

The New Zealand (School Curriculum) ‘History Wars’: The New Zealand Land Wars Petition and the Status of Māori Histories in New Zealand Schools (1877–2016)

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This article draws upon historical evidence and theoretical insights to critique the New Zealand government’s negative response to a popular petition developed by students of Otorohanga College. The petition called for the New Zealand Land Wars to become a ‘prescribed course of study’ (topic) in New Zealand schools. This article consequently reviews the status of Māori histories in New Zealand schools from 1877 to 2016. This review is followed by a critique of the New Zealand government’s response to the petition. This will be of interest to an Australian audience grappling with issues relating to the teaching of Indigenous peoples’ histories in schools.

■ **Keywords:** Māori, history, curriculum, New Zealand, wars, Indigenous, syllabus, social studies

On 8th December 2015, two Otorohanga College students, Waimarama Anderson (17) and Leah Bell (16), presented a petition to the New Zealand Parliament. It was signed by 13,000 people (Price, 2016). Among other things, it sought the inclusion of the New Zealand Land Wars as a prescribed course of study (i.e. topic) in the national curriculum. While the Ministry of Education commended the students for their initiative, it argued that ‘making the topic compulsory would be contrary to the spirit and underlying principles of the curriculum’ (Price, 2016, p. 1).

This outcome was predictable given earlier conflicts in the New Zealand (school curriculum) ‘history wars’. These curriculum power struggles have shared similar characteristics to ‘history wars’ fought elsewhere in the world (Benson & Openshaw, 1998; MacIntyre & Clark, 2003; Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 2000, & Wilson, 1995). These ‘history wars’ are relevant to Indigenous peoples’ quests for self-determination because as Smith (1999, p. 28) recognised:

A critical aspect of the struggle for self-determination has involved questions relating to our histories as Indigenous peoples and a critique of how we, as the Other, have been represented or excluded from various accounts.

Rather than focus solely on the New Zealand Land Wars, this article reviews the historical efforts of risk-averse New Zealand politicians and officials to bury Māori

historical narratives within officially-approved grand narratives of ‘our’ New Zealand (national) history. It begins by reviewing the status of Māori histories in schools during the years between the 1877 Education Act and the 1944 *Thomas Report*. It then explores relevant history and social studies curriculum developments during the years 1945–1979. This is followed by a critique of the 1980s curriculum reforms and the positioning of Māori content in the 1989 New Zealand history syllabus.

Next, it summarises the role of corporate lobbyists and media commentators in fuelling public resistance to the inclusion of Māori historical content in schools during the 1990s. The 2002 ‘Tudor-Stuart England Day’ debate, prompted by Professor James Belich, is then considered against this backdrop. A response from the Ministry of Education to Belich’s critique is also related to official responses I received in response to questions posed in 2005 (Manning, 2008).

Both sets of official responses are then related to the New Zealand Government’s response to questions raised about the New Zealand Land Wars petition in March,

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2016. Finally, the current status of Māori histories in New Zealand schools will be considered in relation to the national strategy for Māori education (Ministry of Education, 2013) and the Crown's 'principles' for action on the Treaty of Waitangi (State Services Commission, 2006).

The Teaching of Māori Histories: 1877–1944

The 1877 Education Act produced the first national curriculum. Moreover, Section 84(1) of the Act specified that if history was taught, only English history was to be transmitted (1877 Education Act, as cited in Consedine & Consedine, 2012, p. 291). Furthermore, the 1877 Education Act emphasised that 'no child shall be compelled to be present at the teaching of history whose parents or guardians object thereto' (Section 84(1) of the 1877 Education Act, as cited in Consedine & Consedine, 2012, pp. 290–291). This clause was only included 'because it was thought Catholics and Protestants [not Māori] would inevitably disagree over certain aspects of [British] history' (Stenson, 1990, p. 170, as cited in Consedine and Consedine, 2012, p. 136). A similar clause appeared in the 1914 Education Act. This was finally removed from the 1964 Education Act. Hence, from the very first national curriculum, history was considered a vexatious subject by New Zealand's politicians and policy writers.

The 1877 Act did not provide for the advent of a free (state-funded) national secondary schools system. Secondary schooling was only available to those who could afford it. There was no national curriculum for secondary schools. Secondary school principals, if permitted by their boards of governors; could choose curriculum content and texts at their discretion (Stenson, 1990). While the 1878 Education Regulations later allowed primary schools to include references to 'New Zealand' content, these references were confined to the geography curriculum. Hence, teachers in New Zealand's primary schools were not officially required to address Māori, nor indeed New Zealand histories.

Later, the 1880 *Native Schools Code* stipulated that newly appointed Native School teachers were not expected to speak Te Reo Māori (the Māori language). However, they were expected to be 'familiar with the discovery of New Zealand . . . [and] the history of the New Zealand [land] wars' (Barrington, 1965, p. 7). Given the urgency of Government assimilation policies of that immediate post New Zealand Land Wars era, it is fair to assume that Native School teachers' historical triumphal accounts of these wars were not necessarily always consistent with those spoken, sung, woven or carved by their students' communities (Barrington, 1965; Keenan, 2012; Mahuika, 2011).

Little changed following a review of the primary schools syllabus in 1885. A Eurocentric focus prevailed whenever history was offered as an optional subject (Consedine & Consedine, 2012; McGeorge, 1993; Stenson, 1990). In

1904, a new primary schools syllabus added fresh historical content to standards three to six of the primary schools system (New Zealand Parliament, 14 April, 1904). New Zealand content could now be included. While a more localised approach was recommended – encouraging teachers to refer to the local environs of the children (Ewing, 1970), the 67 prescribed topics simply reinforced the dominant culture's Social Darwinian narratives of the past (McGeorge, 1993).

A major alteration occurred following the 1903 Secondary Schools Act. This legislation provided free secondary schooling to students possessing proficiency certificates. Secondary school rolls swelled – necessitating curriculum revisions. By 1915, history became a compulsory subject for New Zealand secondary schools. An Anglo-centric curriculum continued, treating loyalty to the British Empire as a virtue.

While curriculum changes were made in 1924, they did not result in a shift away from the focus on Empire (Derbyshire, 2004). The first *Special Committee for History* was created encompassing 'representatives' from the 'Department of Education, primary, secondary and technical schools' (New Zealand Parliament, 1925, E-1, p.4). The omission of tribal representatives was critical because, as Derbyshire (2004, pp. 16–19) explained, the *Special Committee* shaped the development of the New Zealand history curriculum over the next two decades.

The Department of Education claimed that: 'For the first time in recorded history, New Zealand history and stories connected with the life of the Māori were introduced to the state syllabus' (Department 1928, p. 19, as cited in Derbyshire, 2004, p. 19). This claim, however, was indirectly refuted by Consedine and Consedine (2012, p. 136), who found that 'New Zealand' content had already been introduced in the 1904 *History and Civic Instruction* curriculum. While the 1928 syllabus devoted more space for 'New Zealand' topics – these topics did not guarantee the incorporation of Māori perspectives. A political debate regarding the merits of an 'academic' and 'general education' would dominate history curriculum discourses of the 1930s – not the status of Māori perspectives.

The period 1925–45 reflected a prevailing interest in promoting British citizenship and patriotism. School textbooks were instrumental in the continued marginalisation of Māori culture (Derbyshire, 2004). When considering the ideological underpinnings of school text books of this era, McGeorge (1993, p. 64) explained that social Darwinian theories of race were used to morally legitimate the violent expansion of the British Empire and the subservient status of Māori within it. Thus, history textbooks assisted successive New Zealand Governments to undermine the value of Māori epistemologies and ontologies (Waitangi Tribunal, 2011). It was not until the release of the 1944 *Thomas Report* (Department of Education, 1942) that the secondary schools curriculum was significantly overhauled.

Te Ao Hurihuri: The Changing World? (1945–1980)

The *Thomas Report* prompted the introduction of social studies as a new compulsory curriculum subject – weaving together history, geography and other subject areas (Stenson, 1990, p. 75). Previously, the *Thomas Committee* specified, in ways not too dissimilar to the guidelines of the current New Zealand Curriculum; that schools should be free to ‘work out courses in harmony with their special aims’ and ‘adapted to suit their local circumstances’ (Department of Education, 1942, p. 23). However, Derbyshire (2004) found that the new social studies curriculum, did allow for ‘differing cultural viewpoints’ to be taught (p. 40).

The Department of Education even acknowledged that Māori and Pākehā historical perspectives were likely to differ and suggested the planning of a social studies course could include, ‘a survey of the history and culture of the Māori people and their relations with the European’ and that teachers needed to consider ‘Pākehā and Māori viewpoints where these are apt to differ’ (Derbyshire, 2004, p. 32). This was, as Derbyshire (2004) reported, a ‘step away from traditional imperial accounts of interaction’ (p. 32). But, it was not mandatory for teachers to do anything other than to consider that alternative Māori perspectives existed (and little has changed since then).

Derbyshire’s (2004) research found that between the years 1945–1970, the teaching of ‘New Zealand national history’ (which Derbyshire considered inclusive of Māori content), remained problematic. She explained (Derbyshire, 2004) that, as a result of the *Thomas Report*, history was replaced by social studies in the junior secondary curriculum (i.e. Years 9–10). Moreover, it was relegated to the lower status of an optional subject in the senior secondary school curriculum (where it has since remained).

Meanwhile, great importance continued to be given to imperial and wider European history, within both social studies and history, between the years 1945 and 1980. The Māori population had rapidly urbanised during the 1950s, but little change occurred by 1960 regarding the prevailing Pākehā constructs of Māori histories taught in schools. *Our Country: A Brief Survey of Zealand History and Civics* (Whitcombe and Tombs, 1937) was still used in the junior levels of secondary schools. It had been reprinted 13 times since 1937 (Consedine & Consedine).

This is significant when one considers that the *Report on the Department of Māori Affairs* (Hunn, 1960) reported that Māori ‘disadvantage’ was partially the result of an ‘inadequate’ schooling system during the post war years when more Māori students were entering urban, Pākehā-dominated schools (Calman, 2016, p. 5). Harris (2004) added that widespread Pākehā racism was also problematic during these post War years (pp. 13–23). While Hunn (1960) described integration as a shift in Govern-

ment thinking away from assimilation, his claim has been contested.

Rather than offering a shift in thinking, Mahuika (2011) argued that Hunn’s notion of integration ‘offered a three-tiered Māori typology’ that noted the majority were somewhere in between either: ‘a completely detribalised body of Māori with vestigial culture’ and those ‘complacently living in a backward life in primitive conditions’ (Hunn, 1960, as cited in Mahuika, 2011, p. 15). Although Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) provides a rich medium for the transmission of Māori customary knowledge, Hunn considered it a relic of an ‘ancient life’ and ‘difficult to keep alive’ (Hunn, 1960, as cited in Harris, 2004, p. 44).

The late 1960s consequently heralded what Harris (2004) defined as the beginning of the era of ‘modern Māori protest’ (Harris, 2004, p. 13). It was ‘precipitated by a number of post war events and trends which highlighted incidents of racism and ongoing failure on the Government’s part to understand Māori aspirations’ (Harris, 2004, p. 13). Meanwhile, Mutch (1998) recalled that the 1960s witnessed a boom in New Zealand’s economy – encouraging many non-Māori citizens to boast that New Zealand had the best race-relations in the World. Therefore, it is little surprise to find that the social studies curriculum of that era still emphasised loyalty to the English motherland – where most exports were shipped.

Derbyshire’s (2004) research, additionally, indicated that a combination of factors conspired to side-line the teaching of ‘New Zealand national history’ during the period 1945–1980. She defined this ‘national history’ as being inclusive of ‘Māori’ content. Another problem, identified by Low-Beer (1986), was that history had become ‘eclipsed’ after losing its compulsory status in the junior secondary school years to social studies. Māori histories, therefore, remained peripheral in senior secondary school history programmes between 1945 and 1974.

This was despite the fact that, from the 1950s onwards, ‘the Māori Women’s welfare league, and other organisations, had challenged Government policy on the teaching of te reo and Māori history in schools’ (Harris, 2004, p. 44). Later, in 1975, the Form Five (Year 11) School Certificate prescription was amended to allow for the introduction of seven new themes, divided over two parts. ‘Part A’ was significant, according to Derbyshire, because it embedded the teaching of ‘New Zealand national history through the introduction of New Zealand topics related to its themes’.

These topics included: *New Zealand since 1891*, *New Zealand since 1911*, *New Zealand since 1918* and *New Zealand in the World since 1945*. While a revision of the new University Bursary and University Entrance scholarships examinations had also occurred, British imperial history retained its dominant status – via the compulsory topic titled: *The history of England 1558–1725*. While the 1960s and 1970s was a period in which more ‘New

Zealand national histories' were being written than ever before, Derbyshire (2004, p. 50) found that:

Publishing during this period was still very much a European dominated area; school texts written or produced by Māori authors were still practically non-existent. Race-relations, therefore, was often viewed from a lone cultural viewpoint.

As a result, academics like Professor Ranginui Walker (via his regular *Kōrero* columns in the *Listener*), challenged the mono-cultural curriculum and schooling system (Walker, 1987). Even if teachers elected to incorporate Māori content, much research suggests that the perspectives of Pākehā (textbook) authors still dominated. Hence, as Derbyshire (2004) and Mahuika (2011) argued, text books written by Pākehā 'about' Māori history have long contributed to the assimilationist armoury of the colonial enterprise. This colonial enterprise would be vigorously challenged (and defended) during the New Zealand (school curriculum) history wars that followed.

The Status of Māori Histories in New Zealand Schools: 1981–2001

By 1984, many Māori students felt marginalised by the schooling system (Grant, 2003, pp. 80–81; Harris 2004, pp. 48–50; Walker, 1987). This was particularly evident following a hui (meeting) organised by the Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA). It was held at Waahi marae, in Huntly between 13 and 15 April (1984). According to Grant (2003), over 1200 people were present during key deliberations. He found that:

For many, the highlight of this hui was the youth forum where Māori secondary students, led by Te Hemara Maipi, the first girl to be accredited University Entrance at Huntly College, articulated feelings of anger, frustration, defeat, inferiority, and spoke of the urgency for te reo to be incorporated into the school curriculum as part of the heritage of all New Zealanders. (Grant, 2003, p. 82)

Hemara Te Maipi's concerns prompted a call from her friends, to other Māori students (also in attendance); to conduct a day of protest on 1 June, 1984. This call to action quickly spread to Māori students in other schools around the country. Consequently, a controversial national 'strike', or 'day of progress', occurred on 1 June in 75 schools, with the support of the PPTA, and affiliated school Māori communities (Smith, 1985, p. 9). Not everyone agreed with their actions. For example, my doctoral research involved a review of Department of Education archives which uncovered a transcript of a 2YA *News* broadcast (12.30 pm; 16 April, 1984) which announced that:

Education Minister, Merv Wellington, says that students who join a call to protest and stay away from school on June the 1st, will be treated as truants ... Mr Wellington says he's heard nothing official from the students, but says he doubts if they represent the bulk of New Zealand children. He says he's also disturbed to hear the Secondary Teachers

Union [PPTA] actively encouraging children to stay away from school. (Ministry of Education, 1990)

Despite the Minister's anger, many schools allowed senior students (Māori and Pākehā) to attend meetings, workshops and seminars. The focus of these meetings was how Taha Māori might be included in schools (Grant, 2003, p. 82). The PPTA reported that, nationwide, there was:

... an overwhelming consensus from all pupils, Māori and Pākehā, that Taha Māori should be compulsory and that it should not just be a subject on its own, but should be incorporated in the teaching of such subjects as social studies, history and so on. (PPTA, 17 April, 1984, p. 1)

Whether these 'student-led' meetings, workshops and seminars were the result of teacher union capture and manipulation (as alleged by the former Minister of Education: Merv Wellington); remains an interesting question, worthy of further research. What is certain is that, following the election of the fourth Labour Government (later in 1984), the new Minister of Education – Russell Marshall, instigated a contentious curriculum review.

Taha Māori and the (1984) Curriculum Review

The curriculum review, among other things, proposed the inclusion of a mandatory 'Māori dimension' (i.e. Taha Māori in the curriculum). This prompted much public debate and the review committee received over 21,000 submissions (Consedine & Consedine, 2012). In their analysis of submissions, Adams et al. (2000) observed much resistance to the inclusion of Taha Māori. Despite receiving many negative submissions, the review committee concluded, in its draft report, that:

A high number of responses stated that a truthful version of New Zealand history [should] be taught in schools. In their opinion, insufficient history about New Zealand was being taught, and when it was taught much of it was from a viewpoint that gave neither an accurate nor full record of what had occurred (Department of Education, 1986, p. 45).

While the notion of Taha Māori was also not universally supported by all Māori for a range of reasons (see Adams et al., 2000, p. 179–180; Smith, 1985, 1990), the review committee's findings (above) indicated that many New Zealanders believed their education system was 'failing' to 'teach the history of their country and that something needed to be done' (Consedine & Consedine, 2012, p. 145). This viewpoint was given further credence by a visiting British history educator – Ann Low-Beer (1986). She was surprised by the scantiness of New Zealand historical content in the curriculum and its Eurocentric scope. Hence, a new history syllabus was sought. This new syllabus enjoyed a long shelf-life despite wider curriculum debates surrounding the inclusion of Māori historical content across the curriculum.

A New History Syllabus (1989) and the Mythology of Political Correctness

The new syllabus did not deliver what many people had been hoping for. The officially sanctioned 'Māori' topics were problematic. At the Form Five (Year 11) level, the *Māori–Pākehā race relations* topic gave the impression that: 'There might be problems in New Zealand race relations, but these were eradicated by the contributions of eager Māori groups in the democratic system and goodwill of benevolent Governments' (Glowsky, 2001, p. 14).

While a study of *19th Century Māori leadership* provided a Form Six (Year 12) theme-related topic for teachers to select, there was no guarantee that those teachers who did choose this topic would address contentious content like the New Zealand Land Wars or the forced confiscation of Māori lands on which many of their schools now sat. In Form Seven (Year 13), students would encounter some content 'about' Māori, if their teachers selected the *Nineteenth Century New Zealand* option for external examination or internal assessment purposes. Research suggests that most teachers preferred to teach the *Tudor Stuart England* for external examination purposes at this level well into the early 21st Century (Bargas, 2005; Derbyshire, 2004; Manning, 2008).

In short, the Department of Education failed to uphold the recommendations of distinguished academics and a group of Kaumātua (Māori elders) compiled in the *Heritage and History in Schools* report (Department of Education, 1988). This report was produced by the Departments of History of the New Zealand Universities. The Committee assembled by the Departments of History of the New Zealand Universities was instructed by W.L. Renwick (Director General of Education) to consider the New Zealand Curriculum Review Committee's recommendations (Department of Education, 1988).

The committee was also invited to propose topics that might be included in a revised history syllabus. The *Heritage and History in Schools* report, accordingly, recommended a progressive study of New Zealand history to begin at the fourth form (Year 10) level (Department of Education, 1988, p. 28). However, the Department of Education ignored this recommendation. It also disregarded the recommendations offered by Kaumātua, Māori historians and Māori teachers who had attended a Department of Education sponsored hui held at Whakato marae, near Gisborne (30 October–1 November, 1988).

Two reports with detailed accounts of the hui were embedded in the *Heritage and History in Schools* report (Department of Education, 1988). When summarising the recommendations of this hui for both reports, Judith Binney, a prominent historian, emphasised that hui participants agreed that:

Māori history must be taught on a tribal basis . . . Māori cultural diversity, which is central to Māori thinking, can only be retained on a tribal basis. The introduction of Māori history

in schools therefore has to be conceived in conjunction with the regional tribal areas. (Binney, 1988, p. 47)

While those lobbying for change felt confident that curriculum modifications were imminent, mounting resistance emerged from risk-averse officials within the Department of Education and from factions within the historian and teaching professions. This resistance was, as Derbyshire (2004) observed, closely related to growing public fears about the general direction of the national curriculum review from 1987 onwards. For example, the New Zealand Federation of Social Studies Associations was initially supportive of change. However, its President later wrote to Department of Education officials (1 June, 1987) to share his concern that:

Too often in the past we have dismissed the heritage of Aotearoa/New Zealand as insignificant compared to the rest of the world. My concern is that the reverse could happen as a result of this review. (Neil Lancaster, pers. comm.; as cited in Derbyshire, 2004, p. 70)

The President of the New Zealand Historical Association offered similar advice to Department of Education officials later that same month (J.M.R. Owens, 11 June, 1987). He claimed that while change was needed, 'the European heritage of our language and culture has not suddenly become irrelevant' (J.M.R. Owens pers. comm.; as cited in Derbyshire, 2004, p. 70). So, given the political climate and fears evident within these communications, it seems plausible that, later, the DHNZU recommendations (1988) were ignored by already risk-averse Department officials – who at that time were already encountering growing opposition to curriculum changes that could have seen more Māori and other New Zealand content embedded.

The prospect of mandatory Treaty of Waitangi provisions in school charters (central to the *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms of 1989) would probably have added extra fuel to an already heated debate within the media and the corridors of power. As Derbyshire recalled:

The charters aimed to ensure that educational institutions honoured the Treaty of Waitangi, through all aspects of their organization and operation . . . In order to understand historical grievances, studies of the Treaty were unavoidable, and therefore became a compulsory part of the New Zealand [social studies] curriculum. (Derbyshire, 2004, p. 72)

Treaty affirmation statements were no longer mandatory after the National Party took office in late 1990. The National Party's neo-liberal reforms also impacted upon the education sector via the establishment of a quasi-market education system underpinned by the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education, 1993). The *Curriculum Framework* had little impact upon history but constituted the first major refurbishment of social studies and other core-curriculum subjects since 1945. In summary, junior social studies was reformatted

under a new over-arching learning area called – social sciences. This reconfiguration 'allowed for the assortment of topics that made up social studies to be re-evaluated, including the teaching of New Zealand national history' (Derbyshire, 2004, p. 76).

The *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* claimed that New Zealand contexts would be emphasised, and that students would develop 'an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi, and of New Zealand's bicultural heritage and multicultural society' (Ministry of Education, p. 14). However, accusations of 'political correctness' (or 'PC') were made by influential corporate-sponsored lobby groups and media commentators – prompting the withdrawal of both the 1994 *Draft Social Studies Statement* and the 1996 *Revised Draft Statement* (Adams et al., 2000, pp. 181–186; Benson & Openshaw, 1998). This writer, like Adams et al., (2000); can well recall being 'surprised' by the 'unprecedented' media coverage given to the submission of the Education Forum (1995):

The media coverage was highly selective, focusing on the more "sensational" aspects of the Forum's case. In September 1995, the *Evening Post* ran a feature provocatively entitled, 'Once were cannibals' (*Evening Post*, 11 September 1995, p. 5). Prominence was given to the Forum's claim that the Draft Statement attempted to redress past injustices by offering a sanitized [allegedly 'politically correct'] version of Māori culture which omitted references to such practices as cannibalism, whilst highlighting the negative aspects of the country's British heritage. (Adams et al., 2000, p. 183)

The widespread media attention given to the views of some journalists, were equally damaging. For example:

An article in the *Nelson Times*, by Agnes Mary-Brooke, a Nelson freelance writer, spoke of a crippled curriculum ... turning out students who know very little about anything substantive, but have been thoroughly indoctrinated with the mind-set of the *politically-correct*. (Brooke, 1995, as cited in Adams et al., p. 183)

Similar accusations of 'political correctness' were made by Jenny Fawcett, a trainee teacher in 1997 (Fawcett, May 11, 1997; p. C5). Fawcett (1997) received a full page in New Zealand's most popular Sunday magazine to warn more experienced teachers to avoid falling into the 'trap' of 'PC' (p. C5). She bemoaned: 'The white student's burden'. Her angst was based upon the hear-say of a friend's daughter – about a 'fourth form [Year 10] history lesson' (1997, p. C5). Fawcett (1997) alleged that her friend's daughter was taught that all aspects of Māori history were positive, whereas European history offered nothing positive to celebrate. However, the newspaper did not seek the opinions of the school or teachers to verify the accuracy of the account provided by Fawcett's source.

Thus, the 'PC' label was repeatedly applied by lobby groups and media commentators during the New Zealand (school curriculum) history wars from the 1990s onwards. This mirrored patterns of behaviour found elsewhere in

the (global) 'history wars' of the late 20th century and early 21st century. The term 'PC' allowed lobbyists and media commentators to lazily side-step robust debate and dismiss Indigenous peoples' aspirations to see their histories accurately portrayed in schools (MacIntyre & Clark, 2003; Manning, 2008, Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 2000; Wilson, 1995). By 2009, an out-dated and poorly phrased New Zealand history syllabus (Department of Education, 1989) still allowed experienced history teachers to continue to 'assimilate' younger teachers and to keep teaching the 'traditional' (Eurocentric) topics they preferred (Hunter & Farthing, 2004; Manning, 2008).

This eventually provoked a memorable public debate triggered in February 2002 by Professor James Belich – one of New Zealand's most famous historians. His candid opinions sparked strong reactions from politicians, Ministry of Education officials and leading history teachers. Their reactions, in turn, partially prompted my doctoral research (Manning, 2008).

Tudor England Day and its Aftermath

To support his allegation that the teaching of New Zealand history was a 'national disgrace', Belich (as cited in Catherall, 2002, p. A5), highlighted the following statistics he collected from the New Zealand Ministry of Education: 'In 2002, 5198 of the 27,000 bursary students studied history: 3243 chose the Tudor–Stuart option, and 1955 took New Zealand history'. He was also shocked to discover that in 1999 only 15% of New Zealand's Year 11 students sat the school certificate history paper. He therefore joked that Waitangi Day (New Zealand's national holiday) should be renamed; 'Tudor England Day'.

This was because most Year 13 history teachers elected to teach the *Tudor–Stuart England (1558–1667)* option available in the 1989 Syllabus, rather than the *19th Century New Zealand* option (in which Māori content existed). In Catherall's interview, Belich urged that:

History should be as important as Maths and English in secondary schools ... most other countries in the Western world would try to engage people in their past so they can have a concept of how their present emerged ... a knowledge of a country's History is crucial to our capacity to handle a challenging future and accommodate differences ... There's a notion that there's something parochial, or noble or second-rate about learning New Zealand history but that's bullshit. New Zealand history makes the 'wild-west' look like an old people's tea party. There is sex and violence coming out of the ears of New Zealand history. (Belich, as cited in Catherall, 2002, p. A5)

Belich's allegations prompted a flurry of reactions. For example, the National (opposition) Party MP Simon Upton (2002) dismissed Belich's critique as a 're-colonial deconstruction of historical reality' (p. 1). He asserted that:

Modern New Zealand history didn't start in New Zealand. It started in Europe. And understanding that part of our cultural, political and economic heritage as 'ours' (rather than something alien that occurred almost on another planet) is the sine qua non of understanding ourselves in the modern world . . . Understanding that there's "sex coming out of the ears of New Zealand history" simply confirms the dystopia we all know about. (Upton, 2002, p. 1)

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Manager, Alison Dow, refuted Belich's interpretation of official statistics:

The bursary (Year 13 examination) figures masked the number of students learning New Zealand History in class, as 40% of the bursary year was internally assessed . . . Throughout school, students learned about New Zealand History in Social Studies, gaining an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi, for example . . . (Dow, as cited in Catherall, 2002, p. A5).

However, Dow's response on behalf of the Ministry of Education was highly problematic. The Ministry had no way of accurately knowing what was being taught about New Zealand history in schools. This only became evident to me, later, during the collection of public information, while conducting my doctoral research (Manning, 2008).

In 2005, 12 local secondary schools had not provided the public information that I had repeatedly requested (asking them to identify their history and social studies topic preferences). As a result, my research supervisors instructed me to request this data directly from the Ministry of Education (Manning, 2008, pp. 81–82). However, we were later advised by senior Crown officials (and the Minister of Education – Trevor Mallard), that the 1989 Education Act prevented the Minister and Ministry officials from specifically collecting data that would identify school history and social studies topic preferences (Manning, 2008, pp. 81–82, 304).

Eventually, I was required to cite the 1982 Official Information Act to successfully acquire public information from the 12 schools that had not respond to my repeated written requests for public information (Manning, 2008, pp. 355–364). Hence, I found that the Ministry of Education's response to Belich (see Dow, as cited in Catherall 2002) was misleading because the Ministry had no way of accurately knowing, in 2002, whether Treaty of Waitangi content was taught in all schools (let alone taught well). As I was advised by Ministry officials (2005), the Ministry of Education did not survey schools to collect such data and nothing has changed since 2002.

This became clearly evident during officials' response to media questions about the New Zealand Land Wars petition. Price (2016), for example, reported that the 'Secretary for Education Peter Hughes . . . said that requiring schools to teach a specific subject would be contrary to the spirit and underlying principles of the curriculum'. The Ministry's spokespeople advised that an, 'enabling approach', rather than prescribing subjects, would lead

to a better uptake of land wars content (Price, 2016). These officials presumed this 'enabling approach' was already happening due to a Ministry-funded 'Māori history project' developing resources for schools (Price, 2016). But, as Price (2016) also noted, the 'Ministry did *not* [my emphasis] know how many schools actually taught about the land wars'.

As a result, the Minister of Education (Hekia Parata) was forced to vigorously defend her Ministry's lack of data during a Radio New Zealand interview. She disingenuously argued that it should not be compulsory for the history of the New Zealand Land Wars to be taught in schools because, 'it is not the New Zealand way' (Baker-Wilson, 10:19 am, 10th April 2016). Her argument was consistent with the advice I had received from a previous Minister of Education (Mallard, 2005, as cited in Manning, 2008, pp. 81–82, 304). However, her advice also overlooked the fact that the Ministry of Education prescribes curriculum subject areas and regularly surveys New Zealand schools to measure student achievement levels (i.e. in relation to prescribed national standards for reading, writing and maths).

This, again, draws attention back to Dow's inaccurate response to Belich (Dow, as cited in Catherall, 2002), plus other negative reactions made in response to Belich's critique. For example, some history teachers were quick to respond to Belich's allegations. Two leading teachers received the most media attention. One illogically hypothesised that students at his affluent Auckland boys school were 'probably' not attracted to the (Year 13) *New Zealand in nineteenth century* topic simply because Māori 'activists' had recently protested against the Queen's visit to Waitangi (Frood, 2002).

Another teacher, interviewed by Catherall (2002), said that students at his prestigious Wellington boys' school simply preferred the *Tudor–Stuart* option because the *New Zealand* option was considered too 'PC'. Hence the mantra of 'PC' still reverberated in some New Zealand school staffrooms well into the early 21st century.

Yet, the inclusion of optional Māori topics in the durable 1989 history syllabus could hardly be described as a 'PC' conspiracy. As indicated previously, the Department of Education (1989) had only recommended that teachers 'should' (not 'must') give consideration to incorporating a 'Māori dimension' in their 'programme planning' (Department of Education, 1989, p. 13). It defined this vague 'dimension' as something providing New Zealand with a 'unique past and present perspective' (Department of Education, 1989, p. 13). The flexibility of the 1989 syllabus consequently enabled many experienced teachers of history to continue teaching the 'traditional' (Eurocentric) topics they favoured (Bargas, 2005; Hunter & Farthing, 2004; Manning, 2008).

This became more apparent to me when my doctoral research found that officially-sanctioned 'Māori history' topics were often side-stepped in the 24 schools surveyed

by this author in 2005 (Manning, 2008, pp. 355–364). Similar patterns emerged in a survey of 126 New Zealand schools conducted that same year by the New Zealand History Teachers' Association (2005). In summary, 29% of the 24 Port Nicholson block schools I surveyed (Manning, 2008) taught the NCEA level 1 topic: *Māori and Pākehā (1912–1980)*, whereas 23% of the 126 schools surveyed by the New Zealand History Teachers Association offered this topic (NZHTA, 2005).

Although four new level 1 'Māori History' courses were introduced by the Ministry of Education (2001), the NZHTA (2005) found that only 3% of the 126 New Zealand schools it surveyed offered the new topic: *The place of the Tiriti [Treaty] of Waitangi in New Zealand Society (1975–1985)*. None of the other 'Māori' topics were selected by the schools surveyed by the NZHTA (2005). My research, on the other hand, found that no Port Nicholson Block schools offered any of the new 'Māori' topics on offer (Manning, 2008).

In relation to NCEA level 3, the NZHTA survey found that 58% of schools offered the *Tudor–Stuart England (1557–1665)* topic, while 34% of schools it surveyed preferred the *New Zealand in the Nineteenth Century* topic (NZHTA, 2005). The NZHTA (2005) also found that 8% of schools offered students a choice of topic. Meanwhile, my survey indicated that 46% of Port Nicholson Block schools selected the *Tudor Stuart* topic and an identical number taught the *New Zealand in the Nineteenth Century* topic (Manning, 2008).

Additionally, 8% of Port Nicholson Block schools claimed that they offered students a choice of topics which usually translated into the majority of largely Pākehā students 'electing' the *Tudor–Stuart* option (Manning, 2008). As a result, 8% of the Port Nicholson block schools I surveyed did not select a broad 'New Zealand' topic and 29% of schools in the same area surveyed avoided teaching any specific 'Māori history' topics (Manning, 2008). Later, in 2015, The NZHTA conducted a Departmental Survey which included a question about the participating schools' 'main' or 'minor' topic preferences (i.e. a mini-unit within a wider topic). It advised that at level 3, Tudor–Stuart and 19th Century New Zealand content still dominated; with revisions in some schools. Meanwhile, 'traditional' topics like the Russian revolution and origins of World War I still dominated level 2 topic preferences. Level 1 also remained dominated by 'traditional' topics like the Origins of World War II, but with some 'New Zealand contexts' also offered (2015 NZHTA Departmental Survey summary notes provided courtesy of T. Seaker, Rangi Ruru Girls' School; Pers. Comm., 22 May, 2017). More recently, I wrote to a senior Ministry of Education official (3 May 2016) to seek clarification as to why the Ministry rejected the curriculum component of the New Zealand Land Wars petition.

The Associate Deputy Secretary for Education promptly responded (Karl Le Quesne, 30 May, 2016, pers. comm.). He sought to remind me that a new history cur-

riculum now exists (Ministry of Education, 2010), adding that:

... there is already a focus on events of significance to New Zealanders. This provides schools with the opportunity to include the New Zealand Land Wars in teaching and learning programmes. Similarly, NCEA levels 1–3 History achievement standards include the text, "of significance to New Zealanders" (Karl Le Quesne, 30 May, 2016: Pers. Comm.).

The wording of the history Achievement Standards is significant, but not for the same reasons suggested by Karl Le Quesne (30 May, 2016: Pers. Comm.). Rather, the inclusion of the prescriptive caveat 'of significance to New Zealanders' (Le Quesne, 30 May, 2016: Pers. Comm.) contradicts the Minister of Education's earlier advice to Baker-Wilson (April, 2016). The Minister had emphasised that it is 'not the New Zealand way' to prescribe curriculum content. However, the wording of various NCEA History Achievement Standards, described by Le Quesne (Karl Le Quesne, 30 May, 2016: Pers. Comm), *does* indicate the existence of prescribed history curriculum content.

New Zealand students of history (NCEA levels 1–3) are required to study events, places and figures 'of significance to New Zealanders' at the discretion of their teachers. Therefore, this is no guarantee that the events, places and figures studied will be 'of significance' to Māori students or their communities. The New Zealand Government still has no way of knowing, with any certainty, whether Māori content is embedded in the teaching of 'New Zealand history' in every State-funded New Zealand school.

Conclusion: A Not so 'New' Curriculum

Since 1877, Māori historical experiences and perspectives have been marginalised by 'flexible' Eurocentric curriculum frameworks – championed by politicians and risk-averse bureaucrats. As a result, the historical perspectives of Māori students and their communities have frequently been avoided by teachers who have exploited 'flexible' curriculum documents to continue to select 'traditional' (Eurocentric) topics – rather than incorporate 'Māori' content. All of this has contributed to what Smith (1985, 1990) denounced as 'Pākehā capture' of the curriculum. This has not gone unnoticed by Māori communities:

Māori have become increasingly aware that school curriculums are essentially cultural and political instruments ... Māori have hotly contested the interpretations of history provided by previous curriculum documents which have treated one group's view of New Zealand history as the only view, and actively ignored what we know to be more accurate accounts of the relationship between Māori and Europeans. (Adams et. al., p. 178)

The laissez-faire approach adopted by the current New Zealand Government does not auger well for the future of New Zealand's Race-relations. This approach may have produced another 'flexible' history curriculum (Ministry

of Education, 2010) but it does not gel with the Crown's 'principles for action on the Treaty of Waitangi' (State Services Commission, 2006). These include the principle of active 'protection' (State Services Commission, 2006, p. 22). It seems implausible for the current New Zealand Government to claim that it upholds this 'principle' when it still refuses to survey schools to reassure the public that all students have access to Māori historical perspectives.

This situation is also ironic given that the New Zealand Government's national strategy for Māori education prescribes that school boards of trustees ensure Māori learners can see their 'identity' reflected in the curriculum so that they 'are enjoying and achieving educational success as Māori' (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 5). While some clusters of motivated teachers are now striving to incorporate Māori content into their schools' history and social studies programmes – as part of a 'Māori history in schools project' (see Peter Hughes, as cited in Price, 2016) – I suspect this initiative will prove insufficient to bring about the levels of curriculum change needed.

One only needs to review the historical roots of the ongoing New Zealand (school curriculum) 'history wars' to appreciate the scale of the political problem at hand. Therefore, it would appear timely for the New Zealand Government to recognise the need for a political solution that is consistent with its own national strategy for Māori education (Ministry of Education, 2013) and the Crown's 'principles for action on the Treaty of Waitangi' (State Services Commission, 2006).

To conclude, I suspect that a regular (national) survey of New Zealand schools might provide greater clarity on the real status of Māori content encountered by students of history and social studies. However, one cannot be certain that such a survey would help to reassure those who signed the New Zealand Land Wars petition that history and social studies programmes delivered in all State-funded schools are developed in ways that are culturally responsive and inclusive of historical events, figures and places that local Māori communities also believe are 'of significance' in the telling of 'our' (contested) New Zealand national history.

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