

Newman Weekly

By Dr. Muriel Newman
8 April 2006



The New Zealand Centre for Political Debate

Sovereignty Marches On

To be successful, political movements need effective long-term strategies. This week observers would have witnessed two tactical steps in long-term march of New Zealand towards Maori sovereignty and a separate Maori nation.

The first of these steps was the launching of the Maori electoral option campaign on Monday. This four month long campaign, budgeted to cost \$4.5 million, is held following the census every five years. It targets those who claim to be Maori inviting them to choose whether they want to be registered on the Maori electoral roll or the general roll. If all Maori voters on the electoral roll registered for the Maori option, there would be 13 Maori seats in our Parliament. That would be more than sufficient under our MMP system for a Maori Party, if it was able to win all or most - of those seats, to permanently hold the balance of power.

The Maori option campaign has been called 'state sanctioned separatism'. To have a racially divided electoral system still operating 140 years after the Maori seats were created to rectify an historical voting anomaly is an anathema in a modern civilised society.

In the 1860s, temporary voting measures were introduced to ensure that men, disenfranchised by private property ownership requirements, were able to vote. These measures gave the vote to miners and also established four Maori seats for Maori men whose land was in collective ownership.

While the miners' temporary voting rights were eventually abolished as planned, the Maori seats stayed on. The eligibility for voting on the Maori roll was based on the legal definition of Maori - as having at half or more of Maori blood a definition that remained in place right up until 1974. In that year the Labour Government introduced the Maori Affairs Amendment Act, which changed the definition of Maori to anyone who has Maori

ancestry, causing an outraged Allan McCready, the MP for Manawatu, to state in Parliament: "It appears now that anyone who rides past a marae on a pushbike can claim to be a Maori"!

This change has opened the door to anyone who "feels" Maori being able to claim they have Maori ancestry and gain access, not only to vote on the Maori electoral roll, but also to enjoy an array of other special privileges including sharing in the spoils of the Treaty settlement process.

The second event to assist radical Maori in their march towards sovereignty has been the release this week of the United Nations report on New Zealand Maori by the Special Rapporteur, Professor Rodolfo Stavenhagen, who spent ten days visiting New Zealand at the request of Maori last year.

For years now, the United Nations, regarded in many quarters as a driving force of international socialism, has been helping to mobilise the world's indigenous peoples, supporting them in their campaigns for independent nationhood status. By producing anti-government reports, which paint a bleak picture of the status of indigenous peoples in their homeland, the UN has helped to strengthen national sovereignty campaigns.

This UN report (see www.nzcpd.com) is no different. In fact, in response to its release, the head of Maori studies at Auckland University, Professor Margaret Mutu, stated that: "The New Zealand Government, and all governments before it, do not want Maori to fully participate economically and socially in this country". The fact that this grossly fictitious comment reported by Radio New Zealand remained unchallenged is typical of the PC agenda that now underpins the reporting of Maori issues.

In his report, Professor Stavenhagen was highly critical of the New Zealand media, claiming that they

The eligibility for voting on the Maori roll was based on the legal definition of Maori - as having at half or more of Maori blood a definition that remained in place right up until 1974.

portrayed Maori in a negative light (how he could come to that conclusion given the plethora of pro-Maori taxpayer funded media outlets is rather puzzling). He indicated that the media should be prevented from being able to be critical of Maori through the establishment of a watchdog body. That is presumably UN-speak for censorship.

But he didn't stop at the media, he appeared to want to shut down frank and open debate: "Representatives and leaders of political parties and public organisations should refrain from using language that may incite racial or ethnic intolerance".

The report claimed that: "Having been dispossessed of most of their lands and resources by the Crown for the benefit of Pakeha, Maori had to accept sporadic and insufficient redress, only to be faced with accusations they were receiving undue privileges". To rectify this historic grievance, the report suggests that the Treaty of Waitangi settlement process should be binding on the Crown. He further recommends that the Treaty itself be entrenched in a constitution, which would recognise Maori rights to self-determination and sovereignty.

The Professor states that he received considerable evidence of the historical and institutional discrimination suffered by the Maori people: "Disparities continue to exist between Maori and non-Maori with regard to employment, income, health, housing, education, as well as in the criminal justice system". But rather than taking the view that the increasing crime rate amongst Maori is a result of

the breakdown of the Maori family, social dysfunction and personal choices made by the young people themselves, he concludes that the answer lies in more state funded initiatives for Maori: "There appears to be a need for the continuation of specific measures based on ethnicity in order to strengthen the social, economic and cultural rights of Maori".

The report claims that the education system is letting down Maori children and rather than the answer lying in a strategy to lift our educational performance as a whole with more parental involvement, greater school choice, and a reduction in the bureaucratic burden on schools, he sees the solution in terms of more resources for Maori and the development of 'culturally appropriate teaching materials'.

Sadly for New Zealand, the UN Rapporteur has bought into the myth that Maori are victims and that the only solution is Maori self-rule. The reality is that Maori are an amazingly talented race of people. They are great orators, artists, sportsmen, academics and entrepreneurs, with a special warmth and presence that sets them apart. The very best thing that their leaders can do to help them succeed is to get government out of their lives and out of their way so they can flourish in a country that is committed to equality under the law and a future of equal opportunity for all.

This week's poll asks: Should the eligibility for voting on the Maori roll should be returned to being based on having "half or more" of Maori blood?

Sadly for New Zealand, the UN Rapporteur has bought into the myth that Maori are victims and that the only solution is Maori self-rule.

Supporting the NZ Centre for Political Debate

If you enjoy reading Newman Weekly and value independent political discussion then I'm inviting you to consider becoming a member of the New Zealand Centre for Political Debate.

The NZCPD is an influential political force and provides a much needed independent voice on political issues. But life is all about reality and the NZCPD relies on the support and goodwill of others to continue. Contributions both big and small are most welcome.

The support levels range from a subscriber who receives Newman Weekly and has an opportunity to participate in our discussion forums, to those who would like to be foundation supporters or benefactors.

Thanks so much for your interest in Newman Weekly and taking the time to read this message. To find out more about how you can support us visit www.nzcpd.com.