

Dion Tuuta asks for a few facts.

Dion Tuuta of the Taranaki Daily News asks for facts, so let's put a few on the table.

In 1771, Marion du Fesne and 24 of his party were slaughtered in the Bay of Islands for ignoring wahi tapu when fishing. His crew killed 250 natives and torched their village in retaliation.

In 1820, Hongi Hika (Ngapuhi) on his return from visiting England exchanged all the gifts the King had given him for 300 muskets when passing through Australia on his return to New Zealand. He then went on a rampage south for the next 10 years slaughtering an estimated 60,000 of his unarmed countrymen.

By 1830, the southern tribes had armed themselves and were traveling north to annihilate the northern tribes.

In 1831, it was rumoured that the French naval vessel La Favourite intended to annex New Zealand to France in retaliation for the killings of Marion du Fresne and 24 of his crew and to protect their countrymen now living in New Zealand. The natives decided to place a British flag on the mission flagstaff, reasoning if the French torn it down, the Missionaries would appeal to Britain for protection.

In the same year, 13 northern chiefs wrote to the King asking him to be their guardian and protector, not only from the French, but also from themselves. They were afraid the Maori race would become extinct if the British did not intervene. This is a very interesting letter for the following reasons.

1. Maori admit they had no possessions, *"We are a people without possessions"*. It must be remembered this letter was from some of the most powerful and influential northern (Ngapuhi) chiefs at the time.
2. They admit, Britain was the only land liberal towards them, *"It is only thy land, which is liberal towards us"*, and therefore, asked Britain to be their guardian and protector.
3. They were afraid the French would take away their land, *"We have heard that the tribe of Marian [the French] is at hand, coming to take away our land"*.
4. They were also afraid the southern tribes, now that they were armed, would come and slaughter them for utu - revenge and take away their land. "Therefore we pray thee to become our friend and the guardian of these islands, lest the teasing of other tribes should come near us, and lest strangers should come and take away our land. At the time maori only *"held"* their land as long as they could defend it (*"Ahi ka, The land is theirs until the fire goes out"*). *"Might was Right"* as the Moriori found on the Chatham Islands in 1835 when invaded by the Maori who took their land and farmed them like sheep into virtual extinction.

Britain had no interest in becoming involved in New Zealand but agreed to send a Resident in 1833 to assist in bringing law and order to the people of New Zealand, **but as Britain had no legal jurisdiction over New Zealand, the Resident was of little use.**

Two years later, the 1835 Declaration of Independence was signed, pledging to meet annually to form laws etc but was abandoned without one meeting taking place due to the inter-tribal fighting and tension raging between the tribes. As a result, it was never ratified. *“However, it did introduce Maori to the idea of a legal relationship with Britain and therefore, five years later, to the Treaty of Waitangi”*. Historian Dr Claudia Orange.

In 1840, Britain reluctantly agreed to become legally involved in New Zealand, but only if the chiefs would agree to give up their individual territories to Her Majesty the Queen and New Zealand would become British soil, under English rule and English law. Over 500 chiefs voluntarily signed the Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840 and New Zealand became a British Colony under English rule, English law.

The Tiriti o Waitangi gave the same rights and guarantees to *“all the people of New Zealand”* (Article 2) irrespective of race, colour or creed. Governor Hobson only made and authorised one Treaty of Waitangi/Tiriti o Waitangi, which was in the Maori language and it makes no mention of forests, fisheries or customary rights. Article 3. *“The Queen of England will protect all the Maoris of New Zealand. All the rights will be given to them the same as her doings to the people of England”*. No more – No less.

Since the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, Maori have intermarried of their own free will with other races, therefore are no longer, the distinct race of people that signed the Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840. Through the Tiriti o Waitangi (He iwi tahi tatou – We are now one people) and intermarriage of their own free will, Maori today are New Zealand Citizens with the same rights as all New Zealand Citizens. No more – No less.

“If you think these things are wrong, then blame your ancestors who gave away their rights when they were strong”. The Treaty of Waitangi – An Explanation, by Sir Apirana Ngata. 1922.

The End.