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The Rise and Fall of Political Blackness

Introduction

Blackness was a mode of being that Black Power activists in the USA sought to recover and sanctify in order to confront a viscerally and institutionally racist settler state. In this chapter we examine the political identifications with Blackness that emerged in another racist settler state – New Zealand. In pursuit of restitution for colonial injustices, the identification with Blackness provided for a deeper binding between the children of Tāne/Māui and Legba. Along with Māori we must now add to this journey their *tuākana* (elder siblings), the Pasifika peoples – especially those from islands that the New Zealand state enjoyed some prior imperial relationship with – who had also arrived in urban areas in increasing numbers during the 1960s.

In this chapter, we shall first witness how young Pasifika activists learnt similar lessons to their Māori cousins in Ngā Tamatoa regarding Black Power, yet cultivated, through the activities of the Polynesian Panthers, a closer political identification with Blackness. We shall then turn to the high point of confrontation during this period, the anti-Apartheid resistance to the tour by the South African Springboks rugby team in 1981. With regards to this resistance we shall retrieve a *whakapapa* of colonial administration that binds South African Apartheid to breaches to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty). And through this retrieval we will be able to glean why some Māori would begin to politically identify with Blackness. Subsequently we shall

focus upon the Black Women's Movement that spanned this time period and that sought to bring political identifications with Blackness quite literally home. We shall finally witness the abrupt breaking of these anti-colonial connections.

The Polynesian Panthers

Most parents of the youth who would join the Polynesian Panther Movement had migrated from the islands with an assumption that Aotearoa NZ was the place to 'get ahead'.¹ Upon arrival in Auckland and other towns across the north and south islands, parents encouraged their children to assimilate in order to enjoy the benefits of New Zealand society. However, the desire to enter into a majority Pālagi² society as an equal tended to foster insensitivity to the prior and continuing dispossession of Māori. Among many parents and elders – both Māori and Pasifika – this conjuncture of labour exploitation and land dispossession played into a 'divide and rule' mentality.³ However, visceral racism, with its global anti-Black grammar, had a perversely democratizing impact on the quotidian experiences of Māori and Pasifika youth. For instance, buses to Ponsonby (the inner-city neighbourhood of Auckland where many Pasifika peoples resided) were labelled the 'Congo run'.⁴ And at school, under the colonial gaze, Māori and Pasifika youth were all lumped into the same subaltern category of Polynesians. Indeed, those Pasifika youth who were born in Aotearoa NZ, and therefore sported a Kiwi accent, were often assumed to be Māori.⁵ Inevitably, the assimilatory pressures felt by Māori started to affect Pasifika communities too and, likewise, their youth pushed back.

Unlike Ngā Tamatoa, the constituency of the Polynesian Panthers was largely (but by no means entirely) Pasifika and non-tertiary educated. Its initial core group was composed of ex-members of a Pasifika gang, the Nigs. Chairman Will 'Ilolahia was the only member to attend university. And while his encounter with Black

Power came during his university studies, it was his fellow gang members who provided 'Ilohia with his 'real education'.⁶ Meanwhile, family members and friends who had left school to work as seamen returned regularly with Black Power literature and information from the outside world.⁷ Inspired, 'Ilohia encouraged his gang mates to make a principled decision to do something more for their immediate community than hanging on the corner. However, they could not call themselves the Black Panthers because a broad association of Māori and Pasifika gangs, which included some of their brothers, had already taken that name. Hence the Polynesian Panther Movement (PPM) was inaugurated in June 1971.⁸

Initially the Movement was apprehended simply as a kind of acceptable gang.⁹ However, the Panthers strived to be something more. They enthusiastically adopted the Black Panthers' Ten-Point Programme of freedom, equality and social justice so as to teach Pasifika families how 'to survive in the system'.¹⁰ The Movement even professed to be 'the New Zealand response to the Black Revolution'.¹¹ Structuring themselves in the same micro-nation format as their US counterparts with various ministerial portfolios,¹² the Polynesian Panthers echoed Malcolm X's organizational mantra of Black Power: 'we cannot have black and white unity until we have black unity'.¹³ The Panthers were especially concerned with both dividing lines among Pasifika peoples of various islands as well as between Māori and Pasifika. Blackness as a Polynesian identity was the solution to colonial divide and rule.

The Polynesian Panthers focused their practical efforts on grass-roots activities (some in partnership with the Peoples Union, their Pālagi equivalent in the inner-city suburb of Ponsonby) including: organizing prison visit programmes and sporting and debating teams for inmates, providing a halfway-house service for young men released from prison, running homework centres, offering interest-free 'people's loans', legal aid, and organizing food banks that at one point catered for 600 families. The Panthers also employed one of their core Māori members, Miriama Rauhihi-Ness, as a full-time community worker.¹⁴

But while community welfare was the major activity of the Panther Movement, survival was a strategy, not a goal; for their aims were directly political: to eliminate the visceral and institutional racism and exploitation that accompanied assimilation policies. These politics were evident from the beginning of the Movement and took the form, for instance, of protest marches against Vietnam wherein slogans from Muhammad Ali were remixed for the Oceania context: 'no Vietnamese ever called me coconut'.¹⁵

After a couple of years the Movement somewhat contentiously became a fully fledged Party. While the community initiatives continued, more focus was placed on political education and mobilization of the people.¹⁶ With the adoption of a vanguard identity more direct forms of confrontation with the racist and exploitative power structure ensued. As both their American and Australian Black Power counterparts had done, the Panthers helped to run a PIG patrol that shadowed police patrol cars in order to pre-empt raids on predominantly Māori and Pasifika drinking establishments.¹⁷ In their legal aid activities, the Panthers were supported by a lawyer and future Prime Minister, David Lange. The Panthers also stood up against so-called 'dawn raids' whereby the police specifically targeted the homes of 'Polynesians' (sometimes including Māori and Pasifika citizens) in a racist government campaign against overstayers.¹⁸

The Polynesian Panthers were not Oceanic subalterns. They did not simply copy the ten-point programme of the Oakland Black Panthers and extend it into Oceania. Instead, and despite very tenuous material linkages, the Polynesian Panthers' grounding with their African-American cousins facilitated a binding of colonial New Zealand presents back to decolonial Oceanic pasts.

This process was visibly marked by the way in which Pasifika aesthetics combined with African-American when it came to the Polynesian Panthers' dress code: men would wear 'cultural shirts' along with the standard black dress, while women would wear 'cultural dresses'.¹⁹ Furthermore, while members were advised to read *Seize the Time* and *Autobiography of Malcolm X* they were also encouraged to 'read on our

culture, to give us something to identify with.²⁰ The various independence movements of Oceania (including those of Māori) featured heavily in the Panther psyche, as well as opposition to French nuclear testing in the region.²¹ Indeed, as was the case with some members of Ngā Tamatoa, anti-colonial struggles were already woven into the personal genealogy of some Panthers.²² More importantly, Oceanic pasts formed the living cultural matter that politicized Pasifika youth as they started to engage with Black Power. Take, for instance, Tigilau Ness – the Polynesian Panthers' minister for culture. His radicalization occurred after he was suspended from school for refusing to cut his afro. Ness was singled out, despite Pālāgi 'surfer' students being allowed to keep their hair long. But while the afro aesthetic owed much to Black America, the actual practice of the eldest boy growing out their hair came from his Niuean heritage.²³

Ngā Tamatoa had demonstrated a qualified irreverence to the given order represented by Te Aute Old Boys. The Pasifika children of Māui demonstrated likewise. Rather than cut the threads of their Pasifika heritage so as to become model New Zealand citizens, the Panthers wanted to manipulate the arrangements of migrant communities to better survive in Aotearoa NZ. Indeed, particular Pasifika values intentionally informed the organization and operation of the Panthers. For example, the practice of according respect to elders due to their demonstrated leadership featured in gangs such as the Nigs and followed through into the Panthers.²⁴ At the time, 'Ilohia even considered this respect to be a 'revolutionary thing' because 'there's all this European shit breaking up the [Polynesian] family unit.'²⁵

But unlike Ngā Tamatoa, the Panthers, as radical children of Island migrants, had no established Te Aute Old Boy tradition to contend with. In fact, Pasifika elders were struggling to reproduce their hierarchies of affiliation and attendant cultural practices in Aotearoa NZ. Nonetheless, the Panthers still had to grapple with a similar inter-generational tension to that faced by Ngā Tamatoa. Indeed, some Pasifika elders had started to argue that their rebellious youth were compounding their communities' problems by undermining the accommodationist strategy of engaging with the Pālāgi majority.

All these tensions are clearly exposed in the Panthers' provision – along with the Citizens' Association for Racial Equality (CARE) – of homework centres designed to promote 'Polynesian culture' and to encourage parents to participate in children's welfare and education.²⁶ But such after-work-hour activities impacted directly on the time that families would usually spend at their church. Pasifika churches in Aotearoa NZ commanded such a large share of community time because they functioned to retain the cultural practices (including the use of language) that migrant parents had had to leave behind. The Panthers recognized precisely this point that churches did 'a lot to preserve the communalism that exists back in the Polynesian islands'. And because of this, church leaders commanded significant respect.²⁷ However, for the sake of community survival, the Panthers were now asking their parents to commit to alternative activities after the work/school day.

These inter-generational tensions manifested most acutely through gender dynamics. Many young women at the time had to work outside of the home, even if they had families.²⁸ (In fact, Rauhihi-Ness, the Panther's full-time social worker, had first come to the movement's attention through the strike that she had organized with Pasifika women over pay conditions.²⁹) For some women the Panthers provided a social and purposive space outside of the home, church *and* workplace wherein they could take active part in the struggle against inequality and discrimination and stake their own claim in wider society. It is true that in this space Panther men often ridiculed women's efforts. But Panther women collectively confronted these internal discriminations.³⁰ Inevitably, the audacity of the Panthers' confrontational pursuit of social justice, combined with the radical space opened for 'feminist' impulses, led to some churches discounting the Party as 'Fia Pālāgi communists' – agents of ungodly outsiders.³¹

In many ways, then, similar contentious dynamics informed Ngā Tamatoa and the Polynesian Panthers' grounding with Black Power. However, the Panthers had to contend with one further challenge that perhaps required a political identification with Blackness more so than

many of their Māori counterparts. As I noted previously, the *tēina* (junior)/*tuākana* (senior) relationship is a fundamental structuring principle of *whakapapa*. Pasifika people are considered the *tuākana* (senior) line to Māori, the *tēina* (junior), in so far as Māori migrated from the Islands to Aotearoa NZ.³² Yet at the same time, Māori are the *tāngata whenua* (peoples of the land) in Aotearoa NZ and Pasifika peoples are, strictly speaking, *manuhiri* (visitors). Situated within this network of relations, the Polynesian Panthers' programme of community survival was necessarily dependent upon and bound up in Māori *mana motuhake* (self-determination).

In order to pursue social justice while honouring these complex relations, the Panthers creatively reinterpreted Huey Newton's notion of 'revolutionary intercommunalism'.³³ For Newton, co-founder of the Oakland Black Panthers, revolutionary intercommunalism was a notion that developed out of a shift in his understanding of the global role of the USA. As an imperial military and economic power, Newton came to realize that the USA consistently undermined the self-determination of peoples. In light of this realization his earlier conceptualization of African Americans as an 'internal colony' could no longer hold, and he replaced it with the idea of dispossessed (lumpen) communities. Newton believed that it was in this state of mutual dispossession that African Americans, Vietnamese and all colonized peoples could connect as the world's lumpen-proletariat.³⁴

'Ilolahia, chair of the Polynesian Panthers, provided a different interpretation of Newton's concept. He was confident that Māori and Pasifika youth shared the same problem: racism. However, in identifying as a united front of Polynesians, 'Ilolahia was clear that Māori could not 'lose their *Māoritanga* [culture] and replace their Maoriness'.³⁵ 'The solution to our predicament', declared 'Ilolahia, 'lies in UNITY through DIVERSIFICATION, and not UNIFORMITY'.³⁶ Hence, strategically, the land issue was to be strictly led and determined by *tāngata whenua*, i.e. 'Māori Polynesians', although *manuhiri*, especially 'non-Māori Polynesians', should 'take a stance of solidarity and support'.³⁷ Following this logic, the Panthers took a supportive role

in some of the seminal Māori struggles over land dispossession in the 1970s including the great Land March of 1975 (wherein they acted as security as it passed through Auckland) and the occupation of Bastion Point in 1978.³⁸ Conversely, racial discrimination and exploitation over housing, education, the courts, work and employment were issues that *all* Polynesians owned,³⁹ and here the Panthers often took leading roles. Tellingly, 'Ilohia's strategy was announced in Rongo, a multilingual news magazine jointly published with Ngā Tamatoa and other Māori and Pasifika radicals.

'Ilohia's revolutionary intercommunalism formed part of a wider aspiration among Polynesian Panthers to cultivate a global infrastructure of anti-colonial connectivity. Beyond Aotearoa NZ, the Panthers hoped for an Australasia-Pacific common front, a Black Power collectivity that also included indigenous peoples generally considered *not* to be Polynesian (i.e. the peoples of Australia, Papua New Guinea and the New Hebrides).⁴⁰ Beyond that, they looked forward to a united Black Power front composed of all oppressed peoples in the 'world struggle'.⁴¹

In sum, the Polynesian Panthers sought to redeem the *tuākana/tēina* relationship between Pasifika and Māori by mobilizing Blackness as a political identification through which to bind together the diverse yet related peoples of (post)colonized Oceania in a global anti-colonial project of restitutive justice.

The coming of the Springboks

But what of Māori? Was there any political imperative that required the *tāngata whenua* (peoples of the land) not just to compare themselves with Black Power but to identify with Blackness? To answer this question we must now shift geographies and narrate the constitution of colonial ties and anti-colonial resistance between South Africa and Aotearoa NZ, and specifically, between Apartheid and Te Tiriti (The Treaty).

In the first instance, such a *whakapapa* binds Aotearoa NZ and South Africa together as British dependencies that share a long history of administrative relationships. George Grey, for instance, served as governor of both colonies. Grey did much to set the structures of white supremacy in South Africa, while in Aotearoa NZ he launched the invasion of the Waikato against the Kingitanga (Māori King Movement).⁴² These administrative relations are long standing. For example, in Aotearoa NZ Apartheid categories were deployed in inter-state relations as late as 1970 in order to facilitate a rugby tour of South Africa when the status of 'honorary whites' was accepted for Māori players on their behalf by the Māori Council. However, the *whakapapa* that I am retrieving also binds the two settler colonies together through anti-Apartheid agitation. Indeed, the disavowal of ancestry that accompanied the status of 'honorary whites' was decried by the Māori Women's Welfare League.⁴³ Subsequently, Vern Winitana, Ngā Tamatoa member, turned down the opportunity to tour South Africa as an All Black.⁴⁴

The first national protest over the sporting relationship between South Africa and Aotearoa NZ took place as far back as 1936/7 and was driven by two Māori, Te Puea Herangi and Tai Mitchell.⁴⁵ Soon afterwards, members of the Māori Battalion experienced racism from white South African soldiers during the Second World War, and this was not to be forgotten.⁴⁶ After having led a motion of 500 Māori to oppose another Springbok tour in 1972, the Māori Organization on Human Rights wrote in their newsletter: 'Kiwis who fought against Hitler remember: we are against the Nazi master race theories that led to the massive violence of World War Two with the organized murder of 6 million Jews – and to the present day rule of Apartheid law in South Africa.'⁴⁷

When in 1981 the Springboks were welcomed, as per protocol, onto Poho-o-Rawhiri *marae* (meeting place), just before their first game at Gisborne, a small group of Māori sought to deny entrance to the visitors. A great-great grandson of Apirana Ngata was part of the protest. He recalled that East Coast Māori formed the bulk of the

Māori Battalion and that during the war they were initially barred from entering Cape Town while white soldiers were permitted. 'Perhaps we are too hospitable', pondered the grandson; 'I think if Hitler was alive we would welcome him.'⁴⁸

This *whakapapa* retrieves the intimacy with which the anti-apartheid struggle was bound to the struggle for *mana motuhake*. The tensile strength was provided by the apprehension among Māori that support for apartheid desecrated Te Tiriti (The Treaty). For instance, in 1960 a petition against the forthcoming Springboks tour was launched by Bishop Wiremu Netana Panapa that charged the sporting relationship with breaching the principles of Te Tiriti with regards to protection and equal treatment of Māori.⁴⁹ By 1972 the second national branch of Ngā Tamatoa had issued a statement of aims opposing 'white racism at home and abroad', while seeking ratification of the spirit of Te Tiriti.⁵⁰

The issue of immigration policy was also included in the 1970s struggles against sporting relationships with the apartheid state. In this respect, activists were recalling, once more, the *whakapapa* of colonial administration that bound South Africa to Aotearoa NZ as settler colonies wherein the 1897 Natal Act in South Africa inspired both Australia and New Zealand's *fin de siècle* racist immigration acts.⁵¹ Some Māori activists protested that the immigration policies of the New Zealand state threatened to destroy the *tēina/tuākana* relationship between them and Pasifika peoples. In fact, the Kia Ngawari youth club of Wellington directly likened the 1970s 'dawn raids' against suspect 'Polynesians' to the South Africa group area act of 1950.⁵² Ngā Tamatoa, in pledging to support the 'Black freedom fighters in South Africa', also pledged to overthrow 'New Zealand's present racist regime' so as to support the right 'of all pacific island peoples to free and unrestricted entry'.⁵³

For all these reasons, Māori and Pasifika activists were especially critical of the majority of Pākehā anti-Apartheid activists who, having imbibed the exceptionalist narrative of New Zealand colonization, failed to make the global connection between the mores and laws of the two settler colonies, especially with regards to land dispossession,

a racist division of labour, and de facto second-class citizenship.⁵⁴ The appropriation by many Pākehā anti-Apartheid activists of Steve Biko as symbolic of apartheid violence was especially galling. Biko, the leader of the Black Consciousness movement, had been murdered by the South African regime on 12 September 1977. At a protest meeting during the beginning of the 1981 tour Donna Awatere sought to bring Te Tiriti onto the agenda and was met with ‘what’s that got to do with it?’ by a Pākehā attendee. ‘What hurts most,’ Awatere conceded, ‘is that they make a monument of Biko. But how many turned out when Daniel Houapapa was murdered?’⁵⁵ In Awatere’s understanding, Biko’s Black Consciousness could not be – and should not have been – segregated from the pursuit of *mana motuhake* and the honouring of Te Tiriti.

Consonant with the *whakapapa* that I have retrieved above, Māori protestors by and large framed apartheid as a global form of settler-colonial governance. For instance, on the eve of the 1981 tour, Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan, MP for Southern Māori, suggested that ‘many Maori people in this country have had a taste of Apartheid attitudes here at home.’⁵⁶ Some even began to identify themselves with the African sufferers of apartheid. Hone Harawira argued the point on behalf of the Māori Peoples Liberation Movement: ‘We are as much slaves as [South African Blacks] are, a little better paid, and a little better housed of course – but slaves to the cause of imperialism nonetheless.’⁵⁷ This was less a case of comparing natives to negroes, browns to blacks, and more a case of politically identifying with Blackness against shared colonial injustices.

This incipient or actual identification is what differentiated the level of Māori militancy from that of most (but not all) of their Pākehā counterparts. While for most Pākehā the campaign was focused on combating a foreign evil, Māori and Pasifika activists sought to arrest the encroachment of this evil upon their children’s future.⁵⁸ For this reason, Māori and Pasifika groups planned their activities with a much more military mindset and deeper intensity of confrontation than the predominantly Pākehā-run anti-tour organizations. And these militant plans were rarely conveyed to Pākehā marshals.⁵⁹

A police unit called the Red Squad had been trained to forcefully confront protestors and they had been armed, for the first time in Aotearoa NZ policing history, with long batons imported from the United States where they had been designed to ruthlessly quell the predominantly Black urban uprisings of the 1960s and 70s. Māori and Pasifika activists in Auckland took the initiative to create a counter-organization, the Patu Squad. *Patu* can be glossed as to strike; in noun form, the word indicates a club. The Patu Squad studied the formations of the Red Squad and developed counter-tactics.⁶⁰ Armour that could deflect the long baton blows was manufactured, predominantly at home, although machinery at car factories was occasionally utilized.⁶¹

There had existed a 'military wing' of the Polynesian Panthers that sometimes undertook direct actions just on the other side of legal.⁶² Will 'Ilohia, former chair of the Panthers, drew upon these past experiences to organize a special military wing of the Patu Squad, populated by some of the best fighters from gangs.⁶³ Members of different gangs marched together at anti-tour protests, and many were on the front line of confrontations with the police, but would drop back as soon as the cameras came closer.⁶⁴ It should not be forgotten that Pākehā activists were often in the front lines alongside Māori and Pasifika.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, at the end of the last march of the tour in Auckland it was mostly Māori and Pasifika that remained, ready to physically confront the police.⁶⁶ At one point, gang leadership marshalled fleeing protestors to regroup and successfully counter-charge the police.⁶⁷ Was this evidence of the political awakening of gangs that had long been feared as the arrival of Black anarchy?

The differences in militancy between Māori, Pasifika and Pākehā protestors also produced different consequences, and this is especially the case with regards to policing and the criminal justice system. Riot police, armed with the new batons, frequented drinking establishments known to have a 'black presence'.⁶⁸ Women were not spared from the baton, especially if they congregated at a known Māori and Pasifika activist community centre.⁶⁹ In fact, the police squad that was responsible for publically drawing the first blood of protestors in Molesworth

Street, Wellington, also visited Takapūwāhia Pā in Porirua in a similarly violent fashion but out of the glare of city headlines. Ostensibly, they had been tasked with tackling the smoking of Marijuana by groups of Māori youth who had become interested in the RasTafari faith.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, although many Pākehā took part in the confrontations, arrests for more serious charges of riotous destruction overwhelmingly targeted Māori and Pasifika activists – both male and female.⁷¹ A number of defence funds were set up in response.⁷² As 'Ilohahia and Hone Harawira went on trial in Auckland facing serious jail sentences, outside the court supporters shouted 'white justice, black oppression!'⁷³ The sentences were only quashed because, with the help of Halt All Racist Tours (HART) and veteran Māori activist Titewhai Harawira, Desmond Tutu (visiting on church business) was sequestered to make a personal appearance in court wherein he testified graphically as to the realities of living under Apartheid.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, upon leaving court, 'Ilohahia was informed by police that they were still out to 'get him'.⁷⁵ Both 'Ilohahia and Eruera Nia, a founding member of Ngā Tamatoa in Wellington, were so disgusted with the state's response to the Springbok tour that they left Aotearoa shores (with 'Ilohahia only returning many years later).⁷⁶ Tigilau Ness, culture minister for the Polynesian Panthers, was not so lucky and in a separate trial received a substantial jail term.

Inevitably, the protests affected Pākehā activists too. Mitzi Nairn, a leading Pākehā figure in these movements, suggests that Pākehā-led anti-racist campaigns started in earnest only after the Springbok tour precisely because the state response made domestic racism unavoidably visible. What is more, middle-class Pākehā had now witnessed first-hand the marshalling skills of Māori and Pasifika on the front line, as well as their deeper investment in the struggle.⁷⁷ It therefore became far more difficult to categorize these youth as 'happy-go-lucky' Polynesians or pathological vectors of urban society. At a recent thirty-year commemoration lecture, John Minto, a key Pākehā anti-apartheid activist, acknowledged that the displacement of racism onto foreign issues was a 'valid criticism' of the anti-apartheid movement.⁷⁸

What was clear at the time, though, was that the tour had split Aotearoa NZ straight down the middle. One poll undertaken at the height of the confrontation reported that 49 per cent of the respondents believed that the Springboks should not have come and 43.5 per cent believed that the tour should stop immediately.⁷⁹ Pākehā families were internally divided, sometimes violently,⁸⁰ and so too were Māori and Pasifika privately and publically, with Māori policemen sometimes being called ‘house niggers’ and ‘uncle Toms’.⁸¹ Church constituencies also suffered, with those who supported the protests sometimes receiving unprecedented criticism and anger from their congregations and superiors. In fact, many priests and pastors involved in the protests subsequently abandoned the institutional church.⁸² But above all, the multiple confrontations that took place over the tour intensified the terms of engagement with Blackness.

From Blackness to *taha Māori*

In Great Turtle Island (North America) the central aim of Black Power had been to unravel the dependency on white beneficence and instead build self-reliance within Black communities. Merata Mita, Ngā Tamatoa member and director of the documentary of the Springboks protests, recalls that the confrontations over the tour effectively vindicated self-determination strategies cognate to Black Power by forcing Māori to realize that ‘if we waited for them [Pākehā] to grow up it wasn’t going to happen’.⁸³ Mita points out that the Te Reo (Māori language) immersion schools movement shifted gears in the aftermath of the tour as did *mauri ora* (spiritual wellbeing) health projects, nowadays known as *whānau ora* (family wellbeing).⁸⁴ There were other effects, too. After the tour a number of Māori activists returned to their *tūrangawaewae* (places of belonging), often bearing deep scars from their urban struggles, in order to ground for extended periods of time with their peoples in their *tūrangawaewae*. In 1984, a

gathering at Ngāruawāhia – the home of the Kingitanga (Māori King Movement) – was convened, called by Māori for Māori in order to find common cause in Te Tiriti (The Treaty).⁸⁵ And while the Māori Land March had helped to put in place the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975, it was only after the Springboks tour, in 1985, that its mandate was extended retrospectively to encompass the colonial history of land dispossession since 1840.

Therefore the Springboks tour confirmed the sagacity of updating the Te Aute tradition with a more oppositional approach to *mana motuhake*. But while these radicalizations had been contentiously compared to Black Power, the engagement with apartheid, especially for Māori, was far less framed by comparison and much more cultivated through a *whakapapa* of *mana motuhake*. This was why the tour had to be stopped: the breaches to Te Tiriti were proof that apartheid was alive and well in Aotearoa NZ also. And through this *whakapapa* some Māori began to mobilize Blackness as part of their political identification: ‘be proud, be strong, be black’, proclaimed the Waitangi Action Committee.⁸⁶ As we have witnessed, the Polynesian Panthers had already demonstrated a close identification to Blackness; they were, after all, non-indigenous migrants to the urban areas in somewhat the same fashion as African Americans. Crucially, the anti-tour protests channelled most of these Māori and Pasifika activists into the front line. What is more, some of these activists were also key participants in the Black Women’s Movement. And it was this Movement that worked through the political identification with Blackness most intensely and intimately.

The Black Women’s Movement that coalesced around 1978–9 was in part a response to the sexism that women had long experienced in the activist movements of that decade.⁸⁷ It was also made necessary by the inability of the wider feminist movement to accept that white supremacy was part of the foundation of patriarchy. For Māori women the Movement sought to recover a radical feminist *mana motuhake* that could be distinguished from the more ameliorative work of the Māori Women’s Welfare League (cognate in many ways to Ngata’s Te Aute Old Boys tradition).

For the members of this Movement 'Black' did not so much signal a sociological content but much more a political intent along the lines of Steve Biko's understanding of Black Consciousness, that is, an intentional politics of positive identification in solidarity against the white power structure.⁸⁸ For instance, Zena Tamanui, an activist based in Ōtara who attended the first Black Women's *hui* (meeting) at Ngāti Ōtara marae in September 1980, argued that the term 'black women' encapsulated 'the common bond of being the lowest, the most oppressed: the only ones to lead the revolution.'⁸⁹ In this way, 'Black' once more re-politicized a broad Oceania identity just as the 'revolutionary intercommunalism' of the Polynesian Panthers had done, with the effect that Black women could now be said to include 'Māori, Pacific Island and other Black women.'⁹⁰ In fine, Blackness delineated for the Women's Movement a radically autonomous but united space of struggle against colonial rule. Along these lines the Black Manifesto of the first *hui* (meeting) proclaimed: 'A black woman taught by whites how to be white learns to hate her blackness ... [and] prefers to be brown so she can feel comfortable and close even closer to being white.'⁹¹ Even Brown Power was a sell-out. Only 'the blanket of black skin' could act as 'a *whāriki* – a cloak of dignity.'⁹²

The Black Women's space of protest was not only public but avowedly personal. Foci on health, domestic violence and sexuality at *hui* (meetings) brought the effect of colonial rule – in its patriarchal and racial manifestations – quite literally home. The Movement specifically bemoaned practices that could be conceived of as 'white integration/infiltration' or the actions of 'house niggers'. And it was also in the home where the Movement confronted this infiltration most contentiously as it undertook a critical assessment of inter-racial/ethnic personal relationships. The issue had, in fact, been brought up by some women at an Ngā Tamatoa national *hui* in 1976, leading to intense confrontations with some male members who had white female partners.⁹³ A few years later, the Māori Peoples Liberation Movement made it policy that members could not engage in inter-racial relationships.⁹⁴

Over the period of 1981 to 1983, sexuality and 'Māori sovereignty' were consistent themes at *hui*.⁹⁵ But then, in 1983, a first national *Māori* – and not *Black* – women's *hui* was held at Otatau marae.⁹⁶ Reflecting on the second *hui* of this kind in 1984, Ripeka Evans explained the shift in identification from Black women to Māori *wahine* (women) as a 'need to reclaim our taha Māori (Māori side)'.⁹⁷ The shift was contentious and, for some, traumatizing. Indeed, by 1983 the Black Women's Movement had begun to implode. Lines of demarcation had been drawn inside Blackness – ethnicity first, regarding intimate relations between Pasifika and Māori, and sexuality second, between men and women.⁹⁸ After this moment individual activists might still acknowledge their Blackness;⁹⁹ however, Blackness was no longer a central political term used for radical identification, solidarity and mobilization. Instead, lines of agency, guardianship and accountability were re-clarified into Māori, Pasifika and Pākehā, although, of course, multiple forces interacted and contended within these lines.

From 1970 onwards Black Power had become implicated in a publically articulated strategy of radical opposition to settler-colonial rule. Because many key activists in the Black Women's Movement played leading roles in the Springbok protests, I would argue that political identifications with Blackness peaked around 1981 to 1982 followed by its rapid denouement. In effect, while Black Power was seminal to the rebirth of radical strategies of *mana motuhake*, the very terms of these strategies also required the shedding of Blackness as political identification for the retrieval and renewal of ancestral identifications. Black Power had done what it needed to do. Apparently, the relationship between the children of Tāne/Māui and Legba was to be a temporary one, born and dying in a particular conjuncture.

Conclusion: Towards and away from identity politics

The children of Tāne/Māui have reached out to Blackness, and this Black matter has catalysed a binding back to their decolonial pasts in the context of racist and colonial urban presents. So is it necessarily a problem that, in this process, the 'blanket of black skin' was discarded for a more fitting Māori *whāriki* (cloak of dignity)? In addressing this question I want to turn our attention to Zena Tamanui's retrospect on the Black Women's Movement. In her assessment, the process of re-identification that the Movement undertook was driven by a power that lacked *aroha* (love, sympathy, empathy).¹⁰⁰ Power absent of such a binding force inevitably categorized and segregated peoples, whereas power exercised through *aroha* could have re-related them to themselves *and* the world.

Is there something lost in the mobilization of a loveless power, even in the pursuit of decolonization? In Aotearoa NZ this period of tumult within Māori activism was immediately followed by the sudden inauguration of neo-liberal governance in 1984. In many ways, neo-liberal governance has since sought to assimilate indigenous identity so that 'Māori' becomes only an adjective that describes the outward appearance of the instrumental interest-maximizing individual of market lore.¹⁰¹ Some of the elder activists who I have spoken to bemoan this emergence of an 'identity politics' stripped of decolonizing agendas and social justice sensibilities, and personalized in a cadre of what one elder terms 'power Māori'. We must certainly be careful not to casually dismiss these political changes as entirely disabling to Māori (and Pasifika) peoples. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that since the mid-1980s the state has sought to coopt the Māori Renaissance as well as the broader multiculturalism of 1970s Māori, Pasifika (and even Pākehā) activism so as to continue colonial practices of land expropriation and resource extraction most recently evidenced in the debacle over the Foreshore and Seabed Act.¹⁰²

But Black Power was never simply identity politics.¹⁰³ Its aims were not only to set Black men free to compete as individuals in

the marketplace and halls of government. Among Legba's children, whether in South Africa, Louisiana or Oakland, Black Power also sought collective re-humanization against the categorical segregations generated by colonial science so as to refocus struggles upon the self-determination of a beloved community. In fact, the Black Power movement never significantly detached itself from the *agape* (unconditional love) promoted and practised by the civil rights movement.¹⁰⁴ Blackness was an investment in Black love; its power, at heart, was a soul power. Moreover, lest we forget, the mantra of the Oakland Black Panthers was 'all power to the people', not 'all power to the Black people'. In other words, the liberation of Black peoples was crucial not only in and of itself, but because it would also augur the destruction of a wicked global *system*. In short, Blackness – as Black love – taught how to know oneself and *whakapapa* to the world. And so, returning to the relation between the children of Tāne/Māui and Legba, I want to retrieve another pathway through their 1970s groundings that did not converge with neo-liberal governance to subsequently mestatize into identity politics.

At the 1970 Māori Leaders conference Taura Eruera, the first chair of Ngā Tamatoa, had argued that Māori could already lay claim to a *whakapapa* of radical oppositional politics and therefore should be wary of cultivating deeper relations with Black Power. In early February 1971, Eruera wrote to a Pākehā church minister, Don Borrie, during a seventy-day tour of minority communities in the United States. Eruera's visit to San Francisco and Berkeley coincided with the arrest of Angela Davis and a concerted effort by government to fracture and destroy the Black Panthers. Nevertheless, Eruera admitted to Borrie that he was much more interested in the struggle of Chicano peoples and First Nations. This, Eruera suggested, was for two reasons:

there are more parallels and comparison between us and the Indians/ Chicanos and probably because I sense, rightly or wrongly, that the latter accept me more readily than the negro which is understandable I guess. No sweat with me – they have their problems and they are the ones to solve their own problems.¹⁰⁵

And yet Eruera immediately went on to retell a meeting with quite a different outcome:

But I think that the highlight of San Francisco was a church service, conducted by a Rev Cecil Williams, a black, at a church called the Glide Memorial. It was absolutely fantastic. It was just like Jumping Sunday [an outdoors event in Auckland], complete with light shows and rock groups, a chorus like something straight out of Hair both physically and vocally wise, and people everywhere. Everywhere man, in the exit doors, in the exit stairs, in windows, aisles, in all the seats on both floors. All the songs were contemporary ones that are applicable to any religious context rather than being hymn type ones, complete with rock backing. And everybody sang and danced. And at the end of each song everybody gave peace signals, power salutes and everything else – expressing themselves as they wished ... Fantastic man ... It was a truly glorious though unbelievable event that nearly reduced me to tears for I have never seen such a mass participatory session since my brother's tangi [funeral].¹⁰⁶

'Natives' and 'negroes' fail to bind together because they are created precisely as colonial-sociological categories of segregation, of subalternization. They serve global systems of colonial extraction. Their identities do not disturb but confirm colonial governance. But where these categories fail to connect, affective, aesthetic and religious experiences exceed and subvert colonial governance. They can even provide for a crossing over so that Tāne/Māui and Legba can be gleaned walking together in the uncolonized spiritual hinterlands, ready to confront colonial injustices in solidarity. We are heading in this direction, away from identity politics, towards a deeper identification, perhaps even collective inhabitation. So in the next two chapters we shall turn away from the public-political arena of the manifest world in order to examine the grounding of the children of Tāne/Māui and Legba as they cultivate soul power through theological reasonings and artistic performances.