

stuff**Fairfax Media, 2012**

Tuhoe struggle timeline

Last updated 19:31 20/03/2012

Tuhoe have had an uneasy relationship with authorities for more than 140 years.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE TUHOE PEOPLE

1866 – Crown seizes the most fertile Tuhoe land, cutting off their access to the coast.

1868 – Maori leader Te Kooti and his followers begin what historian Michael King called “the most effective guerrilla war ever waged in this country”. Te Kooti kills about 30 Europeans and at least 20 Maori men, women and children in raids on Poverty Bay settlements.

1869 to 1872 – Government unleashes a “scorched earth” policy against Tuhoe, who shelter Te Kooti and refuse to hand him over.

1872 – Tuhoe chiefs make a decision to close their land off from outsiders.

1896 – Premier Richard Seddon draws up the Urewera District Native Reserve Act, recognising Tuhoe’s autonomy.

1896 to 1901 – Twenty–three per cent of the Tuhoe population die from a combination of disease, extreme frosts, crop failures and famine.

1907 – Pacifist leader Rua Kenana establishes a “City of God” for around 600, deep within the Ureweras. Trade, agriculture, banking and mining were part of his plan.

1916 – Fifty–seven police constables arrest Kenana at Maungapohatu in the Ureweras. Kenana is unarmed but a gunfight ensues and two Tuhoe are killed. Kenana taken to Auckland and tried for sedition. He is found guilty of a “moral” resistance to arrest and sentenced to hard labour and 18 months’ imprisonment.

1921 – Crown imposes costs of building rural highways through Te Urewera on Tuhoe, who are forced to pay in land.

1922 – Urewera District Native Reserve Act is repealed.

1954 – Crown establishes Te Urewera National Park.

2006 – Police start monitoring alleged guerrilla–style training camps deep in the Urewera Ranges, including bugging conversations, tapping cellphone calls and texts, and video surveillance.

October 15, 2007 – Three hundred police officers raid homes in several towns and cities. Seventeen arrests are made in Wellington, Palmerston North, Hamilton, Auckland and eastern Bay of Plenty. Sixteen people arrested in the raids face charges under the Firearms Act. Twelve, including Tuhoe activist Tame Iti, are referred to the solicitor–general’s office for possible prosecution under the Terrorism Suppression Act, passed in 2002.

October 27, 2007 – About a thousand people march to Auckland’s Mt Eden Prison to protest against the raids.

December 2007 – The accused are released on bail.

November 2007 – Solicitor–General David Collins brands the Terrorism Act incoherent and unworkable and says it cannot be applied to those arrested in the raids.

April 2008 – The solicitor–general confirms he is prosecuting The Dominion Post’s owner and editor for publishing leaked conversations secretly recorded by police during their investigations. The charges are later dismissed by two High Court judges.

October 2008 – Charges of participating in an organised criminal group laid against Tame Iti, Te Rangikaiwhiria Kemara, Emily Bailey, Urs Signer and Tuhoi Lambert.

March 2009 – Justice Helen Winkelmann transfers case from District Court to High Court level.

December 2010 – Justice Winkelmann rules defendants will stand trial before a judge alone.

January 2011 – Appeal lodged against decision to try the case before a judge alone.

May 2011 – The trial, due to start on May 30, is delayed until February 2012. A documentary on the police raids – Operation 8 – opens in cinemas around New Zealand.

July 2011 – One of the defendants, Tuhoe Lambert, 63, a Vietnam veteran, dies in Auckland Hospital. He had multiple health problems. A compact agreement is signed between the Crown and Tuhoe recognising a commitment to achieving mana motuhake or self-governance for the region.

September 2011 – Firearms charges are dropped against 13 of the accused in the case when the Supreme Court rules police gathered evidence illegally. The court rules charges against Emily Bailey, Tame Iti, Te Rangikaiwhiria Kemara and Urs Signer were serious enough to warrant putting the illegally gathered evidence before the court. The Court also rules the accused will face a jury trial.

13 February 2012 – The case against the “Urewera Four” begins.

20 March, 2012 – Jury unable to reach a verdict on whether the four were guilty of participating in an organised criminal group, but found them guilty on some firearms charges.

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