

# Mihaia

## The Prophet Rua Kenana and His Community at Maungapohatu

*By Judith Binney, Gillian Chaplin and Craig Wallace*

## Teacher Notes

### History

#### BOOK OVERVIEW

*Mihaia* traces the life of Rua Kanana and his community of faithful followers at Maungapohatu in the heart of Te Urewera. Rua called himself Te Mihaia Hou (the New Messiah). He said he was the brother of Christ, the son of Te Kooti and the saviour Te Kooti prophesied.

His life and the hardships Māori endured due to land confiscations and the expansion of Pākehā colonisation helped Rua consolidate his position. Rua and his followers became known as the Iharaira (Israelites). Returning to their ancestral lands at Maungapohatu, they initially isolated themselves. Pākehā who made the gruelling journey to Maungapohatu 'praised the enthusiasm of the faithful, whom Rua was directing towards the creation of a good life on ancestral Tūhoe lands.' However, many more Pākehā sought to remove this dissident influence. The police operation in Ruatoki in 2007 resonates with that carried out at Maungapohatu in April 1916.

Plans for railway and roads through the Urewera did not eventuate, and the area was deemed financially unviable. Poverty and harsh winters led to a higher than normal mortality rate.

Three times Rua tried to establish a thriving community, but his aim of unifying Māori and restoring mana through the restoration of confiscated land remained a dream.

#### KEY FEATURES

- Chronological approach, each chapter is a portion of Maungapohatu's history
- Draws on oral history, diaries, letters, police records, and newspapers
- Illustrations include photographs of people, places and artifacts; maps; telegrams; and police records
- Concludes with a segment of Rua's whakapapa, abbreviations, te reo Māori glossary, currency and imperial/metric conversions, a list of illustrations, endnotes, bibliography and index.

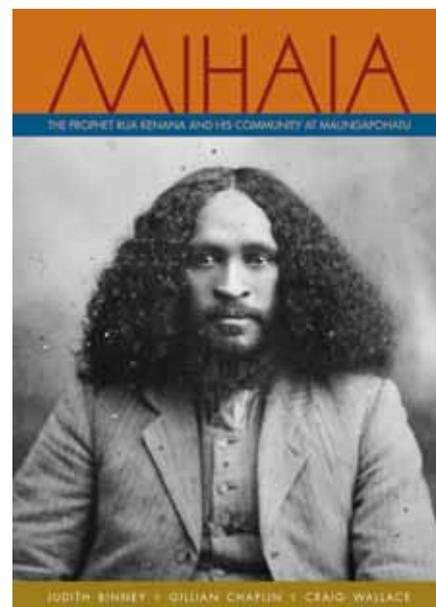
#### RELEVANT ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

##### Achievement Standards

##### Level 3

AS91434 (3.1) Research an historical event or place of significance to New Zealanders, using primary and secondary sources (event includes an historical development or movement)

AS91435 (3.2) Analyse an historical event, or place of significance to New Zealanders



#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Judith Binney was an acclaimed New Zealand historian and Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Auckland. Prior to her death she was recognised for her services to recording the history of the Ringatū faith and the Tūhoe people.

Melbourne-based photographer Gillian Chaplin specialises in international exhibition design. A key person in a number of Judith Binney's books, as images and photographs are an integral part of how Binney conveys the past.

Craig Wallace collected a number of the photographs used in *Mihaia*. He has managed a range of literacy and English programmes in several countries.

- AS91438 (3.5) Analyse the causes and consequences of a significant historical event
- AS91439 (3.6) Analyse a significant historical trend and the force(s) that influenced it

## USING MIHAIA IN YOUR HISTORY PROGRAMME

### 3.1 *Mihaia* can be used:

- as a source of primary and secondary material for an inquiry into the charismatic leader Rua Kenana and the development and schism within the Ringatū faith and the ideals of the Maungapohatu settlement
- to compare recent experiences with the Crown and the Tūhoe people with those experienced in the past.

### 3.2 *Mihaia* can be used:

- as a starting point for analysing a range of historical themes or ideas from faith and social change to state intervention
- there are many ways this analysis could be presented. As Judith Binney focused on the oral histories, it would be a tribute to present these findings as a podcast or speech.

### 3.5 *Mihaia* can be used to:

- write an essay on the causes and consequences of the schism within the Ringatū faith
- write an essay on the causes and consequences of Rua's followers selling all and following him to Maungapohatu.

### 3.6 *Mihaia* can be used to:

- write an essay on the interaction between Māori (specifically Tūhoe) and Pākehā during 1860–1940
- write an essay on Māori land development around Maungapohatu.

## INDEPENDENT ENQUIRY IDEAS

- Compare the work of different historians (e.g., Māori and Pākehā; early and modern) regarding Tūhoe or any area of early New Zealand history.
- Brainstorm what life may have been like during those first encounters with the new settlers and then the impact of Pākehā settlement with traditional practices.
- Compare responses to Te Kooti, Rua Kenana or other influential Māori leaders who promoted something other than the desires of the Crown.
- Use the images in *Encircled Lands* and from other sources to develop a pictorial history of Tūhoe.
- Using the examples provided in the book to learn more about your own whakapapa/genealogy.

## FURTHER READING

Eldson Best, *Tuhoe: Children of the Mist*, A H & A W Reed, 1973

James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from 1880 to the Year 2000*, Penguin, 2001

F. M. Brookfield, *Waitangi and Indigenous Rights: Revolution, Law and Legitimation*, Auckland University Press, 1999

Hirini Melbourne, *Te Manawa o Tūhoe: The Heart of Tūhoe*, Craig Potton Publishing, 1997

Alan Ward, *An Unsettled History: Treaty Claims in New Zealand Today*, Bridget Williams Books, 1999

- BWB Publishing Trust would like to thank Jenna Teesdale for these teacher notes.

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