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Ng reo o ng niupepa: M ori language newspapers 1855-1863

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Abstract:

By 1855, most M ori still lived in a tribal setting, with little official P keh interference. This would have been as they expected, exercising their tino rangatiratanga, the chiefly rights guaranteed by the Treaty of Waitangi. However, their world was changing. In an effort to gain P keh goods, many M ori had entered the market economy. Most had converted to Christianity. Many could read and write. Some sold land to accommodate the increasing number of P keh settlers. These trends gratified the government. It envisaged a New Zealand society dominated by P keh , in which European mores would be norm, and where its sovereignty, gained through the Treaty, would be more substantive rather than nominal.

At this tme, the government pursued the policy of iwi kotahi (one people) or "amalgamation". The policy included the aim of elevating M ori socially and economically by extending to them the benefits of European civilisation. It sought too to encourage M ori to give up their "waste" lands for P keh settlement, and for M ori to accept the rule of English law, and government authority. Ultimately the two races would become one society - a P keh -style society. The government used newspapers for disseminating its message to M ori, publishing the bi-lingual Maori Messenger - Te Karere Maori from January 1855 to Spetember 1863.

This thesis investigates the government's newspaper, plus other M ori language newspapers appearing within the period, printed by government agents, evangelical P keh , the Wesleyan Church, and the rival M ori government, the K ngitanga. The thesis not only looks at the impact of newspapers upon M ori society and political issues to M ori, including the first Taranaki War, the Kohimarama Conference, and the impending all-out war with the K ngitanga in Waikato.

Using the newspapers as its major source, this thesis seeks to show how M ori might have understood the issues, and where possible, to allow them to respond in their own voices. We are fortunate that for almost a year the K ngitanga was able to publish its own views in Te Hokioi, thus allowing the anti-government M ori voice to articulate its stand. However, M ori opinion was hardly unitary. The P keh -run M ori language newspapers, through reports, reported speeches, and their corsepondence columns, provide another set of M ori opinions, which show a variety of opinions on political and social issues. Many histories of this period focus on the tensions and conflicts between Crown and M ori, thus marginalising pro-government M ori, the waverers, and those who merely wanted to keep trouble from their door. This thesis endeavours to illuminate the whole colonial discourse as it appeared in the M ori language newspaper, providing a wide range of opinions as possible.

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Research Type: [Thesis](#)

Other language versions: <http://hdl.handle.net/10523/5145> (M ori)

Notes:

This thesis is also available in te reo M ori (the M ori language).

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