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NEW CALEDONIA: THE POLITICS OF LAND

A.D. Ward

OUTLINE

From the late 1960s radical groups among the Melanesians of New Caledonia began to campaign for independence. By the mid 1970s three Melanesian political parties championing independence held seats in the Territorial Assembly and in 1977 the multi racial Union Calédonienne also opted for independence. The French government has recently sought to meet the situation with a wide ranging programme of economic and social development. Central to the programme is a renewed réforme foncière aimed at returning substantial areas of land on the main island - the Grande Terre - to Melanesian ownership and control. There is considerable agreement that this is urgently necessary. But there is considerable disagreement about the extent and location of the land to be affected, the terms on which it will be acquired and the manner in which it should be reallocated among Melanesians. These matters underlie current New Caledonian politics and strongly affect the independence issue.

COLONIAL ORIGINS

Several authors (notably Douglas 1972; Saussol 1971, 1979; and Roux 1974, 1977) have documented the impact of colonization on Melanesian land and society. As in Australia the resistance of the indigenous people of the Grande Terre was overcome by force of arms and they were pushed onto reserves - in the policy of cantonnement - to make way for settlement and the Territory's reserve of domaine land. The Loyalty Islands were, however, made a réserve intégrale, as was the Isle of Pines in 1913 after the end of convict settlement there. The Grande Terre reserves - less than one tenth of the island and much of it poor - were vested in artificial collectivities called tribus (tribes), usually comprising several adjoining clans bundled together on the traditional territory of one or other of them. The tensions among the clans added to the demoralization due to loss of land and independence, and the balance of individual and family rights under the old clan structure was destroyed. The reserves were not held in true proprietorship but were octrois (donations) of the state, the boundaries of which could be modified - and were, as the Melanesian population declined. The tribus were controlled by officially appointed chefs working under the supervision of the gendarmes. Traditional maitres de la terre retained at best a precarious authority. The tensions and demoralization on the reserve were reflected in alcoholism, violence and sorcery. This degradation, as among the indigenous victims of colonization elsewhere, underlies the strength of political reassertion today.
Although there was little chance of economic development on the reserves, in the 1930s particularly coffee planting rapidly expanded and provided cash income. However this took much of the scarce valley land previously directed to subsistence agriculture and increased the tensions between 'host' and 'stranger' clans on the reserves.

Before the Pacific War the Melanesians were subject to the indigénat, a code of summary regulations enforced by the gendarmes which forbade free movement from the reserves, imposed compulsory labour on roads and public works, and (through a personal tax) obliged Melanesians to work as exploited labour for settlers. Among themselves Melanesians regulated life by a form of custom administered by the chefs, under legal provisions authorized by the French Constitution and referred to as the statut particulier, upholding droit coutumier as opposed to the droit commun or French 'common law'.

POST WORLD WAR II DEVELOPMENTS

Occupation by Allied forces in the Pacific War caused the effective collapse of the indigénat and in 1946 it was formally abolished. The Melanesians acceded to civil liberties and the rights of free labour. From 1951 they were effectively enfranchised. Because the Christian missions had brought some genuine amelioration of conditions on the reserves, some education and some defence of the reserves against further encroachment, it is perhaps not surprising that the first organizations mobilizing Melanesians politically were mission-based - the Union des Indigènes Calédoniens Amis de la Liberté dans l'Ordre (UICALO - a Catholic organization) and the Association des Indigènes Calédoniens et Loyaltiens Français (AICLFF - Protestant). The multi racial Union Calédonienne formed in 1951 around the deputy Maurice Lenormand drew heavily upon these groups and captured most Melanesian support in the elections to the Territory's Governing Council (soon to be succeeded by the Territorial Assembly and the Council of Government).

The defence of the reserves and their enlargement immediately became a key policy of these organizations. This was partly a response to rapid demographic growth and urgent economic need. But it also related to a demand for the recovery of traditional clan territory, the return of uprooted clans to their ancient village sites and the easing of tension between clans on the reserves. What are often referred to as the 'economic' claim and the 'psychological' claim were mixed from the beginning of the resurgent Melanesian demand.

There followed what Saussol calls the era of the agrandissement des réserves, as they were enlarged by transfers of domaine land, repurchased private estates and land sequestrated from Japanese nationals during the war. Saussol (1979:377) gives the following figures for the total area of Grande Terre reserves:
Thereafter the aggrandisement of reserves slowed. In 1979 they still totalled only 162,536 ha. Although it relieved the pressure on some reserves, at no time did the process keep pace with the Melanesian demographic explosion; indeed Saussol calculates that the overall figure of hectares per head of population on Grande Terre reserves fell from 7.61 in 1912 to 4.8 in 1969. (The Loyalty Islands and Isle of Pines total a further 209,372 ha.)

But the aggrandisement of reserves was not the only mode of returning land to Melanesians. It had revealed many weaknesses as a method. The aggrandisements had been given to the tribu as a collectivity - the only Melanesian group recognized by the Territory law - and the internal subdivision of the land was frequently a matter of contention and dissatisfaction among the member clans. The contradiction between the claims of the traditional owners of the land concerned and those who had by now lived on the reserves for several generations was heightened. Sometimes the land lay idle. The maldistribution between clans in some cases intensified.

Moreover many Melanesians hoped for better economic opportunities outside the reserves. In the 1950s and more especially with the nickel and industrial boom of 1969-74 they sought salaried employment in towns and in the mines. Remitted salaries rapidly overwhelmed agriculture as a source of money on reserves.

In the 1950s entrepreneurial Melanesians themselves began to acquire land on lease or share-cropping arrangements from settlers, or occasionally even by purchase. Responding to the demand, and hoping now to assimilate Melanesians better into the introduced economic/social/legal system, the administration developed two means of transferring land to Melanesians in individual title outside the reserves and under the droit commun. These were locations domaniales and concessions domaniales. The locations were leases with a promise of sale after a certain term of years and improvement of the land. They were favoured by the Melanesians both as a mode of acquiring individual titles and as effectively adding to reserves, on the margins of which they were often granted. Saussol calculates that 196 locations totalling 18,861 ha were granted in the period 1958-63, greatly exceeding formal aggrandisements of reserves in importance during that time.

The second method, concessions domaniales, were grants of domaine land available first to returned soldiers (of any race) then to enfants du pays (persons born in New Caledonia). Free grants (concessions gratuites) were normally 25 ha each but could be added to a location or to a concession involving progressive payments (titre onéreux). The concessions gratuites were given in provisional title for five years. These were made definite when improvement conditions were met. Widely granted to European
applicants, they were made available to Melanesians increasingly in the 1960s and eventually overtook locations in importance as a means by which Melanesians acquired land. They were often, but by no means always, on the margins of reserves. The system of concessions was suspended in 1974, partly because Europeans were acquiring them for hunting and recreation purposes around the margins of Melanesian reserves in the mountain chain, and partly to allow the Service du Domaine (Lands Department) to catch up with the survey and paperwork generated by a backlog of applications. (Roux, verbal communications 1979-80.)

During the industrial boom also, Melanesians began to acquire lots de village – urban concessions in new Noumea suburbs and other townships.

Other modes of land transfer analyzed by Saussol reflect an interest by French administrators in trying to adapt customary Melanesian social organization to modern land development. These included an early (1958) experiment with a cooperative at Nassirah which failed, as cooperatives have failed elsewhere in the Pacific, because of rather naive European assumptions about the collective nature of Melanesian society and economics. But later experiences with ‘sociétés civiles agricoles’ (agricultural cooperatives) were organized around existing Melanesian entrepreneurs and regulated within a framework governing such societies generally. These have been much more successful and have received loan finance from new state credit organizations designed to foster rural development.

Internal subdivisions of reserves, by which the appointed and customary authorities formally recognize ‘a permanent right of possession and enjoyment’ (though not of alienation) in a particular parcel of land by an individual or family, may also be registered by the Service du Domaine and form the basis of personal loans. This practice has been used on some reserves to foster individual enterprises (Saussol 1979:423-431).

Another significant experiment in the Tchamba valley involved the subdivision of a former Japanese proprietorship into thirty-two lots and their allocation under droit commun after public discussion involving the clans of the adjacent reserve (whose land it formally was) in the ratio of seventeen lots to the traditional claimants and others linked to them, to fifteen to Europeans and Melanesians having no relationship with or consent from the locals. The evidence of improvement of the land by the traditional claimants and failure to improve (or even reside on) the land among the stranger Melanesians is considered by some French analysts (notably Guiart 1961, 1974) to show that without the consent of the customary authorities Melanesian landholders are not well motivated to improve their holdings, whatever rights the droit commun gives them. Saussol surmises that where they hold under both the droit commun and the approval of traditional authorities the former rights will in time supplant the latter in importance (Saussol 1971:120-121).

Whether this is so is a moot point, because there is a tendency for individual holdings on the margins of reserves to be drawn into the property rights system of the clans. This is partly a function of the customary law of succession, which, depending on origin and circumstance, may favour the older brother or nephew of a property holder rather than his
children or his widow. Since only a few hundred Melanesians have opted for the *statut commun* their inheritance rights are governed legally by the *statut particulier*. Pressure for a customary devolution of land has been therefore in effect supported by the law, even though the incidents of title may be those of the *droit commun*.

It is clear then that the French authorities have, of recent decades at least, made some effort to return land to Melanesians and have evolved several forms of title, of transfer, of rural credit and of adapting customary organization to modern exigencies. In some ways they have been more adventurous than their counterparts in adjacent anglophone states — if only because they have at their disposal the category of *domaine* land, ruthlessly acquired by their predecessors.

But precisely because it raises fundamental questions of the form of society to evolve in New Caledonia, and of who should control that society, the land reform question has evoked more and more controversy.

**LAND AND POLITICS**

Very early on, in the 1950s, sections of the Union Calédonienne (UC) began to consider the piecemeal aggrandisement of reserves to be altogether too limited, and to contemplate a much more thoroughgoing transfer of land based on new powers of preemption and expropriation (of unused or underused settler land) to be taken by the Territory. The *grandes colons* were already anxious about the threat to their primacy apparent in the success of the Melanesian backed UC, and by the adoption in New Caledonia of the *loi-cadre* developed by a Socialist government in Paris mainly for the African territories. Under the *loi-cadre* ministers selected from the UC-dominated Governing Council were appointed to direct the various departments of government, and further constitutional evolution — at least to full internal self-government — was foreshadowed. Now came the threat of land redistribution based on expropriation. The settler reaction was formidable. In 1958, encouraged by De Gaulle’s accession to power in Paris, armed settlers from the west coast descended on Noumea and menaced Lenormand and some of his colleagues. Following the civil unrest which ensued the authorities abrogated much of the *loi-cadre*, reaffirming the authority of the high commissioner and appointed officials. In 1963, having been implicated in further disturbances, Lenormand was deprived of civil rights for ten years. The UC remained influential, with the Melanesian elder Roch Pidjot taking over much of the leadership responsibility, but Lenormand subsequently charged the conservative parties with pursuing land reacquisition in only lukewarm fashion. The shift of political power also largely explains why, for some years, aggrandisement of reserves (which the conservative parties regarded as wasteful and perpetuating Melanesian backwardness) was largely replaced by *locations* and *concessions* under the *droit commun* as the modes by which Melanesians acquired land.

The political spectrum changed sharply again in the late 1960s with the emergence of an explicit Melanesian nationalism, led by the educated younger generation which was beginning to emerge from the *lycées* and even tertiary institutions in France. The humiliation and exploitation of the *indigènes*, the day to day reminders of European paternalism and racism,
have given rise to a legacy of bitterness, reflected in the attitudes and demands of radical groups like the Foulards Rouges, Groupe '78 and Jeunesse Calédonienne. Their demands included the wholesale return of ancestral land, a demand which, as Saussol wrote in 1971 had 'more and more the appearance of a "battle-horse" crystallizing all the resentments of Melanesians and, by consequence, the reaction of the settlers. Under this heading one can affirm that now the question of land is the major, if not the only problem in the rural bushlands of New Caledonia'. He urged that it must be defused before a confrontation on the land became unavoidable (Saussol 1971:112).

In the early 1970s, though rapidly increasing, Melanesian demands for the return of lands were still limited to fairly specific areas - points of land where there were ancient cemeteries, old gardens or fishing sites. But these tended to be concentrated in the lower river valleys where some of the grands colones were still living and farming, even though their sons and daughters had often joined the movement to the towns (Guiart 1977). Unfortunately (as it now appears) with conservative parties in office in Paris and predominant in Noumea bold measures were not taken systematically to buy large areas of the land from settlers and transfer the land to Melanesians ahead of demand. The administration tended to condemn the demand as neither 'economic' nor 'psychological' but 'political', stimulated largely by the UC bidding for the Melanesian vote. For the most part the administration went ahead with the granting of concessions and locations to individuals.

In the mid 1970s a more systematic land reform was constantly talked of in the various Commissions of the Territorial Assembly. In 1976 the Assembly voted in favour of a 'plan de relance morale', but plans for revitalizing the rural economy immediately came up against the question of land tenure and land redistribution. To confront this problem the high commissioner set up a commission to study Melanesian land problems. This group, dominated by business-minded Europeans and entrepreneurial Melanesians, proved unsympathetic to adding more land to reserves and leaned towards support for the Melanesian seeking to farm under French legal titles. Misconceptions of the report indeed led to the charge that the administration intended to suppress the reserves - a highly emotive charge, evoking the spectre of a further assault on Melanesian culture.

Meanwhile general political developments had produced a number of Melanesian political parties, which emerged from the young Melanesian movements of the late 1960s. Led in 1974 by the Front Uni pour la Libération des Kanaques (FULK), the party of Yann Celène Uregei, these parties embraced the goal of independence, and more especially an 'Indépendance Kanak' recognizing the Melanesian people as the legitimate people of New Caledonia. In these circumstances the questions of land tenure inevitably became of even greater importance politically. In early 1977, moreover, the UC led by Maurice Lenormand (again active in politics), also agreed to support the goal of Indépendance Kanak.

Perhaps in response to the pressure, the administration stepped up the granting of concessions to Melanesians, of loans from new funds to the holders of individual titleholders and to sociétés, and the repurchase of private estates. (In 1977 31 million francs CFP - about $310,000 - was available for the last purpose.)
The whole issue was raised in May 1977 by the Union Progressist Mélanésienne (UPM), a moderate Melanesian group in the Territorial Assembly led by André Gopea. This party tabled a lengthy proposal for a 'réforme agraire', a systematic rather than a sporadic redistribution of both private and domaine lands that were uncultivated, abandoned or 'insufficiently exploited'. These were to be attributed either as aggrandisement of the reserves or to individuals (especially but not exclusively Melanesians) for exploitation under new and more productive systems of agriculture. A new 'Commission territoriale de réorganisation foncière', which included the customary authorities from reserves adjacent to the land from time to time under consideration, was to supervise the process. Proprietors were to be given reasonable notice but if land was not then improved it was to be expropriated by the state under a 'right of preemption'. Compensation was to be paid by the Territory, which would have the power to determine the price of the land. All existing leases were to be reviewed by the new Commission (Procès-verbal 25 May 1977:29ff).

The UPM motion embraced both the so-called 'economic' and 'psychological' (or 'customary') claims and was flexible as regards reallocation of the land. However, immediately, and with Gopea's foreknowledge, Lenormand, for the UC, proposed a motion which focused on the 'customary' claim:

Considering the people despoiled of their ancestral lands and welcomed by other tribes following the cantonment, the Assembly demands that in the repurchase of lands priority be given to the urgent problems of returning Melanesian families to their ancestral land with respect for the status of reserves and the right to free choice of individuals and invites the Governing Council to deposit a text instituting the necessary organisations and structures (Procès-verbal 25 May 1977:32).

Lenormand said that for twenty years the UC had been asking for the Territory the powers of preemption already possessed by the departments of France. Both motions were referred to the Commission for Agriculture to study.

Soon afterwards a number of cases arose which indicated the serious obstacles to the effective transfer of land under the existing legal framework. A classic case concerned the property of the settler Mazurier in the Houailou valley. There the tribe Nessakouya contested the boundary; their existing settlement, moreover, was flooded annually. Twenty years before, in 1958, a local leader had asked for the return of ancestral land for the group but nothing had been done and in 1977 the group was again asking for the restoration of about 50 ha of their traditional land. Mazurier at first would not sell more than 11 ha for a price of CFP 7 million but eventually the administration got an offer of 38 ha for CFP 5 million. Even this was a price much above the average for rural land – perhaps five times as much – but the area was a tense one, Melanesians having encroached on Mazurier's land and Mazurier allegedly having fired shots at them. With some reluctance, and fear of increasing the already high asking prices, the Assembly approved the expenditure at the price demanded; a sharp difference of opinion then broke out as to
whether the land should be allocated as aggrandisement of the reserve (the view of Lenormand and the UC) or as individual lots (the view of Roger Laroque and the rightwing Réassemblment pour Calédonie dans la République (RCPR)). The Melanesian elder M. Parawi-Beybas (RCPR) was very critical of the control of reserved lands by certain powerful individuals in the tribal community, and the consequent frustration of young Melanesians. In the end the Assembly agreed that the attribution would be left for discussion and decision by the services and the tribu (Procès-verbal 7 December 1977: 14-24).

Meanwhile other 'hot points' had remained unresolved because of the high demands by settlers, and in some areas, especially on the east coast, young Melanesians, generally organizing themselves under the new political group PALIKA (Parti de Libération Kanak), led by Nidoish Naisseline, began to encroach on the land and menace settlers in a deliberate campaign borne of what they considered to be years of inaction and frustration as regards the key areas of valley land. Old arrangements between colons and Melanesian elders began to break down in a climate of tension, covert violence and virulent hatred. (See, for example, 'La Vallée D'Amoa', France Australe 10 June 1977.)

In this context, in June 1978, the report of the Commission examining the UPM and UC motions, Report No.81, was tabled in the Territorial Assembly. Given the nature of the Melanesian demand and the tension on the land itself, the report was not only conservative but provocative. The preface adumbrated two principles: first, the need to proceed with 'great prudence' because of the sensitivity of the question to Caledonians of all races – meaning especially in this case the Europeans; secondly, the need to give financial aid to the scheme with a view to the improvement of the land for commercial agriculture. Three types of operation were proposed:

1. urgent redistribution and improvement of land to the benefit of tribes where the land was contested among them and with settlers (the relief of so-called 'hot points' near reserves);

2. the setting-up of a small peasantry (familiale);

3. the establishment of modern forms of commercial agriculture.

With reference to all of these, including the first, the report spoke of the aspirations of young people, notably young Melanesians, to move outside the reserves and set up modern small farms. The report leaned strongly in favour of that aspiration and looked to the improvement of unexploited land within the reserves as well as outside them and by the 'stranger' clans located there during the cantonnement as well as by ancestral claimants. The report proposed the allocation of Territory funds in the order of CFP 43 million for the repurchase of land which would be redistributed with improvement conditions and some payments (titres onéreux, not titres gratuites which were to be suppressed) (Procès-verbal 21 June 1978:1ff).

In essence the policy was a revitalization of the existing programme of granting locations and concessions of domaine land favouring not the recognition of customary 'clanique' claims, but the creation of Melanesian small farmers. In urging the development of new peasant communities
adjacent to reserves and near existing villages within reserves the report indeed implied an attack on the structure of the reserves themselves.

Yet Report 81 embraced the recommendations of a special commissioner from Paris, M. Garrigou, and at last proposed that the state (the French government and legislature) be requested to grant the Territory new powers, adapted from the French Code Rural, of a right of preemption and a right of expropriation of unexploited and underexploited land. Local measures were to include a tax on unexploited land. To consolidate the position of individual Melanesian peasants and householders against the claims of traditional kin, a new succession law was proposed to permit Melanesians, still personally under the statut particulier but acquiring farms or urban lots outside the reserves and under the droit commun, to follow the French rules of succession rather than customary succession.

Minutes of the debate in the Agriculture Commission show that the report was unlikely to satisfy the real protagonists, the Melanesian political leaders and the settlers. Settler members like M. De Villelongue of the Hienghène valley had wanted no special regard for the 'political' aspect and no special favour for any race (that is, Melanesians) in land allocation. M. Tjibaou (Union Calédonienne), on the other hand, said that the political aspect of the problem was inescapable and that first and foremost the Melanesians wanted space in which to practice their customary lifestyle. At the heart of Melanesian society the presence of 'stranger' clans was an obstacle to effective functioning of the society. He looked to a much larger plan of land redistribution than appeared to be envisaged in the report. The issue of credit was also debated, Tjibaou objecting that while it was readily available for developments outside reserves it was not readily granted for developments within them.

In the Assembly itself the report was immediately denounced by UC, PALIKA and FULK speakers as the charter of a new colonization-a colonisation noire on the land of others, denying the Melanesians the right to make a repartition of the land in terms of their own custom and forcing them, by the improvement conditions, the conditions on credit, the emphasis on titles under common law, and the proposed succession law, into Europeanization. M. Machoro (UC) recited the historical spoliation of Melanesian land and demanded that it must be returned, at the state's expense, to the original clans without intermediary. Priority should be given to the restitution of traditional land to those clans living on reserves as 'strangers'. Europeans should not interfere in the determination of this purely Melanesian matter. M. Burck (UC) feared the creation of smallholdings, as in the time of Governor Feillet, which would again fail and fall into the hands of big accumulators. M. Lenormand also doubted the worth of creating small holdings (very marginal for European farmers) and stressed the value of traditional agriculture as a means of assuring an ample subsistence and genuine independence and dignity which was not available to peasants on the margins of the capitalist economy. (This indicated how far the UC had shifted from its earliest statements which had spoken of a possible subdivision of reserves into individual and family holdings) (Saussol 1979:371).

PALIKA speaker M. Gohoup criticized the administration for its 'collaboration with the local haute bourgeoisie and certain local political parties, notably the intervention of the colonial forces of order in the
face of actions to recover lands stolen from certain tribes'. He instanced Balade, Touho, Poindimié, Ponérihouen and Thio. He recalled the PALIKA policy of 'the total and unconditional recovery of the lands', in accord with ideas of the (1975) festival 'Melanesia 2000' and the demands of the Foulards Rouges of 1969 for the recognition of the Kanak identity.

Pro-administration speakers denounced the UC and PALIKA for denying young Melanesians, in the name of custom, access to property, responsibility, wealth and a place in modern culture. They replied that a basis of customary ownership did not preclude entry (from a secure base) into the market economy (but did not go into detail about how the adaptation would be made).

At the conclusion of a three and a half hour debate the UC declined to vote on the report until the Assembly had recognized the Kanaks' 'right to live in their own homes, on their lands, following their mode of life, taking into consideration the history that they have lived and in conformity with the statut particulier recognized by the Constitution, following the principle of the right to be different'. They tabled a motion of urgency on the point. Right and centre speakers denied that the principle was in question - the reserves would continue to be respected.

Only the first motion of the report - concerning urgent operation for the benefit of tribes on contested lands - was accepted, the UC and Melanesian parties having quit the chamber. Next day the Assembly did allow the UC to put a motion stating, *inter alia*, that

considering the programme of operations envisaged in report number 81 is entirely oriented towards the attribution of individual lots and considering that the maintenance of the reserves and their aggrandisement are the sole means of assuring the safety of the Melanesian culture and the adaption of Melanesian society to a modern rural economy [the Assembly should demand a reform] to the benefit of the Melanesian collectivities which permits the aggrandisement of reserves and guarantees to the Kanaks the free choice of status of property (*Procès-verbal* 22 June 1978:2).

A further two hours of debate disclosed the same polarization. Speakers like Jean-Pierre Aifa, a former UC member and now chairman of the Agriculture Commission of the Assembly, angrily denounced the motion as denying individual property to Melanesians - already well advanced with urban blockholders in the Noumea suburbs of Montravel, Logicoop and Rivière Salée, and supported by the local tribal authorities in recent rural repurchases such as that of the Mazurier estate. The UC and PALIKA speakers argued that they merely wished to correct the bias of Report 81 and to hold out the prospect of some form of development other than the western capitalist one. The UC motion, however, was lost by seventeen votes to thirteen, right and centre parties voting against the independence parties.

The unfortunate result of Report 81 and the extended debate on it was to polarize and politicize views on the land question even more strongly than before, just at a time when economic circumstances and considerable
irritation in the administration with the colons' high asking prices might have enabled some agreement to be reached, at least on the judicial means of recovering the land. By coming out so strongly on the question of the modes in which the land should be redistributed Report 81 excited a contrary reaction from the main Melanesian parties at a critical time.

Meanwhile the nationalists were also bringing pressure to bear on the land itself regarding the form of redistribution. The agreement the administration believed it had reached with the hierarchy of appointed chiefs and Conseil des Anciens regarding the Mazurier property soon broke down, the supporters of the 'customary' claim blocking those Melanesians who were with the administration in thinking that the land should be available for Melanesians from all adjacent clans who had a need, especially the young men. In 1980, three years after the acquisition, the land remains effectively an extension of the reserve with a few scattered cultivations.

The same is true for other 'hot points' in the Amoa, Tiwaka, and Néoua valleys, with the added complication that old traditional rivalries between 'customary' claimants have been revived. The surveyors have been able to complete little work on the east coast. In the Territorial Assembly right and centre speakers have in consequence become reluctant to vote funds to buy land at speculative prices, only to produce contention on the ground.

It was this bunch of nettles that the new secretary of state for overseas territories, Paul Dijoud, tried to grasp in the second half of 1978. His statements in Noumea, that the land reform would be treated as a matter of first priority and the recommendation that the Territory should indeed assume the powers of preemption and expropriation, caused great concern among some sections of settlers. So too did M. Dijoud's tour of reserves later that year, when he invited the chefs to tell him frankly what lands they wanted in addition, and to lodge claims with the administration. However, the official policy was clarified in a press conference by the then high commissioner, M. Eriaud, on 31 October 1978 (France Australe 31 October 1978). M. Eriaud recited the principal statistics of landholding at that point: 950,000 ha of domaine land (mostly mountainous); 372,000 ha of réserve autochtone, 163,000 ha of it on the Grande Terre (24,000 Melanesians live on this area); 380,000 ha of propriétés privées, all on the Grande Terre. He could have referred, also, to about 100,000 ha of locations and 40,000 ha of concessions provisoires also granted to settlers from domaine land, plus 110,000 ha of mining concessions. This (with the 380,000 ha of propriétés privées) makes a total of 630,000 ha held by non Melanesian settlers and miners. Only about nine hundred settlers and their families are actually living on farms, with a further two thousand (approximately) in ancillary and service occupations in rural areas outside the townships. Eriaud added that in his term as high commissioner, 5,500 ha had been added to the reserves (800 ha of it having come from former private properties, the rest from domaine land); another 5,630 ha had passed to Melanesians outside the reserves as locations or concessions. He noted that Melanesians had registered demands with the Chefs de Subdivision (the Territory equivalent of sub-prefects) for a further 120,000 ha. Eriaud then subdivided the land claims into those 'which have a political motive in the sense that New Caledonia ought to return to the Melanesians because it was their ancestral territory'.

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'Such', he said, 'is the point of view of certain extremists'. In view of the presence of the 40 per cent of Europeans and 20 per cent of other minorities in the Territory - the Wallis Island, Tahitian, Indonesian and Vietnamese migrants and their locally born descendants - this claim was not realistic and could not be satisfied. Next came the claims 'Étatiques'. Some were reasonable; he understood well that Melanesians would want back the village sites from which they had been dispossessed between 1878 and 1917. The third category of claims were 'economic', where the tribus were closely confined; it was essential to satisfy these.

Referring to the Melanesian claim to the large uncultivated estates of Europeans he said the belief that the acquisition of space as the way to a better lifestyle was illusory. What was much more important was to improve the land. Nor would the matter be resolved quickly. It would take five or ten years and require close collaboration between the state and territory, especially for finance. There was no reason for the Europeans to panic. He congratulated the minister for approaching the matter frankly. Indeed Dijoud was the first minister to do so.

In February 1979 Dijoud's long term plan for economic and social development in New Caledonia was published and adopted (against the opposition of the independence parties) by the Territorial Assembly (Plan de développement). The chapter on land reform stressed the urgent necessity of returning much more land to the Melanesians and introducing the powers of preemption and expropriation for the purpose. But it also spoke of safeguarding the rights of settlers who live in the bush to continue to live there in security. It also referred to economic development and population growth. Dijoud, in debate, spoke of proving independence to be but a vain dream (Procès-verbal 21 February 1979:14-15). The basic line of the plan Dijoud is clear: New Caledonia will remain a French Territory and a multi racial society, open to possible further settlement. Indépendance Kanak and the Indépendantiste's 'political' demand for virtually all the land to be returned to the original clans is rejected. The Dijoud strategy received a form of endorsement in the July 1979 elections for the Territorial Assembly, which returned a 65 per cent majority in favour of a continuance of the relationship with France; of those voting (there was a 73 per cent turnout of voters) a majority of Melanesians voted for independence. The right wing Rassemblement pour Calédonie dans la République (RPCR) and the centrist Fédération pour une Nouvelle Société Calédonienne (FNSC) formed the 'Governing Majority'. The various Melanesian parties and the UC, which had come together before the elections to form the Front Indépendantiste (FI), are in opposition.

Within the framework thus established Dijoud's intervention has nevertheless produced a number of shifts of policy on the land question. The Commission D'Etudes des Problèmes Fonciers set up in late 1978, though justifiably somewhat sceptical of the attempt to establish a finite picture of traditional clan distribution, is attempting to reestablish their location as at the beginning of colonization, using the researchers of ORSTOM (Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre-Mer) to systematically determine, from aerial photographs and old maps, the traditional distribution of taro and yam cultivations and village sites throughout the Grande Terre.
NEW CALEDONIA: THE POLITICS OF LAND

There has also been more flexibility on the modes by which land has been redistributed. In September 1979 the Territorial Assembly approved purchase of thirteen parcels of land totalling 1,250 ha, mainly acquired from the Catholic Church, for a total price of CPP 25.5 million (about $A283,000) (Procès-verbal 11 September 1979). Of these only three were specifically stated to be for subdivision into individual lots; two were for tribal groups organized as agricultural societies; seven were for various clan or family groups who in some cases already occupied them, outside the reserves; one was expressly for aggrandisement of a reserve and destined for subsistence agriculture. All were paid for by a grant from FIDES, a fund which had hitherto been used strictly for lands being commercially improved. The hardline demands of the RPCR and Report 81 that the land be returned only in individual titles under the droit commun have thus been modified.

Mid 1979 also saw the organization, under M. Frank Wahuzue, of the Commission for the Promotion Mélaneisienne, part of the larger long term reform programme developed by M. Dijoud. The land section of the Promotion supported both a systematic location of old clan territories and a survey of the claims with a view to determining greatest need. It was noted that considerable difficulty might be expected in locating the true 'maîtres de la terre' of any lands, given the confusions of the last hundred years. The Commission debated at length the issue of whether land should be attributed as aggrandisement of reserves or in individual European style titles and proposed a new alternative. Declaring (like the Indépendantistes) that customary landholding was no necessary barrier to development of individual enterprises, it called for the legal recognition of a propriété clanique - something between the titles of the droit commun and the tribu and much more traditional. Conseils des Clans consisting of the family heads (both of 'ancient' and 'new' families in a given locality) should regulate land matters, with Conseils des Chefs de Clan and a Conseil des Grande Chefs for appeal and inter clan disputes. This was an effort to establish some kind of Melanesian authority in land matters to replace the French-created official chefferie and Conseils des Anciens in which confidence is no longer reposed (Commission pour la Promotion Mélaneisienne 1979). In some of these key principles the Melanesians of the Promotion were quite radical and held views in line with those of the Indépendantistes. Though described in the rhetoric of the latter as a French puppet, Wahuzue is in fact fearful of the divisions opening up among Melanesians as a result of confused and overlapping land claims and wants them sorted out under French auspices as a necessary precondition of any later political evolution.

Finally, in March 1980 an avant-projet of the law to grant the Territory the powers of preemption and expropriation of underused land was leaked in the Noumea press. Not surprisingly, in view of the strength of their reaction in 1958, the settlers again reacted strongly to the introduction of such measures - this time by their erstwhile protector, the French state. Divisions opened among the governing majority, the FNOSC generally favouring acceptance of the measures as necessary and many of the RPCR being bitterly opposed, especially to expropriation. A delegation went to Paris to seek modifications and Dijoud returned to Noumea for a discussion in camera with the Territorial Assembly. The terms of the avant-projet, revised slightly in the settlers' favour, were republished on 30 May.
The preface acknowledges that, in the context of general agrarian reform and revival, the Melanesians have a special need. It specifies that the reserves will not be affected, and affirms the right of choice of Melanesians to live under the droit coutumier or the droit commun. Article 1 affirms support for the development of uncultivated or insufficiently exploited lands, notably through the constitution of family enterprises and for food production; and for the transfer to Melanesian collectives, family groups or individuals of enough land to enable them to satisfy their needs, their custom and their 'organisation particulière'. Articles 2 to 4 provide that the state, the territory and, where appropriate, the communes, are to collaborate for the purpose of acquiring the necessary land, if possible by agreement. An incentive for this will be the provision, under Article 5, of compensation and pension arrangements for farmers sixty years of age or more who cede their land to programme. Article 6 provides that when proprietors voluntary offer an estate the Territory has a three months' right of preemption; where there is failure to agree on price, the price will be fixed by the court of first instance. Article 7 gives the high commissioner in council power to declare an estate abandoned or uncultivated; the proprietor will be given time in which to improve the land. Article 8 provides that where agreement is not reached the Council of Government may issue a declaration of public need and expropriation; an inquiry will then follow by a commission presided over by a magistrate and including representation of the state, the territory, the commune, the Melanesian authorities and rural proprietors and farmers; if this commission recommends affirmatively the declaration will be promulgated by the high commissioner. Article 9 provides that if the land so acquired is not used within three years for the purposes defined in Article 1, the former proprietor may apply to have it ceded back to him. Article 10 states that lands acquired will be attributed under modes defined by the Territorial Assembly, either under the droit commun or the droit coutumier (Les Nouvelles 30 May 1980).

The proposed law continued to be bitterly opposed by settlers. Expropriation seemed to some 'a death blow' and there was some fine rhetoric by members of the Movement Pour l'Ordre et la Paix (MOP) and a new association called RURALE (Rureaux, unis pour une réforme agraire libérale et équitable) about 'dying for Caledonia'. But Jean-Pierre Aifa and Gaston Morlet, settler members of the FNNSC, strongly defended the reform in a series of public meetings. Frank Wahuze of the Promotion Mélanésienne also defended it against attacks by his more conservative colleagues in the RPCR.

From the FI point of view the reform is far too limited in scope and too administration-directed; since late 1979 they have boycotted all official commissions or committees dealing with land and have attempted to set in motion their own land reform based on systematic demands by all clans for return of their former lands, without condition. They would, in turn, undertake to protect genuine settlers, but they believe that a land reform controlled by the administration and Territorial Assembly will continue the colonization of Melanesian lands. This issue was sharply revealed in mid 1980 when the administration proposed to allocate a repurchased estate near Dumbea to Wallis Islanders, the prolific Polynesian migrants of the postwar years, notoriously short of land. There was a strong response from the FI, focussed on a public letter by Madame Pidjot, claiming the land on behalf of the clans dispossessed in the colonization.
The avant-projet for the réforme foncière went to the Territorial Assembly on 2 September 1980 for its opinion and after furious debate was approved by eighteen votes (of the governing majority) to fourteen. The FI voted against, as did M. Guillemand, a most determined settler opponent (two other members of the governing majority abstained). During the debate settler members crowded the chamber, chorused objections against the speakers of their own party who were supporting the proposed law, and afterwards gave Guillemand a hero's welcome. In December it went before the National Assembly in Paris and was passed, against some opposition from the extreme right and the Communists.

A week after its approval of the avant-projet, the Territorial Assembly rounded out the legislative framework of land reform by passing a law on succession which gives Melanesians holding land outside the reserves the choice between customary succession rules or succession under the droit commun. In theory this should assist those Melanesians, still generally living under the statut particulier, to keep individual farms within the nuclear family (if they so choose) rather than see the encroachment of clan control at point of succession. If they do not exercise the option, however, customary succession prevails.

THE OUTLOOK

There is no doubt that the new laws will introduce a much needed and long overdue flexibility into land reform. There is little doubt that 100,000 ha of land will now be purchased from the settlers over ten years at something less than the speculative prices recently demanded. For some settlers on the east coast and mountain chain especially, there will not be much regret. In some valleys Melanesian pressure in the form of cattle theft, incendiaryism and menaces have already made life uncomfortable. In response to complaints by the MOP that Melanesian encroachments are not being met by adequate law enforcement the high commissioner has publicly acknowledged that, with the forces at his disposal, complete deterrence is not everywhere possible all the time (Les Nouvelles 21 January 1980).

But the police forces certainly are strong enough to prevent widespread occupation of land and - given the repeated statements of both M. Dijoud and the present high commissioner, M. Charbonnied - they would be so used. Recovery of land from settlers will generally be directed within the legal channels. The goals of the land reform clearly do not go far enough to satisfy the FI but, despite the occasional rhetoric of some of the extremists, it is hard to conceive of them gathering enough support for a direct trial of strength with the French authorities over the recovery of the full extent of the 'customary' claims.

But a trial of strength is already in progress over the redistribution of the land. This is largely a struggle between Melanesians: between those who claim as traditional proprietary clans and those who claim on the basis of several generations of residence - since colonization - on or near the land; and between those who see the recovery of land as part of the resurgence of Kanak culture and self-determination, and those who want title under the droit commun for individual or family farming enterprises. Of these last there are about 2,000 on titles formally outside the reserves. Efforts by the administration and the official chefferie to
establish more have not infrequently been checked by pressure from sections of the Independantistes. The tension and bitterness among Melanesians is inevitably increased by land redistribution and is a heavy burden for them to bear.

An unpredictable feature in the situation is the Promotion Mélanésienne under Frank Wahuzue. Despite FI denunciation Wahuzue is not simply an administration stooge. He represents the policy of choice for Melanesians, and has equally promoted a revived legal/administrative recognition of the clan and arrangements which encourage the individual entrepreneur. Introducing the new law on succession he said:

The Melanesians find themselves in a state of evolution. It is not timely to put them into a single, fixed system. It is suitable to emphasise more and more the propensity of the young to become individualist. It is necessary then to leave the Melanesian the voice, a certain option between the evolving customary system and an adapted modern system, prompted by the provisions of the Code Civil (Les Nouvelles 9 September 1980).

A second unpredictable factor is the reaction of the immigrant minorities, particularly the Wallis Islanders. So far they have not had much success in getting land from the administration, in the face of fierce FI resistance. Many Wallis Islanders have respect (however grudging) for the Melanesians' customary claims, as well as of their strength in rural areas - including their sorcery. The FI - whose policies in the first decade of political nationalism have been fairly unsubtle - have begun to develop more detailed strategies and to consider the kinds of rights they would give to non Kanaks in an independent state. They might conceivably persuade some Wallisians and Tahitians that their fortunes - in terms of land rights - could be better as clients of Melanesian clans than of the French administration.

A third feature of the situation - an interesting irony of the recent political struggle over the avant-projet - is that the FI and many of the settlers opposed the official land reform for precisely the same reason - that it is too paternalistic and prescriptive. Spokesmen of both groups at times said that direct negotiation between Melanesian buyers and brousards (bush settlers) over particular parcels of land would be best. There was even a moment when the brousards' committee of defence went to see the FI leadership about the issue.

Meanwhile the official land reform will proceed, gravely weakened by the fatal politicization of the land issue which has caused the FI and the Melanesians behind it to be excluded - and to exclude themselves - from close participation in the work. This, and other divisions among Melanesians, and between Melanesian and Polynesian migrants, will leave the redistribution contentious and difficult. In many respects some kind of determination among the real protagonists - the settlers and the Melanesians - to take the responsibility and direction of land reform would indeed be the best possible outcome for New Caledonia. But it is blocked by the two fundamentally different conceptions of ultimate goals - Indépendance Kanak (with Melanesian primacy) versus a multiracial territory
of France. Modification of both of these competing goals, towards a genuine Indépendance Calédonienne, would be the precondition for much fruitful development in New Caledonia, including land reform. Perhaps out of the politics of mutual frustration and stalemate something like this could occur. Indeed Gaston Morlet of the FNSC, exulting in his success with the approval of the avant-projet by the Territorial Assembly, took a full page advertisement in the daily paper to celebrate 2 September 1980 as the day of political maturation of New Caledonia, and spoke of an indépendance réelle. But he was thinking of Tahiti as a model. For his part Frank Wahunze also speaks of the necessity of reinforcing ties with France. Clearly the sense of dependency among New Caledonian settlers and some Melanesians remains strong. The onus of steering some kind of course in land reform will remain in the immediate future in the paternalistic care of the French authorities. The next few years in the complex politics of New Caledonia will depend in part on the detailed politics of land: in struggles in remote valleys between rival clans over various ancient territorial claims and new claims based on occupancy and use; in questions of access to rural credit; in the success or failure of pastoral societies and growers of the new strain of coffee on individual title; in the arrangements made by new clanique proprietors and individuals holding leases from them; and in obscure struggles over succession to rights in land.

NOTE

This paper is a part of a larger work in preparation for the Department of Political and Social Change, Australian National University. Some of the details of law and statistics are provisional and subject to checking by work now in progress.

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COLONIAL AND POST-INDEPENDENCE POLITICS: VANUATU

James Jupp and Marian Sawyer

The Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides became independent, as the Republic of Vanuatu, on 30 July 1980. It thus gained its independence at a late stage for the South Pacific and in political conditions which had not existed elsewhere. Among these was the reluctance of the French (in Paris, Noumea, Vila and Santo) to leave a colonial possession; this was exemplified by their refusal to lower the flag in public. The British, who have already lowered the flag almost fifty times in this century, did so at a now conventional ceremony, complete with a royal representative. But the French refused and held a private ceremony attended only by French citizens. At the very last moment, then, the differing approaches of the two administering powers were still only too evident.

The special political circumstances which Vanuatu inherited include:

- the heritage of two administrative colonial systems based on different concepts and traditions;
- two very recently amalgamated police, education, health and general administrative systems;
- a bilingual education system and a constitutional obligation to preserve tri-lingualism;
- no armed forces;
- several secessionist movements, all at various times encouraged by local French citizens and by the French administration;
- a national political party which had used both constitutional and unconstitutional methods to assert its hegemony over the entire republic;
- no effective local government system or agreement on methods of devolution;
- bitterness and hostility leading to bloodshed and armed intervention against secession.
No other society in the South Pacific had to start out as an independent state with such problems, superimposed on the classical Melanesian pattern of localism, ethnic and cultural diversity, linguistic variety and the mixed blessings of economic colonialism and mission Christianity.

SOURCES OF FRAGMENTATION

The sources of the fragmentation which manifested itself in the fullblown secessionist crisis in the New Hebrides from May to September 1980 are complex, reflecting the complexities of the colonial experience in the New Hebrides. Significantly, the crisis which threatened the unity of the new nation was resolved only after the withdrawal of the colonial powers and their peacekeeping troops, which in fact had presided over continuing disunity.

Francophonie

The colonial inheritance in the New Hebrides included the division of the population into Francophone and Anglophone groups, educated in the competing educational systems. From the mid 1970s the French government poured massive amounts of aid into upgrading the French education system (at least five times the British expenditure on their system) and were able to provide free primary school education, in contrast with the fee-paying English language schools. Consequently the French created a significant Francophone constituency concerned over their future career prospects or those of their children. In 1980 the French estimated that 60 per cent of the student population were within the French system (Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes 28 July 1980).

The dominant Vanuaaku Pati had (in February 1979) only three Francophones out of its eighty local level political commissars. Philibert de Montgremier (born 1911), the most important of these, has been a longstanding party organizer in Luganville, and was elected in the 1975 national elections for the New Hebrides National Party (the pre 1977 name of the Vanuaaku Pati). He was subsequently defeated in the by-election for Luganville or Santo Town on 25 October 1976. In July 1980 his house was blown up by secessionist rebels and he retreated to Aore.

In 1979 the Vanuaaku Pati took some steps to improve its representation of New Hebridean Francophonie, particularly in relation to the young Francophone community. Alei Saurei, a new graduate of the University of Paris, was made an assistant editor of the party organ, Vanuaaku Viewpoints - which subsequently contained a French language section as well as its Bislama and English components. (The Pati also produced a Bislama newsheet.) In the same year Saurei was made a member of the Pati kabinet.

Despite these gestures towards Francophonie, and the renewed commitment by the Vanuaaku Pati to bilingualism in the 1979 election campaign, the Francophone community remained uneasy about their own and their children's future. On 25 June 1980 the French Teachers' Association
organized a demonstration in Vila in support of bilingualism. Estimates of the numbers participating ranged from 500 to 1,000 (Radio Vanuatu 26 June 1980) to about 2,000 (Nabanga 28 June 1980).

On 25 July 1980, the eve of independence, the chief minister, Walter Lini, reiterated that: 'We want higher and better opportunities for Francophone students, we want more opportunities for them to obtain professional qualifications as lawyers, doctors, engineers and so on through university training. We certainly don't want to see just Anglophones in the professions and civil service and just Francophones in the private sector and technical skill areas' (Radio Vanuatu 25 July 1980).

On 12 August the parliament (i.e., the Vanuaaku Pati majority and the members of the Independent Opposition) elected Maxime Carlot, an independent Francophone member for Vila, to be speaker of the parliament. This was another gesture towards Francophonie, and Carlot as speaker would stand in as head of state during absences of the president. Originally the Vanuaaku Pati had looked favourably on the idea of a Francophone president of Vanuatu, the obvious candidate being the Francophone ex chief minister (1978-1979) and respected politician, Father Gérard Leymang. However the embitterment among Pati supporters over the French involvement in the May-September secession precluded this step. Instead the popular Vanuaaku Pati leader, George Kalkoa, was elected on 4 July and subsequently assumed his chiefly name of Ati George Sokomanu. In general the policies of the French residency in the pre-independence period militated against the influence of the bloc of three Francophone members (Leymang, V. Boulekone and Carlot) who were playing a responsible role as a loyal 'Independent Opposition' in this period.

Despite the genuine fears by the Francophone community over their future under an Anglophone government the following points should be kept in mind: first, as has been pointed out by Professor Jean Guiart, who was involved in the founding of much of the French educational system, Francophonie is essentially fragile in Vanuatu. Before the enfranchisement of the Melanesians the French expatriate community did not support the founding of French schools. Even in North Malekula, where the French school programme has been longest established, a large part of the adult population speaks Bislama or English (Guiart 1980:2). This is also true of Tanna, where the French schools had great difficulty in establishing themselves. On Efate, many parents in the 1970s split their children between the (free) French schools and the English-medium schools which seemed to provide greater career opportunities in the more indigenized British administration.

Independent Vanuatu is destined to be oriented towards regional centres which are Anglophone, rather than towards the old metropolitan colonial powers. The continuance of the French education system will be completely dependent on French aid, and the long term continuance of such aid is problematic. The 1980 aid agreement has been delayed as part of the French protest against the deportation of its citizens involved in the rebellion, and at some stage French aid is likely to be withdrawn completely as a result of independent Vanuatu's prominent role in the regional movement against the French presence in the Pacific. The September 1980 congress of the Vanuaaku Pati reaffirmed the foreign policy
priority it gave to the independence of New Caledonia (twelve representatives of the New Caledonia Front Indépendantiste attended the congress).

In the short term, the belated creation by the French of a large Francophone student population in the 1970s remains a potentially divisive influence. The fears of this Francophone community have been exploited by the French for the political objective of weakening the Vanuaaku Pati.

Custom

In its emergence as the only genuine nationalist movement in the New Hebrides the Vanuaaku Pati heavily utilized the preexisting organizational networks (both national and international) of the Presbyterian church. This was both a source of strength and a source of distrust on the part of some elements of the New Hebridean population. Francophone Catholics, whether French, Vietnamese, mixed-race, Wallisian or indigenous Melanesian, inherited a suspicion of the 'Anglo-Saxon' Protestant churches dating back to the colonial rivalries of the nineteenth century. Historic suspicion of the secular ambitions of the Presbyterian church has hardly been allayed by the presence of four Presbyterian pastors in the nine-member Vanuatu council of ministers, leaving aside the Anglican priest, Walter Lini.

Local Melanesian custom movements also had deep seated suspicions of a nationalist movement emerging out of the Presbyterian church. Non Christian custom followers form a majority of the population on the densely populated island of Tanna, and about a quarter of the population of Espiritu Santo. Despite the reapprochement the Christian churches (except the Seventh Day Adventists) in the 1960s and 1970s with custom practices, there remains a vivid memory of the vigorous attempts by the Presbyterian missions, in particular, to suppress custom earlier in the century. In many islands this suppression was so successful as to cause considerable embarrassment to the present efforts to codify custom practices as part of the reassertion of indigenous culture.

The Vanuaaku Pati has made a determined effort to identify itself with custom, which is seen as a source of a non European cultural identity. This has meant the incongruous (to some) spectacle of Father Lini, as Pati leader, participating in pig-killing ceremonies. It has also meant the integration of kava drinking into all public ceremonies and the encouragement of custom dancing (now usually in conjunction with the more recent phenomenon of string band competitions). Despite the imported instruments and musical style, the string bands have become a genuinely domesticated cultural phenomenon, the lyrics expressing local issues (Tonkinson 1980). Custom symbols such as namele (cycas palm) leaves have been deployed by the Vanuaaku Pati as the insignia of peace-making and of the role of the custom chiefs, as in the Mal Fatu Mauri. The new national flag incorporates namele leaves and a pig's tusk, while the motto of the new republic is Christian ('Long God yumi stamap').

Nonetheless the manipulation of custom symbols by the nationalist movement has not been sufficient to erode distrust of the Christian clergy and laymen which form its leadership at both national and local levels.
The religious factor (which builds on traditional intra village rivalries) has been particularly strong in the secessionist tendency in Tanna 1979-1980. The John Frum cult on Tanna, dating from World War II, was based on a rejection of the European missionaries who had failed to bring cargo to the native population (hence the reversed red crosses of the John Frum cult). John Frum was to act as an intermediary in the transmission of cargo from the US via the Yasur volcano. The John Frum movement has a long-standing grievance against the Christian church, as do the custom people of the 'middle bush' area of Tanna, who have formed a constituency for the Kapiel party. (The latter party was founded in 1975 by Charles Nako; it takes its name from a sorcerer's stone.) The middle bush people believe in the power of sorcery and their hostility to the Presbyterian church was exemplified by an incident in January 1979 when they trussed up and detained at their village of Lamlu the Presbyterian pastor and Vanuaaku Pati commissar, Willie Korisa (now minister for social affairs).

During the period of Tanna Law from 1906-1912 the Presbyterian church acted as the civilian authority on Tanna and imposed severe penalties for custom dancing or kava drinking, or even the transporting of kava roots along the island paths. Kava drinking is once again universal on Tanna, whether among Christians, pagans or European anthropologists, and has resumed its function as an integral part of Tannese social life. However the suspicions bred by the Tanna Law have been reinforced not only by the traditional village rivalries which play a role in the credentialing of 'big men', but also by more recent commercial rivalries. The Australian, Bob Paul, who owned the trade store at Lenakel and was a founder of Air Melanesia was heavily identified with the Vanuaaku Pati and with the local Presbyterian villages. His efforts to develop the tourist industry, arranging tours to Yasur volcano, were opposed by the John Frum who were jealous of access to their volcano and who supported a rival commercial venture by the Vila-based Francophone politician Guy Prévot (since declared a prohibited immigrant).

Many of the older leaders of the John Frum movement are unable to play an effective role in national politics due to their lack of education (reflecting the earlier boycotts of mission schools). However the voting power of the John Frum and other custom movements has been assiduously courted by the French, and local political figures have been groomed and encouraged to emerge onto the national scene. For example, Alexis Yolou, the most notable 'custom' politician from Tanna, was born in the John Frum village of Lounatum but was educated first at a Catholic mission school and later on Efate. He joined the French police in Vila and was a foundation member of the Francophone party UCHN (Union des Communautés des Nouvelles Hébrides) in 1974 and became a member of its executive committee in 1975. In that year he was elected a member of the Vila Municipal Council. Only in 1977 did he return to Tanna, in time to be 'elected' to the Representative Assembly as a Kapiel member. In 1979 Yolou stood for election to the Representative Assembly as a John Frum candidate and topped the poll on Tanna (a five seat constituency).

Charles Nako, the founder of Kapiel, was of a similar age to Yolou (they were born in 1949 and 1950 respectively) and had followed a similar career pattern. He was born in the middle bush village of Lamlu, but also moved to Vila for further French education after Catholic primary school on
Tanna. Nako joined the French agricultural service but also rapidly became absorbed in UCNH politics. He was elected to the Representative Assembly as UCNH member for Tanna in 1975, the same year he founded his middle bush custom party, Kapel. In 1977 he became Kapel member in the Representative Assembly and was again elected as Kapel member in the 1979 national election (third in the Tanna poll).

Both Nako and Yolou had been led to believe that their parties (grouped as 'the Moderates') would win a majority of seats in the election to the Tanna Regional Assembly, which was held at the same time as the national election. When they narrowly lost the Regional Assembly election (gaining seven out of fifteen seats, 49.3 per cent of the vote) the inevitable reaction was accusations of electoral malpractice. Both Nako and Yolou attended the founding ceremony of the secessionist Vemerana Federation on 11 January 1980 in Luganville. From then on the Tannese custom leaders were firmly set on the secessionist path and boycotted the meetings of the Representative Assembly in Vila.

In March Yolou and Nako went with a delegation of 'Moderates' to Paris, to discuss their grievances concerning the government. On Tanna there was mounting violence between the custom followers and Vanuaaku Pati supporters, connived at by the local French gendarmerie. This culminated in the death of Yolou in an armed skirmish on the morning of 11 June 1980. Despite the fact that Yolou had a long history of involvement in violent incidents (he had been named in the judicial inquiry into violence on Tanna as far back as February 1979) the French press depicted Yolou as a martyr. The Nabang front page read 'Alexis Yolou assassiné. Pourquoi? Par Qui?' (16 June 1980). In Luganville Boulevard Higginson was renamed Boulevard Alexis Yolou.

Meanwhile on Espiritu Santo custom opposition to the Vanuaaku Pati was manifested in Jimmy Stevens's Nagriamel movement which was founded in 1964. Nagriamel differed from the custom movements on Tanna in that it combined custom with Christianity (if of an unorthodox type) and many of its members were nominally members of the Church of Christ. Nagriamel began as a strong assertion of Melanesian identity against the appropriation of land and culture by the Europeans. Custom practices and dress were adopted and Stevens enjoyed the traditional chiefly prerogative of polygyny. At the same time Stevens and Abel Bani, the Church of Christ pastor on West Aoba who worked with Stevens, conducted an active church-building programme for their independent Nagriamel church (going under various names).

The Nagriamel movement (known as the Vemerana Federation from 1980) has also differed from the Tannese custom movements both in its charismatic leadership and in the kind of collectivist work and lifestyle established at the movement's headquarters at Vanafo from 1966-67. Followers from other islands such as Aoba and Paama were encouraged to spend periods at Vanafo, engaging in collective work and the daily life of the community.

One aspect of Nagriamel's stress on custom has been suspicion of the new urbanized elite lifestyle which is identified with Vila and a lack of understanding for 'Man Santo'. After the 1977 national 'election' when Nagriamel/MANH were allotted twelve seats Stevens outraged the new chief minister, George Kalsakau, by appearing in Vila with his 'half-naked
bushmen'. (For further details of the political adventures of Nagriamel see Jupp and Sawer 1979 and Sawer and Jupp 1980.)

Stevens's own claim to embody custom was somewhat invalidated, however, by his mixed-race background (only one quarter Melanesian) and his involvement with dubious business ventures, sometimes in conjunction with foreigners. On his arrest on 31 August 1980 he is alleged to have admitted that he had usurped the authority of Paul Buluk, the 'true' custom chief of the Vanafao area, with whose help Stevens had established the movement (Radio Vanuatu 17 September 1980). He also blamed French involvement for the violent turn taken by his secession movement and admitted receiving American money. Hence although custom remains a divisive force rather than the unifying symbol the Vanuaaku leadership would like it to become, this reflects not only endogenous cultural divisions but also their exploitation by exogenous interests.

French political objectives

In 1971 the French were confronted by the emergence of the Anglophone New Hebrides National Party (NHNP), apparently under the tutelage of the British residency (or its political secretary, Keith Woodward). Through the networks of the Protestant churches and the British Co-operative Federation the NHNP soon gained a firm hold on rural villages throughout the New Hebrides. In answer, the French residency and the French and Vietnamese commercial ventures sponsored a series of parties and party groupings, all characterized by their urban nature and lack of solid organizational structure. These included UPNH (Union de la Population des Nouvelles Hébrides) (1971), MANH (Movement Autonomiste des Nouvelles Hébrides) (1973, Luganville), UCNH (1974), Tan Union (1977) and the Federal Party (1979). These ephemeral parties suffered from their identification with non Melanesian commercial interests, and depended for support on the ethnically diverse urban communities. They were not sufficient to impede the gathering strength of the NHNP/Vanuaaku Pati. Consequently the French residency looked to the custom movements as providing a mass Melanesian base for the political opposition to the Vanuaaku Pati. To many this alliance appeared incongruous, as the Melanesian custom-followers whose lingua franca was Bislama were the antithesis of the sophisticated French or mixed-race urban community which predominated in the Francophone parties. However the assiduous cultivation of the Tannese custom movements through the grooming of selected leaders has already been noted. The provision of material inducements became most blatant during the 1979 election campaign, when the French resident commissioner, Inspector-General Robert toured the island supplying 'handouts'.

On Santo, despite the initial hostility to Nagriamel land claims, the local French district agent began courting Jimmy Stevens in earnest in 1974, and a road, a dispensary, and other aid was forthcoming from the French residency. However the 1975 national elections indicated that even alliance with custom movements such as Nagriamel and John Frum was not sufficient to prevent a NHNP victory.
In 1977 French groupings such as the Federation of Independents started working towards a federal solution to the problem of retaining French influence. Regional assemblies, for example in Santo, would assume the bulk of government power, leaving a weak, indirectly elected central government. This theme was followed through with the creation of the umbrella 'Federal Party' in 1979 which characterized itself as the opponent of the 'centralizing, authoritarian and even totalitarian tendencies' of the Marxist/theocratic Vanuaaku Pati (Tru TokTok No 1, March 1979; No 6, September 1979).

In 1979 M. Paul Dijoud, the French minister for overseas departments and territories forced the inclusion of regional assemblies for Santo and Tanna in the independence constitution. There was heated opposition to this institutionalizing of secessionist foci in the new state but in the all night session of 18 September 1979 which preceded the final agreement, Dijoud made it clear that it was a condition of independence.

The subsequent failure in the elections of 14 November 1979 to win the majority of seats in the regional assemblies came as a rude shock, after so much diligent French work. The rejection of the legitimacy of the new central government by the custom parties and other pro-French groupings on Santo and Tanna was never firmly discouraged by the French residency, which instead insisted that further concessions should be made by the elected government to the desire for decentralization on the part of pro-French groups.

When open secession occurred with the seizure of the airport and town on Santo on 28 May 1980 the French colonial authorities resisted all suggestions that central government authority should be forcibly restored, despite the concern expressed by all governments in the region, including the Australian, over the preservation of the territorial integrity of the new state. The French constitutional advisor, M. Arnaud Lizop, who was appointed by the minister for overseas departments and territories, to arrange a negotiated settlement to the rebellion, instead made suggestions for neutralizing the rebellion. In a letter dated 10 June 1980 to Georges Cronsteadt, secretary-general of the Vemorona Federation, he stressed the importance of a defence plan and of organizing a referendum. (It was hoped that the evacuation of about 1,000 Vanuaaku Pati supporters from Santo during the rebellion would at last enable Stevens to obtain a majority of the island's vote.) M. Lizop ended his letter (which was presented in evidence at the November trial of Stevens) by saying: 'Stick it out, we're onto it in Paris' (The Age 24 November 1980).

One week before independence and just after the strong support given at Tarawa to the idea of military intervention through the Pacific Forum the French finally agreed to the deployment of a joint British/French force in Luganville. (Two hundred British commandos had already spent over a month in the New Hebrides.) The joint force was to be commanded by a French officer, Colonel Vidal from Noumea.

On the eve of the arrival of the troops Inspector-General Robert made an inflammatory speech to the inhabitants of Luganville, in which he suggested that the intervention was designed purely to prevent a military intervention and 'massacre' mounted by the Pacific Forum governments, and
that the whole operation would be 'French oriented'. Robert assured the Santo people that the operation had been designed in their interests, without the knowledge of the Lini government, and that it was not clear that the Lini government would ever be coming back to Santo (Robert 1980a). 'Reprisals' for the rebellion were 'right out of the question'. In answer to a question as to whether the situation was like that of the Free France Robert replied: 'Yes, it is a bit like that. That's it. It's exactly like 1940. Although of course, I don't fancy myself as a de Gaulle'. (Robert is very short.) Another report of Robert's speech included the accusation that some British officials wanted to make the New Hebrides 'an Australian colony' before leaving and that a massacre 'would not rob Mr Bill Fisher' of his sleep (Robert 1980b). On the same day Robert assured Stevens that France was supporting him to get a 'confederation system' (The Age 22 November 1980).

The role of the French troops as a means of warding off the reassertion of the authority of the central government was confirmed by the French foreign minister, M. Olivier Stirm, on the night before independence. Stirm said that there was 'no possibility at all that the troops at Luganville would be used to make arrests of rebel leaders. They are there to protect French and British nationals' (Radio Vanuatu 30 July 1980).

When the French/British force in Luganville was finally replaced on 18 August, after a series of dynamings by the rebels, by troops from the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, and arrests were made, much blame was laid at the foot of Inspector-General Robert. The defence counsel provided by Noumean support groups for the rebels, Maître Leder, argued in mitigation:

that those really responsible were the two metropolitan powers. When their military forces were present, couldn't they have stopped offences against law and order? Could not the two Resident Commissioners have prevented such acts by persuasion and explanation? No-one tried to explain that independence had arrived, and the rebellion finished. Inspector-General Robert bears a heavy responsibility for these tragic events (Radio Vanuatu 18 September 1980; Les Nouvelles Caïdonniëres 22 September 1980).

In another defence Maître Leder explained that Inspector-General Robert had fostered the idea that the blockade imposed by the Vila government on Santo, in an effort to bring an end to the rebellion, was somehow 'illegal' (Radio Vanuatu 24 September 1980).

While Inspector-General Robert was obviously concerned to preserve a bastion of the free French in the Pacific, against the encroachments of the 'Anglo-Saxons', or the Melanesian pawns of the Anglo-Saxons, the motivation of the Quai d'Orsay is somewhat more obscure. The French have no real economic interest in the New Hebrides (the Santo plantations are not really significant at this level), and their cultural presence is a fragile growth, as indicated above. The most plausible explanation has been that the French government was attempting to 'hold the line' in relation to the much more important New Caledonia, by entrenching opposition to the
independent Vanuaaku government which might otherwise embark on an overly activist foreign policy (e.g., Pacific Islands Monthly July 1980:11).

The small French colony on Santo was certainly imbued with a last-ditch mentality, encouraged by relatives and associates in New Caledonia, some of whom had already been pushed out of Indochina or Algeria. Typical of the small scale French adventurer involved in the New Hebrides was Antoine Fornelli, an ex-soldier from Indochina and Katanga. Fornelli bought a property at Rentabao on Efate and opposed the softness of the condominium authorities towards Melanesian land claims. He became involved in a project to set himself up as 'King of Tanna' in 1974, with the aid of the John Frum and other custom movements opposed to the colonial authorities. He was deported to Noumea but turned up again in November 1979, in Tanna, where he still had a following among the John Frum. Once again deported, Fornelli reappeared in 1980 (arriving as in 1979 by boat from Noumea) giving military training to the Vemerana secessionists at Vanafo. He was arrested when Vanafo was captured by Papua New Guinean troops at the end of August. Subsequent to his third deportation Fornelli gave an interview in Noumea, promising to continue resistance to the 'yoke of Walter Lini' (Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes 30 September 1980).

French adventurers were not, however, the only external elements involved in exploiting fissiparous tendencies in the New Hebrides.

The Americans and other Utopian capitalists

In the late 1960s the Hawaiian-based land developer Eugene Peacock bought extensive properties in the New Hebrides and in 1971 the Carson City, Nevada, real estate developer Michael Oliver also bought properties. Their plans for extensive subdivision and sales to American servicemen were thwarted by the joint regulations issued by the condominium authorities in 1971 and fully supported by the emergent NHNP, who were determined to put a stop to further European land alienation.

Oliver's real estate interests coincided with his ideological commitment to setting up a new country with a free enterprise constitution (i.e., with minimal government, no taxes and no interference with property or contract). In pursuit of this aim he had set up the Phoenix Foundation, which included on its board prominent US Libertarians such as Professor John Hospers, the presidential candidate of the Libertarian Party in 1972. Oliver regarded Stevens's Nagriamel Federation with its secessionist tendencies to be the most promising candidate as a free enterprise paradise, after the failure of experiments on Minerva Reef (southwest of Tonga) and Abaco (in the Bahamas). Stevens, like the John Frum movement on Tanna, was deeply interested in the possible return of American cargo, glimpsed during the Second World War. Oliver provided him with constitutions for the Nagriamel Federation, passports, flags, a radio station and other paraphernalia of nationhood. After an initial attempt at secession in 1976, Oliver and his fellow Libertarians pinned their hopes on a successful secession at the time of independence. In preparation, the Foundation produced a book-length constitution entitled A Blueprint for a New Nation: The Structure of the Na-Griamel Federation (Doorn 1979).
In January 1980 Stevens inaugurated the Vemerana Federation, with an office in Luganville. In April F. Thomas Eck III of the Phoenix Foundation accompanied Stevens back to the New Hebrides after a visit to Carson City, Nevada, in order to help him with a constitution for Vemerana. In May a prospectus for an 'Investment in the Vemerana Federation' was circulated at a Henry Schultz Monetary Seminar in the Bahamas (Schultz was also a member of the board of the Phoenix Foundation). The prospectus, which was signed by Stevens, included his latest constitution. This contained the same elements as all the constitutions prepared by the Libertarians - minimal government with no power to impose income tax, sound-money clauses (currency not to be a government monopoly, but to require solid backing, preferably gold or silver) guarantees of freehold property in land for expatriates as well as Melanesians (the Vanuatu constitution by contrast upholds the principle of the inalienability of land) and untrammeled individual rights. Members of the board of the Vemerana included Thomas Eck, Michael Oliver and John Hosapers.

The prospectus was distributed to European residents in the New Hebrides at the end of May. Meanwhile the Phoenix Foundation had devoted considerable energy, since 1975, in attempting to gain international recognition for the legitimacy of Nagriamel's secessionist claims. The Phoenix Foundation had arranged in 1976 for Nagriamel emissaries to visit the United Nations and in 1979 it sponsored an international tour by Jimmy Stevens and prepared press brochures and influential 'contacts' for him. The material prepared, such as the Australian brochure (Mol Jimmy Tuba Pututun Stevens: Chief President Na Griamel Federation. Visit to Australia 1979), made various untenable claims about the Marxist and/or Communist nature of the Vanuaaku Pati, the alleged rigging of elections, and the validity of Nagriamel's own pretensions to authority over areas of the New Hebrides. Support for Nagriamel (and any future secessionist moves) was sought from all freedom loving opponents of big government and the menace of communism. The idea was promoted that a Vanuaaku Pati government would mean a Cuba on Australia's doorstep and that the Russians would immediately move in to establish a naval base (Tam-Tam 12 July 1980). In May 1980 the Phoenix Foundation Bulletin made the extravagant claim that the Vanuaaku Pati had won the 1979 election in the New Hebrides only with the help of three million dollars provided by 'Australian red run labour unions'.

The Phoenix Foundation efforts to gain international recognition for Stevens had considerable resonance among Australian free marketeers. Gary Sturgess, the research director of the Queensland branch of the Progress Party (1979-1980) was active in promoting the Nagriamel cause. Sturgess was apprehended in the New Hebrides about a month before independence, while acting as a go-between in the delivery of 1,200 Vemerana passports from the Phoenix Foundation to Espiritu Santo. Sturgess was expelled from the New Hebrides but has widely publicized the cause of the Nagriamel/Vemerana secession, 'the only country in the world with a Libertarian constitution' (On Liberty February 1980 and subsequent issues; The Bulletin 17 June 1980:97-103). The Progress Party maintained outspoken support for the 'libertarian revolt' in the New Hebrides. In August 1980 the Progress Party spokesman on foreign affairs, Mr Wal Younger, called for the suspension of Australian aid to Papua New Guinea because of the role of Papua New Guinean troops in bringing an end to the secession in Vanuatu.
Meanwhile Mr Michael Darby, the editor of the monthly *Free Market* was deported from the New Hebrides for his attempts to reach the rebels and subsequently resigned from the Liberal Party.

While the manoeuvres of the Phoenix Foundation have hardly been crowned with success, they were significant insofar as they encouraged the secessionist movements on Santo and Tanna to seek a future outside a united Vanuatu. The Americans were most active in attempting to obtain international recognition for the secessionist attempt, thus threatening the territorial integrity of the new nation. They also provided material help, such as Radio Vanaf, without which the secession could not have been organized, and a bank account opened in May 1980 at the Noumea branch of the Banque de l'Indochine et de Suez in the name of the Vemerana Federation and the Tafea Federation (Tafea being the Tanna based southern version of the Vemerana Federation). Stevens and Jean-Marie Lévy (the president of the Federal Party) were entitled to draw up to $20,000 a month on the account, and the other signatories were Michael Oliver and F. Thomas Eck III (*The Age* 22 September 1980). A boatload of arms from them appears never to have reached the rebels (Fornelli 1980).

Ideological differences

The sources of fragmentation already cited have to some extent been compounded by ideological cleavages. The parties based on the Francophone and custom groups have expressed a commitment to free enterprise as an absolute value which knows no colour. They have supported notions of economic individualism and opposed government controls over land or other transfers.

The Vanuaaku Pati, on the other hand, has rejected the western concept of land as an alienable commodity. It has also espoused a much more guarded approach to the patterns of foreign investment dating from the colonial period (including the lack of local equity, participation and/or control). It has been receptive towards the development of small scale rural projects based on 'appropriate technology' (many of which have been sponsored by overseas church groups and voluntary aid agencies). The Vanuaaku Pati stresses the continuing importance of the rural-based cooperative movement, and the need to improve rural amenities rather than accept patterns of investment which exacerbate economic inequalities and particularly rural/urban distinctions (e.g., Vanuaaku Pati Platform 1979).

The ideological stance of the Vanuaaku Pati reflects both its sociological base in the rural villages and the Third World identification of its leadership. Through the international forums supplied by the churches the leadership has had much exposure to the problems of Third World development. This has been reinforced by the influence of the University of the South Pacific and the University of Papua New Guinea on New Hebridian graduates.

The opposition parties have, by contrast, drawn their strength from local commercial communities which are inextricably involved with foreign business interests. Hence they have naturally opposed policies of government economic intervention in the name of individual liberty.
The ideological cleavage has been greater at the level of rhetoric than at the policy level, owing to the pragmatic approach of the Vanuaaku Pati to the overwhelming problems of economic dependence in post-colonial Vanuatu.

FORCES FOR NATIONAL UNITY

While Vanuatu may seem to be uniquely fragmented, at the same time there are forces for national unity which make it quite probable that the political system will become increasingly consolidated once the secessionist movement on Santo has been completely eliminated. While there is little doubt that other local movements will continue to exist, particularly among the John Frum and non-Christian people of Tanna, the creation of a police mobile unit as a first priority of the Vanuatu government will probably discourage foreign intervention and the steady entrenching of a secessionist movement which characterized the Santo situation. The removal of the French administration, while it will not prevent a degree of potential interference from individuals in New Caledonia, will remove much of the material and ideological encouragement which Vemerana and John Frum received in the past. The dominant French official in Vanuatu is now the accredited ambassador, answerable to the ministry of foreign affairs and with no executive authority, not an executive officer of the ministry of overseas department and territories.

The unifying political forces in Vanuatu are the national movement, embodied in the Vanuaaku Pati, the constitutional system created in October 1979 and posited on a unified nation with regional devolution, and the machinery of government still being created out of the various and disparate institutions left behind at independence. Within a year or two Vanuatu should have a working ministerial system, the beginnings of local government, a unified police force trained partly by Australians and the Papua New Guinea armed forces, and a national communications system based on Radio Vanuatu and (although less likely) on nationally distributed printed media. The creation of these unifying factors depends to a large extent on the receipt of sufficient aid and expertise to make the new institutions viable. While the future of French aid is still very doubtful it is quite certain that Vanuatu will be receiving about $A30 million in aid over the next three years from Britain and Australia. In the absence of foreign interference and with reasonably favourable economic circumstances, a unified and well-managed Vanuatu seems quite feasible, despite the inauspicious nature of its beginnings.

The Vanuaaku Pati

Much of the literature on 'nation building' of the 1960s drew attention to the role of a national party in bringing together and mobilizing the disparate elements of plural societies. The Indian National Congress, the Ghana Convention People's Party or (more relevant to Vanuatu) the Tanzanian African National Union, were all seen as engaged in creating solidarity and giving direction to variegated peoples who had little or no previous sense of national identity. More recently the collapse of many African party systems has tended to diminish enthusiasm for the 'mobilizing
party'. In general such parties either have not surfaced in the South Pacific or have had a shadowy existence. The New Hebrides was exceptional in creating such a party and in sustaining it from its beginnings in 1971 to its total domination of the independent government of 1980. The Vanuaaku Pati, which undoubtedly took some ideas from Tanzania in the past, has been attacked as totalitarian, communist or Marxist. Fear of its victory led to a whole series of countermovements, culminating in the Santo secession when foreign supporters of Vemerana accused Father Lini of creating a 'Cuba in the South Pacific'. Yet, in essence, the Vanuaaku Pati is simply the latest, and one of the most successful, of a long line of nationalist parties common to the Third World over the past century. If such parties do have a 'nation building' function then the Vanuaaku Pati must be seen as a force for unity despite the passionate opposition which it has often aroused among expatriate and indigenous opponents.

The early history and development of the Vanuaaku Pati has been fully described elsewhere (Jupp 1979; Plant 1977). The critical points in its rise were the creation of the New Hebrides Culture Association by Donald Kalpokas, Peter Taurakoto and Walter Lini in 1971, the winning of 59.5 per cent of the popular vote in the Representative Assembly election of 1975, and the launching of the Peoples Provisional Government in 1977. Having shown that it could win votes throughout the islands and build an effective structure under the guidance of Kalkot Matas Kele-kele, the Vanuaaku Pati was able to counteract localism and close the gap between villagers and the educated youth of Vila. What it could not do was recruit Francophone support or break out of its origins among Presbyterians and Anglicans to enrol the quarter of the population who are Catholics or non Christians.

The Vanuaaku Pati was able to build on existing structures, particularly the Presbyterian and Anglican churches and the British sponsored Co-operative Federation. It enjoyed the covert support of the British administration although they were none too happy with the Peoples Provisional Government. Australians had close relations with the Vanuaaku Pati at the official, the religious and the individual level. These latter factors encouraged the French and their supporters in the belief that the Vanuaaku Pati was an agent of 'Anglo-Saxon' imperialism. The adoption of socialist slogans and the influence of educated activists like Barak Sope and Kalkot Matas gave rise to charges of 'communism' amongst the expatriate community and these were taken up by Libertarian supporters of Stevens in America and Australia. The Vanuaaku Pati undoubtedly represented the influence of the Angophone and Protestant elements in the national makeup. But it increasingly used custom symbols and practices as it reached out to the rural electorate, a phenomenon common to other 'nation building' parties originating in the educated indigenous elite but reaching out to the masses. While Presbyterians could not appeal to John Frum for historical reasons, it is clear from voting figures on Tanna in 1975 and 1979 that the Vanuaaku Pati was able to reach many non-Christian voters. It also enjoyed considerable Seventh Day Adventist support and had some following in the Church of Christ, though this was shared with Stevens and Abel Bani.

The Vanuaaku Pati might be termed 'populist' in the sense of uniting better educated leaders with a rural following. As most of the modern white collar, manual and trading classes in Vanuatu are expatriate or non
Melanesian this meant that the Vanuaaku Pati reached the indigenous majority where many of its rivals were based on 'foreign' elements. The early accusations of 'racialism' against the Vanuaaku Pati reflect this firm base in the Melanesians. Most Vanuaaku Pati commissars (or local organizers) are engaged in village agriculture or in serving rural communities through the churches, the cooperatives or the schools. Only Nagriamel and John Frum have comparable claims to organize an indigenous following, and then only in specific localities.

Because the Vanuaaku Pati is so well integrated into local rural society its politicians can more correctly be termed 'grass roots' than most of their opponents. The Vanuaaku Pati has also exerted considerable influence over the chiefs, especially through Fred Timakata and the Council of Chiefs, to the point where conservative politicians like George Kalsakau (in an interview with the authors) were claiming that chiefs were unrepresentative and should be opposed by elected representatives. Most of the Vanuaaku Pati leaders are now enmeshed in the government structure and this raises problems for the party in the future as in comparable situations elsewhere. The Vanuaaku Pati needs a much stronger opposition than currently exists as an incentive to maintaining its organization at the high level of efficiency reached in 1979. The return of Kalkot Matas to study in Papua New Guinea is a serious loss to a party which owes most of its structure to his work. In recent months the Vanuaaku Pati has maintained only a skeletal office and has failed to bring out its party newspaper. This situation underlines the serious shortages of effective personnel in a society with 112,000 people and a dozen indigenous graduates.

The risk to the Vanuaaku Pati is that it might decline in effectiveness and start to expect patronage as the price for loyalty, as has happened widely in Africa. The party leadership is so engrossed in the tasks of government, and particularly in organizing against secession, that it has little time to give to the organization. The disappearance of the French, who devoted so much ingenuity to frustrating the party, in one sense lessens the urgency of keeping the organization at the highest pitch. But these are all possibilities rather than inevitabilities. The Vanuaaku Pati is part of Vanuatu society in the same ways as the major churches or the cooperatives, with which it is inextricably involved. Its membership is active and involved from the Banks and Torres to Anelityum and there are now many 'Vanuaaku Pati villages' which support the party en masse despite its fairly recent creation. The party is likely to attract those seeking a career in the rapidly increasing number of posts open to the indigenous people. Its leaders are well aware of the Tanzanian methods of maintaining party effectiveness in a one party situation, though there is no current indication that they wish to depart from the incentives to efficiency provided by regular contested elections.

The constitution

The constitution on which Vanuatu became independent was, like everything else, the product of Anglo-French discussion, disagreement and compromise. After long, often all night, sessions a constitution eventually emerged less than a year before independence. It is marked by the political disagreements which had already created two major political
forces, the Vanuaku Pati and the 'Moderates' (or 'Federalists') who had come together into a Government of National Unity on 27 December 1978. Eventually, on 5 October 1979 the two resident commissioners for Britain and France endorsed the constitution publicly at a ceremony in Vila although it was not until five months later that the name 'Vanuatu' was adopted, against 'Moderate' objections, nor until less than one month before independence that the French resident commissioner finally and publicly accepted the date for independence.

The constitution begins with the contentious question of language and adopts the formula of 'national language' (Bislama), 'official languages' (Bislama, English and French) and 'principal languages of education' (English and French) in s.3(1). It also commits the republic to protecting 'the different local languages'. As French aid is partly dependent upon the preservation of French culture this section of the constitution is likely to be upheld despite the fears expressed by Francophones that their interests would not be maintained under a Vanuaku Pati government whose members speak only English and Bislama. A further reflection of the preceding propaganda battles is the constitutional protection of political parties which 'respect the Constitution and the principles of democracy' (s.4[3]). This protection does not, of course, help those parties and movements actively engaged in secession, which were decimated by their failure to break up newly independent Vanuatu.

The constitution contains the normal fundamental rights and duties of which the only one currently likely to lead to difficulty is the protection against 'unjust deprivation of property' (s.5[1(j)]). Rights are justiciable, while duties are not. Another highly controversial area of great concern to mixed-race and Asian French citizens was citizenship, where a formula previously used in Papua New Guinea appeared to confine the automatic right to citizenship to those who 'had four grandparents who belong to a tribe or community indigenous to the New Hebrides' (s.9). Naturally, it was also expected that those taking up citizenship should renounce alternative citizenship, an unattractive prospect particularly for Chinese or French with a long term interest in relocating themselves elsewhere if economic or political conditions change too dramatically. However the application of the citizenship laws so far has been fairly liberal, except for those expatriate and mixed-race French citizens involved in the Santo rebellion, who have largely fled or been deported to New Caledonia. Those born in, or resident for ten years in, Vanuatu would appear to have little to worry about at present although immigration and visa laws were being drawn up in October 1980 which will make Vanuatu less 'wide open' than the New Hebrides.

The rest of the constitution describes fairly conventional arrangements for executive, legislature and judiciary, although sometimes in a rather sketchy way for potentially litigious interests. The role of customary law is enshrined (in s.49 and s.50) although no effective record of such laws exists nor is one likely to emerge for some time. Contention may arise in the provision that all non urban land shall revert to the customary owners (s.71) and fear of the loss of property was a factor in the support for secession by French citizens in Santo. However, the government is working on leasing arrangements designed to protect urban and
plantation property, particularly as there is considerable dispute in some areas as to who are the customary owners.

Two areas in which there was hard political bargaining now seem much less important than at the time of constitutional negotiation. Provisions for an element of 'proportional representation' for the election of parliament were not, in fact, implemented. Whatever the system used in 1979 may be called, nowhere does the official report on the elections call it proportional representation (New Hebrides Government 1979). A European-style list system was used for the two regional assemblies in Santo and Tanna but their future is very uncertain and they have not met. While the Vanuaku Pati felt, with much justice, that the electoral systems were designed to frustrate them, in fact this did not happen. They won enough seats to elect the president and amend the constitution, both requiring a two thirds majority.

INDEPENDENCE

The eventual withdrawal of the two colonial powers on 30 July 1980 left Vanuatu politically prepared for independence but administratively unprepared and with a major secession problem unresolved. The Vanuaku Pati was well experienced and organized and had shown twice through elections and once through the creation of the Peoples Provisional Government that it commanded majority support throughout the new country. However its authority was still challenged in Tanna, Santo and, to some extent in Aoba and Malekula, four of the most important islands. Many French expatriates were unwilling to believe that the Vanuaku Pati had finally come to power and they were encouraged in their resistance to the new government by ill-considered acts and words from the retiring French administration. The mixed-race and non-Melanesian citizens were left in even greater uncertainty as they had no metropolis to retreat to (except possibly New Caledonia) and were unsure about their citizenship and property rights in the new state. The Francophone and French citizens had been unwilling to accept the inevitable in many cases and were attracted to the very course most likely to make their situation impossible after independence - support for secession.

The new government simply did what the condominium authorities had been unwilling to attempt. It called in troops from Papua New Guinea to attack Vanafo, arrest Stevens and his supporters, clear up resistance in Port Olry and Big Bay and secure Luganville town and airport for the Vanuatu authorities. The immediate result was the clearing of people from Vanafo and its effective abolition as a future centre for organized resistance, the arrest of dissidents on Malekula, the exiling of expatriates to New Caledonia and the arrest of secessionist politicians including Thomas Tungu, Aimé Maléré, Alfred Maliu and Georges Cronsteadt. That these measures were justified may be gathered from the interview given by Fornelli, self-styled military adviser to Nagriamel, to the Numea press. While denying that any arms had been delivered to Santo he made it clear that this was because the expected deliverer had 'put the money in his pocket' and disappeared. Fornelli's scheme, which Stevens refused to endorse, was simply to blast the Papua New Guinea troops as they landed at
Luganville, a strategy which would have led to far more violence and death than in fact eventuated (Pomrelli 1980).

The short term consequences of the Papua New Guinea military operation and the associated arrests by the Police Mobile Unit left the new state with a mixed legacy. Nagriamel was crushed, its leaders arrested, its illegal radio destroyed and its 'capital city' depopulated. Luganville town lost nearly all its expatriate community and was reduced in population by at least one half. Entry into Luganville was still being controlled by a government permit system in October 1980. Many empty properties and abandoned businesses were already being bought up by the far sighted local Chinese, who had managed to please both sides. Thus the second town of Vanuatu and its major export port were severely affected. The Santo copra mill was destroyed though the Pekoa fish-freezing works were not damaged. In the long run it seems probable that Luganville will recover its previous population and commerce. But it may never be dominated by Francophones again.

Politically the opposition was decimated. Only four assembly members faced the twenty-six Vanuaku Pati politicians. Maxime Carlot, one of the Francophones, was made speaker, leaving only Gérad Leymang, Vincent Boulekoné and Charles Nako as the opposition. All the remaining were either arrested, deported, fled or dead. The very fear of a one party system which had worried Vanuaku Pati opponents was made to come true by their own actions and their false belief that the French either would never leave or would rescue them at the last moment. While potential electoral support for an opposition undoubtedly continues in Santo, Tanna, Aoba and Malekula, this decimation of an already small political elite is hardly promising for the future of liberal democracy in Vanuatu.

The administrative structure left behind by the condominium also presented the new government with many problems. Two local government systems had been attempted at various stages: one based on French ideas of the commune, the other on British rural district councils. Little remained of this at independence and one of the two municipal councils, Luganville, was suspended during the secession. Some villages had been given meeting halls and other facilities under the commune system, particularly those like Erakor which favoured the Francophone parties. In general, however, there was no effective local government system at all other than that provided through the dual district agents or through local chiefs. By August 1980 the Council of Ministers had arrived at an agreement on a local government structure to cover the whole country, but the preoccupation with the secession has prevented this from being put to parliament. Even so, there was some ambivalence within the Vanuaaku Pati between those more attracted to its support for 'island government' or maximum devolution and those who felt that centralization was necessary both to prevent secession and to control the economy.

The proposed local government structure would divide Vanuatu into eleven local government councils, containing within them sixty-nine area councils based on the electoral wards. While the local government councils are to be elected the area councils will be chosen by consensus. Nominated members may also sit on local government councils and would include chiefs, women and youth, chosen by the minister of home affairs. At present this
would ensure the likelihood of all local government councils having a Vanuaaku Pati majority, although that is not necessarily the primary objective. The duties and powers of local government councils include school maintenance, roads and bridges, water, licensing, minor airfields, livestock control and the provision of clerical staff for village courts. Taxes and licences would be administered for the central government as would electoral, birth, death and marriage registration. Councils would be empowered to prepare regional development plans, to provide agricultural extension services and to supervise cooperative societies and the social development of women and youth.

Because of the improbability of finding sufficient funds or trained personnel at the local level, the envisaged local government system would rely heavily upon central funds and upon staff seconded from the public service. Field staff other than council secretaries and treasurers would, in due course, be seconded from relevant ministries like Education or Health. Recurrent 'untied' grants would come from central government, allocated on a formula, while capital grants would be tied to specific projects. Council revenue proposals would be approved by the minister and subject to the auditor-general. The long term objective is to reduce the staff, and presumably the powers, of district commissioners while not allowing local government councils to be more autonomous than their capacity makes desirable.

While the local government structure remains on the drawing board at least until all serious danger of secession is over, the Vanuatu government was also faced with the need to build a ministerial structure, a unified police force and defence force and an economic planning organization which could process foreign aid. Nearly all such work had to be undertaken after independence because of the inability of the condominium powers to agree with each other or with the government. Expatriate advisers remained, of course, although there was a shift from French to English recruitment reflecting both the bitterness surrounding the events before independence and the Anglophone character of the government. The new Central Planning Office had only one ni-Vanuatu at the policy making level, the rest of the small staff being English, French and New Zealander. The ministries also employed expatriates, mostly British, as 'non-executive advisers' while the prime minister's press officer, John Beasant, was brought out from England in mid 1980, having failed to win a parliamentary seat for the Labour Party in the British general elections of 1979.

This continued reliance on expatriates is hardly surprising, given the very small number of ni-Vanuatu to have completed tertiary education before independence. As in some African (but no South Pacific) cases, the ruling party has been a recruitment ground for the highest level of public servant. The existing ministerial structure frequently consists of an elected Vanuaaku Pati politician as minister, with Vanuaaku Pati activists as first and second secretary. Thus Father Lini, as chief minister, has Barak Sope, former Vanuaaku Pati secretary, as his first secretary responsible for foreign affairs. His second secretary, Grace Molisa, is the wife of Sela Molisa, a Co-operative Federation official and Vanuaaku Pati organizer from Santo. His private secretary, P. Taurakoto is, likewise, a Vanuaaku Pati activist of many years standing. Among other Vanuaaku Pati activists serving the government are Shem Rarua, who was
actively engaged in Vanuaaku Pati politics in Santo town for many years, Charles Bice, a member of the Vanuaaku kabinet, and Iolu Abbil. Thus the ministerial structure (given in the Appendix to this chapter) is largely in the hands of those who built up the Vanuaaku Pati over the years and who can be relied upon to cooperate with Vanuaaku Pati ministers. The price for such an arrangement is the running down of the once extremely effective Vanuaaku Pati machine, nearly all of whose full time activists are now involved in the government structure as politicians or public servants. There is also some feeling in the Vanuaaku Pati, expressed at the Mele conference of September 1980, that the new government is looking after its friends and relatives and becoming remote from its grass roots activists. Such a feeling is almost inevitable with the passage of former fighters for independence into the role of rulers.

The creation of a ministerial structure based so firmly on a single party should give effective solidarity to the new government as long as the Vanuaaku Pati stays united. Given the success of the party in maintaining its cohesion since 1975 the signs are fairly hopeful. While adherents to a pure 'Westminster model' may deplore the partisan character of the administration, admirers of the French 'ministerial cabinet' system will welcome it and remain unsurprised. One advantage of the dual influence of Britain and France has been that Vanuatu politicians have been freed from slavish imitation of metropolitan models. The present system ensures the policy makers have known and worked with each other for some years and share common attitudes and allegiances. Partisan patronage has not declined into nepotism or corruption nor laid the basis for a one-party system, although there are risks in all these areas. The way in which the nationalist movement developed made it almost inevitable that the Vanuaaku Pati would take control over all major positions upon independence, while the activities of its secessionist opponents made this completely unavoidable.

NOTES

1 The weekly (bi-weekly from 1979) produced by the French residency.

APPENDIX

The Basic Structure of Vanuatu Government in Late 1980.

The president and all ministers belong to the Vanaauku Pati.

**PRESIDENT:** George Sokomanu
**Secretary:** Ruth Kaltonga

**PRIME MINISTER:** Walter Lini
First secretary: Barak Sope (responsible for foreign affairs)
Second secretary: Grace Molisa (Vanaauku Pati activist)
Private secretary: P. Taurakoto (Vanaauku Pati founder-member)
Press officer: John Beasent (expatriate)

**HOME AFFAIRS:** Fred Timakata (responsible for police and defence)
First secretary: Jimmy Simon (Vanaauku Pati activist, ex British administration)
Second secretary: John Kalotiti

**EDUCATION:** Donald Kalpokas
First secretary: Tele Taun
Second secretary: Lawrence Tarisese

**FINANCE:** Kalpokor Kalsakau
Secretaries: Simeon Revo/Brownie Reuben (on course in Suva)

**NATURAL RESOURCES:** Thomas Reuben Seru
First secretary: Martin Tamata
Second secretary: Charles Godden

**HEALTH:** George Worek
First secretary: Shem Rara (Vanaauku Pati activist)
Second secretary: Frederick Tau

**TRANSPORT:** John Naupa
First secretary: George Pakoa (Vanaauku Pati activist)

**SOCIAL AFFAIRS:** Willie Korisa
First secretary: Charles Bice (Vanuaaku Pati kabinet member)
Second secretary: Aidan Arugogona

**LAND:** Sethy Regenvanu
First secretary: Iolu Abbil (former Vanuaaku Pati Assembly member)
Second secretary: Selwyn Leodoro (Vanaauku activist)

**DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS:**
Northern (Santo): Job Dalesa
Southern (Tanna): Reuben Tamata
Central district 1 (Vila): Tom Bakeo
Central district 2 (Malekula): Jim Rovo

**CENTRAL PLANNING OFFICE:**
Director: D.S. Grundy (expatriate)
REFERENCES


DECOLONIZATION POLITICS IN SOLOMON ISLANDS:
THE MODEL THAT NEVER WAS

J.M. Herlihy

From 1974, coincident with the international oil crisis and the tightening of the world economy, Britain's cooperative policy towards decolonization for its dependent territories changed into an active drive for disengagement (Allen 1978). For Solomon Islands, where a rapid series of constitutional changes had brought an elected majority to theoretical power for the first time in 1970 and a ministerial system of government in late 1974, this meant the subordination of domestic concerns to precipitate preparations for independence. After preliminary talks in London, a provisional timetable was drawn up for internal self-government in January 1976 and independence twelve to eighteen months later. The Constitutional Committee set up in August 1975 was directed to keep the number of substantive changes to the existing constitution and administrative machinery 'to the minimum necessary to achieve the overall aims' (Solomon Islands 1976:28). It was to report back to the parliament¹ by April 1976, which allowed the government three months for follow-up action before the next elections. Despite the haste, preparations for independence in 1977 thus should have reached the point of no return by the time the new parliament first met in the second half of 1976.

The 1975 moves achieved almost unanimous parliamentary support for rapid decolonization, but made independence a major issue in the 1976 election campaign. A number of candidates, aware that the bulk of the population was nervous of independence and hypersensitive to the possibility of consequent political and economic instability, advocated delay. At the same time, many made considerable political capital of electoral grievances against colonial management and, by association, against central government.

From early colonial days central government, an imposed concept in the Melanesian context, was regarded as a foreign enclave, the legitimacy of which was sustained more by the weight of metropolitan backing and sanctions than by village need for a national authority. To many Solomons communities, whose security and survival traditionally derived from small scale autonomy and self-sufficiency, central government represented a threat. As an institution it became stereotyped as powerful but unreliable, rich but rapacious, interventionist, inconsistent and often inept. The inherent tensions caused by differences of structure and scale between national and village level were largely subsumed under the more visible aspects of colonialism. Solomon Islanders tended to operate on the
premise, a legacy of the years when a foreign power usually met the costs of concessions won from central government, that resources wrung from the centre were an unequivocal gain to the indigenous population. Self-government brought no pronounced changes to this situation, and Solomon politics during the decolonization period was strongly influenced by the dual stereotype of government as the symbol of colonial dominance and government as exploitable resource.

From a situation in which the pressures of decolonization threatened to perpetuate a system of minority government, to further polarize the legislature and the bureaucracy, and to create a vicious cycle of diminished legislative effectiveness and diminishing public support for representative government, Solomon Islands emerged in 1980 with a relatively stable polity. Though the transition period was characterized by ad hoc problem-solving, and though the general pattern was one of 'bumbling through', the result was the survival of a beleaguered minority government, the establishment of a working accord between the legislature and the bureaucracy, and the legitimation of central government. On the other hand, the pace and style of colonial withdrawal transferred a number of problems from a context of transition and change to the less mutable context of independent nationhood. Many of these problems were aggravated by situational factors.

Solomon Islands consists of seven main island clusters and innumerable smaller islands, within an estimated nautical zone of 1,520,000 km² (Ward and Proctor 1980). With a population of just over 200,000 (Solomon Islands 1979) it is a small and fragmented country by most measures, but a large and strategically situated nation in the Pacific context. Traditional political systems range from hereditary chieftainship of the Polynesian type to small scale and comparatively fluid groupings based on the acquired status of the Melanesian bigman senior landowner. Both traditionally and in their adaptive mechanisms Solomons cultural systems exhibit a strong element of pragmatism and considerable political sophistication. In modern politics this was obscured during the struggle by the colonial administration to establish the legitimacy and authority of macro level government. Colonial suppression of indigenous political movements and promotion of institutions with apparently similar aims resulted in a disproportionate concern among Solomon Islands politicians for poorly comprehended procedural matters. Modern political skills performed were focused on forms, symbols and political gamesmanship rather than on the art of government.

One consequence of the small size of the Solomon Islands was that relations between political, administrative and economic institutions were highly personalized (see also Selwyn 1975; May and Tupounlua 1980). This gave greater scope than in larger countries for informal checks and balances, but allowed greater distortion of formal processes by individuals. Limited numbers in the legislature and bureaucracy gave a more manageable unit size, but restricted task specialization and created a greater need for multi-skilled personnel. The mechanics of operation as a state made Solomon Islands 'top-heavy' for its size, though small size facilitated general awareness of the constraints imposed by externalities and to some extent eased the pressures on government that they caused. On the other hand, the need for a certain minimum size in some functions made
government as a whole a fairly high cost operation relative to the capacity of the population to support it and to the benefits it could provide for the average villager. Finally, the small size of the educated leadership cadre resulted in considerable overlap and high mobility between politics and administration, with consequent problems in maintenance of the separation of powers on which the Westminster system was based.

The small size of the Solomon Islands, remoteness from its metropole and from other decolonized nations, and relative isolation even within the Pacific meant that Solomon Islanders as a whole had little knowledge of decolonization precedents when the country reached self-government. As a result, the lessons of experience transferred to Solomon Islands were primarily those of its colonial power and little attempt was made to apply the theories and models used by other new nations. Nonetheless, a radical element emerged within the public service at a relatively early stage. In 1973 a number of these men moved into politics and formed a bloc which later became the United Solomon Islands Party. They found that with Britain still firmly in control, and with the committee system of government then in operation, their scope for effective political leadership was severely limited. Educated radicals complained that in the public service the 'employee's mouth was kept well shut and his actions closely circumscribed by restrictive regulations deliberately designed for that purpose' (Raraka 1973:438), and that politicians were hampered by an 'official practise [sic] of buying out promising so-called "rabble-rousers" and "trouble-makers"' (Saunana 1973:434). As Solomon Islands passed through its peak period of elite nationalism and radical anti-colonialism at a time when neither could be used to advantage, both were debased as political tools when the time for them was ripe.

The Solomon Islands position as a 'late-comer' was itself an important variable in the events of the decolonization period. Decolonization on an international scale was almost complete when the islands reached self-government. It was generally assumed that the remaining dependent territories had little to contribute to a knowledge of the decolonization process, and that their main aim should be the avoidance of mistakes made elsewhere (Hart 1974:8). By the mid 1970s the relative prosperity of the 1960s, which had allowed the relaxation of considerations of economic efficiency in the developed world in favour of equity and social justice, was on the wane. Many Western countries faced problems of inflation, unemployment and political instability at home, and were less susceptible than they had been to Third World 'assertions...about the moral obligations and responsibilities which fall on former Western colonial powers' (Harries et al. 1979:116).

In 1976 the main issue for many Solomon Islanders was governmental and economic stability. This derived largely from concern over the deteriorating situation in many developed and developing countries, from a relatively benign contact history and a strong church influence, from widespread disillusion with the then Mamaloni government, and from the belief that the country was being rushed into independence against its own inclinations and interests. Fears of instability were intensified in late 1975 and early 1976 by signs of internal unrest.
One disturbing element was the secessionist confrontation between the Papua New Guinea government and the neighbouring island of Bougainville, with which many Solomon Islanders, especially in the Western Solomons, had close ties. Though suggestions for amalgamation with the secessionist island lapsed, the Bougainvillean situation revived demands for decentralized government, which had been a recurrent political theme since the mid-1960s. These demands were particularly strong in the west, where politicians for many years had capitalized on a popular though debatable theory that the west contributed more than any other area to the national economy but received little in return.

At about the same time, unrest developed in Honiara with the calling of a general strike by the newly formed Solomon Islands General Workers' Union (SIGWU). This led to a major confrontation between the government and the newly organized union workers, led by economics graduate and ex-student leader Bart Ulufa'alu. The intransigence of the union, coming at a time when the international economic situation was unsettled, when the home countries of the bulk of the expatriate community were suffering the effects of rampant unionism, and when self-government was imminent, brought widespread condemnation of Ulufa'alu. The strike, badly handled on both sides, was followed by further unrest to which the government responded with hasty and politically ill-considered moves to curb SIGWU activities. After the second strike, Ulufa'alu was arrested. This reflected adversely on the Mamaloni government, by then in no position to take a hard line on controversial issues, and shortly before the election Ulufa'alu, who previously had stated that he would not stand, announced the formation of a political arm of the union and his own candidacy.

1976: ELECTION AND REACTION

Though competition for seats in the new House was keen, electoral support was generally lethargic (Chick 1980:21). A constitutional increase in the number of seats from twenty-four to thirty-eight operated to the advantage of some candidates and fourteen of the twenty-three recontesting members were returned. Very few of the new members could claim a mandate from their electorates. Over two thirds polled less than 50 per cent of the votes cast, which, with the knowledge that few parliamentarians lasted more than one term of office, made the 1976 House acutely sensitive to electoral opinion. This was intensified by the approach of independence. As a result, parliamentary debate often took the form of a competition between opposing factions and individuals for the position of leading exponent of rural concerns. As members frequently argued essentially the same case in much the same words, this gave an appearance of parliamentary consensus on issues which was belied by subsequent actions and decisions. For much of the life of the 1976 House the common need to demonstrate conscientious representation was overridden by internecine personal rivalries. At the same time, electoral concern for stability meant that despite the popular reformist rhetoric very few parliamentarians could afford to 'rock the boat' or, more correctly, to be seen publicly to rock the boat.
One of the problems for the 1976 House was its superfluous of potential chief ministers. The reshuffles under Mamaloni had given two thirds of the previous House ministerial experience, and the highly fluid party alignments meant that approximately a quarter of the new House held or had held the status of party leader. The rivalries which this situation produced were exacerbated by an early British emphasis on who should lead the country to independence. In 1976 eight candidates were nominated for the chief ministership, which was narrowly won from Mamaloni on the seventh ballot by Peter Kenilorea, a newcomer to parliament, an unsuccessful candidate in previous elections, and a man often designated as 'an administrator - not a politician'. Unlike most of his rivals, Kenilorea had no party affiliations and previously had spoken against party politics (Kenilorea 1973:23-6). Following the election he was promptly deserted by most of his parliamentary colleagues. In a lagged reaction against colonial government the bulk of the House, including most of its experienced politicians and best-educated men, moved en masse into the opposition. At the first sitting Kenilorea and his cabinet of eight ill-assorted ministers faced an opposition of twenty-nine, led by Mamaloni, Western Council president Francis Talasasa Agorau, and Ulufa'alu, whose party had been the only one to achieve significant success.

In the expectation that the Kenilorea government would not last, Mamaloni declined the controversial position of leader of the opposition, which at that stage was not an officially recognized body, and the position fell to Ulufa'alu. The first sitting became a farce, with Mamaloni and his supporters challenging the new government on matters it inherited from their own term of office, and with the opposition forcing through motions which committed the government to action it had little hope of fulfilling. During this period parliamentary consideration of the constitutional report was deferred and the timetable for independence was delayed, but a motion to postpone independence for five years was narrowly defeated. While the opposition hoped that Kenilorea would resign his untenable position, it began to prepare for a vote of no confidence or, as a second line of attack, for the defeat of the budget at the November sitting.

The events of the first sitting, and the inclusion in the opposition of elements widely regarded as dangerous or unstable, threw the bureaucracy solidly behind Kenilorea. Though some public servants objected to Kenilorea's style of leadership, his administrative experience and his ties to the early radical group enabled him to maintain an anti-colonial image without alienation of powerful public service interests. This in turn enabled him to preempt the role which the Opposition Coalition Group has assigned itself, that of defender of Solomon Islands interests, and closed off the bureaucracy as an opposition resource. While Kenilorea's dependence on public service support limited his ability to initiate reforms and make his government vulnerable to charges of neo-colonialism, it quietened electoral fears of instability during the difficult transition period when the legislature was occupied almost exclusively with preparations for independence.

One consequence of the concern for stability was a reluctance on the part of many parliamentarians to employ the constitutional provisions for a vote of no confidence. The small size of the country and the disproportionate impact of personal relationships on parliamentary performance
also vitiated the mechanisms for change of government. After the first sitting a number of fringe members of the Opposition Coalition expressed concern over the inherent dangers of a massive opposition, and dissatisfaction with its erratic leadership. Ulufo'alu, aware that some of his group were wavering, refused to bring a motion of no confidence, which increased the tension between the opposition leaders. The opposition position was further eroded by its lack of official status, support staff and facilities, and by public service and church opposition to its indiscriminate use of anti colonial slogans and political gamesmanship.

The newly constituted legislature had little opportunity to familiarize itself with budget matters. Many parliamentarians, in the erroneous belief that defeat of the budget would bring all government services to a halt, were reluctant to make an issue of it. Nonetheless, the size of the opposition contingent caused widespread tension, especially within the public service, as it became evident that the vote on the budget would be in fact a vote for the country's first prime minister. The anticipated confrontation was aborted after several days of largely inconsequential debate when the speaker, a long term public servant appointed to the position in 1974, called for the vote and, on the voices, gave a quick decision in favour of the government.

During the second sitting the opposition won formal recognition from the House, but in practical terms the victory meant very little. While the government steadily improved its access to support services, the opposition had only its own dwindling resources. Dissatisfaction within the group increased and shortly before Christmas Ulufo'alu dissolved the group, offered to resign its leadership, and demanded an oath of loyalty from those who rejoined. This caused further resentment and shortly thereafter half the members broke away and formed an 'Independent Group'.

From its inception the Independent Group acted more as a political party than as an independent parliamentary body. Though its membership was fluid and lacked any real mutuality of ideas, the fact that its support was the deciding factor in every vote held the group together. During final negotiations for independence the numerical strength of the Independent Group was a direct cause of the institutionalization in the independence constitution of a tripartite system of government. Though some Independents, in belated recognition of the weaknesses of this situation, later discussed dissolution of the Group, the majority of its members were reluctant to relinquish their new status and influence. As a result the House was divided into three parts, with the Independent bloc in effect in opposition to both the government and the formal opposition, and with a consequent diminution in the capacity of the legislature for consistent long term decision making.

With the collapse of the November moves to bring down the Kenilorea government Mamaloni began to consider resignation. A month later Francis Aorau died suddenly. As suspicions that he had been poisoned spread through Honiara, Mamaloni handed in his resignation. It was followed by an upsurge of rumours that a 'Malaita Mafia' had been formed to 'get rid of good politicians and promising public servants', and that 'a politician is behind all the threat' (Melanesian Nius 19 January 1977). These rumours, publicized in a new 'independent' newspaper with which Mamaloni and one of
his ex ministers were closely connected, caused only transient agitation in the parliament, but were taken more seriously in Mamaloni's isolated electorate. In some areas the rumours militated against the Malaitan leadership of the government and the opposition, and revitalized old jealousies of the Malaitan hold on the wage-earning workforce.

INDEPENDENCE: MOMENTUM AND COUNTER-MOMENTUM

The attempt by the House in its first months to secure a more reliable mandate for constitutional decision-making, by referral of the constitutional report 'back to the people', was largely unsuccessful. The report was concerned primarily with the type of post-independence government, about which many villagers felt they had little to contribute. In addition, such consultations often had a cost for villagers, in time and occasionally in cash or goods, which was rarely considered by the convenors. 'They are paid for it, not us', was a frequent comment by villagers who resented the responsibility laid upon them.

Though British officials tended to regard the independence constitution as immutable, many parliamentarians, trained in the British system of constitutional change every few years, were disinterested in more than the short term implications. The constitutional debate in early 1977 provided the first real test of strength for the new parliamentary groupings, each of which was reluctant to concede to the others. The impasse was broken by renewed British attempts to arouse enthusiasm for independence, one of which was the appointment of a constitutional adviser. Due largely to his negotiating skills, agreement was reached on the principles of a draft constitution. Though this was approved by the House, it was a compromise to which none of the groups was totally committed and, as their relative strength in parliament fluctuated, parliamentary priorities for the constitution varied accordingly.

One of the central issues in this period was land. For many years the protectorate government, hypersensitive about formal land rights, had fuelled a belief that freehold land held by foreign interests was land 'stolen' from Solomon Islanders, and that national government, as a 'foreign interest', had no more right to land than foreign business enterprises. This led to interpretation of the popular credo that 'all land belongs to all the people' as implying the return of title to the original landowners, and to the proposed exclusion of national government from any land rights. The Kenilorea government was unable, as a minority, publicly to oppose popular demand for the return of land, but was equally unable, as the national government, to ignore the distributive issues involved. When the parliament deferred consideration of a special committee report on land and rejected a subsequent government white paper, the debate on land was postponed until the constitutional issues were clarified.

One of the constitutional issues was the status of Gilbertese residents who had been resettled in Solomon Islands by the British government some years earlier. In the aftermath of the Banaban affair and the expulsion of Asians in Africa, the British parliament was particularly sensitive to the situation of constitutionally disenfranchised minorities
(Hansard 19-23 May 1978). The hard line adopted by the Solomon Islands on the Gilbertese issue, originally intended to strengthen its bargaining position in the independence negotiations, quickly became explosive. Populist anti-colonialism within Solomon Islands focused Solomons resentment over British high-handedness, both in the earlier resettlement arrangements and in the constitutional discussions, on the unfortunate Gilbertese. It was aggravated by the apparent British denial of what many Solomon Islanders regarded as their unequivocal right to choose their own citizens.

In May 1977 Kenilorea led a small group of parliamentary leaders, selected by the cabinet, to London to negotiate financial arrangements for independence. Dissatisfaction within the group over British handling of the negotiations, and within the Solomons parliament over the lack of consultation, made the proposed settlement of $40 million over four years a highly controversial issue. The parliament refused to allow Kenilorea to bring the settlement before the House, on the grounds that the cabinet had no mandate from the legislature for financial talks (Ben, cited in News Drum 10 June 1977), and stood firm on citizenship and land. Kenilorea, under pressure from the British to move into constitutional talks in July stated that he was prepared to let self-government continue indefinitely.

During this period British attempts to recreate the 1975 momentum towards independence alternately placed the Kenilorea government in a position which was highly vulnerable to parliamentary attack, then patched over the damage with moves which undermined articulate criticism. These moves were a significant factor in the decline of the parliamentary opposition as a political force, but also weakened the Kenilorea government. Kenilorea himself was increasingly isolated as a result of the conflicting pressures on him from the British government, from the different parliamentary groups, from the public service and from within his fragmented cabinet.

With the independence negotiations apparently deadlocked, the British government sent a 'special envoy' to Solomon Islands to discuss the citizenship and land clauses, and constitutional adviser Yash Ghai made an unsuccessful attempt to repeat his earlier achievement in uniting the rival parliamentary groupings. Caught between the British demands for concessions on the Gilbertese issue, and political turbulence at home, the Kenilorea government accepted a hastily-prepared compromise. This resulted in the separation of the issues of Gilbertese citizenship from that of Gilbertese land rights, and the displacement of any discrimination against the Gilbertese from the constitution, which required British parliamentary approval, on to the Solomons parliament and its land legislation.

By mid 1977 colonialism as a political issue was almost moribund and, with attention once again focused on London talks, parliamentary support began to swing towards Kenilorea and established power. As members became more involved in intra-parliamentary manoeuvres, they were less inclined than before to appeal to the electorate. Public support for the legislature declined and, after the House voted itself a pay rise, the plan to engage the entire House in the London negotiations drew charges of parliamentary extravagance. Kausimae left the opposition and announced the formation of a new party, the Rural Alliance Party. The opposition made a
belated attempt to distance itself from the controversial London talks but in the short term its decision to boycott the negotiations acted to Kenilorea's advantage. Three members of the opposition defected and Kenilorea was able to reduce the size of the London delegation.

Though the decline of the opposition derived largely from personality factors and from its reliance on Westminster parliamentary tactics, which were widely regarded as disruptive, it was accelerated by the opposition's failure to conciliate the public service, the churches, and the increasingly influential rural councils. As a result, many extra-curricular moves to secure governmental stability focused on Ulufa'alu. In August 1977 the auditors reported a lack of documentation for over $7,000 SIGWU expenditure, and the registrar issued notice of suspension on the Union. SIGWU threatened a nationwide strike. A week after the suspension was imposed the auditors reported that the documentation had been found, but the suspension was not lifted until the chief justice upheld a SIGWU appeal two months later. The publicity which during this period was given to the implication of financial malpractice within SIGWU reflected adversely on the opposition and with the return of the London delegation in triumph the government for the first time had the upper hand.

Among the concessions won by the Solomons team at the London talks were the right of the National Parliament to elect a Solomon Islands citizen as governor-general, a slight increase in the overall amount of the financial settlement, and a large grant instead of the previous soft loan component. Though a senior Colonial Office official later commented that 'we didn't really give them that much', these changes further discredited Ulufa'alu's National Democratic Party (NADEPA), which had claimed that 'there was no way the conference could improve [the settlement's] quality which [is] quite different from increasing it, but at any rate, to increase the amount ... is almost impossible' (News and Views 15 September 1977). One concession by the Solomons team to British reluctance to appear interventionist in post-independent internal matters was in the details of its provincial government proposals. (Solomon Islands 1977:15-16). As a result, electoral response to the proposed constitution was ambivalent, but it brought a loose alliance within parliament, based on mutual responsibility for the successful negotiations, between the government and the Independent Group.

Though the report of the constitutional conference received parliamentary approval at the 1977 budget sitting, difficulties with the legal details delayed preparation of the Independence Order until March 1978. In late 1977 the government began to flex its newly acquired muscle, to which Ulufa'alu responded with a motion of no confidence in Kenilorea's cabinet. The seven hour debate collapsed without a vote. In a characteristic risk-minimizing technique, the House evaded the issues raised and concentrated on the main personalities involved and their relative fitness for the prime ministership.
SECESSION: MELANESIAN VARIATIONS ON A THEME

In late 1977 and early 1978 Western resentments of central government, which were revived by the changes to the constitutional clauses on provincial government, resulted in the rapid spread of a secession movement in the Western Solomons. A number of Westerners, convinced that provincial government would not answer their problems and that central government would not meet their demands, regarded 'breakaway' as the only alternative. Divisions within the Western parliamentary contingent, which was split between the three parliamentary groups, intensified as parliamentarians voiced conflicting views on the issue and sought to reconcile their national alignments with electoral pressures. The situation was aggravated by the return to the West of an entrepreneurial ex politician who had been soundly defeated for his Honiara seat in 1976 and had decided that Western politics offered him a new and promising future. He attached himself to the Western Council as its 'political adviser', and became the leading proponent of secession.

In a somewhat bathetic facsimile of the Bougainvillean secessionist confrontation, the Western demands reached a crescendo shortly before independence. These demands, toned down after meetings between the Council, Western parliamentarians and central government representatives, finally became:

That the Solomon Islands Government should give serious consideration at the forthcoming Legislative Assembly meeting to granting State Government to the Western Solomons with full control over finance, natural resources, internal migration, land, legislation, and administration before Independence, and if this is not granted the Western Solomons will not be participating in the national Independence celebrations and may possibly declare eventual unilateral independence. (Western Council Minute 20/78, March 1978).

The national government moved quickly to set up the Special Committee on Provincial Government for which the Independence Order provided (Solomon Islands 1978:195), but to the West an alliance with the Committee was a 'fall-back' option. Though one of the parliamentary leaders announced in February 1978 that the movement had converted to a watchdog role to ensure that the West received full autonomy under a state government system (Talasasa, cited in News Drew 17 February 1978), the Western Council - and its 'political adviser' in particular - was not prepared to relinquish the initiative and continued to press for secession.

For Kenilorea's government, the situation was complicated by the delay in preparation of the Independence Order. Though the British government kept up the pressure with the somewhat premature dispatch in February of an 'expert in organizing independence ceremonies', the Independence Order did not come before the House until April. By that time Kenilorea had increased the financial allocation to the councils, rejected state government for the West, and improved his government's parliamentary position by the appointment of two leading Independents as ministers. Despite a walk-out by six Western members and four of the opposition, in protest
against government handling of the Western situation, the Order was passed. Fresh talks commenced with the Western Council, during which it became clear that the secessionist leaders, trapped by the expectations they had aroused and the uncompromising stance they had adopted, could not back down. Central government, also trapped by the publicity and hindered by the imminence of independence, could find no mutually acceptable ground on which to negotiate. By June, a month before independence, the protagonists were immobilized.

The pressure was eased, paradoxically, by an additional complication: the fortuitous publication in the national newspaper of an anonymous verse inimical to the West's claims and aspirations (News Drua 9 June 1978). The Provincial Government Committee, which had been warily evading the Western demands, immediately and publicly condemned the ill-timed publication. National government, slower to respond and embarrassed by the incident, which had been due to a slip by a senior member of staff of the government-controlled paper, found itself accused on all sides of irresponsibility. A week after the publication the Western minister of home affairs, whose responsibilities for local government had placed him over previous months in a politically invidious position, resigned from cabinet.

The main thrust of the West's 'Ode' campaign was towards central government culpability for the publication, which provided the West with a strong lever to press for compensatory concessions to its cause, and reinforcement with the electorate for its stance. Central government responded with a diversionary investigation into the identity of the author, which had little effect until a rumour erroneously attributed the verse to a source close to the chief minister. The possibility that the author's identity could be used against Kenilorea brought a further flurry of political manoeuvring by the Western bloc and other ambitious leaders. Non-government Western parliamentarians formed a joint committee with council representatives to negotiate compensation for the damage to provincial pride, and to further the Western claims for autonomy. With independence only weeks away central government vacillated over the issue and amount of compensation, which provided an easy way out of the dilemma despite the dangerous precedent it would set, and the delay drew further opprobrium on the chief minister.

Though Kenilorea had attempted during this period to improve cabinet cohesion by the formation of a government 'United Democratic Action Group' (UDAG), tensions within cabinet were intensified by electoral pressure on the two remaining Western ministers, by the need to decide on an uncontroversial candidate for governor-general, and by the rigid application of British protocol in preparations for the independence ceremony. Kenilorea faced an additional problem with the conviction of and imposition of a prison sentence on Ulufa'alu and Kenilorea's controversial special secretary, Francis Saemala, for a 'disorderly conduct' incident outside the expatriate-controlled Yacht Club. Shortly before independence the powerful minister for finance, Ben Kinika, resigned as deputy chief minister, ostensibly because the Independence Order left his future position unclear.
INDEPENDENCE: 'WE ARE NOW MASTERS OF OUR OWN POLITICAL DESTINY...'

The first sitting of parliament after independence coincided with the second full meeting of the Provincial Government Committee and with the failure of a high court appeal by Ulufa'alu and Saemala. This resulted in a tangled series of negotiations and shifting alliances as ambitious politicians tried to take over the leadership of both the opposition and the government. After the collapse of a move by the deputy leader of the opposition to replace Ulufa'alu, parliamentary attention focused on Kenilorea, who had refused demands that he dismiss Saemala, and on the possibility of a vote of no confidence. Aware that whoever moved a no confidence motion was likely to be accused of disruptive personal ambitions and to be scapegoated in the election for a new prime minister, potential candidates privately offered support to possible rivals, but declined to bring the motion themselves. The impasse was overcome when an unlikely contender for prime ministership was induced to sponsor the motion, but it did not reach the floor of the House. Previous experience and the equivocal negotiations made the challengers uncertain of the reliability of their allies, and in a relatively rapid volte-face they pressed their colleague to withdraw his motion.

By the last quarter of 1978 provincial government had become a political bandwagon. Parliamentarians on the Provincial Government Committee began to coalesce for parliamentary vote, and to throw their weight against the Kenilorea government. Other parliamentarians courted and deferred to Committee members, and on occasion preempted by motions in parliament decisions that had been 'leaked' from the Committee. In September the non-government groups demonstrated new found strength with the defeat of the government over a motion to review the public service, a victory which some parliamentarians regarded as a de facto vote of no confidence.

After the collapse of the August moves for a vote of no confidence, Kenilorea filled the last of the vacant ministries which had attracted some Independents to a more pro-government stance. Preoccupation at senior administrative and cabinet level with the budget and post independence matters overshadowed the protracted provincial government issue, and by November public interest was on the wane. Leakage of some Committee decisions, an accumulation of matters on which government action was frozen pending the Committee's report, and a growing suspicion that the results would not justify the time and expense, made a number of erstwhile sympathizers impatient. Parliamentarians and cabinet members, many of whom had been directly or indirectly snubbed by the Committee over previous months, withdrew into cautious preparation of their stance when the provincial government issue came before parliament. Some Westerners attempted to focus the anticipated challenge to Kenilorea's government on the Western cause, but this took second place to the new strength of parliamentary opposition to Kenilorea personally. After the test of strength over the motion to review the public service, the alliance of the opposition and independents from the Provincial Government Committee drew sufficient numbers to reject the budget, which was passed by one vote on the second reading and defeated by one vote on the third.
The post independence reform thrust demonstrated by the defeat of the budget soon collapsed. Kenilorea, who had stated prior to the vote that he would not resign over it, moved that the ministry of finance be authorized to continue supply for the constitutional four months. The parliament, characteristically grasping the least-risk option, agreed. The ministry for finance then called an immediate halt to all planned expansion and government officials gave extensive publicity to the alleged threat of a rapid decline in rural services. This placed the opposition alliance on the defensive and enabled the government to involve its leading members in a new 'Public Expenditure Committee' to assist the ministry of finance in the preparation of a revised budget. Though the committee had very little time to review the budget, and no power to authorize changes, the token gesture was sufficient to defuse the crisis. Cabinet announced its acceptance of some of the Committee's recommendations, and the budget passed at the next sitting with no major changes either to recurrent or to capital estimates.

THE TURNING POINT

By the time the provincial government report was submitted to the minister for home affairs the country had moved into a stage of difficult distributional choices and trade-offs, where concessions to one area often had to be weighed against the resultant losses to another. The report, on the other hand, was essentially a political document and to a large extent a lagged reaction against colonialism. Many of its recommendations presaged major problems for central government. These included considerable increases in monetary and non monetary costs, complex political and administrative arrangements, a high potential for disunity, a strong bias in favour of the better-developed provinces, and severe limitations on central government capacity for economic management. At the same time, most Solomon Islanders regarded total provincial autonomy as an unrealistic goal, and by Committee fiat as well as by established practice central government retained the final say over many crucial aspects of the proposed provincial government system. In this situation it could well be argued that improvement to the previous decentralization programme required stronger, not weaker, linkages between the provinces and the centre.

The eleventh-hour distribution of the lengthy report to parliamentary members, due to debate it in the May-June session, flustered the insecure minority government. Members of cabinet, aware that the only predictable factor in the imminent debate was that the provincial government issue would be used against them, were reluctant to present the report without detailed consideration. They also knew that to withhold it would be politically unwise. Cabinet therefore decided to table it on a 'take-note' motion, a move which it hoped would provide an indicator of likely parliamentary and public reaction. The motion suggested that the parliament

await the proposals of Government regarding the adoption of a suitable system of Provincial Government for Solomon Islands to be submitted before December 1979, following detailed consideration of the report of the Special Committee.
The non-Cabinet parliamentarians, equally uncertain of the politically optimal stance, refused to be drawn and simply 'took note'. For the Committee parliamentarians, however, the implication that the government was not prepared to accept their report as 'a suitable system of Provincial Government' was a slight which intensified their hostility towards government. The motion thus did little more than commit cabinet to production of a potentially controversial alternative to the report.

In July, cabinet appointed a working party of experienced public servants, chaired by its best educated minister, to prepare a white paper for the next sitting. At the same time, government departments were preparing for the important debate on the next development plan and for the budget sitting in November. Members of parliament began to prepare for the 1980 elections, and political parties commenced their customary pre-election renaissance. In the expectation that the white paper would represent government counter-proposals to the Committee's recommendations, many non-government parliamentarians adopted the Committee report as the symbol of their anti-cabinet stance. The supremacy of political alignments over issues was strengthened, unwittingly, by the ministry responsible for the white paper. Aware of the incipient split, ministry officials kept tight security on the paper's proposals. As a result, parliamentarians had little opportunity to discuss the respective merits of the white paper and the report with their electorates, and relied the more strongly on their predetermined parliamentary alliances.

In the event, the white paper was a remarkably astute political document. It disarmed much of the nascent opposition by taking a stance that was 'largely in agreement' with the report and by minimizing points of conflict, so that it preempted rather than challenged its predecessor. It used to advantage the demonstrated reluctance of many parliamentarians to 'rock the boat' or to debate unfamiliar detail and established cabinet firmly as the leading proponent of provincial government. In providing a 'least-risk' compromise of the type to which parliament repeatedly had shown itself most receptive, it won parliamentary approval for an approach which in real terms committed central government to very little that had not been foreshadowed by the 1973 decentralization programme and subsequent developments in local government. Finally, by a resolute claim to 'at least' twelve months for planning and preparation of legislation, it deferred awkward questions of implementation until well into the life of the next House.

The combination of the scheduled September and November sittings into one massive pre-Christmas session to deal with the annual budget, the next development plan and another motion of no confidence, inter alia, cast the provincial government debate into the shade. Members of the House, who by that stage had a considerable personal and political stake in the finalization of the issue before the 1980 elections, passed the white paper with a resounding majority. The crucial decisions on the optimal means to attain the desired ends were relegated to the bureaucracy, the body which most national and provincial politicians previously regarded as the main rival to their power and authority.
This new willingness in parliament to allow the public service a major role in an intensely political issue was an important landmark in the decolonization process. Due largely to the momentum created by the provincial government issue, by the end of 1979 much of the earlier tension between the political and the bureaucratic arms of government had been dissipated. Non-cabinet parliamentarians were less inclined to treat the public service as the cabinet's exclusive property and secret political weapon, and public servants demonstrated an increased ability to differentiate between the parliamentary institution and its personalities, many of whom they did not respect.

To a considerable extent the main hopes for the provincial government system, accelerated political development and improved local participation, were achieved by the process of planning it. More than any other event of the decolonization period, the provincial government exercise mobilized a broad spectrum of political, administrative, educated and grassroots interest and, more than any other issue, it symbolized the transition from dependency to nationhood. In particular, it demonstrated the interdependence of national and provincial roles, and legitimized the centre. At the same time, it strengthened local government and increased central responsiveness to provincial concerns to an extent that answered many of the problems the new system was intended to overcome.

1980: THE ACCOUNTING

With provincial government defused as an election campaign issue, the various parliamentary groups turned to consolidation of their electoral standing. Several gained an early advantage for their 1980 candidature and, if necessary, for a subsequent move into local government, by successfully contesting provincial seats. Over half the members, by that stage cognisant of the inevitability and power of party politics, joined one or other of the existing parties. Kenilorea upgraded UDAG into the United Party and Mamaloni joined Kausimae's Rural Alliance Party, renamed the People's Alliance. The core members of the parliamentary Independent Group drew up an 'independent' manifesto and, under the new leadership of Francis Billy Hilly, campaigned as a de facto fourth party.

Though the United Party had only eleven of the recontesting members, Kenilorea was in a relatively strong position for the six months prior to the election. In January, shortly after the council elections had given NADEPA control over the Honiara Town Council, the government initiated a long overdue investigation into the affairs of the difficult council, and replaced the elected body with an appointed authority. In February the government announced a record trade surplus, the importance of which was boosted in April when Britain cut its budgetary allocation to overseas aid. The other parties, with no equivalent reinforcement, tended to rely on numbers and tactics, to their own detriment.

In the run-up to the elections, which had been postponed until August 1980 due to problems with registration of voters, the entire parliament came under attack for having approved a $4,000 terminal grant to its members. Protests against the grant, largely from the educated, wage-earning cadre, were used in the campaign against some sitting members, but
outside the urban centres had little influence on the election results. In the pragmatic and often sceptical rural electorate's political exploitation of central government was less important than conscientious representation and, in particular, than a demonstrated capacity to direct government resources to parochial needs. One consequence was that parliamentary antagonisms to Kenilorea proved difficult to amplify into an election issue, and on occasion told against their exponents.

While party affiliation gave no significant advantage for most of the outgoing members, 64 per cent of whom were defeated, Kenilorea's party won half the seats it contested. Almost 75 per cent of the new House eventually claimed party allegiance. Unlike the 1976 election, when seven of the nine outgoing ministers retained their seats, cabinet membership also gave very little advantage, and six of Kenilorea's ministers were defeated. This left Kenilorea's party with seven of the thirteen reelected members, but only three previous ministers and none of the strong graduate contingent. With the exception of Ulufa'alau, the only survivor from the previous NADEPA members, the remaining reelected members were Independent. These included the other three university graduates and Waita Ben, the retiring minister for agriculture and lands and one of the most successful electoral performers both in 1976 and in 1980. Though the People's Alliance increased its parliamentary representation from one to eight, it lost Kausima, who had campaigned against Kenilorea in his home electorate, and only Mamaloni achieved significant electoral success. This meant that the new House, like the old, held considerable potential for leadership conflict but, on the whole, a very weak electoral mandate.

While the 1980 election was, first, a 'get with the strength' vote, it was also a vote for professionalism in politics. Seventy-one per cent of the new House had previous experience of politics in some form, and one third of the new members had been defeated candidates in 1976. Almost 90 per cent had worked at some stage in the public service and though eight members represented themselves as farmers or businessmen all of them had administrative experience. A significant element in the public image of political professionalism was conscientious representation. All the reelected members had shown above average sensitivity to electoral opinion in the previous House, but at the same time most were relatively well educated men who saw their role as more than village mouthpiece.

Though the high turnover of previous representatives indicated widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of the 1976 House, the voting figures show that only in seven electorates was the vote clearly a vote against the sitting member. Twenty-six of the thirty-six recontesting members lost votes by comparison with their 1976 performance, but in most cases this was little more than could be attributed to a 37 per cent increase in the total number of candidates. While the performance ranking of 75 per cent of the old House declined, twelve of the losers scored better than the lowest-ranking member to be reelected, and fourteen had a higher score than the lowest-ranking new member. Three of the defeated candidates actually held or improved on their previous numbers. This suggests that in the eyes of their electorates most members of the difficult 'transition' House performed far more creditably than the events of 1976-80, and the high turnover of members, indicated. In effect, new members were voted in but the old House was not voted out.
Whereas analysis of the 1976 House showed that a number of major changes occurred in the legislature despite a relatively low representative turnover, the 1980 House with its very high turnover showed very little significant change from 1976. The proportion of the House with previous national legislative experience jumped from 21 per cent to 42 per cent in 1976 (Chick 1980:27), but remained approximately the same in 1980. Educational levels showed only a slight decline in the number with little or no primary education. The number with university degrees, which had increased dramatically in 1976, was unchanged in 1980. One graduate who made a last minute change of electorate lost; one who had been defeated in 1976 won. The number with secondary, technical and non-degree tertiary education was almost exactly the same, though the number of teachers increased from six to nine in the new House. This was less significant than it seemed as rural teachers often were the only educated group in 1980 which had close and regular contact with rural electorates.

The age range also showed little change, with an average age of thirty-seven years in the new House as against thirty-eight years in the old, a slight narrowing of the age range to between thirty and fifty-two years, and a small increase in the number of under-forty-year-olds at the expense of the over-fifty bracket. Of the 'old guard', those who had been involved in Marching Rule a generation earlier and those who had been 'professional politicians' in the 1960s and early 1970s, none survived (though one, Peter Salaka, made a comeback as a result of his exploitation of the Western secession movement). The 1980 election could be said to have marked the real end of Marching Rule, the end of confrontation and the beginning of electoral identification with central government.

On the other hand, the 1980 elections showed no major changes to voter participation. Voting turnout ranged from over 80 per cent in two electorates to 34 per cent in North Guadalcanal (see Table 1). Significantly, the only two members of the 1976 House to show an improvement in their percentage of the vote after adjustment for changes in the number of candidates, Kapini and Tovua, came from the two Guadalcanal electorates with less than 40 per cent voting turnout. As in previous elections, voter participation often reflected the degree of dependence of the provinces on national government resources, as opposed to their own or non-government resources, for development. In the better developed provinces, West, Central and Guadalcanal, voting turnout was medium to low, while in the Makira-Ulawa electorates the lowest participation rate was 73 per cent. Only six members of the 1980 House polled over 50 per cent of votes cast and only two, Kenilorea and Mamaloni, received a clear electoral mandate from over 50 per cent of their registered voters. Approximately 75 per cent of the new parliament represented no more than 25 per cent of their eligible voters (see Table 2).

THE FUTURE: HEADS YOU WIN, TAILS I LOSE

In August 1980 Kenilorea again faced Mamaloni in the contest for prime minister, and was reelected on the first ballot with a majority of twenty-five to five votes. Though his party had the highest representation of any
Table 1
Voter participation by provincial area, 1980 elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of registered voters casting votes</th>
<th>Malaita</th>
<th>Santa Isabel</th>
<th>Makira/Ulawa</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Central Is.</th>
<th>Guadalcanal</th>
<th>Honiara</th>
<th>Temotu (Eastern Outer Is.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 80</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 to 80</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 70</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total electorates</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total registered voters</td>
<td>29,771</td>
<td>5,087</td>
<td>6,885</td>
<td>18,877</td>
<td>8,726</td>
<td>21,065</td>
<td>5,520</td>
<td>5,187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2

Electoral support for successful candidates, 1980 elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinicial area</th>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>No. of candidates</th>
<th>Successful candidate</th>
<th>Votes for successful candidate as percentage of registered voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malaita</td>
<td>North West Malaita</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Olea</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lau &amp; Mbaelelela</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Suri</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Kwara'ae</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>*Taki</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Malaita</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Maetia</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Malaita</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bataiofesi</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Kwairo</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kuka</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Kwairo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fa'asifoabae</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Are'Are</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aihunu</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Are'Are</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>*Kenilorea</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small Malaita</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Harihiru</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaita Outer Is.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Keaumi</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guadalcanal</td>
<td>West Guadalcanal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teke</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Guadalcanal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mangale</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Guadalcanal</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Alebua</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North-East Guadalcanal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>*Ben</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Guadalcanal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>*Kapini</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Guadalcanal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>*Tovua</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honiara</td>
<td>West Honiara</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>declared invalid on appeal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Honiara</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>*Ulufa'alu</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Islands</td>
<td>Russells &amp; Savo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ngina</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rennell/Bellona</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gela</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Harper</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Isabel</td>
<td>West Isabel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lulei</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Isabel</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Evo</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Shortlands</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Salaka</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Choiseul</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Qurusu</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Choiseul</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>*Dorolovomo</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vella Lavella</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>G. Talasasa</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ranongga &amp; Simbo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>*Hilly</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gizo Kolombangara</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>*Wickham</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vona Vona/Rendova &amp; Tetepari</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Soakai</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roviana &amp; North New Georgia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>*Beti</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marovo</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>*Ghemu</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makira/Ulawa</td>
<td>West Makira</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mamaloni</td>
<td>67.6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Makira</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>*Kinika</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ulawa &amp; Ugi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mamau</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temotu</td>
<td>Temotu Pele</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>*Bonunga</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Temotu Nende</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tropa</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*retiring member of 1976 House.
group, it did not have an absolute majority. Rather than appoint his cabinet from his minor supporters, Kenilorea opted for a coalition. An eventual agreement with the independents enabled him to form a strong cabinet which included four of the parliament's five degree holders, nine of the thirteen reelected members, and all four reelected ministers. On the other hand, the need to negotiate with the independents as a group, a consequence of the influence of the old Independent Group, resulted in a severe imbalance in cabinet representation. The better-developed provinces, West and Guadalcanal, received seven of the eleven ministries for 36 per cent of the national population. Malaita, with about one third of the country's population, had one plus the prime minister, and two of the eight council areas had no cabinet representation. In addition, the ratio of six United Party to six independents, four of whom belonged to the old Independent Group and continued to act as a party, made Kenilorea's position in cabinet much weaker than his parliamentary numbers and the vote for the prime ministership indicated.

Theoretically the coalition gave the Kenilorea government twenty-two members - the twelve cabinet members and ten United Party backbenchers - against an opposition of Mamaloni and his seven new People's Alliance members. Though four of the remaining seven unaligned members, including the two NADEPA representatives, indicated that they would lean to the opposition, neither the opposition nor the independents, nor both collectively, had the number to defeat the government.

With the change to a government majority, the influence of political expediency on the independence constitution registered almost immediately. Whereas the power structure and the highly personalized divisions in the 1976 House tended to obfuscate the constitutional separation of government, opposition and independents, in the 1980 House it was clear that the old Independent Group was in fact a party grouping, distinct from parliamentary independence. One problem was that the constitution reflected the earlier political relationships and did not define the status, role or privileges of the official opposition or the independents other than for the purpose of appointment of the leader of the two groups. It therefore employed the term 'independent group' rather than 'independent members', and defined an 'independent group' as 'a group of members of Parliament whose members are independent both of the Government and of any opposition group and whose number includes a leader who commands their support' (Solomon Islands 1978:179). While it provided for a situation where the opposition or the independents were not strong enough to warrant official recognition by the appointment of a leader, and allowed an absolute majority of the parliament in effect to vote them out of existence, it did not cover a situation where the leader of one group moved into another. Confusion of the assumptions underlying the constitutional clauses with the situation in the previous House led in October 1980 to the appointment of Billy Hilly, deputy prime minister in the 1980 House, to the parliamentary leadership of the independents, most of whom had no ties with his Independent Group.
1980 AND AFTER

Though many of the problems of the transition period have been overcome by attrition if not by confrontation, and though the Kenilorea government superficially is in a fairly impregnable position, the major problems for the 1976 House have yet to be solved. Solomon Islands is still a small country with a small, relatively high-cost polity. In this situation personal relationships and internecine rivalries tend to dominate the decision making processes to an extent that makes a parliamentary majority fairly insignificant. Kenilorea's triumph at the 1980 elections, part of which was a consequence of the unusual circumstances of the previous four years but much of which must be attributed to Kenilorea himself, focuses those rivalries even more strongly on the prime minister. As previous events have indicated, victory at the polls has very little bearing on parliamentary alignments between elections. Kenilorea needs a far greater majority than he has to control the parliament effectively in the Solomons circumstances, and with the traditional fluidity of Solomons alliances even his present majority cannot be considered reliable. He now has a strong and well educated cabinet, but one which contains the strongest contenders in the present parliament for his own position. The polarization of macro and micro concerns during the colonial period, and the resultant conflict between the parliament's national and electoral roles, make the government particularly vulnerable to any mobilization of public opinion. The provincial government exercise has already indicated that the more advanced provinces are only prepared to subsidize the less developed areas when they have reached the levels of living to which their own people aspire, and that they cannot be expected to relinquish voluntarily their 'right' to the superior services they now enjoy. As a result of these advantages, their representatives now control the cabinet, and as conscientious representatives and astute politicians they cannot place an amorphous 'national interest' ahead of the interests of their own electorates. Though the first Kenilorea government had little scope for reform, the second Kenilorea government is by virtue of its position answerable for all the problems not only of the transition period, but of the entire colonial era. Kenilorea in effect has won the war, but has yet to win the peace.

NOTES

1 The term 'parliament' is used throughout to designate the legislative body, which was renamed several times during the constitutional changes leading to independence.

2 See Grocott (1975) for a brief resume of party formation and alliances up to July 1974. Grocott tends to overestimate the importance of party allegiances in Solomon Islands politics, but provides a useful insight into the background of the personal rivalries which dominated the decolonization period.
See Russell (1970), Woolford (n.d.) and Paia (1975) for the details of this system and its place in Solomons constitutional development. In retrospect, the four years of experimentation with the committee system left the Solomons parliament without the experience it needed to operate a Westminster system effectively during decolonization.

Risk minimization, as opposed to maximization of 'profit' or selection of the hypothetically optimal alternative, is a widespread feature of Melanesian decision-making. See Brookfield (1969, 1972) for a more general analysis.

The scores of successful candidates in 1976 and 1980, using a 1976 base, are given in Appendix 2.

The West Honiara election was declared invalid on appeal.
APPENDIX 1

Chronology of Solomon Islands Political Development

1893
Solomon Islands declared a British Protectorate within the Western Pacific High Commission.

1921
First Advisory Council, not more than four members.

1922
Government appointment of district and village headmen authorized under first Native Administration Regulation.

1927
Membership of Advisory Council increased to seven expatriates.

1939-40
Government suppression of pan-Solomons movement for native advisory forum.

1944
Government introduces small native councils on African model.

1946
Marching Rule disrupts development of councils.

1947
Marching Rule leaders imprisoned.

1950
Four nominated Solomon Islanders join Advisory Council.

1952
Headquarters of Western Pacific High Commission transferred to Honiara.

1958
Four official members and ten nominated members, including five Solomon Islanders, in Advisory Council.

1960
Advisory Council replaced by Executive and Legislative Councils, the latter with eleven official members and ten nominated members including six Solomon Islanders.

1964
Constitutional change provides for eleven official members and ten others, consisting of two nominated members, seven elected by electoral colleges of local government councillors, and one directly elected for Honiara.

1965
First elections of Solomon Islanders to Legislative Council under 1964 constitution, and formation of Democratic Party by Mariano Kelesi and others.

1966
Legislative Council recommends increase to fifteen officials and fourteen elected members, and makes provision for two nominated non-voting members.

1967
First general open elections in thirteen of fourteen constituencies.
1968 Public Service Advisory Board established on the direction of High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, 'as a first step in the process of separating control of the public service from the influence of politics'.

1970 Constitutional change replaces Legislative Council with Governing Council consisting of the High Commissioner, seventeen elected members, three ex officio members and up to six official members. First elected majority of Solomon Islanders. Committee system of government introduced. Formation of Labour Party.


1972 Special Select Committee recommends return to conventional Westminster system.


1974 Governing Council reorganized as Legislative Assembly with ministerial system. Mamaloni elected first chief minister. High Commissioner for the Western Pacific becomes governor of B.S.I.P.

1975 Mamaloni resigns and is reelected chief minister. Formation of SIGWU.

1976 Internal self-government. Legislative Assembly increased from twenty-four to thirty-eight members. Kenilorea elected chief minister.


1980 First elections after independence. Kenilorea reelected as prime minister and Mamaloni replaces Ulufa'alu as leader of the opposition.
## APPENDIX 2


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>1976</th>
<th>1980</th>
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<td>Shortlands**</td>
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<td>Li'i</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>12.3</td>
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</table>
Tumulima  Gela  49.9  7.0  Ind

* Performance ranking was derived from an index based on the candidate's percentage of the vote and the number of his votes by comparison with the average per candidate in his electorate.

**As the candidate changed electorates in 1980, no comparison can be drawn between his 1976 and his 1980 score.
REFERENCES


Fiji: Post-Independence Politics

J. Nation

'... this is one of the few matters within the range of political science in which there is complete agreement between theory and practical experience. Communal elections strengthen communal feelings because in public debate appeals are made principally to the interest of each community, and within each community the more violent and selfish spokesmen of special interests outbid the moderates and public-spirited.'

W.J.M. Mackenzie (quoted in the Royal Commission into Fiji's electoral system 1975).

'Few societies exhibit a more marked degree of institutional separation between the major sections of their population than does Fiji, yet group violence has seldom occurred - never on a significant scale.'


Ten years ago Fiji achieved independence in a fairly low-key atmosphere; it was not the culmination of a nationalist struggle and the constitution providing for independence was a compromise requiring continuing cooperation to make it work rather than a monument that would stand forever. The initiative for independence (and the self-government that preceded it) had come from the predominantly Indian National Federation Party (NFP) which espoused nationalism but lacked the nation to make it a reality, a problem that its leaders attributed to the preservation of communal representation. Before the 1972 election they were confident that they could win a significant proportion of the Fijian vote, just as the Fijian-based Alliance had succeeded in winning some 38 per cent of the Indian vote in the 1966 elections.¹ The NFP had attracted to its camp a number of promising Fijian leaders who combined high rank, education and political ability. The almost complete lack of Fijian support for their party at the polls in 1972 came as something of a shock for NFP leaders. Matt Wilson summed up the results of NFP attempts to woo Fijians in these terms: 'So the Fijians today will listen to the NFP; they will offer its members a bilo of yacoma² and bid them a courteous farewell .... They won't vote for it.' (Fiji Times 4 May 1972).

From 1972 onwards the NFP's attitude to the political framework within which it operated began slowly to change. Recognizing that attempts to win Fijian votes promised little return in relation to effort expended the NFP turned more towards winning support away from the Indian Alliance. It
started to become the Indian communal party that the constitution encouraged it to be. It also began to go soft on common roll, turning more to the position taken by the Alliance Party in 1969 constitutional talks, that a compromise with communal representation was necessary for the time being. The Alliance meanwhile had come to regard the existing electoral system as more permanently desirable.

THE CONSTITUTION

Fiji's electoral system is extremely complicated and reflects the many compromises that went into its creation. Even the majority of Fiji's citizens do not understand how it works and the full implications of its operation were clearly not realized by those who fashioned it.

The first principle of the constitution is the racial reservation of constituencies. Seats in the House of Representatives are specified as being open to Indians, to Fijians, or to General Electors. There cannot be electoral contests between members of the three major racial groups and the number of seats is fixed at twenty-two for Indians, twenty-two for Fijians and eight for General Electors.

The second principle of the constitution is that twenty-seven of the fifty-two seats are to be elected by voters as they are registered on 'communal rolls', while twenty-five are elected by those same voters as they are registered on national rolls. Communal rolls are composed of electors of the same race while national rolls include all races. Each voter therefore has his name on four separate rolls: one as a voter in his communal constituency, and one for each of his national constituencies (Indian, Fijian and General Elector). Each voter therefore casts four votes in a general election, one for the communal member of his own race, and one each for his choices of his three national members (Indian, Fijian, General Elector). Indian and Fijian national constituencies have the same boundaries and rolls because there is the same number of each (ten), while General Elector national constituencies are larger since there are fewer of them (five). The communal constituencies (twelve Fijian, twelve Indian and three General Elector) have different boundaries and different rolls.

Fiji's constitution is sometimes interpreted as establishing Fijian political predominance, a view which seems to find confirmation in the Alliance monopoly of government since 1966. Such a view, however, confuses two distinct issues, an electoral system that dictates the racial composition of parliament, and protection in the constitution of certain Fijian interests.

The first issue, that of the establishment of the racial composition of parliament, does not necessarily support the view that Fijians can always maintain predominance. Fijians can never occupy more than twenty-two out of fifty-two seats in the House of Representatives. It has been argued by Vasil (1972) that the Fijians can 'count on the backing of at least 30 (22 Fijians and 8 General) of the 52 members', but this argument overlooks the fact that fifteen of these thirty members are elected by national roll voters. As communal groups, Fijians can elect only twelve members and General Electors only three.
The remaining fifteen members of Vasil's natural majority of thirty occupy racially reserved seats but are not communal representatives. They are, instead, elected by and responsible to multiracial constituencies. To include these fifteen members automatically with the fifteen Fijian and General Elector communal members to give Fijians a dominant position of thirty members is a mistake a political scientist might make, but one which politicians have always avoided. The Alliance government's majority has never depended simply on the thirty Fijian and General Elector members; in fact the Alliance has never held all thirty seats, and gaining them would be impossible without a very substantial share of Indian votes. To hold power under the system of racially reserved seats the Alliance has to elect Indian national members, though these Indians can be supported largely by the votes of the Fijian and General Elector voters on the national rolls. Similarly the NFP is required to use its influence with Indian voters to secure the election of Fijian and General Elector national members.

The April 1977 election, in which the Indian-based NFP gained two more seats than the Alliance, has shown conclusively that the racial reservation principle does not prevent an Indian political party from gaining an electoral victory (see appendix). 'Fijian political paramountcy', though it is not an entirely empty phrase, does not mean that the constitution provides for an electoral system weighted inevitably in favour of Fijians.

The other issues seen as an integral part of 'Fijian political paramountcy' are the constitutionally established protection of two areas of particular interest to Fijians, land and the Fijian Administration. Fijian land ownership was guaranteed by the deed of cession and safeguarded throughout the colonial period. Although many Indians depend upon access to Fijian land for their livelihoods, neither they nor their political leaders have seriously questioned since independence the Fijian right to ownership of land or to the ultimate control over its use. The Fijian Administration, a separate system of local government, was so jealously guarded during the colonial era that a defensive mentality toward it grew up among Fijians, somehow associating the Administration with their whole way of life. The Administration was in fact radically transformed in the mid 1960s and now bears little resemblance to its earlier form, but its protection is still an issue that weighs much more heavily emotionally among Fijians than the comparatively small costs and difficulties which its preservation entails, weigh among Indians. According to the constitution, legislation affecting land or the Fijian Administration requires a three-quarters majority of both houses if it is to pass, and that majority must include six of the eight nominees of the Fijian Council of Chiefs in the Senate. This does entrench in the constitution certain Fijian interests, but the protection of those interests is the maintenance of traditions long accepted and respected among all groups in Fiji.

The constitution, then, does safeguard some Fijian interests and does provide for racial reservation in parliament. Neither singly nor together, however, do those elements amount to 'Fijian paramountcy'. If many Fiji Indians feel that they lack security and are at the mercy of Fijians, that feeling arises out of fourteen years of Alliance government (itself the continuation of eighty years of colonial rule) rather than out of any injustice inherent within the constitution.
THE QUESTION OF INTERESTS

The question of whether Indian interests have received fair treatment under fourteen years of Alliance government is one that a political scientist might justifiably retreat from in the name of objectivity. It would be surprising, and perhaps contrary to human nature, if the Fijian majority in cabinet had not tended to lean a little to one side, but, in view of the generally weaker position of Fijians in the economy, it is in accordance with modern redistributive values to discriminate in favour of an economically disadvantaged group. The problem this interpretation faces, however, is that there are many poor Indians and many well-off Fijians.

In fact, Fijian interests and Indian interests overlap at many points. Fiji now has a significant degree of social and economic differentiation, particularly within the Indian community. Fijians are less internally differentiated in terms of income and occupational status, and there is also less awareness of differences because they are newer, but social change is occurring rapidly. It seems likely that in the future economic progress will bring about a highly differentiated society in which class-based interests will outweigh race-based interests. Economic progress depends, however, on political stability which is at present bound up in politics based on significant racial definition of interests.

Land remains the major area in which interests are racially defined, although, to a large extent, the constitution has depoliticized the land issue. Any alteration of the present system requires the consent of the Council of Chiefs, which is unchallenged as the official voice of the Fijian community. A protocol also seems to have grown up according to which initiative on land matters should come from the Fijian side. In 1974 a motion by the leader of the opposition, Mr S.M. Koysi, calling for the abolition of the Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB), provoked an angry declaration from the chairman of the NLTB that he would henceforth sign no more lease approvals for Indian applicants (Pacific Islands Monthly August 1974). In 1979 a motion by an independent member of the House of Representatives, Ratu Osea Gavidi, to require landowner approval before granting or withholding consent to any dealing with leases affecting their land did not attract a single Indian speaker, although it was supported by a Fijian member of the NFP. At the conclusion of the debate Ratu Osea thanked the Indian members for 'their golden silence', suggesting that it contributed to 'the very objective manner' in which he believed the motion to have been discussed (Hansard September 1979). Three years earlier, during a debate on the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (ALTO), there had been a little sniping about which side, Fijian landlord or Indian tenant, should be laying down the rules for discussion. The main National Federation spokesman, Mr K.C. Ramrakha, acknowledged 'the position of the Fijian landowners', asking only that there be further dialogue and consideration of the position of the tiller of the soil, but even this had been too strong for some on the Fijian side (Hansard October 1976). Indian silence in the 1979 debate is more readily explained, however, by the potential divisiveness of the issue within NFP ranks than by a desire to defer to Fijian sensitivity about protocol. The 1976 ALTO debate had left the party divided over whether to accept the bill for its guarantee of thirty years tenure or to reject it because of its new rent reassessment provisions. Any contribution to the debate on Ratu Osea's motion would
also have been divisive. The motion was seconded by Isikeli Nadalo, a Fijian member of their party, although it offered no improvement in the position of tenants and was opposed by Alliance members on the grounds that any restriction on the transferability of a lease would reduce its value and therefore would harm the interests of both landlord and tenant.

For the next ten years or so the land issue can be expected to remain dormant. The ALTO of 1966 laid down minimum conditions for all tenants, including a minimum tenure of ten years with two renewals allowed, provided landowner needs were not greater than those of the tenants at the time of renewal. The 1976 amendment established thirty years as the minimum period of tenure and allowed for an automatic twenty year renewal of all existing leases. Leases will therefore not start to expire before 1996. Any Fijian pressures to alter this, if for example the Alliance party tried to head off Fijian Nationalist pressure, could not succeed, as the constitution requires a three-quarters parliamentary majority for any changes.

The major issue affecting Indian interests which emerged in the April 1977 general election was education. Shortly before the election it was revealed that the minimum university entrance mark required of Fijian students was considerably lower than that required of Indians, or to put it around the other way, Indian students were being required to achieve much higher marks before being awarded places at the university. National Federation Party leaders seized the issue (the timing was perfect) and appeared to gain considerable electoral advantage from it. In fact the policy to offer equal numbers of places to Fijians and Indians was an old one, to which the NFP had previously agreed. At the time at which the policy had been agreed to there had been insufficient Fijians passing the university entrance examination to fill the quota reserved for them. This, however, did little to calm Indian fears on the matter. As Ahmed Ali put it: 'education is to Indians what land is to Fijians' (Ali 1978).

The most recent issue concerning Indian interests is the allegation that the government is by-passing Indians in the selection of senior civil servants. The appointment of Mr Epeli Kacimaivai (formerly high commissioner to Australia) to the position of secretary for education was interpreted by the NFP as a deliberate passing over of the deputy secretary on the grounds that he was Indian (Fiji Times 16 April 1980). Kacimaivai's qualification for the job was not questioned (as he is a former educationist and already possesses permanent head status), but it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that Mr Hari Ram, the deputy secretary, had been passed over because this was the second time that this had occurred. Some years earlier a Fijian officer junior to Ram had been promoted out of Education and then transferred back in, over the head of Ram, without the opportunity to appeal. It was reported in the press that Ram had been offered promotions elsewhere but had declined them, thereby refuting the claim that he has been denied promotion per se but, if anything, lending credibility to the allegation that he is being denied the sensitive position of secretary of education.

In fact the civil service is closely regulated by law. All appointments are made by the Public Service Commission and are subject to appeal, thereby removing the possibility of direct political manipulation. At the permanent secretary level, however, all appointments must receive the approval of the prime minister, a constitutional requirement which
recognizes that the relationship between the political and non-political heads of a government department has a political element. The Public Service Commission presumably bears in mind the need for appointees with appropriate qualifications to work well with their ministers, as is suggested by the fact that the prime minister has never withheld his approval of a Public Service Commission appointment (Pacific Islands Monthly June 1980).

Later, in the House of Representatives, the deputy leader of the opposition, Mrs Irene Jai Narayan, took up the question in more general terms, moving a motion expressing concern at the racial imbalance in senior civil service positions. It is already policy that there be equal numbers of Fijians and Indians in the civil service; Mrs Narayan urged that there be parity at all levels. In reply, the acting prime minister, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau, said that the policy of parity applied only at the entry point with promotion thereafter being determined entirely by merit. He said that the suggestion that race influenced promotions in the civil service was 'cheap political propaganda of the worst kind' (Pacific Islands Monthly June 1980). If the worst kind of political propaganda is that which people believe then he is undoubtedly correct. Although there has not been, and under the law there cannot be, blatant discrimination on the basis of race, the feeling within the Indian community is that power over the civil service is in Fijian hands.

THE NFP AND COMMON ROLL

Fourteen years of Alliance government have created, or at least perpetuated, a feeling of unease among Indians, a feeling that they are somehow not fully accepted, despite constitutional assurances of equality for all. NFP leaders point to steady Indian emigration as evidence of insecurity. In this context the civil service issue, like that of educational opportunities, is fitted into the mainstream of Indian communal politics, linking up with the colonial past during which Indian cultural, religious and economic groups tended to coalesce in opposition to the CSR sugar millers, the colonial government and European privilege. Sugar, like land, affected the interests of the bulk of the Indian community, either directly as growers or indirectly as suppliers of services to growers. Since the departure of the CSR it has not been the successful rallying point that it had been and, like land, has tended to be depoliticized.

The coalition of groups brought together in 1963–64 under the leadership of Mr A.D. Patel to form the Federation Party has successfully institutionalized itself as a party defending Indian interests. It has survived the death of Patel in 1969, the removal of the colonial regime and European privilege, and the depoliticization of the sugar industry. The goal of common roll, which was an essential part of opposition to colonial rule and European privilege, remains, although it has slipped into the background.

A weak surviving link with the origins of the party can also be found in the adherence to a number of populist themes. Although entirely non-ideological, and as conservative as one would expect from a party led by lawyers, landlords and businessmen, the NFP from the beginning projected a concern for the small man. During his period as ministerial member for
social services, before the introduction of cabinet government, A.D. Patel founded the Fiji National Provident Fund, a compulsory retirement benefits scheme based on wage and salary deductions and employers' contributions. In the 1972 general election campaign the NFP promised 'immediate water supplies to all areas; the abolition of basic tax; free and compulsory education up to two years of secondary school level and at all levels if the economy permitted; free medical services; old age pensions; the creation of a social security system and a national shipping line' (Ali 1973). Alexander Mamak, apparently under the influence of these promises, was led to describe the NFP as 'the party left of centre', although, as Brij Lal has remarked, this is an unusual characterization of a party led by 'wealthy lawyers, businessmen, landlords and money lenders' (Lal 1980:124). A good example of the limitations imposed on the NFP's populism by the business interests it contains is its silence when bus fares rise.

In 1966 and 1972 the NFP attempted to characterize the Alliance as the party of the elite 'Fijian Establishment' and European vested interests. In 1965 A.D. Patel declared: 'until Fiji is in the hands of only the major races, Fijians and Indians, the situation in the colony will remain as it is' (Pacific Islands Monthly May 1965). He regarded the European/colonial presence as divisive and appeared confident that he could win the support of Fijians away from their traditional leaders who were enmeshed in the colonial system and partners in social privilege. The departure of the colonial regime, accompanied of course by localization of the civil service, has removed much of the basis of NFP populism, as has steady upward mobility in the Indian community within the expanding economy of the early post independence period. (Between 1968 and 1978 per capita GNP rose in real terms by 36 per cent.) Echoes of the former populism can still be heard but they are muted. In 1977, for example, while speaking of the need to establish industry in Fiji, Irene Jai Narayan stressed the legacy of A.D. Patel and said that 'Our party has always endeavoured to protect our locals from exploitation' (Fiji Times 30 August 1977), but this lacks the sharp edge of Patel's struggle against colonialism.

The more general goal of defending Indian interests remains the key to the electoral success of the party. Indian opponents of the NFP are open to the charge of betraying their race, as for example in the brandishing of nooses in the House of Representatives by Mr S.M. Koya, the leader of the opposition, with the advice that the traitors in the Indian Alliance should use them to hang themselves (Pacific Islands Monthly August 1974). This outburst followed charges that Koya had been neglecting his role as leader of the opposition, in particular over the land issue, which was beginning to worry many Indians whose leases were reaching the end of their first ten years with the possibility of non-renewal. At this stage Koya was described as a moderate facing criticism by radicals (Pacific Islands Monthly July 1974). Later, when his rediscovered belligerence brought him into conflict with the prime minister, Koya was accused of promoting racial disharmony and failing to cooperate with the government for the benefit of his constituents. At this stage there was no doubt that the party was seen as basically representing the Indian community. From 1972, when, following the election defeat, Koya's leadership was first challenged, the NFP had increasingly turned inward, looking only at Indian intra-communal issues. Following the resolution of the factional conflict, when Koya was defeated, a peacemaker leader, who could give some thought to the question of attracting Fijian support, was elected. The prospects for gaining that
support, however, are not promising. The party is more than ever identified as an Indian party and stuck with the role that the constitution envisaged for it.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

I began by looking at the constitution, which obviously plays an important role in governing politics, but there are, in addition, informal 'rules of the game' which shape politics in Fiji. Ralph Premdas has summed up these rules as adherence to the principle of 'balance'. Fijians control government and own 83 per cent of the land; Indians dominate the sugar industry and intermediate businesses; Europeans dominate the very large businesses. By an informal process of *quid pro quo* Indians accept assistance to help Fijians enter industry while the prime minister, a Fijian, deliberately appoints several Indians to his cabinet (Premdas 1979). Many more examples could have been cited, some of which have been mentioned already in this paper (equal numbers of Fijians and Indians entering the university or joining the civil service, for example). Wherever the question of Fijian or Indian interests arises, an attempt is made to find balance. In the Seeqaka sugar scheme, for example, blocks were allocated to farmers on the basis of equal numbers for Fijians and Indians.

Robert Norton, the major theorist of contemporary politics in Fiji, has developed at some length the related notion of 'accommodation' as a feature of race relations in Fiji. He argues that it grew out of colonial institutions and is preserved in both the constitution and the informal rules that supplement it. The division between races, which colonial institutions preserved (some would say created - see Mamak and Ali 1979:62-69), 'developed not as a dynamic relationship governed purely by antagonism but as a structural principle - a regulated feature of race relations - that sustained attention to the value that groups should accommodate their differences'. Within this framework, conciliation 'was built on the retention of symbols of racial difference and reciprocal acknowledgement of rights and interests'. With the removal of colonial arbitration, however, there had to be negotiation founded on 'the consensus that violent struggle must be avoided'. One feature of this negotiation, in addition to the principle of balance, is the recognition of the NFP by the Alliance as 'not simply an opponent to be parried but as the principal voice of the Indians who must be given continual attention in government' (Norton 1977:37-38).

The principle upon which politics in Fiji are founded is that which Reinhard Bendix has termed 'functional representation'. According to this principle 'functions', that is 'group-specific activities or rights and duties' are to be represented rather than individuals. This is distinguished from the 'plebiscitarian principle', according to which 'all powers intervening between the state and the individual must be destroyed' (Bendix 1969). Fijian social and political organization shows a marked preference for functional representation and the embodiment of this in the constitution (written and unwritten) should be traced to Fijian culture as well as to colonial policy (Nation 1978). It is sometimes said that Fiji's colonial rulers created an artificial communal system that was not genuinely traditional (whatever that might mean) but designed to serve
selfish colonial interests. It is not possible to refute this in the present context but the questions which should be asked of this interpretation are: how did colonial bureaucrats manage to achieve their purpose so well; could it be that Fijians contributed something of their own? Whether its origins are colonial or 'authentic', however, there can be no doubt that Fijian culture is a force in Fiji's politics today.

Fijian unity, which has played a crucial part in maintaining Alliance domination, can be traced to Fijian culture. It is not sufficient to explain it as arising entirely out of a perceived Indian threat. Unity (duavata) is a value of general importance in Fijian society and regarded as the norm in both traditional institutions and Fijian Provincial Councils (where there is no Indian threat). I have argued elsewhere, at greater length, that Fijian organization is not subject to factionalization; that rivalry between leaders sometimes produces fissures that do not extend down to the rank and file, rather than factions (Nation 1978).

Fijian unity has never been regarded as established merely to oppose Indians, just as Fijians have never opposed Indian unity or welcomed Indian factionalism. Striking evidence of this can be seen in the report of A.D. Patel's death in the Alliance Fijian-language newspaper Na Tovata. Entitled 'The Love of Fiji Goes with Hon. A.D. Patel', it praises him as a 'respected leader', a man 'to whom the majority of Indians in Fiji looked', 'the captain of the ship of his race and their party'. Recognition as the legitimate spokesman of his race goes much further than the recognition of a 'worthy opponent' contained in the English-language Fiji Nation (Nation/Tovata October 1969).

Fijians undoubtedly regard the NFP as an Indian party but do not see this as a bad thing; an Indian party is as natural a phenomenon as a Fijian party. Indeed the recognition of the NFP as the voice of the Indian community can sometimes go as far as explicit criticism of the Fijian's electoral allies in the Indian Alliance. The prime minister, for example, has complained that the Indian Alliance is not giving him 'the two way communication with the Indian people' which he needs. In order to get this, he said, he has to rely on the opposition party, public meetings or the rural development committees that meet under the guidance of divisional commissioners and district officers (Fiji Times 2 March 1979).

It is no accident that the Alliance has chosen in its organizational structure to preserve the organizational integrity of its three constituent bodies, the Fijian Association, the Indian Alliance and the General Electors' Association. This has not always pleased members of the Indian Alliance who found it something of a handicap when campaigning against the NFP whose organizational structure was proudly unitary and in accordance with the plebiscitarian principle which they stood for in their call for common roll. To placate Indian feeling the Alliance allowed the Young Alliance, to which all races belonged, to join the Alliance as an independent constituent body alongside the other three. Members of the constituent bodies were also brought together in committees called district councils which send delegates to a national council. Apart from this, however, the constituent bodies are distinct and discrete; leaders are chosen and policies are formulated in racial isolation.
The NFP, with a vague awareness of the Fijian preference for ethnic distinctiveness, created a Taukei Committee composed entirely of Fijians and empowered to select candidates for Fijian seats and propose policies to attract Fijian voters. This is largely windowdressing, however, as the party remains committed to unitary organization and common roll. Despite this, a number of Fijian members of the NFP in western Viti Levu once 'insisted that they were not direct members of the Federation Party but only of the National Democratic Party, which was merely affiliated with the Indian-led organization' (Norton 1977).

Robert Norton has suggested that it may be that 'only by modifying its internal structure to provide for the recognition of racial differences will the Federation, or any other party, be able to challenge the Alliance. By adopting this tactic such a party would simply be invoking a principle of social and political organization that has become characteristic of Fiji' (Norton 1977). This would not be an easy step for the NFP, however, for it goes against the philosophy of A.D. Patel, which is the main unifying ideal within the party. The potential divisiveness of the abrogation of common roll is reflected in the secrecy that surrounded the party's submission to the Royal Commission on the electoral system; many party officials who made oral submissions were forced to do so without being allowed to consult the party's official written submission and were apparently unaware that the party had for the first time proposed proportional representation under the single transferable vote system. The written submission also proposed that the system be introduced 'if its proposals were acceptable to all parties' (emphasis added) and envisaged that election under the system should be preceded by the formation of a 'government of national unity and concord which would include all political parties' (Royal Commission Report 1975). Ignoring for the moment the coalition proposal which is discussed below, the interesting point here is the conditionality of the proposal; the ideal of common roll is maintained but conveyed to an indeterminate point in the future, as in the Alliance proposal. The unqualified fight for common roll is missing. The secrecy of the submission is therefore not surprising.

In the days of A.D. Patel common roll was a right to be won from the colonial government rather than the Fijians. The origins of the demand lie in the decade before World War II when Fijians did not vote and European and Indian electors were on separate rolls. It was an emotional issue, concerned above all with the removal of racial discrimination (Gillion 1977). There is, however, another reason which might explain why Indian politicians have sought common roll. Intra-communal unity, which the present electoral system presumes, is not easy to achieve within the Indian community. In the past it has been divided by religion, culture and region (within Fiji), and is now increasingly divided by class. Such unity as has existed is to a large extent unity against the colonial regime first, and then the Fijians who replaced it. The argument put forward by NFP politicians, that communalism in the electoral system is racially divisive, is one that grows out of their own experience and is not, as many Fijians may believe, an attempt to sneak in common roll in order to achieve Indian domination. They know all too well that Indian unity, which the fear of Indian domination presupposes, is not the natural phenomenon that Fijians believe it to be. On the other hand, the NFP appears to have assumed (in the past if not at present) that Fijian unity would disappear with the introduction of common roll, and with that would disappear the compelling
need for Indian unity. As mentioned earlier the charge of 'selling out' is one to which Indian leaders feel particularly vulnerable and one that they would probably prefer to do without. The bind that Indian politicians now find themselves in is this: if they join the Indian Alliance they face the unpleasant charge of racial treason; if they stay in the NFP they are condemned to the role of perpetual opposition, for the rules of the game include the provision that the Indian party should fill the opposition benches. As Robert Norton puts it, the 'terms of inter-racial reciprocity' are 'that Fijian political power be safeguarded' (Norton 1977:168) or, in Ralph Premdas' terms, Fijian control of government must be maintained to preserve 'balance'. R.S. Milne is also clear on this point: 'The premise on which consociationalism in Fiji rests is Fijian political predominance' (Milne 1975).

The NFP victory in the April 1977 election appeared to be something of an embarrassment to the victors. Factional warfare within the party, which had been temporarily laid aside to fight the election, threatened to erupt. There was some delay in naming a leader, talk of a coalition with the Alliance and rumours that an NFP government might provoke a Fijian backlash. The Fijian Nationalists had hoped for an NFP government because it would demonstrate to Fijians that they did not hold 'power in their own land', a realization which the Nationalists assumed would bring the majority of Fijians into their fold and lead to the destruction of the constitution.7 Reluctance to form a government within the NFP ranks was perhaps due to the fear of playing into the Nationalists' hands, although the rival factions have each denied any reluctance on their own part. The Ramrakha/Narayan faction accused Koya of being reluctant to take office, thereby leading to the governor-general's reappointment of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara as prime minister, while the Koya faction accused the Ramrakha/Narayan faction of secretly communicating their unwillingness to support Koya to the governor-general (Ali 1977). To admit that Fijian control of government was needed to safeguard political stability would open the way for the charge of racial treason. The informal rules of the game are therefore not only unwritten, some must also be unspoken. The Alliance is similarly silent about the question of Fijian control of government. It does not refute Fijian Nationalists' claims that the constitution fails to guarantee power for Fijians. It obviously cannot dispute that the constitution allows for the election of an Indian prime minister or the appointment of an Indian governor-general, but neither does it attempt to persuade its Fijian supporters that this is as it should be. It simply remains silent and hopes that they will accept the status quo and recognize that it is founded upon Fijian unity.

THE FUTURE: COALITION?

The constitution and the unwritten rules of the game go hand-in-hand. Both are built around the principle of functional representation. The NFP, although retaining formal adherence to the plebiscitarian principle, has come to accept its role as official voice of the Indian community which is dictated by the principle of functional representation. Politics within this framework has allowed for reciprocity over issues such as access to land for Indians and balance within the civil service and university education. Nevertheless, the system still seems precarious, particularly in view of its dependence on the unspoken, unwritten rule of Fijian
political dominance: that it must be Fijians who determine the terms of interracial reciprocity.

The quotation from W.J.M. Mackenzie which heads this paper makes clear the principal danger that communally oriented politics face: the politics of 'outbidding', when 'within each community the more violent and selfish spokesmen of special interests outbid the moderates and public spirited'. It seems such a natural way of gaining support that it appears inevitable that some will resort to it. It is not surprising that the charge of 'selling out' has already been levelled at leaders of both communities in Fiji. It is surprising, however, that outbidding has not provided a cheap and quick way to power for its proponents.

The Fijian Nationalists' share of the Fijian vote dropped from 27 per cent to 14 per cent between April and September 1977 and, moreover, their defeat paved the way for the restoration of Fijian power as people had known it for twelve years. The Fijian Nationalists were listened to in the first place because Alliance neglect of grass roots feeling was regarded as a threat to unity. After the April election in 1977 it became apparent that the Nationalists were, themselves, the greatest threat to Fijian unity. The vote by their leader, Butadroka, in favour of the NFP motion of no-confidence in the minority Alliance government was an act of hubris that severely undermined his credibility and made many Fijians wonder just what he was trying to do (Nation 1978).

Within the NFP both factions made accusations of selling out but it was the hardliners at the September elections, the Koya faction, who lost at the polls. Koya himself was defeated by an opponent who declared Koya's 'elimination at the polls essential to the maintenance of multiracial peace and harmony' (Premdas 1979:199).

In fact, the political framework militates against the success of the outbidding tactic. So long as Fijians are united and allied with the General Electors the Alliance will maintain its majority in the House of Representatives and, with that, the political status quo. Together Fijians and General Electors form approximately half of the population, although up till 1977 they had always had more than half of the registered voters (51.9 per cent in 1977). The Alliance should therefore expect to win about half of the National seats, which, together with the three General Elector communal seats, would give them a majority.

The incentive for unity is therefore strong, although it does not of itself explain how that unity will be achieved. One must look to Fijian culture and traditional organization to explain how unity is achieved. The personal contribution of Ratu Mara, the only leader the Alliance has known, must also be considered. His fortuitous combination of high traditional rank and modern skills has greatly assisted unity. The question of who will replace him is one that has vexed Fijians in recent years.

Up to now no one has 'emerged' as a potential replacement and it is particularly conspicuous that men of high rank have avoided entry into democratic politics. Ratu Mara, together with the other Alliance ministers of high rank, entered politics before Fijian Legislative Council members were elected, as the nominees of the Great Council of Chiefs. The democratic elective process is not one that attracts chiefs but an
additional problem is presented by the fact that many men of chiefly rank, especially those who are well educated, are civil servants unable to enter politics. It is not impossible, however, for a well qualified man lacking in rank to become prime minister. It is now common practice in Fijian provincial councils to have men of low rank who are qualified by education and occupational experience, filling the position of chairman and adopting the guise of servant to the traditional chief (or chiefs) of the province, in whose name decisions are carried out. The advantage that this system offers is that the chairman may be voted out without upsetting unity. A similar system could operate at the national level with a high chief (perhaps Ratu Mara in retirement) as governor-general and an able but suitably humble commoner as prime minister.

Traditional sentiments and organization have become increasingly prominent in Fijian life over recent years. Many provinces have resorted to traditional methods to gather funds for development. Provinces and other traditional groups have held church services in Suva. The political significance of these activities is not far below the surface, leading one observer to the conclusion that they represented 'clear signs of the development of political allegiances based on the traditional power groupings of ancient Fiji', in a word 'tribalism', and therefore 'a threat to political unity which has been essential for the continued dominance of the Alliance' (South Pacific Islands Business News Editorial May 1980).

The assumption that the upsurge in tradition will lead to disunity is, in my opinion, unjustified. As emphasized earlier, the pursuit of unity is accorded great importance in traditional organization. An examination of two recent traditional events will demonstrate this. In June 1980 a new system of fund raising was established in Tailevu province with a large gathering at Nabitu on the Rewa river, an area of strong Fijian Nationalist support in 1977. The choice of this site for the inaugural gathering was an honour for the district and a successful promotion of unity under the chiefly establishment of the province.

A little earlier, further down the Rewa river at Lomanikoro, there was a large ceremonial gathering (kau ni mata) to officially introduce the children of Ratu Mara into the home of their mother, the paramount chief of the Rewa confederation. The link between the two families is a link between two traditional federations. The large scale of the ceremonial activity was a source of pride to participants on both sides and a reflection of unity within and between the two chiefdoms. It was also a blow to the Fijian Nationalists whose base in Rewa has been built upon resentment of Ratu Mara within a section of the province.

Tradition is a powerful force for unity within the Fijian community and therefore the main prop supporting Fijian dominance of government. Since the upset of the April 1977 election there has been an increased awareness of the tradition/unity/dominance nexus, against which Butadroka and the Fijian Nationalists will have difficulty arguing. They are not a spent force, especially if they shift their emphasis from rural areas where tradition is strong to urban areas where it is breaking down, but they are being powerfully opposed by the forces of tradition. It is important to realize that it is by the indirect methods of tradition that the Nationalists will be beaten rather than by an open declaration of war which
the NFP and other non Fijian observers have thought desirable (Norton 1977).

So long as Fijian unity is maintained under the conservative leadership of the present Fijian elite the rules of the game that have developed since 1966 will tend to remain. The NFP with its growing middle class orientation will continue to play the game of interracial reciprocity. There is too much to be lost by listening to outbidders. Whether unity within the party can last is another matter, however, for, while the constitution encourages unity, the events of the split in 1977 have left scores to be settled.

A question that might soon put unity within the party to the test is that of coalition government. In 1972 and again in 1979 and 1980 the prime minister raised the possibility of coalition government. On both occasions he merely mentioned it as a personal preference, attempting neither to force a decision from the opposition nor to persuade his Alliance colleagues to accept it as a firm proposal. It remained an ideal which he believed to be based on the constitution. In 1977 the NFP firmly rejected coalition; in April 1977, after their electoral victory, they approached the Alliance only to have the prime minister turn down the proposal on the grounds that an Alliance junior partnership would play into the hands of the Fijian Nationalists (Fiji Times 7 April 1977). The coalition he has had in mind over the years is clearly a coalition with the Alliance setting the terms.

There is a number of practical problems in the way of such a coalition. The NFP would be liable to split if there were not representatives of both factions included in the ministry, but carrying divisions into cabinet does not seem a stable foundation on which to build. Would Alliance ministers need to step down to make room for NFP ministers? How many ministers would the NFP have? So far there has been no detailed discussion of these questions within either of the parties or between them. The NFP seems to have been particularly troubled by questions of detail, which have implications, of course, for the recently healed factional relations within the party. Who would get what and where would former leader of the opposition Koya go, in view of his probable unacceptability to Ratu Mara? At the 1980 annual convention the party leader, Mr Jai Ram Reddy, preempted further consideration of coalition, for the time being at least, by telling his party that he had not been fully consulted about the issue by the prime minister. He described the prime minister's proposal as 'very ill-defined and vague' (Fiji Times 29 October 1980). Ratu Mara promptly replied by telling the Fijian Association Convention that Mr Reddy's response had buried the proposal: the Alliance would thenceforth concentrate on winning the 1982 general election (Fiji Times 31 October 1980). The NFP similarly looked forward to the 1982 election. Until then, it seems, the coalition proposal will remain dormant, although it appears likely that, in campaigning for the election, each party will blame the other for lack of progress towards coalition.

The formation of a coalition would be a major step in the direction of consociationalism or 'government by an elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with fragmented political culture into a stable democracy' (Arend Lijphart's definition, quoted in Milne 1975:413). In 1975 Milne concluded that while it 'would be hard to claim that Fiji ranked high on a
consociational score' it had 'recently shown some undeniably consociational characteristics' (Milne 1975:429). The main shortcoming on the consociational 'score' was the absence of a coalition. Milne noted that the coalition idea had been floated but observed that negotiations did not 'progress far enough to indicate exactly what its formulation would have entailed'. An interesting point in Milne's analysis is the implication that coalition is part of a consociational package. Seen in this light, continued moves towards a coalition can be interpreted as part of a natural progression; the logical culmination of 'accommodation' and 'balance' and in accord with the principle of 'functional representation'.

The 1982 election will be the critical time. If the coalition issue is again raised both parties will need to face the voters with an answer. They will need to consider how serious they are about attempting to attract multiracial support. The NFP must decide whether it is still the universal, populist party that A.D. Patel created, ready to seek government in its own right as representative of all races, or an Indian party, the legitmate voice of the Indian community but resigned to the second best course of junior partnership in a coalition. If, as seems likely, the party again fails to win Fijian support, there can be only one course open to it. The Alliance must decide whether it still believes in functional representation, and if it does, how it can offer meaningful participation to the NFP in an Alliance based coalition.

NOTES

1 The Alliance contested only three of the nine Indian communal constituencies. The figure of 38 per cent refers only to these constituencies (Fiji Times Electoral Guide 12 April 1972).

2 A bowl of kava, a beverage made from the powdered root of a species of pepper.

3 General Electors include all people who are not Fijian or Indian. All people of Pacific island origin are included within the category Fijian. General Electors are therefore mainly Europeans, part Europeans and Chinese. See the population table in the appendix.

4 A number of different figures have been quoted as the difference in marks required. Ali (1978:150) says that Fijians were required to have 216 marks (out of 400) while Indians were required to have 261 marks for admittance to Science in 1977. The Alliance has stated that for Social Science the lowest qualified Fijian had 200 marks compared with 213 for non Fijians. The greatest difference was in Medicine where the lowest accepted Fijian had 204 and the lowest non Fijian male had 247. The rumour mill produced figures of widely differing proportions.

5 The depoliticization of the sugar industry is a result of nationalization of milling and the creation of an independent tribunal to regulate relations between growers and the Fiji Sugar Corporation.
France (1969) exposes the many arbitrary decisions that were inevitable in the change from traditional chiefdoms to a colonial administration based on a western legal framework. A careless reader of France's 'demythologizing labours' might reach the conclusion that somewhere (in a parallel universe perhaps) there exists 'genuine' Fijian tradition. Clammer, for example, believes he is able to draw a 'picture of what may honestly be said to constitute traditional Fijian social organizations when all the imported and subsequently self-generated conscious models have been cast aside' (Clammer 1973:200). France, however, has no illusions about present day Fijian tradition which he recognizes as 'a powerfully cohesive force in Fijian society'.

The racial reservation of seats means that Fijian Nationalists could only stand in twenty-two constituencies. Their unconcealed aim is to split the Alliance vote and defeat the Alliance.

Many Rewans have in the past supported NFP candidates (Ratu Moses Tuisawau and Ro Asela Logavatu) in order to express their opposition to the Alliance.
## APPENDIX

### Population
(1978 Estimate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>'000</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part European</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All others</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Composition of House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communal seats</td>
<td>National seats</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Communal seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Fijian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7(^c)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP(^d)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7(^c)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP(^d)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNP(^d)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind.(^e)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind.(^e)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Federation Party (previously Federation Party)

Prior to 1972 National seats were known as Cross Voting seats

One communal General Elector member joined the Alliance after winning election

Fijian Nationalist Party

Independent – Ratu Osea Gavid

Party support

1966. Six Alliance candidates in Fijian and General Elector constituencies were elected unopposed, making comparisons of percentages of votes obtained unreliable (many Alliance voters not being able to register their support). Indian national constituencies were the only class of constituencies in which all seats were contested. In these, votes were shared between the parties as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>70,332 (55 per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>47,064 (36 per cent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Alliance obtained 38 per cent of the vote in the Indian communal constituencies that it contested, but it contested only three out of nine. The NFP won 43,075 votes in Indian communal constituencies, 3,989 votes less than in Indian national constituencies. This difference can be explained by the fact that national votes controlled by some communal opponents were directed to the NFP.

1972. Votes in Indian national constituencies were shared as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>100,563 (59 per cent) (up 4 per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>66,582 (39 per cent) (up 3 per cent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each party increased its share of the vote (at the expense of independents). The Alliance contested all Indian communal constituencies and won 24 per cent of the vote. All Federation Fijian communal candidates lost their deposits, as did ten out of fifteen independent opponents of the Alliance. The NFP contested three out of five national general constituencies, compared with none in 1966. It contested all but one Fijian national constituency.

April 1977. General national constituencies were the only ones in which all seats were contested. Votes were shared as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>100,551 (47 per cent) (down 12 per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>86,597 (40 per cent) (up 1 per cent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Informal votes amounted to 8 per cent of total votes cast. Most of these would be the votes of Fijian Nationalist voters.
The Alliance share of Indian communal votes dropped to 16 per cent. Its share of Indian votes in Indian national constituencies might have been higher as the Alliance won 87,217 votes (2,659 more than the NFP) in these constituencies, whereas the NFP polled 85,753 in Fijian national seats (6,528 more than the Alliance). It appears that some Indian Alliance candidates are able to convince a proportion of voters to vote Alliance in Indian national seats and Federation in Fijian national seats, and perhaps also in Indian communal seats.

If voters in the overwhelmingly Fijian Lau, Cakaudrove and Rotuma constituencies (in which Alliance candidates were returned unopposed) had voted, the Alliance would have had more votes in all national constituencies, but, of course, the same number of seats.

The Fijian Nationalists polled 27 per cent of the Fijian communal constituencies that they contested. They also lowered the Alliance vote by deterring Fijians from voting (see turnout figures below).

September 1977. Indian national constituencies were again the only group in which all seats were contested. Votes were shared as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>(% of Total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>110,596</td>
<td>53 (up 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>86,323</td>
<td>42 (up 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Fijian Nationalist vote was cut in half and formed less than 14 per cent in the electorates contested. The turnout also rose, boosting Fijian Alliance votes.

The Alliance share of Indian communal constituencies dropped to just under 15 per cent. Overall there were 7,049 fewer Indian voters than in April, most of whom were apparently Alliance supporters.

Single member constituencies

Apart from the obvious racial pattern in the figures shown above, the most striking thing is the dramatic change in party fortunes that can be caused by single member constituencies. In 1966, despite winning 36 per cent of the vote, the NFP failed to win a single national seat. In 1977, despite obtaining 7 per cent more votes than the NFP, the Alliance won fewer seats than the NFP.

In view of the known racial basis of voting, gerrymandering would be very easy. For this reason the NFP recommended, and the 1975 royal commission accepted, that a system of proportional representation based on multi-member constituencies should be used. In rural, parochial electorates, however, this system might not be popular.
Turnout

In September 1977 the racial composition of registered voters was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fijians</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Electors</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rate of turnout is therefore of obvious importance. In 1972 percentage turnout was as follows:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>84.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijians</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Electors</td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in April 1977:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijians</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Electors</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in September 1977:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijians</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Electors</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


Royal Commission, Fiji, 1975. 'Report of the Royal Commission appointed for the purpose of considering and making recommendations as to the most appropriate method of electing members to, and representing the people of Fiji in, the House of Representatives'. Parliamentary Paper No.24.

LAWLESSNESS IN THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA HIGHLANDS

Marie Reay

Here I am not surveying the whole of the Highlands region, as the title of my paper may seem to imply, but I am concentrating on a part of the Western Highlands which has been my main field area since 1953. This is Mid-Wahgi, the core portion of the Jiwaka Division. The name Jiwaka is coined from the first two letters of the component regions of Jimi, Wahgi, and [East] Kambia. It is the name intended for the new province when secession from the Western Highlands becomes feasible. Mid-Wahgi is one of the most developed parts of the Highlands and its Wahgi Council is one of the most prosperous in the country. The Wahgi Council, established in 1965 by amalgamating the smaller councils on either side of the river, is now splitting back into two as the Minj councillors secede. At the time of the amalgamation the man who was to be the last president of the present council suggested the name 'Wahgi' not to signify the unification of the Wahgi valley but to commemorate the Wahgi river which divides it effectively into two. The movements to secede from the province and from the council parallel similar movements elsewhere in the Highlands and in the country as a whole. They are, of course, rooted in the strengthening of regional and local solidarities that began with disputes between labourers on coastal plantations and continues now with ambitions to rediscover local autonomy and restore some pride in traditional culture.

I shall be examining two kinds of lawlessness, 'raskolism' and renewed tribal warfare, in particular aspects which seem to pose real threats for the future of the Highlands region. 'Raskol' (a Pidgin word, from the English 'rascal') is a term that can cover many kinds of law-breakers but tends to refer to violent crime such as breaking and entering, robbery with violence, unprovoked assault, and malicious damage to property. Here I shall be using the term in the particular sense of a member of the organized Raskol Gang. My most detailed data come from Minj, but the organization is not limited to a single locality.

RASKOL ORGANIZATION

There is little mention of raskol organization in the literature. Robert Forster, a former Kiap, identifies the Goilala raskols in Port Moresby as 'a sophisticated criminal organization', 'an embryonic Mafia' (1979:88, 89). But he is concerned with the organization of criminal activities, not with the organization of the criminals who perform them. He appears to assume that the raskols are socially undifferentiated. And yet they are continually engaged in group enterprises that require
planning. Quick decisions have to be made which cannot wait upon egalitarian consensus. The safety of the gang leaves little scope for individualism. To carry out its habitual criminal activities the raskol gang requires the discipline of an army unit and the solidarity of a traditional clan-tribe.

The clan-tribe, which is typical of the Western Highlands, is a named territorial exogamous group with a segmentary structure. Legitimate forms of organization were based on or at least took account of this arrangement of named groups and their named segments. The organization of the Raskol Gang, by contrast, transcends the clan-tribe and recruits its members from all over the Mid-Wahgi area. But, like the clan-tribe, it is itself segmented and has a hierarchy of leaders. Further, the small nuclear gangs that together form the great segmentary structure are composed of clansmen.

The grand leader has authority over the entire Raskol Gang in the Mid-Wahgi area. Subordinate to him are two major leaders, each of whom commands a few minor leaders. The terms I am using for these leaders are my own. In the vernacular all are referred to in context as kumna ('the first'). Thus the grand leader is kumna in respect of the entire Gang and also in relation to either of the major leaders. He is nambawan tidaman ('the first or chief leader') in tok pisin. The major leader commands a regional clustering of gangs and is also kumna and nambawan tidaman in respect of these and the minor leaders who head them; but he is nambatu tidaman ('a second leader') in relation to the grand leader. Each minor leader has a small gang he can put to the service of his major leader. When the grand leader is planning some activity in collaboration with the major leaders he is able to select the participants from the entire membership of the organization. Thus for an operation in which gang members may be recognized he calls upon participants from a different part of the valley. In addition each of the big leaders has a small personal gang of his own. Each small gang in the organization is composed of raskols who are clansmen of its leader. Occasionally a pair of such gangs has united when their neighbouring clan-tribes have been fighting on the same side in a prolonged tribal war.

Minj people, living in the centre of the Mid-Wahgi area, are not familiar with the raskol organization of Mt Hagen. But they know the identity of the Hagen grand leader and speak of him sometimes as an alternative grand leader to the head of the Mid-Wahgi organization. This is because a Hagen major leader who commands a set of gangs near the border can be called upon to supply raskols to carry out operations planned by the Mid-Wahgi grand leader. Reciprocally, the Hagen grand leader can call upon Mid-Wahgi gangs situated close to the Hagen border. There is some evidence that similar linkages extend the raskol organization from Hagen to Enga and from Mid-Wahgi to Simbu. If this is true there is a vast underground organization spread over a large part of the Highlands, and perhaps even beyond, in a chain of overlapping raskol gangs. At present the nuclear gangs that make up the overall organization are small. I know of none that has more than seven members each in groups that number (including women and children) up to 8,000 people; and, more typically in the Minj area, it is likely to have only two or three members. But gangs are apt to recruit two or more clansmen as helpers for particular operations, for example in hiding the spoils. These men, running the risk of discovery or suspicion, may have to accept help from the raskol organization and in this event may
become committed members. Thus the numbers are growing. On issues that deeply affect not only raskols but the rural population generally, we cannot ignore the potential of the organization for mobilizing the combined raskol gangs of perhaps the whole Highlands with popular support in a concerted attempt to achieve larger, more revolutionary goals.

Politicians in the Western Highlands are conservative in their stated policies and at election time they try to be all things to all men, too wary of alienating votes to try to attract support for new or sectional ideas and approaches. It is, of course, possible that politicians in various parts of the Western Highlands may have offered the raskol leaders protection in exchange for votes: I have no data on this, but it would be consistent with the relations between some politicians and police in some centres.

The raskol organization demonstrates resourcefulness, compassion for the underdog, and ability to cooperate across the boundaries that separate wantoks. But cooperation across the boundaries in joint ventures is merely expedient. Coffee buyers, who are safe in their home areas, are fair game for raskol attacks once they venture into a different district or province. A Hagen coffee buyer operating in Mid-Wahgi is bailed up near Minj and relieved of his money and coffee; a Minj coffee buyer operating in Simbu suffers a similar loss. The highwaymen who beset coffee buyers from a different area belong to the Raskol Gang. But, as well as acting at the behest of the grand leader and/or a major leader, a minor leader and his gang carry out independent operations of their own. Most, if not all, of the hold-ups of coffee buyers appear to be independent operations of the minor gangs. But they show certain regularities which suggest that the Raskol Gang has a set of rules to govern such operations. First, the coffee buyer who is carrying, say, K2,000 in cash and five or six rice-bags of coffee is in no danger of highway robbery so long as he stays within his own area. In a peculiarly Papua New Guinea version of taking from the rich to give to the poor, the highwaymen take from the foreign rich (those who are not wantoks) and distribute the spoils in their own wantok area. But it is noticeable that the hold-ups occur well inside the foreign area, away from the border where an incident on the road could lead to fighting between clan-tribes. (Even when highwaymen wear laplap head masks in imitation of Western villains they have seen on film, anyone who knows the area well can correctly infer their clan-tribe.) Further, although the raskols immobilize the coffee buyer and his offside by tying them up and sometimes gagging them, the victims rarely suffer any bodily injury. Considering the degree of violence in traditional culture and the extent to which violent and bloodthirsty practices have reemerged in contemporary tribal warfare, it seems remarkable that raskol gangs treating foreigners from adjoining districts or provinces as fair game for highway robbery do not intentionally inflict bodily harm. The 'rules' (as I think we can call these regularities) ensure that this kind of operation stops short of inter-district or inter-province confrontation and is no serious impediment to cooperation between the raskol gangs of adjoining areas in joint ventures.

The Mid-Wahgi gang specializes in breaking and entering, though it does not confine itself to this activity. The leaders choose as their targets stores and houses belonging to persons they judge to be rich. They aim to close the gap between the rich and the poor by robbing the rich and
giving to the poor. Gang members recycle the spoils of their robberies among those they think are in need. The grand leader himself provides a model of this Robin Hoodism. When he sleeps in somebody's house for the night he gives K60 or K70 in tariff. To anyone he meets on the road who seems thirsty or hungry he gives food and drink or money.

The raskol organization has no headquarters. The leaders visit the gang members to recruit for particular jobs, and recruiting for the gang itself is similar. The leaders are on the lookout for habitual criminals who will make suitable gang members, and at any stage in a criminal's career the major leader or even the grand leader himself may visit him to learn of his plans, give him advice, and assure him of help in evading the police.

To be a full member of the gang a raskol has to be an habitual criminal who has escaped from legal custody at least once. There are virtuoso raskols who have escaped three or four times and have been wanted by the police for several years. The escapes are generally from the ranggad of the police station. Police stations are evidently understaffed, since guards are unable to summon help in time to abort an escape. They are also poorly designed to contain prisoners who are bent on escaping. Guards appear to lack training in how to protect the keys and their own persons. But the role of the police is ambiguous. Their job is to apprehend and detain the raskols, but all my informants say that the police are afraid of some of the leaders and deliberately refrain from catching them. One major leader was formerly a policeman himself and possesses a walkie-talkie which he allegedly uses to confuse and trick the police.

There is a legend of the grand leader which his raskols and other admirers delight in recounting. I shall not relate it here because some elements in the story could easily identify him. It illustrates his allegedly superhuman powers to escape from custody in unlikely circumstances and also his compassion for ordinary people. But I shall describe an activity of his gang which was a transformation of a traditional ritual.

For some years missionaries had been denouncing the konggar pig festival as the work and worship of Satan and had succeeded in banning it; but at independence it began tentatively to reappear. In the late 1970s a konggar was held near Kudjip, which is both the local headquarters of one of the missions and also a prominent centre of raskol activity. Soon afterwards a raskols' konggar manqué, in the form of a classic Black Mass, was held in the hills behind Kudjip. The raskols stole a cow and a lot of pigs and took them to the top of the mountain. They killed them as if in a konggar. They collected the blood of the cow and the pigs in banana leaves and offered it to Satan. The blood allegedly disappeared. The grand leader prayed to Satan, saying 'Many people are following God and working for him and soon there will be no room for you. But we are your workmen'. They offered Satan the spirit pork and the spirit beef and feasted on the material part of the animals themselves.

There is a parallel here with the pattern of alliance in traditional and contemporary warfare. A clan-tribe can rely on the help of the enemy's own traditional enemy. The raskols are opposed to the missionaries, who identify Satan as their own enemy and that of their powerful and punitive
God. Some extreme fundamentalists instructed their flock to be kind only to fellow Christians. For a long time they tried to insist that Christians should refuse to share food with non Christians even in the same family (see Kaman 1975:21-30). It is little wonder that some people became bitterly disaffected with the missions and threw in their lot with Satan, the traditional enemy of the straightlaced and unfriendly God of the missionaries.

Each of the raskols I know personally has at least two brothers. His father's coffee holdings are not enough to provide a living for them all and the family had been counting on his completing school and getting paid employment. But he leaves school too early to qualify for a white-collar job and despises as 'dirty' any work he could conceivably now get. Helping his father and brothers in return for his keep involves him in exactly the kind of work he has learned to despise. He neglects it, but begins to present his father and brothers with useful objects he says he has found abandoned or has received as gifts from old school friends. He seeks some status in the community as well. An age-mate's radio or tape recorder is broken, but soon there is one to replace it.

The raskols' clansmen pity him for his landlessness, for a 'real man' has coffee, pigs, and enough vegetables to contribute to group prestations as well as supplying the needs of his own family. He needs land for all these purposes and is not likely to get a wife without it. They pity him also for his inability to complete school, which they see as the arbitrary withdrawal by the educational system of the promise of a well-paid job. Further, his helpfulness endears him to them and they turn a blind eye to his illegal activities.

Most people are either knowingly or unknowingly receivers of stolen goods. Just as one of the raskol leaders has a walkie-talkie as relic of his time in the police force, a young man who held a clerical job for a few months possesses an expensive typewriter, allegedly a gift from the government. Many houses contain odd items of furniture of recognizably government issue, gifts from friends who have been leaving government houses. People consider most of these acquisitions to be legitimate. They see the experience of having worked or lived with material equipment as conferring some entitlement to it. Further, they see some goods as being in a limbo of non-ownership. The clearest example is the money sent by mail and removed from envelopes when one of the raskol gangs raids a post office. The money ceased to belong to the sender once he had mailed it, but would not belong to the intended recipient until he received it. Obviously a failure to keep proper inventories and an unwillingness to prosecute for theft are contributing to the general lawlessness and the protection of the lawless from the once long but now amputated arm of the law. In this climate a young man may become an habitual thief and remain undetected for some years. He recruits his own small gang with one or two of his clansmen and the grand leader's organization begins to take an interest in him.

A raskol who is wanted by the police simply goes home and it should be easy enough to catch him. But the police, who are public servants, have to give up the chase in time to arrive back at the station by 4 p.m. and next morning they are usually assigned to other duties. They instruct the village magistrate and, particularly, the peace officer of the village
court, who has powers of arrest, to locate the stolen goods, catch the raskol, and deliver both into their hands the next day. The village magistrate makes a vague speech deploring the general situation. When the police have left, the peace officer instructs the assembled company to go and see the raskol's family and tell them to persuade the raskol to give himself up. They grumble that the peace officer himself should do this and nobody attempts to follow his instruction. For it is common knowledge that when raskols are captured they and their families issue threats that if they should die or suffer illness while in prison anyone who helped with their capture will have to pay massive cash compensation. Village magistrates and peace officers succumb to these threats for fear of the consequences of non-compliance. The demand for cash compensation carries the threat of death if it is not paid. Threats and curses play a much greater part in the lives of these highlanders than they did at any time during the colonial period.

The village magistrate and the peace officer are both court officials, but they are the only officials in the community who are expressly concerned with the law and it is natural for the police to solicit their help. If these officials were committed to upholding the law they would not be intimidated by threats but would be prepared to charge raskols and their families with attempted extortion. But village magistrates and peace officers are not committed to upholding the law. They are among the most active warriors when their clan-tribes go to war and they take no initiatives to end the war. One village magistrate deliberately incited his clansmen to start a war in 1979. Some village magistrates twist the law to suit their private ends. The village court institutionalizes men's reaction against the substantial liberation of women over the colonial period by practising new forms of discrimination against them. There was more justice in the witchcraft trials that prevailed into the 1960s than there is in the contemporary village court.

There is still a lot of talk of witchcraft and a man who has been ill demands cash compensation from the person he accuses of causing the illness. He consults a medicine man, who asks him what he has eaten before falling ill and who provided the food. The medicine man gives him an emetic and examines the vomit for traces of the foods he has named. As the provision of vegetable food is women's work the evidence generally points to a woman, though traditionally the witch was more usually a man. Women react angrily to these accusations but generally come to accept the blame for the illness and pay up. One who continues to protect her innocence soon receives a stiff goal sentence from the village court, either for some offence she has been deliberately provoked into committing or for some charge the man and his relatives have trumped up against her.

The world in which the raskol flourishes draws no clear distinction between what is lawful and what is not. Neither does it relate law to morality. Children do not learn that it is wrong or bad to break the law. When women kill or attempt to kill their co-wives they may do so in passion but their crime is premeditated in full knowledge of the consequences for themselves. Similarly, when a traditional leader engages in tribal warfare and incites his clansmen to fight he is well aware that what he is doing is forbidden by the government and will earn him a gaol sentence if he is caught. The conclusion is inescapable that the jealous co-wife and the
fight leader deem their own unlawful acts to be worthwhile incurring the consequences.

The consequences are known (although the precise length of the gaol sentence is not known) because the jealous co-wife makes no attempt to conceal her crime and although the fight leader may make feeble excuses and his relatives implore the authorities to deal with him compassionately because of his age, the fact remains that he has been caught in flagrante. There is no recognition that either of them deserves an extended gaol sentence because of the serious nature of the offence. People do recognize that because homicide and warfare and inciting to warfare are officially forbidden and regarded by the authorities with some seriousness a gaol sentence is appropriate for anyone who happens to get caught engaging in these activities. But only a short gaol sentence of, say, one month, and certainly no longer than one year. It is unfair (kab'g' ma)\(^1\), they say, to imprison an offender for a term of years. The unfairness they complain of is not so much to the offender himself as to the community that is deprived of his presence. The eight years a young man spent in gaol for killing his wife left his declining subclan short of an able-bodied member for that period. The six years a woman has just spent in gaol for killing her co-wife has left her husband wifeless and therefore dependent upon his mother and his brother's wife - for caring for his pigs, tending his gardens, picking his coffee, and cooking his meals - to an extent he can never repay. The five or ten years the fight leader is condemned to spend in prison are likely, because of his age, to be the five or ten years before he dies. It is most important to his subclansmen that he should be at home with them in these crucial years. This is the time they have to care for him tenderly, as if he were again a baby, and lavish him with gifts - not simply to demonstrate their affection for him but to so please him that when he dies his ghost will not wish to harm them. Being sorry for the old before death comes for them is being sorry for themselves - not from a realization that they too will grow old, but from their conviction that if they are not sufficiently sorry for the nearly dead, death will transform these into malicious and punitive ghosts ready to afflict them with all kinds of misfortune. It is the duty of an old person to stay at home and allow his agnates to fete him. An extended stay in prison prevents him from performing his duty towards his subclansmen and makes it impossible for them to fulfil their duty towards him. His subclansmen - and particularly his sons, his brothers, and his brothers' sons are profoundly uneasy while he is detained and still has several years to serve. They pester the authorities from time to time to release him or at least shorten his sentence, and when a relatives dies they seek permission for him to come home for the burial. The absence of the murdering co-wife is inconvenient for the husband and any of his close kin who have to supply female labour to do her work. To her own kin her absence in gaol is simply an extension of the absence required by the rule that a woman lives with her husband in marriage. For the woman herself living in prison is not qualitatively different from living in an alien group (her husband's) and having to work unremittingly for an alien boss (her husband). But the fight leader and wife-killer consider their incarceration to be unjust (kab'g' ma), since they accord higher priority to their communal obligations than to their duty to satisfy the requirements of the law.
This discussion has entailed two seemingly conflicting propositions:

1. offenders (not habitual offenders) deem their own unlawful acts to be worthwhile incurring the consequences;

2. they accord higher priority to their communal obligations than to their duty to satisfy the requirements of the law.

The two propositions appear to be conflicting because we might expect a devotion to communal obligations to inhibit people from committing unlawful acts that inevitably earn them extended gaol sentences. But the obligation to be at home with one's clansmen and fulfil the roles appropriate to age and status is not the only communal obligation felt and answered by a Papua New Guinea highlander. An insult to the clan-tribe is an immediate call to group solidarity and it is a leader's duty to muster immediate retaliation. Leaders were hobbled when there were white kiaps who could march out with a squad of police and stop fights with summary justice; but people are well aware that the independent governments have failed to formulate a clear and consistent policy on the containment of tribal fighting. They can have little respect for the law when they see it in disarray. It appears all the more weak and confused to people who remember the white kiaps patrolling to explain all new laws and make sure that they understood them.

TRIBAL WARFARE

I speak of 'war' and 'tribal warfare', rather than using the official term 'group fighting', because the groups that fought traditionally were mini-nations sharing custom but no common government and the fighting that has broken out since 1975 is continuous with the warfare that was suppressed at the time of pacification in 1947. Fights that were then unresolved have been resumed and are again in progress. And some of the deaths that occurred before pacification have not yet been avenged.

In many parts of the Highlands there were two kinds of warfare of greater and lesser severity corresponding with two kinds of enemies. Often different segments of a large group waged a minor form of warfare with few fatalities. At Minj the minor kind of warfare was between groups that had intermarried and were usually friendly and hoped to be friendly again. The war continued until the number of dead on both sides was even, totalling from two to about ten; then an outside group would initiate peace-making. An exchange of pigs prepared the way for a new exchange of women. But warfare with a traditional enemy was total war aimed at the annihilation of the clan-tribe. A defeat was only decisive when one of the groups was driven from its territory and its surviving members scattered to find refuge with kinsfolk. Casualties were heavy: in one such total war there were more than one hundred dead on the winning side. It was commonplace for the remnants of defeated groups to fetch up in Jimi or Simbu. Everyone knows of several groups that once flourished but became extinct.

Paula Brown (1963) has characterized the traditional state of affairs in Simbu, adjacent to Mid-Wahgi, as 'anarchy'. She was using the term in the technical sense of an absence of governmental institutions; but I think it conveys to most of us a disorderliness, an absence of law and order. I myself have described the external relations of the clan-tribe as
anarchic (Reay 1959:194). The clan-tribe itself, however, formed a community which contained a legal and moral order (Reay 1974:198). Moral and legal principles did not apply to outsiders: external relations were indeed anarchic. Even when men were dealing with friendly groups, they were wary and formal, careful to observe protocol in case they should awaken hostility. Friendship was precarious. The only groups that could be trusted were those that had exchanged women, each keeping the other's clan sister as hostage.

The renewed tribal warfare that I have witnessed in 1979-80 is a resumption of a war the kias had stopped in 1947. It was resumed in mid 1979, halted at the end of January 1980, and broke out again in September of that year. By the end of 1979 four clan-tribes were centrally involved as groups providing separate but loosely coordinated armies ranged on two sides. Twenty-one other clan-tribes were involved to some extent: by providing one or more sub-clan battalions, a handful of warriors, or a few shields as earnest of later support. A separate war on the Simbu border had been dragging on for years and was beginning to involve groups situated closer to Minj. In the west and northwest two other fights were looming and one of these had broken out by the middle of 1980. I calculated that if deaths occurred in particular groups nearly all the clan-tribes of the Mid-Wahgi area could soon be embroiled in Wahgi World War I. By September 1980 ten armies were engaged instead of four. These supply some thousands of fighting men and I do not know how many others are involved as a subclan battalion or a handful of warriors or as reinforcements who have sent their shields ahead of them.

The weapons used are the traditional spears and unflighted arrows. The men with spears bear the brunt of the close fighting and protect themselves with shields. Meggitt (1977:57) states that by and large 'the shield has not occupied an important place in Enga fighting techniques', but it is crucial to Mid-Wahgi warfare. Archers shoot over the heads of the spearmen in the general direction of the enemy. These are the men who, because of their youth or age or general physique, are not strong enough to hold and manoeuvre the heavy shields while using their spears efficiently and performing the quick and delicate footwork needed to dodge enemy weapons. Early in the war the women of one group filled their great string bags with river stones and hurled these over the heads of the warriors. But this proved to be too effective: the men, whose wives are members of the community but not of the clan, needed to take credit for all the deaths on the other side. They were afraid, too, of the extra threat to their lives in the event of the enemy's womenfolk hurling missiles in return. The warriors are not using firearms, which have already appeared in renewed tribal warfare in Enga Province. Many of the shotguns imprudently issued for hunting are now useless through lack of attention and rough handling. In 1979 a raskol stole two rifles but his clansmen, fearful of the effects of firearms in tribal warfare, quickly recovered them and handed them to the police.

Meggitt (1977) relates that Mae Enga warriors tried using shields made of corrugated iron but discarded them because arrows ricocheted off the surface and endangered men in the immediate vicinity. The Konumbu, one of the principal groups participating in the 1979-80 war at Minj, had tried using similar shields in a fight over a road death in 1975. They did this because they were not organized for war and had not replaced the
traditional hardwood shields the missionaries had burnt a decade earlier. By 1979 the Minj groups had equipped themselves with ample traditional hardwood shields. Early in the fighting the police Riot Squad confiscated and destroyed most of the shields.

In traditional life one of the methods the older men used to subdue the young men was to control their access to weapons. Youths had bamboo bows for hunting, but a select band of older men kept the weapons of war - the black palm bows, the slender black palm spears, and the hardwood shields - in the war-magic house, half shrine and half museum, which only they themselves as priests and curators could enter. By 1979 the older men had long lost their traditional control over the younger men, but they were now able to reexert their authority. With the confiscation and destruction of their shields they needed new ones quickly. As the experts on martial technology they taught their sons how to make the shields and use them to best advantage. By the end of the year, when the Riot Squad had destroyed more and more shields, men of thirty years of age were constructing new shields in one and a half days. Often they had to carry shields that were unusually heavy because the enemy attacked before the timber had dried. Fighting with a shield is not simply 'feinting and lunging' as Meggitt's account (1977:57) of Mae Enga warfare suggests. It required special skills involving ambidextrousness, body movements, and intricate footwork. The older men taught their sons these skills and the younger men learned eagerly, knowing that their lives might depend upon their knowledge.

The older men are repositories of all the different kinds of knowledge needed to wage a successful war. In deciding tactics and when to accept offers of alliance they draw upon their detailed knowledge of wars that have occurred during their own and their fathers' lifetimes. They know the rituals of revenge for deaths in warfare and the rituals to protect men who have killed or wounded an enemy. So long as the group is at war the older men are again the acknowledged leaders. Occasionally one of them boosts the morale of the group by announcing that he has 'a little thing' (yap kambia) that ensures a certain result; his own group will be victorious and will suffer no deaths; a particular subclan of the enemy will be exterminated; and so on. The 'little thing' is an item of knowledge from the wars of the remote past which somehow bears upon the relations between the groups now in conflict.

It may be argued that modern tribal fighting differs from traditional warfare in that it takes place in the context of the efforts of law enforcement agencies to stop the fighting. That is not how it looks on the ground. When the Konumbuqa and Omngar fought over a road death in 1975 the 'law police' (as distinct from the Riot Squad) told the Konumbuqa and their allies that they could fight for four days and they did so without interruption. When the Riot Squad came it concentrated on keeping the armies apart, not on dispersing them. In 1979 the law police had no power to intervene, excepting by summoning the Riot Squad. When a fight was brewing they would visit the points where the armies were assembling and stand by while the warriors trotted off to battle. They had no powers to arrest the men for breaches of the law and had instructions not to try to dissuade them from their purpose.
The police Riot Squad is called in expressly to intervene and its ostensible role is to stop the fight. Its observable role is that of a third army harassing both sides and causing hardship to both in ways that ensure that the fight continues. The fight area defined by the Group Fighting Act is not the battlefield where the fighting actually takes place but the combined homelands of the clans that are engaged in the war. Within this area the Riot Squad has unlimited powers of arrest. When the Squad raids one of the clan territories to capture the warriors the men have already heard of their approach and fled to the bush. At first the Riot Squad used to put the women in gaol in the belief that the men would then give themselves up; but the naivety of this belief was soon apparent. A few old men presented the Squad with food and one or two pigs in the hope that the police would reciprocate by leaving them alone. But soon the Riot Squad, frustrated by their inability to capture the warriors, were helping themselves to pigs and fowls and fruit and vegetables. Some interpreted their power to search all houses for the warriors as licence to take anything they might find there. They raped a number of women in two of the groups. In response to complaints the officer in charge of police refused to hold a line-up to identify the culprits on the score that 'it would be bad for the morale of the men'.

One of the cultural differences between Minj and Mt Hagen is in the style of oratory. Hageners boast vaingloriously whereas the orators at Minj impress with their wealth by being self-deprecating. Indicating the hundreds upon hundreds of pigs their group had killed, they used to apologise for having so few to kill. By June 1980 an orator was excusing a modest presentation of food in a new idiom:

I cannot see pandanus fruit or bananas or coffee or such things very clearly.
I cannot see pigs or dogs or cassowaries or fowls or such things very clearly.
The Riot Squad came and finished all our food crops
And our pigs and fowls were stolen so we have none left.
We are truly impoverished.
If I had some of these things I would give them to you.

When a warrior is killed the Riot Squad is more concerned with punishing offenders than with restoring order. For some days after the death the Squad directs its entire attention to searching for the men of the killing group, harraessing their womenfolk, and plundering their territory. And yet this is not the group that is eager to continue the war: its members would welcome peace while the score of deaths is in their favour. The group that has suffered the loss is impatient to avenge it. And the Riot Squad leaves it free to carry out its rituals of revenge, renew its supply of weapons, and instruct allies in waiting to be ready to join in a fresh assault as soon as the Riot Squad departs from the general area.²

There are no effective methods of concluding a war. Local notables and educated men appeal to the provincial government to intervene and end the war by fiat. An imposing array of very important personages arrives to confer with the warring groups. In January they were unable to arrive at a peace settlement and the interim provincial government gave the groups one
week in which to do this themselves, without indicating what would happen if they did not succeed. (It would have been impractical to imprison the thousands of people occupying the fight area.) An outside group adopted its traditional role of peace-making and brought about a truce which lasted seven months. There were several reasons why the peace could not be permanent - the most important being that the numbers of dead were not even. The Ngeni-Muruka had suffered badly: several men had been killed outright and two more had died of wounds. Also the senior wife of one of their leaders had drowned while trying to cross the Wahgi River to reach her relatives with enemy archers in hot pursuit. Their allies, the Kambilika, had sustained only minor wounds. On the other side the Kugika had no war dead yet and the Konumbuga had lost only one man.

The Ngeni-Muruka, who were plainly the losers, were demanding massive compensation for the deaths in battle. The Kugi-Konumbuga, however, acknowledge no such debt. The Ngeniga, taking the attitude of the police as their example, saw advantage in arguing that killing in warfare was homicide and compensation was traditionally appropriate. Their opponents maintained correctly that groups never paid compensation for deaths they inflicted in warfare. Every warrior ran the risk of getting killed and a man who was not prepared to run that risk would have stayed at home. The pigs that clans exchanged at the end of a traditional war stood for the men who had been killed but were in no sense compensation for their deaths. The only acceptable compensation for a war death was a retaliatory death on the other side. The Kugika, however, were willing to make a small payment to the Ngeniga leader whose senior wife had drowned. This was not as compensation, they stressed, but simply a gesture of sympathy towards the bereaved leader.

The peace-making group was not a wholly neutral group since a few of its subclans had been fighting. Many of its traditional leaders, the men best qualified to head the peace-making operations, had themselves participated. Young educated fellows, bent on making their names before standing for the provincial and national elections, pushed themselves forward as leaders in the peace-making. Some of the procedures they followed did not satisfy the older men; but the peace-making was merely the formalization of a truce, not the establishment of lasting peace, and no one insisted on correctness of every detail.

Also the provincial election was approaching and the Minj people heeded the pleas of politicians to postpone the fighting until the election was over. The election then became a substitute for the war. The only real issue was which side in the suspended war would succeed in being represented in the provincial government. Candidates were careful not to campaign among groups that were sympathetic towards the other side. As elsewhere in the Western Highlands, losing candidates took the result as an affront. They accused voters who were on their side in the war of betraying them and voting for the enemy. They demanded a new election (one on the grounds that the people he had expected to vote for him had not done so) and there were ugly incidents. In another part of the valley clansmen of a disappointed candidate killed the brother of a leader who had allegedly promised support. Throughout the province the result of the election was greeted with unrest and often violence.
Up to the time of the clash between the Konumbuga and the Omngar in 1975 the Minj people (and indeed the Mid-Wahgi people generally) had been justly proud that although tribal wars were continually breaking out in Mt Hagen and Simbu they themselves were law-abiding. But they were all convinced that independence would put an end to the white kiape's law. Their ardent desire that independence should be delayed until their grandchildren were mature men was not a simple conservatism but a desire that pacification should continue until no one remained who had known the war dead as living persons. If pacification could last as long as that, the idea of tol y'b' would become a mere artifact of the violent past.

The expression tol y'b' has no literal meaning and no one knows its derivation. I myself think it derives from the words tolmon, meaning 'red paint', and yibe, meaning 'nowadays', giving the sense of 'red paint nowadays' or, figuratively, 'blood as a consequence of what went before'. (Blood, e.g. menstrual blood, is sometimes referred to jokingly as 'red paint'.) People define it as 'thinking of the dead and how to avenge them'. Tol y'b' is the generic name for rituals of revenge and it includes rites aimed at protecting a killer and his 'small group' from the angry ghost of his victim. The war that began in 1979 revived these rituals after a gap of thirty-two years. This revival delays for more than a further generation the time when the idea of tol y'b' can recede into history.

Revenge is the principle that makes war necessary and, in the absence of authoritarian control, inevitable. When a man is killed his clansmen feel it to be their bounden duty to avenge his death. His closest agnates feel this obligation most strongly, but even if they die before the deed is done the obligation remains with all those clansmen who knew the killed man as a living person. His death is not simply the death of an individual but also a depletion of the clan. An insult to a leader of another clan is an insult to the clan and must be redressed as such. The engagement of a clan-tribe in what may at first seem to an outside observer to be a clash between individuals is not a matter of 'mob psychology', as Sillitoe (1979:77) alleges for the Wola, but of duty and obligation to the group.

The Minj people can see no prospect of bringing tribal warfare to a definite end short of arranging for the return of the white kiape, which many of them advocate. They point out that neither the police nor the provincial authorities are impartial, but emphasize that an authoritarian suppression of warfare is necessary. It will not be easy to eradicate the idea of tol y'b' until no man in any clan has known a clansman killed in war as a living person. If warfare is to be suppressed in the meantime we must consider what kind of authoritarian control would be politically feasible, locally acceptable, and effective.

It is too late, of course, to call back the white kiape to reenact the drama of pacification. But in equating the success of pacification with the rule of the white kiape the Minj people are forgetting that in the heyday of pacification the kiape ruled through satraps (Brown 1963) - the tultuls and tulutas, appointed local officials whose roles were more authoritarian than those of the subsequently elected officials (local government councillor, village magistrate). It seems to me that, whoever the ultimate local authorities may be, an effective suppression of warfare must involve grassroots officials, strongly supported by higher
officialdom. They would need to be answerable to the authorities on behalf of the clan-tribe, the unit that might otherwise be waging war, rather than on behalf of an arbitrarily defined constituency or village court area. There would be no need to create yet another class of officials with yet another especially designed badge. The peace officer could be charged with the duty of preventing his clan-tribe from going to war. This could be effective if the peace officer were indeed a village police officer commanded by and answerable to the police. A closer relationship between peace officers and the district law-enforcement agencies would help to restore the much eroded legitimacy of the police and help to eliminate warfare, raskolism, and the blatant disrespect for the law. The credibility of the law itself would seem to hinge on its being enforced with reasonable consistency. It also depends on the law-enforcement authorities acting as if they are confident that the law is enforceable. Neither of these conditions is present when most clansmen are imprisoned but some are released on payment of a fine in case the enemy should attack again believing that all the clan's warriors are in gaol (Balakau 1978). The destruction of weapons, which was so effective when carried out on the orders of the early kiape, has lost its power to usher in a period of non-violence and now signifies a willingness to suspend hostilities for at least as long as it takes to make new weapons and shields.

The Highlanders of Minj were once a proud and vital people living a rich community life within the broad framework of pacification and the law of the kiape. Community life is now impoverished and initiative is stifled by a new tradition that decision-making is out of people's hands and awaits upon authoritative orders. There is no easy way to put an end to tribal warfare so that the people of the Highlands may, in Winston Churchill's words, 'walk together in majesty, in justice, and in peace'.

NOTES

1 Literally this expression means 'Fair? No!' I have discussed elsewhere (1974:198) the concept of kab'g' in traditional justice.

2 Curiously the riot police do not remain at Minj, handy to the battlefield, longer than a few days at a time. They have to be summoned from Banz or Kundiawa or Mt Hagen, and there is time for a battle before they arrive.

3 This argument assumes that such a choice was available to him. But a proven coward could be dragged trembling to the battlefield and hemmed in by braver warriors until it was too late for him to evade his duty.

4 Sillitoe (1979:77) says it 'supports' war. Despite the weak phrasing, he does identify revenge as the only principle that does this.
REFERENCES


POLITICAL STYLE IN MODERN MELANESIA

R.J. May

In recent writing about contemporary politics in Melanesia one frequently comes across the term style. The suggestion seems to be that there is, if not a unique, at least a distinctive Melanesian style (or styles) of politics. Hegarty, for example, speaks of an 'essentially accommodative political and governmental style' in Papua New Guinea (1979:110) and Quiros (1979) speaks similarly of a 'conciliatory style of political leadership' in that country. (Also see Standish 1978a:29 and Herlihy, p.575.) Melanesian political leaders themselves frequently talk about doing things 'in the Melanesian way' (for example, see Lini 1980).

This paper seeks to identify some of the elements of political style in modern Melanesia and to relate them to broader aspects of the region's political culture.

I begin by accepting that there is such a thing as political style; I will not, however, attempt to define the term, except to say that it has something to do with the way in which nations' leaders (and by extension nations themselves) behave within a framework set by formal constitutions and realpolitik. The suggestion that one can distinguish a national or regional political style implies the existence of an identifiable political culture, though it does not deny the importance of individual personality in political style. By way of crude illustration, from outside Melanesia: I think one might reasonably argue that, say, the Ayatollah Khomeini, Emperor Bokassa, Ferdinand Marcos, Sir Eric Gairy and Bob Hawke display a variety of political styles which reflects differences in the respective political cultures from which they have emerged, and which could not be easily transferred from one political culture to another, and that the spectacle of the United States presidential elections reflects a style of politics which varies from that of even such other predominantly anglo-saxon western democracies as the United Kingdom and Australia.

The literature of political science has little to say about political style at an aggregative level, except perhaps in the field of international relations where several authors have referred to national styles as an important factor in determining patterns of international negotiations (for example, see Druckman 1977 and references cited therein; Spanier 1978:chapter 12). There is, on the other hand, a substantial literature on personality and politics (much of it contributed by psychologists), which has a lot to say about individual styles and has occasionally attempted to make the leap from the individual to the group or nation, mostly however in
the context of 'developed' societies. The anthropological literature on leadership in Melanesia is also of obvious relevance to the question of style in modern politics, but except for the work of Standish on Simbu politics (especially Standish forthcoming) and perhaps that of Pinney (1973) on bigmen and biemis - both of which are about Papua New Guinea highlands societies - there appears to have been little interest in the relationship between traditional and modern political styles.

In approaching the question of political style in modern Melanesia one possible method would be to compile a series of political biographies and attempt to generalize national characteristics from these. Entertaining though such an exercise might be, the prospect of deriving some stylistic equivalent of a 'modal personality' from profiles of political leaders as personally disparate as, say, Walter Lini, Iambakey Okuk, Marten Tabu, John Kasaipwalova, Jimmy Stevens and Ratu Mara seems sufficiently daunting to suggest an alternative approach (a reaction which recent personality-and-politics studies would seem to support).

By way of alternative, it might be argued that if there is a distinctive Melanesian style of politics (or if there are distinctive styles) one might expect to locate its essence in a specifically Melanesian political culture (or cultures). Constraints of time and space prevent me from attempting to draw a comprehensive picture of Melanesian political culture. Instead I will suggest that there is a number of respects in which the culture(s) and the recent political history of Melanesia are, if not unique, at least unusual. Some of these are examined briefly in the following paragraphs.

The scale of politics and the politics of scale. An earlier speaker (R.G. Ward, pp.181-191) has already touched on the question of the relative smallness and isolation of Melanesian societies and the impact this has had on their politics. This relationship is examined in greater detail in Benedict (1967) and in May and Tupouniua (1980). To quote from the latter:

The relationships between individuals in a small scale society thus tend to be more intense and social transactions to be dominated by personal relationships reflecting, amongst other things, kinship, village ties and ascriptive status. At the same time, the members of a small scale society tend to be more dependent upon one another's actions than do those of a larger society. Typically, political and economic relations are dominated by series of reciprocal obligations (between equals and between patrons and clients) but it is common, also, for small scale societies to employ social pressures to ensure individual conformity to the values and objectives of the group. It is often suggested that smallness of scale promotes social cohesion, however there is little evidence for this; indeed as Benedict (1967:49) rightly points out, "intense factionalism" is a common feature of small communities (May and Tupouniua 1980:423).
Diversity and (a little bit) beyond. Melanesia's diversity is legendary. The linguists have already commented on the region's extraordinary linguistic diversity - and have made the interesting suggestion (Laycock, pp.33-38) that this diversity is not a function of isolation but that language has been used deliberately as a means of differentiating one group from another. And the prehistorians and anthropologists, while reminding us of the extent of traditional exchange networks, have described a situation in which social units were typically small and in which intergroup relations were limited both in physical range and content. It may be, as has been suggested during the course of this seminar, that we are sometimes inclined to overemphasize the extent of isolationism in pre-contact Melanesia; nevertheless the fact remains that even compared with tribal Asia and Africa, pre-contact Melanesia was fragmented to an unusually high degree and that to a substantial extent this fragmentation has survived the colonial period.

Related to this is a provocative suggestion made by Barnes (1962:9): that

A characteristic of Highland cultures, and perhaps of Melanesia as a whole, is the high value placed on violence .... In these circumstances we might expect to find a less developed system of alliances and counterveiling forces, and less developed arrangements for maintaining peace, than we would have in a polity directed to peace and prosperity.

Bigmen and all that. A substantial body of recent writing on leadership and social stratification in Melanesia (to which the papers in this volume by Connell and Donaldson further contribute) seeks to distinguish between a stereotype of the typical Melanesian traditional society as egalitarian and communalistic, with leadership determined by competition between men of influence (what Standish 1978a refers to as the 'Big-man Model'), and the reality of socially hierarchical, status-conscious societies in which heredity frequently played an important part in the selection of leaders. Without wishing to detract from this recent emphasis on social stratification (except occasionally to query the source of the stereotype), I think it is important that we not lose sight of the essential elements of truth in the stereotype: namely, that relative to Polynesia and most parts of Africa (not to mention traditional societies in Europe and Asia) social stratification in Melanesian traditional societies was not particularly formalized and that traditional institutions such as sorcery and warfare, as well as social attitudes to wealth, were frequently used as a means of preventing forceful individuals or groups from rising too far above the common herd (cf. Moulki 1973:123-127).

The exception in this respect, it would seem, is Fiji. There, traditional societies appear to have been more formally stratified and the status ordering, having been consolidated by colonial rule, has so far proved enduring (see Nayacakalou 1975; Nation 1978).

Whatever the situation may have been, there is now a well entrenched (if not universally accepted) belief that egalitarianism and communalism prevailed in pre-contact Melanesia, and that these values are integral to 'the Melanesian way'.
... our peoples are communalistic and communalism is the basis for our traditional way of life. Our values therefore must be communalistic (Gris 1975:137).

The colonial experience. With respect to the impact of colonial rule on Melanesia's political culture, I offer four comments.

The first is the unremarkable observation that the impact of colonialism has itself been diverse. Not only have the colonial mastra exhibited a variety of political styles reflecting their indigenous political cultures (a theme pursued earlier in this seminar and also by Ward and Ballard 1976) but the timing of the colonial impact has been responsible for major differences in the attitudes of colonizers to colonized, and particular circumstances of physical environment and historical events (notably the second world war) have affected the Melanesian societies in different ways. For example, Australian colonialism in the New Guinea highlands in the 1950s was a very different thing from German colonialism in coastal New Guinea at the end of the nineteenth century, partly because of differences in the political cultures of the two colonizers and partly because of differences in the circumstances of contact, but primarily because prevailing attitudes towards colonialism in the late nineteenth century were rather different from the attitudes prevailing in the mid twentieth century (except, perhaps, amongst French colons). Similarly, the impact of the French on New Caledonia might have been very different if that territory had had no nickel.

Secondly, beyond this diversity colonialism has had a universal impact in breaking down traditional isolationism, facilitating the movement of people, goods and ideas, and fostering a national consciousness within the (largely arbitrary) geographical boundaries of the colonial system. Further, the colonial powers sought to develop this wider consciousness within the framework of institutions and norms imported, for the most part, from outside. (Consider, for example, the comments of Waddell 1973 on the appropriateness of the Westminster model to Papua New Guinea.) At the two extremes of this generalization: in Fiji the British administration actively sought to 'preserve' elements of the traditional polity; in Irian Jaya Indonesian policy has been overtly assimilationist and the Melanesian political culture has been suppressed by direct political action and by heavy immigration. As in other parts of the world, however, the attempt to modernize Melanesian societies and to create national polities in the colonialist's image has been only partially successful. For one thing, like colonized people elsewhere, Melanesians have already shown a remarkable capacity for adapting modernity to tradition and tradition to modernity and for maintaining, side by side with occasional overlapping, the forms and institutions of traditional politics with those of the introduced system. For another, in Papua New Guinea, the Solomons and Vanuatu separatist and what elsewhere (May 1975, forthcoming) I have called 'micronationalist' movements have emerged to contest, actively or passively, the political boundaries of the modern states.

Thirdly, and more controversially, it might be argued that while colonialism is very seldom a pleasant experience for the colonized and although Melanesia suffered its share of forced labour, punitive expeditions and the rest, for most Melanesians the colonial impact, judged
against the broad sweep of world history, was relatively benign (Irian Jaya being the notable exception). Without wishing to press the point too far—and recognizing that in some respects this is a condemnation of Australian colonial rule: there have been few countries in which, as in Papua New Guinea, the indigenous government, elected on a nationalist platform, has sought to postpone the granting of independence. This observation and the implications of it have been elaborated by the African Mazrui (1970:56).

Until the recent interest in large scale mining enterprise, Australian indifference denied New Guineans even the advantage of a shared anti-colonial resentment. The British [in Africa], by being exploitative, were also involved in fostering cultural homogenization, some economic inter-action, some constructions of institutions for conflict resolution, and above all the beginnings of national consciousness.

By the sin of indifference, however, Australia has denied her dependency such an infra-structure for nationhood. And she has denied her own participation in modern imperialism its ultimate legitimation—the legitimation of having laid the foundations of modern statehood.

Finally, in three Melanesian territories a major impact of colonialism (and I include Irian Jaya as a colony) has been the importation of non Melanesian people. In Fiji and New Caledonia Melanesians are now in a minority of the population; in Irian Jaya non Melanesians probably account for around 10 per cent of the population (Pacific Islands Yearbook 1978:223), but they are concentrated in the administrative and commercial centres and the proportion is probably rising. Obviously this makes for a different style of national politics.

Politics, economics and bissnis. In 1971 R. Kent Wilson wrote:

When the economic history of Papua New Guinea comes to be written by an indigenous scholar, it is possible that it will be seen in part as the search for a key, a search indulged in by both indigene and expatriate, by both tribes and Administration. Exotic religion, roads, schools, co-operatives, savings societies, information services, business advice and so on, have all been interpreted in some contexts by one or both parties to the dual economy as the key to economic advancement. When frustration or imagination took over, the search was diverted to cargoism, a cult which in broad terms has not been the preserve of the indigene (Wilson 1971:525).

Nine years later the record of Melanesian business enterprises is little better than it was when Wilson carried out his survey of village industries (Wilson and Garnaut 1968); equally remarkable is the general failure of the numerous locally-based development movements which emerged in Papua New Guinea in the early 1970s. And although various explanations have been offered (e.g. Nadkarni 1970; Wilson 1971; Andrews 1975; also see Jackman
1977) the questions which plagued business development officers and development bank officials in the 1960s remain largely unanswered. Yet individual and group businesses are still seen - perhaps increasingly - as a road to development and to the acquisition of social and political status, and in Papua New Guinea provincial governments are in the process of setting up business arms, already with some unfortunate results.

In an earlier paper to this seminar Peter Lawrence suggested (pp.57-72) a distinction, in traditional societies, between 'secular or empirical knowledge' and 'sacred or "true" knowledge' and referred to the continued strength - in the face of education and material advancement - of magico-religious thinking as an obstacle to people's understanding of the operation of the modern world. Certainly what Lawrence would refer to as cargoistic thinking, and what might be more generally described as inadequate understanding and unrealistic expectations about business, provides part of an explanation for the failure, in western terms, of some business ventures; but it is also clear that Melanesians have not always seen the demise of businesses (or, indeed, their raison d'être) in the same terms as outsiders (just as Papua New Guinean lawyer, philosopher and consultant to his country's Constitutional Planning Committee, Bernard Narokobi opposed the constitutional provision for an auditor-general on the grounds that such an office was unMelanesian).

The relationship between politics and business in modern Melanesia is a complex one, especially as in Papua New Guinea where a government leadership code seeks to restrict the business activities of national leaders, many of whom argue (with Iambakey Okuk) that the accumulation of wealth is an essential element of political status.

At the national level, also, there is in much of Melanesia an element of unreality in the ideological commitment of self-sufficiency and the fact that Melanesia is, per capita, probably the most heavily aid-assisted region of the world. Commenting on this in 1970 (from the viewpoint of a political party organizer) Mr Michael Somare said:

Our people are so accustomed to getting things for nothing ... that they do not see why they should organize as political groups to express these demands (Somare 1970:490).

What sort of a picture does this leave us with and what sort of political style is suggested by these aspects of political culture?

The first generalization I would offer - which follows on from the comments about scale and about fragmentation - is that politics in modern Melanesia, even at the national level, is essentially personal and group politics. In the absence of basic social divisions cutting across the Melanesian polities (to the obvious frustration of some Marxist analysts) the bases for political support in Melanesia are typically local or personal. With the exception of Fiji, and the qualified exception of New Caledonia (where French colonial attitudes and policies have produced the sort of anti-colonial nationalist solidarity whose absence in Papua New Guinea was noted by Mazrui), the Melanesian political culture has not proved to be a fertile ground for the growth of political parties. Even in
Papua New Guinea, where in the early 1970s there appeared to be a well established incipient party system, political parties have not developed as the proponents of the Westminster model assumed they would; indeed in late 1980 the Pangu Pati machinery in both Morobe and East Sepik — probably the strongest examples of political party development in Melanesia outside Fiji — appeared to be in a state of total disarray. In provincial elections in Papua New Guinea during 1979-80 several provinces (including the East Sepik and Western Highlands) decided that they 'would not have' political parties because parties were 'disruptive'. Moreover where incipient party structures have emerged they have tended to display a pronounced regional bias. Even within the West Papuan liberation movement, personal and regional/ethnic divisions have cut across the common cause of Irianese against Indonesian rule.

In the absence of western-style parties political loyalties have tended to revolve around clan, local or ethnic divisions. This appears to have two major implications. On the one hand it makes for parochial, pork-barrel politics; on the other it ensures the interplay of traditional and modern politics, with the implications this has for the accumulation and distribution of wealth and influence for political purposes, the manipulation of *kastram* to political ends, and occasionally the use of violence (cf. Standish forthcoming).

A corollary of this is the growing incidence of nepotism (in Papua New Guinea, *wantokias*, in Vanuatu 'family government'). As several people (Melanesian and non Melanesian) have argued, there are strengths in a *wantok* system, but when the impact of *wantokias* is to entrench the position of those who for historical or other reasons have gained an initial advantage in the political-administrative system, *wantokias* has a great potential for exacerbating ethnic and regional tensions (cf. McKillop and Standish in May forthcoming).

A second observation, which derives from the comments about the fragmentation of traditional society, relates again to the importance of regionalism. Apart from the tendency for regionalism to manifest itself as a basis of political organization within national politics, Melanesian societies have shown a marked propensity towards decentralization, separatism and micronationalist withdrawal. This is a subject which will be taken up in more detail by Jim Griffin but I think it is worth noting that aside from such separatist tendencies as evidenced by the North Solomons, Papua Besena, Nagriamel and the western islands movement in the Solomons, the formal decentralization of political power which has taken place in Papua New Guinea and has been mooted in the Solomons is highly unusual in the experience of new states.

A third generalization concerns the inconsistency between the ideology of 'the Melanesian Way', with its emphasis on equality, communalism, self-sufficiency and consensus, and its respect for tradition, and the reality of political and social change in Melanesia which so often is characterized by social stratification, individualism, dependence and conflict (Standish 1980 uses the term 'jugular politics'), and is so frequently anxious to embrace modern, capitalist development. In part, perhaps, this is evidence of a variety of Melanesian political cultures. In part it is a reflection of the gap between political myth and political reality which exists in all political systems. But it also has something
to do with the use of ideologies rooted in a model of harmonious small societies to justify participation in a system imposed during colonial rule. And of course it should be said that 'the Melanesian Way' is not entirely myth. Melanesian politics often does reveal a concern for egalitarianism, a capacity for compromise, and (except perhaps for Fiji) a lack of respect for authority which places it apart from new states in Asia, Africa or America. I find it impossible, for example, to think of an indigenous military regime in Melanesia.

In a similar way the emphasis given to kastom or kalsa in Melanesia is in part evidence of genuine respect for tradition, but it is also a symbol manipulated by politicians (especially young politicians) to legitimate their participation in the modern system and as such, as Tonkinson (1980) has recently pointed out, can be used both as a force for national unity and a force for ethnic division.

I am aware that this paper does little to capture the spirit of Melanesian political style. And it does nothing to distinguish differential (for example, highlands as opposed to coastal) Melanesian styles. But what I hope it has done is suggest that one might be able to talk about a Melanesian political style, rooted in Melanesian political culture, and that in interpreting contemporary political developments in independent Melanesia non-Melanesian observers should be aware that in part what they are observing is the assertion of that Melanesian style (cf. Quiros 1979 in reviewing Standish 1978b). What is offered here is merely the preamble to a more serious study.

NOTES

On the concept of political culture see Almond and Verba (1963), Pye and Verba (1965), Almond and Powell (1966:chapter 3), Kavanagh (1972). This writing might be compared with the earlier literature on 'national character', of which there is an extensive review in Inkeles and Levinson (1969).

The personality-and-politics literature is well reviewed in Greenstein (1969, 1975). There is also an extensive bibliography in Hermann (1977). For specific comments on aggregative analyses of personality and politics see Greenstein (1969:120-140; 1975:60-68). Probably the best known study of personality and politics in 'transitional societies' is that of Pye (1962); there is also some interesting material in Legge (1973). A course on 'Personality and Political Style' is provided by the Department of Government at University of Queensland. I am grateful to Graeme Vaughan for informing me of this and providing me with a copy of the course outline and references.

A presentation by Griffin, 'From Vogelkopf to Fiji: fragmentation, friction and fraternity' was not available for inclusion in this volume.

The closest to a coherent statement of 'the Melanesian Way' which I have been able to locate is a piece by Bernard Narakobi in Post-Courier 22
October 1974 but there is constant reference to it in papers in May (1973) and Lawrence (1975) has written about it. A similar philosophy is expounded in The Pacific Way (Tupouniusa et al. 1975). The Melanesian Way philosophy is, of course, embodied in the Papua New Guinea government's Eight Aims and in the preamble to its constitution. [Since this paper was written a volume on the Melanesian Way, by Narokobi, has been published by the Institute of Papuan New Guinea Studies, Port Moresby (Narokobi 1980).]

REFERENCES


MELANESIA AND SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL POLITICS

G.E. Fry

Melanesia is noted for its cultural diversity. This diversity is, in fact, so marked that it has caused many to question the accepted practice of grouping the hundreds of societies from West Irian to Fiji into a 'region', and of referring to its inhabitants as Melanesian, with the implication of shared characteristics that the use of such a label suggests. Whilst a strong objective basis for the 'existence' of Melanesia, in anything but name, appears to be lacking, there is nevertheless a context in which a Melanesian identity becomes relevant and therefore one in which the region can be said to move 'beyond diversity'. That context is provided by the involvement of the newly independent Melanesian states - Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu - in South Pacific regional politics. In such a context, where Melanesians confront Polynesians, Micronesians and Europeans, a sense of ethnic allegiance is promoted, which is as real and as significant as if there were an objective cultural basis for it. Such an allegiance is based primarily on shared political interests and is increasingly encouraged by political leaders who see advantage in 'Melanesian brotherhood' for domestic, regional and wider international purposes.

This paper is concerned with the involvement of the Melanesian countries in regional developments and with the implications that such involvement has both for the development of a Melanesian political identity and for the nature of regional politics. The subject is approached by examining, first, the nature of regional political activity and its institutional framework; secondly, the dominant role of Fiji in regional activity and its repercussions; thirdly, the entry of Papua New Guinea into regional politics; fourthly, the Papua New Guinea/Fiji 'alliance'; fifthly, the developing Melanesian 'alliance' under Sir Julius Chan, and finally, the grounds for talking about a Melanesian bloc within South Pacific regional politics.

THE BASIS OF REGIONAL POLITICS

The decolonization that took place in the South Pacific during the 1960s and 1970s made the emergence of regional politics inevitable. Prior to decolonization there was no regional politics as such. All of the island countries came under the administration of five metropolitan countries. The withdrawal of Britain, Australia and New Zealand from their island territories left behind nine independent states and two self-governing countries, each in a position to determine its own foreign
policy. This had important repercussions for the international relations of the region. Significantly, each of these states opted to adopt, as a priority in its foreign policy, a commitment to the promotion of regional cooperation. They have not just been concerned, then, with developments in their own countries. They have a regional view and hold the attitude that it is they, rather than outside powers, that should determine future developments in the island region of Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia.¹

The emergence of independent states committed to a regionalist view has inevitably provided the basis for political conflict because of the continued involvement of metropolitan powers in the region. The countries have their own ideas about how developments should proceed in the area and about who should determine them. This involvement is not confined to the United States and France, which still administer territories in the region. The political change in the region has also aroused the interest and involvement of other metropolitan powers which were previously denied access to the region under colonial arrangements. Such interest has come mainly from Japan, the Soviet Union, China and the EEC, and has been expressed in terms of diplomatic ties, trade links, visits and offers of economic assistance. These moves prompted an immediate response from Australia and New Zealand, who regard the South Pacific region south of the equator as their sphere of influence (Fry 1979:276-291); consequently, they became much more heavily involved diplomatically and economically in the region. Thus recent developments have moved the region from an isolated world position to one more closely linked with 'big power' strategic and resource interests. The political withdrawal of the colonial powers has not meant a lessening of external involvement. Rather, it has led to an increased interest and involvement on the part of outside powers.

Here then were all the ingredients for the emergence of regional politics: newly independent Pacific states committed to the promotion of regional cooperation and the fostering of an indigenous regional identity; a continuing American and French administrative presence in their Pacific territories; new interest from the Soviet Union, China, the EEC and Japan; and Australia, New Zealand and the United States attempting, as an ANZUS strategy, to keep the newly independent states under their influence. Each of these groups wants to influence developments in the region. Political divisions, tensions and conflicts were therefore inevitable. Moreover, the fact that the independent Pacific states were committed to practical ventures in regional cooperation dictated that regional politics would not only be defined in terms of the island countries versus the metropolitan countries. The basis was also established for political conflict to occur among the island states themselves concerning the nature, pace and control of regional ventures.

**ASSERTION OF INDIGENOUS CONTROL OF THE REGIONAL STRUCTURES**

Regional politics was, at first, concerned with the issue of control. Prior to 1965 all decisions concerning regional developments in the South Pacific were made in the distant metropolitan capitals of the colonial powers. Pacific islanders did not play a significant part in this process. From the mid 1960s, however, the Pacific leaders took a series of actions aimed at changing the regional structures which ensured this colonial power supremacy. The first action was to demand change in the power balance
within the existing regional organization, the South Pacific Commission (SPC). The SPC had been established in 1947 by the colonial powers with territorial interests in the region - Britain, France, the Netherlands, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. The stated purpose of the organization was to promote the economic and social development of the inhabitants of the Island territories.\(^2\) Nineteen territories were eventually included within the scope of the SPC. The assurance that absolute control of the organization would be in the hands of the metropolitan powers had been built into the provisions of the founding Agreement. Although the involvement of Pacific islanders was to be encouraged through participation in a triennial South Pacific Conference, the Conference was given only advisory powers. Control of the organization's activities rested firmly with the twelve commissioners who represented the metropolitan governments.

Although a reflection of prevailing thought in 1947, the provisions which ensured colonial power predominance were anachronistic in the 1960s, when islanders had begun to feel the impact of political change within their countries. They objected strongly to these structural guarantees of colonial power supremacy and in their reaction to them, the Island leaders found a rallying point. Their attack on metropolitan power dominance took the form of a series of demands for a more prominent role for the South Pacific Conference, the body within the SPC organization in which islanders were represented. Indigenous interests became identified with the Conference, whilst the interests of the colonial powers became identified with the Commission.

Although there had been earlier isolated instances of islander dissatisfaction with their role within the SPC, it was not until the 1962 conference, held at Pago Pago, that such feelings were widely shared and articulated (Herr 1976:179-186). The mood of the meeting influenced the representatives of the colonial powers meeting in the 1964 session of the Commission who decided that the Conference would henceforth be able to make recommendations concerning the work programme. Delegates at the 1965 conference held in Lae were disappointed, however, in how their newly-won power worked in practice. This disillusionment was the immediate cause of the outspoken attack upon the Commission which followed (Langdon 1965:21). Ratu Mara of Fiji was the principal protagonist, but he was supported by nearly all island delegates. He was later to describe their joint action as a 'rebellion'. He argued that the 'confrontation' with the colonial powers was necessary because

the powers seemed incapable of realising that the winds of change had at last reached the South Pacific and that we peoples of the territories were no longer going to tolerate the domination of the Commission by the Metropolitan powers. We were sick of having little to say and no authority. Regardless of what we said or did, the final decision was always in the hands of the Metropolitan powers (Mara 1974:7).

For both island participants and European observers, the Lae conference represented a watershed in regional affairs.
In subsequent conferences between 1967 and 1974, the Pacific delegates continued to press for more power. Despite the reluctance of some metropolitan powers, particularly France, to concede change, these efforts culminated in the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding in 1974. Under the Memorandum, the Conference became the governing body of the SPC. The operation of the SPC under the new Memorandum rules did not, however, satisfy all islander complaints concerning metropolitan influence within the SPC. In the conferences between 1975 and 1979, the Pacific island representatives continued to attack what they saw as residual elements of metropolitan dominance. For example, at the 1978 conference, the Fijian delegate, Livai Nasilivata, attacked Australia for referring matters to Canberra for decision and, in so doing, keeping the rest of the Conference waiting. He asked,

How much longer are we, the island countries and, in fact, ministers representing islands peoples at this conference, to allow ourselves to be treated in this insulting and paternalistic way by some of our partners? (Ashton 1978:22)

His attack was supported by other delegates. The sensitivity to any metropolitan actions which might be construed as trying to influence unduly the operation of the SPC remains despite the structural changes which have given islanders effective control of this organization. For many islanders, the SPC will always be seen as the organization created by the colonial powers, and therefore not to be regarded in the same way as 'home-grown' institutions.

The second action aimed at asserting indigenous control of regional organization was the establishment of the Pacific Islands Producers' Association (PIPA). Significantly, it was established in 1965, the same year as the 'rebellion' at the Lae conference. This was not mere coincidence, for the two developments were related, stemming as they did from a common motive and initiated by the same group of island leaders. The creation of PIPA was particularly important because it was an action which involved moving outside the established organizational framework which was identified with colonial power interests. The establishment of PIPA was initiated by Ratu Mara, then member for natural resources in the Fiji government, who saw the need for closer cooperation among island territories supplying bananas to the New Zealand market (Elder 1971). Fiji was joined by Western Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tonga, and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Thus PIPA really amounted to a Polynesian venture reflecting the more advanced stage of decolonization in that part of the region and the fact that the main banana producers also happened to be Polynesian. The scope of PIPA's interests widened to include cooperation in relation to other primary products and to include consideration of cooperation on all stages of production (shipping, marketing, research).

PIPA was not created merely to work on practical problems of development, though this was the stated objective. Most of the activities undertaken by PIPA could have been approached through the SPC, and yet a decision was taken to establish a new organization. The creation of PIPA can therefore be regarded as being, at least partly, an effort to take control of regional programmes. It was an exercise in self-determination. The importance of the all-island aspect of PIPA was stressed by Tupua
Tamasese Lealofi IV, then prime minister of Western Samoa. In his closing speech to the 1971 PIPA conference, he said:

This is the strength of our small body ... this is an association of islanders, created by islanders, and successful only from the efforts of such.\textsuperscript{55}

For Albert Henry, premier of the Cook Islands, PIPA was important as a symbol of Polynesian assertion in particular:

... for 200 years, the white man has been exploiting the resources of the Pacific, but now Polynesians are working together for Polynesians (Pacific Islands Monthly May 1971:22).

PIPA was terminated in 1973 but only because there was by then another indigenous organization of wider function that could subsume its activities.

The creation of the South Pacific Forum in 1971 was the third indigenous action to gain control of regional decision-making. It was established by the newly independent Pacific states to provide them with a forum to discuss any matters of concern to them. Its creation was spurred by the frustrations felt with the limits placed on the scope of discussion in the South Pacific Commission. The founding Agreement had limited the SPC's scope to economic and social development. Political matters had been purposely excluded. This began to annoy island delegates to South Pacific Conferences during the 1960s (Mara 1972:5). Ratu Mara of Fiji, Tamasese of Western Samoa, and Albert Henry of the Cook Islands therefore moved to create their own organization. Although the other independent Pacific states became involved, it was these three who took the initiative. They asked Australia and New Zealand to join them but excluded the other metropolitan powers. In 1972 the Forum established the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation (SPEC) as its research arm.\textsuperscript{6} SPEC's functions are concerned with the promotion of cooperation on trade and economic development. It also became the secretariat and coordinator for the many institutional offshoots - conferences, councils and corporations - of the Forum network, particularly in the fields of civil aviation, shipping, telecommunications and trade.

The region now has two organizational networks, one centred on the SPC and the other on the South Pacific Forum. Both institutional networks are now managed by the Pacific states. As will have become evident, there are important distinctions to be made between them. The SPC covers a wider region through its inclusion of dependent territories. It also has greater metropolitan involvement through the participation of France, the United States and the United Kingdom, in addition to Australia and New Zealand. The Forum, on the other hand, restricts its membership to the independent Pacific countries plus Australia and New Zealand. Another important distinction is that the SPC has retained its 'no politics' rule, whereas any subject may be raised in the Forum. It was possible in its early years for the Forum/SPEC organization to reach an understanding with the SPC such that duplication, and conflicts between the two institutional networks, could be minimized. The subsequent expansion of the Forum network, however, both in terms of membership and function, has prompted actions
which now threaten the continued existence of the South Pacific Commission. These actions, taken mainly by Melanesian countries, are examined below.

IMPLEMENTATION OF FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION

In their joint activity aimed at taking control of the SPC and establishing their own regional structures, the Pacific leaders could achieve a high degree of cohesion and unity of purpose. The attempts to implement regional ventures and programmes through these structures, however, began to reveal the political conflicts inherent in the regional movement - the national interests, jealousies, rivalries and tensions. The promotion of functional cooperation involves the commitment of resources, a willingness to sacrifice national interests, coping with the problems of regional management, and undertaking the hard work of evaluating regional schemes. It is in such a context that the underlying divisions and rivalries within the Pacific community have become apparent.

The Pacific states have pursued cooperation in a wide range of functional areas. It is evident, however, that although regional proposals involving a high degree of integration have often been contemplated, and sometimes attempted, there has generally been a shying away from such options in favour of options involving a lesser degree of integration. For example, the free trade area option was passed over in favour of ad hoc regional trade promotion and the negotiation of preferential access to the Australian, New Zealand, and EEC markets. In the case of the regional airline, the Pacific states have opted for cooperation among national airlines after a troubled experience with a regional carrier. The regional development bank proposal, which had been given serious consideration over many years, was finally passed over in favour of a joint approach to gain access to Asian Development Bank funds. Whereas early proposals for a regional shipping line involved a corporation which would acquire its own vessels, the proposal which ultimately won acceptance advocated a 'pooling' concept. Also, the regional rationalization of industrial development has not been attempted though there is provision for SPEC to examine this if the Forum becomes committed to the idea. Once again a lower level form of integration has been adopted (Fry 1979:124-178).

The evidence suggests that those ventures requiring considerable commitment of national resources and a surrendering of national sovereignty have been generally rejected at the proposal stage, have failed after establishment or have struggled on beset by difficulties. It has proved very difficult to achieve high-level integration in such areas. Examples of this type of venture include the regional airline, the shipping line, the Telecommunications Training Centre, the free trade area concept, the university, and the Fisheries Agency. As the implications for national interests of such ventures are significant, their establishment and operation have been of substantial concern to the Pacific leaders. It is in relation to such cooperative ventures that political divisions have been most evident.
IN Volvement OF MElantesian STaTes

The Melanesian states were generally latecomers to regional politics owing to the later decolonization of this part of the South Pacific. Fiji was the exception. From the mid 1960s Ratu Mara, prime minister since 1970 and chief minister prior to independence, made the development of regionalism a central concern of Fiji's foreign policy. In 1974 he described regional cooperation as the subject closest to his heart (Mara 1974:1). This commitment is further indicated in his report to parliament on the first three years of foreign affairs of an independent Fiji:

... in its foreign policy, Government has accorded the highest priority to the development of the closest possible relationships with its South Pacific neighbours and to the extension of practical co-operation to all matters of common interest (Ratu Mara, Report on Foreign Affairs for the period 10th October 1970 - 31st December 1973, Parliamentary Paper no. 19 of 1974, Parliament of Fiji, p. 1).

Ratu Mara has been the most prominent regional activist. He led the 1965 'rebellion' at the Lae conference and many of the subsequent attacks on metropolitan influence within the SPC. He was also responsible for the creation of PIPA, the first indigenous regional organization. Although he had an important part to play in the establishment of the Forum, he was by that time careful to ensure that he was not seen to be dominating that initiative. Fiji was not only prominent in the moves to gain control of regional structures; it also became the main supporter of many of the major regional ventures pursued through indigenous-controlled institutions. This was partly because Fiji had more resources in terms of manpower and finance than its neighbours, partly because many of the regional institutions were sited in Fiji, and partly because of Ratu Mara's commitment to regionalism. The dominant role of Fiji, and in particular of Ratu Mara, has not gone unnoticed by other Pacific leaders. It has been, in fact, one of the main causes of political tension among the Pacific states. The reaction of other leaders and its effect on regional politics is considered below.

It was not until 1973 that a second Melanesian state began to commit itself to involvement in South Pacific regional affairs. Papua New Guinea gained self-government in that year and the new chief minister, Michael Somare, indicated that his country would be identifying itself with the Pacific island states in its international relations and would be supporting regional cooperation. This commitment was reiterated by Albert Maori Kiki, the minister for defence, foreign relations and trade. In his Assessment Report on Foreign Policy, delivered to the House of Assembly in December 1974, he stated:

We feel ... that Papua New Guinea's interests are best served in international affairs by being clearly a member of the Community of the South Pacific Islands Nations loyal to this community's causes and common initiatives (Kiki 1974:2).
In 1975, the year of its independence, Papua New Guinea became a full member of the SPC and a member of the South Pacific Forum, having been an observer at two previous meetings. The replacement of the Somare government by that of Chan in 1980 has not altered this foreign policy commitment to involvement in the South Pacific. To the contrary, it has eventuated in Papua New Guinea adopting a much higher profile in the region. As the largest country in the area, Papua New Guinea's entry was bound to have a significant impact on regional politics. Its entry, its subsequent 'alliance' with Fiji and the Solomon Islands, and the reformulation of the Melanesian bloc under Chan's leadership is examined below.

The Solomon Islands, like Papua New Guinea, indicated its commitment to South Pacific regionalism prior to independence. When it became self-governing in 1975, the chief minister, Solomon Mamaloni, attended the South Pacific Forum as an observer. The Solomons became a full member of the SPC and the Forum after independence in 1978. The new country's first prime Minister, Peter Kenilorea, continued the previous administration's commitment to participation in regional cooperation and in May 1980 his party, the Solomon Islands United Party, incorporated this commitment in its manifesto (Solomon Islands United Party Manifesto, May 1980:13-14). As a smaller country, the Solomon Islands has not been able to influence regional politics to the same degree that Papua New Guinea and Fiji have. It has, however, taken some independent initiatives in addition to being a firm supporter of the Papua New Guinea 'line'.

Vanuatu is the latest Melanesian state to join the regional forums. Although its foreign policy priorities have yet to be announced, it is evident that participation in regional activity will be a priority. It has already been accepted as a member of the Forum and of the SPC. As a dependent territory of France, New Caledonia has much less involvement in regional affairs than the other Melanesian states. It does not qualify for participation in the South Pacific Forum nor for full membership of the SPC. It does, however, send a representative to the South Pacific Conference. Whilst Vanuatu's independent involvement in regionalism has been a recent development, it has, together with New Caledonia, formed a focal point for much of regional politics, particularly since 1978. Thus whilst unable themselves to participate in regional political activity as such, they have been central to much of what is going on. Certainly, the Melanesian blocs referred to below have gained much of their unity from the French involvement in New Caledonia and, until recently, in Vanuatu.

FIJIAN 'DOMINATION' OF REGIONAL ACTIVITY

A resentment of what has been seen as Fijian dominance of regional affairs has created serious conflicts within the regional movement. There are several related elements underlying this anti-Fiji sentiment. First, until recently most of the regional institutions had been established in Fiji. These include the University of the South Pacific (USP), SPEC, the SPC Community Education Centre, the Telecommunications Training Centre and Air Pacific. Fiji has the advantage of being in a central location and well serviced by international transport. An added attraction is the fact that various United Nations agencies have set up their regional offices in Suva. In addition, once one regional organization had been established
there were advantages, in terms of liaison, for others to do likewise. This situation created the appearance of a regionalism centred on Fiji.

A second factor contributing to resentment of Fiji was the dominant role it had played within the regional organizations. Ratu Mara's growing reputation as the 'front man' of the regional movement has earned him the resentment of others who, perhaps through jealousy, see his actions as amounting to an assumption of regional leadership. Within Air Pacific and USP, where Fijian financial interests are predominant, there has been discontent with what is seen as Fijian dominance. The other Pacific countries feel that the way these ventures are run favours Fijian interests. Conflicts within the organizations became defined in terms of Fiji versus the rest of the membership. A third point is that Fiji saw itself as a spokesman for the region at the time when it was the only Pacific island member of the United Nations (1970-75). To a certain extent, it was regarded as such by the outside world. There was a tendency for the other Pacific countries to see this as an assumption of a leadership, rather than a representative, role.

The resentment of Fiji's role in regionalism contributed to the move towards national, rather than regional, endeavours. This was particularly evident in relation to civil aviation. Fiji's reaction to the criticism of its role has also had important implications for regionalism. At first Fiji had tried to meet such criticism by publicly claiming that it was not desiring a regional leadership role. For example, Koya, the Fijian chairman of the thirty-third session of the SPC (1970) said in his opening address:

We do not in any way claim that it [independence] gives us a special position of prestige and leadership (Koya 1970:1).

Fiji's sensitivity to such charges at this time was also indicated by Ratu Mara's suggestion that the first Forum should be held in New Zealand:

... the story was that Fiji was trying to usurp the leadership of the island region and so I thought it would be one way of avoiding this, and scotching such reports, if we met entirely away from the island region altogether (Mara 1974:11).

Stuart Inder, reporting on the Wellington Forum for Pacific Islands Monthly, observed that Ratu Mara 'continually soft-pedalled on what in fact is his undoubted leadership in the South Pacific'. He viewed this as an attempt by Mara 'to avoid a wrist-caning from his colleagues' (Inder 1971:27).

By 1975, however, it is evident that Ratu Mara had tired of the constant criticism of Fiji's role. In a statement to the press in November, he indicated considerable disillusionment with regionally-run organizations such as Air Pacific and the University of the South Pacific. He drew attention to the difficulties associated with joint management of a regional programme or institution. In particular, he objected to the fact that under such an arrangement, the 'pace of development is determined by the slowest member'. He cited as an example the conflict concerning
whether USP should have accounting and engineering chairs. Fiji supported this move because it suited its requirements in this area, whilst some other countries opposed it because this was not relevant to their needs. Ratu Mara advocated a move away from joint management of regional institutions to a situation in which the host country was responsible for the running of the regional institution. This, he thought, would ensure that 'development would be determined by the fastest'. When Mara made this statement, he had in mind the proposed Regional Telecommunications Training Project then before the Fiji cabinet. It was, in fact, subsequently established as a Fiji-run regional organization with places available for others in the region.

At first glance, Ratu Mara's revised concept of regional organization management does not appear to threaten significantly the nature of regionalism; it is just the management which would be organized in a more rational way. Ratu Mara, in fact, claimed that this new attitude would not damage the concept of regional cooperation. On closer inspection, however, it is evident that his statement presented a radically new interpretation of the concept of regionalism. It could be argued that it in fact amounts to a rejection of the main elements in regionalism. What he was advocating was the end of cooperative determination of goals, methods, pace, and direction in regional policy, and, in its stead, a 'regionalism' in which 'the pace of development', and, by implication, the direction and methods of development, is in accord with the wishes of the 'fastest'.

This was the first time that Ratu Mara had publicly criticized the concept of regionally-run regional organizations. His statement represented a culmination of the growing frustration that Fiji had experienced in trying to lead regional activity within these organizations and the growing resentment that Fijian leaders had felt against the criticism that had been levelled at their country in recent years by other island states and territories. It also reflected a feeling that Fiji's national interest had suffered through the compromises and sacrifices necessary in the cooperative process:

...I think we may have over-reached and done it [the encouragement of regional co-operation] at the expense of our own national interest.\(^\text{11}\)

Some recent developments appear to have lessened the antagonism felt towards Fiji. These include the siting of new regional organizations in Honiara and Apia, the decentralization of USP, and the move by other Pacific countries to join the United Nations. Nevertheless, the tensions related to Fiji's position in the regional movement could be said to have had some lasting effects. Nearly all Pacific countries moved to more nationalistic positions. This was particularly significant in Fiji's case because, up to this time, it had been regionalism's most active supporter and Ratu Mara had been the region's most prominent activist.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S ENTRY

It has been claimed by several observers that the Pacific states viewed with apprehension the prospect of Papua New Guinea's participation in South Pacific regionalism,\(^\text{12}\) and further, that Fiji in particular saw
Papua New Guinea as an unwanted rival for the position of regional leader. These claims appear to have been based on two observations. The first was that Papua New Guinea was demonstrably a giant among dwarfs in the South Pacific context, whether measured in terms of population, land area, or size of economy (Sundhaussen 1974:102-103). Thus, it is inferred, its size alone gives to it a potential for domination that would concern the much smaller island states. For more direct evidence of Pacific island wariness about Papua New Guinea's participation, they cite the decision of the Forum countries not to admit Papua New Guinea when it applied for membership in 1972. This was interpreted as signalling that Papua New Guinea was not wanted in the South Pacific group of countries. In particular, it was seen as a Fiji-inspired action to keep out a potential rival. At a seminar held in 1972, Dr Reuben Taureka, Papua New Guinea's minister for health, commented:

We were refused admission by Fiji and its small neighbours to the South Pacific Commission. We have been excluded from the Pacific Forum. Fiji is afraid for us to enter the South Pacific Forum because she thinks we may dominate her (Sundhaussen 1974:110).

In a television interview in Australia in June 1972, the Fijian prime minister denied that he was trying to exclude Papua New Guinea from entering regional activity. He said he thought that 'they belong to the South Pacific and they should take a greater role in the Pacific if they become independent'. In an attempt to explain the refusal of Forum membership to Papua New Guinea in 1972, he said:

I've been misquoted that I have a complex against Papua New Guinea. I certainly put my foot down in [sic] New Guinea joining the South Pacific Forum because the South Pacific Forum is for independent countries.

In a further attempt to counter the claims of tensions between Fiji and Papua New Guinea, Ratu Mara again explained the Forum entry issue whilst on a visit to Papua New Guinea in May 1974. He said that Papua New Guinea had not qualified for membership because it did not have full responsibility for its own affairs. The criterion of entry, he said, was 'one of sovereignty and not size' (Mara 1974:11).

In 1973-74, a foreign policy was determined for post independence Papua New Guinea in which participation in South Pacific regionalism received high priority. It was in this context that Somare made a series of statements disclaiming any intention, on Papua New Guinea's part, of dominating or assuming leadership of the South Pacific states. In his Roy Milne lecture (Melbourne, July 1974), where he set out Papua New Guinea's future external policies, he stated that Papua New Guinea

... sees her role in the Forum as one of equality. We believe that the basis of this equality should be sovereignty and not size or population. We wish to meet with our island neighbours on an equal footing (Somare 1974:11).
Earlier in the year, he had given a similar assurance to the Forum meeting, the first in which Papua New Guinea participated as a full member.\footnote{14}

Thus both Somare and Mara tried to dispel the claim of tensions between them over regional leadership, Mara by disclaiming any fear on Fiji's part of Papua New Guinea's entry into the Pacific bloc, and Somare, by disclaiming any intention on Papua New Guinea's part of dominating the other Pacific states. In an attempt to assure the other Forum members of their joint intentions the two leaders claimed, in a communiqué issued after Ratu Mara's visit in May 1974, that:

Fiji and Papua New Guinea have no desire to dominate the leadership in the Pacific region, but only to ensure that the best interests of each Pacific country are protected and maintained and will continue to work towards maintaining close co-operation with other Pacific countries (Mara and Somare 1974:1).

It appears that the observers were incorrect, not only in claiming Fijian fears of Papua New Guinea's entry into Pacific regionalism but also in their predictions of continuing rivalry between the two over regional leadership. Once Papua New Guinea had qualified for membership of the Forum in 1974 there was no objection from Fiji. Mara had made a special trip to Papua New Guinea in May 1974 to forge links between the two countries, a visit which was returned by Somare in the following year. Subsequent developments did not indicate any excessive conflict between the two countries. To the contrary, it was evident that they were allies on most major issues.

THE FIJI/PAPUA NEW GUINEA 'ALLIANCE'

Although Somare and Mara fostered a relatively close relationship between their countries in the years following Mara's visit to Papua New Guinea in 1974, it was not until 1978 that they emerged as the core of an identifiable grouping in regional politics. A number of factors contributed to this development. These included the facts that an independent Solomon Islands, with similar attitudes to Papua New Guinea and Fiji, entered the regional forums; that there was an acceleration of political developments in Vanuatu; that decisions needed to be taken at a regional level concerning the control of the region's most lucrative shared resources, the migratory skipjack tuna; and that Papua New Guinea decided to adopt a higher profile in regional affairs. The basis of the 'alliance' between Papua New Guinea, Fiji and the Solomons was a shared view concerning the need to control the influence of metropolitan powers in the region, a view which was at variance with that of the Polynesian countries, particularly of the new governments of Tupuola Efi in Western Samoa and Tom Davis in the Cook Islands.

The division between these two groups first became apparent at the ninth South Pacific Forum held at Niue in September 1978.\footnote{15} The Polynesian group, led by Western Samoa's Tupuola Efi, supported proposals that would open up the Forum to further metropolitan influence. The first concerned the admittance of American Samoa, a dependent territory, to Forum membership; the second was concerned with admitting the United States to
the proposed Regional Fisheries Agency. These proposals were strongly opposed by the Papua New Guinea/Fiji bloc which, it appears, saw them as threatening indigenous control of the Forum, and of the region generally. American Samoa, as a dependent territory, could not make its final decisions and thus would still be referring matters to the United States. The Papua New Guinea/Fiji position is that if island countries want to join the Forum, they should first work for independence from their administering power.

In relation to United States membership of the proposed Fisheries Agency, the objection was partly that the United States does not recognize coastal state sovereignty over migratory species, which is the main resource such an Agency would be controlling. Fiji's position was made clear in the month following the Forum when, in an address to the United Nations General Assembly, its ambassador, Mr Vunibobo, stated:

We have now reached a situation where the formation of such an agency is threatened. .... The main reason for this sorry state of affairs has been due to the wishes of a dominant power foreign to the region, to join the Agency on its own terms .... We view this ... as yet another attempt to dominate our region and to dictate to us the terms and conditions in which we should run our affairs.\textsuperscript{16}

An additional objection, held particularly by Papua New Guinea, was that the United States as one of the main distant-water fishing nations should not be a member of an agency controlling the activities of such nations on behalf of the South Pacific states. The issue was not resolved at the Forum. As a compromise, it was decided to proceed with the establishment of an agency composed only of the Forum countries, leaving the question of metropolitan country membership to further discussion.

The division between the Papua New Guinea/Fiji group and the Polynesian group was deepened by conflict over who should succeed Mahe Tupouniua as director of SPEC, the research arm of the Forum. Papua New Guinea apparently had been under the misapprehension that its candidate, Sir Albert Maori Kiki, would be unopposed. Thus Somare was offended when Tupuola Efi nominated a Samoan for the job. He reportedly withdrew Kiki's nomination in pique. Mara, a supporter of the Kiki nomination, was angered by Tupuola's unexpected move which he described as not in keeping with the 'Pacific Way'. It was evident that Tupuola was at least partly motivated by a desire to challenge what was seen as the domination of regional affairs by Papua New Guinea and Fiji. By the end of the Forum, the Melanesian states were threatening to set up their own fisheries agency and Tom Davis, the Cook Islands' premier, was talking of the need for a Polynesian alliance.\textsuperscript{17} It was clear that regional political divisions were being defined in terms of Melanesian versus Polynesian.

The rift between these two groups carried over into the South Pacific Conference meeting in Noumea in the following month. Here it was clear that Papua New Guinea and Fiji were determined to weaken the South Pacific Commission, which they viewed as being tainted with undue metropolitan influence. At the same time, it was evident that they wanted to strengthen the Forum, which was seen as having a minimum of outside influence. The
proposal for a regional environment programme was used by Father Momis, its
initiator, as a means of enhancing the Forum's power at the expense of the
SPC. Papua New Guinea had been unsuccessful at the Niue Forum in obtaining
sufficient support to make the programme a wholly SPC-run venture. However, its proposal for a joint SPC/SPC venture, accepted by the South
Pacific Conference, still amounted to an incursion into SPC 'territory' and
was interpreted as such.\(^{18}\) A second way in which the Papua New
Guinea/Fiji position on the SPC was indicated was their decision not to
increase their contribution to the organization in the three years
following 1979.\(^{19}\) This effectively meant a freezing of the budget for the
1980–82 period (and a decline in real terms) because the increase in
contributions of all participating governments is governed by the lowest
increase offered. Once again it was the Melanesian group which was
attempting to oppose metropolitan influence. As in the Forum, they were
opposed by the Polynesian group which saw advantage in having American
involvement in the region.

Immediately after the Noumea conference in October 1978 Papua New
Guinea initiated a campaign aimed at pressuring France into giving
independence to its Pacific territories. Ebia Olewale raised the issue at
the July 1979 South Pacific Forum where it was supported by the other
independent Pacific states. On the insistence of Australia and New
Zealand, however, the call for decolonization of the French Pacific
territories appeared in a watered-down form in the final communiqué.\(^{20}\) In
press interviews and at an independence rally whilst in Tahiti for the
October 1979 South Pacific Conference, Olewale called for decolonization of
the French territories and attacked Australia and New Zealand for not
giving their support to the issue.\(^{21}\)

The new hardline Papua New Guinea attitude was not shared by Fiji,
which began to move away from the Melanesian camp as Papua New Guinea
became more outspoken. At the same time, it was evident that an emerging
New Hebrides was becoming part of the Melanesian bloc. Even the
francophone chief minister, Father Leymang, representing the New Hebrides
at the Tahiti conference, was openly critical of French attitudes in the
Pacific. Thus by the end of 1979 there were hints of a new Melanesian
bloc, one that excluded Fiji (by Fiji's choice) but which included Papua
New Guinea, the Solomons and Vanuatu, with sympathies extending to the
Melanesians in New Caledonia.

THE MELANESIAN 'ALLIANCE' UNDER CHAN

Fiji's move out of the Melanesian camp was confirmed by developments
in 1980. The first development of significance was the change of
leadership in Papua New Guinea. This spelt an end to the Somare/Mara
relationship as a basis for Papua New Guinea/Fiji cooperation. The second
development was the decision of the Chan government to send troops to
assist Walter Lini in putting down the Santo rebellion. This move
reportedly angered Fiji to the point where Papua New Guinea/Fiji relations
have become severely strained. Fiji was itself prepared to consider
sending troops as part of a United Nations force. It was very critical,
however, of Papua New Guinea's individual action. Whilst the basis of
Fiji's anger is not fully clear, there are several explanations which
suggest themselves. First, Fiji is jealous of its traditional leadership
position being usurped by Papua New Guinea. Secondly, Fiji is trying to take a much softer line on French involvement in the Pacific and would view Papua New Guinea's action as going against this. Fiji has noticeably changed its public attitude in this area in the last year. This could be based on the fact that the Sugar Agreement with the EEC comes up for renegotiation in 1982. Fiji is dependent for about two thirds of its export revenue on sugar sales to the EEC under this agreement. France is known to oppose this special arrangement. These circumstances may have affected Fiji's changed attitude. Certainly, at the 1980 South Pacific Conference, observers were surprised to hear the Fijian delegate suggest that the SPC needed more support. This attitude is a complete reversal of that held in 1978 and represents a changed public view towards the involvement of metropolitan powers in the region.

Whilst the decision to send troops to Vanuatu sealed the end of the Papua New Guinea/Fiji alliance, it opened up a new alliance based on a Chan/Lini relationship. In the aftermath of Santo, Lini and Chan are taking steps to forge much closer links between their countries. Papua New Guinea will be training 360 Vanuatuans in its police and army academies for the new Vanuatu Mobile Force. There is also talk of closer trade cooperation. Much more important, however, in terms of regional politics are the shared attitudes of these governments in relation to outside involvement in the region. The Lini government is reportedly prepared to allow Organisasri Papua Merdeka representatives and Kanak Independence groups from New Caledonia to set up offices in Vila.

There is, then, the beginnings of a new Melanesian alliance, this time excluding Fiji, but including Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, which, rumour has it, encouraged Chan to send the troops to Santo. The sympathies of these countries extend to Melanesian 'brothers' in New Caledonia and West Irian more than they have before. This is partly due to the increased awareness on the part of these countries concerning developments in New Caledonia and West Irian, partly to the foreign policy line of the new Papua New Guinea government, and partly to the inclusion of an independent Vanuatu which is more emotionally disposed to assist other Melanesians in view of its own decolonization experience. The developing Melanesian bloc is likely to be much more radical in relation to regional politics than the Fiji/Papua New Guinea 'alliance'.

A more radical stance has already been indicated by Papua New Guinea's initiative at the twentieth South Pacific Conference held in Port Moresby in October 1980. In his opening speech to the Conference, Noel Levi, the foreign affairs minister, proposed that the Pacific states form a 'political alliance such as the Organisation of African Unity to make its opinions known in the forums of the world'. The proposal is a radical one in the South Pacific context. Papua New Guinea intends that such an alliance would include only the island countries of the region. Thus it really amounts to the present South Pacific Forum, less Australia and New Zealand. It was evident from Chan's opening speech that this was motivated by a desire to exclude metropolitan power influence on decisions concerning political issues affecting the region. In an obvious reference to the role of the United States in relation to the fisheries question and to Australia in relation to regional shipping and some other issues in the Forum, Chan stated:
We island peoples have to stick together. I do not say that aggressively, but I do say it with thoughts in mind of attempts by non-islanders to divide us for their own ends. We in Papua New Guinea could quote occasions where our efforts to achieve widespread benefits for the islands through co-operation have been frustrated by jealousies and suspicions either encouraged or initiated by non-islanders (Chan 1980:4).

During his speech, Levi made it clear that such a political alliance would be able to 'speak with one voice' on issues such as nuclear wastes and decolonization.

The new more radical Melanesian line-up is likely to polarize the region even more. This is accentuated by Papua New Guinea's new high profile in regional politics. The sending of troops to Vanuatu, Chan's suggestion of a regional police force, and the political alliance initiative have engendered the general feeling among the non Melanesian Pacific that Papua New Guinea is going too far. For Chan, however, it is the domestic implications of his regional initiatives which are of more immediate importance. The sending of the troops to Vanuatu has been a major coup for Chan in domestic politics. It was a popular move and Chan has played it up to the fullest. He promoted the concept of Melanesian brotherhood as part of the justification for sending the troops. The success of the exercise has created a type of new nationalism in Papua New Guinea which will have significant implications for Melanesia and for the wider region.

A MELANESIAN BLOC?

Although it is perhaps too early to describe the Melanesian states as a bloc within regional politics, there is considerable basis for regarding 'Melanesia' as a label of increasing political relevance within the regional context. As was demonstrated above, a shared attitude toward the involvement of outside powers in the region has formed an important rallying point for these states. In view of the extensive involvement of metropolitan powers in all regional ventures and organizations, there are many occasions and contexts in which this issue arises and therefore in which an identity of interests is developed. The identity fostered by this shared attitude is reinforced by a number of other factors which act to divide the South Pacific on Melanesian/Polynesian/Micronesian lines.

The Melanesian states have only recently enjoyed substantial constitutional development, whereas the main Polynesian states were among the first island countries to gain political independence. As a consequence, indigenous regional activity was primarily a Polynesian phenomenon until around 1973, when Melanesian states began to enter regional forums as self-governing countries. By the time they entered, one indigenous organization, PIPA, had already come and gone; the Forum and SPEC had been established; and many cooperative programmes had been attempted or studied. Thus the Melanesian states were latecomers to a movement which had been initiated and managed by Polynesians.
When they became members of the regional organizations in the 1974-75 period, the Melanesian leaders were very critical of the lack of progress made by the regional movement in the past. Somare, for example, reported that he told the 1974 Forum, at which Papua New Guinea was admitted as a full member:

Papua New Guinea senses that something was missing from our attempts to solve problems of regional importance. The Forum allows open discussion. However, it seemed that there was much talk and little action. Costly studies have been undertaken by the Forum, but few of their recommendations have been implemented (Somare 1974:12).

Solomon Mamaloni, the first chief minister of the Solomon Islands, expressed similar sentiments at the 1975 Forum:

... I think, to promote this co-operation, we need to do more than just attend endless conferences which talk in marvellous phrases over cocktails about 'the Pacific Way' and then do nothing afterwards (Mamaloni 1975:1).

Inherent in such comments was a criticism of Polynesian efforts. In general terms, the Melanesians have resented what they see as the superior attitude of Polynesians within the regional forums. They have felt that the Polynesians have seen them as inferior, unsophisticated, and even primitive. In 1972, Dr Taureka, Papua New Guinea's minister for health, commented:

Most of the people in the South Pacific regard us as people still sitting on top of a hill watching the aircraft take off and landing. In other words, they regard us as primitive ... (See Sundhaussen 1974:110).

A further distinction between Melanesian states and other Pacific island countries is created by differing economic interests. Their continental land forms endow the Melanesian states with a much greater land area, a wider range of resources and a larger population than the volcanic 'high' islands and coral atolls provide for their Polynesian and Micronesian neighbours. They therefore have greater potential for economic development and their economic problems are of a different nature and dimension. Melanesian identity is also facilitated by the use of Pidgin, though with some variation, in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. For the representatives of these countries attending regional conferences, Pidgin is often the preferred language for social situations. As is the case with any language, an in-group and out-group form whenever it is used. Pidgin, then, is an important source of identity for the Melanesians, whilst providing a barrier to the non Melanesians. Educational links are also important. Some of the leaders of Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands have been educated at the University of Papua New Guinea. They tend to be the Melanesian leaders most dedicated to the promotion of a Melanesian identity.
Whilst Melanesia is culturally diverse, there is nevertheless a general similarity in comparison to the Polynesian, Micronesian, Asian and European cultures that surround them. Thus Melanesian cultural identity, to the extent that it is recognized, tends to be defined in negative terms - in terms of what they are not rather than what is strongly shared. The relative similarity in physical appearance among Melanesians when compared to these other groups is particularly significant in this respect as it encourages stereotyping and perceptions of shared identity even where little objective basis for such allegiance exists.

Fiji's 'movement' in and out of the Melanesian grouping, in the context of regional politics, demonstrates the importance of subjective perception as the basis of ethnic allegiance. Although ethnographers have identified Fiji as part of Melanesia, Fiji was seen as Polynesian by Papua New Guinea and the Solomons when they first entered regional politics in 1974-75. This perception was based partly on their view of Ratu Mara. At the same time, the other Polynesian countries regarded Fiji as part of their group, albeit a rather outspoken and radical second cousin. There was some objective basis for this acceptance. Fiji's 'chiefly' society has, in general terms, much in common with Polynesian societies. There are also very close historical links between Fiji and its Polynesian neighbours, particularly at the elite level. Tongans, for example, have had an important influence in eastern Fiji and there has been considerable intermarriage between Fijians and Tongans.

The 1978 rift, in which the Papua New Guinea/Fiji 'alliance' challenged the Polynesian grouping on the issue of outside involvement in the region, changed this perception of Fiji. At this time, the Polynesian leaders began to see Fiji as part of a Melanesian grouping. This did not, however, last for long. As shown above, developments in 1980 have moved Fiji out of the Melanesian grouping. Its changed public attitude toward outside involvement and the loss of the Somare/Mara special relationship has moved Fiji back towards the Polynesian group. It could be argued that this is Fiji's more natural 'home' although a number of factors will ensure that, as before, it is not fully accepted into the heartland of Polynesia.

It is evident that the new Melanesian grouping that is developing around the Chan/Lini relationship is more likely to stress its 'Melanesianess' than was the 1978 Papua New Guinea/Fiji/Solomons 'alliance'. This has already been indicated by the nature of the statements issued by Papua New Guinean and Vanuatu leaders concerning the sending of Papua New Guinean troops to Santo. The new Melanesian grouping, which includes the Solomon Islands, is likely to develop further as a force in regional politics, spurred on by the situation in New Caledonia and encouraged by the leaders of these countries who promote 'Melanesian brotherhood' for political reasons.
1 The region referred to is the territorial area covered by the South Pacific Commission. The constitutional status and population of the countries within this region are listed in the Appendix.

2 'Agreement Establishing the South Pacific Commission, Canberra, 6 February 1947', Australian Treaty Series, 1948, no.15, Preamble.


4 Between 1965 and 1968 this organization was called the Pacific Islands Producers' Secretariat. PIPA's constitution did not become operative until 1971. See PIPA, Constitution Establishing the Pacific Islands Producers' Association. Suva, 1971.


6 The functions, purposes and structure of this organization are set out in Agreement Establishing the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation.

7 See, for example, Speech by the Chief Minister, Mr Michael Somare, at the Dinner for the Prime Minister of Australia, Papua New Guinea Press Release No.0466, 18 February 1973, p.4, and Somare (1974).

8 See, for example, Noel Levi, Statement of Foreign Policy, Port Moresby, July 1980, pp.6-7.

9 See Speech by the Chief Minister, Hon. S. Mamaloni, to South Pacific Forum Held in Tonga, 1-3 July 1975; and 'The Mamaloni Interview', Solomon News Drum 28 February 1975, p.4. This commitment was confirmed in a personal interview with the author, 26 September 1975.


12 See, for example, Sundhaussen (1974:104); Boyce and Herr (1974:34); S. Inder in Monday Conference Interview with Ratu Mara, Australian Broadcasting Commission, transcript, 5 June 1972, p.22; and Premdas (1976:154).

13 Ratu Mara in Monday Conference Interview, Australian Broadcasting Commission, transcript, 5 June 1972.

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As reported in "New Colonialism" Over Fishing: Fiji Accuses the US', Canberra Times 11 October 1978.

Based on discussions with journalists and delegates attending the Eighteenth South Pacific Conference (Noumea, October 1978).

Based on observations at the Eighteenth South Pacific Conference (Noumea, October 1978). See Fry (1978).


For the final wording of the Communiqué, see Press Communiqué: Tenth South Pacific Forum, Honiara, 9-10 July 1979.

Based on observations at the Nineteenth South Pacific Conference (Papeete, October, 1979).

Based on observations at the Twentieth South Pacific Conference (Port Moresby, October 1980).

A special report on the post-Santo Vanuatu/Papua New Guinea links was included, ironically, in the Papua New Guinea National Broadcasting Commission's regular programme, Around the Provinces, 26 October 1980.

## APPENDIX

South Pacific Countries - Constitutional Status and Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Constitutional Status</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Samoa</td>
<td>United States Unincorporated Territory</td>
<td>30,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>Self-governing in free association with New Zealand (1965)</td>
<td>18,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Independent (1970)</td>
<td>592,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>Overseas Territory of France</td>
<td>137,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guam</td>
<td>United States Unincorporated Territory</td>
<td>87,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>Independent (1979)</td>
<td>53,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>Independent (1968)</td>
<td>7,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>Overseas Territory of France</td>
<td>136,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>Self-governing in free association with New Zealand (1974)</td>
<td>3,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>Independent (1975)</td>
<td>2,908,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitcairn Island</td>
<td>British colony</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>Independent (1978)</td>
<td>206,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tokelau Islands</td>
<td>New Zealand territory</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>Independent (1970)</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands</td>
<td>United States Trust Territory</td>
<td>129,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>Independent (1978)</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>Independent (1980)</td>
<td>99,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallis &amp; Futuna</td>
<td>Overseas Territory of France</td>
<td>9,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Samoa</td>
<td>Independent (1962)</td>
<td>152,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Sundhaussen, U., 1974. 'That PNG should try to play a significant role in both the South-East Asian and South-West Pacific regions', in J. Griffin, ed., *A Foreign Policy for an Independent Papua New Guinea.* Sydney: Angus and Robertson, pp.103-117.
NEW NATIONS AND OLD IMPERIALISM

E.G. Whitlam

It was not till after World War II that Australians took much interest in the islands and peninsulas to their northwest. The closest and largest areas had been part of the Netherlands East Indies for two centuries before Europeans settled in Australia. There were occasional suggestions as far back as the end of last century and indeed as recently as 1950 that Australia might purchase Dutch New Guinea and Portuguese Timor. After Indonesia secured her independence there were periods of tension between her and Australia as the Dutch, British and Portuguese departed from divided islands in the archipelago. The countries to Australia's northwest have formed closer and closer associations through the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) since its formation in August 1967.

In the islands to their northeast Australians showed an earlier interest. A hundred years ago the governments of Victoria and Queensland were urging a policy of acquisition on Britain and such policies were urged by both sides of politics in the Federal parliament in the first twenty years of this century. Then between the two world wars little attention was given to Australia's responsibilities in her colony of Papua, under Judge Murray, and her mandated territory of New Guinea under former conservative politicians, Brigadier-Generals Wisdom and McNicoll. (McNicoll's appointment was particularly blatant: he resigned from the parliament on the day it rose for an election - 2 August 1934 - and was appointed Administrator the following day; parliament was dissolved on 7 August.) The Mandates Commission was often critical. It was especially critical of the savage reaction to the Rabaul strike in 1929 and the general lack of educational opportunities. The Trusteeship Council became increasingly critical in the 1960s but it was not till 1970 that Australians became much concerned with the future of Papua New Guinea. There was a sudden surge of interest in the consummation of Vanuatu's independence in 1980. There will be growing interest in New Caledonia until she also becomes independent in the mid 1980s. Most Australians have taken little interest in neighbour countries as societies in their own right; it seems to require the arrival or departure of an imperial power to arouse their attention.

The South Pacific Commission must be the starting point for any present consideration of the place of the numerous, scattered, sparsely populated and unevenly developed states of the south and central Pacific in international politics. In 1944 Australia's minister for external affairs, Dr Evatt, floated the idea of a regional organization which would strengthen international cooperation and promote the wellbeing of Pacific
people. On 6 February 1947 the Agreement establishing the Commission was signed in Canberra by representatives of all the metropolitan powers with island territories in the Pacific: Australia, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. The expressed objective of the Agreement was 'to encourage and strengthen international cooperation in promoting the economic and social welfare and advancement of the peoples of the non-self-governing territories of the South Pacific Region'; an unexpressed objective may have been to deter interference in the area by powers which did not already enjoy a foothold in it. On France's insistence the Commission was precluded from promoting political advancement; its charter omitted the words of the relevant articles in the United Nations Charter. The Netherlands withdrew when she lost West New Guinea in 1962.

Whilst the Commission was composed of representatives of the metropolitan powers, there was an advisory South Pacific Conference attended by representatives of the indigenous peoples and meeting every three years. After 1967 the conference met every year. With the support of Senator Willessee at the thirteenth conference (1973), W.L. Morrison and me at the fourteenth conference (1974) and Senator Douglas Mcclelland at the fifteenth conference (1975), the plural voting powers of the metropolitan members were abolished and equal voting rights were accorded all delegations, whether from the metropolitan powers or the island governments and administrations. The Conference, however, is still limited to the objectives laid down in the Canberra Agreement of 1947, and to budget initiatives taken by the Commission; it accordingly is losing much of its appeal and effect.

Meantime in 1971 the prime ministers of Fiji, Samoa and Tonga and the president of Nauru, which had all become independent, and the premier of the Cook Islands, which had achieved self-government, suggested to the prime minister of New Zealand that his country should host a meeting, to which Australia would also be invited, to establish a political forum for the peoples of the region. The first South Pacific Forum was held in Wellington in August 1971.

Apart from Australia and New Zealand the Forum now includes Samoa (which achieved independence in 1962), Nauru (1968), Tonga (1970), Fiji (1970), Papua New Guinea (1975), Solomon Islands (1978), Tuvalu (1978), Kiribati (1979) and Vanuatu (1980), the Cook Islands (which became self-governing in free association with New Zealand in 1965) and Niue (which adopted the same status in 1974), and the Federated States of Micronesia (which was admitted as an observer in 1980). It is likely that the Forum will be joined by the Northern Marianas and the Marshall Islands and by New Caledonia where there are strong links between the Front Indépendantiste and the new government of Vanuatu. Hitherto, on achieving independence, every member of the Forum has become a member of the Commonwealth; this was a natural process since they had all been ruled by New Zealand, Britain or Australia. A nation can join the Commonwealth without having the queen as its head of state; four of the present members of the Forum are republics and another, Tonga, has her own monarch.

The cohesion of the developing nations in the South Pacific Forum is remarkable when one considers how recent and varied their political development has been. New Caledonia was annexed by France in 1853, Fiji by
Britain in 1874, northeast New Guinea and the north Solomons by Germany and Papua by Britain in 1884, and Nauru by Germany in 1888. Britain declared protectorates over the Cook Islands in 1888, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands in 1892 and some of the south Solomons in 1893. In 1898 Spain ceded the Philippines and Guam to the United States and in 1899 sold the Caroline, Northern Mariana and Marshall Islands to Germany. In 1899 Samoa was divided between Germany and the United States and in 1900 Tonga was proclaimed a British protectorate. In 1906 Australia accepted Papua from Britain and Britain and France established their condominium over the New Hebrides. It can be seen how often the distant powers balkanized the Pacific archipelagos. In 1914 the German colonies were occupied by the Allies and in 1919-1921 the League of Nations granted mandates over New Guinea to Australia, Western Samoa to New Zealand, the Caroline, Northern Mariana and Marshall Islands to Japan and Nauru to Australia, Britain and New Zealand. In 1933 Japan left the League and annexed her mandates. In 1946 the United Nations gave the old Japanese mandates to the United States as a strategic Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and confirmed the Australian and New Zealand mandates as Trust Territories.

Whether all the American and French possessions join the South Pacific Forum when they become independent or only some, it is now well established as the focus of the economic and political activities of the developing countries of the South Pacific. The South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation (SPEC), established by the Forum under an Agreement of 17 April 1973, has coordinated the approach of the regional states to the European Communities and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The Forum is sponsoring the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (SPARTECA); Australia signed it on 14 July 1980 and is contemplating ratification of it. The South Pacific Regional Shipping Line and the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency, both established by the Forum and hitherto principally financed by Australia and New Zealand, are strongly supported by the members of the Forum; Australia became a party to the Agency Convention on 13 September 1979.

The activities of the South Pacific Commission, the South Pacific Conference and the South Pacific Forum which is replacing them can be readily followed in Australian official publications. In examining the place and role of the South Pacific in international affairs I shall now concentrate on two aspects: first, the extent to which the newly independent states do or can take part in international organizations and, secondly, the lessons of the Vanuatu experience for the emancipation of New Caledonia.

Four of the new nations - Samoa, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands - have joined the United Nations and most have joined the international financial institutions. In the Asia and Pacific region the most effective international financial institution has been the Asian Development Bank and its soft window, the Asian Development Fund. To the end of 1979 Papua New Guinea had derived from the Asian Development Fund 24.8 per cent of her total loans from multilateral institutions, Western Samoa 85.7 per cent and Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga 100 per cent. Loans from this source, however, are vulnerable to current pressures in the United States Congress. Because the House of Representatives, with an ostensibly Democratic majority, prevented the Carter Administration honouring its commitments, the Fund had to suspend operations from April to
July 1980. Initially Congress sought to prevent United States aid through multilateral institutions being given to countries which had defeated the United States in war, such as Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea and Angola. More recently it has sought to slash the amount of United States aid going to developing countries generally in the belief that they are ungrateful for the legacy of three decades of American bounty and benevolence. It must be doubted that the new House of Representatives, still with a Democratic majority, the new Republican Senate or the new Reagan administration, which is committed to a reduction in foreign aid, will augur any better for the future. The Asian Development Bank has forty-three governors and twelve directors. The governments represented by these governors and directors, especially the Japanese and Australian governments, were delinquent in failing to support the Carter administration and expose the United States Congress. Kiribati and Solomon Islands are represented by an Australian director and alternate director. Cook Islands, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa are represented by an Indonesian director and a New Zealand alternate director. Papua New Guinea is represented by a South Korean director and a Papua New Guinean alternate director. Vanuatu has applied to join the Bank. New Zealand recently indicated to the president of the Asian Development Bank that she was dissatisfied with the Bank's performance in the South Pacific. The developing states, being recent and comparatively small borrowers from the Bank, appear to believe that they do not secure sufficient attention from the Bank's bureaucracy, which is disproportionately drawn from and familiar with the wishes of original and large contributors, such as India. Australia did not support New Zealand's approach. The Bank has not responded to suggestions for a regional office. The Pacific states may well have to reconsider the nature and quality of their representation on the Bank.

The World Bank's soft window, the International Development Association (IDA), is similarly vulnerable to slow payments by the United States. Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa are Part II members of the IDA, Solomon Islands has been offered Part II membership and Vanuatu has sought it. A Part II country pays only one tenth of its initial subscription in convertible currency; the remaining portion and all of any additional subscriptions are paid in the member's own currency and may not be used without the member's consent. To the end of June 1979 Papua New Guinea had derived 31.4 per cent of her loans from multilateral institutions from IDA and Western Samoa 14.3 per cent. Developing countries throughout the world are sensing that the mood in the United States is once again to use international financial institutions as a crude vehicle of American imperialism.

In other areas of international assistance Papua New Guinea and Fiji alone are members of the Colombo Plan, they and Tonga of GATT, and these three and Nauru, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Only in recent years has Australia extended bilateral assistance to the Pacific countries other than Papua New Guinea. Before Fiji, the second largest of them, became independent Australia rejected Fijian and British approaches for assistance. She took the attitude that Fiji was a British responsibility despite the fact that Australian companies had carved out a much larger economic empire there than Britain. Australia's official development assistance (ODA) to Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific has
declined from 0.35 per cent of Australian GNP in 1974/1975 to 0.28 per cent of GNP in 1979/1980, a fall of 20 per cent, reflecting Australia's recent movement away from the international target for ODA generally. Significant bilateral assistance now comes from the European Community (EC). Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Samoa are among the sixty signatories of the Lomé II Convention which entered into force in March 1980. Vanuatu's application for accession to the Convention has been formally approved by the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group and at ministerial level by the EC. The Convention offers three principal advantages to its ACP members:

(a) trade - preferential access to EC markets;

(b) export earnings - the STABEX scheme is designed to compensate for losses of earnings caused by fluctuations in market prices or production levels of major commodities;

(c) aid - the European Development Fund (EDF) provides concessional financing, on a bilateral or regional basis, for approved development projects. The Convention stipulates that 10 per cent of the total EDF resources should be applied for financing regional cooperation projects.

Potentially the most valuable aspect of the Convention is that it does not discriminate between the members but encourages them to meet together and agree collectively on the package of development projects or programmes for the region. New Zealand's and Australia's former colonies enjoy equal rights with the former colonies of Britain, which is now a member of the EC. The special terms which New Zealand and Australia have offered to their former colonies help to perpetuate the colonial division of the Pacific. Lomé II gives a great boost to closer cooperation amongst the island states. Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and Papua New Guinea have held the presidency of the ACP council of ministers. The Community has a physical presence in the Pacific region through its aid office in Suva and has a project officer in Port Moresby. Assistance in various forms to the Pacific Group under Lomé II is likely to reach close to $A30 million over five years.

The island states have been slow to avail themselves of the facilities available to developing countries from United Nations agencies. The Australian bureaucracy still has some inhibitions about the participation of United Nations agencies. Throughout the 1950s and indeed until 1964 Australia resolutely resisted and resented suggestions by United Nations visiting missions that the Trust Territory of New Guinea would benefit from many agency programmes. Papua New Guinea is the only one of the new nations to become a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), she and Fiji the only ones to become members of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and they, Tonga and Samoa to become members of the World Health Organization (WHO). All these organizations make very considerable assistance programmes available to developing nations which join them. The latest (the fifth) session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), held from 7 May 1979 to 3 June 1979, was attended by Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Samoa.
Marine trade and resources are of prime importance to all the Pacific island states. The expansion of the Law of the Sea, with its recognition of 200 nautical mile economic zones, has meant that the central and south Pacific, with very few interstices, fall within the jurisdiction of these newly independent states. Nowhere, however, is their imperial heritage more apparent than in the degree of their adherence to the treaties which increasingly affect marine trade and resources. Nowhere, too, are Australia's regional shortcomings more apparent than in her failure to give a lead in adhering to these very treaties. IMCO has a depository function with respect to thirty-one conventions and seventeen amendments; of these conventions seventeen have entered into force and of the amendments five. Of the imperial powers in this region Britain is a party to thirty-five of these instruments, France to thirty-three, the United States to twenty-six, New Zealand to seventeen and Australia to a mere seven. Britain frequently chose not to extend conventions to her territories; the present position appears to be that Fiji is a party to fourteen IMCO instruments, Tonga thirteen and Tuvalu two while two apply provisionally in respect of Solomon Islands and Kiribati and a third in respect of Tuvalu. France has applied all instruments to her Pacific territories. Vanuatu is a party to none of the instruments, since none was applied by Britain or France to their New Hebrides condominium. The United States has applied only five to American Samoa, five to Guam, five (some different) to Midway Islands and six to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The instruments to which New Zealand is a party apply in respect of the Cook Islands and Niue, since New Zealand is responsible for their external affairs. Papua New Guinea and Nauru, for which Australia used to be responsible, are parties to five instruments.

There is thus much room in the central and south Pacific to coordinate international maritime laws. Some IMCO conventions of great moment to Pacific nations have already entered into force, such as those on oil pollution casualties and damage (1969), on carriage of nuclear material (1971) and on dumping wastes and other matter (1972). Australia has not yet become a contracting state under these conventions, because the current Federal government adopts the dubious attitude that each of the Australian states must first agree. The United States and Canada, the other states which hide behind federal constitutions in relation to international obligations, have not taken this stance on IMCO conventions; in fact IMCO is the United Nations agency in which the United States has come nearest to pulling her weight. Nor has Australia herself taken this stance on conventions drawn up by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Australia has the capacity and, one would think, the responsibility to help her small neighbours with representation at international conferences and she ought to set a better example in implementing the fruits of those conferences. Only Fiji, Nauru and Papua New Guinea were able to attend the resumed eighth session of the third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) held in July-August 1979. It is a travesty that the region which is most affected by the changes in the distribution of wealth and resources associated with the new Law of the Sea regime is also the region most sparsely represented in the negotiations determining that new regime. Australia and New Zealand have not sought to involve their neighbours in the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling although Japan adhered to it in 1951 and the Republic of Korea in
1978 and Chile and Peru, original signatories, ratified it as recently as 1979, or in the 1959 Antarctic Treaty where the six Pacific parties - Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Japan, United States and USSR - were original signatories. The neighbour states would have helped Australia's recent objectives in the former but not the latter.

Certainly financial restraints are a major reason for the reluctance of Pacific island states to involve themselves in the international community. It may be that countries as small as many in the central and south Pacific might seek some collective representation at international conferences on trade and resources. Australia should facilitate the effective representation of these states in international organizations. She should also help to persuade them that collective and effective action is not only necessary on fisheries matters but on a whole range of trade and aid issues which are being negotiated and renegotiated at an international level.

Australia and New Zealand, having strategic arrangements with the United States in the south Pacific, should be aware of regional attitudes to the policies of the United States administration, institutions (such as the East-West Center) and corporations. American political imperialism in the Pacific has in the past been mainly confined to Micronesia and parts of Polynesia, and in the former the process of decolonization is finally under way. American economic imperialism in the South Seas seems to stand in the way of negotiations on the Law of the Sea. The greatest asset of the small thinly-populated islands is the sea which surrounds them. Of the world's tuna catch 60 per cent is caught in the Pacific; of the world's tuna consumption 50 per cent is consumed in the United States. The United States refuses to recognize the rights of Pacific island states to sovereignty over highly migratory species of fish, especially tuna, within their own exclusive economic zones; the United States would not be consistent enough to forgo her own sovereignty over highly migratory species of birds above her own territory. The island states are not impressed with United States finessing on the protection of bowhead whales under the Whaling Convention, because of local pressures in Alaska, or by her insensitivity on the disposal of nuclear waste. Attempted intervention by American land speculators and tax dodgers has already muddied the waters around Vanuatu.

The other imperialist powers are adopting an approach opposite to that of the United States. They have rejected confrontation in favour of trying to win the hearts of the Pacific island governments. The Soviet Union, with the world's greatest fishing fleet and its ambitions for Antarctic krill, has attempted to gain favour in the Pacific though with limited success. China has established embassies in three Pacific Forum capitals and has offered aid in return for influence; she has no fleet that would wish to exploit the Pacific waters. Taiwan has such a fleet, however, and has managed to persuade the governments of Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu to recognize Taipei rather than Peking, for an unknown consideration, and thus to complicate the administration of a common Forum fisheries policy. Japan, as the world's second greatest fisheries power, is examining means of establishing close links with Pacific countries following her fleet's rebuff at the hands of Papua New Guinea.
No doubt each of the maritime imperialists sees the status quo in the Pacific as being in its interests, since the island states will have difficulties in enforcing their fisheries policy. It behoves Australia and New Zealand, then, as the countries which have some resources to do so, to take initiatives for the negotiation and conclusion of a Pacific Fisheries Convention which would involve all the maritime powers from the USSR and United States southwards, and all the island states in the conservation and exploitation of Pacific fisheries. Such a convention would be in the long term interests of both maritime powers and island states, as it would recognize the legitimate interests of both while ensuring the maintenance of stocks for future generations.

The ratification of ILO conventions might appear less urgent for the developing states of the Pacific than for the countries of Southeast Asia with their burgeoning industries. ILO conventions will become increasingly relevant in the Pacific island states as workers in these states realize their common interests, particularly in dealing with multinational corporations or overseas governments. This realization has already occurred at the points of international contact - the ports and airports. Hence, on more than one occasion, Fiji has expressed displeasure with the actions of Australian and New Zealand trade unionists concerning industrial conditions at those places. More recently port workers throughout the Pacific have appeared ready to ban Japan's ships and goods if her proposed dumping of nuclear waste takes place. Here again they are being led by Australian and New Zealand trade unionists. The experience they gain in fighting this insensitive and overbearing policy will assist them in learning to deal with economic or political imperialism by other governments or corporations.

Under the ILO constitution imperial powers can apply to their non metropolitan territories only such ILO conventions as they themselves have ratified. Our seas are therefore studded with anomalies flowing from the degree of responsibility shown by Paris, London and Washington. France, always a leading protagonist of the ILO, with 102 ratifications, has applied sixty-eight conventions to French Polynesia and New Caledonia. Her sins lie in other directions - the alienation of land and the infiltration of aliens. Britain, with seventy-three ratifications, had applied twenty-nine to Solomon Islands, twenty-four to Kiribati and twenty-three to Tuvalu. Once more France and Britain could never agree to apply any conventions at all to their New Hebrides condominium. The United States, which withdrew from ILO from 1977 until George Meany died three years later, has ratified seven conventions - only seven nations have ratified fewer - and has applied one to her Trust Territory; it dates from 1936.

Papua New Guinea and Fiji have ratified none of the thirty-two ILO maritime conventions. Australia has ratified ten and New Zealand seven. There are, moreover, eleven ILO conventions which are considered to concern basic human rights: freedom of association or forced labour or discrimination. Of these seven apply in French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Kiribati, six in Tuvalu, five in Solomon Islands, and none in the American Trust Territory or, of course, Vanuatu. Papua New Guinea has ratified five and Fiji four; the latest of them was adopted in 1957.
There are nineteen human rights conventions in respect of which the United Nations secretary-general performs depositary functions. These conventions are an important means of changing international debate about human rights from imperial rhetoric about the poor morality of developing countries to a potential basis for consensus in this area of universal need. United Nations records show that Fiji has ratified or succeeded to eleven, Tonga two and Samoa one, but Papua New Guinea none. On becoming independent Fiji retained Professor D.P. O’Connell to advise on current treaties to which she should adhere; she has ratified no subsequent ones. The situation of Papua New Guinea is due to the fact that before self-government in 1973 Australian governments had not applied these conventions to the Territory and that between self-government and independence in 1975 the Australian government acted in international affairs on behalf of the Papua New Guinea government at that government's request. The position of the other newly independent nations is somewhat obscure. The general principle is that, unless a different intention appears from a treaty or is otherwise established, the treaty is binding on each party in respect of its entire territory. France, in respect of all eleven conventions which she has ratified, and the United States, in respect of four of the five she has ratified, applied the conventions to all their Pacific territories. Britain, however, excepted Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and sometimes Tonga from some of the conventions which she ratified. Consistent with their performance in IMCO and ILO, Britain and France never agreed to apply any United Nations human rights conventions to their New Hebrides condominium. They have never left another territory with so little international experience and infrastructure. If there is one thing worse than distant powers dividing an archipelago it is their sharing it.

The new states of the South Pacific have fought to replace the links provided by imperial bondage with regional linkages focusing around the South Pacific Forum. The diversity and introspection of the island states should not be allowed to prevent greater regional cohesiveness. Nonetheless in many other matters such as maritime consultation, labour conditions and human rights, as well as common approaches towards overseas investment and international organization, much work remains to be done to overcome the imperial legacy.

British and French rule ended ingloriously in the New Hebrides in 1980. Throughout the decades of British, German and United States annexations down to the end of World War I Australians were much exercised at the possibility of France extending temporal and spiritual power over the archipelago. Victorian Presbyterians were particularly active in lobbying for the extension of Britain's kingdom on earth. One of the arguments for federating the Australian colonies was that a national government would have more influence on Britain than the separate colonial governments. The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia, which took effect at the start of the new century, gave power to the Federal parliament to legislate on 'the relations of the Commonwealth with the islands of the Pacific'. In February 1906 English and French officials drew up a protocol respecting the New Hebrides without informing Australia. Her feelings had to be communicated to the Colonial Office through the governor-general; not till 1928 were direct contacts established with the Dominions Office in London. On 20 October 1906 the protocol was confirmed by a convention. On 6 August 1914 another Anglo-French protocol was
concluded; World War I having broken out, it was not ratified until March 1922. The history to this stage is given in Thompson (1980). I shall indicate the subsequent events.

The New Hebrides was on the agenda for the Imperial Conferences between the two world wars. On the eve of the 1923 conference New Zealand and Australia received the Devonshire despatch (the ninth Duke of Devonshire was colonial secretary under Bonar Law) putting three choices: (1) cession to France, (2) cession to Britain, or (3) partition between France and Britain. The conference discussed two mandates, one French and the other British. The Imperial Conference in 1926 decided on a formal approach to France for partition, which France rejected. The next year Britain asked Australia to take over her responsibilities; Australia urged Britain to make another approach to France for partition, but Britain declined. At the Imperial Conference in 1930 Australia and New Zealand declined to take over Britain's responsibility and it was decided that the MacDonald government should negotiate her withdrawal. Next year, however, the national coalition government decided not to proceed with withdrawal.

In November 1936 Australia placed 'British policy in regard to the New Hebrides' on the agenda of the last of the prewar Imperial Conferences. At the conference in May 1937 Australia at last offered to take over Britain's responsibilities. The Foreign Secretary, Eden, however, raised the possibility of negotiations between Britain, France and Germany on colonial questions and asked that the conference should not discuss the New Hebrides, which would provide one of the few colonial concessions which Britain had available. Lyons, Parkhill, Casey and Bruce, who represented Australia, seem to have gone along with the prospect of Hitler having a colony nearby; they were saved from the wrath of the Australian public by the confidentiality which attended such gatherings in those days.

In the 1950s the Menzies government fumbled some opportunities to reverse the balkanization of Melanesia. On 29 June 1950 the British government agreed to the Australian government's suggestion that Australia should take over Britain's responsibilities in the condominium. An approach was made to the French, who agreed to examine the proposition on the basis of the legal texts in force but who did not approach Australia for preliminary discussions. In 1952 Australia asked France to consider her offer withdrawn; Hasluck, who had become minister for territories in May 1951, had expressed the view that Australia did not have the staff to look after any territory other than Papua New Guinea. By January 1956, however, he had come to the view that Australia should accept responsibilities in the Solomons. He and Casey, the minister for external affairs, made a submission to cabinet. In May cabinet approved administrative cooperation with the Solomons but not a transfer of administration. In January 1960 Hasluck informed cabinet that Australia had the knowledge and capacity to undertake greater responsibilities in the Solomons, but the government as a whole appears to have realized that Australia would not have international support in assuming additional colonial responsibilities. There would not have been the same objection to a joint Anglo-Australian timetable for an independent state amalgamating the British Solomon Islands Protectorate and Papua New Guinea, which already included the north Solomons. When I raised this possibility in Port Moresby in January 1973 the chief minister of Papua New Guinea felt that he was fully occupied in preparing to take over responsibilities of
independence in his own country. By this time, moreover, the Protectorate had a governing council with an elected majority and was developing a separate national identity.

In the mid 1960s Britain raised the question of the New Hebrides afresh. In December 1964 she asked New Zealand and Australia to confirm that they did not desire to take over her responsibilities. In August 1966 Wilson's colonial secretary, Bottomley, visited Australia and found that she still had no desire to take over. Now the Liberal government's unstated motive was to deny Britain any excuse to abandon her responsibilities east of Suez.

Right to the end of the Anglo-French condominium the two powers maintained separate police forces, separate court systems, separate hospitals and separate schools. Under the Anglo-French Convention of 1906 a Joint Court (Tribunal Mixte) was established consisting of a British judge and a French judge with a president and public prosecutor appointed by the King of Spain, whose predecessor's Portuguese navigator had discovered the islands just three hundred years before. The first president was a grandee, el conde de Buena Esperanza (1851-1935). The first British judge (1908-1917) was Thomas Ernest Roseby, a Sydney graduate (BA 1890, MA 1901) and New South Wales barrister (1896) who was later chief justice of Mauritius; his reports and recommendations are in the National Library with the papers of Atlee Hunt, secretary of the Department of External Affairs. In Madrid in 1976 the head of the North American and Pacific branch of the Foreign Office recounted how his father, Alfonso Aguirre de Carcer, had been appointed prosecutor by Alfonso XIII. The last president (1936-1939), Manuel Bosch Barrett, was appointed, with the consent of Britain and France, by the president of the Second Spanish Republic. When he returned to France he wrote a book, Tres Años en Las Nuevas Hébridas (Barcelona 1943).

Administration was incredibly dilatory. On 14 June 1973 I released the following agreed joint communiqué by the Australian and British governments:

The Australian and British Governments have agreed in principle that Australian lands in the New Hebrides known as the 'Commonwealth Lands' should be transferred to a Land Trust Board to be set up by the British Resident Commissioner in the New Hebrides under Queen's Regulations.

As part of a contract made in 1902 between the Australian Government and Burns Philp and Co. Ltd., Burns Philp transferred the right of disposal of approximately 25,000 acres of land in the New Hebrides, to which it held claims, to the Australian Minister for External (now Foreign) Affairs, in return for an increase in shipping subsidy.

Most of the land is registered in Burns Philp's name and the company has continued to act as agents for the Australian Government in dealing with the land. It will be the duty of the Land Trust Board to further the
use of land vested in it from time to time for the benefit of the people of the New Hebrides.

The 'Commonwealth Lands', with some possible exceptions to be agreed between the British Resident Commissioner and the Australian authorities, will be vested in the Board. In reaching this agreement the Australian and British Governments have had very much in mind the interests of the New Hebrideans. Detailed discussions and negotiations consequential upon the agreement will be held as soon as possible between the British Residency in Vila and the Australian authorities.

On a visit in July 1978 I was astonished to find that no changes in the use and ownership of the former Commonwealth Lands had been made and that none of them had yet been passed to indigenous New Hebrideans.

This year the New Hebrides have been more in the news in Australia than at any time in the last century. Not even Evelyn Waugh could have done justice to the departure of France and Britain from Vanuatu. The resident commissioners cooperated as effectively as the consuls Caesar and Bibulus. Their largest joint operation since Suez ended not with a bang but a whimper. The British paratroopers who were flown in and out seemed to be as effective as

The noble Duke of York,
He had ten thousand men,
He marched them up to the top of the hill,
And he matched them down again.

The predominantly anglophone government of Vanuatu suddenly learnt the meaning of Albion perfide. They will probably remember French duplicity, British complicity, Australian prevarication and Melanesian determination. But for Papua New Guinea troops, French colons and American investors would have turned Santo into a Mayotte. The Fraser cabinet had to hold two meetings before a score of Australian troops could accompany their Papua New Guinea comrades in arms. Australia cannot afford to be seen again in her own region to be so indecisive and pusillanimous. Australians should not be surprised that Papua New Guinea could not mount the operation unaided; Australian troops, from the Sudan to Saigon, have always had to rely on the logistic support of greater powers.

Vanuatu has now been welcomed into the South Pacific Forum and the Commonwealth. The indigenous inhabitants have ceased to be stateless persons. France still hesitates on the nature and extent of the aid she will give the new nation. In particular, France has spent great sums on francophone higher education. Her teachers were able to organize demonstrations against independence by their secondary pupils in Vila. If France boycotts Walter Lini as she boycotted Sekou Touré, she will not destroy his influence but her own.

Vanuatu has provided lessons for the South Pacific Forum, not least Australia and New Zealand, as the moves to independence gather pace in New Caledonia. The prime point to realize is that independence in New Caledonia is inevitable and unexpectedly imminent. If Australian
politicians, bureaucrats, journalists and academics remain indifferent, those from the new nations will not. I am unabashed in my dogmatism on this issue because of my experience in relation to Papua New Guinea.

When Britain had already noted the winds of change in southern Africa, conservatives in Australia were still not sensing the breeze in the South Pacific. In October 1961 Hasluck, who had administered Papua New Guinea for ten years, had told the Economic Society of Australia and New Zealand that the necessary conditions for independence 'would appear unlikely under twenty years' or, indeed, anything 'up to fifty years'. The last Liberal minister for territories, Peacock, spoke in Port Moresby of independence by 1980.

The profound error in both these judgements, however well-intentioned, lay in the assumption that the presence of the colonial power promoted the self-confidence of the men and women who would be the eventual leaders and administrators of an independent nation; and that the presence was needed to bring not only the leadership but the general population to some required level of education and maturity (always of course, as defined by the foreign power); in short, that self-government is something to be taught, not learnt. It also assumed that Papua New Guinea was a special case, to be isolated from world trends and world events; and either that Australia was so benevolent a ruler or Papua New Guinea so backward a people that what happened in the rest of the world had no relevance. I must confess that I could never impart to British ministers, Conservative or Labour, the sense of urgency on the Solomons and New Hebrides that I felt on Papua New Guinea.

Undoubtedly there will be pundits who will give the warning on New Caledonia, as they did on Papua New Guinea, that the presence of the imperial power is necessary to obviate a bloodbath. In the Current Affairs Bulletin of July 1973 Santamaría opined that 'what Mr Whitlam's New Guinea policy is likely to accelerate is not independence but secessionism and insurgency, and cost the lives of many helpless New Guineans'. Thus the reason for Australia remaining in Papua New Guinea was the same as the reason for her intruding in Vietnam. The fact was that the longer Australia was a colonial power in Papua New Guinea, the greater became the pressure towards separatism and the greater grew the likelihood of insurgent movements against the central government, whether based in Canberra or Port Moresby.

As early as April 1965, at a seminar in Goroka organized by the Council on New Guinea Affairs, I had suggested 1970 as the appropriate target date for independence in New Guinea. If my statement in 1965 had had the same effect as my statements in 1970, then I believe independence could have been achieved as expeditiously and effectively in the 1960s as it was in the 1970s. The men and means available to make self-government work were not materially different. All that was needed was to unleash the will to apply them on the part both of Papua New Guineans and Australians, and the administrations in both Port Moresby and Canberra. My visit and statements in 1965 did not have that effect; my visit and statements in 1970 did. The only real difference was that by 1970 I could speak with the authority of a leader of the opposition, fresh from the success of the 1969 elections, and, therefore, with a fair chance of becoming prime minister. The relevance and urgency of what I was saying in 1970 arose not from what
had happened in Papua New Guinea in the intervening decade but from what
had happened in Australia. If there had not been a change of government in
Australia in 1972 it is likely that Australia would still be exercising
authority in Papua New Guinea. Can anyone assert that Australians in
executive positions there in the last two years would have behaved any more
prudently and creditably than most of the Australian judges?

Some Australians will be impressed with the French argument, advanced
by the president himself, that France will hand over authority as soon as
the electors of New Caledonia express that wish. It is a spurious
argument. The situation in New Caledonia is a common one in that overseas
settlers have secured and retained the best jobs and the best land. It is
uncommon in that the indigenes, the *kanaques*, are now in a minority in
their own country. During the 1960s, when Le Nickel was booming and the
French empire elsewhere disintegrating, the French settlers, officials,
teachers, soldiers and *pieds noirs* - approached the *kanaques* in numbers.
French birds of passage have the right to vote. Immigrants from French
Pacific territories, Vietnamese and Polynesians, identify with the
metropolitan power. They are, if possible, less acceptable than the French
themselves to the *kanaques*.

New Caledonia is not the only country in the Pacific with an exotic
majority; the difference is that the majority in Fiji does not cling to
Indian citizenship in the manner that the majority in New Caledonia clings
to French citizenship. Some Noumea newspapers were hysterical over the
coming of independence to Vanuatu, which had long been deemed a *cordon
sanitaire*. At the 1979 elections for the Territorial Assembly it was clear
that a majority of those born in New Caledonia favoured the Front
Indépendantiste. The Front assisted Vanuauku in its struggle and is
encouraged by its success. It needs to be emphasized that the Front does
not advocate the expulsion of the French or the Polynesians. It advocates
an independent but multiracial New Caledonia. At the same time it is
convinced that if the French were not prepared to fight for Algeria on the
other side of their own Mediterranean they will not be prepared to fight
for New Caledonia on the other side of the world.

The Australian public can expect very little guidance from its media
on South Pacific issues. In July 1979 President Giscard d'Estaing spent
six days visiting New Caledonia, where he also received a New Hebridean
delegation, the Wallis and Futuna Islands and French Polynesia. His visit
was not reported in the Australian media. The ABC and the commercial
oligoplies will always run a story on East Timor or West New Guinea but
cannot spare a staff correspondent in the New Hebrides or New Caledonia.
The only exception occurred when a journalist employed by a weekly
Australian magazine acted as a courier and ambassador for the stillborn
separatist movement on Espiritu Santo. The television station owned by the
same company then ran on its weekly current affairs programme a sycophantic
and misleading story on the leader of that movement. The result of the
poor coverage of the Pacific provided by the Australian media is an erratic
pattern of sometimes hostile and exaggerated stories interspersed by long
periods of indifference. There are already signs that in Europe French
elements are peddling such stories about Vanuatu to Amnesty International
and the International Commission of Jurists; a version will be cabled to
Australia.
NEW NATIONS AND OLD IMPERIALISM

Many politicians, officials, businessmen and academics have tended to back off for fear of offending the French. The French, however, have already demonstrated their indifference to Australia's views. President Giscard gave Australia as wide a berth in 1979 as President de Gaulle gave in 1966. On the earlier occasion the presidential aircraft had to land at Darwin on the way from Phnom Penh to Noumea; the great man could not be disturbed by the Australian representative who called to pay respects. On the later occasion the aircraft, of greater range, was able to fly direct from Singapore to Noumea. On his foray de Gaulle made a five hour visit to Vila, whence he sent greetings to the Queen. (The French still affect the colonial style of 'Port Vila'.)

The French in New Caledonia have an ambivalent attitude towards Australia. Many regard Australians as picking up where the British left off in the confrontation between Consul Pritchard and Admiral Du Petit-Thouars over Tahiti in the 1840s. Some even see an imperial aspiration in the visit of HMAS Adelaide in 1940 to engineer the coup which transferred New Caledonia from Petain to de Gaulle. At the same time many feel reassured by the possibility of taking refuge in Australia and have bought accommodation and education here.

The external impetus for the independence of New Caledonia will not come from Australia but from the developing countries in the South Pacific Forum. Attempts by Australia and New Zealand to restrain Melanesian criticism of France, as at the 1979 Forum, will no longer succeed. In February 1978 when Peacock came closest to saying 'hou' to the French in answering a question in the House of Representatives on the political situation in the New Hebrides, French advisers prompted the Representative Assembly to pass a resolution asking the French government to declare the Australian consul in Vila persona non grata. It used to be alleged that Australians were stirring up Pacific islanders about French nuclear tests at Mururoa. Nobody suggests today that Australians have to stir up Pacific islanders about Japanese dumping of nuclear waste. When the Somare government and its foreign minister, Olewale, lost office it was thought that the succeeding government and minister in Port Moresby would take a more relaxed attitude about the French presence. Nobody says that now.

Australia, in selling uranium to France, which continues to conduct nuclear experiments in Polynesia against the wishes of all the island states, and to Japan, which contemplates depositing nuclear waste against their wishes, must expect to encounter some regional resentment. At the 20th South Pacific Conference in Port Moresby on 18 October 1980 the Papua New Guinea foreign minister canvassed the possibility of forming a strong political alliance of regional states along the lines of the Organization of African Unity and the Papua New Guinea minister for primary industry and leader of the delegation called for a South Pacific political alliance to protect island nations against foreign exploitation; it was understood that Australia and New Zealand were not contemplated as part of the proposed organization. On 4 November 1980 at the ESCAP Women's Conference in Suva, despite Australian reservations, delegates passed a resolution criticizing 'colonialization' by France, nuclear tests and dumping of waste, drugs and alcoholism. The statement, introduced by Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu, declared: 'The colonialization which continues in the Pacific is an indignity shared by both men and women ... . There remain Pacific sister islands, including New Caledonia and French Polynesia, who are
denied their inalienable right to self-determination, to walk in dignity as free Pacific peoples'.

Australia's preoccupations often fail to find support among neighbours. When Fraser attended his first Forum meeting the other prime ministers were not impressed by his strong, impromptu discourse about the menace represented by the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean. Australian institutions are not admired; no other member of the Forum is a federal state and only Fiji has a bicameral parliament. Australia has to give constant attention to her credentials as a concerned neighbour. Especially must she exercise her responsibility and influence with respect to the decolonization of the French territories in the South Pacific.

In 1946 France responded to the United Nation secretary-general's invitation to all member states to submit information on their territories, including New Caledonia. In 1947 France told him that the situation had changed as New Caledonia was now part of metropolitan France. There is a request from Papua New Guinea that New Caledonia be placed on the agenda of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization (the Committee of Seventeen when established in 1961, and the Committee of Twenty-four since 1962). Australia was a foundation member of the Committee. The Gorton government withdrew in 1969 but my government rejoined in January 1973. Chile, China, Fiji and the USSR are the only other Pacific members of the Committee. The Committee frequently criticized the refusal of France and Britain to cooperate with it on the question of the New Hebrides. Among Pacific territories Tokelau, Pitcairn, American Samoa, Guam and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands are included in the Committee's provisional list of dependent territories and, accordingly, will be considered formally by the Committee each year until the residents of these territories decide to terminate the present arrangements by an act of self-determination. Australia should not hesitate to vote in the General Assembly in favour of adding New Caledonia to the Committee's provisional list.

If Australia takes a negative attitude on the issues which her developing neighbours are now discussing at every available forum, she will be treated by them with as scant respect as she is now treated by ASEAN. If she resists their legitimate aspirations she could become as impotent a colossus in the region as the United States is in the Caribbean and Latin America.

REFERENCE