

# Tuhoe Confiscations Inevitable and Justified

The media has published many articles to support the alleged Tuhoe claim with much of it based on selective research by the Waitangi Tribunal, Dr Paul Moon, Bruce Stirling and others. However, most importantly, as with many of these claims, there is another side to this story that must also be told. While Tuhoe did suffer at the hands of the government troops and their Maori supporters, they brought it upon themselves by protecting the “rebels” that had violated both Maori and European. Below is a brief account of why the confiscated lands were “inevitable and justified”, as fully documented in New Zealand’s archives.

Tuhoe did not sign the Treaty largely because they were too isolated for it to be taken to them, read, discussed and given the opportunity to sign. Unlike Ngapuhi and other northern tribes, Tuhoe had very little contact with the Europeans, the missionaries or the British Crown and remained this way for many years after the Treaty was signed, when New Zealand was ceded to Britain, which was recognized and accepted by all the major nations of the world.

In December 1864, Kereopa brought the Pai Marire religion to the East Coast but was told not to interfere with the Europeans. On the 2 March 1865, missionary Rev C S Volkner was hanged from a willow tree near his church. His body was then decapitated and the head paraded around the village before Kereopa swallowed his eyes, calling one Parliament and the other the Queen and British Law. Kereopa instigated the killing of Volkner, as he believed he had been spying for the Government, which caused the death of two members of his family. Although this act outraged the Europeans, such an

indignity to the head of an enemy conferred mana amongst Tuhoe. If the government was to honour the commitment Britain had made to all the people of New Zealand in 1840, then it was time a stand had to be taken to bring law and order to the people of the East Coast.

After the killing of Völkner, Kereopa fled to the Ureweras under the protection of Tuhoe. In May 1865, he and a party of Tuhoe attempted to travel to Waikato, but were prevented from reaching the Kaingaroa plains by a force of Te Arawa – but not before killing two Te Arawa chiefs with Kereopa again eating their eyes. They were forced to turn back when a relief party of Te Arawa, led by W. G. Mair, arrived. Kereopa, under the protection of Tuhoe from the Government troops, returned to hiding in the Ureweras.

Kereopa had much mana in the minds of Tuhoe and thus obtained their continuing protection. The dense bush of the Urewera Mountains offered him protection from the Government troops, as it later would for Te Kooti and the Hauhau. Martial Law had been declared in the Opotiki and Whakatane districts after the killing of Völkner, and a reward was offered for the capture of those responsible.

Over the next three years, the people of the Urewera were weakened, and their land devastated by the government's relentless pursuit of Kereopa for his involvement with Völkner's killing; Te Kooti for his massacres up and down the country and the Hauhau who were attacking and killing innocent settlers and their families and destroying their crops and buildings. However, Tuhoe continued to protect these "rebels". The government troops included Ngati Porou, Ngati Kahungunu and Te Arawa embarked on several campaigns to capture the "rebels". During these campaigns Tuhoe's pa were plundered, crops destroyed, people killed and land confiscated. This in itself is Maori custom, – revenge – plunder to avenge a wrong. There is no denying Tuhoe land was devastated, but they brought it upon themselves by protecting the "rebels" from

being brought to justice.

By late 1870 several Tuhoe leaders had made their peace with the government, but they would not violate the sanctuary of the Urewera by giving up Kereopa, Te Kooti or the Hauhau. Eventually, however, seeing that their survival was now threatened, they withdrew this protection.

It was agreed amongst Tuhoe that neither European soldiers nor Ngati Porou forces should be allowed to capture the "rebels": as their protectors, they would deliver Kereopa themselves to the government. Kereopa agreed to give himself up as payment for the Tuhoe blood that had been shed for him.

It must be remembered that it was not only the government that wanted law and order established on the East Coast. Ngati Porou, Ngati Kahungunu and Te Arawa also fought with the Government troops, as did many other tribes around New Zealand to enforce the Queens Law. These three iwi were instrumental in the 1870 and 1871 pursuit of the "rebels" that Tuhoe allowed to take refuge in Urewera Mountains after massacres in Poverty Bay.

There is no denying that Tuhoe, Te Whakathea and Ngati Awa were out of step with the majority of New Zealand, both Maori and European at the time, which they eventually realised, releasing the "rebels" they had been protecting. By this time, the majority of Maori had realised that for the Maori race to survive, there had to be one government, one law for all the people of New Zealand and had put this law in the hands of the Britain Crown.

Due to the isolation of Tuhoe, the "1896 Urewera District Native Act" established some 650,000 acres of their land as a reserve – **but never gave them full autonomy**. It was no more than a "Maori local government" under the control of the Crown. The Government gained Tuhoe's recognition of the Queen. All tribal powers had to be within the Law, devolved and

approved by the Crown. The Crown intended that in due course it would impose "all the responsibilities, liabilities and privileges" of the other iwi that had signed the Treaty, on the Tuhoe people. The Colonial Government would not have had the authority to give Tuhoe **full autonomy**. Britain would definitely not have give uncivilized natives autonomy to part of a British Colony! This "Maori local government" was revoked a few years later.

Over the next 60 years, Tuhoe sold large tracts of their underdeveloped wasteland to the Government. Later the Crown vested most of this land into the Urewera National Park for all the people of New Zealand to enjoy, including the people of the Eastern tribes.

The Waitangi Tribunal stated that Tuhoe had 24,147 ha of land confiscated, but Government figures show, in 1866, 448,000 acres (181,000 hectares) of land belonging to the tribes of the Bay of Plenty, Tuhoe, Te Whakathea and Ngati Awa were confiscated by the government. Government documents show, this area was subsequently reduced to 211,000 acres (85,387 hectares), of which Tuhoe lost 14,000 acres (5,700 hectares).

The Waitangi Tribunal also claims Tuhoe were never compensated, but in Richard Hill's Justice Department report for the Lange Government in 1989, page 11 clause 31, shows Tuhoe received \$200,000 compensation in 1958. Tuhoe is also a party to the Waikaremoana Trust Board that receives \$124,000 per year in rental for Lake Waikaremoana.

The alliance of the Tuhoe with Kereopa, Te Kooti and the Hauhau and their resistance of the Crown to apprehend these "rebels" after killing many innocent Maori and European – meant military action was inevitable and justified – a fact admitted by the Waitangi Tribunal stating, "The alliance of the Tuhoe people with Te Kooti and the attacks on the Crown's subjects, Maori and Pakeha that followed, meant military action was inevitable and justified" – as was the

confiscations. If New Zealand was to be civilised as the majority of the chiefs had asked for in 1840, then the action taken by the government of the day was inevitable and justified, especially when the compensated land was reduced to only 5,700 ha and Tuhoē received \$200,000 compensation in 1958 and the ongoing rental of Lake Waikaremoana— a fact not mentioned by the Waitangi Tribunal.

This “Kangaroo Court” method of determining our country's future by the Waitangi Tribunal and others must stop. There must be a full public inquiry where all the documented evidence is presented and scrutinised before more land and assets belonging to the people of New Zealand are given away without their, knowledge, authority or consent. **This is our sovereign right Prime Minister and the people also deserve balanced reporting from our media!**

Compiled by the One New Zealand Foundation Inc from files held in New Zealand's Archives.

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