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Patuone and Officialdom

It is clear from the official record alone that the success for *pākehā* generally and the various instrumentalities set up by burgeoning government, was dependent on *rangatira*, including Patuone and Nene, whose support and benignity towards them was important and influential. Without consent and co-operation, nothing would have been accomplished; without sponsorship of the crown by major figures such as Patuone and Nene, the task would have been virtually unmanageable, given the complexities of Māori politics and the extreme passions and sensitivities around at the time. Even at the time of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, with a comparatively small number of Europeans in the land, any combined pan-Māori force would have easily demolished any European presence.

In the first place, *pākehā* authority which Māori recognised as *kāwanatanga* was understood as something quite distinctive from *rangatiratanga*. In the *pākehā* mind, however, there was a blurring between these two meanings, particularly exploited in the text of the Treaty of Waitangi. Whether this had been part of a deliberate plan from the beginning or part of a developing recognition as *pākehā* power and institutions grew, is not important: for all the sweet words, the Treaty was ascribed minor value by *pākehā* and major value by Māori *on trust*. Of course, much of the evidence for this would take some time to develop and become clear to all. By that stage, those signatories still living could only observe the progressive insult upon their *mana*, their *rangatiratanga*, their faith and their trust. ¹

Under the leadership and through the *mana* and eloquence of Heke, Nene and Patuone, the Treaty obtained its first signatories. Those who signed initially did so in the greatest trust and faith. In spite of many misgivings and fervent exhortations that Hobson go home to England, Patuone and Nene especially knew also that there could be no return to what had been before: the *pākehā* was not going to leave voluntarily and the ways in which the lives of Māori had been impacted, materially, physically and socially could not be expunged and handed back as legacies of a failed experiment. It is certain that the concerns expressed by other leading chiefs was fully shared and recognised by Heke, Nene and Patuone. Even if the British left, the French would arrive; perhaps even the Americans. That Heke, together with Kawiti, was to embark on a military campaign to vent his sense of betrayal indicated his decision to return to the old ways of solving problems; in the meantime, Patuone and Nene decided that this was not the pathway to follow and that no matter what, they had to support the process to which they had submitted. For Patuone it was particularly poignant for it was a process begun with the first sighting of Cook in 1769. The major tragedy to arise from this state of affairs of course was that, as had long been such a historical fact in Ngāpuhi, friend became pitted against friend, kin against close kin. In Heke's case too, Hongi's deathbed warnings against those 'who come dressed in red' had always been a call-to-action in waiting.

Again, it is not likely that this division was a deliberate and planned strategy on the part of the government overall although there would have been many advisors, well versed and experienced in *tikanga Māori* who recognised the advantages which would accrue under the principle of division, which had always been endemic in Ngāpuhi anyway. This was important because the Treaty was conceived and sponsored within the *rohe* of Ngāpuhi. In one way therefore, this was a continuation of history but in a new and deadlier context since at the end of the events which were to proceed, for Heke and Kawiti and their forces and supporters, it meant a diminution if not total loss of their *rangatiratanga* anyway. In sum it was more a continuation of the lack of serious interest in detail and true commitment on the part of the British government and its various colonial instruments. In hindsight, for all the best intentions of some, overall for Māori the Treaty instruments remain a subtle and lingering insult, a betrayal and an artifact of cultural and linguistic ignorance. New Zealand therefore became a crown colony ² in May 1841 and the pathways of discontent would continue to grow.

Apart from considerable ignorance—deliberate or not—on the part of many of the key players on the side of the Crown, the underpinning problem which arose in the Treaty wording was an assumption that two worlds, two cultures and two languages were a general approximation of each other. The fact that greater care was not taken with the wording in Māori indicates that in the eyes of *pākehā* it had become a valid outcome through a process of assumed validity; a process which needed to be completed as part of putting the house in order so that all parties could get on with the serious business of life. The evidence for this 'linguistic colonialism' can be found in the Māori sense of value. Ownership of land was more a matter of guardianship and the Māori term *kaitiaki*, conveys this well. Therefore it is arguable whether axes, nails, blankets and other goods of *pākehā* trade for land to Māori were anything more than items to be used under the same notion of guardianship as *utu* for use of the land rather than as payment for absolute title, a concept totally foreign to Māori. In the same way, when Nene and Patuone referred to the Governor as 'father and protector' (*matua* and *kaiwhakaora*) they meant it in the sense of him as the representative of a system which had an assumed integrity, honour and truth. What is also highly significant is that the Treaty was never ratified in the time of those who signed it, yet again suggesting that in the end it was merely an artifact of convenience, designed by *pākehā* to buy time for increasing colonisation and a not-so-subtle conquest by numbers.

In the case of Patuone and Nene and apart from Gipps (1791-1847) whose operational base was in New South Wales and who was ostensibly overseeing Governor from January 1840 to May 1841; they were to have close dealings with all governors and lieutenants, however titled, and senior parliamentary administrators until their respective deaths, in particular, Hobson (1792-1842), Lieutenant Governor from May 1842 to September 1842; FitzRoy (1805-1865), Governor from December 1843 to November 1845; Grey (1812-1898), Governor from November 1854 to December 1853; Gore Browne (1807-1887), Governor from September 1855 to October 1861; Grey again from December 1861 to February 1868 and Bowen from February 1868 until the death of Nene on 4th August 1871 and Patuone on 19th September 1872.

1. While it might be argued that the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal and commencement of claims settlements in the 1980s began to address the manifest errors and wrongs done, these moves alone are miniscule in the wider scheme of loss related to *rangatiratanga* and *mana whenua*. In traditional Māori terms and as has been foretold, until *utu* is fully made and *take* are properly satisfied, our nation will always be held back and not allowed to achieve its fullest potential. It will also lead to various disasters being suffered by the nation. ([back](#))

2. New Zealand was granted self-governing status in 1856. It became a Dominion on 26 September 1907 and achieved full independence under the Statute of Westminster in 1931, this being adopted finally by the New Zealand Parliament in 1947. ([back](#))

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