

PERSONALLY ATTACKED

Well, friends, the racists and treaty-twisters are certainly getting rattled, with the depths to which some of them are descending. I have now (21 March 2023) received a scurrilous personal attack, full of falsehoods, from “ChatGPT23220”. Can Tusiata Avia, well-known for other extreme creations, which some might call poetry, clarify this? Or if not her, then who?

This tirade begins:

“Bruce Moon claims to know a lot of New Zealand early history and to be an authority on the Treaty of Waitangi.”

This is false. I have never made such claims though I do know of others I could quote who have done so with respect to my work.

It continues:

“Bruce Moon is a controversial figure in New Zealand history and his views on the Treaty of Waitangi and early New Zealand history are not widely accepted by mainstream historians and academics.”

Well, I certainly do hope that I have been successful in stirring up controversy when I have revealed the falsehoods in many of the statements of *“mainstream historians and academics.”* **And no, I don’t go for “views”. I go for facts”.**

And next:

“Moon is known for promoting a revisionist view of New Zealand history that downplays the negative impacts of colonization on Maori and argues that the Treaty of Waitangi was a fraud. He has been criticized for relying on selective and often unreliable sources, cherry-picking historical evidence to fit his preconceived notions, and using inflammatory language that can be seen as racist or insensitive towards Maori.”

Whew, that’s a lot of wrongdoing I have done – **allegedly**. *Lets’ have a look.*

“revisionist” is a favourite term of abuse particularly favoured by communists and their like which they apply to statements of fact which do not accord with their propaganda. Is that applicable here?

But **yes!** I do *“downplays the negative impacts of colonization on Maori”* for the very good reason that it saved Maoris from themselves, a people hitherto living in a state of chronic poverty, warfare, cannibalism, slavery and oppression of women. Hands up, those who would prefer to revert to those conditions today!

But **no!** I have never claimed *“that the Treaty of Waitangi was a fraud”* though I have done a lot of work to describe the fraudulent claims of many a treaty-twister today.

It is *“mainstream historians and academics”* who *“rely on selective and often unreliable sources, cherry-picking historical evidence to fit [their] preconceived notions”* not I!

As for *“inflammatory language that can be seen as racist or insensitive towards Maori”*, it is this very text I have received which, I can inform Tusiata Avia and everybody else, is racist and insensitive towards me. Indeed I have respect for the shrewder of the Maori chiefs who recognised the dire state of Maori society leading up to February 1840 and who prevailed upon the British Crown to provide unity, protection and safety to all New Zealanders under its auspices - a remarkable achievement all round.

This worthless tale continues with the false technique of “argument from authority”, referring to “many experts”, “The New Zealand Historical Association” and “the wider academic community”. And then ...

“Bruce Moon may claim to be an authority on New Zealand history and the Treaty of Waitangi, his views are not widely accepted by experts in the field and should be approached with skepticism.”

The implication, once again is false but I certainly assure the reader that the views of many so-called “experts in the field” are quite grossly false and should be approached with skepticism!

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It proceeds by stating:

“The New Zealand Historical Association (NZHA) publicly rejected Bruce Moon's claims about the Treaty of Waitangi in 2019. The association issued a statement in response to Moon's article, titled "The Treacherous Treaty," which had been published in the right-wing magazine The New Zealand Journal earlier that year. In the statement, the NZHA stated that Moon's article "contains numerous errors, misrepresentations and distortions of the historical record" and that it "reveals a lack of understanding of basic principles of historical method." The statement was widely reported in New Zealand media and drew attention to Moon's controversial views on New Zealand history and the Treaty of Waitangi.

I state here definitively that **I have never published an article entitled "The Treacherous Treaty"**

I have never **“published in the right-wing magazine The New Zealand Journal”**. I can only conjecture that this magazine of whose existence I am entirely unaware, reprinted an article of mine from another source, certainly without my consent, and renamed it. I should certainly be interested in viewing any news release which stated that “Moon's article ‘contains numerous errors, misrepresentations and distortions of the historical record’ and that it ‘reveals a lack of understanding of basic principles of historical method’” and of being given a fair opportunity to reply. I have received none. I assure my readers that, in accordance with established research methods, I index fully works I reference, using source material where possible. However I do view with caution ‘oral traditions’ or contorted assumptions that are politically engendered.

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Having dealt to its own satisfaction with me, such tirades attack Don Brash and Muriel Newman with multiple claims of unidentified “experts” who oppose them. It remarks that “As with any claim of expertise, it's important to critically evaluate the evidence and arguments presented and to consider a range of perspectives and sources.” That applies, it may surprise them to know, to those “experts” on their own side equally with those who oppose them. I personally prefer the well-known view that “‘x’ is the unknown quantity and a “spurt” is a drip under pressure!”

Doctors Newman and Brash are of course, well able to defend themselves from the racists and others who attack them. What continues to infuriate these people seems to be Brash's celebrated speech at Orewa on 27 January 2004, in particular his closing remark that “In this country, it should not matter what colour you are, or what your ethnic origin might be.” Just who are the racists, I ask, in this matter??

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Then we are presented with a selection of the author's own favourite “experts”; number one: Anne Salmond. We have written fairly extensively on Dame Anne and her foibles, e.g., in “New Zealand; the fair colony”, 2nd ed., pp.77-8 and pp 96-7 and more recently in “Breaking Views”, from which article we quote some opening paragraphs (somewhat edited):

She persists in her profound delusion – shared by many others one might add – that when the chiefs signed the Treaty “this did not amount to a cession of sovereignty” although “the rangatira gave absolutely (tuku rawa atu) all the Kāwanatanga of their lands (te Kāwanatanga katoa o ou rātou whenua) to the Queen.” Well, what doublespeak that is! Why? ‘Kawana’ is neither a Maori word nor a Maori concept – Maori had chiefs of which the highest were ariki. But Maori did recognise the governor (transliteration ‘kawana’) as having absolute authority in New Zealand on behalf of the Crown. While it is glaringly obvious that the derivation of “kawanatanga” is from “governor” plus “-tanga”, its translation is “sovereignty” because that represented the understood and accepted manifestation of Crown authority. As we have shown by many examples, time and again,ⁱ translation is not the same as derivation – too hard for her to grasp perhaps?

Lest there be any doubt whatever, the recorded words of the chiefs at Waitangiⁱⁱ make it crystal clear that they understood that by signing they would become subordinate to the Queen. Lest there be any doubt about that, at Kohimarama in 1860 at the greatest meeting of chiefs ever assembled, more than a hundred passed the unanimous motion **“That this Conference takes cognizance of the fact that the several Chiefs, members thereof, are pledged to each other to do nothing inconsistent with their declared recognition of the Queen's sovereignty, and of the union of the two races”**ⁱⁱⁱ Now that looks pretty plain and definite doesn't it? Yet Dame Anne dismissed this in an email to me^{iv} because it had all happened twenty years previously. Conversely, Busby's unauthorised insubstantial “Declaration of Independence”, anointed with a cauldron of porridge and which so ingloriously gasped its last breath of fatuity under the tribal (inter and

intra) warfare of the signatories, is lauded more than 180 years later as a founding document of New Zealand! Aaah! What price the humble oat and the haka?

So why were all those chiefs wrong a mere twenty years later, yet after 180 years Dame Anne and swarms of others, including the Waitangi Tribunal, may claim quite the opposite?

Dame Anne proceeds blithely to quote selectively and inaccurately from Article second, claiming that the Queen agreed to “te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou wenua o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa” promising “to uphold the absolute authority of the rangatira and Māori people generally over their lands, dwelling places and taonga.”

Well, one of the first rules of quotation that she should have learnt as a first year student is that one does so fairly and accurately and does not omit vital wording. So why, we may ask, does she omit here that this undertaking was to “tangata katoa o Nu Tirani” which in plain English means “all the people of New Zealand” where “all” means “all”? Falsely and brazenly, in my opinion, she refers instead to “Maori people generally”. Now that’s treaty-twisting if ever there was, by a woman who makes much of very fine points of translation. How much more need we say?

Number Two James Belich

In his most informative book, “When two cultures meet, the New Zealand Experience”, ISBN 1-872-970-31-1, 2012, John Robinson, assuredly our top modern scholar on topics of the colonial period, makes numerous references to the flaws in the work of Belich to whom he refers in one passage as “cavalier – and ignorant”, strong words from one profoundly educated in the discipline of science. Try reading John’s work for scholarly explanation and discussion, *contra* Belich, of New Zealand in those times.

Number Three Claudia Orange

Orange’s writings, e.g. her book “the Treaty of Waitangi”, are so often so discursive and vague that quotation from them does not come easily. She has an answer for everything. Informed that Hobson’s final draft of 4th February 1840 was on paper watermarked “1833”, her response was “that [it] was hanging around the solicitor’s office and was used”. Informed that Edward Williams, co- translator of the Treaty was a scholar in the Maori language “without peer” she dismissed as “something of an exaggeration”. She dismissed the work of T.L. Buick, generally considered the doyen of treaty scholars, as “a compilation of official documents [with] little analysis” and that of Apirana Ngata as “still cited as if it were ... reliable.” “She always had a pretty good opinion of herself” said a friend of mine who knew her as an undergraduate. That’s the way to get on in life, apparently. What would the wise and honourable Sir Apirana think of this sort of denigration?

Number Four Vincent O’Malley

To any perceptive reader, the accounts of our history by Vincent O’Malley, clearly of Irish descent, reveal an unremitting hatred of all things British. Of Grey’s handling of the Waikato tribes’ rebellion, thoroughly covered in Robinson’s text,^v O’Malley, in a gross distortion of the truth, states “after much careful planning and preparation, [Grey] invaded the Waikato heartland of the Kingitanga in July 1863, determined to destroy the movement.” In fact Grey had repeatedly endeavoured to negotiate with the rebels who remained intractable. Many other tribes firmly supported the Government, consistently with their commitment to the Treaty, so grossly breached by most (but not all) Waikato tribes. The Waikato was British sovereign territory in the hands of rebels. Grey had every legitimate right in the world to move to recover it. O’Malley’s reference to it as an “invasion” is a gross distortion of the truth. As for General Cameron’s avoidance of much bloodshed by his carefully planned and executed capture of the rebels’ food source of Rangiaowhia, O’Malley chooses to call this “an incomprehensible act of savagery”. Yeah! Right! Eh?^{vi}

Number Five Michael King

King’s “The Penguin History of New Zealand” is packed with details of many aspects of our history, albeit his own judgements tend to predominate in places. It is outstanding however in its detailed description of Busby’s two feats with a cauldron of porridge – the first when he induced a coterie of northern chiefs to choose a flag for their ocean-going ships, achieved with some difficulty after they had politely chosen all three of the options before them. The second was a similar inducement to sign a “Declaration of Independence” of what was in fact a non-existent “Confederation of United Tribes” (displayed today in a cabinet costing us taxpayers about \$7 million along with the rat-eaten original Treaty document and the petition for women’s suffrage), a paper tiger if ever there was one!^{vii} King’s premature death robbed us of a

man who had done much to codify our country's history. Of its present state, one can only speculate on what his thoughts might have been.

Number Six Atholl Anderson

I have no knowledge of this man and his work. It would be interesting to know his assessment of the Poukawa deposits of Hawkes Bay, striking evidence of human habitation many centuries before the arrival of the seven canoes of the Maori invaders and colonists of which very little is known in the public forum.

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The final sentence of this extraordinary effusion is one with which I can wholly concur. "It's also worth noting that any historian's work is subject to criticism and revision over time as new evidence and perspectives emerge." Never was this more urgent than today.

FOONOTE: CHAT GPT is an artificial intelligence website. However this cannot be used to hide that what comes out must have gone in. Hence my question at the start as to who initially provided the information which was garnered by this artificial intelligence website? If this is artificial intelligence why is it so biased and so flawed? Is this an example of new technology being corrupted by false information that it then disseminates anonymously?

Bruce Moon,

Nelson

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- i In, for example, B.Moon, "New Zealand; the fair colony", p.68, available from charlton@farmside.co.nz
 - ii W. Colenso, "The Authentic and Genuine History of the Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi", <http://www.waitangi.com/colenso/colhis1.html>
 - iii Proc. Kohimarama Conference, 13 to 18 of the Maori Messenger, NZETC, VUW.
 - iv A.Salmond, email to B. Moon, 24 August 2010
 - v J Robinson, "The Kingite Rebellion", ISBN 1 872 970 4806, 2016
 - vi My own O'Malley colonial forebears would surely turn in their graves if they knew the distorted tales, masquerading as history, that this man tells!
 - vii M King, *op.cit.*, pp153-5