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Terrorism, trauma, tolerance: Bearing witness to white supremacist attack on Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand

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Kia kaha Aotearoa, be strong New Zealand

To bear witness to the aftermath of a terrorist atrocity as a national outpouring of grief and a memorialising of those who have passed away is a very touching and deeply emotional process. We were in Beijing when we learned of the mass slaughter of Muslim people at their most important day of gathering for Friday prayers – 50 killed and 48 injured including a 4-year-old girl still in critical condition¹ – at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in the early afternoon on March 15, 2019. We wish to offer our heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the families and friends of those killed and injured and to the Muslim community in this outrageous terrorist attack on the main Masjid Al Noor (the light) and the smaller Linwood mosques.

The positive, non-partisan and supportive leadership of all our politicians and especially of our young 38-year-old Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern has been noted worldwide. She immediately called out the atrocity as terrorism, and said in media conferences about the Muslim victims ...

They have chosen to make New Zealand their home, and it is their home. They are us. The person who has perpetuated this violence against us is not. They have no place in New Zealand. There is no place in New Zealand for such acts of extreme and unprecedented violence, which it is clear this act was. While “this attack was brought to us by someone who was not a citizen, we cannot hide from the fact that the ideology also existed here” ... “One of the things we can all do is never allow New Zealand to be an environment where any of that hostility can survive. [But] terrorism doesn’t have borders, we’ve seen that now. So we can do our bit in New Zealand but actually we need to try and play a leadership role too.” Gunlaw reform has been one way to show leadership to the world. That response was “completely obvious.” Tackling social media is another and those companies “know there will be a call for change” (Ardern, 2019a).

In Parliament on Monday 19th March, Prime Ardern addressed the nation:

That quiet Friday afternoon has become our darkest of days.

But for the families, it was more than that.

It was the day that the simple act of prayer — of practicing their Muslim faith and religion — led to the loss of their loved ones’ lives.

Those loved ones were brothers, daughters, fathers and children.

They were New Zealanders. They are us.

And because they are us, we, as a nation, we mourn them.

We feel a huge duty of care to them. And Mr Speaker, we have so much we feel the need to say and to do.

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In addressing the families, she said, “We cannot know your grief, but we can walk with you at every stage. We can.

And we will surround you with aroha, manaakitanga and all that makes us, us. Our hearts are heavy but our spirit is strong (Ardern, 2019a).

There have been multiple outpourings of grief, and support in the weeks following. On Friday 21st March, throughout New Zealand and worldwide services and vigils have been held with millions stopping to honour the dead. Some 20,000 gathered at a memorial service in Hagley Park opposite the Al Noor Mosque. After the Islamic call to prayer (adhan), the Jummah Salah, or afternoon prayer was held and at 1:32 pm a 2 min silence was observed nationwide. Imam Gamal Fouda conducted a sermon where he said of those killed: “they are not just martyrs of Islam, they are martyrs of this nation New Zealand ... With all the shades of our diversity is a testament of our humanity. We are here in our hundreds and thousands, unified for one purpose – that hate will be undone.” He gave thanks for: “your haka, thank you for your flowers. Thank you for your love and compassion. To our Prime Minister, thank you. Thank you for your leadership – it has been a lesson for the world’s leaders.” He thanked paramedics, people who used their own vehicles to transport the injured to hospital, “our neighbours who opened their doors to save us from the killer.” He stated, “Islamophobia is real ... we call on Governments across the world, including New Zealand, to bring an end to hate speech and the politics of fear”, and added that white supremacy was a threat to mankind, and “this must end now ... Last week’s event is proof and evidence that terrorism has no colour, no race and no religion.”² Further vigils continued throughout NZ towns and cities over the weekend, with 40,000 attending in Christchurch on Sunday. Placards noted: ‘this is your home, you should have been safe here’. With the approval of the Muslim community, in a show of solidarity many women in NZ wore head scarves. Yet there was some criticism that this was tokenism since the hijab is not worn by all Muslim women ‘nor a piece of clothing to be worn as a costume – there are other ways to show aroha (love).’

The attack in Christchurch was not just about Muslims, it was against any person of colour in a ‘white’ country so this focus on hijabs is derailing the examination of white supremacy, systematic racism, Orientalism and bigotry. We don’t want to be turned into a caricature. (<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/christchurch-shooting/111473440/headscarves-movement-means-well-but-it-is-cheap-tokenism?cid=app-iPhone>)

The news flooded to us first on social media and then through our own NZ media searches. It was incomprehensible. We were dumbfounded: the scale of the killings; the cold, calculated planning of the shootings over many months; the undetected hate speech on social media; the interconnections with other attacks on Muslims, Christians and civil society in the West. How could such a cowardly act of terrorism happen in NZ, an otherwise peaceful and open society? How is it possible in words to express our grief and to whom? People struggled to find the words that convey their deep sympathies to the Muslim community at the same time to cope with their own feelings of shock and outrage that it was possible for such mass killings to take place at all and that the planned attack could take place as the result of a deep uncontrollable hatred of one man against the religion and people of another race and culture with his white supremacist views.

This terrorist atrocity constitutes a form of trauma first to those who experienced it and survived, their relatives and friends and affects the whole Muslim community worldwide. It also affects the first responders – paramedics, hospital staff, police and ordinary citizen witnesses/helpers. It is in fact a double trauma for many in the New Zealand Muslim community who have come to NZ to escape war and strife in their country of birth. For instance, the first burials included Syrian refugees Khalid Mustafa and his 16-year-old son Hamza. His 13-year-old son Zaid was wounded and in a wheelchair. The family had been in New Zealand less than a year. Both Hamza and another teenager, 14-year-old Sayyad Ahmad Milne and 24-year-old former pupil

Tariq Rashid Omar were from Cashmere High School³, one of the first of many places visited nationwide by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.

For those at the mosques who survived the assault there will be a long healing process. Many will be comforted by their religious beliefs that the victims died martyrs in the most sacred of places, closest to Allah, by the outpouring of love and community support. Nevertheless people will have to learn to live with the trauma and a host of feelings that might be accompanied by a form of denial and then feelings of being frightened, helplessness, feelings of anger, maybe guilt and sadness. Trauma may result in a state of numbness, of being dazed and feeling cut off the reality, the classic symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), followed by being unable to sleep or eat, palpitations, extreme tiredness, poor concentration and headaches.⁴ Often victims of PTSD find themselves reliving the trauma again and again through vivid and distressing memories or dreams. Sometimes it leads to a kind of perpetual feeling of being on guard, a state of readiness and alertness, to counter feelings of helplessness. It may lead to extreme suspicion of others and long-term depression depending on the gravity and scale of the assault. Tragically, despite Islam's religious prohibitions, it may even lead to self-harm or suicide, as has recently occurred in USA with three suicides by people associated mass school shootings at Marjory Stoneham Douglas High School and Sandy Hook.

Trauma for victims' families is ongoing. Two women had heart attacks and one mother whose son was killed, died. With so many men killed, the wives they've left behind have ongoing trauma and difficulties to face as they put their lives back together. Some were left with no immediate money, do not drive or work and had relied on their husbands as sole breadwinner, while others have jobs and professional qualifications. Some speak limited English. Several were on temporary visa's attached to their husband's work visas, others have been here many years. Government support is available from Accident Compensation Commission, and Victim Support has had NZ & overseas donors raise over \$NZ8.4 million to support the community⁵. But of course there will be multiple forms to be filled and constant reminders of their trauma.

Amid the shock and disbelief that it happened in otherwise peaceful Christchurch, a common theme has been that New Zealand has lost its innocence. New Zealand police are not armed except in emergencies. We never had to fear a bag or bulky back pack left lying around. Emergency procedures emphasise what to do in a fire, tsunami or earthquake. Schools have crisis and lock-down plans and on 15th March all Christchurch schools were locked down for 4 hours as terrified children heard choppers circling, some watched the news on their phones, and all wondered if/when the gunman would come for them. Many of children and adults who inadvertently saw the video as it popped up in news feeds before being removed have sought counselling and there has been a considerable upsurge in those seeking help, some of whom may need it for years to come (Lewis, 2019). Local Christchurch people, especially older children, teens and adults who had already lived through the trauma of the earthquakes of September 2010 and February 2011, when a 6.3 magnitude quake killed 185 and decimated Christchurch, will have been retraumatised. The continuing quake aftershocks added to their anxiety and stress in subsequent years, and it united the country in support.

Yet the trauma from terrorism is different, and is part of the intended psychological effects whereby indiscriminate violence is the means to create terror and fear as a deliberate political act designed to incite hatred and further bloodshed that aims to threaten the innocent, to shock the population and to create enemies among the non-combatant civil population. It is a political act of intimidation designed to galvanise both sides of a conflict. Unfortunately, terrorism is not new – its roots and practice go back at least to the first century when the Sicarii attempted to expel the Roman invaders from Judea. Whereas terrorism aims to divide, in NZ this has been unequivocally resisted in the national outpouring of support and tolerance uniting the country with such sayings as: "Terror will not win!" and "They r us".

Increasingly, in the modern world we have come to experience acts of terrorism and civil war as a daily possibility. In the era of the alt-right, associated with the Trump's presidency and

Brexit, we have seen the global growth of white supremacist extremism and terrorism (<https://www.csis.org/analysis/rise-far-right-extremism-united-states>). We reported on the tragedy of Charlottesville⁶ and ‘Unite the Right’ rally organised by Jason Kessler and Nathan Damigo led by Richard B. Spencer and David Duke who with their alt-right supporters chanted ‘You will not replace us,’ ‘Blood and soil’ and ‘Jews will not replace us’ (Peters & Besley, 2017). We noted that Guillaume Faye’s (2011) manifesto of European white nationalism ‘holds out the prospect of a racial and revolutionary alternative to the present decayed civilisation. The manifesto’s principal objective is thus to unify the resistance by developing a common doctrine that unites everyone and every tendency seeking to constitute a European network of resistance—a doctrine that goes beyond the old sectarian quarrels and superficial divisions.’ We noted the links of the Alt-Right with the Identitarian movement (Peters & Besley, 2017):

The invective against ‘Cultural Marxism’⁷ originates in the European far-right and is very similar to the Norwegian far-right terrorist Anders Behring Breivik’s manifesto that describes cultural Marxism as ‘political correctness’ and seeks to critique the Frankfurt School and deconstruction as being responsible for the empowerment of ‘minorities’ against ‘white civilization’ (<https://sites.google.com/site/knighttemplareurope/2083>). Breivik (now known as Fjotolf Hansen) was responsible for the 22nd July attack on the Workers’ Youth League camp in Utoya in 2011, when he shot 69 having murdered another eight people by earlier bombing the Regjeringskvartalet (the Government quarter) in Oslo (Revese, 2017).

The 28-year-old terrorist gunman⁸ in the Christchurch attack was from Grafton, Australia and sent a ‘manifesto’ called ‘The Great Replacement’ to our political leaders minutes before starting shooting. This document was named after the racist, anti-immigration, misogynist conspiracy theories set out in the *Great Replacement* by Renaud Camus (<http://www.great-replacement.com/>) and which replaces the term ‘white genocide’ as used by alt-right in USA, that white people face existential demise and ultimately extinction. As Manjoo notes, not only is there no evidence of such genocide, but the term sounds ‘more polite than “genocide,” which fits with a long-term effort among white supremacists to craft a cleaner-cut image for themselves (that’s why the hipster new term for “white supremacist” is “identitarian” (Manjoo, 2019). Within a week both the gunman’s document and his 17-min live-stream video of the attack in a 1st-person shooter style similar to a video game for viewers to comment on in real time, a form of ‘performance crime’⁹, that was intended to inspire other alt-right followers as he posted on Facebook, have now been classified as ‘objectionable publication’ material by the NZ Chief Censor, David Shanks (<https://www.dia.govt.nz/Response-to-the-Christchurch-terrorism-attack-video>)¹⁰. While they may be banned in NZ, unfortunately these items are still available in various global sites. Worse still, in Turkey, President Erdogan has repeatedly replayed blurred footage of the video multiple times as part of his current election campaign. There is obviously huge danger of this inciting hatred. But with the support of both major political parties, NZ has banned assault rifles and military style semi-automatic rifles (MSSAs), parts that can convert guns into MSSAs, parts that cause a firearm to generate semi-automatic or close to automatic gunfire, and high capacity magazines. These are now illegal so owners need to turn them in to Police and will receive some compensation (Small, 2019). While many Americans have praised this move, the NRA and its supporters have already targeted and trolled New Zealanders who have turned in their weapons. For New Zealand, gun ownership is a privilege, for the US, the 2nd amendment provides a right to bear arms.

Social media remains a huge concern in how it enables racist hate to perpetuate, to recruit and propagandise extremism and glorify violence. Does banning them simply push them more underground to darker internet sites like 4 chan and 8 chan where they continue to radicalise others by using their ongoing techniques of memes, humour symbols, anti-social trash-talking, competitiveness and trolling, codes etc? Michelle Duff states that

Followers on the internet chat room the gunman frequented – a site that began out of a harassment campaign known as GamerGate, to target high-profile women in the gaming industry with trolling, rape and death threats, and doxing – cheered along and encouraged him as innocent people died.

Moreover, she points out that he “mentions video games, the name of a massively popular online YouTube gamer, and leaves what are known as ‘easter eggs’ – gaming terminology for a hidden message or image that reveals a work’s ‘true’ meaning.” It seems that far-right extremists use the same recruiting techniques online as Islamic State had, such as “using fabricated narratives and false concepts designed to deceive, with messages deliberately targeted to different online platforms” (Duff, 2019).

Although Facebook and YouTube worked hard to take down the offensive video, it had already spread through Twitter. Facebook reported that it had “1.5m uploads within 24h and claimed to have caught 1.2m before they made it into users’ newsfeeds. (That still left 300,000 copies on the loose though).” To deal with the huge number of uploads on YouTube, the chief product officer overrode its human content moderation systems “relying entirely on AI software to immediately identify the most violent parts of the video and automatically block them. Predictably this was only partially successful.” Alarming, YouTube engineers found that there was not just simple sharing by pressing a button, rather, deliberately tweaked copies were created that would escape their AI systems (Naughton, 2019). The call now is for a delay in live-streaming similar to that on TV, but of a few minutes so moderators have time to check content. After considerable criticism, including complaints from the NZ Privacy Commissioner John Edwards who said “Your silence is an insult to our grief,” about Facebook’s level of engagement and accountability (Nadkarni, 2019), finally to address propagandising and recruiting by white supremacist groups, on 26 March Facebook announced it “will no longer allow content supporting white nationalism and white separatism ... since white nationalism cannot be meaningfully separated from white supremacy and organized hate groups ... we will not tolerate praise or support for white nationalism and separatism” (Beckett, 2019).

The terrorist’s ‘manifesto’ follows the same ideological pattern of that are commonly seen from white supremacist groups: ‘white genocide’ through mass immigration and high birth rates of immigrants, with low birth rates of the white population; ‘to take revenge’; ‘to incite violence’; ‘to create an atmosphere of fear’; and ‘to create conflict between the two ideologies within the United States on the ownership of firearms in order to further the social, cultural, political and racial divide within the United states.’ The link to fascism is self-consciously deliberate, as he writes:

I support many of those that take a stand against ethnic and cultural genocide. Luca Traini, Anders Breivik, Dylan Roof, Anton Lundin Pettersson, Darren Osbourne and so forth.

But I have only had brief contact with Knight Justiciar Breivik, receiving a blessing for my mission after contacting his brother knights.

Although he may have acted alone in the massacre, contrary to reports of being a ‘lone wolf’, the Australian gunman was not alone, but was clearly connected with alt-right and white supremacist groups that conflate Islam with terrorism and most likely was carefully groomed by their networks. He came to NZ in 2017 after touring Asia, Greece & Turkey in 2016, a ‘study tour’ in the Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia, Austria, France, Portugal, Spain, Hungary, Bulgaria and other parts of Europe and visited locations of significant Ottoman Empire battles, where it seems he made contact with others like him¹¹. It seems he was influenced by the far right, white nationalist ‘identitarian’ movement, originating in France 2016 which takes ideas from Renaud Camus, philosopher Alain de Benoist and Guillaume Faye (2011). As *The Economist* (March 2018) article stated, ‘Identitarianism’ is ‘a growing movement led by young European activists aimed at reshaping identity politics’ (<https://www.economist.com/europe/2018/03/28/how-identitarian-politics-is-changing-europe>). Subsequent to the massacre, the Austrian government investigated its Identitarian Movement (Generation Identity – GI) and uncovered links and a donation of E1500 from the gunman in 2018. It’s leader, Martin Sellner revealed that he urged the shooter to watch the Group’s English language videos online but denied meeting him. In considering banning the

group, Chancellor Sebastian Kurtz stated “Our position on this is very clear, no kind of extremism whatsoever — whether it’s radical Islamists or right-wing extremist fanatics — has any place in our country and our society,” however, the Identitarian Movement has clear links to the minor coalition partner of the Government, the Freedom Party of Austria (FPO) with Vice-Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache being an FPO member who has previously promoted Generation Identity online, tweeted, “Fanaticism has no place in our Society” (Besser, 2019). More than ever, in liberal democracies, political parties will now need to think very carefully on the ramifications of who they choose as partners.

This highlights just how global the internet and social media enables such group to exist and to share ideas that most of us find unacceptable. The network effect is important to understand the emergence of narratives of white nationalism, not just the chat sites on social media, nor the propaganda, nor shared videos, but also a history of the far right and a set of texts that propose a philosophical justification of white civilisation, nationalism and supremacy. The gunman quoted Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British fascists, on ‘the great awakening of the European soul’. As is well known Mosley went to Italy to meet Mussolini in 1931 and to study the new movements. On his return, he set up the British Union of Fascists in 1932. There is a return of fascism in Europe based on anticonservatism, a myth of ethnic or national renewal and a conception of a nation in crisis:

There are those among the current generation in the West who are still able to remember the rise of Fascism in Europe. It is rising again, all over Europe and in other parts of the world. It never died, like an ancient virus in the bloodstream of the body politic, it grows, multiplies and mutates. To understand its contemporary forms and the conditions that gave rise to it we need to re-evaluate its history, understand its background and to recognize its links with forms of government and institutions it wants to negate. We need to know it again within the propaganda era of digital media and to analyze and understand its power of attraction to young white men (Peters, 2018).

Albright’s (2018) *Fascism: A Warning* addresses the contemporary resurgence of fascism and its global repressive and destructive forces that threaten democracy and Trump’s entanglement with and support for the far-right. Albright is only prepared to say that Trump is the most undemocratic president in American history, but he has clear links to Steve Bannon and has defended various white nationalist groups.

The question is what can we do? What is the role of education in an age of terrorism? This was the underlying question in the *Education, Globalization, and the State in the Age of Terrorism* (Peters, 2006) which was an analysis of the Gulf War and the neocon (neoconservative) justification for intervention in Iraq. The synopsis argued:

Education plays an important role in challenging, combating and in understanding terrorism in its different forms, whether as counter-terrorism or as a form of human rights education. Just as education has played a significant role in the process of nation-building, so education also plays a strong role in the process of empire, globalization and resistance to global forces – and in terrorism, especially where it is linked to emergent statehood. This book focuses on the theme of education in an age of terrorism, exploring the conflicts of globalization and global citizenship, feminism post-9/11, youth identities, citizenship and democracy in a culture of permanent war, and the relation between education and war, with a focus on the war against Iraq.

In ‘The Unforeseen: Education and the flowers of sacrifice’ Peters (2016) commented on the 2014 Peshawar school massacre by the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, (‘the Taliban Movement of Pakistan’) that killed 145 people, including 132 schoolchildren, relating it to Beslan school siege and massacre, North Ossetia, Russia (334 dead) and Breivik’s massacre of 69 people mostly teenagers at the Workers’ Youth League (AUF) camp on Utøya, Norway in 2011, commenting:

Breivik’s far-right militant anti-Islamic terrorism calls for the violent annihilation of ‘Eurabia’ and his motive for his atrocities was to draw attention to his manifesto. His deep-seated hatred of Islam echoes the intensity of ideological-inspired hatred against the West by fundamentalist Islamic militant terrorists (Peters, 2016).

White supremacist racism as a form of extremism that is linked to a set of religious circumstances – a civilizational set of religious wars that go back to the Middle ages and political manifestations of the Crusades and the Jihad and manifests in our contemporary world as a war of religion between fundamentalist forms of Christianity and radical Islam. Hence there is now a conversation about changing the name of the Christchurch based Super Rugby team the Crusaders, the significance of whose name and affront to Muslims would most likely have escaped most New Zealanders when it was chosen in 1999, reflects how the socio-political landscape in New Zealand has been impacted and is now changed. Much has been said about the encounter between Islam and Europe, most recently by Edward Said (1978) in *Orientalism* but that stretches back to ‘war on Islam’ conspiracies starting with Egyptian, Sayyid Qutb, a leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 60s who was critical of Muslim governments and promoted Islamist ideology, the hostility of the West against Islam, and violent jihad, influencing Al Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Anwar-al-Awaki and others. There are pronounced ideological, sociological, and religious similarities between radical fundamentalist Islamic and extremist Christian groups as Nick Gier’s (n.d.) observes:

There are some chilling parallels between Christian and Islamic fundamentalists. Both divide the world between believers and unbelievers, and by deciding for themselves who is saved and who is damned, they think that they can play God with our lives. Both have also declared war on the secular culture of liberal democracy, the most peaceful and prosperous means of social organization ever devised by humankind. They both reject the separation of church and state and would set up governments based on their own views of divine laws, <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/ngier/parallels.htm>

Increasingly, there are forms of *extremism*, and there are strong historical connections between them: each trying to mobilise sentiments, ideology and terror against civil society. Some argued that this is in part ‘blow-back’ of American wars and western aggression in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, but it seems to be much deeper.

New Zealand in 2019 is now a multicultural country¹² with over 200 ethnicities and 160 languages spoken. It follows a set of bicultural (Maori and non-Maori) policies many of which have been established since the late 1980s and 90s, related to relationship between Maori and the Crown as described in our 1840 founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Treaty of Waitangi (for a very brief overview, see Hayward, 2012). There have been ongoing struggles to honour the Treaty, to establish ways to settle reparations for past injustices with iwi (tribes) on behalf of the Crown via the Waitangi Tribunal, and it is outrageous that it took until 1987 for Maori to become an official language. While Muslims have been in NZ for many years, there has latterly been an increase with them now numbering ~46,000 at the 2013 census, with the majority Sunni, and the Shia population concentrated in Auckland. At almost 1% of the population it totally destroys the great replacement theory as sheer nonsense. The dead and injured in this atrocity, aged from 3 to 77 were mostly men, but women and children were not spared. They and were from many countries, including including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and New Zealand. There are multiple media accounts from Maori, Muslims and people of colour about their experiences of contemporary racism including reports from a vigil in Auckland on March 21 where speakers also referred to ‘hard truths’ about New Zealand’s history of white settler colonial violence. Forms of racism were part of the colonisation of indigenous peoples around the world and took place against Maori in Aotearoa-New Zealand and we still grapple to redress this on-going legacy. The Waitangi Tribunal goes only some way in this. Nevertheless, some attendees were dismayed at the political tone, that having come to mourn thought this was too soon although noting that such conversations need to be had (Neilsen, 2019). Attitudinal and actual racist practices definitely still need to change.

The NZ Chief Human Rights Commissioner, Paul Hunt (2019), points out that “casual racism can lead to the stereotyping, and the stereotyping can lead to the othering... and as soon as you start treating others as alien it’s close to demonising, and demonising can slip into the 15th

of March". He believes it is timely to seriously focus on the country's human rights shortcomings, and have a mature debate about human rights, and the balance between free speech and hate speech, noting that "There is Islamophobia, there is racism... This is not 'political correctness gone mad.' It is a matter of life, death and human rights. Disrespectful words and actions give permission for discrimination, harassment and violence." However, it is not just in New Zealand, there have been reports of increases in Islamophobic comments and actions across the world, including New Zealand. For example in the UK, an organisation called Tell MAMA, which measures anti-Muslim attacks, said there had been a 593% increase in the number of incidents reported after March 15 (Paul Hunt, 2019 cited in Walters, 2019). Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London reported "he has been repeatedly subjected to anti-Muslim abuse from Tory members and supporters" and with the number of hate crimes against Muslims reported across Britain increased by 593% in the week after the attack on two New Zealand mosques, he asked Theresa May to adopt "a definition of Islamophobia drawn up by the all-party parliamentary group for British Muslims, already accepted by Labour and the Lib Dems." The definition reads: "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness." (Savage, 2019).

In light of all this Jacinda Ardern's leadership has been vital and exemplary both nationally and globally. In the UAE, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid praised her support for the Muslim community and on Friday 21st March, Dubai lit up the tallest building in the world, the Burj Khalifa with her photo embracing a woman in hijab at Kilbirnie Mosque, Wellington and the words Salaam Peace, in Arabic and English. Similar expressions of support against hatred and for tolerance and co-existence have been made by many world leaders. Ardern's leadership has received many plaudits from around the world: 'A leader with love on full display' (Nagesh, 2019) and are summarised by Edwards (2019):

The strong consensus – both here and abroad – is that Ardern has demonstrated extraordinarily impressive leadership since the terrorist atrocities. Numerous commentaries have celebrated her emotional and empathetic response, combined with her strength and "steeliness" in taking decisive action on matters such as gun control and victim support, her correctness in labelling the murders as "terrorism", and her ability to project and foster unity (when there is a tendency towards division, even from many of her own supporters).

Ardern in speaking at the National Memorial in Christchurch 29th March, captures the impact on New Zealand and worldwide stating the vicious cycle of extremism breeding extremism and it must end. We cannot confront these issues alone, none of us can. But the answer to them lies in a simple concept that is not bound by domestic borders, that isn't based on ethnicity, power base or even forms of governance. The answer lies in our humanity" (Ardern, 2019b).

In trying to answer, what can/shall we do? Some things become obvious as noted above, but accepting diversity, addressing racism, being tolerant while enabling free speech all form part of the mix. Considering the parallels of being in exile or a refugee from war, it seems significant that we should invoke Karl Popper's famous 1945 paradox of tolerance following the recent tragic events in Christchurch, "To maintain a tolerant society, the society must be intolerant of intolerance" (see Popper, 1945, note 4 to Chapter 7).

Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.

Popper was an Austrian Jewish exile who came to NZ as lecturer in philosophy at Canterbury University College, University of New Zealand in 1937 and wrote this famous book, *The Open Society and its Enemies* while in Christchurch. Much public debate about free speech arose in NZ in 2018 when alt-right speakers, Lauren Southern and Stefan Molyneaux who are closely connected with the alt-right Identitarian movement, had a speaking event cancelled ('no-platforming' or 'de-platforming') when Mayor Phil Goff denied them an Auckland City Council venue. Similarly, much debate occurred when Don Brash (former head of the Reserve Bank and ACT

party leader) was not allowed to speak at Massey University later that year. This is the political embodiment of this paradox. But if we believe in an open society, to take John Rawls' (1999) view-point, we need to carefully consider how much of a threat to an open society are such adherents? Where do we draw the line? Currently there is no specific offence for hate crime in NZ which is subsumed under other crimes. Should there be? We continue to hope that the points made about the vital tasks of dialogue in dealing with diversity as outlined in our book, *Interculturalism, Education and Dialogue* (Besley & Peters, 2012) can be heard and acted upon. Without dialogue we have nothing, except conflict and in the end, war. The overwhelming stance is that civil society must be defended.

In New Zealand at the central mosque and Al-Noor in Christchurch, innocent people were slaughtered while peacefully at prayer. They too were 'the flowers of sacrifice' in a networked war of terrorism that knows no safe or secure place. Bearing witness is a concept that allows for the expression of sympathy and empathy and as multiple media accounts testified, the people of New Zealand responded by forming a national bond with the Muslim community turning out in their thousands in many towns and cities to hold vigils to honour the slain and to express their grief, having read the stories of so many, clearly understanding that the great majority of Muslims are peace-loving people who want to pursue their own faith and in so many ways 'are us.' Tolerance, respect, diversity and unity. As Ardern (2019b) said,

And we remember, that ours is a home that does not and cannot claim perfection. But we can strive to be true to the words embedded in our national anthem

Men of every creed and race,

Gather here before Thy face,

Asking Thee to bless this place

God defend our free land

From dissension, envy, hate

And corruption, guard our state

Make our country good and great

God Defend New Zealand

Tātou Tātou

Asalamu Aleykum. [Peace be upon you]

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

Martin Luther King Jnr

Tina Besley and Michael A. Peters
Beijing
March 30th

Notes

1. Subsequently 51 killed.
2. See NZ media – both Stuff and NZ Herald: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/christchurch-shooting/111479826/livestream-new-zealand-two-minutes-of-silence-for-victims-of-christchurch-terror-attack-vigil?cid=app-iPhone>

3. It was particularly poignant for Tina since she is a past student and teacher at Cashmere High.
4. <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders/coping-after-a-traumatic-event>
5. Donated by March 20 – see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christchurch_mosque_shootings
6. On 27 March 2019, James Alex Fields, 25, who drove his driving his car into counter-protesters at a 'Unite the Right' rally in 2017, killing Heather Heyer and injuring dozens, a professed neo-Nazi, pleaded guilty to 29 federal hate crimes out of 30 counts in a deal to avoid the death penalty. Charlottesville murderer Fields pleads guilty to hate crimes, In the aftermath, President Donald Trump was criticised for saying there had been 'very fine people' on both sides in Charlottesville. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-47727275>; Carma Hassan & Eric Levenson (2019). <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/03/27/us/james-fields-charlottesville/index.html>. Accessed March 28.
7. Cultural Marxism is notable as an anti-semitic meme (Moyn, 2018).
8. In keeping with the intent of Prime Minister Ardern and others to counter his wish for notoriety, we will not give him, as Thatcher called it, 'the oxygen of publicity' so will not name him.
9. Dr Stuart Bender, an early career research fellow at Curtin University in Australia said the shooting was notable for its use of live-streaming video. 'This makes the attack a form of "performance crime" where the act of video recording and/or streaming the violence by the perpetrator is a central component of the violence itself, rather than being incidental'. He said the video should not be seen as a disgusting trophy for the perpetrator to re-watch later – the video is part of the violent activity itself. 'The performance crime element of this attack links it to the new era of participatory media terrorism and shows the dark side of live-streaming services.' (Stevenson & Anthony, 2019).
10. The content of the video file is disturbing and harmful for people to see. Furthermore, the video file depicting the terrorist attack in Christchurch (the video file) is an objectionable publication under the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 (the Act) as it depicts and promotes extreme violence and terrorism. Accessing, possessing, or distributing (including sharing or hosting or showing other people) the video file are criminal offences against New Zealand law. The Chief Censor has now also confirmed that the video of the attack is officially classified as objectionable.
11. See Daily Mail, UK, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6824407/How-Christchurch-gunman-far-right-ideology-influenced-travels.html>
12. NZ population: 74% European; 15% Maori; Asians [both Indian & Chinese] 12%; Pacific Island 7.4% (2013 Census, www.stats.govt.nz, note there are considerable overlaps in ethnic identity). There were 213 ethnic groups identified in the 2013 census. 3% speak Maori, 2% Samoan, 2% Hindi, with many other languages spoken by a small number of people primarily by recent immigrants.

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