

Dear New Zealand,

It's 3.35am on Saturday 16th March in London, 2019. I can't sleep. I can't sleep because of my complicity in the terrorist attacks against Muslim peoples in Christchurch on Friday.

I am complicit because I am Pākehā.

This is not our biggest mass killing in history. Our country was built on mass killings. My great-great-great-grandfather carried out one of these in 1864, burning and shooting hundreds of Māori to death with his militia comrades as they raided Rangiorua – a village designated as refuge for women, children and elderly during the colonial wars.

I do not know this history because my family spoke about it, or because I learned about it in school. Like you, and everyone else growing up in a British colony or indeed in England – the germ of the Empire itself – I was submitted to the production of ignorance about this violence. A well-established tactic of colonisation.

Yet this bloody 'past' is present every time we – Pākehā – are disproportionately employed, educated, healthy, propertied. Feel protected by the criminal justice system, cared for by the mental health system. Think we have priority rights to the land. Roll our eyes at the naming of racism, at the correct pronunciation of te reo Māori. Demand that people speak English. Flinch when people name the colour of our skin. White.

Indeed this bloody 'past' is present every time we say the name of our country: "New Zealand".

There is nothing "unprecedented", "shocking", "unbelievable" about the attacks.

What makes them so devastating is their familiarity.

As I write this there is a foetus kicking in my womb. They came into my body six months ago and their name is going to be Rua. 'Rua' because Tehseen – my boyfriend, their father – and I have a sense of twoness about them. Including that they are of both Pākehā and Muslim heritage.

When I woke to the news of the terrorism yesterday, I did not know how to speak to Rua about the immense sadness and anger that was washing through my body, through their body. Made of love from Pākehā to Muslim, met by hatred from Pākehā to Muslim.

Then I found myself humming them a song: Tūtira mai ngā iwi.

Our Prime Minister tells us that the people who did these attacks are "not one of us". But New Zealand, they are. This *is* part of 'us'. This was not a killing by white supremacists, by individuals. It was a killing by white supremacy, by the social structure on which our country is built and builds.

Its time, Ngāti Pākehā, to collectively rise up against white supremacy. To face our violent foundations, feel the painful feelings and fight the inner fight alongside Indigenous, black and migrant movements that have already been doing the work for centuries. We have a lot to learn. A lot to do.

This is our response-ability.

In solidarity,

Rachel Jane Liebert