

Democracy under attack

By [Dr Muriel Newman](#), NZCPR, 30 July 2017

Democracy has been described as a ‘fragile flower’. Indeed it is, and it’s something we take for granted because our relatively young society has not yet experienced its collapse. But it’s that complacency along with a naive assumption that serious social disorder could never really happen here, that has created opportunities for those who seek to undermine democracy for their own personal gratification and enrichment.

The sad truth is that we have allowed those who want to subvert democracy to have a free reign.

This week’s NZCPR Guest Commentator retired Judge and former university law lecturer Anthony Willy, outlines what’s been going on:

“Until the passing of the Resource Management Amendment Act 2017 the business of territorial local authorities was conducted by the elected representatives of the citizens living in the particular area. That is no longer the case. Henceforth councils will be required to share their statutory powers with self-selected, unelected entities. This marks the end of democratic local government in New Zealand for the obvious reason that the elected members are no longer sovereign but must take account of the wishes of the self-selected group none of whom will be required to submit to the ballot box.”

Anthony is, of course, referring to the consequences of the back-room political deal making between the National and Maori parties earlier this year to unilaterally pass their ‘Mana Whakahono a Rohe’ agreements into law in such a way as to deny all public consultation and avoid any scrutiny by the wider public whatsoever.

By National’s own admission, the new powers that they granted are significant. They will elevate any number of Maori tribal and family groups into positions of partnership with their local authorities for “plan-making, consenting, appointment of committees, monitoring and enforcement, bylaws, regulations and other council statutory responsibilities” – including over fresh water.

Anthony goes on to say, “Given that the activities of local authorities play an increasingly important role in our lives this has the potential for far reaching consequences. No longer will the contents of the district plans which control all important aspects of land and water use, and any activities involving discharges to the atmosphere, be arrived at with the consent and input of the occupants of the district, but they will become subject to the wishes of unelected groups.”

He further explains, “Democracy has fathered a notion of equal importance and that is the ‘Rule of Law’. This is a lawyer’s construct and little discussed or even understood by the general public. It involves the simple imperative that laws enacted by our democratically elected government will be applied equally to all irrespective of creed, colour or social circumstance. The combination of democratic government and the rule of law are the twin pillars on which all of our freedoms rest. Without the support of both pillars the house cannot stand. Absent either of these foundations, the liberties we hold dear cannot survive and one of the competing forms of government will come back to haunt us.”

In legislating Maori tribal groups into the status of an elite ruling class that is totally unaccountable to the public, the National Party has undermined the Rule of Law in New Zealand and corrupted democracy as we know it.

It's fair to ask, how on earth it could have got to this stage – has the nation been asleep while iwi leaders have been advancing their sovereignty agenda?

While the iwi agenda has not been secret, it has not been entirely open either. Much of their manoeuvring has been carried out under the guise of helping disadvantaged Maori. As a result, most New Zealanders have been totally unaware that a long-running and well-planned offensive has been underway.

Some, however, have been trying to raise the alarm for years.

For more than two decades, Professor Elizabeth Rata of Auckland University has warned of the threat being posed by the bicultural movement in New Zealand. She has outlined how a powerful cultural elite from within Maoridom – who were committed to subverting democracy – were positioned inside the State system, to destroy it from within.

According to Professor Rata, biculturalism arose in the seventies, driven by left wing activists who were seeking an alternative to traditional class politics.

What they found, of course, was cultural Marxism – a socialist philosophy originated by a former leader of the Italian Communist Party, Antonio Gramsci, who saw 'culture' as the way to win the class struggle. While the traditional battle to 'liberate' the working class involved taking control of the 'economic means of production and distribution', he focused on controlling the 'cultural means of production'. His work inspired a literal socialist march through culture-forming institutions such as the media, universities, and churches – enlightening those within about the struggle for social justice by 'oppressed' groups in society, centred on race, gender, and sexuality.

Professor Rata explained that many 'biculturalists' moved into positions of power and influence in the education and health professions, social services, and government circles, as public servants and politicians, bringing with them their political commitment to the identity politics agenda: "Victimhood was subsequently understood as oppression by colonisation, the patriarchy, and 'Western' culture generally – an oppression experienced by ethnic groups, indigenous peoples, women, gays, and religious minorities rather than the capitalist exploitation of working class people."

Over the years, New Zealanders have been deceived by the bicultural activists, who have claimed that the movement was a means to greater social justice for marginalised Maori. Yet, in reality, it has been used as a Trojan Horse to enable a rich and powerful tribal elite to grow stronger at a cost to disadvantaged Maori, who are little better off today than they were back then.

John Moore, [writing](#) on the *Liberation* blog run by Dr Bryce Edwards of Otago University, has called *identity politics* an "elitist scam" that enables the state largesse flowing to groups claiming to be marginalised, to end up in the hands of the elites who run the groups, instead of those in need: "Modern social-liberalism – in the form of identity politics – has been exposed as an elitist scam. Gender politics and tino rangatiratanga struggles were all presented as a way to alleviate the poverty, oppression and discrimination of those at the bottom of society. Instead these ideologies have acted to elevate... an elite of those from subjugated sectors of society..."

Professor Rata has also pointed out that while the agenda promoted by biculturalists occurs in the name of social justice, the path to social justice cannot be through ethnic division.

This was reinforced by former US President Barack Obama in 2006, when he said, “Ethnic-based tribal politics has to stop. It is rooted in the bankrupt idea that the goal of politics or business is to funnel as much of the pie as possible to one’s family, tribe, or circle with little regard for the public good. It stifles innovation and fractures the fabric of the society. Instead of opening businesses and engaging in commerce, people come to rely on patronage and payback as a means of advancing. Instead of unifying the country to move forward on solving problems, it divides neighbour from neighbour.”

The reality is that tribalism is an archaic social structure that suits the tribal elite, and no one else. Yet this is what National is supporting through massive state subsidies.

Policies enacted under the tribal ‘by Maori for Maori’ bicultural umbrella have led to separate Maori education systems, Maori university quotas, Maori health care, Maori welfare programmes, Maori housing schemes, and Maori justice programmes. There are Maori government departments and tribunals, Maori-only consultation rights, Maori-only co-governance rights, Maori-only tax rates, and Maori-only charitable status – to name but a few of a vast array of separatist privileges that now exist to support tribalism.

The problem is that the pressure for more tribal power and control is never-ending. Now the Maori Party not only wants to restructure the entire Justice System on “the basis of the Treaty of Waitangi and the foundation of partnership”, but it is also pushing “cultural competency” and a “Maori world view” across the whole of the public sector.

The education system is the latest victim, with cultural competency requirements having become compulsory from 1 July. As a result, all primary and secondary school teachers now have to “Demonstrate a commitment to a bicultural Aotearoa New Zealand” and prioritise “Maori learners as tangata whenua”.

As Professor Barend Vlaardingbroek explained recently in an [article](#) for the NZCPR, “Passive acquiescence won’t do any more: teachers *must* now be *personally committed* to this political paradigm. This is where the new standards leave the democratic domain and enter the totalitarian realm. Bang go teachers’ rights as citizens to hold their own opinions without interference. New Zealand teachers are being deprived of a fundamental right of all citizens in a democracy – the right to disagree with ideological dicta promulgated by the political elite. This right is not about letting teachers get away with denigrating or abusing Maori kids, which falls foul of the duty of care and professional ethics. This is about hitting teachers who are actual or potential political dissenters with a stark choice: submit or vacate. And that is enforced ideological conformity – the antithesis of democracy and an infringement of teachers’ internationally acknowledged human rights.”

With there now being a critical shortage of teachers in New Zealand, one can’t help but wonder whether compulsory cultural competency requirements, that requires all teachers to not only swear an allegiance to the Maori sovereignty agenda, but to indoctrinate the children as well, is the straw that is breaking the camel’s back.

It’s all emerging as Professor Rata warned. The bicultural movement was captured by radical Maori separatists who will not stop until Maori control all governance processes – they want to return the country to Maori. “The bicultural movement in New Zealand has been a mistake – it is subverting democracy, erecting ethnic boundaries between Maori and non-Maori, and promoting a cultural elite within Maoridom.”

But she has also warned that there are two sides to biculturalism – the small elite group that are promoting it and the much larger group that is allowing it to happen.

And that's where our fragile flower of democracy stands today.

So, what of the future and the possibility of a new government come 23 September?

The National Party has already said that if it wins sufficient support it would prefer to enter into another coalition agreement with the Maori Party after the election.

This news will have no doubt caused many former National voters to despair.

Anyone in doubt about the merits of National's liaison with the Maori Party needs only reflect on the mess that National's concession to the Maori Party over the foreshore and seabed has caused, whereby hundreds of Maori groups, gifted with millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to fund their opportunistic grab for New Zealand's coastline, have lodged claims covering every square inch of our coast, many times over, forcing citizens to have to fight to protect our public rights.

Labour, it appears, would be no better as their leader Andrew Little has already said he supports Maori sovereignty. So too does the Green Party, which also wants a new constitution based on the Treaty of Waitangi.

That's also one of the goals of Gareth Morgan's Opportunities Party – to increase Maori rights and put the Treaty at the heart of all Government affairs.

At this stage the only dissenting voice is that of Winston Peters with his call for a binding referendum of all voters on the future of the Maori seats – which, of course, are the power base of the bicultural movement and their Maori sovereignty agenda.

As the election jostling continues, one can only hope that more political parties will come to recognise the crucial importance of the Rule of Law and Democracy to New Zealanders – and realise that overwhelmingly, Kiwis want to live in a country where all citizens are treated equally.