

That didn't stop Hōne Heke. He was so frustrated with the British, he returned to chop that flagstaff down three more times. Sadly, the fourth and final time, the felling of the flag signalled the outbreak of the Flagstaff War – fighting in the north between British troops and northern Māori.



"Friend Governor – This is my speech to you. My disobedience and rudeness is no new thing. I inherit it from my parents, from my ancestors, do not imagine that it is a new feature of my character, but I am thinking of leaving off my rude conduct towards the Europeans. Now I say that I will prepare another pole, inland at Waimate, and I will erect it at its proper place at Kororāreka in order to put an end to our present quarrel. Let your soldiers remain beyond sea and at Auckland, do not send them here. The pole that was cut down belonged to me, I made it for the native flag, and it was never paid for by the Europeans."

Hōne Heke to Governor Fitzroy, translated by Thomas Forsaith from a letter held at Auckland Public Library.

This wasn't simply Māori vs British – two Ngāpuhi groups also took sides against each other. Hōne Heke and Te Ruki Kawiti fought both the Crown and a Ngāpuhi group led by Tāmāti Wāka Nene. The fighting ended in January 1846 after many brutal battles, with no one winning and with suffering on all sides. Heke finally made peace with Governor George Grey at a meeting in May 1848 at Te Waimate mission. Two years later Heke died.

For Hōne Heke, when he looked at the British flag, he saw the British Empire's domination and control over his people. His act of cutting the flagstaff down expressed this view, and he continued to protest over treatment of Māori until his death. "He resisted the government in battle and in letters," the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* says of him. "By the time he retired to Kaikohe, his actions had made a powerful statement about his people's rights to self-determination"

PARIHAKA – THE BIRTHPLACE OF NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

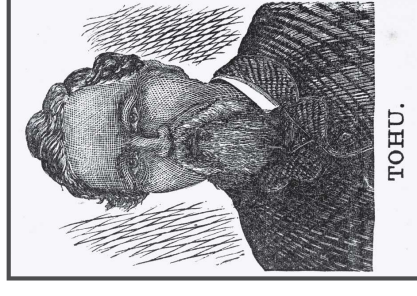
"Though the lions rage, still I am for peace."

Te Whiti o Rongomai (Parihaka 1881)

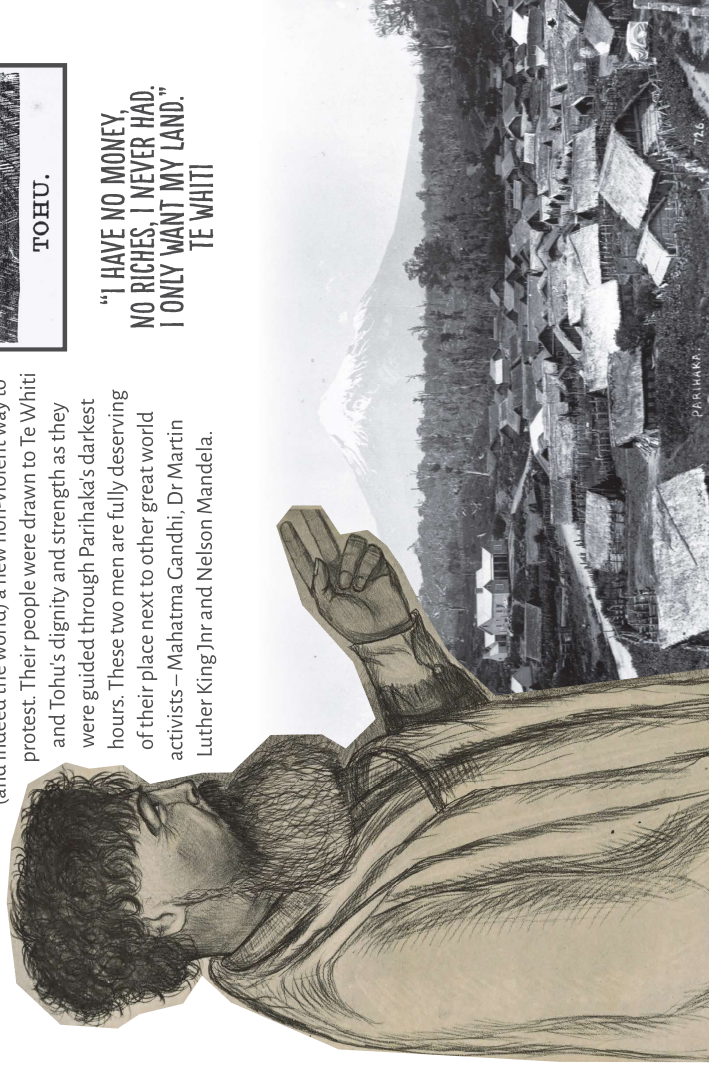
Imagine you are living peacefully in a settlement your ancestors have occupied for generations. Now imagine that strangers from overseas arrive and start to carve up your land, moving you on, tearing down your home. How would you react? Would you fight for your land? Your home? How would you protect it when the newcomers have weapons, soldiers, and new legal powers you do not? In 1881, the people of Parihaka in Taranaki faced just this.

Led by two extraordinary men, Te Whiti o Rongomai (of Taranaki and Te Atiawa descent) and Tohu Kākahi (Taranaki and Ngāti Ruanui), the people of Parihaka showed the colonial government

(and indeed the world) a new non-violent way to protest. Their people were drawn to Te Whiti and Tohu's dignity and strength as they were guided through Parihaka's darkest hours. These two men are fully deserving of their place next to other great world activists – Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela.



**"I HAVE NO MONEY,
NO RICHES, I NEVER HAD.
I ONLY WANT MY LAND."
TE WHITI**



What led them to take this stand? It must have been a terrifying time, with many Māori suffering greatly as the new government confiscated their land and drove them off.

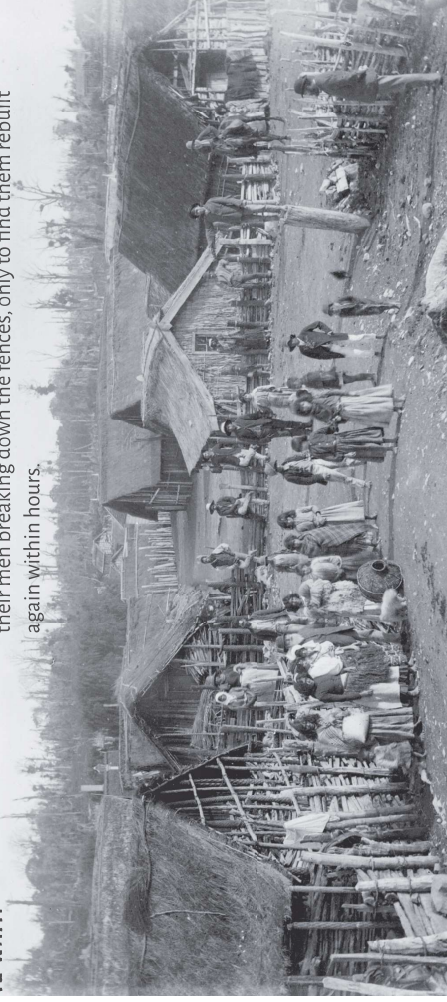
The actions around Parihaka sparked the Taranaki Land Wars of the 1860s – Māori felt tricked and betrayed, and when they fought back to protect their rights, the Crown took thousands more hectares to punish them. Hundreds of Māori were arrested and thrown in prison – or killed.

By the 1870s, Parihaka was the largest Māori village in the country – refuge to thousands made homeless by land confiscations happening in both islands. Te Whiti and Tohu's aim was to maintain peace while protecting their land and culture. Both men preached non-violence and their peaceful teachings offered Parihaka's people inspiring leadership at a very troubled time. They truly believed it was possible to live alongside the settlers peacefully, but they insisted their land be left alone and their customs respected. It seemed their words weren't enough.

The year of 1879 came to be known as "The Year of the Plough". The settlers demanded that surveyors slice up the land around the village, despite a promise not to. Te Whiti and Tohu's talk shifted to action. Te Whiti ordered his followers to plough the surveyed fields, an act of passive resistance. They could cause disruption but must avoid using violence.

The villagers built fences across the newly surveyed land and roads, ignoring anyone who tried to stop them, sneaking back if they were moved away. Large squads of armed police swooped down on the ploughing parties. They found them "unarmed, unresisting, and quite unimpressed". The surveyors continued, their men breaking down the fences, only to find them rebuilt again within hours.

**"GO, PUT YOUR HANDS TO THE
PLOUGH. LOOK NOT BACK. IF ANY
COME WITH GUNS AND SWORDS,
BE NOT AFRAID. IF THEY SMITE
YOU, SMITE NOT IN RETURN.
IF THEY REND YOU, BE NOT
DISCOURAGED – ANOTHER WILL
TAKE UP THE GOOD WORK."
TE WHITI**



Now the settlers called in backup from the police and army. Soon, hundreds of protesters were arrested and held in prisons without trial. Yet, the worst was far from over.

In the morning of 5 November 1881, as more than 2000 villagers sat quietly on the marae listening to a group of singing children, an invading force entered Parihaka.

"Nine hundred and fifty-five armed volunteers and forty-four armed constabulary were sent to deal with people who were peacefully resisting the theft of their land. More than four hundred resisters were arrested before the invasion [...] [which] was marked by rapes, the looting of the resisters' property, the burning of their homes and the uprooting of their crops, the forced relocation under armed escort of 1507 men, women and children; arrests which continued for three weeks after the invasion, then imprisonment without trial [...] for periods of up to two years."

Te Whiti and Tohu were arrested and led away through their weeping friends and whānau, wearing korowai cloaks about their shoulders. Those from other tribal regions were forced to leave. The village was nearly wiped out. The colonial government built a fort inside the pā and for the next five years it was manned by seventy soldiers and five officers. Maps were redrawn. History was rewritten. The invasion of Parihaka was swept under the colonial carpet, its people left landless, hurt and grieving.

**"WE LOOK FOR PEACE AND WE
FIND WAR. BE STEADFAST, KEEP
TO PEACEFUL WORKS, BE NOT
DISMAYED: HAVE NO FEAR." TOHU**



Te Whiti and Tohu were jailed without a trial, as were hundreds of their followers (some for up to eighteen years). They were shipped to overcrowded prisons in the South Island, where on average one prisoner died every two weeks. Conditions were so bad in Dunedin that caves were dug by the prisoners to hide those most unwell from prying eyes. When they were released in 1883, Te Whiti and Tohu returned to Parihaka, but, although they continued to fight for its return, their land was lost. However, their peaceful vision remains strong to this day.

It took 136 years for the Crown to apologise for its invasion and the destruction of Parihaka. On 9 June 2017, people wept as the Minister said sorry for the wrongful arrests and detention of Parihaka's men, and the rape and abuse of its women and girls. He acknowledged it was a shameful moment in Aotearoa's history. It's important we acknowledge this; even now, there are many land claims and much pain yet to be resolved. But one thing is certain: Te Whiti and Tohu's peaceful legacy of non-violent, passive resistance stands as a shining beacon for many, right around the world.

"Theirs was a moral victory, in which they upheld Māori honour and integrity against inconceivable odds." Dick Scott in *Ask that Mountain – The Story of Parihaka*

THE MOTHER OF THE NATION LEADS THE WAY – DAME WHINA COOPER AND THE MĀORI LAND HIKOI 1975

Before the arrival of Europeans, Māori held collective kaitiakitanga over their tribal land. No one person had ownership rights – everyone worked together to ensure protection of the land and its future sustainability.

But within a century of Te Tiriti o Waitangi being signed in 1840, the tribal land had shrunk to a few small pockets, mostly in the middle of the North Island. The ongoing effect of sales and land confiscation means that together, Māori today only have exclusive kaitiakitanga over 4.8% of Aotearoa's total land. Such an enormous loss.



Māori have never given up writing letters, papers, petitions, holding hui, speaking out... they are connected to their land; it's part of who they are. But time after time their pleas are ignored and laws are passed to make the confiscations easier.

In 1953 a new law invited people to report so-called "unused" or "unproductive" Māori land to the Māori Land Court and then apply to "borrow" it for themselves. Another law in 1967 went even further, forcing the compulsory transfer of Māori land with four or fewer owners into a pool of "general" Crown land, which was often then sold.

Early in March 1975, a hui was called at Te Puea Marae in Mangere, South Auckland. They discussed the idea of a protest march from the far north to Parliament, to catch public attention and spread their message that "land is the very soul of a tribal people" and that it was time to give it back. Everyone was called to action: young and old, people from farms, towns and cities came to join the protest. It took four months of planning and fundraising, with offers from marae throughout the country to provide hot food, showers and beds.

On 14 September 1975, 50 protesters left Te Hāpua, on the shores of the Port of Auckland, on a mission to hīkoi (march) all the way to Wellington, a 1000 kilometre journey. At their head was 79-year-old kuia, Dame Whina (Hōhepine) Cooper, with a scarf on her head and a walking stick in her hand.

She was the daughter of Heremia Te Wake, a leader of Ngāti Manawa, and she took part in her first act of passive resistance at the age of 18, when she helped save local mudflats from being drained for cattle. In the non-violent spirit of Parihaka, Cooper and her friends filled in the drains to save the delicate ecosystem and then argued their case. Eventually they won.

Sixty-one years later, Cooper's determined figure became the symbol of the hīkoi, her age a reminder of the long battle Māori had already faced to recover their lands, and her dignity a reminder that they have a right to be treated with respect.

