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In: Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Politics, tradition and change in the Pacific 149 (1993), no: 4, Leiden, 673-689

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THE MAORI KING MOVEMENT: UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN PAST AND PRESENT

The indigenous people of New Zealand did not have a name for themselves as a people before European explorers and traders arrived in the late eighteenth century. The New Zealand 'Maori' people did not collectively distinguish themselves from other peoples. Distinctions were only made between various tribal groups and, accordingly, a multiplicity of tribal names existed. Colonial interaction, however, brought about the abstraction The Maori. Some thirty years after James Cook had initiated European contact with the indigenous inhabitants of New Zealand, the word *maori* was first recorded as an adjective of *taangata*, meaning 'usual', 'ordinary' or 'normal' 'people'. It was not until the 1830s that the word Maori was used as a noun. From then on, Europeans were referred to as Pakeha, which was derived from the adjective *paakehaa*, meaning 'foreign' (Williams 1971: 252).

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the term Maori was gradually transformed from a purely ethnic marker into a political category. It became the central notion in the political process which aimed at uniting the various 'Maori' tribes in opposition to the imminent threat of colonial domination. In this article, I briefly describe the history of the first and foremost movement for the establishment of political unity among the various Maori tribes: the Maori King Movement. The political constitution of the movement was based on the model of a kingship which was derived from the British model of polity as well as from the Old Testament. In order to explain the historical background behind the drive for establishing a Maori monarchy, I begin with a preliminary account of the early colonial history of contact in New Zealand, with particular attention to the role of the Treaty of Waitangi.

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The Treaty of Waitangi

In New Zealand, the discourse on Maori state formation processes centres around the concept of sovereignty. This follows the principal position of the notion of sovereignty in the Treaty of Waitangi, a covenant between the British Crown and numerous Maori chiefs from both the South and the North Island. The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 when the Colonial Office in London, which administered the territories of the British Empire, felt it had to intervene in the gradual extension of the imperial frontier from the penal colony of New South Wales to the islands of New Zealand.

In the final decade of the eighteenth century, sealers and deep-sea whalers exploring the Tasman Sea from Port Jackson (currently Sydney) drifted off to the coastal waters of New Zealand. Over time, extensive trade developed. When European explorers and traders called at New Zealand harbours to refit, pigs and potatoes were exchanged for blankets, iron tools, and weapons. After the establishment of missionary stations between 1814 and 1823, developments in New Zealand rapidly accelerated. More and more Europeans arrived with the intention of settling and exploiting the growing market economy. This uncontrolled intensification of contact sparked off rumours that the French were about to take possession of New Zealand, which, in turn, caused the Governor of New South Wales to suggest that a British Resident be appointed to protect European settlers and Maori people from each other.

In 1833 James Busby was appointed British Resident, and assigned to control the law and order problem that the British government faced in New Zealand. He arranged for 34 chiefs to declare their independence under the designation of the 'United Tribes of New Zealand'. Being the sole administrator, however, he lacked sufficient power to accomplish his mission, and by 1839, some 1300 British subjects had settled permanently on the North Island and some 700 on the South Island, although many thousands more had passed through (Adams 1977: 26-28).

In 1939 James Busby recommended that the Colonial Office intervene in New Zealand. He substantiated his recommendation by drawing attention to the statutory obligation of the British government to support British subjects who had migrated to New Zealand, as well as to control their excesses. In addition, he appealed to a moral obligation on the part of the British to protect Maori people from the potentially disastrous consequences of the anarchic situation created by uncontrolled British settlement (Adams 1977: 13). The Colonial Office appeared aware of a dual obligation, which to some extent reflected a difference in ideology between two factions in British society, one justifying, the other condemning the expansion of the British Empire (Owens 1981: 53). Some

form of British intervention was widely regarded as inevitable. Actions of the mastermind behind the New Zealand Association (later the New Zealand Company), Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who aimed at systematically establishing a New Zealand colony by purchasing massive amounts of land, prompted the Colonial Office to take measures.

On 29 January 1840, the first Governor of New Zealand, William Hobson, landed at the Bay of Islands. He had been instructed to secure sovereignty for Britain, preferably by means of a treaty with the Maori people. On behalf of Queen Victoria, Governor Hobson invited Maori chiefs to gather at Waitangi, where he presented them with a treaty which was signed by more than forty chiefs. After a tour around the North Island and some parts of the South Island, it was eventually signed by more than 530 chiefs of various tribes (Orange 1987: 259-260). Referring to the signatories of what became known as the Treaty of Waitangi, on 21 May 1840 Hobson proclaimed British sovereignty over the North Island. The British Queen's sovereignty was proclaimed over the South Island in June of the same year (Orange 1987: 60, 80).

It is both impossible and unnecessary to elaborate on all the details of the immensely complicated debate on the legal aspects and the various interpretations of the political implications of the Treaty of Waitangi.¹ It is, however, important to note that there are several different versions of the Treaty, with significant differences between English and Maori translations. Although 39 Waikato chiefs signed an English version of the Treaty in April 1840, most Maori chiefs signed a Maori version. There can be no doubt that their understanding of key aspects of the Treaty was very different from the understanding of the other signatory. This can best be exemplified by the translation of the concept of sovereignty in the Maori language.

The Treaty is made up of three Articles. In the first Article, the English version states that the chiefs ceded 'all rights and powers of Sovereignty' over their respective territories. The Maori version, however, does not use the nearest equivalent to sovereignty, which is probably *mana*, but uses *kawananatanga*, a translation of 'governorship' improvised by the missionaries. To the Maori people signing the Treaty, *kawananatanga* may not have meant more than the coming of the first governor. In addition, one can question whether translating sovereignty by *mana* would have made a difference, since in the second Article the Maori people

¹ For a comprehensive historical account, see Orange (1987), while the essays in the volume edited by Kawharu (1989) offer valuable insights into the contemporary debate. For an introductory account arguing against the central role of the Treaty in explanations of the relatively favourable position of New Zealand Maori people in comparison with other Fourth World minorities, see Van Meijl (n.d.).

were confirmed in their *rangatiratanga*, which in some sense was equivalent to a chief's *mana* (Orange 1987: 42).

In the second Article, the English version of the Treaty guaranteed 'the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties' to the Maori. The Maori version, on the other hand, was less specific, but nevertheless all-embracing. It confirmed to the Maori *te tino rangatiratanga o o wenua o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa*, or 'the unqualified exercise of their chieftainship over their lands over their villages and over their treasures all'.² In the Maori language, the word *tino* bears the connotation of 'quintessential', and the phrase *tino rangatiratanga* is therefore likely to have been interpreted as emphasizing to Maori people the Queen's intention to give them complete control according to their own customs (Kawharu 1989: 319). Further, it must be noted that in the Maori language, *taonga* includes both physical possessions and social and cultural properties, such as, for example, language.³ The Maori version of the Treaty of Waitangi, therefore, largely justified the conclusion of the Rarawa chief Nopera Panakareao: *Ko te atarangi o te whenua kua hoatu ki te Kuini, ko te oneone i mau*, 'It is the shadow of the land which has been given to the Queen, while the substance of the soil remains with us' (Ngata 1922: 10, 24).⁴ It can indeed be argued that on the basis of the Maori version of the Treaty, an awareness among Maori people of the political and legal implications of the Treaty of Waitangi for the colonial government was nonexistent.⁵

Dissension among the Maori about European settlement surfaced very clearly during the debate held at Waitangi and thereafter. Potatoes and guns symbolized irrevocable changes to some chiefs, particularly those from the coastal tribes in the North Island. They valued the prospect of increased trade, and they signed the Treaty partly because of their

² This translation has been adopted from Kawharu (1989: 319-320).

³ This has recently been acknowledged in a decision of the Waitangi Tribunal examining Maori grievances about violations of the Treaty. The Tribunal ruled that, within the context of the Treaty of Waitangi, language is to be regarded as a treasure (see also Matson 1991; Sorrenson 1987: 185-187 - a revised version of this paper has been published in Kawharu 1989: 158-178).

⁴ I have slightly modified M.R. Jones' English translation of Ngata's Maori words.

⁵ There is further confusion in the second Article as to whether the provision in the Maori version, that chiefs *ka tuku ki te Kuini te hokonga o era wahi wenua e pai ai te tangata nona te Wenua* ('will give to the Queen the sale and purchase of those parts land is willing [to sell] the person owning the land'; translation by Kawharu 1989: 320), has the same implications as the phrase 'yield to Her Majesty the exclusive right of Preemption over such lands as the proprietors thereof may be disposed to alienate'. For a more elaborate account of the different interpretations of this clause, see Kawharu (1991).

passion for material benefits and their desire for intertribal peace brought about by Christianity (Orange 1987: 58). The Ngapuhi chief Tamati Waka Nene even asked Hobson to stay as a 'father, a judge, a peacemaker' (Orange 1987: 50). Some of the great chiefs of the interior, on the other hand, such as Te Heuheu of Taupo and Te Wherowhero of Waikato, declined the Governor's invitation to sign the Treaty. The reasons for their refusal can only be speculated on. They may be expected to have valued their past more than the uncertain European future. They might also have had sufficient resources at their disposal to be able to dispense with the prospective advantages of European settlement. However, in the late 1840s, barely ten years after the Treaty was signed, more and more voices were heard urging unification against the disastrous alienation of Maori land under the impact of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The emergence of Maori nationalism

Initially, many Maori people had been willing to sell vast tracts of land to European settlers. What motivated the Maori to dispose of large sections of one of their most precious treasures has never been satisfactorily resolved (Ballara 1982: 523). It cannot be maintained that they were forced to part with their land (see also Parsonson 1981: 148), nor can it be maintained that the right of individual disposal extended to the alienation of tribal land, as Layton (1984) has suggested.⁶ As in other Austronesian societies, the Maori people probably recognized a distinction between, on the one hand, the right of use which was divided among individual family groups, and, on the other hand, the right of alienation of the land reserved for the overarching tribal communities (Van Meijl 1990: 183). This would explain the enthusiasm for individual deals once the arrival of European settlers provided the opportunities, while the individuals selling were perfectly aware that they were not entitled to dispose of the land permanently.

It is debatable whether Maori people before 1840 had an inkling that European settlers were buying land on the understanding that they would acquire permanent title, but after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi they soon realized that Europeans believed they had obtained the land permanently. In spite of a growing awareness of parting with the land permanently, however, the sales did not stop until the mid-1850s, when there was a slump in the agricultural market due to the end of the goldrush and the expansion of agricultural production in Australia. As a

⁶ For a critique of Layton's argument, see Ward (1986).

result, Maori communities had more competition from European farmers, which was reinforced by the fact that the Maori advantage of communally organized labour was increasingly outweighed by the uncomplicated individual tenure of their European rivals. In addition, the latter responded to the economic downturn by switching to sheep herding, which required larger tracts of land (Sinclair 1952: 128; Sorrenson 1981: 172). This made up for the economic losses, as it resulted in a boost of wool exports, but politically, it compounded the problems caused by the recession because it increased the demand for land. Thus, the competition between Maori and Europeans shifted from the produce of the land, to land as a scarce commodity.

In the 1850s, various groups of European settlers began lobbying the government to put pressure on the Maori to sell more land, while at the same time more and more voices were heard among the Maori against the sale of land. Maori resistance to the alienation of their land caused various tribes to put aside intertribal rivalries and discuss their common interests. A number of meetings were held between tribal groupings across the North Island. This caused great concern among the governmental Land Purchase Officers,⁷ who in 1854 spread the rumour that an anti-land-selling league had been formed in Taranaki. The term 'league', however, implies a greater degree of agreement and organization than actually existed at the time. Sinclair (1950, 1969) has cogently argued that the notion of a Maori land league was a European construction to justify an increase in political pressure on the Maori to sell their land.

To protect themselves from European interference and to make a ban on land sales effective, a more coherent political organization was required. To this end, meetings continued to be held, and Maori tribes united into intertribal councils or *ruunanga* to devise a common strategy in order to maintain control of the political and economic situation in the colony of New Zealand. At first, the meetings, which became known as the movement for *kotahitanga*, or 'oneness', were in favour of putting a *tapu* on land sales within certain boundaries. But soon, the idea of a Maori king was born. The motivation behind a king movement to unite Maori tribes throughout New Zealand was strengthened when the economic depression hit New Zealand in 1856.

Maori nationalism has often been interpreted as being a direct result of the slump in the Victorian market (e.g. Miller 1950: 60), but the movement was clearly underway before the economic crisis began (Sinclair 1952: 132). The economic troubles only reinforced Maori

⁷ In 1854 the government had set up a Land Purchase Department to meet the increasing demand of settlers for land (Ward 1973).

determination to stop the European economic advance. Attempts to set up a king movement should, therefore, not be interpreted as a reaction to economic despair, or even an antagonistic response to the advancement of colonization, but rather as the result of a positive stance in defence of Maori sovereignty and Maori control over the political and economic situation. The movement for pan-tribal unity was induced by the advancement and pressure of colonization, but it was not simply anti-European. It was generated from within Maori society in order to protect Maori dominions.

The idea of setting up a kingship was not entirely new to Maori people. The first missionary, Samuel Marsden, had urged Maori chiefs to make the northern chief, Hongi Hika, king, in order to end intertribal disputes (Elder 1932: 383). At the same time, it has often been suggested that Hongi Hika had mapped out a plan to become the first Maori king after visiting London, where he had been intrigued by stories about Napoleon Bonaparte.⁸ Oral tradition has it that the Queen of England had also suggested setting up a Maori king (Jones 1959: 183, 1968: 132; Anonymous 1979: 10).⁹

The drive to set up a Maori kingship, which eventuated in the crowning of the Waikato chief Potatau Te Wherowhero, was initiated by two chiefs from the Ngaati Raukawa area. In 1852, they formed a deputation with several other chiefs, and they spread the idea of a Maori king around the North Island. Their principal motivation was to *whakakotahitanga* ('make unity'), to create order in the chaos caused by European settlement. They proposed setting up a confederation of all Maori tribes with one chief in charge as Maori governor or king. At a series of meetings between 1854 and 1856, the objectives of the movement were deliberated at great length. The tasks of the first Maori king that were finally agreed upon were the following:

Firstly, [...] to hold the *mana* or prestige over the land; secondly, *mana* over man; thirdly, to stop the flow of blood (intertribal wars); fourthly, the Maori King and the Queen of England to be joined in concord and God to be above them both (Jones 1959: 196, 223).

⁸ E.g. Buddle (1860: 3). Identifications with Napoleon were by no means uncommon among Polynesian chiefs; see also a quotation in Thomas (1989: 63-64) with reference to the Hawaiian chief Kamehameha.

⁹ The anonymous document I am referring to offers an interesting account of the events leading up to the coronation of the first Maori king. It is composed of contemporary correspondence and newspaper clippings interlarded with details that were orally transmitted. It was issued on the occasion of the centenary of the King Movement in 1958.

The Waikato chief Potatau was made king because he had prestigious kinship status, his line of descent being linked with the senior lines of all Maori tribes. In addition, he had status derived from his ties to important lands, as well as control over abundant resources of food and fisheries. Potatau, however, was reluctant to accept the invitation to become Maori king, partly because of his old age, partly because he still had a major revenge outstanding which would not allow him to stand above all intertribal rivalries. For those reasons he did not accept the offer of the kingship until 1858. He was crowned in the same year.

Contesting the Maori kingship

Initially, King Potatau was supported by 23 tribes. Most were from the Waikato area, Potatau's own region, but some were from the districts of Taupo, the east coast, Hawke's Bay and three even from the South Island. The tribes that declined to pledge their allegiance to the King were, nevertheless, supportive of the policy of the movement to withhold land from the market. Potatau thus provided a focus for Maori discontent regarding the government's land purchase policies which were implemented to appease the disenchanted settlers. It goes without saying, however, that the crowning of Potatau and the unfurling of the flag of the *Kingitanga*, or kingship, could only reduce, rather than resolve, traditional tribal rivalries, which in the 1850s were compounded by modern views of the Treaty of Waitangi and European settlement at large.

The Maori people were roughly divided into three groups: the loyalists, the extremists, and the moderates (Van Meijl 1990: 192). The loyalists argued that a Maori kingship was incompatible with the cession of sovereignty pledged to the Queen in the Treaty of Waitangi. They also refused to recognize Potatau as King because they feared the possibility of racial disharmony and, as a consequence, the exclusion of the Maori from participation in the advantages derived from the skills and resources which European settlers were bringing from the outside world. They did wish to make their own laws, but were proposing to have them sanctioned and administered by the Governor and a European magistrate, respectively. This positive view of European colonization, primarily predominant in the northern region, was partly founded on the belief that Maori social organization did not allow for the difference in status resulting from the coronation of a King.

The extremists and the moderates, on the other hand, were both in favour of the Maori people being independently ruled by a King, although they disagreed on the implications of that basic stance. The extreme Kingites had not signed the Treaty of Waitangi and, accordingly, opposed

the selling of any block of land under any circumstances. The moderates put more emphasis on preserving Maori autonomy without necessarily trying to thwart European settlement. For that reason, too, they were willing to yield certain disputed blocks of land for the sake of peace. This ambivalent position with respect to European settlement also explains the diverging views on the Treaty of Waitangi among this group: some had signed, some had not. Interestingly, the division among Maori tribes with regard to the Treaty of Waitangi and the movement to counteract the political implications of the Treaty, which was soon used as a pretext for the alienation of land, did not essentially change over the course of colonial history. Rather, it was reinforced after the government's attempt to dismantle the Maori kingship by force, and the confiscations of the Maori King's lands.

Long before the coronation of Potatau, the Governor of New Zealand had been instructed to persuade Maori chiefs to give up their determination to elect a King. The Colonial Office could not accept a semi-autonomous Maori movement, since all Maori were considered to have ceded sovereignty by signing the Treaty of Waitangi. The argument expressed by Maori tribes, and supported by Attorney-General Swainson, that the Crown's sovereignty was incomplete since not all tribes had signed the Treaty, was invalidated from as early as 1843, when the Colonial Office stated that the sovereignty it had declared was 'exhaustive and indivisible' (Paul McHugh, personal communication).¹⁰ The Governor's main problem was undoubtedly that the *Kingitanga* was substantially a land league, since Potatau had the authority to withhold land from the market and the right to forbid sales. This clearly formed the real objection of European settlers to the King. The increasing number of European immigrants were becoming frustrated with the lack of land available for settlement. Gradually they gained the government's sympathy, which made the Maori realize that the Treaty of Waitangi had supplied the government with a powerful weapon to enforce its intention to acquire control of the political and economic situation in the colony of New Zealand.

Towards the end of the 1850s, the Kingites gradually lost trust in the Governor and began to realize that his ultimate intention was war. In 1860 King Potatau died, and his son Maatutaera was enthroned as his successor, becoming known as King Taawhiao. His nomination had been controversial, as some people argued he was not competent to replace his father, but he soon won the allegiance of increasing numbers, as many Maori people became convinced that the settlers were planning to take

¹⁰ See Orange (1987: 110-112).

their lands by force.

In 1860, war finally broke out in Taranaki, and gradually extended to other regions. Although it was beyond dispute from the very beginning of belligerent manoeuvring that the government's aim was to capture the Maori King's lands, the area from which the Maori monarchy originated was not invaded until 1863. The wars lasted until the end of 1864, when the government quickly moved to confiscate three million acres of Maori land. The argument put forward in justification of the land confiscations concerned 'punishment' of 'hostile natives'. Most of the forested hill country and the steep limestone valleys of the more extreme Maniapoto tribes were, however, left untouched, while the King Movement tribes, who were primarily concentrated in the most fertile and cultivatable areas of the North Island, lost nearly 500,000 hectares (one and a quarter million acres) of land. This highlighted the ultimate motives of the government. The argument of punishing the rebels was merely a pretext. The confiscations were plainly for settlement.

After the wars, several King Movement tribes made peace with the government, but King Taawhiao and his close followers fled into the bush, where they lived in isolation for nearly twenty years. This united the core of the King Movement and distinguished its strongest adherents from other, marginal supporters. The disintegration of the supporters of the King Movement was further compounded by the fact that King Taawhiao concentrated his activities on seeking redress for the confiscations. All the lands of his own Waikato tribe had been confiscated while other tribes had scarcely been affected. As a result, the main cause of the paramount Waikato chief soon became identified with the aims and objectives of the Maori King Movement. For that reason too, King Taawhiao had great difficulties in acquiring support for his attempt to make the kingship a politically effective institution. His ultimate goal - centralizing his authority in order to strengthen his position in the negotiations for a settlement of the confiscations with the government - was disputed by many tribes which could not accept his self-constituted claim to rule over the entire North Island (Williams 1969: 47). In spite of intertribal dissension about Taawhiao's actions, however, the second Maori King managed to keep the tribes which had been most affected by the confiscations united. Although not all of them supported Taawhiao's political strategies, which included recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi in spite of the fact that his father Potatau had refused to sign it, the confiscations provided the Kingitanga with the political purpose of collectively seeking redress. This focus was, nevertheless, primarily for the benefit of the Waikato people, which had some important consequences for the King Movement's original aim of intertribal unity: most of its founding supporters, who had retained their lands, were now more

ambivalent about the policies of the King. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the dissension among Maori tribes regarding intertribal unity in the form of the Maori King Movement even sparked off a new movement to achieve Maori unity.

The Maori Parliament

In the 1890s, it was commonly believed that the Maori as a people were doomed to extinction in the near future. The size of the Maori population reached an absolute low, and anxiety about the possible waning of Maori society became widespread. Kingitanga tribes, as well as Maori people in other districts, were struggling for survival. Some form of co-operation between Maori tribes was again required to counter the threat of total assimilation, but no one was prepared to unite behind Taawhiao. The Maori Members of Parliament¹¹ revived the *kotahitanga* movement of the 1850s, and in June 1892 set up a Maori Parliament to present tribal and intertribal grievances to the government (Williams 1969: 48-67). Unlike Taawhiao's Great Council, which claimed traditional sovereignty, the Maori Parliament accepted the European Parliament and was only asking for independent control over a limited range of affairs.

The story of the Maori Parliament is not one of the most successful episodes in Maori history. European society was now so well established that it could afford to neglect what it considered a separatist movement, but, more interestingly, many Maori people were also scarcely interested in the Maori Parliament. The Kingites still argued for unity under King Taawhiao, while others opposed the Maori Parliament because they accepted European society. Large sections of the Maori population refused to join because they were looking for other avenues to solve their problems of poverty than the protest meetings of the Maori Parliament, which often degenerated into bickering over tribal differences. Reasons behind the lack of motivation for protest against European domination in the 1890s partly emanated from the despondency which characterized the *fin de siècle*, but also partly had to do with a large-scale movement into the money economy of European society. Throughout New Zealand, massive numbers of Maori people entered paid employment (Metge 1976: 35).

Eventually, during the final five years of the nineteenth century, the division of Maoridom within the Maori Parliament proved fatal. Several

¹¹ In 1867, the Maori Representation Act was passed, under which the Maori people were given 'manhood suffrage' in four seats in Parliament (Ward 1973: 208-210).

young leaders who had opposed the Parliament's constitutional proposals from the outset now took a positive stand for the government. Unlike the conservative 'home-rule' party, consisting of elderly leaders who distrusted the government outright, they no longer resisted some degree of governmental protection of the Maori people. In 1898, the old guard refused to further co-operate with the younger, educated leaders, and walked out. The Maori Parliament was finally disbanded in 1902 (Williams 1969: 98-112).

A new era

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Maori were becoming less concerned with political autonomy and more concerned with the development of their remaining land. Even the Kingitanga adjusted its earlier strategy of irreconcilability. In 1894, Taawhiao's oldest son Mahuta had succeeded his father on the throne. Initially, King Mahuta had remained adamant by continuing to boycott the government and continuing the request for sovereignty under his authority, but in 1903 he accepted appointment to the Legislative and Executive Councils. His decision to accept the appointment to a governmental institution was rather controversial among his supporters. Mahuta's critics argued that the government was only out to eliminate the King, but he himself hoped he could reach a satisfactory settlement of the confiscations. Although, in the meantime, many hectares of confiscated land had been returned in Crown grants, most of it was steep or swampy land along the west coast. In the most fertile valley of the Waikato River, which had been required for European settlement, only a few 'native reserves' had been set aside. Moreover, most of the Crown grants were made to 'loyalist natives'; for the core of the King Movement's followers, this was 'the second lie', the first lie being the pretext of rebellion for the confiscations.

In spite of King Mahuta's new strategy to alter the government's stance from within the Legislative Council, the Kingitanga remained frustrated at not receiving a fair settlement of the confiscations. In 1928 this issue again became the central cause of the King Movement, when the charismatic Princess Te Puea began negotiations for a settlement after the release of a report by a Royal Commission concluding that the confiscations had been excessive. However, it took eighteen years before the New Zealand government and the leaders of the King Movement reached an agreement about financial compensation in the form of an annual grant. To administer the grant, the Tainui Maaori Trust Board

(TMTB) was established in 1946 by Parliament.¹² During its first year, the TMTB received £5,000, but since 1978 it has been receiving a grant of - after the national currency had been changed - NZ\$ 15,000 per annum.

Initially, the deal with the government about compensation for the confiscations temporarily appeased the resentment of King Movement supporters. It restored a sense of pride among the staunchest supporters of the Maori King, who were inclined to believe that the government had finally recognized their movement, but this revival was based on a trade-off with respect to the confiscations. After all the years of negotiating a settlement, the King Movement had finally 'frozen' its demand for the return of all the confiscated lands and accepted financial compensation instead. As a result, the Kingitanga has become increasingly depoliticized. The establishment of the TMTB has resulted in a shift of the power centre of Kingitanga tribes from the headquarters of an 'illegal' movement to an institution formally appointed by the government. And although the TMTB is, from the Kingitanga's point of view, still answerable to the movement, formally the Board is only accountable to the government.

Presently, all political interaction between Kingitanga tribes and European institutions takes place through the TMTB, and the Maori monarchy has become a purely ceremonial Crown, whose influence is largely confined to the tribes of the Tainui confederation, which includes the Waikato tribe (see also footnote 12). The consequence of accepting the government's offer of a monetary settlement has thus been an institutionalization of interethnic politics in the form of the TMTB, which, in turn, has resulted in a differentiation of power between the King Movement and the Trust Board.

In recent years, the King Movement and the TMTB have become increasingly estranged, symbolizing an increasing rift between two power domains, one 'traditional' and based on criteria such as seniority and oratorical skills, the other concerned with interethnic politics and based on criteria such as education and an understanding of European dynamics. The differentiation of power simultaneously implies a division of objectives. The Kingitanga is now widely regarded as the movement whose task it is to preserve the past, while the TMTB is charged with preparing the Tainui people for the future. The Kingitanga is more concerned with matters of identity, while the TMTB focuses on the equality of living standards through the implementation of tribal

¹² Tainui is the name of the confederation of tribes to which the Waikato tribe of the head of the Maori monarchy also belonged. Although most of the land confiscated was Waikato land, two other Tainui tribes had also been affected by the confiscations.

development programmes. Tainui people still regard the Kingitanga and the TMTB as complementary, and argue that the past needs to be preserved in order to meet the challenges of the future, but in practice, the significance of the Kingitanga in interethnic politics is negligible.

The Maori King Movement today

King Potatau's title was handed down by primogeniture to his direct descendants. At present, the kingship is held by Queen Te Atairangikaahu, who is of the fifth generation descending from Potatau. She is the first woman to lead the Kingitanga. Generally, Te Ata is addressed as Te Arikinui ('Superior Paramount Chief'), although, ironically, various respected spokespersons of the Queen pointed out to me that she is supposed to rank above the chiefs:

There are so many *ariki* [paramount chiefs], it's not funny. Te Ata is above them. She is at the same level as the British Queen. She is Te Kuini Maori [the Maori Queen].

However, even though in the early days the King Movement was recognized by some non-Tainui tribes, at present, only Tainui people recognize Te Ata as their monarch. The wars in the previous century drew the Tainui tribes together as the strongest adherents of the Maori King. Some of the original non-Tainui supporters of the King Movement distanced themselves from the conflict between Potatau's own tribes and the colonial government, and this historical schism has never really been repaired. Nevertheless, the present Maori Queen does much to promote the King Movement beyond Tainui circles. She attends countless official functions and tribal gatherings throughout New Zealand and overseas. She also receives and entertains distinguished visitors from abroad, who wish to meet with a representative of Maoridom. As such, Te Ata is widely respected beyond her own tribe, though she is not granted any intertribal authority. She is only recognized as ceremonial head of the Kingitanga.

Nowadays Kingitanga activities are confined to two ceremonial gatherings, the *poukai* and the coronation anniversary celebrations, referred to as 'the Coronation'. The first functions primarily as a Tainui communication network, while the second attracts visitors from beyond Tainui. At *poukai*, old respected elders re-establish links among Tainui tribes while reminiscing about the origins of the King Movement. Topics discussed in the ceremonial speeches at these gatherings exemplify the depoliticization of the movement. The purpose of the Kingitanga is

usually described as protecting a distinct Maori identity, often referred to as *te mana Maori motuhake*, or the separate spiritual prestige of the Maori people, while their motto has become *kia tau te rangimarie*, 'hold fast to peace'.

The focus of the Coronation is slightly different from the *poukai*. Apart from the continuous exchange of ceremonial speeches, at the centre of this three- or four-day long gathering are sports and cultural competitions, which attract visitors from beyond Tainui, particularly young people accompanied by elders. In the ceremonial exchange of speeches, the debate about the original purpose of the King Movement - intertribal unity - is revived. Although Maoridom shows a united front at the Coronation, the prestigious gathering merely constitutes a form of ceremonial unity, which masks the tribal fragmentation of Maori society.

However, it would be incorrect to downplay the significance of the Kingitanga in the contemporary period. The Maori Queen is perhaps the most popular leader of the Kingitanga so far. The annual celebration of the anniversary of her coronation attracts more visitors from all over New Zealand than ever before. The enhanced appeal of the Maori Crown is, nevertheless, clearly a consequence of the depoliticization of the movement, which has allowed the Queen to travel and present the movement to a wider public. The Queen's visits to other tribal territories and overseas have increased the awareness that, unlike her great-great-grandfather Taawhiao, she no longer aspires to govern all the Maori people of New Zealand. She has also made other tribes realize that the aim of the Kingitanga now reaches beyond the quest for redress of the confiscations, which chiefly affected the Tainui tribes. And, as Queen Te Ata has transformed the traditional objectives of the movement, she has widened her symbolic recognition beyond the Tainui tribes.

To many Maori people, the Queen is an important leader of the Maori community in the New Zealand nation. However, the charisma of the Maori Queen is confined to matters of identity. She is the symbolic head of a Maori enclave in a European-dominated society and it is understood that she accepts the sovereignty of the government. The Maori Queen encourages people to retain their distinct cultural identity and plays a significant role in the contemporary revival of Maori culture in the popular sense of the term. Queen Te Ata enhances the self-esteem of Maori people and makes them feel proud to be Maori.

Concluding remarks

In spite of the contemporary revitalization of the Maori King Movement as a ceremonial institution emphasizing the distinct cultural identity of the indigenous population of New Zealand, it must be concluded that the Maori monarchy has failed to achieve its original objective of establishing intertribal, if not pan-tribal, unity under the authority of a Maori King or Queen. Although the present Maori Queen is immensely popular, not only among her own tribal confederation but also beyond her tribal district, it is clear that her agenda has become depoliticized since the founding of the Tainui Maaori Trust Board. Nowadays it is the administrative council of the Maori Queen's confederation that is responsible for the political aims (a satisfactory settlement of the land confiscations) of the tribal core of the Maori King Movement, which, in turn, has enabled the Queen to focus on cultural instead of political aspects of the movement. Thus, the present success of the Maori King Movement must be viewed in the light of its main weakness: the inability to transcend the tribal affiliation of the monarch.

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