

TINO RANGATIRATANGA

ACTION ALERT

CLOSING THE GAP OR CREATING A CHASM?

What really happened at Hopuhopu.

A view from the outside.

We arrived at the army camp at Hopuhopu after a moving unveiling at Whaingaroa where we launched the waka wairua especially carved by James Rickard for his mother to care for her in the homelands of our ancestors at Hawaiki. Eva's spiritual strength and presence lingered with us all as we wound through the pathways of her tupuna to the lands where great champions of the poor and destitute Tawhiao and Te Puea had also walked and inspired.

Our decision to attend the hui at Hopuhopu which had been described in invitations and panui in the days preceding the hui as an opportunity for Maori to meet at look at strategies for social justice for Maori people was prompted by the truth that notwithstanding that it had been a day long planned to remember our comrade and friend she would have expected us to travel to the hui to advocate for the rights of those people silenced by the process of colonisation and land loss of the past century.

Hopuhopu like all state defence institutions is an austere place, surrounded by fences that had once been laced with barbed wire whose entrance ways have toll gates and little boxes that are used to housing the likes of the SS and Military Police in times of war and confrontation. Its entrance ways are designed to be intimidating and unwelcoming. It was to be no different for those in our party in this time of peace and planning.

When our group who had traveled in convoy from the unveiling arrived at 2 p.m. we were met by a group of Maori men who we later found out to be part of the local rugby league team who inquired of our purpose and our names.
We were asked if we were high people as low people had been denied access to the gathering.

When one of our party insulted by this discourse refused to answer and attempted to walk through the entrance way she was promptly manhandled by the front row of the league team and frog marched back to the adjoining road.

At this point I disembarked from the vehicle I was travelling in and together with Tame Iti went to speak to those on the gate. Attempts were made to also contact the Public Relations consultant to the Tainui Trust Board Susan Sarich to clarify the position being adopted and the gatekeepers were told in the strongest terms that as many of our group were regarded as cutting edge leaders in strategies and initiatives for social justice for Maori the position being adopted apart from offending against Tikanga Maori undermined the very basis of the gathering itself.

At this point Tame and I were advised that we could gain entry to clarify the position and we were herded into a flat deck truck to travel to the Tainui parliament house. My wairua was unsettled by the reality that Tame and I seemed to be regarded as some of the high people allowed access to the self proclaimed elite while long time friends comrades and colleagues battlers for justice, many skilled in the laws and way of life of our ancestors who have also armed themselves with law degrees, economics degrees many years of experience with Women's Refuge, rehabilitation programmes for recently returned Maori inmates and campaigns for constitutional change and the affirmation of Maori rights of self determination were denied entry.

The atmosphere at the Parliamentary gathering of the Brown table and the sycophantic wannabees was no different. As we entered the building we were met by someone who identified herself as the usher of Parliament. My mind reeled at the thought that we were now introducing into our age old institutions the exclusionary practices and outdated traditions of our colonisers the relevance of which are being questioned more and more by their own citizens. The welcoming karanga of our kuia and the rituals of remembering the past were being substituted by rules akin to the Parliamentary code of misconduct.

The sea of faces that greeted me contained many of the recently confirmed knights and dames of the Government approved Maori realm; many of the signatories to the notorious Sealords deal and other sell out fiscal envelope arrangements and surprisingly some of the key organisers of the Hiko of Hope. The hui was being driven by the corporate warrior elite many of whom would struggle to recall their last visit to the poverty stricken realities of almost half of our people.

The chamber was being chaired by Koro Wetere one of the key architects and agents in the dismantling of the Department of Maori Affairs and the New Zealand Forest Service as part of the latest wave of colonisation of the past twenty years privatisation with Sir Robert Mahuta; Sir Graham Latimer and other shadowy figures at his side. As we entered the hall Tame and I both raised as a point of discussion the practices being adopted by those on the gate to prevent legitimate interests into the hui. Shane Jones tried to ignore us but the strident requests impacted on the hearts of many in the hui if their expressions were anything to judge by.

My heart sunk though when we raised the issue of the practice of exclusion from the hui only to be greeted by the silence of the guilty including some of the emerging intelligencia of the Maori world. To his credit Sir Graham Latimer urged the hui to allow the group entry. The Tainui security guards promptly ignored this request and surrounded Tame and myself to manhandle us out of the

chamber. At this point Manu Bennett was invited to close the hui with a prayer as attempts were made to hide us from the media who had been invited to observe the hui.

Meantime Mereana Pittman and other long time advocates for Maori Sovereignty were in ongoing conflict negotiation on the gate. Representatives from Te Mana Motuhake o Tuhoē; Te Kawariki; the Pakaitore Occupation; Ngai Taurira; the Independent State of Whaingaroa together with kaumatua from Ngati Porou; Wanganui and Tuwharetoa had galvanized. If they were not to be allowed into the hui as a protest to those developing policy on their behalf they would deny them the right of exit from the hui. A convoy blocked the road and exit ways from Hopuhopu and the cries of concern were conveyed to those attempting to leave the hui.

Mereana made a very poignant speech in her usual forthright manner. She highlighted that the very policies being developed in the hui would mostly impact on those being denied entry and participation in the discussions. She likened the vetting process to the caste system in the Indian society with those outside being likened to the untouchable class, the lowest of the sectors in the caste system who had been denied a voice and even recognition by the elite of that classist world. She warned how such processes had been the catalyst for non violent direct action initiated by Ghandi and how that could be expected to be the way of the future for the Maori old boys brigade if they continued with their exclusionary processes and corrupt practices. She reminded those present that even the African National Congress led by Mandela had necklaced those kupapa in their ranks that had chosen to collaborate with the powerful rather than advocate for the rights and privileges of the mass of the black African population She reminded all present to discern what was right and just as opposed to what was being dictated by a few.

This stinging attack certainly impacted on many at the hui who later would suggest that they had no idea of what had been going on at the gate to our party as we would be told by many who would express their concern privately but had not countermanded the approach being adopted under the orders of Bob Mahuta.

What does this highlight?

The hui at Hopuhopu has subsequently been described by the brown table media propaganda machine as the most important hui since Sir Hepi Te Heuheu gathered people together to challenge the crown's unfair and imposed fiscal envelope regime. This description is both demeaning of the Hirangi process and blatantly untrue. Unlike the corporate practices of one or two individuals proscribing a development agenda for Maori as has been the crown approach of many years, the process initiated by Sir Hepi was inclusionary, evolving, fair and democratic. People from all walks of life; rich and poor; kaumatua and rangatahi; tribal fundamentalists and urban cowboys; men and women; church and state interests were invited to observe participate debate and develop responses for and on behalf of those present. The three hui called and the numerous round table discussions and working parties initiated from the process were not a hand picked group of mostly male individuals earning salaries in excess of the equivalent of ten unemployment benefits put together but were about ensuring as many people as possible were given the opportunity to listen and input in constructing a development agenda for Maori.

The subsequent outcomes of the hui have already defined the direction for the Maori world on issues of social justice. They can be summarised as follows";

- Decolonisation education
- The reconstruction of Maori processes of decisionmaking
- Constitutional change protecting Maori Treaty rights.

The model of a policy making grouping that would advise the government was expressly rejected in the Hirangi process as being an ineffectual functioning body unless their policies would be binding on the Crown and its representatives.

What seems apparent also is that those very ones that have sold out our rights are now trying to seek redemption by now selling our social development strategies to the crown. We all know who will benefit from those practices. The self promoting government rejects, the bureaucrats of yesterday are already swooping in for what they perceive as lucrative contract work as part of the National parties stated agenda to privatise social service delivery in the next policy round.

What these people are about is not closing the gap but creating a chasm. They are moving to further entrench their power through the exploitation of our rights for short term outcomes of personal wealth and self promotion. We urge all reading this to resist this short term approach to the difficult problems that have systemically been imposed on us.

Where to from here?

The team set up at Hopuhopu cannot be trusted with the integrity of the process for constitutional change or to even develop a Maori agenda. We urge you to mobilise opposition to the suggested process that Shane Jones and Shane Solomon are now masterminding. Maori from around the motu should seek immediate reinstatement of a democratic process lead by credible leadership, and principles of openness, accountability, participation and analysis by hui or constitutional conventions as opposed to a handpicked few.

***KIA KITEA MAI KO TE TINO RANGATIRATANGA O TO TATOU AKE WHENUA E
KOREROHIA AKE NEI KA RIRO MA TAUA MA TE MAORI
E WHAKAHAEREE WHAKARITEE TAUTOKOE HAPAI WHAKATUTUKI I NGĀ***

**WAWATA O TE HUNGA KUA HAERE KI TUA O TE PAE, O TE HUNGA O APOPO
TIHEI MAURIORA
KI TE WHAI AO
KI TE AO MARAMA**

TANGOHIA TO TAURA

I TAKU KAKI!

He ahuatanga ohorere kei te tukino mai i te ao Maori. He momo kaupapa tenei hei tami i te hunga tautohe. Hei tauira: 1995 ko te nohonga tautohe i te wananga o Waikato; 1995 ko te hainatanga o te iwi o Tainui; no te tau 1997 ko te hui-a-tau o Te Ohu Kai Moana; ka taka mai ki te 1998 ko te raru nui i waenganui ia Hall v Police. Tata tonu mai ka paku tenei ahuatanga ki te hui mo nga "rangatira" i tu ki Hopuhopu.

He whakamarama tenei mo te raruraru ki Hopuhopu.

No te taenga ki Hopuhopu kua arara te waha-roa o te marae na tetahi roopu i aruaru te hunga ke.

Ko te putake o tenei ahuatanga ko te karopatu i te hunga chara no ratou te hui. Pupu ake ana te kiki o te hunga ke i to ratou kore whakaae ki tenei mahi kino.

- 1) Ko nga kaupapa whakahaere me nga whakaaro oranga iwi me pumau ki te motu.
- 2) Ki ta nga kaiwhakahaere o te hui he hui whakamana ke i te iwi Maori ahakoa e ruarua noa atu i tae atu.
- 3) Ka manaakitia paitia nga rangatira, nga hapu, nga tangata katoa e te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- 4) Ko te hunga e whakatu nei i te paepae-a-motu ko te hunga tonu e takahuri ana i nga tikanga Maori hei whangai i a ratou ano.
- 5) Ehara tenei paepae no te ao Maori engari no etahi tangata whai mana.

Ki whea ko atu?

E akiaki ake ana ia Ngai Maori kia kaha te wero ake i te paepae hou nei. He paepae kua whakamarohia e te kawanatanga ehara i te paepae tuturu Maori.

ELITE FEW DETERMINE POLICIES

The so-called 'Maori Leaders' hui called at Hopuhopu was little more than a farcical show of privilege. The hui has been touted in Pakeha media as 'the most significant gather of leaders' since the Hirangi hui in 1995. This is a highly misleading statement. We need to get some facts right about the hui at Hopuhopu. It was nothing at all like the hui called by Sir Hepi Te Heuheu, for the basic fact that Sir Hepi never denied anyone access to the fiscal envelope hui. At Hopuhopu a number of Maori people were not 'allowed' to access the hui. The attendance was limited to those that a select group of Maori determined were worthy to enter. Maori people were left standing at the gates because those in control had decided they were not of the elite group. The Hopuhopu hui reeked of elitism and privilege. The privileged being those who are seen as adhering to a reformist nature rather than constitutional change.

Over the recent past Maori have been confronted with a growing number of concerns in terms of processes of negotiation and development for our people. The fisheries debacle has shown us that the Crown is more than willing to deal with an elite few in the signing away of our fundamental rights. Negotiated deals by Tainui Trust Board and Ngai Tahu have both been actively challenged by hapu who have been denied the tino rangatiratanga guaranteed to them under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We need to be forever mindful that the locating power in the hands of tribal trust boards and other 'national' organisations is a direct outcome of Crown manipulations. What is most disturbing now is that many Maori actually believe that such organisations are a part of traditional structures! Te Tiriti o Waitangi does not refer to national organisations or tribal trust boards, it refers to hapu

So, what we now have is the development of a taumata by representatives of four organisations the Maori Women's Welfare League, Maori Congress, the Maori Council and the Federation of Maori Authorities. These organisations also determine who will be coopted into five other positions on the taumata.

Shane Jones commented that there was "clear acceptance of the need for a national paepae", what he failed to say was that the 'clear acceptance' has come from a group of people who ultimately denied wider Maori consultation and korero. This sounds more like a Crown/colonial process than a Maori one. Such developments must be challenged. These organisations have been developed for specific purposes and that does not include denying Maori access to decision-making.

In an interview with a Pakeha newspaper Shane Soloman stated that the hui was "invitation only for reasons of space", this is a damning and pathetic justification. We all know that the hui was held there precisely so there wouldn't be space for anyone who would challenge the status quo. Why would a hui be called in a space that could only hold a certain number of people unless there was an intention to keep others out.

Robert Mahuta has been referred to in the same article as saying there is too much focus on peripheral issues. Such a statement denies a basic fact, that is that the hui was not called by Maori for Maori but was called by a group of elite Maori for elite Maori. Such a process only maintains the unequal power relations that exist amongst our people. We can not afford another Sealords Deal. We can not allow elitist groups to determine what is needed for Maori. Having policies imposed on us by our own is no different to having policies imposed on us by our colonisers.

The Politics of a National Body for Māori

The Hui at Hopuhopu that supposedly set up a national body for Maori under the idea of a national paepae has had ill fated beginnings. Blocking people from entering a Hui and bringing in a rugby league team to keep people out is not a good look for any Hui. The goon squads being used by some of the "leaders" in the process of Treaty settlements are a clear sign that their leadership is shaky. They've forgotten a key factor, that Maori leadership needs the people to follow.

The aim of setting up a national body is not a bad idea in itself. But the first thing is that leadership needs to come from those who have the integrity and the backing of their own people not the rent-a-whanau operatives that we are currently seeing, who rose to prominence from the Sealords deal.

What's happening among iwi at present is that we are newly attempting to establish hapu and iwi representation. We are also attempting to find ways of working as groups of iwi, working on the same kaupapa. Not all Maori link to iwi, many in the cities are kaupapa based or need convincing that even identifying as Maori is o.k. All the different groups need to be involved in any attempt to set up a national Maori body. The current hassles with iwi bodies are telling us that we cant just reproduce Western systems to get effective representation. Too many trust boards and runanga have ignored whakapapa when establishing themselves. **Much of the revolt is coming from youth and women who bear a large load of the social and economic poverty among Maori.** The current structures have been thrown together too fast in most cases in order to access some of the funding and the Crown status.

Any national body that does not attempt to involve the diversity of Maori is hopeless. The Hui at Hopuhopu was supposed to be about closing the gap. The reality is that no body can be representative if it does not include the voice of Maori women working in the refuges and every other place that works to alleviate the pain and poverty. Maori education is largely run by Maori women.

A national body must also be very well versed in the politics of power. The bicultural models and partnership models have had their day, they don't work because Maori don't control every level of decision making and racism has not disappeared from any community. The Constitutional reform model that has been used in the Anglican Church is being proposed as the answer to our problems, but what looks good on paper is a completely different experience in practice. Constitutional reform is a must but it must be Treaty based and it must recognise the relations of power. The current Treaty settlement process has kicked off a backlash by Pakeha who are subject to the lack of in depth reporting by media. The Treaty itself needs to be getting some good press. The "settlements" imply that Pakeha will be able to kiss good-bye to the Treaty once they are over. The Treaty is for all time and it is to establish relationships in this country. It's a positive framework, unique and groundbreaking in the world. This country has the potential to lead the world in establishing a Treaty based constitution that once and for all acknowledges the Indigenous people as tangata whenua. But there is some growing up to be done first.

Fundamental social change requires as a minimum constitutional adjustments in the framework of lawmaking powers in Aotearoa that are consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi and Kaupapa Maori philosophy. This must be accompanied by concerted efforts on the part of Maori to retain our way of life and our processes for maintaining our world view.

The Hopuhopu initiative does neither.

Challenges for the Movement for Tino Rangatiratanga

Since the 1970's Maori political activism has been a broad based social force, encompassing a considerable variety of political strategies, campaigns and participants. It is only a "Movement" in the most tenuous sense although in recent times there has been the call on many fronts for unified action and organisation against the onslaught of Government policies that seek to further disenfranchise tangatawhenua rights like the fiscal envelope Treaty Settlement framework.

Like many of the social justice movements for change the intensity and momentum of Maori political activism has never been consistent. Upturns in protest activity have been followed by downturns in struggle and vice versa. This has often been coupled by government strategies of cooption as part of an overall damage control approach to the morality of the justice of honouring the obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi locally and respecting the rights and obligations of indigenous populations internationally.

The rise of the Governments bi-culturalism policies of the 1980s coupled with the rise of the New Right Maori elites in the 1990s lured many Maori away from political activity throughout the 1980s and early 1990s.

As a consequence agreement on what constitutes tino rangatiratanga is far from unanimous. It can often simultaneously be identified with Maori capitalism, Maori electoral power, cultural nationalism, or revolutionary protest activity. While many still look to constitutional change and electoral politics to change the worst excesses of the system, a number of powerful tribal executives and corporate warriors have argued, like the New Right ideologues in Treasury and the Business Roundtable, that real self-determination and liberation for Maori can only be achieved under unrestrained, freemarket capitalism. This false consciousness is what is being promoted by the new elites and must be challenged and resisted at all cost.

De-colonisation and Cultural Nationalism has its emphasis on the rediscovery of the role of Maori in history not just as victims but as fighters as well. However for large sections of the movement, this has become the objective of the movement itself and a substitute for practical struggle. For the most part, de-colonisation and cultural nationalism places little or no importance on

building a political movement, or on far reaching social change. Decolonisation and cultural nationalism in this sense risks providing a way out of engaging in struggle by encouraging individual lifestyle changes rather than a strategy for fundamental social change.

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