

TE WAIATA O PARIHAKA – THE SONG OF PARIHAKA

In 1989 Tim Finn was inspired to write a song about Parihaka after reading Dick Scott's book *Ask That Mountain: The Story of Parihaka*.

You can listen to Tim Finn's song on <http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/parihaka-1989> and watch the video clip. Here are the words.

Parihaka

Tim Finn, 1989

My friend, My friend, I hate to see you suffer,
Events conspire to bring us to our knees,
My friend, my friend, you've taken this the wrong
way,
Rise up, defend yourself, never give in,
Look to the sky, the spirit of Te Whiti,
The endless tide is murmuring his name.

I know Te Whiti will never be defeated,
And even at the darkest hour,
His presence will remain.
I'll sing for you a song of Parihaka.

Te Whiti he used the language of the spirit,
Then stood accused, the madman and his dream,
He saw the train go roaring through the tunnel,
He heard the voice travel on the magic wire,
But he loved the silence of the river,
He watched the dog piss on the cannon's wheel.¹

I know Te Whiti will never be defeated,
And even at the darkest hour,
His presence will remain.
I'll sing for you a song of Parihaka.

One day you'll know the truth,
They can't pull out the roots,
Come and take me home,
To weep for my lost brother.
They gather still, the clouds of Taranaki,
His children's children wearing the white plume,²
So take me for the sins of these sad islands,
The wave still breaks on the rock of Rouhotu.
And when you taste the salt that's on your
pudding,³
And when you taste the sugar in your soup,
Think of Te Whiti, he'll never be defeated,
Even at the darkest hour,
His presence will remain,

I'll sing for you a song of Parihaka,
Come to Parihaka,
Weep for my lost brother,
The spirit of nonviolence,
Has come to fill the silence,
Come to Parihaka.

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1. The night before the invasion of Parihaka an old man had a dream in which a dog urinated on the cannon of the soldiers. This was seen as a positive sign and gave people hope.
 2. What is the white plume that Te Whiti's descendants wear?
 3. Read the passage on the following page and find out what this line refers to.

After six months' jail in New Plymouth, Tohu and Te Whiti were taken on a tour of the South Island in an attempt by the government to impress them with European developments.

They were unmoved, especially Tohu, who even rejected European ways of eating. Te Whiti did try to learn table etiquette. "Tohu, on the other hand, did not care for nonsensical Pakeha customs," Ailsa Smith says. "His 'unique tastes' led him to eat sugar and jam with his soup, eggs, meat and fish, and to put pepper on his pudding and his bread and butter."

Virginia Winder, 2003, Puke Ariki (website) used with permission.

- 1. What are the sins of these sad islands that Tim Finn refers to?**
- 2. Who were the lost brothers?**

Read the following excerpt from the *Otago Daily Times* (ODT) and find out how many brothers from Parihaka were 'lost' during their imprisonment in Dunedin.

ODT staff writer, 8 January 2012

Historic caves have story to tell

The Maori prisoners came in waves, with the first group of 74 – known as the Pakakohe group – sent to Dunedin in 1869 after Titokowaru's War, an armed dispute in the mid-to-late 1860s, sparked by land confiscations in south Taranaki.

Historian Bill Dacker, of Dunedin and Beaumont, said it was this first group that was put to work helping build the Andersons Bay causeway and road, with Pakeha convicts also used on the project.

The Maori prisoners also worked on other city projects, including the Dunedin Botanic Garden's stone walls and the city road eventually named after them - Maori Rd.

They were eventually followed by 137 of Te Whiti's 'ploughmen', also from Taranaki, who were detained without trial after peacefully resisting European occupation of confiscated land and brought to Dunedin in 1878-79.

The prisoners were held at Dunedin prison and transported to work sites, but 21 died during their time in Dunedin and were buried in unmarked paupers' graves in the Northern Cemetery.

The death toll included 18 of the 74 prisoners put to work at Andersons Bay, which was "a very significant casualty rate in anyone's army", Mr Dacker said.

Their story has been commemorated, most recently with a memorial stone unveiled at the cemetery in March.

The Rongo stone memorial to their story was positioned on the grass reserve next to the cliff beside the Andersons Bay inlet, and just a few metres from the door into the cliff. It was unveiled in 1987 following a hikoi to Dunedin by descendants of the Taranaki prisoners.

3. In the refrain of Tim Finn's song he says that "Te Whiti will never be defeated."
Read Wharehoka Wano's words to help you work out what this line in the song means.

Wharehoka Wano's ancestors lived in Parihaka at the time that it was invaded by the troops.
He retells the story of 'Te Rā o te Pāhua', the day of plunder, that has been passed down to him.

Wharehoka says 5 November is remembered as a day of great sadness, but also a day of survival.

"There would have been, as far as Te Whiti and Tohu are concerned, no point in fighting because we would have been destroyed. So it was a survival tactic," he says.

"We always talk about going out to the Pāhua and it's the day we remember, we don't celebrate it of course, we commemorate it.

"So there is a sadness, but there is also the survival aspect that's sung about in a number of our waiata."

For Wharehoka, this is the big message: "The Pāhua was a sad day in our history, but it was a survival tactic, and we did survive. Why did Te Whiti and Tohu want us to survive? – so that we could redress those injustices at the appropriate time."

He wonders if that time is now.

Wharehoka isn't certain, but he does know: "Te Whiti and Tohu were about giving us hope and I believe they did."

Virginia Winder, 2009, extract included with permission of Puke Ariki.

4. Write another verse for Tim Finn's song describing the qualities of Te Whiti and Tohu and the way in which their leadership helped the people to survive.

OR

Write a verse for the people of Parihaka today.