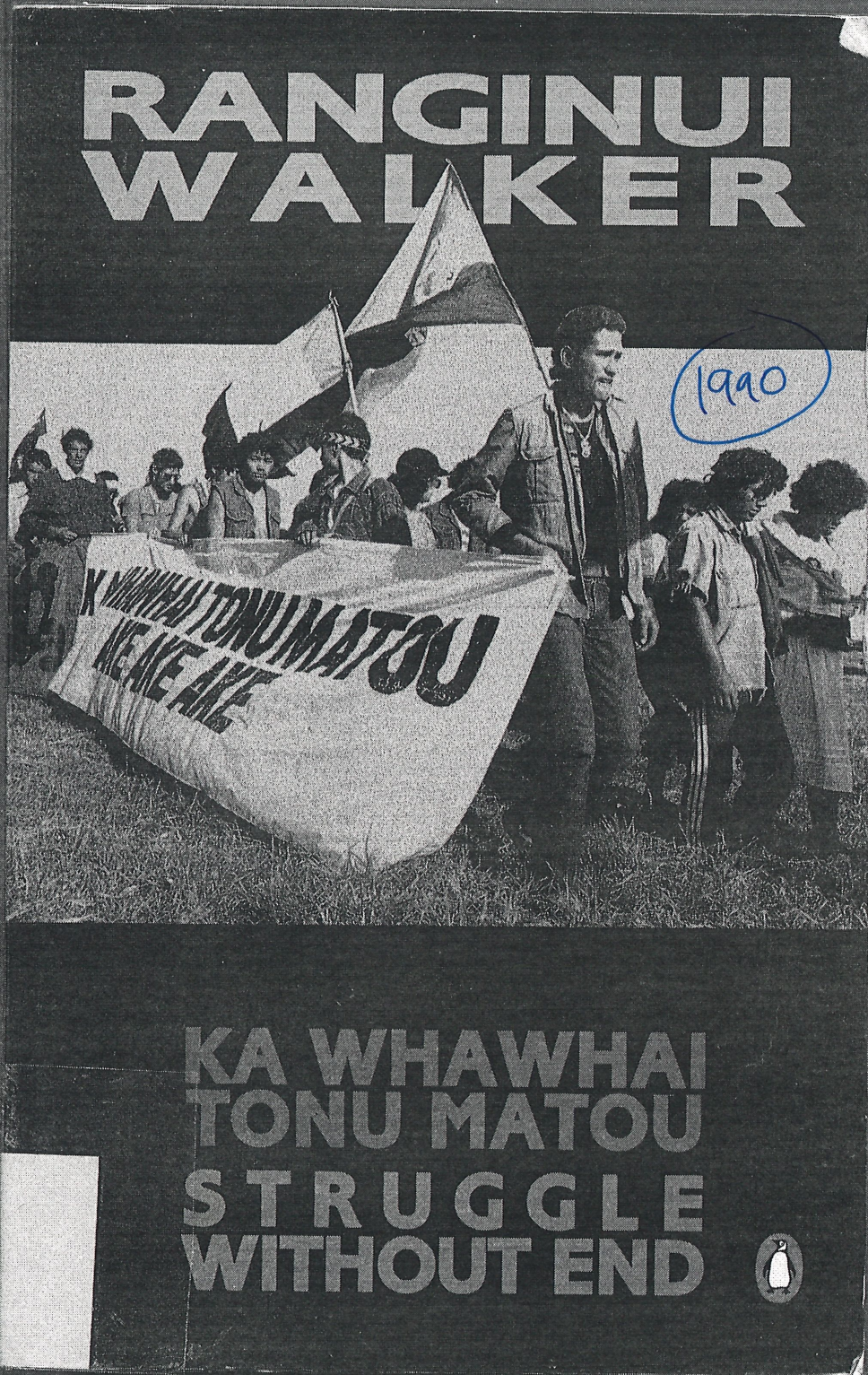


(Walker, R., 1990: 287)



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departments, ostensibly committed by government decree to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, biculturalism and delivering equity to Maori people. The new ideology of partnership between Government and Maori was to be implemented by devolution of some resources and government programmes to iwi authorities. Koro Wetera and Dr Reedy had the task of meeting tribes on their marae to persuade them to accept the proposals in *Partnership Perspectives*.

Sir Graham Latimer, president of the Maori Council, called on the people to oppose the disestablishment of the department instead of sitting around like 'stunned mullet'.⁹⁹ He said despite its faults, the department had acted as a buffer between the Government and Maoridom.

Over 400 people who met with the minister at Orakei Marae in Auckland opposed the Government's plan. Instead they wanted the department restructured.¹⁰⁰ The bulk of the submissions received on the policy proposals opposed the closure of the department. These the minister brushed off lightly, saying, 'There may not have been total acceptance of the proposals in *He Tirohanga Rangapu*, but there is no argument that Maori people themselves want a greater say in their own destiny.'¹⁰¹ This *non sequitur* imputed that the course unilaterally decided upon by Government was in fact giving them a greater say.

Kaupapa for Nationhood in the Twenty-first Century

The saving grace in the Government's policy statement, called *Partnership Response*,¹⁰² is the affirmation of Government objectives. These include honouring the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi; eliminating the gaps that exist between the educational, personal, social, economic and cultural well-being of Maori people and the general population; promoting economic development and self-sufficiency for Maori people; dealing quickly and justly with grievances under the Treaty of Waitangi; allocating resources to Maori language and culture to enable the development of a unique New Zealand identity; promoting Maori participation in decision-making in the machinery of government and encouraging Maori participation in the political process. These goals the Maori have pursued for 150 years, but were consistently thwarted by the necrotic process of colonisation and Pakeha control. This official statement of policy from Government has at least provided Maori people with a charter for the fulfilment of their aspirations, and a document against which they can

measure the performance of subsequent governments and their bureaucrats.

While the Government took measures through an Implementation Committee and an Iwi Transition Agency to action its plan for **devolution and replacement of the Department of Maori Affairs** by a Ministry of Maori Policy, Maori leaders laid their own plans. On 24 June 1989, **Sir Hepi Te Heuheu, paramount chief of Tuwharetoa**, convened an **inter-tribal hui at Taupo where it was resolved to form a congress of tribes**. Given the history of colonisation, and the bifurcated political response of the tribes through Kotahitanga and the Kauhanganui, unification was inevitable. Driven by the recovery of their stolen humanity, the affirmation of Maori identity, and the powerful ethos of the cultural renaissance, it was the obvious political response to a government that directed rather than listened to the people. For the Maori, the inheritors of a millennial culture, theirs is a struggle without end into the world of light. They know the sun has set on the empire that colonised them. They know too it will set on the coloniser even if it takes a thousand years. They will triumph in the end, because they are the tangata whenua.