

MAORI LEADERSHIP

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Ka tere pīpī
whakāo ki mua, ki
a koe, ki tēnei, te

HUI

WHAKAPUMAU

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MAORI LEADERSHIP: THE WAKA TRADITION THE CREWS WERE THE REAL HEROS

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In the tradition of looking backwards in order to move forwards, I often reflect upon our history. I try and imagine what kind of society our seafaring ancestors participated in which led them to not only make the decision to leave the shores of Rarotonga and other places, but to actually carry out the journey, in many cases, several times over.

When you look at it by today's standards, it is a truly remarkable feat of leadership to be able to convince others:

- * to set their sights on a quality of life better than this particular one;
- * to be prepared to risk their lives in a journey which couldn't guarantee their safety, or that they would reach the destination, or that the destination would provide safety on their arrival;
- * that each traveller would have to physically endure great hardship and effort individually and collectively; and
- * that in order to achieve the results, families would need to be separated.

In reality, leadership can not achieve these things - only the will and the determination of the people (travellers). If we look to current international events, the plight of the Rwandan refugees, the Haitians, and before them the Somalians and the Kurds, these journeys were based on people escaping leadership - leadership that turned desperately wrong.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros-Boutros Gali commented that in previous times international conflict tended to be caused by States invading other States or populations within countries engaged in civil disputes. He observed that the world is now witnessing a very different kind of conflict - one based primarily on poor government - inadequate management, inadequate leadership which is driving hundreds of thousands of people from their homelands.

The Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa generation are a generation of Maori unlike any other. Their experience of colonisation has been tempered by the provision of an intensive mana Maori motuhake education. They are able to live comfortably in both worlds - pakeha and Maori. They are fluent in both languages and cultures and they are being trained to look to their taha Maori for sustenance, direction, expertise and vision. They have very high expectations of Maori leadership.

Their days are filled with being included in their education, interacting with their Kaiako and all the whanau who assist in the Kohanga. Few if any, are passive students who are taught from afar in the western ethos of the almighty teacher and the ignorant student. They are bright, active, intelligent, enthusiastic, inclusive, articulate young Maori groomed to succeed in whatever they choose. The question is - Is the current Maori leadership providing the kind of developmental framework which the Kohanga Reo generation will want to inherit and live with? Is leadership strengthening the full participation of all Maori or is it driving people away? Will the Kohanga generation be the embodiment of all that previous generations have sought or will they become a generation of refugees fleeing from a leadership who couldn't and wouldn't provide for them?

Let me quote a statement from one of my favourite author's works (PAULO FRIERE, PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED, Penguin Books 1985):

It is essential for the oppressed to realise that when they accept the struggle for humanization they also accept, from that moment their total responsibility for the struggle. They must realise that they are fighting not merely for freedom from hunger, but for freedom to create and to construct, to wonder and to venture. Such freedom requires that each individual be active and responsible not a slave or a well fed cog in the machine. It is not enough that people are no longer slaves - if social conditions further the existence of automatons, the result will not be love of life, but love of death." (Pg. 43)

This is a more dramatic way of stating that leadership should be equally concerned with providing a quality of life better suited to Maori cultural and political values as it is with pursuing economic development. My personal observation of the overall current Maori leadership is that many of our leaders tend to forget that those they are supposed to be leading are the ones who have just, or are still, emerging from the darkness of suppression and oppression. One gets the impression sometimes that the current leadership is leading the mainstream crew of the Endeavour, not the Maori families rowing the humble fleet of Waka.

The effects of colonisation have gone far beyond physical alienation of lands and resources. Colonisation has also entered into that realm most difficult to redress - the hearts and minds and values of Maori people, Maori leaders, Maori men.

Freedom from colonisation, from Treaty of Waitangi violations, is a delicate balance of restoration of lands, resources, and the spirit (kaha) of the people. My own Iwi, Ngati Awa, are finally having our Raupatu Claim heard by the Waitangi Tribunal. The Crown takes the view that the Raupatu is only about land and that compensation therefore should only take the form of land and/or money. Unfortunately, so do some Maori. Tribunal Claims are an important part of the voyage for Iwi. The Hearings can serve to unite Iwi as they listen to their true history being recounted confirming the truth of the colonial oppression that has been suffered by so many generations. For Ngati Awa, it is proving to be a very inclusive and healing journey.

Current Maori leadership seems almost hell bent on "feeding people" (economic development) . There is an assumption being made that because tangible financial gains make some leaders feel good, then it will make others feel good as well. Is it suprising therefore that significant sectors of Maori society are feeling alienated from and uncatered for within Maori society? To what degree are Rangatahi and Maori women (who combined comprise the bulk of the Maori population) being included in Maori decision-making processes, structures and institutions?

In a statement delivered to the 12th Session (1994) of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, by Dame Mira Szasy and Hinemoa Awatere on behalf of the Maori Women's Tribunal Claim, the following was said:

" There is an urgent need for gender relations to be addressed in indigenous communities such as Aotearoa New Zealand, because the tensions within, obstruct the potential of indigenous peoples. For instance, when indigenous women become politically visible, there is a myth that they are taking something away from indigenous men. There are links between patriarchial colonisation and its influence on colonised men, which have detrimental impacts upon indigenous men and women. The derogation of Maori constitutional rights in New Zealand through colonisation, has caused a redefinition of masculinity and femininty within Maori society. Sexism (against indigenous women) is perpetrated by colonists and indigenous men."

This Statement might anger some sitting in this room, but I feel compelled to share with you the effect it had on the over 500 indigenous people sitting in the room, listening through the earphones which provide simultaneous

translation into 5 of the official UN languages. I have participated in the annual Working Group Sessions since 1988 and never have I witnessed what occurred while the full Statement was being read out.

Indigenous women sitting within their delegations were visibly moved - some looked around to see who was talking about their pain - some gave victory signals and physical signs of agreement, and many, perhaps even the majority, sat stoically with tears swelling in their eyes. The words broke through the barriers of language and regionalism. A raw wound was clearly touched.

The point is, the sexism which has occurred in Maori society originates more from colonisation than heritage, and it is a problem as common in international indigenous societies as is alienation of lands and resources. Maori leadership has got to work this through and de-programme all that does not rightfully belong within our Iwi histories and futures. Maori women, as we all know, are the backbone of Maori society and that isn't only because of our ability to bear children. It is unfair, soul destroying and a tragic waste of much needed skill, energy and commitment, to continue to deny Maori women their rightful place in Iwi/Maori decision-making.

I remember someone telling a joke about a Maori riding a horse and a pakeha yelling out to him: "Hey Maori, there's a whole lot of knives in your back." To which the Maori laughed and said, "No problem, that's how I know my people are behind me." It has become an accepted norm within Maori society that overcoming back-biting, petty jealousies and downright abuse of privilege and position are part of the initiation process for gaining acceptance and credibility as a "real-Maori". This is ridiculous. It always has been ridiculous. That it has continued for as long as it has is an indication of the calibre of leadership. I shudder to think how many Maori, and particularly rangatahi have felt compelled to leave and walk away from their whanau, Hapu, Iwi or Maori organisations after having experienced prolonged bouts of this. As a mother of two Kohanga Reo children, I will say unequivocally, that the Kohanga Reo generation will not tolerate this. There is nothing in their experience which accommodates meanness amongst Maori towards each other. They will expect better of us.

It is one thing for people to be encouraged to recognise their skills, but they must also recognise their limitations and therefore the value of others who can complement and strengthen their own contributions for the collective good.

Rangatahi, who are the majority Maori population, are almost invisible in Maori decision-making. Their fresh innovative ideas and energy are necessary to link this generation with the increased expectations of the Kohanga Reo generation. How many rangatahi occupy positions in Iwi authorities, Marae Committees, national Maori organisations? How many rangatahi (not employed by the Crown) were consulted over the Sealords

Fisheries Agreement? How many are involved in the discussions on the Fiscal Envelope for Treaty Settlements? Did you notice who were the most vocal critics of these two policies? These policies and instruments directly affect the lives and livelihoods of rangatahi. It is one thing for the Crown to marginalise rangatahi, but what about the Maori leadership who is also driving these? It isn't only an issue of whether these are good or bad agreements, it is really about seeking the informed consent of those who will be most affected.

When leadership of one generation considers it their inalienable right to make binding decisions affecting the lives of future generations, and without even tokenistic attempts to consult with them, then loss of respect must be an obvious and predictable outcome.

"The central problem is this. How can the oppressed, as divided unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation? Only as they discover themselves to be 'hosts' of the oppressor can they contribute to the midwifery of their liberating pedagogy. As long as they live in the duality where *to be is to be like*, and *to be like is to be like the oppressor*, this contribution is impossible. The pedagogy of the oppressed is (an instrument for their critical) the discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization."

(Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Friere, Page 25)

Marginalising the participation of Rangatahi and Maori women is dehumanization.

There is a saying: "*If you continue to be as you have always been, you will continue to get what you have always got.*" In the past fifty years, there have been massive changes in the national and global arenas. The whole World has re-organised and re-grouped. Whereas in previous times Maori could quite comfortably exist in isolation of global events, this is no longer the case. We are directly affected by the international agreements and instruments that our Crown Treaty partner negotiates, signs and ratifies on behalf of the Treaty of Waitangi nation - Aotearoa New Zealand. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) Agreement will directly affect everyone one of you sitting in this room. So too, will the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. The people who are following, and reporting to the best of their ability, on these international activities are not from the recognised Maori leadership. These instruments can work to our favour or they have the potential of alienating Maori resources, the tangible and intangible, at a rate and scale unprecedented in our history. So what if the outstanding Treaty Claims are settled by the year 2000. We stand to lose more of our heritage in the next two decades (through misappropriation of cultural and intellectual property)

than we did in the past century and a half. Urgent attention is required, but who in leadership is interested?

My father, Hirini Moke Mead, wrote a paper in 1979 for a NZ Planning Council publication (HE MAATAAPUNA). The Paper entitled **He Ara Ki te Aomarama: A Pathway to the Future** observed:

"We need a Maui-like plan to help guide us into the twenty first century, and we need to begin the search for that plan now...It is worth pointing out however that many of our present leaders are not at all like Maui and would prefer more of the same rather than change. This is an easy way out for them, a way of avoiding unpleasant descisions, a way of not becoming responsible for our future." (He Matapuna, Page 64)

We no longer exist purely as members of an Iwi, or the collective identity of Maori - we must also assume our rightful role in the development of any policy (national, regional and international), which affects this Treaty nation. The Crown wrongfully assumed total monopoly on the right to represent the international personality of Aotearoa New Zealand, and I have to say, they are not doing a very good job. If you observed the performance of NZ government delegations in these UN activities, as I have for over 12 years, you could get the distinct impression that NZ was physically located between Canada and the U.K. The Pacific identity is weak, and the Treaty of Waitangi identity is even weaker.

That Maori do not take more of an active role in the development of the foreign policy of this Treaty nation is an indication of just how colonised we have become. There are four indicators of sovereignty recognised by the global community as necessary criteria to define a 'State' under international law: (Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, 1993, Article I):

- * a territory
- * an effective government
- * a permanent population
- * the capacity to carry out foreign relations

(Reference: Statement by Roimata Minhinnick, Ngati Te Ata, 12th Session of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, Geneva, July 1994)

Sovereignty and self-determination clearly extend beyond one's national shores.

I wonder how many who are participating in the discussions regarding the Fiscal Envelope, have studied the GATT (TRIPs) Agreement? I wonder how

many have followed the global developments in the commodification and trade in indigenous knowledge, or who have explored the fields of cultural and intellectual property rights of tangata whenua? I can assure you that the Crown brings all this knowledge and experience with it to the Treaty negotiating table. Without being unduly unkind, I doubt very much that Maori leadership on their own are able to do likewise. Let me expand on a point I canvassed previously, leaders who cannot accept their limitations and either step aside or more importantly seek the advice and input of those who can broaden their knowledge base, are not serving Maori needs as well as they could. Their successes are hit and miss rather than Maui-like. They are like Captains in charge of waka who can't go anywhere because the crew are primed, keen and ready and sitting in another waka. Canoes can't journey anywhere without the full complement of Crew, the Navigators and the Captain. If anyone is dispensible, it is the Captain.

It is a matter of speculation as to what drove our ancestors from the shores of Rarotonga and other places, to create a new life here in Aotearoa - was it a visionary leadership seeking bolder better things? or were they escaping a leadership which didn't provide for them? One thing we do know is that we created heroes out of the Captains of the Waka with scant recognition for the collective bravery and commitment of the crew and the invaluable expertise of the Navigators. Without them, the Captains would merely have been in charge of a fleet of sinking canoes.

Maori are still a people seeking Captains, but we should re-examine our history, pay closer attention to the future generations emerging, remember that our development includes de-colonisation of our minds as well as our lands and resources, and give greater value to the collective and interdependent skills of all our members. Our ancestors were global and should we remain. It isn't Captains that we actually need. If we need anything at all, it is Navigators.

Who are the Navigators? Well, let's be upfront. Navigators do not have financial shares in the waka - and they do not establish subsidiary bodies such as Waka Enterprises, and Waka Incorporated Trusts. If their interests are in any way commercial and financial, then we cannot call them navigators as their vision and instincts are already blurred. These talents are valuable but should be seen in the context of the total developmental needs of Iwi/Maori. They certainly provide a contribution towards development but are not the full solution.

Navigators will not emerge from those who have pursued lengthy careers at a senior management level in the Crown, at least not until they have served an equal or higher number of years of service for Maori outside of their public service career. Why do I say this?

Maori who develop successful careers by meeting Performance Agreements which quantify percentages of policy advice on Maori issues acceptable to Ministers whose Party policies have an overall effect of further marginalising Maori citizens, have to be seen as individuals on a steep indigenous political learning curve. They may well be bilingual, articulate and even charming but in order to be really useful to Maori, they will need to de-programme most of what they have actively pursued.

Maori senior public servants are working within the Crown philosophy that it is alright to develop policies about Maori without involving Maori. Public servants accept the policy blockades the Crown builds around it to keep Maori out, such as "Commercial in Confidence", and "Classified for Officials only". While there are some who manage to avoid this - they are few and far between. The majority are servicing the crew of the Endeavour with little assistance directed towards those labouring on the Waka.

Incidentally these comments should not be seen as diminishing their personal commitment to Maori, but there has been and still is a tendency to personalise the genuine concerns Maori need to and must express regarding the policies of the employer of Maori public servants, namely the Crown. If such individuals have actively participated in developing and enforcing such policies then they should be prepared to take the criticism.

This Conference was called to reflect on the results of the Decade of Maori Development as it nears its completion. But as one Decade ends, another begins. December 12 1994 will herald the launch of the United Nations Decade for the World's Indigenous Peoples (1995-2005). At the UN Technical Meeting (to review the 1993 UN International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples, and to plan for the UN Decade) held recently in Geneva, Maori Congress stated that:

"The Decade must have one objective - and that is to genuinely and measurably empower and improve the lives and livelihoods of indigenous peoples. At the end of the Decade our children should be healthier and more of them educated in our own languages in our own educational institutions. More of our people should be alive, healthy, housed, out of penal and other institutions, employed and able to contribute meaningfully to our communities and others. Our languages should be more widely spoken and promoted through our own TV, radio stations and newspapers.

The remains of our ancestors should be buried where they rightfully belong and left in peace. The protection and development of our heritage, both tangible and intangible, should be managed by us in partnership with others only when we so choose. Our lands should be returned to us. Our women and children should be safer in their

own homes. (The Human Genome Diversity Project should be a forgotten curiosity that one barely remembers anything about and all of the genetic samples that had been collected from indigenous peoples should have been safely returned to the communities.)

We should be participating in more activities and organs in national, regional and international institutions in an environment of respect, and co-operation.

If this is not the case, then the UN Decade will not serve us in a meaningful way."

Intervention on Agenda Item 7: UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples
12th Session, by Maori Congress Foreign Policy Convenor, Aroha Mead

Congress suggested that tangible quantifiable goals should be determined in a comprehensive manner to address in short term, medium and long term goals, issues such as: sexism, domestic violence, education, science and research, infant mortality, unemployment, education, housing and trade, to name but a few.

The NZ government announced at the same meeting that it "*would be looking at using Decade activities to reinforce the themes developed in our commemoration of the International Year, in particular the ...goal of strengthening international cooperation in relation to indigenous issues.*" In other words, focus on how others in the international community inter-relate with Maori as opposed to focusing on how New Zealand inter-relates with Maori.

New Zealand also announced that it is considering a national theme for each year and proposed that year one would focus on the Maori language. Can you imagine the government assigning a year to 'domestic violence' or 'alleviating sexism'? What tangible outcomes can be achieved in one year other than holding Conferences or designing a poster? I ask you, which approach do you think is in the spirit of real development and empowerment of Maori people? Which approach will Maori leadership promote? Well, in all honesty, the majority most probably won't even care.

In conclusion, there exists a strong force of Maori women and men, girls and boys, ready and able to make a valuable contribution to their Iwi, to the Treaty nation of Aotearoa New Zealand and to the global community. There's an even stronger Kohanga Reo generation being primed. They remain largely invisible because the leadership who are still 'hosting' the coloniser can't or won't see them. We can choose to develop policies and programmes now which the Kohanga Reo generation will proudly assume or we can risk losing them

as they flee like refugees, from a Maori leadership too rigid and unmoving; provide for their heritage, needs and aspirations.

I believe that Maori are better organised and unified than we have ever been. We stand on the cross-roads of liberation or a more entrenched form of colonisation. Leadership has to improve their vision, seek out competent navigators, work in tandem with their crews, or else face the inevitable consequences. This for me is the legacy of our Waka heritage, our responsibility to future generations, and the challenge that lies ahead of us in this next most important international UN Decade.

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