CHAPTER 10

*Mana Maori Motuhake*

E kore te uku e piri ki te rino, ka whitikia e te ra ka ngahoro.
— Te Whiti o Rongomai

The spontaneous recovery of the Maori population from the trauma of colonisation after the turn of the century was matched by a cultural revival. But because the revival began in rural tribal hinterlands, at a time when the Maori were thought to be a subjected and dying race, the colonising Pakeha were not fully aware of the transformation taking place. This was because Maori and Pakeha lived discrete lives. Up to 1926, 90 per cent of Maori people lived in rural communities away from the main centres of Pakeha population. The points of contact between Maori and Pakeha were superficial as the Maori were reduced to selling their labour as bush-fellers, roadmakers, farm workers, and seasonal workers in freezing works and sheep shearing gangs. This accommodation of the Maori to the forces of capitalism enabled Pakeha New Zealanders to promote the ideology of 'one people'. The ideology functioned in the terms of Larraín as a 'distorted solution in the mind' to the contradictions in Maori-Pakeha relations arising out of the historic process of colonisation. The so-called 'Maori Wars' were a distant memory locked away in the nineteenth century. The crushing of the pacifist prophets Te Whiti and Rua Kenana ended any immediate pursuit of Maori sovereignty in the new nation, that claimed for itself a reputation of having the finest race relations in the world.

Essentially, the ideology of one people functioned to hide the relationship of Pakeha dominance and Maori subjection. But because race conflict was a primary element in the definition of the relationship, as much as the imposition of a capitalist mode of production over a tribal people, it is not of the same order as class conflict. The cleavage is much more fundamental in that it is defined in terms of ethnicity instead of class. Proletarianisation of the Maori by expropriation of their resources did not necessarily, as Ratana suggested to the leader
of the Labour Party, make the Maori natural allies of the working class. The liaison with Labour was an attempt to find a political niche for Maori people in the new nation, as other niches had been explored by chiefs consorting with the Governor, Kotahitanga and Kauhanga-nui seeking devolution of power, and the educated élite participating in mainstream politics. Underlying these attempts at accommodation was a desire to maintain the integrity of Maori identity and culture in the face of considerable cultural erosion after a century of European contact.

The bastions of cultural conservatism for the Maori were kinship within the tribal polity, the marae and the institution of the tangi. Seasonal and migrant workers returned often to their kainga to be with kin in times of celebration or bereavement. Weddings, tangihanga, twenty-first birthdays and other community events were invariably held at tribal marae. The marae gave a modicum of stability and cultural continuity in the face of Pakeha dominance and assimilationist pressures. Land on which marae and tribal meeting houses are built are Maori Reservations under the Maori Affairs Act, and as such are inalienable. Accordingly, for landless Maori, the marae was their remaining turangawaewae, on which to hang their identity as the indigenous people who once owned the whole of the country. The marae remained as the beachheads from which the Maori launched their cultural revival in the twentieth century. The instigator was Apirana Ngata, who, despite the powerful political forces in the den of lions that were inimical to things Maori, maintained his cultural integrity and stimulated his people to recover their stolen humanity.

As the most able Maori leader of the century, Ngata concentrated much of his talent and energy on development of land as a means of protecting it from alienation. But government pressure to maintain the colonising goal of acquiring Maori land for Pakeha settlement was difficult to resist. Between 1911 and 1921, a million hectares were sold. Thereafter, up to 1929, as Ngata approached the zenith of his political career, the annual rate of alienation of Maori land continued at an average of 29,091 hectares.

In a critical analysis of the role of Maori members of Parliament during the time of Ngata and his colleagues, McClean concluded that on the basic issue of Maori land and its control, they were impotent. They got for the Maori only what the Pakeha members and their constituents permitted. Despite the energy-sapping nature of the unequal contest, Ngata had enough reserves of energy left to promote a Maori cultural renaissance.
Ngata focused the Maori cultural revival on the carved meeting house as the symbol of Maori identity, mana and tribal traditions. The carved meeting house, known by the generic terms wharepuni and wharenui, has a long history. The wharepuni, with its characteristic rectangular design, gable roof, and porch at the front opening out on to a courtyard or marae, has been identified in the archaeological record by Pricket at Palliser Bay, and Sutton at Pouerua in Northland. Pricket and Sutton place the date of the development of the superior type of wharepuni which they associate with chiefs at around 1200. These early houses were not large, being up to 7 metres long and 5.8 metres wide. But by the fifteenth century, some houses were large enough to need one or even two central pillars to bear the weight of the ridgepole. The period when wharepuni were decorated with carving is difficult to define with precision. Simmons postulates that the Kaitaia lintel which he dates at 1400, was a roof coaming. That being the case, it would be reasonable to assume that external carvings in the form of tekoteko on the front gable, and carved window and door lintels appeared about the same time. By the time of European contact in the eighteenth century, all the conceptual design elements of the meeting house were present in the chief's wharepuni. One house seen by Cook and Banks at Tolaga Bay was 10 metres long and had all its interior posts carved.

With the introduction of steel tools, the dimensions of the chief's house increased to 13 metres long and 4 metres high. The houses of Te Rangihaeata on Mana Island and Puatia's house at Otawhao, painted by Angas in 1847, are the direct antecedents of the modern meeting house. It was at this time that the master carver Raharuhi Rukupo built Te Hau-ki-Turanga at Manutuke, thirteen kilometres south of Gisborne. Rukupo, who opposed European settlement in Poverty Bay and the teachings of Christianity, built the house as a cultural statement and symbol of mana Maori motuhake. The house, which measures 16.9 metres long and 5.5 metres wide, is the prototype of the modern meeting house and set the standard of decoration for all subsequent houses with its interior and exterior carvings, tukutuku panels and painted kowhaiwhai rafter patterns. The conceptual design of the house functioned to conserve tribal history and genealogy so that they would be transmitted from generation to generation. To this end, Rukupo carved fifteen ancestors at the lower end of the rafters, four on the poupou of the porch, and thirty-one on the interior...
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poupou. The house is also notable for the two pillars supporting the ridgepole. The tiki at the base of the poutokomanawa, the main pillar at the front, is thicker-set than the one at the rear, signifying the ancestor’s role as the powerful person holding the house and tribe together. The poutokomanawa is also the symbol for the chief, the living embodiment of the tribal ancestor.

In the decade of the 1850s, as the flow of European settlers increased, large tribal assemblies were held in Taranaki to discuss ways and means of controlling settlement. As a consequence of these assemblies, the wharepuni was scaled up to an unprecedented size not seen by Europeans before. In 1853 the Anglican missionary Richard Taylor found the people at Manawapou building a house measuring 27.6 metres long by 9.2 metres wide. The house, named Taiporohenui, signified opposition to Pakeha settlement.

During Te Kooti’s guerrilla campaign to recover New Zealand for the Maori at the end of the 1860s, he had three large carved houses built for his followers. The first was Tanewhirinaki, built at Waioeka, notable for its polychrome carvings, painted black and white and pink and white. The second house was Te Whai-a-te-Motu, built at Ruatahuna to commemorate the military pursuit of Te Kooti around the island. This house, begun in 1870, was not completed until 1888. The third house, named Te Tokanganui-a-noho, was built at Te Kuiti in 1873 when Te Kooti gave up fighting and retreated behind the aukati, the boundary line of the King Country. These houses were used for meetings, church services and accommodation. But above all, they symbolised the discrete cultural identity of the Maori against cultural invasion by the Pakeha.

After Te Kooti there was a hiatus in the construction of carved houses as Maori fortunes declined towards the end of the century. Tribal houses were still being built, but on a modest scale, or with little or no carving as the art all but died out. For all these reasons, Ngata picked up on the idea generated within the Te Aute Association to revive the art of carving. For years he pressed the Government to support the school of Maori art at Rotorua run by the Ngati Tarawhai master carver Anahata Rahui. But it was not until Ngata became Minister of Maori Affairs that he succeeded in establishing the first School of Maori Arts at Rotorua in 1928. The inaugural tutor of the school was Tene Waitere of Ngati Tarawhai. He was followed by Eramiha Te Kapua. The school trained the master carvers Pine and Hone Taiapa of Ngati Porou, Henare Toka of Ngati Whatua, and Piri Poutapu of Waikato. These men became influential over the next four
decades in re-establishing the art of carving meeting houses in their own districts as well as other parts of the country. They were also learned in the karakia and rituals associated with their craft. Piri Poutapu, for instance, taught his students not just the techniques of carving, but also the chants and offerings to appease Tane for felling trees, the ritual for the correct disposal of wood chips, and the prohibitions of tapu pertaining to food and sex during the construction of a house. One of Poutapu’s students was the baritone singer Inia Te Wiata, whose carving of a pouihi stands in New Zealand House, London, as a contemporary expression of the cultural renaissance fostered by Ngata.

Ngata had his own ancestral house, named Porourangi, at Waiomatatini moved away from the flood waters of the Waiapu River in 1907. The house, which the master carvers Tamati Ngakaho and Kihiriini Te Umutaapi took twelve years to complete, had been opened in 1888. Everything, including carvings, tukutuku panels and even thatch, was moved, refurbished and erected on the new site. Thereafter, Ngata’s name is associated with many carved houses around the country, including Takitimu at Wairoa, Tukaki at Te Kaha, Wahiao at Whakarewarewa, Raukawa at Otaki, Te Poh0 o Rawiri at Gisborne, and the Treaty Memorial House at Waitangi. The carved churches at Tikitiki on the East Coast and at Putiki in Wanganui also stand as tributes to Ngata’s vision, and the work of the master carvers he fostered. Ngata’s focus on the carved meeting house coincided with the aims for cultural recovery of the outstanding woman leader of the day, Te Puea Herangi of the Waikato. Her pragmatic approach in community development had uplifted the tribes of the Waikato from the spiritually devastating effects of colonisation and confiscation, and now complemented Ngata’s efforts in the political arena.

In 1922 Te Puea re-established a community at Ngaruawahia, the former capital of the King Movement. She chose the symbolic name Turangawae wae (footstool) for the marae that was to play an important part in the development of the Maori people in the years that lay ahead. Money for building a dining hall and accommodation was raised by doing contract work on Pakeha farms in the district. In the evenings Te Puea instituted a programme of teaching action songs, haka, and poi dances to the young people. She turned this programme of cultural recovery to the useful purpose of fund-raising for a meeting house by giving public performances under the concert party named Te Pou o Mangatawhiri. In 1927 Te Puea sought Ngata’s assistance
for her project by arranging a fund-raising tour of the Ngati Porou territory on the East Coast. The tour raised £1,336, and as a consequence, Ngata suggested the meeting house be named Mahinarangi after the East Coast puhi who married the Waikato ancestor Turongo, thus linking the genealogies of the two tribes.18 Both Ngata and Te Puea planned the opening of Mahinarangi in March 1929 to be an event on a grand scale to signal the significance of the cultural renaissance. A multi-tribal gathering of 6,000 people attended the opening and witnessed action songs, haka and poi dances.19 Thereafter, the spread of the cultural renaissance was assured.

Fight for Equity

A characteristic of Ngata’s role as a leader was his involvement in a broad spectrum of Maori causes. One of these was the Maori claim to North Island lakes submitted by the tribes of the Arawa Confederation to the Stout-Ngata Native Land Commission in 1907. The tribes asserted ownership over the beds of Lakes Rotorua, Rotoiti, Rotoehu, Rotoma and Rotokakahi. The claim rested on customary rights to take freshwater inanga, crayfish and shellfish for their subsistence. These rights, guaranteed by the Treaty of Waitangi, had been derogated by the Government and the acclimatisation society stocking the lakes with trout, to the detriment of the native species. The claim asserted the viewpoint of indigenous people, that natives were not accustomed to take fish for sport, nor did they take species they did not eat. When the foreign fish ate the indigenous species, the Maori switched to eating the invaders, only to find they were breaking the law if they did not buy a licence to take them. Ngata advised the tribes to go to court. The Court of Appeal decided the tribes could have their claim heard by the Native Land Court. The First World War intervened and the case was held in abeyance until 1920. The Crown sought a compromise, and Ngata, acting as advisor to Te Arawa, assisted them in the formulation of proposals that resulted in the Arawa Lakes Agreement 1922. In exchange for surrendering the fee simple of the lakes to the Crown, the tribes were given forty licences to take trout, and an annuity of £6,000 per annum for the benefit of the tribes and their several hapu, to be administered by the Arawa Trust Board.20

Another cause taken up by Ngata was devolution of power from Pakeha to Maori within the hierarchy of the Anglican Church. In 1923 Bishop Ataria visited New Zealand. He was the first Indian bishop, consecrated in the Anglican Cathedral of Calcutta in 1912.
That fact was not lost on the Maori people who were agitating in the Anglican Church for their own bishop. Their desire for mana motuhake within the Church was analagous to Kotahitanga agitation in the 1890s for devolution of power to the Maori Parliament. The claim was resisted for years by the Church on the grounds there was no Maori suitable for the office. This racist manifestation of the relationship of Pakeha dominance and Maori subjection within the Church was a continuance of the order established by Bishop Selwyn. In the previous century the Bishop refused to ordain Maori ministers no matter how well versed they were in the Bible or church law, because they were not trained in the Greek language, one of the hallmarks of a classical education. Rota Waitoa of Ngati Raukawa, who became a disciple of Bishop Selwyn in 1842, was a victim of the policy. He was refused ordination for ten years before he was made a deacon in 1852. The continuance of the policy, by way of blocking Maori admission to the office of bishop, roused the ire of Rewiti Kohere, who wrote that there was a need to “teach bishops and Pakehas to be flexible, not to use the Maori as a ladder for the Pakeha to climb into high positions. It is over 100 years since the Pakeha has controlled the Maori church. It is time the Maori ruled himself.” While the Church was prepared to concede the establishment of a post for a Maori bishop, the matter was delayed by a drawn-out debate over whether the first incumbent should be a Pakeha.

The Maori Synod co-opted Ngata to assist the Reverend F. A. Bennett to prosecute the Maori cause with the Church authorities. In Ngata’s opinion, the intransigence of the bishops in denying the wishes of the Maori people, if allowed to continue, would cause a breach with the Church in Ngati Porou. He argued that a man conversant with the Maori mind was the only person suitable for the office of Maori bishop. Ngata opposed the proposition that the Maori bishop be a suffragen of the Archbishop, who would head the Maori section of the Church. He also warned the Church of the danger of its Maori members deserting the fold for Ratana’s faith, which was taking such a hold on Maori people. But it was not until the first quarter of 1928, when Ngata was given twenty minutes to speak to the General Synod of the Anglican Church, that the Synod was convinced that conceding a Maori bishop in the interest of maintaining its hold on Maori communicants was the lesser of the two evils. The consecration of Bishop Bennett in December 1928 marked a significant step towards the achievement of equality for Maori people within the Anglican Church. But there was still a long way to go. For the
Catholics, it was even longer. Sixty years were to pass before they repeated Ngata’s feat with the consecration of Bishop Mariu in 1988.

Another of Ngata’s major achievements was the promotion of Maori literature, and a language recovery programme. One of the techniques of cultural invasion practised by the coloniser was to suppress the language of the indigenous people whose lands they were expropriating. After the turn of the century the repressive policy of banning the Maori language from school precincts marked the steady retreat of the language. At first, before the erosion of language became evident, Maori leaders complied with the policy because they did not fully understand the role of an education system in cultural reproduction and its power to implement the official policy of assimilation. Ngata saw English as the means of gaining access to Pakeha culture and its professions. At a conference in 1936 he said that if he were to devise a curriculum for Maori schools, he would make English four out of the five subjects. Three years later Ngata changed his views when he saw the effect schooling had in subverting Maori culture. He believed there was nothing worse than for a person to have Maori features without being able to speak the Maori language. Years later he wrote:

It explains the case of thousands of Maoris, old and young, who entered the schools of this country and passed out, with their minds closed to the culture, which is their inheritance and which lies wounded, slighted and neglected at their very door. There are no wise elders to suspend their excursions into the field of Pakeha education, none at least with the power to enforce such a course. But there are Maoris, men and women, who have passed through the Pakeha whare wananga and felt shame at their ignorance of their native culture. They would learn it, if they could, if it were available for study as the culture of the Pakeha has been ordered for them to learn. For such the journey back to the social life of the Maori race is not so far, or so difficult. It is possible to compromise with it as many of us did sixty years ago, to select those elements in it which should be as satisfying and elevating as the art, the crafts, the music and the literature of the Pakeha, while living according to the material standards of the Pakeha and joining with him in the work of the country. It is possible to be bicultural, just as bilingualism is a feature of Maori life today.

Freire’s contention that ‘knowledge of the alienating culture leads to transforming action resulting in a culture which is being freed from alienation’ is borne out by the Maori experience. As one engaged in transforming action, Ngata wrote, in a child’s autograph book, this philosophy for transformation towards biculturalism:
Grow tender shoot for the days of your world!
Turn your hands to the tools of the Pakeha for the well-being of your body.
Turn your heart to the treasures of your ancestors as a crown for your head.
Give your soul unto God the author of all things.

In these oft-quoted lines, Ngata exhorted the Maori to grasp knowledge from the Pakeha world for one's livelihood, while retaining the treasures of Maori culture for a sense of pride in Maori identity and spiritual well-being. Ngata himself initiated transforming action to raise the level of respectability of Maori culture as an academic study. In 1923 he argued in the House for government support for publication of research into Maori culture. His efforts resulted in the establishment of the Maori Ethnological Research Board. Although the board was founded to support the work of Elsdon Best, Peter Buck and H. D. Skinner, Ngata used it also as a useful platform to promote the study of Maori language. He channelled a request through the board to the Senate of the University of New Zealand to have Maori included in the Bachelor of Arts degree on the same basis as foreign languages such as French, Italian and Spanish. The Senate attempted to stonewall the request by asking where was the literature to sustain the teaching of the language as an academic discipline. But after it was pointed out that the literature existed in Grey's *Nga Moteatea* and *Nga Mahi a Nga Tupuna*, the Senate conceded and Maori was introduced into the New Zealand University in 1925. But the actual teaching of courses did not begin at Auckland University until 1951, and at Victoria University almost fifteen years later. Having won the point, Ngata did not rest until the matter was secure. He spent twenty-five years collecting the poetry, songs, chants, laments and lullabies that were in the oral repertoire of Maori women and orators on marae throughout the land. But because of his heavy work schedule, it was not until 1959 that he published *Nga Moteatea* as an addition to the literature and his answer to the Senate.

**Backlash on Ngata**

During the years of the Depression, when he was Minister of Maori Affairs, Ngata concentrated his energies on expanding his Maori land development schemes. He deliberately overspent his budget in order to commit the Government to his programme at a time of financial stringency. This earned him the displeasure of Treasury. He made
enemies in the civil service when he dismissed two Pakeha supervisors for not being able to get on with Maori communities. He also cut corners in administration. These matters, combined with his influence in Cabinet, generated white backlash. A campaign to destabilise his position was waged in the civil service and the press. Maori land development was denigrated as a ‘waste of Pakeha money’; similarly, the Native Department was described as a ‘ghastly sink for Pakeha money’ which needed to be reorganised to ‘get it away from the influence of the natives’.\textsuperscript{35} Ngata weathered this first storm by insisting on an inquiry, which exonerated him of wrongdoing. However, his star had reached its zenith. In 1933 the Audit Department found one of Ngata’s appointees had falsified accounts and rumours of corruption were rife. In 1934 there followed a Commission of Inquiry into the affairs of the Native Department. The Public Service closed ranks to protect their colleagues in the department. Although Ngata was again exonerated of any wrongdoing, he was blamed for the department’s shortcomings and resigned his portfolio.\textsuperscript{36} But the loss of ministerial status did not diminish Ngata’s ability to influence Government policies behind the scenes; for example, in promoting a Native Housing Act. When war broke out in 1939, Ngata and the other Maori members of Parliament pursued the Government to establish a volunteer Maori unit, subsequently known as the 28th Maori Battalion.\textsuperscript{37} The valorous deeds of the battalion in the campaigns of North Africa and Italy did much to uplift Maori mana and enhance their sense of citizenship in the nation that emerged in the post-war years.

In the meantime the prophet Ratana had not been idle. After the 1935 election when the two Maori seats he held were aligned with Labour, the liaison appeared to bear fruit with the flurry of legislation in 1938 that ushered in the welfare state. Pensions and family benefits staved off want when the cows dried off in the winter months and contract or seasonal work was hard to find. Maori gratitude was expressed by the delivery of Northern Maori in 1938 and Eastern Maori in 1943 to the Labour fold. Except for a brief interruption in 1963, when Steve Watene, a Mormon, held Eastern Maori, the Ratana-Labour liaison dominated the Maori seats for over forty years. That loyalty to Labour was misplaced because, apart from the general benefits of the welfare state, not a great deal accrued to the Maori people.

Ratana and his followers tried to speed up the improvement of the situation of the Maori by collecting 30,128 signatures on a petition calling for the Treaty of Waitangi to be ratified. The petition was
tabled in Parliament in December 1932 by Eruera Tirikatene, Member for Southern Maori. But the petition was held over year after year and its resolution delayed even further by the outbreak of the war. It was not until 1945, thirteen years after it was tabled, that Ratana’s petition was dealt with by the Maori Affairs Committee of the House. The committee recommended that in view of the loyal service of Maori volunteers in two world wars, the Treaty of Waitangi should be published as a ‘sacred reaffirmation’ and be hung in the schools of the Dominion. This response, at the minimal level and little cost to Government, was to characterise future dealings with Maori grievances. It was on par with other reforms with no cost component, such as granting Maori the secret ballot, when Pakeha had it for years, and replacing the pejorative term Native in official usage with Maori.

In 1939 a new impetus was given to the Maori renaissance by the first Young Maori Conference, organised at Auckland University, by Sir Apirana Ngata, Professor H. Belshaw and Dr I. Sutherland. After surveying Maori communities, Belshaw concluded that their problems were not easy to resolve because they were isolated from each other and from the main centres of European population. Since higher education was not readily accessible to Maori, Belshaw thought that making adult education available might stimulate young leaders to take initiatives in community development. In commenting on the economic plight of the people, Belshaw noted that in 1919, of the 1,996,805 hectares of land left in Maori ownership, only 755,280 hectares were actually held by the owners. The rest, comprising 1,241,525 hectares, was held under Pakeha leasehold. The estimated 5,000 farms under the land development schemes established by Ngata, would support only a quarter of the Maori population, which at that time stood at 82,326. Clearly, employment would have to be found elsewhere. In effect, Belshaw anticipated the inevitability of the urban migration of the Maori a decade before it began. In the meantime the good intentions of the young leaders who attended the conference to tackle the economic, educational, health and housing problems that beset their communities were set aside while they went off to war. Some never returned, and the thinned ranks of the young leaders who did come home had to cope with enormous changes attendant upon the demographic shift of 70 per cent of the population to towns and cities in the post-war years.
The Urban Migration

In the decade before the Second World War, 90 per cent of the Maori population was rural. The war acted as a catalyst in stimulating people to abandon rural poverty, and sell their labour for wages in the factories of the urban milieu. The Manpower Act led to the direction of young Maori not eligible for military service to contribute to the war effort by working in essential industries. This meant leaving the papakainga and marae for towns and cities. Young women were put to work in factories or on the land as farm-girls. In 1942 the Maori War Effort Organisation, under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Hemphill, mobilised tribal committees to raise produce and funds for the war effort.\(^41\)

The Maori Affairs Department responded to army encroachment on its domain by appointing six Maori welfare officers in the main urban centres to care for the moral well-being of young women living away from home. This was the department’s first foray into the delivery of a welfare service. After the war, returned servicemen who had acquired skills in the army migrated to towns to seek gainful employment for those skills. Many of them, officers with administrative experience such as Colonel Awatere, Sir Charles Bennett and Sir James Henare, who were former commanders of the Maori Battalion, Major Rangi Royal, Lieutenant Monty Wikiriwhi, Hei Rogers, John Rangihau, Bill Herewini and others, could find employment only within the Department of Maori Affairs. Another group, including Major Harry Lambert, John Waititi, Frank Latimer, George Sutherland and Maurice Bird, entered teacher training. They augmented a group who were admitted under a ‘Maori quota’ in 1938 and who resumed their training after the war. In this category were Major George Marsden, Matiu Te Hau and John Rogers. Several of these men had attended the Young Maori Conference and filled key leadership positions in the transition of Maori from rural to urban life, as well as providing a breakthrough into the teaching profession.

By 1951, 19 per cent of the Maori population of 115,740 was urban.\(^42\) At the next census it had risen to 24 per cent. The rural tribal hinterlands were being depopulated at the rate of 1 per cent, or 1,600 people per annum. In 1960 the Department of Maori Affairs encouraged this demographic shift with an urban relocation programme. Maori welfare officers exhorted rural families to leave the subsistence economy of the ‘pipi beds’ by finding them employment and accommodation in urban centres. Over a five-year period the
department relocated 399 families. It also assisted 485 families who moved of their own accord.\textsuperscript{43} The major reasons for the urban migration were the ‘big three’ factors of work, money and pleasure.\textsuperscript{44} The population recovery, the cultural revival, the deeds of the Maori Battalion, and prowess on the rugby fields, gave the Maori confidence to abandon rural poverty in exchange for a place in the economy of the social mainstream. Marginal and uneconomic incorporations and dairy farms established under Ngata’s land development schemes were abandoned for the security of wage labour and a pay cheque that did not dry up with the cows in the winter months. By 1961, of the 298 registered Maori incorporations, over half were inactive, and the number of Maori farmers had fallen to 2,116.\textsuperscript{45}

In the early stages of the migration, inner city locations were favoured because they were close to work on the wharves, in factories and the transport industry. In the metropolis of Auckland, for instance, the Maori population concentrated in the decaying inner-city areas of Freemans Bay, Ponsonby and Herne Bay. But as the migration continued unabated, houses were overcrowded. To relieve the pressure, the State Advances Corporation and the Ministry of Works planned and built new housing estates in the 1960s at Otara, Mangere and Te Atatu. Similar estates were built in Wellington at Porirua, the Hutt Valley and Wainuiomata. The concentration of the working class in these housing estates allowed a critical build-up in the density of Maori people, which contradicted the official ‘pepper-potting’ policy of Maori Affairs. In suburbs like Otara the Maori population was as high as 40 per cent. Densities above 10 per cent facilitated recruitment and mobilisation into groups to deal with the problems of adjusting to urban life.

Urbanisation posed two developmental tasks for migrant Maori. First, they had to adjust to the economic demands of the urban industrial complex. This meant taking permanent employment, coping with a total cash economy in a milieu that had little scope for subsistence activities, and meeting financial commitments by way of rent, time-payment, hire purchase, rates and mortgages. The universal culture of capitalism is what integrates Maori into the social mainstream of Pakeha society. These economic bonds were supplemented by religious affiliations and a shared passion for the national game of rugby. But outside these transactions, Maori and Pakeha lived discrete lives. Ethnicity, cultural difference and the experience of being colonised impelled the Maori to dwell in the dual world of biculturalism or surrender to the Pakeha imperative of assimilation. While some Maori
chose assimilation, the vast majority rejected it. That meant commitment to cultural continuity.

**Cultural Continuity**

Averting assimilation posed the second development task for migrants of transplanting their culture into the urban milieu. In the early stages of urbanisation, migrants maintained contact with their rural roots by occasional visits to their kainga and marae for holidays, weddings, tangi and unveilings of headstones. But gradually, as the migrants became more sure of themselves, they put down roots and planted their culture in new ground. The key to the successful adjustment of the Maori to urban life is voluntary associations. These include Maori sections of orthodox churches, the Maori protest religions of Ringatu and Ratana, culture clubs, sports clubs, family and tribal organisations, benevolent societies, Maori committees, Maori wardens, Maori councils and the Maori Women's Welfare League. The essence of Maori voluntary association is group membership with the common goal of promoting the kaupapa of perpetuating Maori identity, values and culture. In the alien and hostile environment of impersonal cities, kinship bonds were formalised by the formation of family clubs, adoption of a constitution, and election of an executive for the collection of subscriptions and disbursement of funds against the contingencies of illness, unemployment and the underwriting of expenses incurred in returning the bodies of deceased persons to their home marae. Maori church groups functioned as quasi-kin in fostering Maori cultural values through church membership in a multitribal situation. Maori culture clubs were formed to revive and perpetuate interest in singing, action songs, and arts and crafts. At first, culture clubs provided parochial entertainment, but in time, cultural competitions and national festivals were established for secondary school students as well as adults. This strengthened the culture and raised the level of performance to a professional standard. Maori sports clubs to play rugby and basketball or league were organised in places of employment such as freezing works and bus companies to participate in informal Sunday competitions. The emphasis was on recreation rather than competition, and fraternisation afterwards over a beer and hangi food.

One of the most important cultural transplantations into the urban situation is the kinship network built around the primary social units of whanau and hapu. A social survey in 1967 of a hundred Maori
dwellings in Otara revealed that the whanau has been replaced by the nuclear family as the household unit. Ninety per cent of the households were founded on the nuclear family. The reason for this is that the nuclear family fits the demands of the industrial system more easily than the extended family. It is not bound to locality, is more mobile, and therefore can be moved more easily to where work can be found. But that does not mean the death of the whanau and larger groupings such as the hapu. On the contrary, they too are transplanted, but in modified form. Whanau with siblings scattered across different suburbs meet frequently at a central place, usually the home of the kaumatua and kuia, or the pakeke of the whanau, for mutual support in times of bereavement, or the formation of family clubs described above, and the celebration of festive occasions.

**Urban Marae**

One of the bastions of cultural conservatism in the alien environment of the city is the tangi, the mortuary customs for farewelling the dead. The most appropriate place to conduct the rituals of the tangi is the marae, the other bastion and focal point of the culture. Although there were tribal marae engulfed by urban sprawl in Auckland and Wellington, the first wave of pre-war migrants felt they needed a hall or a marae of their own. In any case as the number of urban Maori increased exponentially, tangata whenua marae were unable to cope with the need. In the meantime, the normal life-crisis of birth, death and marriage had to be met with what was at hand, the family dwelling. The head of a whanau responded to death by turning the suburban state house into a ‘mini-marae’. The living room cleared of furniture served as a meeting house where the body lay in state, and kinfolk and friends came to farewell the dead. A kauta for outdoor cooking met the obligation of extending hospitality to mourners. Tents with trestle tables and benches served as temporary dining halls. Some whanau erected double garages as permanent facilities for their mini-marae. But these were no substitute for the real thing.

For many years in the early stages of the urban migration, communal halls in the city centre served the needs of quasi-tribes such as Ngati Poneke in Wellington and Ngati Akarana in Auckland. But these were only interim solutions. The Maori Community Centre in Auckland, for instance, was not suitable for tangi, and when it was used in 1965 for the lying-in-state of John Waititi, special permission had to be sought from the city council. Because of the need to cater
for tangi, related whanau, hapu, tribal and multiracial groups formed urban marae-building associations. Maori congregations in the various churches also focused on establishing marae as a priority in their development plans. Twenty years after the migration began, urban marae sprang up in many towns and cities. In 1965 the first urban marae named after Te Puea was opened in the Auckland suburb of Mangere. Although Te Puea is a traditional kin-based marae, with the tangata whenua of Waikato in control, the marae is available for use to all migrants, whatever their tribal affiliation. The Te Unga Waka facility, which opened in the same year, is a marae with a difference. The Catholic Church replaced kinship as the unifying principle, bringing Maori of different tribes together as its tangata whenua. Other church-based marae include Te Whaiora at Otara (Catholic) and Tatai Hono (Anglican) in Khyber Pass.

To serve the needs of migrants from different tribes who had nothing in common except residence in the same suburb, a third principle for marae organisation emerged that was secular, multiracial and elective. The most widely known marae of this type is Hoani Waititi Marae at Te Atatu, but there are many others, including Nga Hau E Wha (The Four Winds) at Christchurch, and another with the same name at Pukekohe. The emergence of these three types of urban marae indicate the dynamism of the cultural renaissance started by Ngata with its focus on the meeting house as the symbol of Maori identity. The establishment of the marae-meeting house complex in towns and cities around the country marked the accomplishment of the second development task by migrants: the transplantation of their culture into the urban milieu. With the culture firmly rooted in the new environment, the energy of the cultural renaissance was turned to political action directed at liberating the Maori from Pakeha domination.

**The Struggle Against Hegemony**

The Maori struggle against Pakeha domination was taken up in the post-war years of the modern era by Maori women. From the time of the First World War, Te Puea had led the fight seeking compensation for the unjust confiscation of Waikato land. The matter had dragged on for years, despite a recommendation by the Sim Commission in 1928 that it be settled. In 1945 Te Puea reopened negotiations with the Government and concluded a settlement the following year. It provided for an annuity of £6,000, which is administered on behalf of the Waikato tribes by the Tainui Trust Board.
Te Puea’s leadership grew out of the tribal struggle of the Waikato people to recover their mana from the trauma of colonisation. She was followed by a new wave of Maori women, who, in 1951, established the first national Maori organisation, the Maori Women’s Welfare League. The experience of these women in the Maori committees of the Country Women’s Institute and the Maori Health League, combined with growing urbanisation, motivated Maori women to establish a forum of their own to articulate Maori needs outside and across the tribal arena. Educated women in particular, like Mira Petricevich, felt constrained by the male prerogative which in some tribes prohibited women from speaking on the marae. With the assistance of Rangi Royal, a Maori welfare officer, the league was launched at a conference in Wellington. A Dominion council was elected with Whina Cooper as president and Mira Petricevich secretary. The first task of the president was to visit all parts of the country to establish branches and district councils. With its foundation established, the league then undertook a survey of Maori housing needs in Auckland. The league’s report of overcrowding, and insanitary slum conditions in which migrants were living, put pressure on the Maori Affairs Department to step up its housing programme. The Housing Corporation also had to expedite its plans for the new housing estate in Otara to relieve the pressure in the inner city.

For the next ten years, the annual conferences of the league became an important forum for the expression of Maori views on housing, health, education, welfare, crime, and discrimination in employment and accommodation. The league’s resolutions and submissions to Government were taken seriously by government departments. At the parochial level, the league branches assisted needy families with provisions from a ‘distress cupboard’ when a breadwinner was unemployed, or a father neglected his family. In some cases the league provided clothing, school uniforms and stationery for children of poor families. Members of the league also gave the Housing Corporation advice on setting priorities in the allocation of state houses to the mounting list of applicants seeking relief from overcrowded accommodation. Individual members of the league also budgeted families who got into debt as a consequence of overcommitment to hire purchase and time-payment agreements. In these transactions the league played a vital role in helping people who were not coping well with the adjustment to urban life.

In 1962, when the playcentre movement as an alternative to kindergarten was launched in Maori communities by Lex Grey and Roy
Saunders, the league branches helped establish playcentres on marae all around the country, in public halls and even in their own homes. Prior to this, few Maori received pre-school education because mothers were too shy to participate in kindergarten education, which was seen as the domain of the Pakeha middle class. Playcentre appealed to the Maori because of its philosophy of self-help, parental involvement, and parental participation in control and management. Furthermore, playcentres were touted as analogous to the American ‘headstart’ programme and would help Maori children bridge the gap in educational achievement between Maori and Pakeha that was identified by the Hunn Report. The report noted there was a ‘statistical blackout’ of Maori at the higher levels of education where only 0.5 per cent of Maori secondary students made it to the seventh form compared with 3.78 per cent of Pakeha. But without adducing any evidence, the report blamed parental apathy for the situation. Maori commitment to the playcentre movement contradicted that widely held view in educational circles. Furthermore, one of the Hunn Report's recommendations for resolving the problem, which was partly attributed to low income and large families, was the establishment of a Maori Education Foundation. The Maori Women’s Welfare League, in its commitment to education, put its full weight behind the fund-raising activities that launched the foundation.

**The Maori Council**

In the next decade the initiative in Maori leadership was taken over by the Maori Council. The council had its genesis in the Maori Social and Economic Advancement Act 1945, which gave statutory recognition to the tribal committees. The committees were so successful in supporting the war effort that the Government felt they would have an important role in assisting the Maori adjust to the anticipated changes after the war. Under the provisions of the Act, the committees were expected to promote the social, spiritual, cultural, educational and economic advancement of the Maori. In following this wide-ranging brief, the committees were expected to co-operate with government departments, educational authorities and other agencies of the state. There was provision in the Act for committees to appoint Maori wardens, who were charged with supervision of Maori people in public places, halls, bars and on marae so as to ensure the promotion of harmony between Maori and Pakeha. The wardens had no power of arrest but could confiscate alcohol in the possession of
anyone in the vicinity of a marae or dance hall. In public bars they could ask the barman to stop serving alcohol to any individual who in their opinion was drunk, and they could confiscate the keys of such a person attempting to drive his car. The wardens were issued with a warrant from the Minister of Maori Affairs and a small, undistinguished badge of office. They wore civilian clothing in conducting their duties, but that did not matter; because since they were operating in the context of their hapu or iwi, they were known to the people. They were invariably known by the young as ‘Uncle’ or ‘Aunty’ and their word was law. No one, for instance, queried their right to quell unruly and noisy fans in a picture theatre with a cuff over the ear as the cheering reached a crescendo when the cavalry arrived to relieve a besieged fortress. The tribal committees were the base of the structure under the 1945 legislation. Above them were tribal executives and district councils.

As the urban migration gathered momentum, the Government recognised the changing circumstances of the Maori, and abolished tribal committees, replacing them with Maori committees under the Maori Welfare Act 1962. This Act also brought into being the Maori Council, the top tier of a cumbersome four-tiered structure modelled on Pakeha bureaucratic systems. At the parochial level were the Maori committees with defined areas in a town, region or suburb of a city. Committees were grouped into executive areas, and executives were subject to district councils, of which there were eight covering the country. The district councils were based on the boundaries of the Maori Land Court, namely Taitokerau, Waikato, Waiariki, Aotea, Tairawhiti, Ikaroa and Te Waipounamu. The eighth one was the Auckland District Maori Council, which served the urban Maori population. All levels of the structure held triennial elections, culminating in the district councils sending three delegates to the national council, which elects a president. The weakness of the system is that Maori committees are an artificial construct of the bureaucratic mind and did not fit the authentic Maori systems of mobilising people through whanau, hapu, iwi and marae committees. Despite this blemish, with the assistance of Maori welfare officers, the committees were elected, and the Maori Council brought into being. Marae committees generally designated themselves Maori committees to qualify for membership in the council structure. The one incentive to do so was the role assigned to district councils of allocating priority in the disbursement of government subsidies to marae-building projects. When projects proliferated as a consequence of urbanisation, a dis-
tinction had to be made between rural and urban subsidies. A larger amount of money was allocated to urban subsidies because of the greater need, and the fact that most rural areas already had marae to serve what was in effect a dwindling population.

Although the rural districts of the Maori Council were inherently tribal, with some paying their levies to the national council out of tribal monies, some tribes were suspicious of the council as a creature of Government. Others suspected the council as a National Party ploy because it was established during the reign of a National Government, to counterbalance the four Maori seats held by Labour. At the inaugural meeting of the council in June 1962, Ralph Hanan, Minister of Maori Affairs, gave some credence to that view when he said that as a Pakeha unlearned in Maori ways, he found it difficult to tell Maori people under his portfolio what to do. Although the four Maori members of Parliament offered guidance when he sought it, a bipartisan approach was not possible when the issues were political in nature. Therefore he felt the need for some assistance. For this reason he responded to the request from Reiwhati Vercoe of the Waiariki District Council to establish the national body. The Minister wondered why it had not been done fifty years previously, which is one of the ironies of history, considering that the chiefs had pressed for such a council for more than a century. In any case, as subsequent events unfolded, Hanan was not at all averse to deciding unilaterally what was good for the Maori, and proceeding to enforce his will against their protestations.

The identification of the Maori Council with the National Government was deepened by the election of its leaders. Its first president, Sir Turi Carroll, the secretary, Henare Ngata, and succeeding presidents, Pei Te Hurinui Jones and the present incumbent Sir Graham Latimer, were all publicly identified members of the National Party. For this reason, the council was jokingly dubbed by one wag as ‘Uncle Tom’s cabinet’. Although the council hierarchy was of conservative persuasion, it was leavened by members belonging to the Labour Party, and in recent years one Social Crediter. Despite its origins and the differing political affiliations of its members, the deliberations of the council were driven by the same Maori agenda that drove the Welfare League, Ratana, Ngata and his colleagues, the Maori Parliament, Kauhanganui, and the chiefs: the struggle of Maori leaders for the good of the people against the forces of colonisation. Only time would prove how far the council was prepared to push that agenda against the Government.
The Maori Council addressed the same concerns identified by the league, such as the welfare of girls arriving by boat in Lyttelton, the appointment of teachers in Maori culture, migrant youths getting in trouble with the law, rising crime among Maori, the appointment of Maori to government-appointed bodies, and social problems among urban migrants. But where the council differed from the league was its use by Government as a sounding board for pending legislation such as the Adoption Amendment Bill, Juries Amendment Bill, Maori Purposes Bill and Maori Welfare Bill. None of these were particularly contentious and so support was given to the Minister of Maori Affairs. But when it came to land, the council dug in and opposed the Minister when he proposed to lift the restriction of the term of leases on Maori land from fifty to a hundred years. Sir Turi Carroll likened the move to a 'confiscation of a sort'. Henare Ngata said that the council had no intention of being obstructive to proposed legislative changes for Maori land. He reiterated the sentiments of his father, saying change in legislation was not what was needed, but rather a policy of land development and utilisation with a training programme for young Maori with the aim of Maori occupation of Maori land. The main problem was difficulty in raising loans to finance the development of Maori land. The Maori Council would be greatly pleased, said Ngata, if he could help the Minister see Maori land problems through Maori eyes by conducting him on a tour of the East Coast.

Despite the position staked out by the Maori Council, the Government went ahead with its plan to bring 'idle Maori land' into production by rationalising in an authoritarian way the difficulties of dealing with Maori land because of multiple ownership and fragmentation of land holdings into uneconomic units. The Government's solution was set out in the Pritchard-Waetford Report 1965, which proposed raising the classification of 'uneconomic' shares in land from £25 to £100, with the Crown taking over from the Maori Trustee the power of compulsory purchase of such lands and their disposal. To meet the anticipated workload of acquiring Maori land, there was to be an increase in the parliamentary vote to the conversion fund. The report also proposed to change the designation of Maori land held by fewer than four owners to European land. The administration of such lands would pass from the Maori Land Court to the Land Transfer Office.

The Maori Council made two responses to the Pritchard-Waetford Report. In May 1966, under the auspices of the University of Auckland
Extension Department, it convened a conference of academics, fifty-four district council delegates, representatives from five Maori trust boards, the Maori Women’s Welfare League, the Federation of Maori Students and the Maori Graduates’ Association to consider the report. The result was a thoroughly professional critique, which opposed the £100 conversion proposal and the Crown being the conversion agent. The proposed compulsory change in status of Maori land to European land was also opposed. Instead, it was suggested that such a change should be optional.65

In March 1967 the Maori Council itself responded strongly to the Pritchard-Waetford Report in a letter to the Minister. It pointed out the difficulties of Maori land titles were caused by a one-sided (Pakeha) interpretation of Maori custom, which the Maori Land Court set aside in carving up tribal land into a multiplicity of partitions. A five-point proposal was put forward to retrieve the situation. These included an information service on Maori land, guidance on use through trusts, incorporations and other co-operative organisations (which would be better than conversion), advice on farming, a training scheme and, above all, financial provision at reasonable rates to enable Maori use of their own land. The council concluded by condemning the Government’s plan as discriminatory against Maori. By cutting across basic property rights, the report departed from the British rules of property applicable to British citizens. Tribal leaders around the country joined with the Maori Council in opposing the incorporation of the Pritchard-Waetford proposals into legislation, but to little effect.

The Government, driven still by the colonising ethos of its predecessors, hardly heeded the sage advice of the wise leaders of the Maori world. It introduced the Maori Affairs Amendment Act 1967 at the end of the parliamentary session. Although the Maori Council and tribal leaders had succeeded in pegging the conversion limit at $50, the basic thrust of the Pritchard-Waetford Report remained: commodification of land, facilitating its acquisition for sale to others who would make it productive, and assimilation. Europeanisation of Maori land, which is the basis of identity as tangata whenua, would resolve once and for all the Maori problem by conjuring it away, and so realise the Pakeha dream of ‘one people’. For Maori people, the Act was seen as the ‘last land grab’ by the Pakeha. In the next decade it triggered the Maori land rights movement, a movement that was to expose to the world at large the inherent contradictions between the colonised and the coloniser in New Zealand society.
Although land was the primary focus of the Maori Council, it was also concerned with problems arising out of urbanisation, particularly educational failure, juvenile delinquency and rising crime. Over 85 per cent of Maori children left secondary school in 1965 without any recognised qualifications.\textsuperscript{66} In 1970, there were 9,094 young Maori offenders before the Children’s Court. The following year there was an increase to 10,750. The offending rate of Maori boys under sixteen years was 5.1 times the rate of their Pakeha cohorts. For Maori girls, the rate was even higher at 7.4.\textsuperscript{67} While these negative statistics were symptoms of family breakdown, loss of traditional constraints of the tribal elders, and alienation as a consequence of colonisation, the end product was the 1970s phenomenon of ‘street kids’ and urban gangs. Early in 1970 there was a street battle in South Auckland between the Stormtroopers and a Pakeha group, which did not bode well for the future.

The Maori Council became concerned at these manifestations of social breakdown as a consequence of social dislocation and urbanisation. It convened a Young Maori Leaders Conference at Auckland University on the theme of urbanisation. This conference generated over ninety recommendations directed at conserving Maori language and culture, providing assistance to Maori in making adjustment to urban life, educating the Pakeha to become culturally sensitive, and social transformation towards a more equitable relationship between Maori and Pakeha. Suggested transformations included encouraging Maori to stand in local body elections, training for secondary school principals in cultural sensitivity, discontinuance of exploitive and derogatory use of Maori culture in television and other media, revision of history teaching that promulgated bias and stereotypes against Maori, an increase in Maori Studies lecturers at teachers’ colleges, the promotion of Maori welfare officers into administration and posts of responsibility, and an increase of Maori representation in Parliament on the same basis as European seats. A workshop devoted solely to Maori language recommended language teaching and maintenance programmes at primary and secondary schools for children whose first language is Maori. It was also recommended that all children who wished should be given the opportunity to study Maori language at secondary school.\textsuperscript{68} In effect, the conference provided a unique opportunity for dialogue involving elders, delegates from the Maori Council, the Maori Women’s Welfare League, the Maori Health League, Maori incorporations, tribal trust boards, labour unions, students, the Stormtroopers and Maori sections of orthodox churches.
It helped to define in the urban situation the common lot of the Maori as a subjected people. Yet dialogue alone is not sufficient to implement the decisions arrived at, for there is no transformation without action. One action was the submission of the report to the Government. But past experience had shown that governments seldom heeded the considered deliberations of responsible Maori leaders. Young people felt a standing group from the conference was needed to sustain on-going action. Out of their discussions emerged Nga Tamatoa, the young warriors, who were prepared to challenge the conventional wisdom of the Pakeha establishment.

**Modern Maori Activists**

One of the consequences of urbanisation is increased knowledge of the alienating culture of metropolitan society and its techniques for the maintenance of the structural relationship of Pakeha dominance and Maori subjection. Freire's observation that knowledge of the alienating culture leads to transforming action resulting in a culture that is being freed from alienation, is an apt description of the dynamic of the Maori cultural renaissance. The early portents of modern Maori activism directed at transformation took the form of two newsletters published in Wellington and circulated to selected Maori people in different parts of the country. The first was named *Te Hokioi* after the original Waikato newspaper of Te Tuhi and King Tawhiao. The initial issue of the paper appeared in August 1968 as 'a taiaha of truth' for the Maori nation. The editor declared the paper was prepared to 'publish and be damned'. Telling the truth meant exposure of the pollution of shellfish resources by the aluminium smelter in the South Island, the stripping of the paua beds along the Wairarapa coast by commercial divers, and the commercial exploitation of greenstone in the Arahura Maori Reserve. In publicising these issues and relating them to the Treaty of Waitangi, *Te Hokioi* functioned as a consciousness-raising mechanism that helped to prepare the way for a wide spectrum of Maori people to engage in the practice of social transformation.

The second newsletter, which appeared at the same time as *Te Hokioi*, was published under the acronym MOOHR by the Maori Organisation on Human Rights. Like *Te Hokioi*, which aligned the struggle for Maori rights with the class struggle, MOOHR called for unity to organise the downfall of those sections of New Zealand society which oppress and exploit the Maori people. The aims of MOOHR
were essentially humanist. These included defending human rights, raising consciousness over the erosion of Maori rights by legislation, and opposition to discrimination in housing, employment, sport and politics. MOOHR pledged to uphold the Treaty of Waitangi and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It advocated the recovery and takeover of Maori resources held by Pakeha, such as the ‘tenths’ in the South Island and perpetual leases on Maori land, so that the people would not be dependent on government hand-outs. As an advocate of Maori identity and self-determination, MOOHR attacked the education system, accusing it of ‘cultural murder’ for its denial of the Maori language of a rightful place in the schools of the nation. In its August 1971 newsletter, MOOHR postulated a continuum of Maori-Pakeha tension by claiming that ‘these movements for Maori rights to run Maori affairs will continue so long as Maoris [sic] feel oppressed by Pakeha-dominated governments’. These were prophetic words in the years that lay ahead, as the nation approached the sesquicentennial of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

*Ngā Tamatoa*

While *Te Hokioi* and MOOHR were the underground expression of rising political consciousness among urban Maori, Ngā Tamatoa became its public face. At its inception, there was a division in the movement between radicals, such as John Ohia, Paul Kotara and Ted Nia, and conservative, university-educated students, such as Syd and Hana Jackson, Peter Rikys and Donna Awatere. Initially, it was the radicals, who modelled themselves on the Black Power leaders such as Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael of the United States, who drew adverse publicity with their rhetoric of brown power, Maori liberation, separate government and even a separate foreign policy. Eventually, however, the conservatives took control of the movement and initiated a series of self-help programmes. Offices were opened in Auckland and Wellington to interview migrants searching for work and to find job placements for them. Members of Tamatoa monitored the courts and gave assistance to Maori offenders needing advice and legal aid. A petition, which collected thousands of signatures, was circulated around the country calling for the inclusion of the Maori language in the education system at the primary as well as at the secondary level. When challenged that there were insufficient teachers to introduce the language nationwide, Tamatoa responded by calling for the establishment of a one-year teacher training scheme for adult
native speakers of the language. To demonstrate the feasibility of the scheme, Tamatoa took parties of urban youth to rural marae to learn the language from their elders.

Tamatoa’s campaign coincided with the advent of a liberal Minister of Education, Phil Amos, in the third Labour Government. Under his administration, the ‘link system’ of teaching Maori at primary and secondary schools was introduced in 1974. To support the programme, a one-year teacher training scheme for native speakers was established as well. To strengthen the language programme, Tamatoa introduced a Maori language day, which was taken over by the education system and eventually extended to one week. That the leaders of Tamatoa were so relentless in their language campaign was due to their own incapacity to speak Maori. They felt culturally disadvantaged and cheated by a monocultural education system.

While the leaders of Tamatoa worked within the parameters of the existing social order (for instance, by making their own submissions to the Select Committee on the Race Relations Bill), they were not averse to engaging in radical protest action against perceived institutional racism. When a Pakeha appointee arrived in the Auckland office of Maori Affairs to take up his post as district officer, he was met by a Tamatoa sit-in. Tamatoa asked the embarrassing question why half the employees in the department were Maori, but not one of the nine district officers was Maori.

In 1971 activists in Tamatoa were presented with an irresistible target by the Government’s commitment to the celebration of the Treaty of Waitangi as the cornerstone of nationhood. The Treaty, which for so long had been neglected by the Government, was dusted off under the Waitangi Day Act 1960, which declared 6 February a national day of thanksgiving to commemorate the signing of the Treaty. The New Zealand Day Act 1973 changed the name of Waitangi Day and made it a public holiday as well. Pumped-up ceremony was no consolation for unresolved Maori grievances underlying the Treaty. Tamatoa protested by wearing black arm-bands and declaring the celebration a day of mourning for the loss of 25.2 million hectares of Maori land.

Embarrassed by this show of dissent, the Government sought the advice of the Maori Council, which responded with a submission that cited fourteen statutes contravening Article 2 of the Treaty. These ranged from the Public Works Act, to the Mining Act, the Petroleum Act, the Rating Act, and the Town and Country Planning Act. The council also pressed for an amendment to the Town and Country Plan-
ning Act, which was incorporated in Section 3(1)(g) of the Act in 1974. Under this amendment, monocultural law for the first time was modified to take cognisance of the culture of the colonised. In matters of national importance, the planning of regional, district and maritime schemes had to take into account the relationship of the Maori people, their culture and traditions with their ancestral land.

The Maori Council’s submissions both substantiated and complemented the protest action of Tamatoa. The Government’s response was the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975, which established the Waitangi Tribunal. The functions of the tribunal are to hear Maori grievances, inquire into claims under the Treaty and to make recommendations to Parliament for their settlement. The tribunal was also expected to report on the effect of new legislation referred to it by Parliament on the Treaty. The Minister of Maori Affairs, Matiu Rata, who steered the legislation through the House, hoped to make the tribunal retrospective to 1900, but was unable to do so. The tribunal was limited by Section 6(c) of the Act to hearing claims after the Act came into force. Furthermore, the tribunal had no power to make awards. The power to settle grievances remained with Parliament.

Maori Land Rights Movement

Maori people were not mollified by a tribunal with no substance. The political consciousness forged by newsletters, Tamatoa, and endless dialogue on marae around the country over grievances against the Crown, coalesced into a powerful Maori land rights movement, which in 1975 marched the length of the North Island to Parliament Buildings in Wellington.

The Maori land march movement was launched at a hui, convened by the dowager of the Maori world, Whina Cooper, early in 1975 at Mangere Marae. The driving force of the movement was rising resentment over the relentless alienation and control of the remaining 1.2 million hectares of Maori land by Pakeha laws. The ‘last land grab’ under the 1967 Maori Affairs Amendment Act was the trigger. But other statutes were implicated as well, such as the Rating Act 1967. The urban migration had left Maori land in rural areas unoccupied. Although not producing income, the land was subject to rates. As unpaid rates accumulated, local bodies sought payment by getting court orders under Section 81 of the Act, enabling them to lease or sell the land. There was only a six-month period after notification for owners to retrieve the situation by paying the rates. Notification of
owners who left no forwarding address was difficult. Inevitably, the land was sold to Pakeha farmers. Resentment was also fuelled by the Town and Country Planning Act, which prevented Maori from building houses on their own land because of zoning restrictions. As far as Maori were concerned, ancestral papakainga should have been sufficient reason for allowing them to build where they wanted. The momentum generated by the Maori land rights movement could not be reversed overnight by the amendment of Section 3(1)(g) of the Act, or the repeal of the pernicious clauses in the 1967 Maori Affairs Amendment Act by the Minister, Matiu Rata, in 1974. Besides, there were widespread Maori land grievances of a contemporary nature around the country that caused anger at the parochial level. The tribes concerned sent representatives to the Mangere hui to air their take in a national forum.

The Ngati Wai Land Retention Committee, led by the kaumatua Waipu Peters, condemned the Whangarei District Scheme for designating under the Town and Country Planning Act seven-eighths of public open space and recreational reserves on the one-eighth of Maori land along the coast between the Whangarei Heads and the Whangaruru Harbour. Only one-eighth of the designations fell on the seven-eighths of land held by Pakeha. Waipu Peters was so angry that, in the extravagant rhetoric he used to rouse passion in the hui, he threatened to shoot any public servant who dared walk on his land to claim it for the state as public open space. Later, another member of the tribe vowed to enter politics to fight the Labour Government. That was the beginning of the political career of Winston Peters. A representative from the Tuwharetoa complained to the hui over the 'theft' of a 2.8-hectare island of shingle in the Tarawera River by the Ministry of Works for the Tokaanu power project. Another, from Te Arawa, complained against the Ohinemutu Empowering Bill, which sought to take over the ownership of the Maori road through Ohinemutu village so the city council could maintain it. The Tainui Awhiro delegate complained about Maori land at Raglan taken under the Public Works Act for an emergency airfield during the war. The land, now under the Raglan County Council, had been handed over to the Raglan Golf Club. The tribe wanted it back. Also aired was the longstanding Ngati Maru grievance over the Thames and Coromandel goldfields. In 1867 the Crown negotiated residential site leases for gold miners at 30 shillings per annum for what was thought to be a temporary use. Today, dwellings, hotels, motels and businesses flourish on the leases, but the rent remains at $3 per annum. For generations,
the leaders of the tribe had sought a rent review or a return of the leases but to no avail.

When Whina Cooper spoke to the assembly, she criticised the Maori Council and the Women’s Welfare League for failing to convince the Government over Maori grievances by the process of making submissions. She called for a more dynamic approach and proposed a land march to Parliament. With the endorsement of the hui, she formed the organisation named Te Roopu o te Matakite. The word matakite, which means seers or prophetic visionaries, was carefully chosen for its spiritual meaning. Redolent with the spiritual powers of ancestors, it served as an ideology uniting Maori across tribal differences. After six months of planning, the march, led by a hard core of fifty marchers, set off from Te Hapua in the Far North on 14 September 1975. At the head of the march was the bearer of the pouwhenua, symbol of mana whenua, and standard carrying the Matakite flag. The marchers went under the slogan of ‘Not one more acre of Maori land’ to be surrendered to the Pakeha.

As the march approached large towns and cities, the numbers swelled as local people joined for a short while to give moral support. The marchers, together with their support vehicles, stopped overnight at twenty-five marae en route all the way down the centre of the North Island. For the hosts on rural marae, the discussions in the meeting house at night, led by Whina Cooper, informed them of the aims of Matakite and the purpose of the march. As a consequence of the land march, Maori people throughout the land were politicised in a unity of purpose to a level unprecedented in modern times, in the endless struggle against colonisation.

On 23 September the ranks of the marchers were swelled by thousands of supporters as they approached Auckland City. The honour of leading the march and bearing the pouwhenua across the Harbour Bridge was given to Joseph Parata Hawke of the Ngati Whatua at Orakei. The sight of the thousands of marchers crossing the bridge, and later, on 13 October, converging on Wellington City, became a media spectacle in the press and on national television. But the spectacle bemused rather than informed the Pakeha about the Maori struggle for justice. Only those in central government had some inkling what was at stake when Joseph Cooper handed over the Memorial of Rights to the Prime Minister, Bill Rowling, on the steps of Parliament.

The memorial sought the protective principle of entrenchment over Maori land, whereby pernicious clauses in the law to take, alienate, designate or confiscate Maori land be repealed and never administered
on Maori land now or in the future. The control, retention and management of Maori land was to remain with the Maori people and their descendants in perpetuity. Some months after the land march, the Dannevirke Borough Council put a designation on 24 hectares of Maori land for no more noble purpose than a rubbish tip. The significance of the land march was lost on the Dannevirke borough fathers. Their action was indicative of how deeply entrenched still was the colonial mentality at the level of local government.

At the end of the land march, the participants split into factions. One group established a tent embassy on the steps of Parliament and was promptly disowned by Whina Cooper. Another group went on its own march around the East Coast. It is a testimony to the charisma and mana of Whina Cooper that she had held the movement together for eight months, when it had in its ranks, radicals, activists, trade unionists and the dispossessed. Inevitably, the factionalism detracted from the impact of the march as the breakaway Matakite o Aotearoa attempted to wrest control from Whina Cooper. The irony of the situation was that both factions of Matakite ended up making submissions to the parliamentary Select Committee on Maori Affairs at Mangere Marae in March 1977, the very process for which Whina Cooper had denigrated the Maori Council and the Women’s Welfare League. There were no tangible results other than a referral of Matakite’s petition and Memorial of Rights to the Government for ‘enquiry’. Within twelve months Matakite became moribund, as the dynamic of Maori activism sought expression through other causes.

**Bastion Point**

Joseph Hawke, a politically uninvolved young man but with fire in his belly, was on a political high during the land march. He had been plucked from obscurity by Whina Cooper and pitched into the heady broth of cultural politics. For two years after the march he was in a state of limbo, looking for a cause without knowing where to find one. At the end of 1977 the National Government presented him with an opportunity when it took steps to implement its plan to subdivide 24 hectares of Crown land at Bastion Point.

As a boy, Joe Hawke witnessed the eviction of his people as ‘squatters’ and the burning of their houses on the papakainga of their ancestors at Okahu Bay in 1951. The eviction of the Ngati Whatua at Orakei is a sordid tale of colonial oppression of the once proud owners of Tamaki Makaurau, the isthmus of a thousand lovers. The legal
machinations by which the Crown gained control of the 280-hectare estate of the Ngati Whatua is a microcosm of the Crown’s dealing in tribal land.

After selling the 1,200 hectares on which Auckland City stands to Governor Hobson in 1840, Apihai Te Kawau and his people reoccupied their lands at Orakei under the umbrella of Pax Britannica, safe from Ngapuhi muskets. But as the city expanded, Te Kawau came under pressure to sell more land. In order to safeguard the land for future generations, he obtained a Crown Grant through the Native Land Court in 1869 to 280 hectares of land at Orakei. The grant by Judge Fenton recognized the three hapu of Te Taou, Ngaoho and Te Uringutu as the owners. In 1873 the Native Land Court issued a certificate of title in the name of thirteen persons as trustees of the estate. The title had a rider ‘that the land shall be absolutely inalienable’ to safeguard the rights of generations to come. That safeguard was as substantial as mist in the noonday sun in the face of Pakeha hunger for land.

The first step towards the alienation of Orakei was taken when the Orakei Native Reserve Act was passed in 1882. This private member’s Bill blew away the inalienable clause by allowing for the leasing of land in the Orakei block for up to forty-two years. In 1898 the Native Land Court partitioned the Orakei Block under Section 14 of the Native Land Court Act, and the thirteen trustees were declared ‘owners’ with power to alienate the tribal estate. So as not to render the Ngati Whatua entirely landless, the court declared 15.6 hectares of the papakainga at Okahu Bay an ‘inalienable reserve’. The Stout-Ngata Commission of 1907 declared the partition illegal and void because Orakei was communal land, to be preserved as a dwelling place for the remnant of a tribe. But because the so-called owners had made leases and subdivisions under the partition order, the Commission recommended that they be validated under the Validation of Invalid Land Sales Act 1894.

The Auckland City Council, which wanted a share in the carve-up of Orakei, promoted the Orakei Model Suburb Empowering Bill in 1912. The Bill was opposed by the Maori Affairs Committee and was dropped. Not to be outdone, the Government made its move to get hold of the land. The following year Cabinet recommended that the Crown purchase Orakei. It ensured a Crown monopoly to purchase by a series of Orders in Council prohibiting sales to speculators. By 1916, the buying up of Orakei by the government agent J. A. Tole was well advanced. The Crown also confirmed its hold on 4.4 hectares given
by the chiefs in 1859 for defence purposes at Bastion Point during the
Russian scare, and 3.6 hectares at Takaparawha, by taking them under
the Public Works Act. The rationale that the Ngati Whatua were
willing sellers, and therefore the authors of their own dispossession,
does not bear examination. In a long-running battle to resist the state
and save the land, there were eight actions in the Maori Land Court,
four in the Supreme Court, two in the Court of Appeal, two in the
Compensation Court, six appearances before Commissions or Com-
mittes of Inquiry, and fifteen Parliamentary Petitions. In the end
the state prevailed. By 1928 all that remained was the papakainga,
which the Crown proceeded to buy as well, despite its being
inalienable. By 1929 all that was left was 1.2 hectares. One family,
sensing the Government was determined to have even that, exchanged
its one-third share in the papakainga for 4 hectares on the hill above.
But even that was not safe, as it was subsequently taken in 1950 under
the Public Works Act for state housing.

The Kennedy Commission of 1939 commented on the irregular
conveyancing procedures used by the government agents. Individuals
held undivided shares in the land at Orakei, therefore they could not
point to a specific area that was actually ‘owned’, or was to be
reserved. No surveys were made at the time of purchase, and so
owners were beguiled into thinking the land was intact. Once all the
interests were acquired, the Ngati Whatua were deemed to be squa-
ters on Crown land. Their eviction was only a matter of time. The
commission effectively prepared the way for the eviction eleven years
later, by noting that the papakainga was only 1.2 metres above the
high-water mark. Therefore, in the interests of health and sanitation,
‘the natives could no longer in such a locality live the free life which
they prefer’. The commission failed to sheet home responsibility to
the city council for the muddy and insanitary state of the papakainga.
In 1912 the sewer line was built along the foreshore of Okahu Bay to
the pumping station and outfall. The line was subsequently covered
with soil and a road built on top. The road effectively blocked the run-
off of stormwater down the gully behind the papakainga, turning it
into a quagmire in winter. The last act in this tale of man’s inhumanity
to man was played out in 1951 when the people were evicted from the
papakainga and moved into thirty state houses in Kitemoana Street
above, and Reihana Street on the flat. The houses on the papakainga,
including the meeting house, were knocked down and burned.
Twenty-six years later, the boy who witnessed that burning sought utu
by defying the state over the ownership of the land.
In January 1977 the Orakei Maori Action Group led by Joe Hawke occupied the land at Bastion Point to stop the subdivision going ahead. Tents, cooking facilities, caravans and a meeting house were put on the site for the 150 protesters who moved in to support the cause. The local populace opposed to the subdivision helped the protesters by supplying them with food, water and electricity. The trade unions strengthened Joe Hawke's hand by declaring a green ban on Bastion Point. Matakite, members of Tamatoa, Socialist Action, the Socialist Unity Party and the Citizen's Association for Racial Equality added their support as well. With his position considerably strengthened, Hawke demanded the return of all Crown land at Bastion Point, including the Savage Memorial and Takaparawha Reserve, a total of 72 hectares. The Crown, not wanting a direct confrontation, filed an injunction in the Supreme Court to order the squatters to vacate the land.

In the meantime the elders of Ngati Whatua sought a peaceful resolution to the impasse by entering into negotiations with the Government. A deal was struck for the return of 9.2 hectares in lieu of 5.2 hectares for the Battery reserve, and 4 hectares to replace land taken for state houses. The land, including the houses, was to be handed over to a constituted trust board to administer the estate on behalf of the tribe and take responsibility for paying the residue of the development costs of $200,000. The offer from Cabinet of 11.6 hectares, which was spurned by Joe Hawke, was described as a 'handsome remedy' by Justice Speight. The judge ruled that the protesters occupied the land without right, and issued an injunction for their removal. The elders importuned the protesters to come off the Point, but they refused. The battle lines were drawn as the occupation dragged on.

Finally, on 25 May 1978, the occupation was ended after 506 days when the Point was cleared by 600 policemen. During the occupation, Bastion Point, like the land march, was a media event. But the sensational treatment of it tended to bemuse rather than inform the general public as the drama moved to its inexorable climax. The abiding image from the television news clips of the clearance of the Point, is of an earthmoving machine demolishing the makeshift meeting house of the protesters. It left the impression that the rabble-rousers, who had broken the law, had been crushed like beetles underfoot for daring to challenge the power of the state.

Few people drew the conclusion that the Crown had been down that road before against Rua Kenana, Te Whiti and Te Kooti. Fewer still
realised that the Maori is not intimidated by power, just as the fighters of a warrior race were not intimidated by the big guns at Orakau or Gate Pa. The indomitable desire of the human spirit for freedom and justice can not be denied by repression. That was the undying message of Rewi Maniapoto: the struggle will go on forever.