Purple pocket part I

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INTRODUCTION TO PART I

The first section of this part, "Maori Economic Prospects", establishes Maori economic activities and prosperity at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The second section, "1840 - 1860", indicates continuing economic success for a number of tribes, although fluctuating in some areas and beginning to decline in the South Island especially. The effects of the New Zealand Company are discussed, and the resentment of settlers who could not compete successfully with Maori enterprises in the open market.

The third section, "Supportive Ideology", outlines some of the popular ideas which undergirded the rising ideological conflict between Maori and settlers.

Part I ends with the outbreak of the warfare which characterised the 1860s.

MAORI WORDS AND PHRASES

ahi kaa: part of customary land tenure involving keeping alight or relighting of cooking fires
hapu: sub-tribe
hokohoko: trade
iwi: tribe, people
kawanatanga: function of government
Kingitanga: King Movement
koha: gift
Ngai Tahu: name of South Island tribe
rangatira: leader, chief
(tino) rangatiratanga: independence
tiriti: treaty
utu: restoration of balance
whanau: family

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MAORI ECONOMIC PROSPECTS

Prior to European contact, Maori society was stable, with ways of regulating relationships between individuals and groups and dealing with behaviour that breached those boundaries within the family and tribe. Maori lived in a balance based on the reciprocity of utu. Territorial tribal boundaries over land and waters were established and maintained by a network of customs, usage such as ahi kaa, and genealogical relationships, and would, if necessary, be defended by warfare.

Surpluses of the resources produced by whanau, hapu and iwi by hunting, gathering, fishing and agriculture were exchanged for goods and services from others, through koha and other customary procedures.

The early years of contact brought new things and ideas, which were incorporated into the Maori world. Even the introduction of muskets, a new military technology, which destabilised territorial relationships, had become so widespread by the 1830s that restabilisation was well under way. However, the activities of settler organisations such as the New Zealand Company exploited temporary boundary changes, before customary processes such as ahi kaa had had time to operate. This resulted in questionable 'purchase' and longterm problems.

Generally, Maori people welcomed new metal tools and machinery, new crops and livestock. They were able to produce many goods for sale, because they had both the resources which their lands and waters provided and a well co-ordinated and motivated labour force organised through whanau, hapu and iwi processes.

Their first transactions with the crews of visiting ships from about 1790 onwards were followed, in the North, by housing and feeding the missionaries. However, production of surplus was such that cargoes including potatoes, flax, timber, pigs and other products, as well as the result of Maori fishermen's skill were soon being exported to Australia.

The Waitangi Tribunal summarised the evidence in the Muriwhenua Fishing report (page 58) in this way:

> From 1807 there was intense competition among the whaling ships from France, America, Norway, Spain and East India Company, with some sixteen boats arriving each year by

1813. By then Maori were benefitting considerably, having a monopoly on providing supplies. From imported seeds, huge gardens were planted out. The excess was exported, treated flax, timber, potatoes, sweet corn, preserved fish and pork being sent with the main shipments of seal skins, whale oil and bone. In return Maori were exposed to all manner of European goods and commodities. They also became accustomed to trading with cash.

The competition continued. In 1836, 151 whaling vessels visited the Bay of Islands, the numbers being even higher in the following six months. On another account 861 British whalers came to New Zealand between 1771 and 1844, on 2153 voyages. Soon, the greater interest in whaling shifted to the South Island and the East Coast of the North Island although the Bay of Islands remained important.

The Tribunal report goes into great detail on the subject of whaling and fishing, although it makes it clear that it expects to receive further information pertaining to claims in other areas, especially Ngai Tahu. The Tribunal commissioned special studies from Dr. G. Habib, including a review of written sources such as R.W. Firth's Economics of the New Zealand Maori (1929).

The Tribunal used this historical evidence to reach its conclusion that by the time the Treaty came to be signed Maori fisheries were extensive and valuable, and used by the people as prized commercial assets.

Harry Evison writes of the southern experience, in Ngai Tahu Land Rights, page 11:

> The regular food supply had to come from food-gathering and fishing, from the natural resources of the countryside and its rivers, streams, lakes and seacoasts. This required great knowledge of the country, and of nature. It was necessary to know the best places, the best seasons and the methods for obtaining the various foods that the country had to offer. The various seafoods of the shore, the fish of the sea, the tuna, kanakana and inaka of the rivers and streams, the birds of the forest, the kiore, koreke and weka of the scrub and grasslands, the titi, the edible parts of the mamaku and ti and many other plants, all required specialised knowledge and sometimes expeditions over considerable distances. . . Ngai Tahu knew their country well, even to its remote recesses. The valued knowledge of the best routes, the best river- crossings, the best camp-sites and the best food-catching places, was handed on from generation to generation.

By the 1830's, Maori traders were getting fed up with difficulties with shipping. Because their ships were not sailing under a registered international flag, harbour and unloading arrangements were hard to organise. This culminated in 1830 in the seizure of the 'Sir George Murray' and the impounding of her cargo.

The desire to regulate trade and recognise changing relationships with the outside world led to the 1835 Confederation of United Tribes. The Confederation declared its independence, selected a flag and through the offices of the British Resident, registered it internationally. Busby also had the Declaration translated into English by missionaries, and sent it to Britain, where it was acknowledged.

The Declaration claimed independence, sovereignty and jurisdiction in the first two clauses, stating that the Rangatira "will not permit any legislative authority separate from themselves in their collective capacity to exist, nor any function of government (Kawanatanga) to be exercised within the said territories, unless by persons appointed by them". The third clause concerned meeting annually "for the purpose of framing laws for the dispensation of justice, the preservation of peace and good order, and the regulation of trade (hokohoko)". In the final clause the Confederation seeks the protection of the King of England: "and in return for the friendship and protection they have shown, and are prepared to show, to such of his subjects as have settled in their country, or resorted to its shores for the purposes of trade, they entreat that he will continue to be the parent of their infant State, and that he will become its Protector from all attempts upon its independence".

Ropes, timber, wheat, potatoes, whale oil and dried fish formed the bulk of the export trade. Some of the historical evidence suggests that Maori people had a positive attitude to the establishment of small European settlements which provided opportunities for local trade, both because of the commodities which they brought, and because they were a market for produce, especially produce that was too perishable for export - fresh meat and fish, vegetables, and dairy goods.

The second clause of the Declaration was acted on in 1840 with the signing of Te Tiriti O Waitangi, in which the Rangatira made provision for Kawanatanga to be exercised by Hobson.

A major factor in the rapid changes which led up to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi was the New Zealand Company. This was a commercial venture, which, it became clear, intended to go ahead with organised colonisation, and, by 1838 was

issuing prospectuses, selling shares, enlisting emigrants and trading in land which it had not yet acquired in New Zealand. Many of its investors were simply speculators, and the whole enterprise was characterised by a limited set of ideas which would admit no other interpretation, despite any evidence which might be offered by its opponents. Patricia Burn's book, Fatal Success, reveals and comments penetratingly on the Company, and its agent in command of the expedition, William Wakefield.

> It is apparent throughout the long official journal that William Wakefield never queried the validity of his brother Gibbon's argument, "Possess yourselves of the Soil and you are secure".

While the New Zealand Company and the Colonial Office battled it out in Britain, their respective agents, William Wakefield and William Hobson, raced to New Zealand. Wakefield's task was to "possess the company of the soil". Hobson's task was to negotiate a treaty which would enable Britain to control the Company, and to control the process of colonisation, which was now seen as more or less inevitable.

1840 - 1860

1840 - 1860 was a time of expanding Maori trade. Many tribes were housing and feeding settlers and continued exporting. Books like Fatal Success and Early Victorian New Zealand provide helpful background to some of the events of the early 1840s, including the activities and effects of the New Zealand Company.

There are indications that some Maori groups welcomed the prospects of the expanded market which settlement could offer. Of course it is important to bear in mind that each tribe has had a unique historical experience, just as the relationship of each iwi to the Treaty itself has its own particular characteristics. In different areas, some of the interactions with settlers had a particular style, and certainly the timing of similar events varies from area to area. But within the first 20 years after the signing of the Treaty, many Maori experienced something of an economic boom.

The pinch was felt in the North first. The economic effects of the actions of the Governor, first in taking over income from shipping on behalf of the Crown, then in shifting the capital to Auckland, caused a recession in the Maori economy. The fact that Hone Heke interpreted these actions as being in breach of the Treaty is an indication of his understanding that it was an economic document to regulate trade.

In the South, on the other hand, as Evison details (pages 15-16), business was booming, for a while.

> During the 1840's Ngai Tahu began to establish themselves as successful farmers and traders, and were keen to take up pastoral farming.... At Whakaroa (Pigeon Bay) in 1843 according to a member of the local Scottish settlers the Hay family, all the bush-felling was done by the Maori, who afterwards planted potatoes and sowed wheat or oats. They were also employed for fencing. The Europeans regarded the Maori as "a good shearer, a capital hand in the bush with an axe, and industrious as a cultivator". At Waikouaiti by 1844, each Maori farmer was said to have a wheat field of his own. In 1848 at Arowhenua, European visitors found the Maori were successfully cultivating wheat and potatoes with excellent results, as well as pumpkins, marrows and corn, and they were keen to obtain sheep and cattle so as to take up grazing as well.....(They) added mixed farming to the economic resources they already had. Thus their whole economy and prosperity became based even more firmly on the land, and on the freedom to move about the countryside to their traditional food-gathering grounds, in season, as they had done for generations past.
>
> The 1840's were a time of prosperity and promise for Ngai Tahu, based on their traditional resource, the land. Through their skill and hard work, they could look forward to the future as a community of farmers, living comfortably on the proceeds of their combined efforts side by side with the European colonists, prosperous and secure in their own homeland.

Ngai Tahu wanted to keep for themselves the land between the Waimakariri and Ashley rivers, so that they could themselves become pastoral farmers. But, as the map shows, a spate of purchases took away Ngai Tahu lands in rapid succession. The Ngai Tahu claim details forced purchases, with un-negotiable compulsory prices; failure to respect agreements to exclude certain blocks of land from purchase; that the "tenths" promised by the NZCo were not forthcoming; and that the reserves offered by the Crown were a travesty.

Harry Evison's book is a good source of information about Ngai Tahu. The cheating, deception and ultimate failure of the New Zealand Company, and its effects on either side of the Cook Strait can be found in Fatal Success.Tony Simpson, in Te Riri Pakeha gives a lot of information about the Waikato. The Report of the Waitangi Tribunal on

Muriwhenua, from which the following quotations are taken, also fills in a lot of background about the prosperity of this period.

The first Attorney-General, William Swainson, speaking of trade with the Auckland settlement, said in the early fifties:

> They had upwards of 3,000 acres of land in wheat, 3,000 acres in potatoes, nearly 2,000 acres in maize and upwards of 1,000 acres planted in kumaras. They owned nearly 1,000 horses, 200 head of cattle and 5,000 pigs, four water mills and 96 ploughs. They were also the owners of 43 small vessels, averaging 20 tons each, and upwards of 900 canoes.

In 1857, he offered some interesting information about Maori commerce:

> From a distance of nearly a hundred miles, the natives supply the market of Auckland with the produce of their industry; brought partly by land carriage, partly by small coasting craft, and partly by canoes. In the course of the year 1852, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two canoes entered the harbour of Auckland, bringing to market by this means alone two hundred tons of potatoes, fourteen hundred baskets of onions, seventeen hundred baskets of maize, twelve hundred baskets of peaches, twelve hundred tons of firewood, forty-five tons of fish, and thirteen hundred pigs, besides flax, poultry, vegetables. They are the owners also of numerous small coasting craft. . . .

Lady Martin, the wife of the chief Justice, travelled through the Waikato in 1858 and wrote later of her journey:

> Our path lay across a wide plain, and our eyes were gladdened on all sides by sights of peaceful industry. For miles we saw one great wheat field. The blade was just showing, of a vivid green, and all along the way, on either side, were peach trees in full blossom. Carts were driven to and from the mill by their native owners, the women sat under trees sewing flour bags and babies swarmed around. . . We little dreamed that in ten years the peaceful industry of the whole district would cease and the land become a desert through our unhappy war.

At about the same time, the Austrian geologist Ferdinand von Hochstetter passed through the same district:

> At 5 p.m. we reached Rangiowahia, situated in the fertile plain of the Waikato and Waipa. Extensive wheat, maize, and potatoe-plantings surround the place, broad carriage-roads run in different directions, numerous horses and herds of well-fed cattle bear testimony to the wealthy condition of the natives; and the huts scattered over a large area are entirely concealed among fruit trees. A separate race-course is laid out, here is a court-house, there a store, further on a mill on a mill-pond, and high above the luxuriant fruit-trees rise the tapering spires of the Catholic and Protestant churches. . . Such is Rangiowahia - the only Maori settlement, among those I have seen which might be called a town - a place, which by its central position in the most fertile district of the North Island, and as the central point of the corn trade, bids fair to rise ere long to the rank and size of a staple-town.

In its finding on the Manukau Harbour (page 23), the Waitangi Tribunal used this and similar information to report:

> The Europeans also brought schools and trade. Much land was gifted by the Waikato people for the endowment of missionary schools. Large areas of Waikato were cultivated for wheat, potatoes, maize and kumara. With missionary help the Waikato Maoris built and operated several flour mills. It is recorded that in 1858 in the Port of Auckland 53 small vessels were registered as being in native ownership and the annual total of native canoes entering the harbour was more than 1,700. At about that time the Waikato Maoris established their own trading bank. This was the golden age of Maori agriculture and growth. Peace and prosperity seems assured. In fact it was short lived . . .

It was short lived because in 1863 Grey ordered the invasion of the Waikato and so started the Land Wars that lasted until 1872. However the tensions which erupted into warfare had been brewing for some years previously.

Maori people were competing favourably with settlers from their secure economic base: they controlled their land and resources, and worked as a productive labour force based on kinship and collectivity. But the settlers arrived full of assumptions about white superiority, and soon became resentful of Maori success. There were many philosophical lines of thought which undergirded their assumptions.

SUPPORTIVE IDEOLOGY

Colonial expansion was supported by a number of theories which justified what was happening. Some were about the superiority of European people. Some were about the right to take land.

Belich in the final chapter of The New Zealand Wars: The Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict (page 322), describes a background of simple ethnocentricity, and further identifies three major groups of ideas.

> The first was the conviction of British military superiority per se; the second was the notion that British victory over such people as the Maori was, by a law of nature, inevitable; and the third was the belief that most non-European peoples, including the Maori, lacked the intellectual qualities known as the higher mental faculties.

The second group of ideas showed up as the theory of 'Fatal Impact'.

> A basic axiom of nineteenth century racial thought was that Europeans in contact with lesser races would inevitably exterminate, absorb, or, at the very least, subordinate them.

Justification for this idea that race was a key historical factor came from two directions. The earlier, related to notions from the biblical stories of creation, descendents of the various sons of Noah having different destinies: there was a hierarchy of races from white to darkest. After about 1850, theories of evolution, such as the survival of the fittest, and ideas of a progress of social evolution from 'most primitive' to 'most civilised', began to emerge. By the 1860s, Social Darwinism, as it is called, was very influential. There was an increasing use of 'scientific fact', such as genetics and phrenology, to prove the stereotypes, such as the absence of higher faculties.

> The grand qualities which secure the continuous advance of mankind, the generalising power of pure reason, the love of perfectibility, the desire to know the unknown, and, last and greatest, the ability to observe new phenomena and new relations, - these mental faculties seem to be deficient in all the dark races, wrote William Farrar in 1867.

These ideas, and earlier ones such as Rousseau's concept of 'the Noble Savage', influenced the assumptions made by liberal

and paternalistic Europeans too. The latter simply disagreed that the inferior state of people such as Maori was fixed forever. By example and aspiration, Maori could gradually be raised from their savagery to a state of equality.

In terms of popular folk ideas, it was not necessary for soldiers and settlers to know the theories to accept the basic principle, and to "know' that it was scientifically proven.

> To accept Spencer's metaphor of the struggle for existence, you did not have to understand his theory of the dynamics of matter, or even know who he was, any more than a small capitalist needs to be familiar with Adam Smith to advocate free enterprise. (Belich, page 326).

Fatal Impact theory led to the myth of the Maori as "a dying race". In fact, as Sorrenson showed in the 1950s, the Maori population decline was not brought about by inherent weaknesses in Maori character or social organisation, but by poverty, as their economic base was systematically taken over and their language and culture attacked and undermined. Diseases to which their population had as yet no resistance took a high toll as their general health declined.

Other important ideas were that of "Manifest Destiny" which said that white races inevitably must rule the world. This was a task which they must do, however unwillingly - they must carry the "white man's burden". These ideas fit into a patri-archal world view, which was strongly supported by the church, which also supplied doctrine about the creation of Man to have 'dominion over' the natural world.

Patricia Burns (page 71) and Harry Evison (pages 18-19) both write of the ideological basis for settlers taking over land.

> In a period when the European powers were establishing empires in the 'New World', international lawyers were justifying such actions and laying down guidelines for them. The lawyer who most influenced the colonisers of New Zealand was one Emeric de Vattel, whose Droit des Gens, 1758, was translated and published in two volumes in London in 1760 as The Law of Nations.....
>
> Chapter XVIII examined the 'celebrated question, to which the discovery of the new world has principally given rise', whether a nation may lawfully take part of a vast country inhabited by small 'erratic nations',

These had no right to land which they could not cultivate. If they were nomadic, and not making 'actual and constant' use of the land, this could be lawfully taken by 'the people of Europe, too closely pent up'. This action was justified because 'the earth belongs to the human race in general, and was designed to furnish it with subsistence'. . . . . .

James Stephen (secretary in the Colonial Office), himself a lawyer, was to write in the year of the colonisation of New Zealand, "Whatever may be the ground occupied by international jurists, they never forget the policy and interests of their own Country. Their business is to give rapacity and injustice the most decorous veil which legal ingenuity can weave". . .

As Stephen was writing, the agent of the then New Zealand Company was, in contempt of the Government, already on his way to New Zealand with instructions stating that wilderness land there meant little or nothing to its owners, and could become valuable only through the work and capital of British emigrants. The lessons from Vattel had been well learned, with supplementary instruction from the respected Dr Thomas Arnold, Headmaster of Rugby School. In 1831 he had written that 'so much does the right of property go along with labour, that civilised nations have never scrupled to take possession of countries inhabited only by tribes of savages: who merely hunted over the land without utilising it'. The English poor, however, were not entitled to 'seize their due share' of their own native land. Arnold was interested in the New Zealand Company, and had bought land in New Zealand from it.

* *

In history it is interesting how often a theory is found to suit the needs of the moment. This was the case with the "Waste Land" theory, which held that indigenous peoples like the Maori had no right to the wide open spaces of their ancestral lands. This theory was first put forward by Vattel, an 18th-century French legalist, who argued that cultivation alone gave the right to hold land - not hunting or food-gathering, which were "idle" means of existence. "Those who yet hold to the idle mode of life", wrote Vattel, "usurp more land than they would require with honest labour, and cannot complain if other nations, more laborious and too much pent-up, come and occupy a portion of it".

> Vattel's theory suggested that it was but a law of Nature that Europeans should go out and occupy those lands. Lord Durham went further, and suggested that it was a law of God, who had chosen Englishmen especially for the task. Those lands, declared Durham, were the rightful patrimony of the English people, which God and Nature have set aside in the New World for those whose lot has assigned them but insufficient portions in the Old.

Lord Durham was Governor of the New Zealand Company. The Company's theorists, especially economist Edward Gibbon Wakefield, drew heavily on these and similar ideas. Britain's social problems, caused apparently by "lot", rather than by either God or the activities of the ruling class, could be solved by export of people to colonies rather than by distributive justice at home.

The rise and massive expansion and accumulation of capital was followed by the development of theory to account for it. The 'science' of economics was in its infancy, part of an intellectual and philosophical struggle to make sense of the social and political upheavals which we now refer to as the Industrial Revolution.

WARFARE

The second article of Te Tiriti O Waitangi entitled Maori people to consent or refuse to sell land. During the latter part of the 1850s they began to exercise the right to refuse to sell. This was a cause of conflict from the settlers, who would take no for an answer. Increasingly they began to buy land from Maori people who had no traditional role in the management of land, and get up to all sorts of tricks documented elsewhere. The King Movement began during this time with one of its main purposes being to put all land under a central authority which would only allow further land to be alienated in very special cases.

Kingitanga (the King Movement) and other land sales resistance by Maori, was effective. Ultimately, the response of the Settlers, who by now had a measure of self-government, was warfare. In this they were supported by British imperial forces and leadership. The wars are well-documented by writers like Simpson and Belich. Simpson says they were about land: Belich considers that land was one aspect, but that the settler desire to establish substantive sovereignty and Maori determination to maintain tino rangatiratanga were equally important.

Certainly what happened as a result of the war in the Waikato had long-term effects on the Maori economic base, because the confiscations of land led directly to the setting up of the Maori Land Court.

In July of 1863 the invasion of the Waikato began. Later in the same year, the Cabinet which had made the invasion decision introduced two pieces of legislation which provided for confiscation. The Suppression of Rebellion Act was based word for word on the Irish Act of 1799 which was used to put down the rebellion of Irish people against British rule. It suspended the right of trial before imprisonment, constituted military courts to deal with offences, and threatened "death or prison" to those brought before the courts. The wording of the Act clearly stated its intention to punish "certain aboriginal (Maori) tribes of the colony" for rebelling against the Crown (settler government). The New Zealand Settlement Act empowered confiscation of any district where any 'considerable number' of natives were deemed to be in rebellion. Any Maori who resisted the invasion was a rebel.