

## A SOVEREIGN MAN

Selwyn Parata Clarke: 1927 – 2019

Much has been written about Selwyn Clarke since he died. And, oh! How the tributes have flowed from the most disparate quarters. He will be enjoying it all from his newly elevated perspective.



During his long life, Selwyn and his generation taught and mentored at least four generations in what to do (and how) to be sovereign.

In death, as in life, I am happy to let Selwyn speak for himself. Following is a synopsis of his teachings as [recorded in a conversation](#) we had on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015 when he was under daily threat of being arrested and forced to appear in the District Court on charges of trespass on his own land at Rangīāniwaniwa.

“The constitution of this country was one originally given by God to our tupuna, *Te Whakaputanga o Nga Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirenī*. The first signatory on that declaration was my tupuna, Paerata, and they [*Te Wakaminenga o Nga Rangatiratanga o Nga Hapū* and King William] agreed that there would always be the unextinguishable native title.



“In the face of the threat of the Crown to use its might against me, I remain calm because I live as close as I can to the truth and the scriptures tell me that the truth will set me free. I call it a devil that’s overtaken us; the truth will set us all free from that.

“I have declared myself a free man on the land. I told the Judge of the Māori Land Court in no uncertain terms that my land is sovereign, and I am sovereign, and the only Judge that I rely on and I need every day is the Judge in heaven. That’s how I live, relating my needs to the Saviour himself. I have no need for any earthly Judge or any corrupt system. I don’t want to have anything to do with them.



“In 1946, our Colonel Hemi Henare said to us [*Te Hokowhitu a Tu – 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion*], “One last command I give to you. Go back to your mountain, go back to your marae, and go back to your people and be the rangatira that you are.” That was in February 1946, and we all saluted and were dismissed. I have carried out that command ever since, that command of Colonel Hemi Henare of 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion. We went there [to war] to fight for our people, and today I’m still fighting for our people.

“He inoi tonu ana ahau ki to tatou Kaihanga ia ra ia ra. No reira, hoki atu ahau ki nga mihi i runga i te ingoa Te Matua, Te Tama me Te Wairua Tapu.”

Haere ra Selwyn ki ou tūpuna mātua. I whakapou kaha koe mo to Iwi i tukuna koe te katoa. Ki au, ko koe he Toa, he Rangatira.

