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# **Maori Activism Across Borders, 1950-1980s**

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## Abstract

This thesis examines Maori activism across borders and is structured around two key themes, the creation, use and control of space, and New Zealand's race relations reputation. It is set against a backdrop of global currents, events and ideologies which entered New Zealand and stimulated Maori activism. The overarching argument in this thesis is that Maori activists progressively created a space for themselves internationally in a variety of venues, to have their claims, grievances and realities accepted. To do so they had to subvert and challenge the discourse which confined and defined them as a privileged indigenous people who lived in a position of equality with Pakeha in a country reputed to have the best race relations in the world. I argue that the 'privilege' discourse shaped the form which their activism took and how, in the process of successfully contesting that discourse, they created a space for Maori in an emerging indigenous people's activist network.

A key purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the importance of New Zealand's good race relations reputation as a determinant of both government policy and Maori actions. I demonstrate the lengths that the New Zealand government went to in order to maintain an image of 'one people'. Threading through the thesis are the actions of the government in restricting or mediating space in order to stifle any oppositional discourse and present a positive image of race relations. Alongside this is the agency and actions of Maori and the ways in which they subverted the dominant race relations discourse and created space for an oppositional narrative, first in New Zealand and then internationally. While Maori agency played a major role in this process, they were also the beneficiaries of a global shift which prioritised the elimination of racial discrimination, the liberation of colonised peoples, and saw a growing recognition of the oppression of indigenous people and the abrogation of their rights. All played a role in opening up a space for Maori activists to use and take their claims into international forums including the United Nations, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, and the Russell Tribunal.

This thesis demonstrates the centrality of racial discrimination in opening up New Zealand to international scrutiny, and national discussion. Through an examination of three key events in the late 1950s and early 1960s I argue that this raised a political

awareness and politicised many Maori which was reflected in a less accommodating attitude, growing unrest and discontent. Race relations shifted to a central position in New Zealand. Discontent was exacerbated by proposals designed to accelerate integration and bring to a satisfactory close the 'one people' imperative. It played a part in the emergence of radical Maori activism. Internationally, the opposite occurred and for much of the 1960s New Zealand's reputation was enhanced. From this contact was made with indigenous people who came into New Zealand to study race relations and New Zealand's integration policies. With this came identification between Maori and indigenous peoples, understandings of similar historical and contemporary experiences, and a similar world-view. At the same time Maori began moving out across borders and making contact with indigenous people and communities. It was a soft activism and it can be seen as the first stage of awareness of each other and their place within an indigenous world.

Finally, this thesis demonstrates the movement of radical Maori activists into a variety of international spaces and venues. It sheds light on how they used international spaces, the geographic extent of their activism, and the shift from mainly single issue events into an emerging independence movement across the Pacific. Thus they became part of a large network of indigenous activists who came together at conferences, and provide support and solidarity at protest actions. Moderate Maori activists moved along a different route which took them into the first transnational pan-indigenous organisation with a global perspective, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. Collectively, as a result of these actions, Maori activists created a variety of spaces in New Zealand and internationally where they gained recognition for their grievances. Moreover they played a significant role in creating and sustaining organisations which advocated on behalf of indigenous peoples.

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He maimai aroha

E te rangatira, tōku hoa pūmau, e kore e warewaretia

Kua riro rā koe ki Paerau, ki te huinga o te kahurangi, ki tua o te ārai

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## List of Abbreviations

AAL	Aborigines Advancement League
ACL	Auckland City Library
ACORD	Auckland Committee on Racism and Discrimination
ADMC	Auckland District Maori Council
AIM	American Indian Movement
ASIO	Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library
ATOM	Against Testing on Moruroa
CABTA	Citizens' All Black Tour Association
CARE	Citizens' Association for Racial Equality
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
FCAA	Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement
FCAATSI	Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders
HART	Halt All Racist Tours
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ILO	International labour Organisation
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
MAAA	Maori Affairs Amendment Act
MOOHR	Maori Organisation On Human Rights
MWWL	Maori Women's Welfare League
NA	National Archives (Wellington, New Zealand)
NAA	National Archives Australia

NCC	National Council of Churches
NFP	Nuclear Free Pacific
NFIP	Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific
NZMC	New Zealand Maori Council
NZRFU	New Zealand Rugby Football Union
NZSCM	New Zealand Student Christian Movement
PCR	Programme to Combat Racism
PCRC	Pacific Concerns Resource Centre
PPSEAWA	Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association
PPWA	Pan Pacific Women's Association
PPP	Polynesian Panther Party
SASA	South African Sports Association
UAL	University of Auckland Library
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UWL	University of Waikato Library
WAA	Waitangi Action Alliance
WAC	Waitangi Action Committee
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCIP	World Council of Indigenous Peoples

## Glossary

Haka	posture dance
Hapu	descent group within an Iwi; sub-tribe
Hui	meeting or gathering
Iwi	tribe
Korero	a talk, discussion
Mana	prestige, respect
Maoritanga	Maori culture and beliefs
Marae	courtyard of a Maori meeting house
Mihi	to greet
Powhiri	ritual ceremony of encounter
Take	reason, topic of discussion
Te Reo	the Maori language
Tikanga	protocols and practices
Waiata	song
Whakama	embarrassment, shyness, shame, humiliation, inferiority, self-doubt
Whanau	family