

Escape the guilt trap: who really broke the Treaty

John Robinson

Three Waters and separate government: the elephant in the room

Many councils have spoken out against the Three Waters proposal, with most focussing on the high cost and the taking of ownership and control by a new national organisation. The public organisation Democracy Action has spoken against the proposal, “since the undemocratic co-governance provisions will bring more complexity, more bureaucracy, more costs – and a whole lot less democratic accountability”. The Taxpayers’ Union has pointed to “the lies about ‘ownership’, the unsuccessful buy off of the local government sector, and the parliamentary skullduggery”.

There was considerable publicity when a group of law academics (professors and PhDs), publicised their opinion that the development of Three Waters raised constitutional concerns, because an entrenched privatisation provision (which was dropped following widespread condemnation) “creates a dangerous precedent”. That provision was a last-minute amendment that the Green Party had insisted on, in order to block possible future privatisation.

The claim that the Greens are opposed to privatisation is smoke and mirrors, a diversion and a con designed to misdirect public attention, away from what is going on. The Three Waters legislation takes all those resources out of public control and gives effective control, that key feature of ownership, to an undefined Maori organisation. **That is privatisation in all but name.**

Most Three Waters critics have missed this major point and failed to notice, and emphasise, the key feature in that Bill, which is a further, and significant, step in an ongoing coup. None of these criticisms get to the heart of the matter; none identify the elephant in the room, apartheid, the setting up of a system that divides New Zealanders further into Maori and the other, and which asks Maori to organise a separate government system to choose and appoint representatives who will have effective control over all of New Zealand’s ‘three waters’ – to take the control of drinking water, sewage and waste water from local bodies and hand this to (initially) four imaginative regional structures, ‘entities’, to be governed through an absurd, complicated and divisive structure.

A clear call for such a separated system of government, with two race-based parliaments, is found in the *He Puapua* report to government. Here is a major step in that direction. At the base of the new control systems are those four regional authorities, in which, to quote the proposed Bill, “***Iwi/Maori will have a joint role with councils in the oversight and strategic direction of the proposed new water services entities, with mana whenua having equal representation alongside local authorities on a Regional Representative Group for each entity.***” In addition, the water services regulator, *Taumata Arowai*, will operate from a *te ao Maori* perspective.

Where will these Maori with effective control of each Regional Representative Group come from? There is no definition of how this is to be organised, how it will work, of just who hold the special rights. The legislation makes use of three separate words, with their three

very different meanings, to identify the people chosen for the new authority. Is this grouping, which stands apart from the democratically elected councils, to be all Maori? Or, will it be all *iwi*? Or will it be the selected *iwi* of *mana whenua*, the dominant *iwi* in each local region? How will the members of the decision-making group be chosen? Will this be done within a democratic framework or following the dictates of *tikanga*? **Those essential questions are simply ignored.**

The proposed (and unclear) breakup of common control of the ‘three waters’ is different from past divisions of the nation’s wealth. Thus, when the deep-sea fisheries were divided, members of the controlling Fisheries Commission were appointed by the Minister of Maori Affairs. Maori were not in direct control, they were recipients of profits, which were divided by the Commission among selected *iwi*. Now Maori, or *iwi*, or *mana whenua* are in control.

In order for this requirement to be met, Maori must form an organisation, separate from local councils and central government, so that they (who?) can direct and choose those people who will sit besides representatives from the many local councils (who must accept this structure, and are forced to sit with unelected members in the Regional Representative Group, to take control of their councils’ essential assets). This asks for a major step in the formation of a separate Maori government. Are back-room deals in place, or will there be a power struggle among the many Maori groups and organisations involved? The government of all New Zealand is moving towards the of a new system of governance, away from the public gaze and general awareness. This is a major coup for separatist Maori.

How can this happen, are most of us asleep?

All at sea: driven by false beliefs

This is like a group of fishermen hard at work far out at sea, intent on their tasks – baiting the hooks, settling out the lines, pulling them in and gathering fish – without noticing that they have drifted far from shore and that storms are gathering.

Most people think and act with a focus on daily life, on immediate matters, lacking an awareness and appreciation of the way that society is changing, remaining comfortably within the conventional wisdom of the day, far out of sight of the basic principles of our civilisation as they are being whittled away.

The power of the surrounding ideology, the ethos, the accepted paradigm, has come to include the gradual normalisation of racial inequality. The way in which developing apartheid has replaced a belief in equality is uncomfortably akin to boiling a frog, where the poor animal enjoys the growing warmth until it is too late, not noticing what has been done to its environment. The newly emerging picture is hidden behind a screen of propaganda, obscuring the reality; the emperor has no clothes, clearly visible only if eyes are open. In that environment, it is wise for those whose employment and position rely on the good-will of the dominant ruling elite to keep their heads down, as raising questions and providing an alternative narrative will threaten their livelihood.

Some have kept awake and noticed the ongoing revolution and the current coup of a powerful minority. As one example, my colleague and friend Hugh Barr spoke up in his 2100 book, “The gathering storm over the foreshore and seabed: why they must remain in Crown ownership”. The cover tells how he “tells the shocking and unvarnished truth of how John Key’s National Government is betraying the interests and future prospects of the majority of

New Zealanders by handing over the control and resources of potentially all the foreshore and seabed to local *iwi*”.

One particularly cogent reference there is to a comment by Chris Trotter concerning the action of the biased court concerning the Ngati Apa claim, when they overturned a previous 1963 Court of Appeal decision and ruled that customary title extended out to the 12 nautical mile limit (over waters owned by all as part of the commons): “The judiciary have thrust a sword into the heart of the New Zealand state’s authority. By recognising a sovereign power antecedent to that of the state, the courts have not only established a mutually antagonistic legal diumvirate of customary and statute law, but have also placed themselves outside and above the New Zealand constitution.”

This was not the first such warning; others had raised questions of the way in which history had been distorted under the directions of the Waitangi Tribunal. I had followed the growing storm over those decades, and was starting to raise the alarm, as shown in the title of my 2011 book, “The corruption of New Zealand democracy: a Treaty overview”. The current stage of the take-over of New Zealand (‘Maorification’) being carried out by the Ardern government, led by Maori exceptionalism activist Nanaia Mahuta, is described in “He Puapua: Blueprint for breaking up New Zealand” (2021) and “Regaining a nation: equality and democracy” (2022).

A comprehension of the past is an important guide for the future. A knowledge of history and an ability to build up an understanding based on facts (true facts, corrected for myth and current political dogma) is important. To this must be added an ability and readiness to add all the pieces and see the whole picture, to see the whole pattern emerging – which in the past had been the long struggle for equality within a democratic system, but which has been reversed in the last half-century by the overturn of these fundamentals, to build a divided society.

The search for the whole picture involves a different way of thinking, no longer focussed on immediate problems, but long term and holistic. When following that path, I have studied and written of the need to overcome the pressures of conformity, and to consciously look at the various possible paradigmatic perceptions, of this and other times.

“Excess capital” (1990) showed how a dominant paradigm would direct expectations of the future. The chapter on “Work and well-being” described how **belongingness** ranks high on any list of basic human needs, supporting the view that most people would accept conformity to surrounding dominant social ideas as a behavioural guide – preferring to be accepted members of the group rather than questioning and standing apart from the crowd.

“A plague of people: how a suicidal culture of growth is destroying modern society and the environment” (2013) followed a similar path. G B Shaw is quoted: “The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”

A quote from Ann Rand repeated that point, that society needs people who will stand apart from the crowd: “Men have been taught that it is virtue to agree with others. But the creator is the man who disagrees. Men have been taught that it is virtue to swim with the current. But the creator is the man who goes against the current. Men have been taught that it is virtue to stand together. But the creator stands alone.”

It is hard for an ordinary person to have the self-confidence, or the economic security, required to stand up and speak as such a challenging and productive “unreasonable man”. Powerful groups extend their influence by arrogance and bullying tactics, by empowering those to whom they award honours and by rejecting critics. It is doubly hard to speak out

when a person is put down and unemployed, all self-confidence shattered. **Progress is then possible only in a free society where thinking is encouraged, where the time and security needed to follow a new path is provided, and where there is space for that imaginative man.** That security has been destroyed in current New Zealand (as witness the savage and ignorant attacks on myself and Tross Publishing by TVNZ; see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kkumkgvCQM&feature=youtu.be>).

This article sits as the fourth of a series, calling for the re-establishment of equality as a first principle for society and nation. One basic point of this series is the call to look around and recognise how current policy is driven many myths and false claims, which must be set aside so we can all decide what future we desire, for the good of us all.

The first of these argued that this is our country, it is our future to decide, free from the dictates of the Treaty of Waitangi. The second added to the list of actions aimed at a takeover of the country, describing plans for a constitution enshrining apartheid. The third dealt with another false modern myth, that Maori are 'indigenous' people, with ways and culture that we cannot comprehend, and deserving through ancestry special position and power. The next denial of myth, considered below, demolishes the claims that the Crown alone broke the Treaty, that current Maori grievance is well-founded, and that all others are to be condemned and must live with guilt for the supposed wrongs of their ancestors.

We are born equal, we are free to think for ourselves, none are a different race, and there are no grounds for settlement of one-sided complaints. That recognition of a common humanity helps to establish a well-founded basic guiding principle for the direction of New Zealand, free from control by an imagined past and free to decide what society we want.

Who broke the Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi handed sovereignty of New Zealand to Britain. Land in Maori possession (with no terra nullius) remained in Maori possession, and all living in New Zealand were given British citizenship. The absolute rule of chiefs was gone. The promise was that henceforth disputes would be settled within the law and not by fighting among tribes; this brought peace to a county wracked by deadly tribal wars.

The Treaty gave the right to govern, and British law prevailed thereafter. Should the new authority make a judgement, reach a decision, that someone did not like – or which some now disagree with – was not to break the Treaty, which simply gave the right to govern. The Treaty involved simply setting up a system and a structure by which decisions and judgements would be made by the proper authorities – no longer by chiefly might and tribal warfare.

What is it to break the Treaty? That would be action against the sovereignty of the united nation, and action taken outside of the rule of law. Which, it must be emphasised, does not include properly taken action that some Maori do not like. The point of a system of law is not that it can ever be perfect, or acceptable to everyone in a conflict situation, but that decisions would be no longer reached at the point of a spear, by force of arms, but within an organised and peaceful setting.

To make a decision, a judgement, that someone did not like – or which some do not now agree with – was not to break Treaty of Waitangi, which simply gave the authority to govern, without any promise of perfection to any one point of view.

A brief scan of events in the early years of the new nation identify many difficult decisions, which can (in the light of today's proclaimed beliefs) be considered wrongs. Many such decisions resulted in considerable hardship for the new settlers. However, the directions to the Waitangi Tribunal are to ignore possible wrongs done to settlers, and to consider only claims of problems for Maori. This calls for a one-sided view of history, with any past wrongs to others ignored while stories are sought out in order to increase modern pay-outs to Maori descendants.

A careful overview tells that a number of Maori broke the Treaty, and that the government did not. This is demonstrated by the following summary of a number of key events.

1. Waitara: land sale recognised, then overturned

An early task of the new government was to determine whether previous land sales (prior to 1840) were reasonable, and should be accepted. A Commissioner, William Spain, was appointed to make recommendations to the Governor, who would be the final arbiter.

This was no easy job; there are many, often conflicting, ways in Maori could traditionally make some claim to land. Faced with such a seemingly impossible task, Spain decided to give priority to the people who were actually living at a place at the time of sale. This worked well for most cases: many somewhat extravagant sales were not allowed, while others in which all parties were in accord were readily accepted. But in one important case difficulties arose, for the most part due to the peace brought with the Treaty.

By 1839, attacks by Waikato had driven almost all Te Atiawa away from their homeland in northern Taranaki, and the remaining few lived in fear of further assaults. They were delighted to welcome the New Zealand Company and to sell land in the expectation that settlers would guarantee their security. The situation around Waitara (near New Plymouth) satisfied his criteria and Spain decided that the sale was valid.

But the peace that came with the Treaty of Waitangi had brought changes. Many former residents who had been taken as slaves to the Waikato were set free and able to return. A group who had fled and settled in Kapiti wished to take advantage of the peace and to return to Waitara. Those people spoke out in opposition and there were threats of aggressive tribal action. In 1844, Governor Fitzroy reacted to those challenges by overturning Spain's decision.

The incoming settlers, who had begun to work the land, suffered as they were driven out, back to smaller plots near New Plymouth. Their properties were left, to be looted. **For them, this Government action was harmful, a wrong. However, the process was carried out within the rules of the British colony; there was no question of a breach of the Treaty of Waitangi, and any claims of wrongs to non-Maori are not considered today, given the limits to any recognition of historic wrongs.** In any case, the idea of revisiting and re-adjudicating decisions from the far past would be foolish – accept that this is what is done when a complainant is Maori.

2. Killings at Wairau

In 1843 at Wairau, there was a dispute between a group of Ngati Toa, led by Te Rangihaeata and Te Rauparaha, and a group led by the Police Magistrate, Mr. Thompson, including 49 special constables. A fight took place, and fifteen Maori and settlers were killed. Some

Europeans who survived fled the scene, while eleven surrendered or were apprehended in flight. As a customary act of revenge (*utu*) for the Maori dead, the prisoners were then killed.

This mass murder, the killing of helpless captives, was a terrible crime. **The reversion to the old ways, following the directions of *tikanga* which called for revenge, *utu*, and the refusal to accept the proper application of British justice was a brutal break with the Treaty of Waitangi.**

Governor Fitzroy decided to take no action, and let the killers rove free. His weak ruling was that: "In the first place, the white men were wrong, but you committed a horrible crime in murdering men who had surrendered themselves, in reliance on your honour as chiefs; but, as the Europeans were the first in the wrong, I will not avenge their deaths." Since the "white men" had acted foolishly, their killing would not be punished.

This was wrong. The law was set aside, in fear of the threats against the state by these two powerful chiefs. There was no justice for the friends and families of the dead, or their descendants. **However, Governor Fitzroy had not broken the Treaty, which gave him the authority to make that decision.**

3. Te Rangihaeata and Te Rauparaha incite rebellion at Wellington

Te Rangihaeata and Te Rauparaha continued to strut about and enjoy the limelight, as they spoke of actions against the government. During the growing unrest, with a number of disputes in Wellington and the Hutt, Te Rauparaha threatened a massacre of Wellington settlers: "Now is the time to strike. Come forward and sweep them from the land".

There were a number of deadly attacks; **those who reverted to tribal ways and attacked Boulcott's farm in 1846 were breaking the Treaty, and committing murder, killing six soldiers and two civilians.**

There was evidence that Te Rauparaha had called for reinforcements from Wanganui and that an uprising was imminent. That incipient rebellion was snuffed out and war was averted by Governor Grey when he took Te Rauparaha prisoner. This was a peaceful captivity; he was later freed into the custody of Tamati Waka Nene and Te Wherohero, before returning to live with his son, Tamihana Te Rauparaha, at Otaki. Again, this was a proper action by the Governor, acting under the considerable authority of his position within the British colonial system and averting possible deaths.

4. Hone Heke wages war in the north

Irascible gang leader Hone Heke was emboldened and wanted to emulate the actions of Te Rangihaeata and Te Rauparaha. During an armed raid to take a former slave-girl, who was living in Kororareka with a European, and to force her to return to her owner (surely a breach of the Treaty) a half-naked warrior wildly brandished his taiaha and made a call to arms: "War! War! War with the white people!" In support of this appeal to force, Heke made a speech that was full of fire and ill-concealed rebellion, during the course of which he asked the significant question so often quoted against him: "Is Te Rauparaha to have all the credit for killing the Europeans?"

The attack on Kororareka in 1845, when the flagstaff and Kororareka were attacked by a combined force of 600 warriors in three joint actions, was open rebellion, without doubt a breach of the Treaty, as was the war that followed. Many lives were lost there and in the subsequent fighting; Heke's group at the flagpole killed four soldiers and a little

half-caste girl. This was far from the romantic figure of current legend – Heke should be seen for what he was, an upstart minor chief waging war against the senior Ngapuhi chiefs (led by Tamati Waka Nene) and the Treaty that he had signed, creating havoc and bringing destruction to the north.

After defeat, Heke, who was left to live out his remaining years further north, remained defiant. In an 1849 letter to Queen Victoria, he blamed the “obstinacy” of Fitzroy as “the cause of the war, and of my transgressing against you”, he called for the expulsion of soldiers, Governor and many Europeans, and he claimed decisive power: “The missionaries, the gentlemen and the common people are all that I am well pleased should live here ... still the management of my island remains with me”. Thus, he passed down the call for rebellion and separate rule to his descendants.

5. Another sale of Waitara, and war

In 1848, many Te Atiawa left Kapiti and returned to their previous lands at Waitara (now possible due to the end of fighting between tribes following British rule). They took with them disagreements over the sale of land, most particularly whether a senior chief could prevent others from selling land they were recognised to own. Through the 1850s those feuds brought roving gangs with the killing of around fifty in Taranaki, a state of anarchy.

In 1859, Governor Browne came and promised to bring security, to apply the law. Since the Treaty promised the right to sell land if the owner wished, the desire of a group of chiefs (led by Tiera) to do so resulted in the appointment of a commissioner to decide whether their ownership should be recognised. Meanwhile a senior chief, Wiremu Kingi, continued to insist that chiefly rule should be recognised – which had gone with the assertion of British sovereignty in the Treaty of Waitangi. As before, different Maori held opposing views, and this was not an easy decision, but it was clear that Tiera did own that land (this was recognised by Kingi) and the sale – which had been requested by Maori – proceeded.

Kingi refused to accept the law and built a fortified pa on that land, as a threat to British rule. Action was called for, and war commenced – **fighting that was forced by the rebellion of a group of Te Atiawa, in direct contravention of the Treaty and against the wishes of other Maori**. The initial dispute was within Te Atiawa, and was not instigated by colonialism, not a wrong brought by colonisation. It concerned the rights of Maori as promised by the Treaty.

6. Again dispute among Maori: a Waikato monarch, rebellion and war

In 1857 and 1858, there were great meetings in the Waikato to consider the proposition that the paramount chief, Te Wherowhero, a former great warrior become peace-maker and friend of the Governor (now an old man), should be chosen as a king, a second monarch for the country.

The idea was firmly rejected by many present, who recognised this as an unfriendly act against the government which they supported. The intention that the new king could forbid land sales also met with loud opposition; this was an attack on their rights, guaranteed by the Treaty of Waitangi, to act as free men and to do what they wished with their own property, free of control by any other chief. One such speaker was Wiremu Te Awaiaia, who made his position clear: “I promised the first Governor, when he came to see me, and I promised all the rest, that I would stick (*piri*) to him, and be a subject of the Queen. I intend to keep my promise, for they have kept theirs. They have taken no land. Mine was the desire to sell, and

they gave me money. Why do you bring that new flag here? There is bother (*raruraru*) in it.”

The arguments of the king movement failed to convince those meetings and there was no consensus. After the second rebuttal, they withdrew and unilaterally anointed the confused Te Wherowhero. **This, the setting up of a rival monarch, was treason, a serious breach of the Treaty.**

There were ongoing disagreements, over building roads and, most importantly, whether to join the 1860 rebellion of Kingi in Taranaki, which had been over the right of any Maori to sell his own land, free from the dictates of another chief. One who wanted to stand aside from the fighting in Taranaki, Te Raihi spoke out: “Leave it all alone. Why should we take it up? Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and do what he likes with his own land. If he choose to sell let him sell. If he wish to hold let him hold his own.” Te Wherowhero, who wanted friendship with the government, said that Waikato should not go but his wishes (of an unwell old man who would die later that year) were ignored; this was a puppet king.

Despite the considerable actions of the government to preserve peace (including replacing Governor Brown with George Grey, a former governor and a friend to Maori), a number of aggressive actions were taken by the Maori king’s supporters: preventing road-building inland from Raglan, throwing timber into the Waikato River that was stacked up ready to build a Government outpost, forcing Government Agent, John Gorst, out of Te Awamutu where he had been teaching young Maori basic skills and crafts, attacking some settler farms and soldier communities south of Auckland, fighting in the Taranaki conflict, and declaring a boundary between two separate territories forbidding other New Zealanders, including the government, to cross into that Waikato monarchy. This was the division of New Zealand, under two opposing regimes.

This was rebellion, the breaking the Treaty. War was inevitable. Firm government action to oppose treason and rebellion was not to break the Treaty; it was to uphold the Treaty.

The rebels were driven from the Waikato into Ngati Maniapoto territory south of the Puniu River, which became known as the king country. There were many efforts by the British and New Zealand authorities to bring them back into the national community, including an extraordinary generous offer by Governor Grey to the second king, Tawhiao, in 1875: “the Government will assist you with the chiefs of your own districts, so that matters may be conducted in order that peace and good will between the two races of the Island may exist. ... The Government will give you an allowance and the chiefs who are to be your assistants in conducting the affairs within your district” – and more. Most importantly: “The portions of land not disposed of by the Government to Europeans on the western sides of the Waikato and Waipa will be returned to Tawhiao.”

That offer was met with acclaim, and former rebel chief Rewi Maniapoto organised a celebratory peace-making meeting at Waitara shortly after. Yet, the following year, Tawhiao rejected the offer and made arrogant claims for his continuing rule: “Sir George Grey has no right to conduct matters on this Island, but **I have the sole right to conduct matters in my land – from the North Cape to the southern end.** No one else has any right. He (Sir George Grey) has no right to conduct matters in this Island. That is why I say all things must be returned, and sent away from here [meaning all English customs].” That rebuttal met with forthright condemnation by the chiefs present, who had come expecting to witness a friendly

and straightforward agreement between Grey and Tawhiao. Yet here was Tawhiao insisting that he was ruler of them all.

This, the continuing refusal to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Crown, was treason, yet again breaking the Treaty

The belief of the king movement that they belonged to a different nation remained intact, and many Maori in the Waikato continued to consider themselves a separate people, owing no loyalty to the Crown or to the nation.

With their actions in 1863 and 1864 the supporters of a Maori king threw down a gauntlet at the feet of government and forced a war to determine the future of the young nation. We have returned to that very same situation today with separation, co-governance, and two parliaments waiting in the wings – and the Maori king remains, a monarch-in-waiting. The significant difference is that then the government wanted to hold the country together, while now the government is actively breaking us apart. There has even been an official apology to the major leaders of rebellion, Ngati Maniapoto, with the Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, saying: “The Crown delivers this long overdue apology. The Crown takes responsibility for the pain and hurt it has caused.” This is madness – responsibility for the pain and hurt of the war lies at the feet of those instigated the rebellion, most prominently Ngati Maniapoto.

7. Land confiscations

There were no punishments, and no land confiscations, following the rebellions of Te Rauparaha, Te Rangihaeata and Hone Heke. Nor initially with the rebellion of Wiremu Kingi. An 1863 Government proclamation that further actions against the peace would result in the loss of land was largely a warning, a part of the considerable effort to prevent war from breaking out in the Waikato and an incentive to reach agreement.

When aggressive actions continued and war broke out, that intention was acted upon, and a considerable area of land was confiscated from rebel tribes. Many were dismayed at the excessive extent of the confiscations, which also took land from peaceful tribes, and as a result a commission was set up to revisit the decisions and much of the land taken was returned: the proportion returned or purchased was 64% in Taranaki, 83% in Tauranga, 72% in the Bay of Plenty. The decision by Tawhiao to reject the generous government offer referred to above, and his continuing refusal to accept the sovereignty of the British Crown, blocked any such return in the Waikato, where only 26% of the original confiscated area was returned or purchased. Waikato *iwi* paid dearly for that intransigence.

Later, in 1922, the great Maori leader Apirana Ngata recognized that the confiscations were justified: **“Some sections of the Maori people violated that authority (the sovereign authority of the Queen and her government). War arose and blood was spilt. The law came into operation and land was taken in payment.”**

Those confiscations were an accepted behaviour in all cultures, were within the power of the government and were in no way a breach of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Conclusion concerning Treaty breaches

The Crown, the several Governors, and the government never broke the Treaty of Waitangi. All actions taken were in accord with the accession of sovereignty and the assertion of British law.

A number of Maori chiefs, and their iwi, committed acts of treason and rebellion, in contradiction of the Treaty of Waitangi. There were initially none, or limited, punishments for those actions; the confiscations were forewarned and were clearly within the legal framework of the colonial government.

We can easily understand the very different responses of the various chiefs to the challenges faced when people came from across the world with their challenging ideas. In the same way we can see what Nanaia Mahuta, Willie Jackson, Pita Sharples and their ilk are doing to the country now, what drives them and what are their intentions. They are the inheritors of Hone Heke, Wiremu Kingi, Wiremu Tamehana and Tawhiao – not following the path of friendship and progress of Patuone, Tamati Waka Nene, Te Wherowhero and Apirana Ngata. They follow the rebel Rewi Maniapoto of 1863, and not the older and wiser Rewi Maniapoto of 1878, peace-maker and friend of Governor Grey.

Free our thinking from the shackles of the past

The conclusion reached here is that British and New Zealand authorities did not break the Treaty of Waitangi, whereas Maori did so on a number of occasions. This refutes the calls of Maori grievance based on past wrongs, actions contrary to the Treaty, and removes the requirement for feelings of guilt among others, based on the supposed wrongs committed by their ancestors. There should be an end to compensation for breaches of the Treaty that did not happen, while dismissing the wrongs – so often by Maori – to settlers, and the harm to the young nation. All suffered; we should, as Rewi Maniapoto did in 1875, celebrate the end to war and live together in peace and harmony, putting an end to the building up of stories of harm to one group alone.

This article is the fourth of a series. The first, “Where are we going?” (online at <https://breakingviewsnz.blogspot.com/2022/11/john-robinson-where-are-we-going-this.html> and <https://www.stopcogovernance.kiwi/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/John-Robinson-on-Political-Chaos-of-Co-Governance.pdf> and <https://waikanaewatch.org/2022/11/23/where-are-we-going-this-is-our-country-our-future-to-decide/>) pointed out that “This is our country, our future to decide” asked that we think for ourselves and together build a decent society in a united country no longer ruled from beyond the grave. The Treaty of Waitangi, which has been ripped apart and reinvented to convey a considerable diversity of conflicting messages, should no longer be taken as a sacred text, a virtual spiritual authority.

The second focussed on current affairs, describing an effort to formulate a racially divided constitution: “A constitution for apartheid” (online at <https://breakingviewsnz.blogspot.com/2022/11/john-robinson-constitution-enshrining.html> and <https://waikanaewatch.org/2022/11/03/a-constitution-enshrining-racial-apartheid-in-nz-is-coming/>). That was another warning of the division of the nation.

The third faced the claims that Maori are fundamentally different as ‘indigenous’ people, asking “Are we two peoples, separate? Are ‘indigenous’ Maori a race apart?” (online at <https://breakingviewsnz.blogspot.com/2022/12/john-robinson-are-we-two-peoples-are.html> and <https://waikanaewatch.org/2022/12/11/are-we-two-peoples-separate-are-indigenous->

[maori-a-race-apart/](https://www.stopcogovernance.kiwi/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Are-we-two-peoples-separate-Are-%E2%80%98indigenous-Maori-a-race-apart-.pdf) and <https://www.stopcogovernance.kiwi/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Are-we-two-peoples-separate-Are-%E2%80%98indigenous-Maori-a-race-apart-.pdf>). The conclusion reached is hardly surprising. The question asked was: What sets such people apart? The answer is: Nothing. We are all people, human beings.

These together refute the major tales being told, of a sacred text that must be obeyed, of a special people who must be given supreme power, and that the Crown alone is responsible for breaking the Treaty – and must forever pay for the supposed wrongs of the past. All too many New Zealanders are fools, believing such nonsense, these ridiculous claims, giving away their birth-right and so much of their wealth to a greedy few.

Let us now recognise the limits of the past in ruling the future. Whatever happened many years ago must not confine us to follow directions from the past, which are now based on politically-motivated claims of what was said, what was intended. We should set aside the contentious versions of the Treaty of Waitangi, of claims of a privileged indigenous people, of claims of one-sided colonial wrongs in contradiction with the Treaty.

Throughout these articles my main argument is that we must be free to decide for ourselves now and for our future, based on our desire for a decent society of equals, working together rather than aggressively pitted against one another. In the next article I will suggest the probable future if New Zealand continues down the path to tribal rule, to an end of a united sovereignty, replaced by co-governance complete with two parliaments organised under very different systems and cultures. It is an unpleasant picture.

There can be a better future. Equality must be the one overarching principle, directing and defining the debate; we must be one.

18 December 2022