

# NZCPR Weekly

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NEW ZEALAND CENTRE FOR POLITICAL RESEARCH

## EXPOSING THE REAL AGENDA

Dr Muriel Newman

It is not easy to rile New Zealanders, but Hone Harawira's abusive email clearly did. By claiming that he was entitled to rip off taxpayers with his jaunt to Paris because Whities had been ripping off Maori for centuries, Hone Harawira exposed the racist thinking that underpins the Maori Party. As Labour's former Tai Tokerau MP Dover Samuels said, Mr Harawira is "advocating what he really believes in. A lot of people sitting with him in Parliament believe the same thing".

In fact, it could be said that Mr Harawira has done the country a favour with his outburst by reminding the public about the Maori Party's agenda. Although the Maori Party sounds like it represents Maori it doesn't. At the 2008 general election, the Maori Party gained only 56,000 votes, or 2.4 percent of the party vote. The vast majority of Maori voters chose to support mainstream parties rather than this radical party with its Maori sovereignty agenda.

The Maori Party wants Maori to win back control of New Zealand. In a world where the abolition of privilege is a central tenet of modern democratic reform, the Maori Party wants to create a world where the colour of one's skin determines social and economic advantage. On its own, the creation of racial privilege for anyone calling themselves Maori is a preposterous notion. But with the acquiescence of John Key's National Party, it is exceedingly dangerous.

The leadership of the Maori Party say they are mortified at the public backlash over their colleague's behaviour. But what they are not saying is that they are desperate that this controversy does not spoil their plan to get their hands on the jewel in New Zealand's crown - our foreshore and seabed - not to mention the \$1 billion of "whanau ora" funding which National is planning to devolve direct to Maori communities for social services delivery.

Over the years, the Maori Party leadership has been at great pains to portray itself as mainstream and reasonable. Co-leaders Tariana Turia and Peter Sharples have it down to a fine art. Yet they rely on the public having a short memory, because it wasn't too long ago that Ms Turia was being censored by Prime Minister Helen Clark for her radical views.

In a speech to the New Zealand Psychological Society Conference in August 2000, Ms Turia, as Labour's Associate Minister of Maori Affairs, spoke extensively about the effects of colonisation on Maori.[1] She called New Zealand's first British settlers 'invaders' and 'predators' explaining that they committed atrocities similar to 'home invasions' on their Maori 'victims': "I can see the connections between 'home invasions' which concern many of us, to the invasion of the 'home lands' of indigenous people by a people from another land. What I have difficulty in reconciling is how 'home invasions' emits such outpourings of concern for the victims and an intense despising of the invaders while the invasion of the 'home lands' of Maori does not engender the same level of emotion and concern for the Maori victims."

Tariana Turia drew comparisons between the European colonisation of New Zealand and the Nazi holocaust: "Do you consider for example the effects of the trauma of colonisation? I understand that much of the research done in this area has focused on the trauma suffered by the Jewish survivors of the holocaust of World War Two. What seems to not have received similar attention is the holocaust suffered by indigenous people including Maori as a result of colonial contact and behaviour."

And in her speech she reflected on the healing power of money, wondering how much "compensation" would be needed to alleviate the "intergenerational damage" done to Maori people.

This final point puts the Maori grievance philosophy into perspective - the perceived wrongs to ancestors who are long since dead will not be forgotten by their largely non-Maori relatives (thanks to rapid intermarriage) until each generation of taxpayers are forced to pay through the nose. A report prepared for Labour Prime Minister David Lange in 1989 by Richard Hill of the Justice Department documents the on-going pressure by claimants to settle claims, detailing how some of them had been settled numerous times.[2] It brings into question the honesty of today's claimants who conveniently forget that their grievances have already been fully settled years ago.

The 1,835 new claims that were lodged in the final four weeks before the September 1<sup>st</sup> cut-off date for historic claims last year - compared to the total of 1,497 claims that had been received in the 33 years since the Tribunal was established - also raises the spectre of opportunistic greed. This has become a driving force in the Treaty settlement process as new generations of tribal claimants distort and embellish their claims in order to win ever greater taxpayer funded compensation. A good example is the "Treelords" deal, where at the eleventh hour - when their settlement bill was in front of Parliament claimants attempted to include the 'airspace' above Rotorua in order to gain a controlling interest in a proposed new international airport.[3]

In a paper, *Ethics and Values* presented in 1999, then Chairman of the Waitangi Tribunal Chief Justice Edward Durie, expressed his concern about the veracity of the Treaty settlement process - in particular that claimants were falsifying the research on their cases by demanding that unhelpful material was removed otherwise the researchers would not be paid; that researchers were being restricted by only being allowed to talk with people approved by the claimants; and that researchers were being instructed to change their conclusions. Judge Durie also warned that the secrecy associated with claims could undermine public confidence and asked, "Should evidence to the Waitangi Tribunal be publicly available?"[4]

While the Treaty settlement process is meant to be open, it is far from it. Not only are vast sums of taxpayer's money being appropriated for settlement purposes, prime taxpayer assets are being privatised into Maori hands without any consultation at all. This includes not only prominent buildings, some of the biggest farms in the country, lakes and rivers, but National Parks as well.

Just a few months ago the Department of Conservation warned that unprecedented quantities of valuable public land is being handed to Maori as treaty settlements, despite a Cabinet policy that conservation land was "not readily available for use in Treaty settlements".[5] Some 163,000 hectares of conservation land has been used to settle claims - three-quarters of it over the last twelve months - and while most of this land is being retained in public ownership with iwi management and *naming* rights, up to 2000ha has been vested into Maori ownership with no provision for public access at all.

What is also becoming clear in this whole process whereby public assets are being transferred into Maori ownership is that *assurances* are not worth the paper they are written on. A case in point relates to Lake Ellesmere - which was included in Ngai Tahu's Treaty settlement in 1998 - where assurances were given by both the iwi and the Government that *nothing would change* regarding the public's right

to use the lake. In spite of that assurance an 8 percent levy on the earnings of commercial eel fishermen is now being imposed and while at this stage the permit system does not include recreational users of the lake, many fear that they too will soon be required to pay.[6] In fact, locals believe that this levy is just the start - a forerunner to a nationwide "iwi tax". They say that fishermen and boats in other parts of the country should prepare for similar taxes being imposed wherever riverbeds, lakebeds and foreshore areas have been included in Treaty deals. They say that mooring buoys, jetties and bridges will soon be fair game for an iwi tax.

With the Government poised to legislate on the foreshore and seabed, the developments at Lake Ellesmere should act as a warning of what's likely to come if National is foolish enough to mandate Maori control. For a decade, nothing at Lake Ellesmere was changed. But eleven years after the settlement, Maori are not only starting to restrict free public access to the lake, but they are imposing compulsory taxes on some users. In spite of the government's assurances back in 1998 that nothing would change regarding public access to the lake, the Minister of Fisheries says that there is nothing he can do, that this is a private matter between the public and the iwi.

With the foreshore and seabed playing such a central role in what it is to be a New Zealander, it is crucial that it remains in public ownership for all to enjoy. In spite of what the Maori Party says about customary rights, Maori do not own the foreshore and seabed. The moment the Treaty was signed, any customary rights were extinguished and the Crown became the owner of the foreshore and seabed for the good of all New Zealanders.[7] It is therefore the responsibility of the government to ensure that such common good resources stay in Crown ownership for the benefit of future generations.

When you strip this whole issue down to its bare bones, as Hone Harawira has indicated, Maori activism is all about ripping off the system for as much as they can get. Their interest in the foreshore and seabed is not really about customary rights, it's about title; it has never really been about mana, it's about money; and their whole approach to the Treaty is not really about partnership, it's about power.

I have said this before and I will say it again - public opinion matters. If everyone who reads this newsletter and shares concerns about the fate of the foreshore and seabed emailed the Prime Minister to express their views, he would certainly take notice (click the sidebar link for his address and that of all other MPs).

This of course is the purpose of the New Zealand Centre for Political Research - to research the background of important public policy issues and outline the facts in order to help inform public opinion. Those readers who forward these newsletters on to acquaintances are helping to keep others informed, so that collectively

we can hold the government to account.

As President Thomas Jefferson said "I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; not enlightened enough to exercise their control with wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion. Enlighten the people generally and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day."

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David Round, this week's NZCPR Guest Commentator and law lecturer at Canterbury University, was deeply offended by Hone Harawira's racist remarks. He says, "Harawira is by his own admission a liar. He considers himself entitled to cheat the New Zealand taxpayer. He is a foul-mouthed racist bully."

He explains, "His analysis of New Zealand history is wrong. Compared with many other countries our history has been one of pretty enlightened and humane attitudes. Some of our policies ~ the indiscriminating generosity of the welfare state, for example ~ have done at least as much harm as good, but at least we meant well. Efforts have been made since the late nineteenth century to redress wrongs done to Maori, and of course in the last couple of decades we have seen another very determined attempt to put an end to grievances and put the past behind us. But as far as Harawira is concerned, we need not have bothered. He has noticed neither our attempts to be just nor the spirit in which we have made those attempts."

In his article, David expresses far stronger views that I can quote here - otherwise your email security systems would go into overdrive and prevent you from receiving this newsletter altogether! However, you can read David's uncensored article "Time to Take Offence" on our website, [www.nzcpr.com](http://www.nzcpr.com).

#### FOOTNOTES:

1. Tariana Turia, Speech to the Psychological Society Conference <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/tspeech.htm>
2. Richard Hill, Settlements of Major Claims in the 1940s <http://www.nzcpr.com/Richard%20Hill's%20Report.pdf>
3. Dominion Post, Maori claim airspace above Rotorua marae <http://www.stuff.co.nz/4595649a11.html>
4. E. T. Durie, Ethics and Values <http://www.kennett.co.nz/law/indigenous/1999/39.html>
5. Herald, Treaty land keep out [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10562904](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10562904)
6. Dominion Post, Tribe sets lakebed fishing levy <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/2003175/Tribe-sets-lakebed-fishing-levy>
7. Muriel Newman, Controversy, Consultation, and Conservation <http://www.nzcpr.com/weekly187.htm>

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Thank you for your interest.