

Political Reviews

*Micronesia in Review: Issues and Events, 1 July 2010
to 30 June 2011*

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Raioaoa had become famous in 2002, when, following engine damage, he survived 118 days drifting on an open boat before reaching Aitutaki in the Cook Islands, where a museum was subsequently built in his honor. His adventure has also been told in a book published in French and Tahitian (*TPM*, Oct 2010). Finally, on 16 January 2011, René Calinaud, a former magistrate and legal expert on land tenure matters who had served on the bench since 1959, left this world at the age of eighty (*TPM*, Feb 2011).

On a final note, the Catholic Church, the country's second largest religious denomination, had an important change in leadership. On 31 March, Archbishop Hubert Coppenrath, in office since 1998, retired at the record age of eighty. In his stead, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Father Bruno Mai to serve as apostolic administrator of the archdiocese until a new archbishop is nominated (*TPM*, April 2011).

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MĀORI ISSUES

The year under review was one of shocking upheavals for Māori in more ways than one. In August and September 2010 we lost some key leaders. In September 2010, in February 2011, and in June 2011, Christchurch suffered a series of earthquakes that left many Māori families devastated and feeling abandoned as recovery aid passed them by. On the political scene, Prime Minister John Key finally got his wish when the Māori Party forced Hōne Harawira out, only to have Harawira win a by-election for his Taitokerau seat and return to Parliament as the leader of the new Mana Movement. But the most bewildering development was the Māori Party turning its back on its constituents and supporting the passage into law of the racist Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Bill.

On 17 August 2010, two very different leaders from different parts of the country passed away. In Taranaki, Te Miringa Hohaia died unexpectedly at the age of fifty-eight. He was a scholar, artist, and activist who spent his adult life fighting the injustices perpetrated on his Taranaki people by the British. He was trained and deeply skilled in the traditions, customs, and history of his ancestral home, Parihaka, a place renowned for the atrocities that the British committed there over many years. In the 1970s he was involved in the eventually successful Treaty of Waitangi claims against the Crown to stop the pollution and despoliation of the seafood beds off the north Taranaki coast. In the 1990s he was one of the leaders of the complex and successful Taranaki Treaty claims. In 2000 he co-curated the hugely successful landmark exhibition *Parihaka, The Art of Passive Resistance* at Wellington's City Gallery, and in 2005 he created the Parihaka International Peace Festival, which has become an annual celebration of the heritage of Taranaki (Ashworth, Hond, and Hohaia 2010; Māori Party 2010a). An obituary noted, "In life he was akin to his tupuna [ancestors], becoming perhaps the most hated person in the province among Pakeha in the 1980s as he fought the injustice of the pittance paid by leaseholders farming confiscated Taranaki Maori reserve land. . . . Opponents vilified him, echoing the 19th century settler reaction to the non-violent campaign of Parihaka founders Tohu and Te Whiti" (Ashworth, Hond, and Hohaia 2010, 9).

On the east coast, Te Kapunga (Koro) Matemoana Dewes passed

away. He was staunchly Ngāti Porou, a scholar, a thinker, and the architect of the Māori Studies Department at Victoria University in Wellington. There he challenged the dry, dusty approach to university teaching and scholarship imported from Britain, writing the first MA thesis in the Māori language. However, he was passed over as the inaugural head of the department, so he left academia and returned home to his Ngāti Porou roots to farm and work for his people. It was many years before Victoria University recognized his contributions. In 2004 they awarded him an honorary doctorate in literature (Fox 2010).

In September 2010, Sir Archie John Te Atawhai Taiaroa passed away. He was Te Atihaunui a Pāpārangi, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, and Ngāti Apa and chairman of the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board. He played a key role in one of the nation's longest running court cases—the Whanganui River claim. He took a number of leading roles tribally, nationally, and internationally. He was at the heart of the protracted Māori fisheries struggles and a leader of the Māori broadcasting litigation that spanned over twenty years and led to Māori radio and television. He traveled to the United Nations, the International Whaling Commission, and the Privy Council in London to defend the rights of Māori and indigenous people (Māori Party 2010b; Harawira 2010).

On 8 September, the first earthquake hit Christchurch. It measured 7.1 on the Richter scale and, while there was extensive damage to buildings in the central business district in particular, there was no loss of human life. Hundreds of aftershocks followed,

and a magnitude 6.3 quake on 22 February 2011 claimed 181 lives and caused widespread damage, mostly to buildings and infrastructure already weakened by the September quake. On 13 June, a third quake, again of magnitude 6.3, followed a magnitude 5.6 tremor, causing more damage. A major problem, particularly in the eastern suburbs, was liquefaction—liquid mud and silt forced above ground by each major quake.

In September and then again in February, the news media focused on the central business district where there was significant loss of life. While most suburban areas, including the more wealthy areas, were not severely damaged, the poorer eastern suburbs, which are home to many Māori, were greatly impacted. Water, power, and other services were quickly restored to the wealthy suburbs, but a fortnight after the February quake the eastern suburbs were still without power, water, sewerage, food, shops, money, petrol, passable roads, and other necessities. One Māori reporter noted that “officials from the Prime Minister down . . . were seemingly oblivious to the real life human tragedy taking place where tens of thousands of people were without . . . necessities we take for granted in modern society” (Fox 2011, 11). In the days following the February quake, thousands left Christchurch, making their way home to their own tribal areas. Many marae (Māori communal meeting places) north of the disaster area looked after weary, shaken travelers, who arrived with only the clothes on their backs, hungry, unwashed, and with little fuel in their tanks (Fox 2011, 12).

In July 2010, Professor James Anaya, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, warned the government about its mistreatment of Māori. In a preliminary statement issued at the end of his weeklong visit he said, “I cannot help but note the extreme disadvantage in the social and economic conditions of the Māori people” (Anaya 2010). His 2011 report to the UN Human Rights Committee acknowledged the advances the New Zealand government had made by, for example, formally expressing support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2010. However, Anaya also pointed out a number of serious ongoing problems, including the lack of adequate legal protection for the human rights of Māori as citizens and their rights to their lands and resources; the shortcomings, inadequacy, and unfairness of the treaty settlement process; and the extreme disadvantage in the social and economic conditions of the Māori people in comparison to the rest of New Zealand society (Anaya 2011).

One of the areas the special rapporteur warned about was the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Bill that was before the House. He pointed out that the bill “should be in line with international standards regarding the rights of indigenous peoples to their traditional lands and resources” (Anaya 2011, 2). As a result of the agreement entered into by the ruling National Party and the Māori Party, the government agreed to repeal the previous government’s loathed and discriminatory Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004. It was to be replaced by the Marine and Coastal

Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011. The Māori Party gave assurances that the legislation would respect Māori wishes and the influential National Iwi Chairs Forum conducted extensive discussions with the government to ensure that it would uphold Māori rights. In the end, the National Party government ignored both of them. It drew up legislation that was just as racist and discriminatory as the 2004 act and then looked to its coalition partner, the Māori Party, to get it past the inevitable Māori objections. Much to the dismay of Māori, rather than rejecting National's racist bill, the Māori Party supported it, and in doing so, turned its back on its constituents. The 2011 act, like the 2004 act, confiscates the foreshore and seabed territories of 660,000 Māori while protecting the 12,500 non-Māori title holders who occupy land in the same area. The only Māori Party member of Parliament prepared to fight for Māori rights to their lands and resources was Hōne Harawira, and his refusal to stop criticizing the bill, the government, and his Māori Party colleagues resulted in the Māori Party dumping him.

Despite repeated advice from Māori groups regarding their opposition to the bill, the Māori Party continued to claim that they had support for it. In December and again in February, the Māori Party co-leaders appeared before the National Iwi Chairs Forum and made the bewildering statement that because they were now part of the government, they were now the Crown. As such, they argued, they had little choice but to accept the National Party's bill as the "best they could do." The magnitude of the Māori Par-

ty's betrayal of its constituents became clear when submissions regarding the bill that had been made to the Māori Affairs Select Committee were analyzed. Of the seventy-two submissions received from representatives of traditional Māori groupings throughout the country, only one had supported the bill—and that was a tribal body, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Porou, that had negotiated their own deal with the government. The seventy-one other submissions either opposed the bill in its entirety, demanding its withdrawal, or insisted on significant amendments (Kaitiaki o te Takutai, 2011).

The dumping of Hōne Harawira caused disquiet in the Māori community, and it was not only the Māori Party's failure with regard to the Marine and Coastal Area Bill that was troubling. The dumping itself was a clumsy affair that looked suspiciously like the Māori Party was carrying out the prime minister's frequently and publicly expressed admonitions that they get rid of him (Mutu 2011a, 227–229; Francis 2010). Yet the National government, which the prime minister leads, with its policies of looking after the wealthy, was causing increasing hardship for many Māori families and communities. Having seen and heard the pain of Māori families, Harawira had become increasingly strident in his criticisms of the government. He also reminded his own party that its mandate was to represent Māori, not to kowtow to the National Party. Yet the Māori Party seemed unable to recognize that being wedded to National was alienating them from their constituents. In the months after his dumping, Harawira launched a new political movement, Mana, which

advocated Māori leadership to protect Māori, workers, the unemployed, the poor, and the disenfranchised. Mana drew support from both Māori and non-Māori. In May, Harawira resigned from Parliament, forcing a by-election for the Taitokerau (Māori) seat. Despite vigorous campaigning by other parties, he was returned to Parliament as the leader of the Mana Movement with a comfortable majority. The Māori Party candidate received only 8 percent of the vote.

Harawira's criticisms of the government echoed mounting unease and dissatisfaction in the Māori community. Concerns had been increasing across the board as the government seemed intent on opening its coffers to the wealthy while increasing the taxes of the poor. NZ\$1.7 billion was paid out to the investors of the failed South Canterbury Finance Company (NZH, 11 April 2011); more than NZ\$34 million in incentives and subsidies along with changes to New Zealand employment law were given to Warner Brothers to keep the filming of *The Hobbit* in New Zealand (NZH, 28 Oct 2010); and NZ\$36 million was paid to fund Team New Zealand's challenge for the 2013 America's Cup yacht race (NZH, 28 April 2011). On top of this were the tax cuts whose main beneficiaries are the wealthy. Offsetting these costs was a 2.5 percent increase in the goods and services tax (to 15 percent), a tax that hits low-income earners hard and the unemployed and social welfare beneficiaries even harder. Māori unemployment is at 13.5 percent, more than twice the national rate of 6.5 percent (Department of Labour 2011), and 31 percent of Māori receive social welfare

benefits. Additionally, the NZ\$1 billion budgeted in 1994 to settle all Māori historical Treaty of Waitangi claims has still not been spent. Despite international advice and Māori insistence that the lands, territories, and resources that have been stolen from them be returned along with adequate compensation, the government continues to impose settlements valued at an average of 0.1 percent of the estimated value of the assets stolen (Mutu 2011b, 157) and refuses to pay compensation. Each settlement is assigned a monetary value, but most of that is retained by the government as it forces claimants to pay for their own lands. One Far North iwi (tribal grouping), Ngāti Kahu, has referred to these retained funds as "ransom monies" and has refused to pay them. Instead they have returned to the Waitangi Tribunal to seek orders forcing the government to return their lands and to pay compensation. Since the 1990s, governments have vowed to repeal the tribunal's powers to make such orders if they ever attempt to do so (Mutu 2011b, 108).

On top of all this, the government incurred the wrath of two large East Coast iwi, Ngāti Porou and Te Whānau a Apanui, when it allowed the Brazilian oil giant Petrobras to start exploring for oil in their territorial seas. Apart from the fact that the oil belongs to those iwi, the threat to the well-being of the seas was of major concern. A flotilla of protest vessels authorized by the iwi shadowed the company vessels until they packed up early and left. Shameless government appropriation and exploitation of iwi oil and gas resources have resulted in at least two Waitangi Tribunal reports

upholding iwi claims to ownership of their own resources. Yet in Taranaki, where governments have been making many millions of dollars every year for over one hundred years from oil and gas, not one cent of the income has been shared with its rightful owners.

Despite the inevitable animosity that this type of behavior fosters between governments and Māori, the so-called settlements continued around the country. Office of Treaty Settlements reports indicate that since 1989, twenty-six claims have been “settled” and ten await their settlement legislation to be enacted. Fourteen claimant groups have signed some form of Agreement in Principle, and twenty claimant groups are in negotiations with the government (Mutu 2005, 204; OTS 2011, 6–8). Those completed over the past year include Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, which received a NZ\$14.5 million contribution toward the costs of establishing its Māori-focused tertiary institution following a successful claim to the Waitangi Tribunal in 1999.

On a brighter note, the Independent Māori Statutory Board to the Auckland City Council has proved far more effective than the three seats for Māori on the Council, which the government refused to create. Legislation setting up the board has ensured Māori representation on all relevant city council committees, much to the annoyance of several outspoken non-Māori council members. But the annoyance turned to fury when funding requirements set out in the legislation meant that the council had to adequately fund the board. Attempts by the racist elements within the council to cut funding for

the board failed when the board took the council to the high court in order to force it to abide by the legislation (NZH, 13 April 2011).

Another bright spot occurred when the Black Ferns, New Zealand Women’s Rugby team, won the Women’s Rugby World cup. Most team members are Māori, and they won despite a lack of funding and the New Zealand Rugby Union withdrawing support (Māori Party 2010c).

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RAPA NUI

Conflict between Rapa Nui people and the Chilean state escalated during the review year and peaked in December 2010 as Chilean military and police forces committed state violence against Rapa Nui. While the intensity of conflict has lessened since December, Rapa Nui continue to engage in large-scale public demonstrations against the Chilean state as of June 2011. Interpreting the conflict is problematic given that there are competing discursive grounds by which it can be framed (see Young this issue; Young 2011), and because most of the information available is represented in Chilean media, not controlled by Rapa Nui people. Herein I focus on representations of the conflict primarily in terms of the ways it is portrayed by scattered Rapa Nui voices in the international media.

At the close of the last review (Gonschor 2011), Rapa Nui were noted as embroiled in demonstrations sparked by the Chilean state appointment of Petero Edmunds Paoa as the new governor of Rapa Nui. Following the solar eclipse celebrations in July, conflict intensified as a number of hua'ai (extended families) reclaimed hua'ai lands currently occupied by Chilean state institutions and businesses, such as the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of the Interior, the municipality, the public school, part of a museum, and the Hangaroa Eco Village and Spa (Indigenous News,