

To the Conquerors, the Spoils and Double Standards

Maori who had been driven from their homes by inter-tribal war and returned when they no longer feared for their lives presented a problem to earlier land settlements. Wishing to be fair, Governor Hobson asked Protector of Natives George Clarke "what were the rights of those people displaced by an invading tribe? Did their rights have precedence over the decision of their vanquishers to sell land to the Crown?" At the sale of Taranaki by the Waikato people to the Crown in 1842, he was advised by Clarke: "native customs throughout the length and breadth of this land has led me to believe and declare the forfeiture of such right by aborigines so situated... it is a Maori custom fully established and recognized..." He added: "It would establish a dangerous doctrine and constantly expose every title to be questioned by any returned slave who might assert a former right to the land let the period be ever so remote, and would prove a source of endless litigation and disagreement between the two races."

His words on Maori tradition and expectations were not heeded in succeeding years as survivors of inter-tribal war returned and tried to reclaim their previous lands, bringing further conflict with settlers.

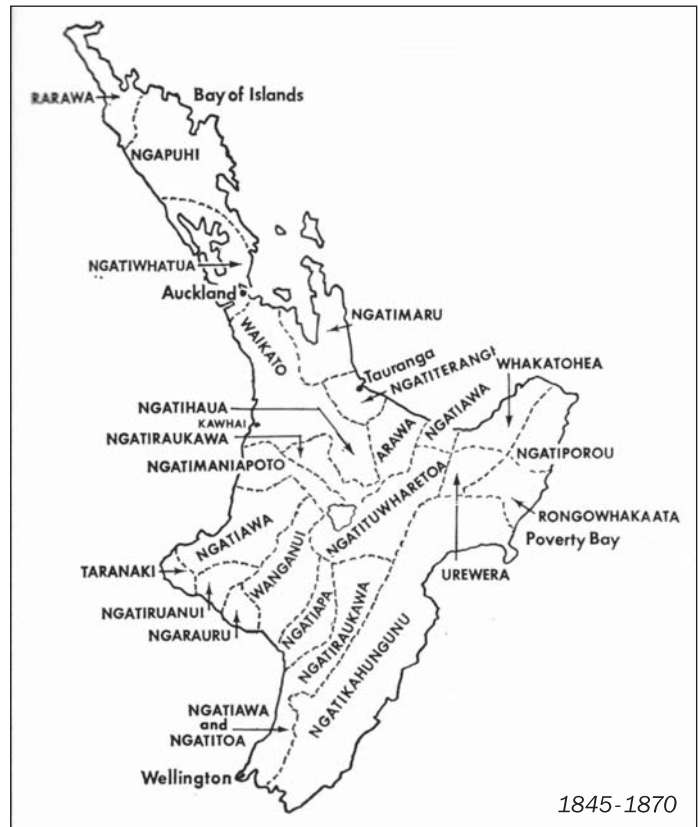
Song of Sorrow for the People

When the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, Maori were rapidly on their way to extinction, their numbers devastated by years of savage inter-tribal fighting, particularly after the introduction of muskets. Tribes had lived by the patu (weapon) and were dying by the patu. It was a merciless way of life. Bullets swung the populace rapidly toward extinction as the warrior way continued. The practise of utu (revenge), a high infant mortality rate and vulnerability to introduced contagious diseases were also sealing their fate. Chiefs who signed Te Tiriti O Waitangi were influenced by the words of Tamati Waaka Nene of Ngapuhi who spoke eloquently of the terrible price of inter-tribal warfare, urging the chiefs to seek law and order under the protection of Queen Victoria. The Maori populace was already in serious decline by 1840, from around 100,000 to just 46,000 in 1870. Tuhawaiki, who applied his moko to the Treaty of Waitangi expressed his anguish for his people to Rev. George Clarke. His song of sorrow is recorded in Clarke's Early Life in New Zealand:

"Look here, Karaka (Clarke) – here and there, and there yonder: those are all burial places; not ancestral burial places, but those of this generation. Our parents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, children – they lie thick around us.

"We are but a poor remnant now, and the Pakeha will soon see us all die out...The wave which brought Rauparaha and his allies to the Strait washed him over to the Southern Island. He went through us, fighting and burning and slaying. At Kaikoura, at Kaiapoi, and other of our strongholds, hundreds and hundreds of our people fell, hundreds more were carried off as slaves, and hundreds died of cold and starvation in their flight. We are now dotted in families, few and far between, where we formerly lived as tribes: our children are few and we cannot rear them.

"But we had a worse enemy even than Rauparaha, and that was the visit of the Pakeha, with his drink and his disease. You think us very corrupted, but the very scum of Port Jackson shipped as whalers or landed as sealers on this coast. They brought us new plagues, unknown to our fathers, until our people melted away..."



Map of North Island tribes ref. *The Maori Wars*, Tom Gibson

Today, a mix of ethnicities has created a whole new people. Many choose not to be categorised by race. At the last census, 400,000 people ignored the ethnic categories and wrote 'New Zealander' in the 'other' category. Those who defined themselves as 'Maori' made up just 14.6% of the population in the 2006 census. Restoring pride in all things Maori has played a significant role in reviving the self-determination of a declining race, but, taken to extremes, what will the ultimate price of that be? Will it continue to be dependence on welfare and grievance payouts from the people of New Zealand? Will Maori ever be able to stand on their own feet and make their way as individuals, as every other New Zealander must? The present process of compensation is in grave danger of making that impossible. Some may gain sudden riches, but in the end, everyone loses.

We see division on grounds of race sponsored by Government eagerness to gain political support under MMP, opening a further disastrous Pandora's Box. To secure support of the Maori party for its emission trading scheme, the National Government recently enabled five Maori corporations to re-open their "Full and Final" settlements. This set a precedence for permanent post-Treaty assets to be forever eligible for compensation should they be affected by government changes relating to forestry, tax law or the exchange rate, making Full and Final settlement impossible.

The present government states their aim is to conclude all Waitangi Tribunal 'Full and Final Settlements' by 2014. It's all been said before. History shows that the people of New Zealand are fully justified in fearing that Treaty Settlement as a long-established institution is here to stay, as a political bargaining point, to haunt and divide, and financially burden future generations forever.

Those Who Constantly Look Back Can Never Go Forward. ■