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## MĀORI ISSUES

Since 2008 Māori have started clawing back a few hard-earned rights. We had hoped that the Pākehā majority generally supported these. But our hopes were dashed over the past year as first the media and then the government launched racist attacks on various segments of the Māori community as part of its ongoing agenda to maintain Pākehā hegemony, that is, the retention of control of the country's resources, wealth, and privilege in Pākehā hands. Māori managed to withstand the onslaught and stand firm in the face of determined efforts to undermine our leadership. However, along the way we lost several important leaders, including our entertainer extraordinaire, Sir Howard Morrison, with his beautiful voice, dazzling showmanship, and unique Māori sense of humor. We lost him in September 2009. Then in May 2010, our internationally renowned film-

maker, Merata Mita, who produced a number of outstanding television and film documentaries on the Māori struggle against Pākehā oppression and racism, passed away.

Much of the Pākehā media animosity toward Māori in the past year focused on the Māori Party members of Parliament (MPs), and one in particular. The media had been sniping for some time with headlines such as "Māori Activists on Warpath" (*Sunday News*, 28 June 2009) and "MP's Uncle to Lead Māori Sovereignty Protests" (NZPA, 28 June 2009), referring to Māori Party MP Hone Harawira; "Government Scuppers Māori TV's Bid for Rugby Rights" (NZH, 13 Oct 2009); and "Luck Running Out for Gaffe-prone Sharples" (NZH, 17 Oct 2009), referring to the party's co-leader, the Honorable Dr Pita Sharples. Late in October unauthorized MP spending came under parliamentary and media scrutiny, and several members were targeted. At the time, Hone Harawira was part of a parliamentary delegation to Geneva for a meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the world organization of parliaments. During that meeting he sought and was given permission for leave to go to Paris for a day with his wife, a private trip that he paid for himself. On 3 November he reported the visit, and the permission to go, in his weekly column in the *Northland Age*. Pākehā media immediately dropped its investigation of unauthorized spending by other members of Parliament and turned their sights on Harawira's trip to Paris, attacking him for using New Zealand taxpayers' money, when in fact he had not. The Māori Party issued a press statement answering

the media questioning (Māori Party 2009a), and the matter should have ended there.

However, among the numerous threatening and abusive private e-mails Harawira received on the matter (pers comm, 10 Nov 2009) was one from an individual known for his attacks on his own Māori people (Mutu 2007). Most unwisely, Harawira dashed off an angry but private response in which he used English expletives to remind the individual of the widely published history of ongoing stealing, raping, and pillaging by Pākehā of Māori and our lands and resources.

For an unscrupulous and unprincipled person this presented an opportunity for media exposure, which some elements of Pākehā media in this country could be relied on to fully exploit. After his visit in 2005, Professor Rodolfo Stavenhagen, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous People, had issued a damning report in which he stated, "Public media should be encouraged to provide a balanced, unbiased and non-racist picture of Māori in New Zealand society" (Stavenhagen 2006). But that advice has been ignored, and Māori who raise the issue of Pākehā atrocities committed against Māori are still typically vilified by members of the Pākehā media.

So the unscrupulous opportunist immediately released the private e-mail from Harawira to the media and then exploited the resulting frenzy, giving numerous interviews to Pākehā media. However, Māori media were much less tolerant of his behavior.

He had miscalculated the level of support for Harawira in the Māori community, and particularly in his own Taitokerau electorate. The Māori Party leadership reeled under the racist onslaught, which was fueled by the prime minister's publicly advising the Māori Party that Harawira should go. Harawira apologized for the hurt he had caused the party, for the offense he had caused to women by his use of English expletives, and for the bad example he had set for young Māori (Māori Party 2009b). However, he did not withdraw his reference to the history of Pākehā treatment of Māori. The Māori Party sorted itself out and Harawira returned to Parliament after the Christmas break.

That did not stop the prime minister's or the Pākehā media's campaign against Harawira. In January, the prime minister was reported as saying, "I would utterly reject the perspective that Hone Harawira has on New Zealand's history and the role of settlers and others in New Zealand" (TVNZ 2010). The prime minister was advised to read the reports of the Waitangi Tribunal in order to be better informed. In February 2010, the *Dargaville News* reported that Harawira had told people at a public meeting to dump chains and anchors into the Kaipara harbor. Harawira issued a statement explaining that Pākehā speakers at the meeting had advocated the action, not he. No apology was issued for the erroneous report (*Dargaville News* editor, pers comm, 30 Aug 2010).

But Harawira was not deterred. He continued calling hui (gatherings) around the country to ascertain Māori opinion on key issues, particularly the ownership and control of

the foreshore and seabed, as well as the damage that tobacco has done to Māori. He and the other Māori Party members of Parliament continued their punishing schedule of speaking to every bill that came before the House, while actively supporting their constituents as they were driven to protest the theft of their lands and the desecration of their wāhi tapu (sacred sites). In the Far North in August 2009, Māori issued a trespass notice to a forestry company that had leased land that the Crown had confiscated, citing several years of illegal logging of native timber, failure to protect wāhi tapu, and damage to neighboring Māori land. In the same area in January 2010, Ngāti Kahu supported the repossession of their lands at Taipā after the Crown refused to discuss the return of private lands as part of the settlement of their claims. In August 2009 in the central North Island, Ngāti Haka Patuheuheu repossessed a road through their territories, accusing the government of negotiating with others to settle their claims to their own lands. In March 2010 desperate attempts by Ngāti Maniapoto of Marokopa marae to stop their wāhi tapu, Te Rongomai o Te Karaka, from being blown up by a private company, failed. Even pleas from the Māori Party co-leader, the Honorable Taraiana Tūria, went unheeded. On 10 March, the day after Clearwater Hydro company destroyed the wāhi tapu, Tūria issued an angry press statement calling them coldhearted and accusing them of having reckless disregard for mana whenua (people holding traditional authority) (Māori Party, 2010a).

Also in March, Pita Sharples deliv-

ered a hard-hitting speech on Race Relations Day in which he admitted that the relationship between the National Party and the Māori Party in government was at times “very difficult and stressful.” He regretted the decision of the government of which he is a part to have no designated seats for Māori on the new Auckland super-city council. Noting that New Zealand’s refusal to ratify or support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was “a source of race-relations embarrassment to Māori,” Sharples said he was working hard to change that (Māori Party, 2010b).

Later in the year, it was embarrassing for the Māori Party to have to support tax cuts for the wealthy and an increase in goods and services tax after they had campaigned for tax relief for the poor. Māori unemployment was up to 15.4 percent, while the rate for Pākehā was 4.6 percent. Unemployment among Māori youth was particularly worrying, having climbed to 30.4 percent (HRC 2010). Then, in May, the prime minister intervened in negotiations to settle the Treaty of Waitangi claims of Tūhoe, declaring that the Crown refused to relinquish Te Urewera National Park to its rightful owners after negotiators had reached agreement that it would. On most of these issues the Māori Party did challenge and attack the National government.

Yet in his Race Relations Day speech, Sharples also listed positive aspects of the National–Māori Party relationship. These included the fact that the loathed Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 would be repealed, although the gains from this were almost lost

when the government issued a discussion document indicating that the act would be replaced by legislation that was almost exactly the same as what was being repealed. To try to ensure fairer and more just legislation, intense discussions were held among the National Party, the Māori Party, the National Iwi Chairs Forum (a group of mandated leaders of iwi [tribal groupings] and hapū [groupings of extended families]).

The development of the Whānau Ora (Well Families) program that would see government agencies delivering services according to Māori societal needs and directives rather than government preferences was also an important Māori Party initiative. Yet it appeared that implementation of such a program would not be straightforward. The prime minister declared that services had to be delivered to all New Zealanders and not just to Māori. Government agencies were also resisting having to work together and having to transfer their budgets to Māori-focused agencies better placed to deliver services. As a result, only a relatively small proportion of the welfare budget was allocated to the initiative.

The Māori Party could also take credit for the tino rangatiratanga flag flying at Parliament and on the Auckland harbor bridge, even if it did only fly on Waitangi Day. The tino rangatiratanga flag was voted for as the preferred Māori flag for the country. It is strongly associated with Māori sovereignty and the struggle for Māori to free ourselves from the oppression, discrimination, marginalization, subjugation, and near obliteration we have experienced at the hands of the

Pākehā (Taonui 2010). The design represents the balance of natural forces with each other. The central white koru (depicting a young fern frond) symbolizes new beginnings and the unfolding of new life, offering the promise of renewal and hope for the future. It lies between horizontal panels of black and red. The upper black panel represents the realm of potential being, the beginnings of creation, and the long, deep darkness from whence the world emerged. It also represents the heavens and the male element. The lower red panel represents the realm of coming into being, the female element. It represents Papatūānuku, the earth mother, the nurturer and sustainer of all living things (New Zealand History online).

Māori Party support for Māori Television to lead the bid for television coverage of the Rugby World Cup included the minister of Māori Affairs providing funding for them to mount their bid. This brought the wrath of Pākehā television interests down on the minister's head when their bids were rejected by the International Rugby Board while the Māori Television bid was kept in the running. For a short but embarrassing few days, it seemed that another government minister could prevent Māori Television from continuing to bid. But on this occasion the prime minister intervened to ensure that such blatant racism could not feature in an international bidding round, correctly assessing the likely damage it would do to the country's reputation on Māori issues.

The Māori Party has insisted on a "rangatira to rangatira" (chief to chief) approach in its dealings with the National Party as well as any dealings

between Māori tribal groupings and the government. In the Treaty of Waitangi claims settlement area, the previous government set this as a precedent and the Māori Party has insisted on it being retained. As a result, several deeds of settlement have been signed between the Crown and the claimant groups, although the Māori Party has acknowledged that they still deliver only a tiny fraction of what was stolen and none of them deliver restitution at the levels available for Pākehā who take claims against the Crown.

In December 2009 both Ngāti Whare and Ngāti Manawa signed deeds of settlement. Both are part of the larger Central North Island forestry settlement (Mutu 2009, 165–166), and both had been left virtually landless as a result of the Crown's illegal activities. Their deeds of settlement signal the return of small areas of their land to their control. For Ngāti Whare the Crown will relinquish its claims to a little less than 60 hectares of their approximately 192,000-hectare territories (OTS 2009b). For Ngāti Manawa the Crown will relinquish its claims to approximately 800 hectares of their “large” territories (OTS 2009a). Also in December 2009, Waikato-Tainui signed a deed of settlement for the management of their river (Mutu 2010, 182), as did Ngāti Raukawa.

The five iwi of Te Hiku o te Ika (the Far North); Te Kawerau a Maki of West Auckland; the Tamaki Collective of Auckland; Ngāti Manuhiri, a hapū of Ngāti Wai just north of Auckland; and Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara from the Kaipara harbor all signed agreements in principle to settle their claims (OTS 2010). All agreements mention relatively small amounts of

money to buy back lands stolen by the Crown and smaller amounts of land to which the Crown has agreed to relinquish its claims. Deeds of settlement are needed to confirm each of these agreements.

By far the most significant achievement of the Māori Party this year was gaining the government's support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is indicative of the state of Māori-Pākehā relations in this country that while Māori were jubilant on hearing the news filtering through from New York, the prime minister was desperately trying to play down its significance. Fearing a Pākehā backlash, the government had encouraged little public discussion about the declaration. There was also no announcement that New Zealand was now supporting it, prior to Dr Sharples's delivering the government's statement at the meeting of the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues in New York on 20 April 2010. And the Pākehā reaction, if measured by that of Pākehā media, did appear to be generally negative. But the Pākehā media seemed to be more concerned that while Māori Television had been present in New York for the announcement, they had known nothing about it. And viewers of Māori Television were told of the pending announcement several hours before it was made. In response to Pākehā media's indignant demands of Tariana Tūria for an explanation as to why they were not told, she simply smiled and quipped that they were not indigenous.

But the significance of New Zealand's support for the declaration was not lost on Māori. Sir Taihākurei

Edward Durie, retired high court judge and long-serving chairman of the Waitangi Tribunal, sent the following message to the Māori Party shortly after the announcement in New York:

“My congratulations to the Māori Party caucus for the Party’s role in securing New Zealand’s support for the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Were nothing else done in the Party’s lifetime, this one thing would be enough to secure for it a treasured place in Māori history.

“Notwithstanding the progress made through all the tribunal reports and court cases from the 1980s, and the consequential changes in legislation and official policy, I would still rank the day that New Zealand gave support to the Declaration as the most significant day in advancing Māori rights since 6th February 1840 [when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed].

“I do not overlook that the Declaration has only moral force. The same is said of the Treaty. Important statements of principle established through international negotiation and acclamation filter into law in time through both governments and the courts, which look constantly for universal statements of principle in developing policy or deciding cases.

“Most significant for the present is the statement that recurs throughout the Declaration that indigenous people should be dealt with through their own institutions, a matter with potent implications for the Office of Treaty Settlements, the Crown Forestry Rental Trust, the Waitangi Tribunal and for those developing policy for social service delivery.

“I hope something will be done in time to honour those of our people

who helped to achieve this result” (Harawira 2010).

MARGARET MUTU

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## RAPA NUI

The year under review was marked by heavy political upheavals on Rapa Nui that were still unfolding at the time of this writing. A very successful protest action in August 2009 initiated a process of limiting immigration, while a historic change of political leadership in Chile in early 2010 caused a reconfiguration of local politics through the controversial appointment of former Mayor Petero Edmunds as governor. This in turn precipitated a far-reaching and ongoing political crisis.

The review period started rather calmly. On 11–14 July, the French warship *Prairial* visited the Island in order to unload building materials for the establishment of a branch of the Alliance Française, an organization promoting French language and culture abroad, in Hanga Roa. This followed a visit by the French ambassador to Chile earlier in 2009 (French embassy in Chile website, undated article), an act symbolizing the normalization of Franco-Chilean relations regarding Rapa Nui, which was in the French colonial sphere of influence for two decades before being annexed by Chile in 1888.

In mid-July, a controversy arose over planning for the solar eclipse of 11 July 2010, named “Honu Eclipse” on the Island, for which all tourist accommodations were booked out a year in advance (RNJ, Oct 2009, 172). Since the event was expected to bring up to 50,000 tourists at one time, local authorities were very