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WHAKAMOANA-ED (SET ADRIFT)?
TŪHOE MĀORI CONFRONT COMMODIFICATION,
1894–1926

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ABSTRACT: Between 1894 and 1926 the people of the Te Urewera mountain wilderness, the *rohe pōtae* ‘sanctuary’ of the Nāi Tūhoe Māori of Aotearoa New Zealand, confronted a series of colonial policies that potentially had the historical effect of commodifying their land, kingroups and ancestors. Significantly, these policies were sincerely intended to establish Tūhoe home-rule until about 1908, when they became increasingly predatory in a Crown purchasing campaign intended to put Māori “wastelands” to better farming use by new settlers. By the time of the 1921 Urewera Consolidation Scheme the new policy had become a sophisticated form of commodification intended by some Māori as well as Pākehā ‘European’ innovators to modernise Tūhoe still refusing to sell. This particular ethnohistory will be reviewed by focusing on the colonial dynamics of commodification as it was taking shape in terms of Māori land and kingroups in New Zealand, and some of the ways in which it was effectively resisted by the Tūhoe. Their triumphant statutory recovery of control over their Te Urewera sanctuary in 2014 still faces the embedded contradictions of this history.

Keywords: Māori; colonisation; indigeneity; ethnohistory; commodification; fetishism

My study of Nāi Tūhoe Māori of Aotearoa New Zealand 1915–1926 revealed a strikingly clear case of the colonial government’s systematic effort to commodify their lands and even their kinship groups. At that time consolidation schemes were seen by Crown officials and some Tūhoe as modernisation or assimilation but, as will be described, they were frankly put in terms of opening their remaining lands to national farming, mining and conservation interests while breaking down their kin-based resistance to this sort of modernisation. Certain aspects of the particular scheme that was deployed by the Crown at that time, the Urewera Consolidation Scheme, could even be seen to exemplify Marx’s theory of the fetishism of commodities: that is, the illusory naturalisation of persons as commodities and commodities as persons. Significantly, some Tūhoe at the time saw that the scheme would *whakamoana* ‘set adrift’ their ancestral land rights from the specific history on which those rights were based.

This implication began to dawn on me in my research for the Waitangi Tribunal's inquiry into the history of the Crown's dealings with the Tūhoe and their Urewera mountain sanctuary between the Bay of Plenty and Poverty Bay in the North Island of New Zealand (Fig. 1). Since then, I have worked on a wider ethnohistory of Nāi Tūhoe and their effort, between 1894 and 1926, first to consolidate their traditional refuge in Te Urewera and finally to retain the remnants of it against the Crown's subversive policies. Meanwhile, backed by the Tribunal's exhaustive research, in 2014 the Tūhoe themselves finally succeeded in recovering statutory control over most of the original 656,000 acres of their sanctuary, still a spectacular mountain wilderness that had been conserved since the 1950s as Te Urewera National Park, one of the largest in New Zealand.

My own effort to reconstruct details of a small portion of this history resulted in two volumes, the first examining the establishment of the Urewera District Native Reserve (Fig. 1) 1896–1915, and the second examining the Crown's betrayal of it 1915–1926 in a persistent purchase campaign and final resort to a scheme consolidating and relocating the land rights retained by the stubborn Tūhoe “non-sellers” (Fig. 2; Webster 2020a, 2020b). My social anthropological foray into historical research in rich archives resulted in a relatively empirical account focused on description and interpretation of the data. My more theoretical bent so far has been largely limited to two published essays based on this research. The first of these essays examined the kin-based influence of Tūhoe *hapū* ‘ancestral cognatic descent groups’, whose leaders largely controlled or even exploited the benevolent patronage of the Crown, in the statutory establishment of their sanctuary under their own home-rule (Webster 2017). The second essay examined the Crown's subsequent betrayal of their Urewera sanctuary in terms of the capacity of this kin-based power to resist these colonial policies (Webster 2019a). The latter essay is focused on one *hapū* cluster controlling an interior area that had been visited by the renowned New Zealand social anthropologist Raymond Firth while they were at the climax of these struggles.

Now, with these commentaries completed, I want to return to the more ambitious theoretical implication that capitalist colonisation works not only in the ambiguous terms of benevolence, patronage or predation, but also in Marx's terms of commodification and, tentatively, commodity fetishism. In the present essay I want to re-examine Nāi Tūhoe¹ in the Te Urewera era 1894–1926 for evidence of this particular ethnohistorical process. With regard to contemporary Māori in general, I have outlined commodity fetishism, and in the past urged its application in the work of social anthropology colleagues whose influential approaches to Māori indigeneity may converge in different ways with my own efforts (Webster 2016, 2019b). Here I want to explore its emergence between Tūhoe and the Crown over a century ago.

EARLIER NINETEENTH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS

In earlier research on Māori hapū I argued that already by the 1850s many aspects of hapū social organisation were integrated into early New Zealand capitalist development and described Māori culture as “a whole way of struggle” (following the historian E.P. Thompson; Webster 1998). Although I did not extend my argument to the nature of commodities and commodity fetishism, drawing on early observers (and critiquing Firth’s assumption of assimilation) I concluded that Māori labour in flax and timber production throughout the regions of colonial settlement, and in sealing, whaling and kauri gum collection in more remote regions, had long since taken on the forms of “putting out”, commodity peonage and debt that had transformed Britain and was being extended to its other colonies. Manufacturers as well as traders had developed these forms of garnering surplus labour as well as surplus production from hapū through their leaders and middlemen as well as directly from widespread itinerant workers. By the 1850s such surpluses in pigs, fruits and vegetables were being brought long distances by Māori in their own ships as well as canoes to feed the growing colonial settlements. I argued that well before the 1860s land wars and alienation methods of the Native Land Court, surplus value in this same sense was being extracted from Māori land by Māori leaders as well as Crown purchase officers, by asserting rights established through marriage, adoption or gifting but lapsed in customary terms, as well as by selling land out from under its rightful occupants.

Reviewing this information now, I would point out that Marx’s distinction between the specific social form of labour that was the source of the ordinary use-value of commodities and the abstract form of labour-power that was the source of the marketable exchange-value of these commodities enabled this extraction of surplus labour and surplus production among Māori that was the basis of capitalist colonisation in New Zealand (McLellan 1987: 421–43; Webster 2016: 3–4). By the 1850s this precarious ambivalence of labour had already penetrated many hapū as well as Māori individuals, involving them at all levels of the emerging colonial social class structure.

The illusory but naturalised role of commodity fetishism in this ambivalence probably already ran deep. The “labour” creating use-value is ordinary work, sensuous activity, the “doings” one sees accumulated, redistributed and used again in one’s domestic group, children, land and leaders. It could be glimpsed when the flax that had been prepared and rolled upon one’s thigh became part of a nameless commodity in the bundle delivered to a nameless agent at the dock, or the suckling piglet that one’s children had played with and that had been fattened with the family’s *kūmara* ‘sweet potato’ became a nameless commodity in the herd driven across familiar country to the strange chaos of the marketplace. At such turning

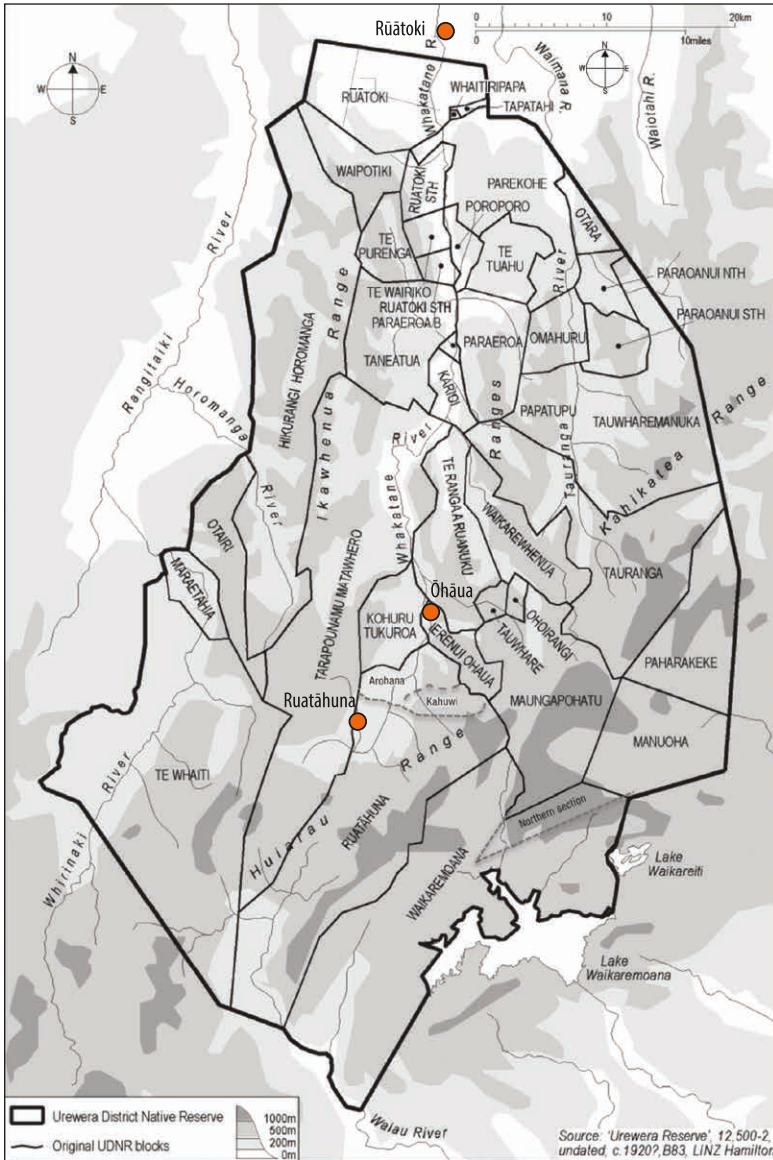


Figure 1. Urewera District Native Reserve showing topography and original blocks (1907). Adapted from “Urewera Reserve”, 12,500-2, undated (1920?), B83, held at LINZ, Hamilton, New Zealand.

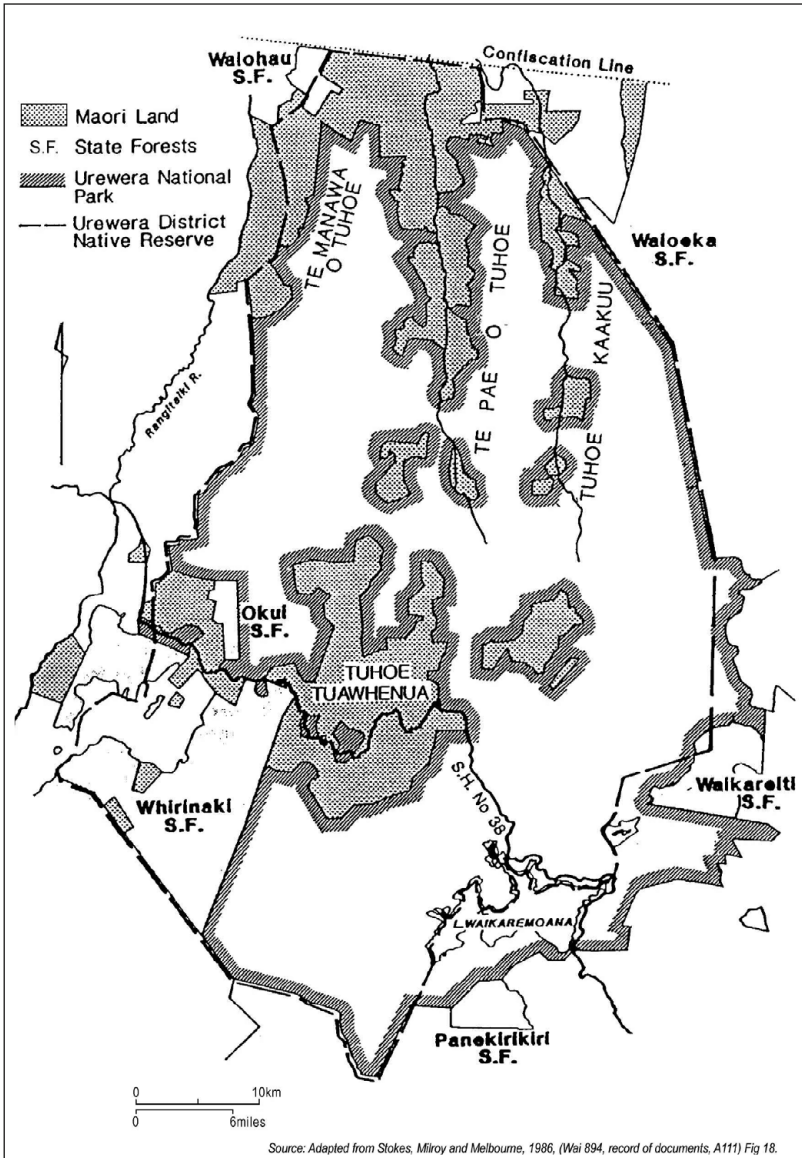


Figure 2. Tūhoe pupuri whenua land rights relocated in the new Crown “A” block under the Urewera Consolidation Scheme 1921–1926. Adapted from Stokes *et al.* (1986: fig. 18).

points between use-value and exchange-value of labour the producers themselves might be seen as commodities. The piece of land to which one's people had once had a right through marriage of a common ancestor, or received as a gift in reconciliation of an offense, became estranged when shillings had been exchanged and its occupants were viewed as interlopers. In moments of self-doubt, the sellers too might have become momentarily estranged or alienated from themselves as well as their relatives.

However, as with the similarly ambivalent labours of their Pākehā 'European' settler colleagues in the marketplaces, the displacement and alienation of the ordinary social use-value of their own labours survived behind the illusion that these things and persons had become mere commodities traded on the basis of their market exchange-values. The ambivalence is literal. In previous articles (2016, 2019b) I argued that under the right historical conditions, at least momentarily but perhaps more enduringly, this apparently "dead" or alienated but restive labour and its real use-value can be restored to life by the real persons and true owners of the labours that had produced them. This new life might or might not reinforce Māori culture "as a whole way of struggle". While their Pākehā colleagues were more likely to have become inured to the illusions of commodity fetishism, the presumed subservient role of Māori as well as the relative recency of their colonisation may have enabled many of them to see through these illusions.

An important test of this aspect of Māori resistance has been the survival of hapū as the foundation of their social organisation (Webster 1975, 1998, 2017). The following sections attempt to trace the deployment of kin-based power by Tūhoe hapū in three successive stages of their struggle against the commodification of their own and their ancestors' labours. The potential resurrection of these labours from commodity fetishism will be raised tentatively, in hopes of further research and activism.

ELECTORAL ROLES IN THE UREWERA DISTRICT NATIVE RESERVE 1894–1908

In my 2004 report to the Waitangi Tribunal, contrary to the conclusions of Judith Binney and Jeff Sissons regarding the establishment of the Urewera District Native Reserve (UDNR), I argued that the Tūhoe commissioners and other Tūhoe leaders tended to control the investigation and establishment of their Te Urewera sanctuary 1899–1907 (Binney 2002: 213–62; Sissons 2002: 100–119; Webster 2004: 14–60; 2020a: chh. 1–3). My belated examination of Cathy Marr's careful account of the lead-up to the enactment of the UDNR Act in 1896 supports my case—as did, interestingly, the Crown's defense (Marr 2002: 6–118; Edwards 2004). Nevertheless, Marr's account of the subsequent delays 1896–1899 and investigation 1899–1907 agrees

with Binney and Sissons that, contrary to the negotiations with Tūhoe, the Pākehā commissioners acted in the pre-emptory way of the Native Land Court and tended to override control by the Tūhoe majority of commissioners, weakening their hopes for home-rule (Marr 2002: 118–98). I agree with Marr’s as well as Binney’s and Sissons’s conclusions that amendments and other acts increasingly subverted the 1896 Act’s original intentions and Tūhoe control *after* the UDNR was finally established in 1908, but contend that until that time the Act had sincerely represented and enforced Tūhoe intentions. What can explain our radically divergent reading of the evidence 1899–1908?

Marr’s insightful analysis of the negotiation and enactment of the 1896 Act, and even her own ambivalence, reveal that two different points of view among participants may have obscured a contradiction that had the earmarks of commodification and even its fetishism. What appeared to Prime Minister Seddon, Native Minister Carroll and the Tūhoe negotiators as legislation supporting Tūhoe intentions of home-rule appeared to opposition leaders as a potential individualisation of Tūhoe control over their lands that would facilitate their alienation (Marr 2002: 63, 89–90, 101). In response to popular pressure increasingly demanding that Māori “wasteland” be “opened up” for Pākehā farmers, the Liberal party policy was giving up its paternalistic appearances. Marr herself emphasises there was “a very fine line” between the Prime Minister’s and the opposition’s different points of view (2002: 89–90).

Crucially, Seddon’s good faith with the Tūhoe was guided by Carroll’s better understanding of Māori hapū, leadership and customary land rights; this might best explain the trust that Marr concludes overcame some Tūhoe doubts about the Act. Meanwhile, to the contrary, opposition and hardening Liberal party leaders were reassured that the Act would be essentially deceptive, and that the Tūhoe would “find before long that all they have wished to avoid has come upon them, and that [Pākehā] settlement will follow upon subdivision” facilitated by individual shares in the titles awarded by the commission (Russell, quoted in Marr 2002: 111). It is ironic but significant that Binney, Sissons and even Marr also came to this conclusion, Binney condemning the Act as “designed to deceive” and its implementation by the investigative commission as “creat[ing] bitter internal quarrels and arguments” (2002: 213, 475). Quite to the contrary, I argued that the implementation of the 1896 UDNR Act was largely carried through under the control of the five Tūhoe commissioners and other *rangatira* ‘respected leaders’ supported in good faith by the two Pākehā commissioners as well as the Act. The result of their investigation was an interlocking network of carefully defined and graduated hapū rights that extended throughout 34 blocks entrenching the customary Tūhoe organisation of labour, land and leadership throughout their sanctuary.

An even finer line than that appreciated by Marr regarding individualisation lay behind Seddon's insistence that home-rule be based in block committees that were elected by individual owners of the block (Marr 2002: 63, 101). Seddon's (and perhaps even Carroll's) apprehension of Tūhoe leadership had apparently misunderstood it, assuming it was authoritarian rather than consensual. His insistence on election of their representatives by all members of a hapū apparently arose from the popular but misleading assumption that hapū "chiefs" would autocratically appoint committee representatives. Quite to the contrary, especially when confronted externally, Tūhoe hapū tend to close ranks consensually (Webster 2020b: chh. 6–9). This was interestingly expressed in 1928 by a frustrated Presbyterian church leader who had been working closely with the Tūhoe:

One thing we have to contend with is the communistic social habits of the Maori. Nowhere does the ancient communism of the Maori maintain to-day as in Tuhoë. These people still think and move en masse. The most private domestic affairs are brought to the meeting-house and discussed and settled by the tribe. Everyone is a member of the tribe rather than a separate entity, and anyone who refused to go the way of the tribe is considered a bad Maori. (Presbyterian Church, quoted in Keesing 1928)

Although by 1894 the Crown had been dealing with what had long been seen as this "troublesome" Tūhoe solidarity, Seddon apparently assumed it arose from autocratic leadership that would best be brought into line with Crown sovereignty through democratic elections. He was also careful to present what the Tūhoe saw as "home-rule" to Parliament as "local government" limited in various ways by ministerial oversight, which resulted in further ambiguities explored by Marr.

From my point of view, many of these ambiguities arose from the common assumption that Māori land could be partitioned on the basis of their ownership by discrete hapū, and the committee representing each block would thus represent a discrete hapū. However, as I explained in my examination of how Tūhoe hapū, land rights and leadership were actually organised at this time, the rights of any particular hapū in the UDNR extended in the form of descent groups representing it into many of the 34 blocks finally established, where their rights were recognised as relatively superior or inferior to those of other hapū, and with ranked differences of particular descent groups discernible between most blocks (Webster 2010; 2020a: chh. 2–6). Within a given block, these rights were furthermore intricately ranked according to successive generations of sibling groups in each descent group, the contribution of any rights in that block from the other parent in each generation, relative seniority of wives

and associated half-siblings, and birth-order among siblings, often with younger descendants of *mātāmua* ‘first-born’ or *tuakana* ‘older sibling’ lines overriding older generations of *teina* ‘younger sibling’ lines in terms of this interlocking network of formal rights. Indeed, it is unlikely that the Pākehā commissioners, or even Elsdon Best, understood the full implications of the “electoral” system of relative shares that the Tūhoe had worked out for their own purposes.

Reflecting his support of Seddon’s insistence on elections of representatives, Percy Smith, as commission chairperson 1899–1901, at least twice emphasised that quite unlike investigations by the Native Land Court, the UDNR blocks were intended to be electoral regions ensuring that each person’s right to the land of that block established his or her right to vote for their representatives (Smith *et al.* 1899: 165; 1900: 136–37; Webster 2020a: ch. 2). Nevertheless, far from Seddon’s assumption of chiefly autocracy, Tūhoe leadership or *mana tangata* ‘personal prestige’ arose from this network of *mana whenua* ‘landed prestige’ but had to be continually reaffirmed by one’s followers in a given hapū who, moreover, could shift their support, as well as to other leaders in the same hapū, to other hapū where they also maintained active rights. Under the relatively benevolent colonial policy toward Tūhoe 1894–1908 this resulted in confrontations between hapū deploying their kin-based power in attempts to gain independence from or dominance over one another, often by manipulation of the Crown’s patronage (Webster 2017). However, after 1908, when colonial policies toward Tūhoe became predatory, hapū were often—but not always—successful in together closing their ranks against the Crown’s subversions (Webster 2019a).

If colonising policies were commodifying Tūhoe social organisation at this time, how might these developments have reflected it? Tentatively, I would argue that the intricate organisation of Tūhoe labour, land and hapū described above was their way of meeting *both* Seddon’s requirement that their land rights be the basis of an individualising electoral role *and* entrenchment of their own traditional relationship to ancestral lands. But, characteristic of commodity fetishism, this ambiguity might come to obscure from the Tūhoe themselves the illusory equivalence of the use-value of their labours with its exchange-value. Thus, as Seddon’s opposition had sensed, the potential subversion of commodity fetishism may have lain in the Tūhoe’s tactical equivocation of their traditional land rights with individual electoral rights. Any shift in the balance of power could result in the emergence of this ambivalent individualism, displacing the ordinary use-values arising from their ancestors’ as well as their own daily labours on their lands by the abstract exchange-value of that land established in markets.

INDIVIDUAL SHARES IN THE CROWN PURCHASING CAMPAIGN
1910–1921

Whether or not the development described above was a commodity fetishism that remained inchoate in the UDNR, the potential of commodification to reduce the daily labours imbedded in Tūhoe lands to the market exchange-value of abstract labour-power was brought to the fore by colonial policies 1908–1926. In disregard of the 1896 Act, the new Herries administration treated the electoral rights as individual land ownership rights, circumvented the statutory control over alienations that the elected Tūhoe committees held, and organised an elaborate purchase campaign in pursuit of individuals that was sustained for a decade (Webster 2020b: chh. 2, 3). These violations of the Act were later legalised retrospectively. The careful entrenchment of hapū organisation in the land by the UDNR commission 1899–1907, along with the generations of ancestral labours this represented, were reduced to exchange-values paid to individuals convinced to sell their “shares” for shillings in their hands.

By the end of the purchasing campaign in 1921 the Crown had obtained about 53 percent of the UDNR, and by the end of the following Urewera Consolidation Scheme (UCS) in 1926 it had obtained over 75 percent of the UDNR. The illusory transformation of the use-values of one’s daily labours into the seductive magic of exchange-values in one’s palm had of course been familiar to everyone for years, but suddenly this apparently innocent transaction “alienated” a portion of the irreplaceable use-values of ancestral land. The echo of Marx’s conception of human alienation in the legal phrase may have been a bitter taste probably sensed by many Tūhoe, *hoko whenua* ‘land-sellers’ as well as *pupuri whenua* ‘land-withholders’.

Nevertheless, the Crown’s purchasing campaign was confronted by the very complexity of customary rights entrenched in the block titles by the UDNR investigative commission in 1903 (Webster 2020b: ch. 3). Although the tireless purchase officer was backed by a wide network of ministries, banks and agents, sorting out the array of over 2,000 individuals’ land rights scattered in over 30 different block lists with over 14,000 individual entries, and having these details ready to hand when that individual was encountered or tracked down, required a mobile card-catalogue that was itself several years in the making. Largely because the UDNR appeals commission in 1907 had no Tūhoe members and irresponsibly resolved many appeals simply by including all appellants in the block list with token shares, many Tūhoe were unaware of these token rights and more ready to sell them when informed of them. On the other hand, most Tūhoe refused to sell at least a few their most valued ancestral rights in at least one their most familiar blocks, with the result that even by 1921 the Crown had been unable to buy 100 percent of the shares in any one of the 34 blocks, thus preventing it from declaring even one of the 34 Te Urewera blocks as Crown land.

Doubling the irony, this passive or quiet triumph of interwoven hapū histories was as much a result of government oversight as Tūhoe resistance: it was the Solicitor General who pointed out that because the UDNR block titles were held in undivided shares in common, the Crown's purchased shares in *every location in every block* were inextricably mixed with those retained by the pupuri whenua. If this oversight is seen as confusing persons with commodities, perhaps the Crown itself had been fooled by the commodity fetish illusion that the Tūhoe had successfully straddled between electoral rights and individual "shares" of land.

A striking example of active rather than passive Tūhoe resistance against this commodification of their lands was the developing tactics of Kahuwī Hakeke, a grandson of the famous war leader Tamaikoha Te Ariari (Webster 2010; 2020a: ch. 4; 2020b: ch. 2). It turns out that Kahuwī's role can be traced from the investigation of the UDNR in 1903 through the Crown's purchasing campaign to the climax of the Urewera Consolidation Scheme in 1926. As will be described later, it was significant that Kahuwī had probably been named after his ancestor Kahuwī, Tamaikoha's great-great-grandfather. According to Tamaikoha's testimony in 1900, this ancestral Kahuwī had been named in memory of his father, Tawhakamoe, who had died in the battle of Rotoiti before his son was born and whose dead body was found covered in a "cloak" (*kahu*) of reeds (*wii*) (Webster 2017: fig. 5; 2020a: ch. 5).

By 1903, when the block lists for the UDNR were finally published, Tamaikoha's grandson Kahuwī was one of some 20 grandsons (and even more granddaughters), at which time he was about 22 years old. Kahuwī was of relatively high birth-order status in the descent group, being a son of Hakeke Tamaikoha, the *mātāmua* of Tamaikoha's five children by the most senior of his three wives (and thus ranked more highly than Tamaikoha's other six children by his junior wives). Kahuwī was also *mātāmua* among Hakeke's six children by the second-ranked of Hakeke's three wives. While many of his kinsmen had given in to the Crown's persistent purchase campaign and sold most of their shares by 1920, Kahuwī had remained among the most stubborn of pupuri whenua (non-sellers). Nevertheless, in November 1920 he apparently asked the Crown purchase officer, William Bowler, to inform him regarding his shares in the UDNR blocks. Bowler's reply (in Māori, translated here by Himaima Tumoana) is revealing of both Bowler's persuasive purchase strategy and Tūhoe resistance to it:

To Kahui Hakeke,
Greetings friend.

Your letter of the 15th of this month about Tūhoe land has arrived.

There are different rates for different blocks. However, the fixed rate for most blocks is 10 shillings per acre.

Therefore perhaps it would be accurate to say that your total shares of the Urewera [lands] are nearly 500 acres.

But here is the problem—these shares cannot be gathered together by a person. The shares are scattered like the tapu [‘sacred’] footsteps of man. How should this be settled? How should we arrange some good provisions which suit you?

So far as I know, there is only one road open. Sell these shares to the Government, so you will have money for other goals away from the troublesome land.

Now, so far as those others living at your settlement are concerned, I can say with certainty that they have sold most of their shares. There are very few acres that remain for your near relatives there, that is, for the descendants of Tamaikoha, of Hakeke, of Tiopira.

To my knowledge, Tauwharemanuka is your [plural] true land [home]. From this [fact] perhaps follows my words to you. Hang on to all your shares in Tauwharemanuka [block]. As for all those other lands, and shares too, sell them. Reply. If you say “yes” I will come there so that these matters may be settled. In that case the shillings will appear [you will be paid] immediately.

Salutations to you. From your friend,
From Te Bowler (signed W.H. Bowler)
Māori Land Purchase Officer

Neither Kahuwī’s enquiry nor any reply to Bowler have been encountered. However, the striking fact that Kahuwī did not sell any shares, and furthermore by 1923 became a leading contributor in the Apitihana ‘oppositionist’ movement resisting the UCS, suggests that his enquiry may have been probing Bowler for some reason. In any case, Bowler’s response reflects the clarity of his understanding of Tūhoe land rights as well as his professional effectiveness as the Crown’s purchase officer. He would have realised that Kahuwī’s land rights were unusually extensive, and probably already had been watching for such an opportunity as this. Although Bowler struggled with the complexity and dispersion of all Tūhoe land rights throughout the UDNR (for instance, Kahuwī actually held far more shares than Bowler had estimated) he probably often knew more than his prospective clients, especially regarding the token shares widely awarded by the appeals commission to simplify their task.

Most revealingly, Bowler’s trenchant phrase “The shares are scattered like the tapu footsteps of man” encapsulated both the essence of ancestral use-value and the abstraction of this essence as a mere market exchange-value. The “use-value” of labour (by which Marx meant the human blood, sweat and tears alienated or left “dead” by its reduction to exchange-value) was here knowingly described by the Crown purchase officer as sacred ancestral “footsteps” that were the traditional grounds for rightful claims by descendants. Playing on the ambiguity of *pānga* ‘shares’ of land, Bowler encouraged the illusion that each share could be separated from all the other

shares with which it was entwined in the whole social history of a specific area of ancestral land. Thus could persons, even in the form of the labours of one's ancestors, appear as a commodity and, indeed, the same commodity appear as "the tapu footsteps of man".

Although Bowler's emotive description of such transactions invokes the contradiction between the use-value of ordinary labour and its reduction to the exchange-value of abstract labour-power in ancestral lands, he might have been less aware of this contradiction than Kahuwī. Albeit less poetic, Bowler's reassurance that "shillings will appear immediately" and encouragement to sell so that "you will have money for other goals away from the troublesome land" also reflects the seductive and even invisible play of commodity fetishism in obscuring these realities of the marketplace. On the other hand, his mention that the other descendants of Kahuwī's father, Hakeke, and uncle, Tiopira, had sold most their shares was probably consciously tactical: both had been retail store-owners in the lower Tauranga/Waimana basin. A few other Tūhoe (including the prophet Rua Kenana since 1910) had even made it their business to facilitate Bowler's purchases as his local agents, and sales had been especially extensive in the Tauranga/Waimana valley, where Tamaikoha's descendants had most of their shares.

Nevertheless, between the ambiguity of customary Tūhoe land rights intricately entrenched as electoral rights and the determination of Tūhoe pupuri whenua to retain at least a few of their most valued ancestral rights, the Crown purchase campaign was finally stultified in 1921. Even where it had purchased 95 percent of the shares in a block, the unique form of undivided tenure-in-common that had been established under the UDNR prevented the Crown from separating its shares from the pupuri whenua hold-outs. Bowler's urgings of outright expropriation went too far, even for the Herries administration. Partitioning out its shares from each block through the Native Land Court posed the likelihood that some of the Crown's claims would fail, as well as excessive costs and further delays. More legal quagmires were raised as late as November 1921 by Chief Judge Jones of the Native Land Court who advised that all the Crown's purchases were invalid either because the UDNR titles were invalid or because they had reverted to customary Native land (Webster 2020b: ch. 4). These Catch-22s for the Crown were aggravated by the actual increase of non-sellers to more than the original number of owners by a high birth rate, customary birth rights to all children and successions to rights of the deceased.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that what I argued in the previous section was Prime Minister Seddon's sincere intentions for the Crown to establish Tūhoe control throughout their sanctuary under the 1896 Act, later prevented the same Crown from subverting the new form that control had taken when left to Tūhoe leadership 1899–1908.

NON-SELLERS “SET ADRIFT” BY THE UREWERA CONSOLIDATION SCHEME, 1921–1926

The UCS is the clearest illustration of commodification imposed systematically throughout Te Urewera lands. Yet this was done by well-meaning government leaders who, as well as extracting the Crown’s purchased but undivided shares for Pākehā settlers, intended to reorganise the Tūhoe non-sellers’ remaining shares for modern small-farming methods. Native Minister Coates’s explicit intention that such consolidation schemes would result in “the extinction of existing titles and the substitution of another form of title that knows no more of ancestral rights to particular portions of land” (Campbell 1998: 46, citing O’Malley 1996: 100) assumed that land should be freed from such restraints and, like any other private property in a modern society, should instead be bought and sold at a fair exchange value in an open market. Characteristic of commodity fetishism, what from one point of view appeared to be benevolent paternalism or modernisation from another could be revealed to be exploitive. Leah Campbell astutely understates the purpose of the 1921 Urewera Lands Act: “[T]his Act repealed all legislation relating to the operation of the Urewera District Native Reserve since 1896. Another important aspect ... was that Native freehold titles were to be issued for the Maori interests. This meant the individualisation of title with all its resulting implications”, including the jurisdiction of the Native Land Court and its procedures facilitating alienation by the owners (Campbell 1998: 47).

As with the purchase campaign, behind this political motive was the continuing popular demand that surplus Māori land be put to good use and, implicitly, likewise with any resulting surplus Māori labour. In addition, Coates’s intention to extinguish ancestral rights was a frank attack on Māori hapū, whose kin-based deployment of power to resist such policies had always plagued the Crown. Moreover, the sincerity of the Crown’s initial motives to modernise the farming methods of the Tūhoe non-sellers was to prove hollow: by 1923 the government’s plan to settle Pākehā farmers on the better land was belied by reports of poor agricultural potential even in the lower valley basins, and alternative mining, conservation and scenic uses were being promoted instead.

Apirana Ngata, who devised the procedure for consolidation schemes and later organised them throughout the North Island, intended them to consolidate the scattered fragments of Māori land, surviving decades of purchases and successions in the Native Land Court, in one location where they could be efficiently farmed by their owners (Campbell 1998). Ngata would have known that since the Tūhoe had lost their best agricultural lands north of Te Urewera to the Crown’s confiscations in the 1860s, they

were dependent upon hunting and gathering throughout the mountains and upper valleys to supplement the poor productivity of the remaining valley bottoms, but he hoped to develop ongoing government support for his Māori small-farming programme. Most tellingly, he would have been uncomfortably aware that, in the case of the Urewera, the purpose of his consolidation schemes was being perverted to consolidate and extract the Crown's undivided interests rather than consolidate those of the Tūhoe non-sellers. However, despite his key role in the purchase campaign (Binney 2002: 442–48), not only had he apparently convinced himself that the Tūhoe could benefit from a consolidation of their remaining land shares, he also played down the predicament in which the Crown had found itself.

When in early 1921 the Crown finally resorted to the consolidation scheme, it nevertheless sought to convince the Tūhoe that they were “in a worse position than the Crown” (Webster 2020b: chh. 4, 5). At the preliminary meeting in Rūātoki in May 1921, the Minister of Lands as well as Apirana Ngata dramatically exaggerated the extent of its purchases by displaying them proportionately in each block on a sketch plan of the UDNR as though they could be separated spatially from the non-sellers' shares, which were furthermore depicted in red. Quite to the contrary, and as both the Minister and Ngata would have well understood, the Crown had already been informed by the Solicitor General that the purchased shares remained held uncomfortably in common with the Tūhoe non-sellers in “every part” of every block. Indeed, this realisation was probably the final straw that broke the back of the Crown's purchase campaign.

The duplicity of the Crown's approach was also implied by the studiedly informal way in which the whole scheme was arranged by fiat, with only ministerial authority, in a single three-week gathering in Rūātoki in August 1921. What came to be called “the Tauarau gatherings” were candidly described by Harry Carr, an officer of the Native Department later to be officially appointed as one of the two UCS commissioners, in the following way:

The informal Commission made its proceedings quite informal, so as to get into direct touch with the representatives and leading men, dispense with intermediaries, conductors and lawyers, and ran as it were with the mood of the people. It was wonderful to see how they responded. They entered readily into the spirit of the game. (Webster 2020b: 119)

Like Ngata, Carr was an East Coast Māori, and other officers at the Tauarau meetings were East Coast colleagues, many of whom later continued to work with Ngata in consolidation schemes elsewhere in New Zealand.

Revealingly, the earlier meeting at Rūātoki the preceding May had been much more formal and encountered signs of Tūhoe scepticism as well as support. The studied informality of the Taurarau meetings in August was probably encouraged by Coates on the advice of Ngata, who was personally familiar with the Tūhoe. The informality of the Crown's arrangements apparently also overrode the usual government principle of conflicting interests insofar as Ngata, who had been accepted by the Tūhoe at the May meeting as their representative (Campbell 1997: 49), had become the Crown's de facto representative in the organisation of the scheme during the Taurarau meetings. His dual role or conflict of interests was also obscured by subordinating his concluding commentary as a "memorandum" to the final official report, while it was signed off by R.J. Knight of the Ministry of Lands, H. Carr of the Native Ministry, and Ngata's personal assistant, H.R.H. Balneavis.

These ambiguities are all aggravated by a further implication of this informality: aside from often opaque or inconsistent correspondence between the officers and the Native Ministry there are few records of the gathering or its aftermath until the final report to Parliament two months later. I have been able to fill out in some detail Campbell's suspicion that a great deal more was going on than was admitted in the report (Campbell 1997: 52; Webster 2020b: chh. 6–9). Indeed, the report systematically overlooked or played down steadily rising Tūhoe resistance to the scheme. I was able to show that the report obscured the compromises the Crown had to make in its plan to take the entire lower Tauranga/Waimana basin for the sake of continued Tūhoe cooperation, and that such back-downs from the Crown's plan continued; that contrary to the Minister's promise to discontinue individual purchases, they were continued with its covert approval; and that there was little evidence it had ever been made clear to the Tūhoe non-sellers that the cost of surveys and promised roads would be taken in land from each of their allotments, let alone that these deductions would reduce their allotments by an average of 40 percent.

However, it was Campbell's identification of the particular way in which Tūhoe suspicions and insight were first expressed at the Taurarau meetings that alerted me to the possibility that they had grasped the ambiguities of commodification as it was emerging most clearly in the UCS. Suggesting that "not all [non-sellers] were aware of what they had apparently agreed to", according to the official report on the Taurarau meetings, Campbell quotes the Crown officer Balneavis's report that many Tūhoe were alarmed "that the land-marks settled after generations of quarrel and bloodshed and later protracted litigation were to be wiped out. Their expressive way of stating the position was that the titles were to be 'whakamoana-ed' (literally put out to sea)" (Campbell 1997: 52).

That is to say, many pupuri whenua saw that the specific land rights they had struggled to retain for the last decade might themselves be cast off or cast adrift from the security and support of their ancestral location and the kin-based labours and political power that had successfully maintained it over generations. Although a sea-faring tradition, they might have also come to view the sea into which their remaining land and labour rights would be cast adrift as the lonely anarchy of the national marketplace.

The implications of the procedure the Tūhoe identified as *whakamoana*-ing or setting adrift their remaining ancestral land rights displayed how thoroughly the illusions of commodity fetishism had penetrated colonial policies by this time. The transformation of their Te Urewera lands was to be strikingly systematic. First, the value of unsold shares each non-seller still held in any UDNR blocks was tabulated for each block in pence (pennies) of pounds sterling at the price paid by the Crown during its purchase campaign in that block. Then the pence-value of his or her shares in each of these blocks was totalled. Then the total pence-value of that person's land rights throughout the UDNR was added to the totalled pence-value of all the persons in the group to which he or she was affiliated. Finally, that group was allocated an acreage in the block that the group proposed anywhere in the UDNR (unless pre-empted by the Crown) equivalent to the price paid per acre in that block during the purchase campaign. Furthermore, when the resulting allocation was finally confirmed, each individual would own his or her individual share in Native freehold title alienable in the Native Land Court. The transformation of land "shares" in this way would have been mystifying from the point of view of many Tūhoe who, despite the subversions of the purchase campaign, may have still thought of their land rights as electoral rights not unlike their ancestral roots.

On the face of it, this procedure at Tauarau appeared as innocently social as bartering goods at a local market or bazaar where no money need be exchanged. Carr's enthusiasm suggests the gatherings had been arranged with a pretence of the same innocent spirit. Behind this appearance, of course, the Crown had set all the exchange-values during its protracted and subversive purchase campaign. However, there was much more hidden behind the rueful metaphor *whakamoana*-ed or set adrift. These exchanges of pence-values had routinely transformed the customary use-value established over generations in the name of particular ancestors and hapū deploying this kin-based power to derive their living from that specific piece of land, and extend hospitality on it as well as defend it, into an impersonal, unlocated and ahistorical exchange-value summed up in pennies of pounds sterling. Although the shillings remained invisible throughout all these transformations, their ambivalent but potent symbolism was probably reassuring to many Tūhoe. With bitterly ironic humour, Marx had described such exchange-values as

obscuring the continuing extraction of the ordinary use-values of social labour, indeed, ultimately becoming alienated or “dead” labour, and with the “set-adrift” metaphor some Tūhoe had seen this in a similarly dramatic way. Perhaps even this early in the scheme, they had come upon a slogan that exposed the illusion of fairness in the transformation, whether they accepted its goal of modernised family farmsteads or not.

Compounding this radical reduction of ancestral land to an abstraction, the group would be allocated a single piece of Urewera land of equivalent pence-value that might not be in any of the locations in which their surviving unsold ancestral shares had been located. Although the group was allowed to propose a location, in practice allocations to non-sellers usually had to defer to the Crown’s pre-emption of more promising locations for settlers and accept what was left after the Crown prioritised and allocated allotments to other non-sellers. The long-standing promise of roads down both the major valleys from the interior tempted many groups to relocate their totalled exchange-values to the vicinity of the planned roads and consequent neglect of their favoured ancestral lands elsewhere. By the time deductions for anticipated roading as well as survey costs were finally taken in land from each allotment, that sacrifice was usually irrevocable. Later in the 1930s it had become clear that the roads might not ever be built after all, and abandonment of their new homesteads as well as the already whakamoana-ed ancestral rights did begin to appear to many Tūhoe like “dead labour” indeed. By the 1960s the remnants of their lands had become surrounded by Te Urewera National Park. Although this appeared to ensure their continued isolation, by 2014 it was to leverage the Tūhoe recovery of control over their sanctuary.

In any case, it is clear that many or even most Tūhoe non-sellers continued to resist the seductive tactics of the UCS in various ways. Quiet deployment of their kin-based power was evident in their stubborn disregard of key intentions of the UCS plan *during* the Tauarau gatherings in August. Although other reports doubted that the Tūhoe had been fairly represented, my examination of the 38 representatives gathered at Tauarau showed that the majority of them had strong rights to speak for several of the 31 hapū found to control the UDNR by the Tūhoe commissioners in 1899 (Webster 2020b: ch. 4, 134–42). Half of these representatives had themselves been leaders in the investigation and establishment of the UDNR, or close kin succeeding to the *mana* ‘prestige’ of their roles. The social organisation of many consolidation groups also appeared to evade both Coates’s determination to extinguish the ancestor-based solidarity of hapū and Ngata’s goal of establishing small “family” farms (Webster 2020b: ch. 5, 180–87). Examination of the consolidation groups showed that they were usually even larger than a *whānau* ‘extended family’, and based primarily on two to four

generations of sibling groups sharing descent from a common ancestor and allied in marriage. These groups were also usually headed by one of the 38 Tūhoe representatives involved in the Tauarau gathering. In this way, these groups disregarded the UCS pressure to form family households, instead retaining the descent group structure of their hapū while also including a few married couples on the Pākehā model of the family farm.

There is also evidence that the scheme's pre-emption of the promising agricultural valley bottoms for settlers was frustrated by Tūhoe already occupying these locations refusing to cooperate, sometimes furthermore backed by supporters loyal to the mana of particular leaders (Webster 2017; 2020b: ch. 6). Although it was nowhere admitted explicitly in the UCS minutes or final report, it is clear that the Crown had to give up its plans to pre-empt extensive areas of the lower Waimana as well as Tauranga/Waimana river basins for these reasons, instead quietly settling for the pre-emption of much less promising settlement locations in the upper basins. It was clear that many of these compromises had to be negotiated with influential Tūhoe descent groups whose mana and support from other Tūhoe posed a potential threat of more widespread resistance or scandal for the commissioners if not for the Crown. If many Tūhoe had come to understand being whakamoana-ed in terms of commodification of their customary land rights, some were simply refusing to raise the anchor of their kin-based deployment of power.

However, the UCS commissioners sometimes responded subversively. Backed by the Native Minister in at least two striking cases revealed in the minute books, they carefully set up confrontations between Tūhoe that were intended to "weaken the opposition" of the most successful and sustained form of resistance to the UCS. By 1923 an expanding and increasingly uncompromising movement refusing to cooperate with the UCS had taken shape in the Apitihana 'opposition'. The UCS commissioners, in their disregard or ignorance of the reach and integration of Tūhoe hapū organisation across Te Urewera, assumed this opposition movement was centred in Ruatāhuna while supporters of the UCS were centred in Rūātoki, and carefully arranged a confrontation between them (Webster 2020b: chh. 7, 8). In 1922 the commissioners furthermore arranged a purchase of most of the lands of an outspoken Apitihana leader, taking advantage of his whānau in the midst of their grieving for several deceased members. This particular "weakening of the opposition" actually had the explicit support of the Native Ministry despite its repeated promise to discontinue all purchases during the arrangement of the UCS, a promise that continued to be repeatedly broken while the Ministry turned a blind eye.

The subversive effects of whakamoana-ing were most successful in facilitating the government's plans to evacuate Waikaremoana block for conservation (tourist and hydroelectric) purposes and Te Whāiti block

for forestry purposes (Webster 2020b: ch. 5, 155–67). When this plan for Waikaremoana became apparent at the Tauarau gatherings, Tūhoe outrage threatened to capsize the UCS plan. Ngata rescued the situation by offering equivalent shares in other blocks to all those agreeing to sell their shares in Waikaremoana. In terms of commodification or whakamoana-ing, “equivalent shares” would be, roughly, fair exchange-value for all the accumulated use-values of labours in one’s ancestral Waikaremoana lands. This resolution of the crisis also potentially benefitted the Crown by splitting Tūhoe ranks not only between those selling and those refusing to give up their shares in Waikaremoana, but also in the blocks into which Waikaremoana shares were relocated. This proved to be especially troublesome in Ruatāhuna, closely tied with Waikaremoana through marriage alliances (Webster 2020a: ch. 7).

However, by 1923 these potential splits in Tūhoe ranks were often overcome by rapidly rising support for the Apitihana movement. When the Crown’s commissioners organised the confrontation between assumed supporters of the UCS from Rūātoki and the Apitihana movement in Ruatāhuna, those refusing evacuation from Waikaremoana block attended and supported the Apitihana. The confrontation also lost the momentum hoped for by the commissioners when the shareholdings represented by each side were publicly tabulated and the Apitihana was found to control almost as many pence-shares as those appearing to support the UCS. Although the following approval of allotments was used by the commissioners to reward their presumed supporters, the supposed antagonists had frequently cooperated behind the backs of the commission, neutralising their effort to weaken the Apitihana.

The closing of ranks in support of the Apitihana movement was all the more surprising because it was strongest in Manawarū, the northern end of Ruatāhuna block. Manawarū had been split into two blocks in 1913 as part of the partitioning of the whole Ruatāhuna block into different hapū interests led by Numia Kererū. Numia’s skills as one of the five UDNR commissioners had been used to weaken the dominant influence of Te Urewera hapū and its leader Te Whenuanui II in Ruatāhuna, and build the influence in that block of his own hapū, Nāti Rongo, based in Rūātoki and Ōhāua te Rangī (Fig. 1; Webster 2017; 2020a: chh. 9, 10). The part of Manawarū that Numia won for Nāti Rongo was thereafter called Kahuwī (often misspelled “Kahui”), while the part retained by Te Urewera hapū was named after Arohana, Kahuwī’s adoptive father. Although this was the culmination of a confrontation between these two hapū since the 1890s, only 10 years later, by 1923, the solidarity of these two hapū had become the keystone (or rather anchorage) of resistance by the Apitihana against the UCS’s deployment of whakamoana-ed shares throughout Te Urewera (Webster 2017; 2020b: ch. 8). Redoubling this

irony, Numia Kererū's claim to Manawarū was in the name of his ancestor Kahuwī, while the contemporary Kahuwī Hakeke, grandson of Tamaikoha and described above as one of the leading "non-selling" pupuri whenua despite Bowler's best efforts to subvert him, had control over 760 shares (260 more than Bowler had been able to find). By 1925 this Kahuwī Hakeke, along with his sister Hopaea, had dedicated most of their extensive shares to support the Apitihana movement.

Finally, in 1925 in the face of uncompromising Apitihana solidarity, the UCS commissioners relented and allocated all its supporters the pence-equivalent of their retained shares in the same area they had continued to dominate against all other non-sellers: most of Manawarū (that is, most of the Arohana and Kahuwī partitions of northern Ruatāhuna) and adjacent central Tarapounamu (Fig. 1; Webster 2020b: ch. 9). Although in three partitions, the Apitihana block was the second-largest UCS block, second only to all of Rua Kenana's followers' shares allocated to Maungapōhatu. The UCS commissioners may have actually had little choice but to allow the Apitihana to retain the lands of its stronghold, insofar as the extent of behind-the-scenes cooperation between it and the supposed supporters of the UCS may have meant that few others dared to lay claims to this area.

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Although the Tūhoe finally recovered their Te Urewera sanctuary in the 2014 settlement with the government, the lands of the pupuri whenua non-sellers who resisted both the purchase campaign and the UCS still lie unquietly. In terms of the global history of commodification, the "dead" or alienated labour of past generations retains the potential to rise up against the illusions of exchange-value that displaced its generations of ancestral use-values. However, in the resurrected Te Urewera, the dead or alienated labour of the pupuri whenua, systematically converted into exchange-values by the UCS, may be deluded to arise against its own ancestors.

The irony is bitter, but the vulnerability of ordinary Māori freehold land enforced under the UCS continues to cast its shadow over the recovered Te Urewera sanctuary. The National Park was only the 70 percent of the UDNR lost to the Crown in its purchase campaign and the UCS. The other 30 percent of the Tūhoe's traditional sanctuary had remained roadless and scattered in over 200 small blocks throughout the Park for nearly a century, emerging as four different traditional enclaves (Fig. 2). Consequently, the Tūhoe are still left with the problem of restoring the wholeness of their traditional sanctuary against the potentially divisive illusions of commodified exchange-values legislatively entrenched in these blocks.

Throughout the several intervening decades, although the new legal status of many of the non-sellers' blocks remained much the same (often under the names of long-dead ancestors), the status of many diverged under the changing vulnerabilities and opportunities of the Māori Land Acts. For example, in the 1970s an effort was made by the Tūhoe-Waikaremoana Māori Trust Board to amalgamate all the blocks in each of the four traditional UCS enclaves so that their pupuri whenua shareholders could manage them jointly as forestry, farming, tourist or other enterprises (Fig. 2; Fraser 2004; Murton 2004; B. Tahi 2004). The frank confrontation between business interests and “traditional” commitments that emerged in this context continues in terms of hapū conflicts and reconciliations that have been underway since the 1890s (Webster 2019a: 212–21). Although these conflicts led to judicial quashing of the 1970s amalgamation plan, some of these four enclaves were subsequently formed into separate trusts for business purposes while some blocks pursued other possibilities under the new acts, or reverted to Māori freehold under the UCS Act. Since 2014, all the divergent legal statuses of the non-sellers' UCS blocks, referred to as “adjacent lands” in the 2014 Acts, continue independently of the newly protected legal status of the Te Urewera sanctuary that surrounds them, at least in technical terms.

On the other hand, much as the National Park had surrounded the non-sellers' remnant blocks, the resurrected Te Urewera is a potentially dominant presence, representing the even older sanctuary and *mana motuhake* ‘separate authority’ of Nāi Tūhoe. Beneath this variety of new legal statuses—deeper in the ground of the sanctuary as well as memories, family papers and official archives—lies their still older histories of the UCS purchase campaign, Rua's prophetic movement, the UDNR, Te Kooti's refuge, the Crown's confiscations following the 1860s land wars, and the divided or reconciled ancestral loyalties these successive struggles had created. The sanctuary awaits its resurrection among the contemporary Tūhoe diaspora, scattered across New Zealand for over three generations. As one of their current leaders said, wisely balancing this contemporary reality against hopeful traditionalism, “Kōia mārika” (So it shall be; Kruger 2017). As Marx said, “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past” (Marx 1852).

Similarly, as the Te Urewera leader Hikawera Te Kurapa cautioned: “Ka kore e tika e pono tō tuku, te kōrero, ka hoki mai ki te ngau i to tou” (If the stories you tell are not true, they will come back and bite you on your ass; Webster 2020a: xvii).

The ambivalent illusions of commodification and commodity fetishism embedded in this history can be turned either way. While the threat of exchange-values entrenched since colonisation continues to lie in the

recovered as well as retained lands of Te Urewera, the much longer history of ordinary daily use-values embedded in the mountains, forests, rivers and very soil of their sanctuary by the labours of the ancestors, sustained against all odds, has been reawakened. It lies quietly, but is ready to stand firm against the subversive values that continue to threaten them. A promising sign of it is the ordinary defiance of young Tūhoe who, following the example of Rongonui Tahi's predecessors in Ōhāua Te Rangi, simply declare that Te Urewera had always remained theirs regardless of the illusions of colonisation (R. Tahi 2015). The alienation of the ancestors' "dead" labours in exchange-values is no more dead than was Kahuwī's namesake, lying bloody beneath his cloak of reeds after the battle of Rotoiti.

NOTE

1. Nāi Tūhoe is consistent with the orthography preferred by this *iwi* 'tribe'.

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