

Racialism, decolonisation and the revolution in NZ education



Jacinda Ardern speaks at the upper Treaty grounds in Waitangi, New Zealand.

- By Elizabeth Rata
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New Zealand's constitution is currently undergoing a major heart and lung transplant via co-governance arrangements between Māori corporate tribes and the government.

It beggars belief that one of the modern world's first democracies — founded in the fledgling 1852 Constitution Act — is descending into ethno-nationalism but the Labour Government is determined to embed racialised policies across a swathe of the nation's laws and institutions, and not least in education.

Led by radical intellectuals of the corporate tribes and enabled by social justice warriors armed with an unassailable moral righteousness, New Zealand's entire education system is rapidly being revolutionised.

Proposals in a recent government Green Paper for a Treaty of Waitangi-led science and research system include recognising mātauranga Māori (traditional knowledge) as equivalent to science.

The universities too are indigenising. According to the University of Auckland's Pro-Vice Chancellor (Māori), this means “finding ways where Māori knowledge, ways of being, thinking and doing can thrive”.



A Maori warrior at the New Zealand Navy parade prior to Waitangi Day in Waitangi, New Zealand.

Proposals to transform the university curriculum and teaching by inserting mātauranga Māori and kinship-based teaching and learning practices are now in the consultation phase.

The revolution does not stop there. The entire school sector is to be “decolonised”. The Ministry of Education’s ‘Te Hurihanganui A Blueprint for Transformative Systems Shift’ will include recognising “white privilege” and understanding racism in schools while the Ministry’s Curriculum Refresh will place ‘knowledge derived from Te Ao Māori (the Māori world)’ in the curriculum.

These initiatives, targeted at all levels of the education system will provide opportunities for an expansion of the cadre of decolonisers as ‘Māori exercise authority and agency over their mātauranga, tikanga (customs) and taonga (treasures)’.

Four strategies will ensure the revolution succeeds:

First, the opposition is being positioned as racist and reactionary, effectively silencing debate and creating self-censorship.

Second, government servants are required to accept the revisionist notion that the Treaty of Waitangi is a ‘partnership’ between two co-governing entities. Reprogramming services by government-paid consultants are on hand to encourage appropriate attitudes — signalled most obviously by insisting on using the correct language.

Third, the abandonment of universalism by the well-educated liberal-left who inhabit elevated positions in government and the caring professions will remove democracy’s very foundation. This is the principle of a shared universal humanity with the individual as the political category. It is the final point in the four decades convergence of postmodern relativism and identity politics.



Jacinda Ardern (left) joins a Waka crew for a paddle prior to Waitangi Day in Waitangi.

navigation by the stars and currents, while efficacious medicines from plants may have helped to advance scientific or technological knowledge. Consequently, the role of traditional knowledge in humanity's history justifies a place somewhere in the educational curriculum. But it is not science. It does not explain why such phenomena occur — just that they do.

Science provides naturalistic explanations for physical and social phenomena in the discovery of empirical, universal truths. It proceeds by conjecture and refutation. It requires doubt, challenge and critique, forever truth-seeking but with truth never fully settled.

Science's naturalism and its self-criticism are anathema to the science-culture equivalence claim. A fundamental principle of science is that no knowledge is protected from criticism yet the Green Paper refers to protecting mātauranga Māori. Knowledge that requires protection is belief, not science. Knowledge authorised by culture is ideology, not science.

The fourth strategy will be the clincher. It is the use of intellectual relativism to destroy the separation of science and culture that characterises the modern world.

Traditional cultural knowledge, including mātauranga Māori, employs supernatural explanations for natural and social phenomena. It also includes practical knowledge (proto-science or prescientific), acquired from observation, experience, and trial and error.

Such traditional knowledge has provided ways for humans to live successfully in their environment. Sometimes this has occurred in highly sophisticated ways, such as ocean

Furthermore, mātauranga Māori's inclusion in science throughout New Zealand's education system will place research under cultural authority. Alarmingly, that authority is to be wielded by evangelical commissars who cannot be questioned.



Traditional waka paddle down the Waitangi River on Waitangi Day.

The outrage encountered by those foolish or brave enough to mount a defence of science shows how important science-culture co-equivalence is to the overall decolonisation strategy.

Decolonisers will not, indeed cannot, tolerate its rejection. To do so would expose the fundamental premise of a racial ideology which claims that there is no universal human being and no universal science.

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