



Moe mai ra e te whaea

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

OF

WHAINGAROA

~i roto i te reo Maori~

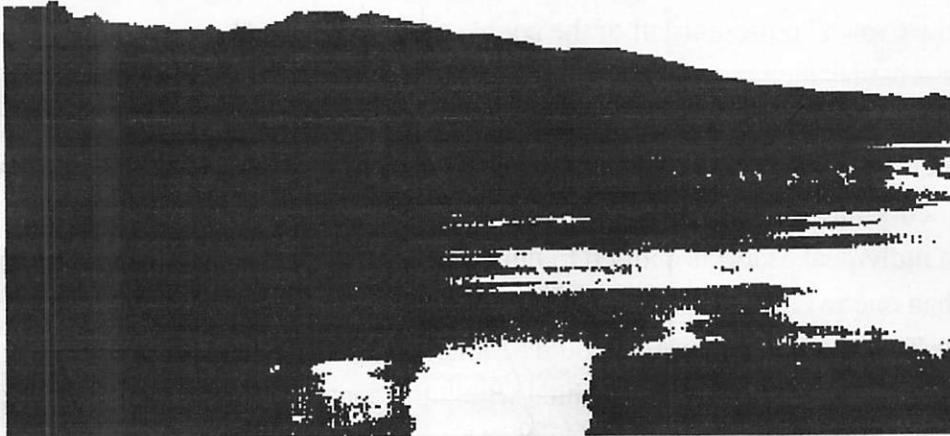
On this day, the eleventh of February, 1996 we remember the struggles of the world's indigenous peoples against the injustices of colonization, where there has always come a time when they have exercised their rights to claim against the independence taken from them.

That time has come for the people of Whaingaroa, who accordingly declare their independence as a sovereign state. This Declaration acknowledges that the people of Whaingaroa will henceforth seek to exercise all the rights, privileges and duties which vest in Independent States and the manner in which we choose to exercise such rights shall be sourced in the *tikanga* and historical practices of our *tupuna*.

- To claim those rights is to exercise in its fullest sense the *tino rangatiratanga* of our people and to reclaim without restriction the *Maori Motuhake mai ra ano*.
- To effectively exercise that authority is to accept a burdensome but spiritual obligation which we do with both humility and pride.
- To maintain our rights to do so is to reject the authority of those who continue to deny us that right and to free ourselves from the tyranny of colonial dispossession.
- As part of our Independent authority we offer to treat and negotiate with other states and peoples of goodwill especially the nations of our Indigenous brothers and sisters.
- Most particularly we declare our intention to establish protocol for our future relationships with *Iwi* and *Hapu* throughout the *motu* in the spirit of equality and *whakapapa*.

In rejecting the authority of the colonial state of new Zealand as represented by the Parliament and institutions of the Crown we nevertheless offer dialogue and future inter-relationships which we may henceforth deem to be in our national interest.

And so we call upon those present today and those beyond that the Declaration be accepted and acknowledged as the expression of our wish for freedom.



[Whaingaroa, Aotearoa]

Eva Rickard's letter to the Queen of England
Te Kopua Road
Raglan/Whaingaroa
Aotearoa
13 September 1995

Tena koe e te Kuini o Ingarangi,
Greetings to you oh Queen of England,

I am a native of Aotearoa, tangata whenua, one of the First Nation Peoples of this land.

As a descendant of a signatory to te Tiriti o Waitangi, I was invited and attended in 1990 a reception given by you at the Government House in Wellington.

Perhaps you will recall the apparition wearing a wreath of leaves (a symbol of mourning), dressed in black, and wearing no shoes. When we were introduced, I remarked that your birthday was on the 21 April and mine was on the 19 April. I did not go through the usual process of curtsying as I was meeting you as a treaty partner and an equal. My daughter on the other hand presented your mother with a bouquet of flowers, complete with curtsy, on her visit to Hamilton nearly 30 years ago. Your mother flawless lily-white skin left a lasting impression on me.

I am now 70 years old and have recently been reminded of my great grandparents who were slain at Rangiriri Pa, and of my grandfather who though wounded by British soldiers escaped with his two year old sister by swimming the Waikato River and walking 70 miles overland to his tribe at Whaingaroa. Had he not escaped then I would not have been born. I suppose there are many more stories that are worse than that throughout the history of British colonization and many more unfortunately to come.

I relate my story because this year a much publicized and dramatic event took place between the Government of this country and Dame Te Atairangikaahu. She signed a Deed which was supposed to be for a full, fair, final, durable and honorable settlement of the Waikato Raupatu (Confiscated) lands.

In return for signing away Treaty of Waitangi Article II rights, cash and land, (much of it tenanted probably into perpetuity) to the value of \$170 million was given to trustees as full and final settlement for land currently valued a nearly \$12 billion.

An apology for calling my people rebels was also demanded by those negotiating with your government. As a descendant of those rebels, I don't expect an apology to Waikato.

If there is to be an apology then it should be for not honoring Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This apology should be to the descendants of the chiefs of the tribes (nga rangatira o nga hapu) your treaty partners, and to the iwi Maori throughout this land. To be honest, my people would prefer action not words.

To me, what is done, is done and no amount of talking is going to erase the mistakes, the pain, or dry the

blood of my ancestors. My mother told me, to forgive if I could but never to forget, and as you can see I haven't forgotten.

One hundred and sixty years ago on 28 October 1835, your ancestor King William signed the Declaration of Independence recognizing our Maori nation under the Confederation of Chiefs. That was at a time when we were trading, had an economic base and were prospering.

One hundred and fifty five years ago the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. Then began the decline of my people, te iwi Maori.

Once the treaty was signed your colonists began to claim the 66 million acres of our land. They have been busy ever since selling our land and its treasures to foreigners without our permission. You can stop them if you want to, or you can just be a picture on a \$20 note. If I am rude then colonization is to blame.

If I remember correctly, in once of your speeches at Waitangi, you admitted that the Crown had not been a good partner. In an earlier speech during another visit you said the Treaty of Waitangi is as honorable today as it was in my great-grandmother's time.

It was good to hear, but unfortunately successive governments in this country continue to betray that sacred document and have used it for their own purposes at enormous cost to us, your treaty partners.

In November, you will once again be visiting Aotearoa, New Zealand to open the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. You will be aware that those countries who have not been decolonised such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand are currently grappling unsuccessfully with challenges to the governments land rights policies, and their right to govern First Nations peoples.

Your governments call it a law and order issue, knowing full well that there is a desire by First nations peoples to set up more appropriate procedures and institutions that can be agreed to by you, the Crown, and by us your treaty partner.

Perhaps you could suggest to the Commonwealth Secretariat that the setting up of a Decolonization Commission could be one of the items on the agenda. With the wealth of experience from the many decolonised and now independent nations within the Commonwealth, it is possible that members could provide a forum or mechanism similar to the World International Court for all indigenous peoples of the Commonwealth to resort to in the resolution of problems left over from the British Empire. The presence of such a commission may encourage governments to look for more just and lasting solutions to issues.

I come now to the real purpose of my letter. I write to inform you that I am declaring my Tribe's Independent State in Whaigaroa, Aotearoa, New Zealand on the 12 February 199.

The signing will take place on the 63 acres of land which was confiscated for an aerodrome during World War 2. Our village was demolished and our people made homeless by our forced contribution to the war effort.

The government gave the land to the local County Council after the War, who leased it to a golf club. Although our tribes originally reserved from land sales, 148 acres in Raglan/Whaingaroa and 1400 acres on the slopes of our mountain, over the years these lands have been taken by unjust laws passed by successive governments.

We were arrested on the 12 February 1978 during a sacred service on the burial grounds of our ancestors. Finally in 1984 some of the land, our original village site, was returned. The remainder is still and airport.

I can no longer sit and do nothing. No longer do I have to listen to my elders telling me to be peaceful and believe in God. My gods are my earth mother, my sky father, and their numerous children.

I am declaring my tribe's independence, no matter what it may cost. Like my ancestors, I am willing to die for my people's freedom. It is time that we determine our own future in our own land. If I have to die for this cause it will only be history repeating itself and I will have fulfilled my destiny.

In conclusion, don't get me wrong. You are a special person in our Realm, Maori are special in Aotearoa. Just as you were born to be a queen, I was born to be a fighter for my people's rights.

I remain, through my ancestor, one of your treaty partners and await your reply with interest.
Heoi ano,

Tuaiwa Hautai Kereopa



The response to Eva Ricard's Letter of 13 September 1995

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

9th October, 1995

Dear Ms Rickard

I am commanded by The Queen to thank you for kindly writing last month.

I can assure you that the views expressed in your letter have been very carefully noted. However, any action which Her Majesty might take would only occur on the advice of her New Zealand Ministers, and this would, in turn involve the Governor-general. I believe that this is a point which was made to you when Dame Catherine Tizard recently wrote to you.

I am to thank you again, for writing,

Yours sincerely,

Simon Gimson


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