

Political Reviews

*Micronesia in Review: Issues and Events, 1 July 2013
to 30 June 2014*

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COOK ISLANDS

As the 49th year of Cook Islands “self-governing” in free association with New Zealand, the period under review has been characterized by a number of political ups and downs, culminating in a snap election with contested results and court action set to determine the outcome. The results highlight the need for reform to address the disparity of the value of a vote across the country. As 2014 is also the International Year of Small Islands Developing States, international and local attention is focused on the country’s development partnerships as it prepares to celebrate its unique form of sovereignty in 2015. Other issues this year revolved around a rollout of tax reforms, marine resources, and the management of the climate change–related drought in the southern group islands.

The Cook Islands continues to place priority on climate change and climate-related disaster risks, with a number of southern group islands “dealing with drought-like conditions after months without decent rainfall” (*CIN*, 16 Dec 2013). On Atiu, groundwater supplies were at critically low levels. These problems were further compounded with increased demands expected over the Christmas

period and the drought conditions forecast to extend the dry season (*CIN*, 16 Dec 2013). With two water treatment plants and a desalination machine dispatched from Rarotonga, the New Zealand High Commission added its support by supplying one of the solar-powered water-treatment plants as part of a NZ\$225,000 grant to support the Cook Islands drought response strategy. The strategy includes equipment, training, awareness raising, and water level monitoring and reporting (*CIN*, 31 Jan 2014). On a much larger scale, the NZ\$60 million Cook Islands Water Partnership, or Te Mato Vai, linked to climate change, is intended to improve water supply and quality on Rarotonga. The initiative will refurbish water intakes, increase water storage and treatment, and replace ring mains and piping (*CIN*, 19 Oct 2013). Funding for the project has been raised, with NZ\$22 million from the Cook Islands government, a NZ\$15 million grant from New Zealand, and a NZ\$23 million concessional loan from the People’s Republic of China. This jointly funded partnership has drawn international attention and is “believed to be a first for the emerging Asian country which has traditionally been known to deliver aid unilaterally” (*CIN*, 12 Sept 2013). Visiting researcher Philippa Brant of the Lowy Institute for International Policy in Australia suggested that because the Pacific faced no current military conflict, the Cook Islands was ideal for Beijing

to test out its new aid strategy while avoiding accusations of self-interest by allowing the Cook Islands and New Zealand to drive the project (CIN, 12 Sept 2013). Locally the project also drew attention through public meetings and consultations on the Water Master Plan. With construction due to start on 14 April 2014, a petition with over two thousand signatures was delivered to Parliament seeking to put a stop to the project “until misgivings and shortcomings on the project can be identified and investigated and other options explored,” said James Thomson, spokesman for the Te Mato Vai Petition Committee (CIN, 5 April 2014). It was agreed that a Parliamentary Select Committee would be established; however, the project still proceeded.

Since the 2011 establishment of the Climate Change Division in the Office of the Prime Minister, a number of initiatives have commenced. A US\$5 million Adaptation Fund project facilitated the development of a national climate-change policy. In November 2013, the *Kaveinga Tapapa: Climate and Disaster Compatible Development Policy 2013–2016* was launched. In taking an integrated approach, the policy is focused on low-carbon, climate-change–and disaster-resilient development. Prime Minister Henry Puna’s introductory statement notes that the policy, by integrating with existing policy instruments and planning tools, “builds on our existing structures and draws on our capability to lift our game” and its “fundamental message is to prepare today for tomorrow” (Cook Islands Government 2013, 2).

With a reputation for punching

above its weight, a potential game lifter for the Cook Islands lies in its ability to deliver on the government’s optimistic energy security goals. Targets of 50 percent of electricity to be supplied from renewable energy sources by 2015 and 100 percent by 2020 are looking attainable with the help of old and new development friends. Support from a range of donors has been negotiated. This includes a NZ\$20.5 million project to design and construct solar-powered hybrid energy systems on Manihiki, Rakahanga, Penrhyn, Pukapuka, Nassau, and Palmerston to enable these communities to move toward 95 percent reliance on solar power. New Zealand company Power Smart has been contracted and is expected to start in August 2014 (CIN, 12 June 2014). In addition, another New Zealand company, Infratec Renewables (NETcon International) was awarded a NZ\$3.3 million contract funded by New Zealand and the European Union to install a 960-kilowatt solar fan at the Rarotonga Airport. Construction on that project commenced in April 2014 (CIN, 29 April 2014). However, it was not all plain sailing, with local businessman and Chamber of Commerce President Steve Anderson questioning decisions to send hazardous lead-acid batteries rather than lithium-ion batteries to a number of low-lying atolls as part of the renewable energy plans.

Given the potential of aid being tied to a donor country’s foreign and trade policies, and noting the nature of the relationship between the Cook Islands and New Zealand, such decisions are perceived as the Cook Islands government’s not wanting “to rock the boat

too much with New Zealand and Australia and China and Japan who are the donors, so . . . they're being guided by the donors who basically lay down the criteria of what's going to be given," said Anderson in an interview on Radio Australia (Fayle 2014).

Cook Islands efforts at the international level took forward three policy priorities of loss and damage, climate-change adaptation, and climate-change financing to the 19th meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties in Warsaw, Poland, in November 2013. The delegation leader (and one of seven women on the eight-member team), Ana Tira'a, in commenting on the importance of attending such meetings and seeking global agreement to address climate-change impacts, said, "In our northern atolls there are some areas that are less than 300 metres wide—ocean on one side, lagoon on the other. Losing a little bit of land has a big impact on low lying communities with limited land area. Loss of land is not easily replaced" (CIN, 18 Nov 2013).

During the period under review, the Cook Islands gave support to regional climate-change efforts. Prime Minister Puna, as the outgoing Pacific Islands Forum chair, attended the 44th Forum in the Marshall Islands in September 2013, adding his signature to the Majuro Declaration, but not before calling on the leaders to support the Nansen Initiative on climate-change- and disaster-induced displacement and the Oceans 21 initiative for the sustainable development of the Pacific oceanscape (PIFS 2013).

Marine resource policy issues also

featured during this review year. With an exclusive economic zone of over 200 million square kilometers of ocean, the Cook Islands establishment of a marine protected area continues moving toward being "legally designated and zoned by the end of 2015" (CIN, 22 Feb 2014). Situated in the southern region, the marine park will cover an area of approximately 1.1 million square kilometers. Following extensive consultations across the pa enua (islands), Marae Moana Marine Park Project Manager Jacqui Evans stated that "we don't want to prevent opportunities for the country to use its marine resources but we want to see our ecosystems being sustained because they provide so much for us in terms of food, shelter, recreation, medicine, income through tourism and basic ecosystem services such as water treatment and coastal protection" (CIN, 14 May 2014). Meanwhile, with zoning providing varied protections within the Marae Moana area, the government continues in developing the institutional and regulatory framework to enable the mining of mineral deposits from the seabed. Located predominately through the central and northern parts of Cook Islands waters, at depths of up to 6,000 meters, manganese nodules rich in cobalt, nickel, and copper are said to offer 10 billion tonnes of mineable resources (Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Authority 2014). With the government's eye on the potential economic benefits as an opportunity to diversify the country's narrow economic base, the environmental and social implications continue to be raised as prominent concerns by cultural and environmental watchdog groups. After a public

session of a Seabed Minerals regional workshop focused on financial aspects of deep-sea minerals and attended by a range of international representatives, Cook Islands Seabed Minerals Commissioner Paul Lynch said the meeting “was hijacked by people who didn’t want to listen or ask questions of our panel” (*CIN*, 19 May 2014). Attendees included members of the national environment organization, Te Ipu-karea Society, which took the opportunity to raise questions about cultural, legal, and environmental issues. While frustration and discomfort levels rose during the meeting, the incident highlighted that this is an area of economic development that will draw locals out of their shells.

This year under review saw a number of tax reforms rolled out. Tax rate thresholds were amended and welfare payments were increased, making more money available for low-income earners. While many of these measures were seen as favorable, the increase in Value Added Tax to 15 percent was less popular, with price increases expected to be passed on to consumers (*CIN*, 3 Jan 2014).

The instigation of back taxing pensioners who collect New Zealand superannuation was also unpopular. The reform saw the Revenue Management Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management take money directly out of pensioners’ bank accounts. Such was the outcry that a pensioners lobby group was formed. Known as Grey Power, they campaigned against the taxing of pensions, with a march on Parliament in December 2013. Opposition leader and Member of Parliament Wilkie Rasmussen found favor with

protesters when he announced that the Democratic Party would abolish the back tax (*CIN*, 27 Feb 2014). However, the government showed its ability to take heed of its constituents’ voices and undertook to amend the legislation and refund pensioner back taxes (*CIN*, 19 April 2014).

On the islands of Rarotonga, the Murienua district by-election was announced for 19 September. This followed the resignation of Deputy Prime Minister Tom Masters and his inauguration on 9 August as the new queen’s representative.

The Cook Islands Party candidate Kaota Tuariki won the seat, beating Democratic Party candidate James Beer. However, alleged bribery and treating claims saw Tuariki resign before the petition went to court (*CIN*, 14 Jan 2014). A rerun of the by-election was set for February. This time James Beer was successful over the Cook Islands Party’s Tare Mareiti, leaving the Cook Islands Party with 13 seats, the Democratic Party 10 seats, and Norman George holding one seat as an independent.

Since her appointment in 2012 as the non-elected Speaker of the House, well-regarded former Secretary-General of the Cook Islands Red Cross Niki Rattle has been kept busy inside and outside of parliamentary sittings. The termination of the Clerk of Parliament Tupuna Rakanui, a long-serving member of staff, featured in 2013. Rakanui, who was appointed in January 2013 following the retirement of Nga Valoa, was discharged of his duties in August after a review of his performance.

In reaction to the termination, Democratic Party Member of Parlia-

ment for Titikaveka Selena Napa and stalwart Atiu Member of Parliament for Teenui-Mapumai Norman George waded in to publically question the termination. Prime Minister Puna would not be drawn into commenting out of respect for “the authority of the Speaker in maintaining responsibility over any employment issues” (*CIN*, 20 Aug 2013).

In consolation for his termination, Rakanui was appointed back into parliamentary services in the role of clerk to the Are Ariki (House of Paramount Chiefs), an appointment advocated for by the head of the Are Ariki, Tou Ariki (*CIN*, 12 Sept 2013).

The subsequent appointment of Pastor John Tangi as clerk of Parliament drew a reaction from the opposition party leader Wilkie Rasmussen (*CIN*, 19 Sept 2013). Despite Tangi’s suitability based on his previous experience as Speaker of the House and a Democratic Party member of Parliament for Tupapa, Rasmussen alleged interference by the prime minister and the Speaker in the appointment (*CIN*, 14 Sept 2013).

The period of review was also marked by the passing of two prominent figures. The paramount chief of the Puaikura district on Rarotonga, Tinomana Ruta Tuoro Ariki, passed away on 27 June 2013. She held the title for over twenty years after her investiture in 1991. Affectionately known as “Mama Bear,” her services extended beyond her tribal boundaries to a number of nongovernmental organizations and groups. Of note, in 1984 she was a founding member of the Cook Islands National Council of Women, and in 1988 she became the first woman deacon on Rarotonga

for the Nikao Cook Islands Christian Church (*CIN*, 2 July 2013).

On 24 August Samoan resident Tamanavao Navy Epati passed away suddenly after suffering a heart attack at the Rarotonga Golf Course at age 49. Well known in Sāmoa and the Cook Islands, he was a representative athlete and national sports administrator for rugby, rugby league, and boxing. Epati was the head of the Ministry of Marine Resources and held the post of public service commissioner for five years until September 2011 (*CIN*, 26 Aug 2013). During that time he led public service reforms, which included the passing of the much-needed Public Service Act in 2009.

Another passing of sorts also eventuated during the year of review. Investigations by authorities of Cabinet Minister Teina Bishop’s business dealings remain unresolved, with no decision despite assistance from New Zealand’s Serious Fraud Office (*CIN*, 14 June 2014). The investigation surrounded the 2012 purchase, sale, and trading of two fishing boats, the *Orongo* and the *Bounty*, to Huanan Fishery (Cook Islands) Limited, a subsidiary of Luen Thai Fishing Venture, without the Business Trade Investment Board’s approval to sell to an offshore buyer, and the granting of a fishing license to the company approved by Bishop as minister of marine resources (*CIN*, 1 Aug 2013; *CIH*, 10 July 2013). With the allegations potentially posing a threat to the credibility and survival of the Cook Islands Party-led government, Puna accepted Bishop’s decision to hand in the marine resources and pearl authority portfolios while investigations took place. Initially this led Bishop to relinquish his marine

resources and tourism portfolios in early August, but Bishop remained a cabinet minister, retaining the education portfolio. There was speculation that the investigation of Bishop as a long-serving cabinet member might have had some bearing on his consideration for the deputy prime minister position, which had also been vacated in August. Four months later, in December, Teariki Heather was named deputy prime minister, with Bishop himself believing that the investigation was the reason he was not appointed to the role (*CIN*, 18 Dec 2013).

By April, discord within the cabinet had taken hold, resulting in Bishop's resignation from the party. In the midst of a Parliament sitting and with the supplementary budget to be presented on 15 April, the no-show by Bishop and Tupapa Member of Parliament George Maggie reduced the Cook Islands Party one-seat majority of 13 to 11 (*CIN*, 17 April 2014). On 17 April, Queen's Representative Tom Marsters was advised to dissolve Parliament. Initially he said that "it is necessary to have early elections because of the need to have the incoming government in place well in advance of the 50th anniversary of self-government in 2015" (*CIN*, 17 April 2014).

With the general election set for 9 July 2014, the prime minister also had a "conflict of interest" allegation to deal with. This related to his pearl farm in Manihiki, which was allegedly set to gain over NZ\$100,000 in assistance as part of a NZ\$3 million aid funding from New Zealand to revitalize the pearl industry in the Cook Islands (*CIN*, 20 May 2014).

The current government assumed

a caretaker role in order to manage the country's affairs in the run-up to the snap election. Legislative matters due to be tabled in the April sitting of Parliament have now been benched until after the election. These matters included the 2013–14 supplementary budget, which is intended to rectify the unpopular taxing of pensions and to fund the rebuilding of two schools that were damaged by arson attacks in 2013 (*CIN*, 14 April 2014).

Finance Minister Mark Brown expected to keep rolling out existing commitments, while provisions within the constitution allow for a 1.5 percent expenditure of the 2013–14 NZ\$200 million annual budget as an administrative measure to address funding gaps created by the policy changes. No new initiatives will be addressed until after the election (*CIN*, 14 April 2014). Parliamentary select committees were also dissolved until after the election. This includes the committee convened to review the Te Mato Vai major infrastructure water project in response to the public petition (*CIN*, 14 April 2014).

Political campaigning for the early July general election dominated the final quarter of this year of review and culminated in preliminary results showing no clear majority winner. Of the 24 parliamentary seats, election night results had the Democratic Party ahead with 11 seats, followed by the Cook Islands Party with 10 seats. The newly formed Cook Islands One had 2 seats and the Mangaia seat of Tamarua tied. Following the recount and additional special and postal votes, the results swung to give the Cook Islands Party a 13-seat majority to lead the country. Despite the

Cook Islands Party being out-pollled by the Democratic Party, the result highlights “the disparity in the value of a vote across the Cook Islands” (*CIN*, 23 July 2014), with the balance of power sitting with smaller voter constituencies.

The Democratic Party, now with eight seats, saw their leader Wilkie Rasmussen lose his seat by 10 votes. The Mitiaro seat they won on election night came back tied after the recount, with both candidates garnering 50 votes each (*CIN*, 18 Jul 2014). A by-election will be needed to sort out the deadlock unless a petition to the court proves successful for either party. On that note, by the 25 July deadline, nine electoral petitions had been lodged with the Cook Islands High Court. As the post-election caretaker government, the Cook Islands Party will now have to wait for the outcome of the court actions. With the constitutional provisions to enable the caretaker government to operate with one quarter of the 2013–14 government appropriations until the end of September, the pressure is now on the judiciary and Chief Justice Thomas Weston, rather than the voting public, to determine the country’s government for the next four years. While the year has featured a full range of political challenges and government-led reforms that have been contested and debated by the public, it is likely that the upcoming celebrations of fifty years of Cook Islands sovereignty will provide a positive focus for 2014–15.

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FRENCH POLYNESIA

The political situation of French Polynesia during the period under review was in two ways fundamentally different from previous periods. First, as a result of May 2013 elections, there is a two-thirds majority for Gaston Flosse’s anti-independence

Tahoeraa Huiraatira Party in the legislative assembly that is most likely to remain for the full term, setting the present situation apart from the preceding decade-long instability caused by constantly changing political majorities. Yet the pending retrials of President Flosse (who was earlier sentenced to jail terms for corruption, which he had appealed) as well as his advancing age (he turned eighty-three in June 2013) make it doubtful that he will retain the presidency for the entire five-year term.

Second, due to the tireless efforts of Flosse's pro-independence predecessor Oscar Temaru and his administration to reinscribe the country on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGTs), which succeeded literally on Temaru's last day in Office in May 2013, French Polynesia is now regarded by the international community as a territory to be decolonized, although France keeps resisting what it regards as UN interference in its domestic policies. The new international status of the country gives the pro-independence opposition unprecedented possibilities to expose the country's problems before international audiences and to promote their long-term goals of building a sovereign state.

Temaru and his confidant, Senator Richard Ariihau Tuheiava (one of the country's two representatives in the French Senate), thus continued their lobbying at UN institutions, where they are now able to be admitted as official representatives of an NSGT and no longer need to find a friendly country to include them in its national delegation. On 8 October 2013, the two testified before the Fourth Com-

mittee of the UN General Assembly, which is charged with decolonization issues. On 14 October, the committee adopted a draft resolution to be introduced to the floor of the 68th UN General Assembly as a follow-up to the reinscription resolution of the previous session in May. The draft followed Temaru's and Tuheiava's advice in recommending a long period of political education in order to overcome decades of French indoctrination and propaganda before a meaningful referendum of self-determination could be conducted in the country (United Nations Web TV 2013; TI, 9 Oct, 21 Oct 2013).

While the resolution was tabled to be voted on by the General Assembly floor, attempts by President Flosse and his government to undo, block, or stall the UN decolonization process were not successful. Despite yet another resolution passed by Flosse's two-thirds majority in the French Polynesia Assembly on 28 August denouncing the UN activities as "interference in the bilateral issues between France and French Polynesia" and lobbying efforts by Flosse to influence Pacific Island leaders during the Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Majuro in September in Majuro to support this position (TI, 28 Aug 2013), the leaders preferred to be silent on the issue, and the final communiqué of the Forum did not contain any mention of French Polynesia (PIFS 2013). Previously, at the Polynesian Leaders Group (PLG) meeting in Auckland on 30 August, Flosse, who became president of the organization for a year on a principle of alphabetical rotation, had convinced the other leaders of the Polynesian countries to include in their communi-

qué a note acknowledging “the resolution adopted by the French Polynesia Assembly reaffirming the democratic choice of its population to remain the strongly autonomous overseas country that it is” (PLG 2013), although the PLG declined to make any concrete commitments in support of Flosse’s position in the international arena.

The French government, on the other hand, also frustrated Flosse, since his demand for an immediate referendum on independence that would not restrict the electorate to long-term residents—which most likely would turn out a majority against independence—fell on deaf ears. When Minister of Overseas Territories Victorin Lurel visited Tahiti in late November and gave a program speech before the French Polynesia Assembly, he declared that there was no reason for any independence referendum, neither according to UN standards on decolonization nor under current French electoral law. Instead, Lurel asked all local political forces to collaborate with the French government in developing the country (TI, 30 Nov 2013).

Temaru and his coalition of opposition parties, Union Pour La Démocratie (UPLD), boycotted and protested Lurel’s visit, insisting that the Flosse government was illegitimate since it was run by the “mafia” (referring to the multiple criminal convictions of Flosse for corruption, all of which were undergoing appeals at the time). Some protestors went as far as depicting Lurel, a Socialist politician from the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, as a “house negro”—in order to portray him as a sellout/colonial collaborator and simultaneously insult

him personally by alluding to his black Caribbean (= slave descendant) heritage. Lurel was infuriated and accused Temaru’s Tavini Huiraatira, the largest constituent party within UPLD and official local ally of the ruling French Socialist Party, of disloyalty (*TPM*, Dec 2013). The minister seemed to forget, however, that it was the Socialist Party that broke the partnership agreement in the first place by opposing UN reinscription, which the two parties had agreed to in 2004 and 2011. Temaru’s party had hitherto dutifully fulfilled its part of the agreements by constantly lending local support to Socialist politicians on the French national level.

A year earlier, in a similar speech before the Congress of New Caledonia in Nouméa, Lurel had admitted that France “never knew how to decolonize” but added that “here [in New Caledonia] we are inventing a new formula” (TI, 24 Nov 2012). Given the attitude of his government toward French Polynesia throughout the year, as well as other recent colonial policies such as the départementalisation (ie, annexation as a supposed part of metropolitan France) of the Comorian island of Mayotte in 2011 despite its contested international legal status, one could conclude that France is creating a “new formula” only for New Caledonia but remains clueless on how to decolonize the rest of its crypto-colonial “overseas” empire.

In the old colonial fashion of his right-wing predecessors, Lurel accepted and replicated Flosse’s discourse by claiming that the 2013 election results should be seen as a plebiscite against reinscription. This line of argument has frequently been used by French governments whenever

pro-French parties held the majority of seats in the local assembly and reflects an unfortunate tradition in French political culture of misinterpreting elections of candidates to office as plebiscites on issues, and vice versa.

However, in a legal analysis written a few days after the UN reinscription vote, University of New Caledonia Law Professor Mathias Chauchat argued that a local election and a referendum of self-determination should not be confused. Furthermore, even the rejection of a particular self-governing status in a plebiscite should not be equated with a vote in favor of integration and therefore precipitate a removal from the NSGT list, as, for example, Tokelau was not removed from the list when its voters did not consent in sufficient numbers to a status of free association with New Zealand in 2007. Echoing Lurel's Nouméa statement, but without the hypocrisy of the latter, Chauchat argued that "in New Caledonia the [French] Republic commits itself to a progressive, peaceful and irreversible process of decolonization, which has not turned against her. Her policy would become incomprehensible, and quickly counter-productive, if she would not be able to see the Pacific as it is today, as the Anglo-Saxons have been able to, and would offer no future perspective for French Polynesia" (Chauchat 2013).

Besides these fundamental legal arguments, it is also worth noting that neither Tahoeraa nor the pro-French opposition group A Tia Porinetia (ATP) mentioned opposition to reinscription in their campaign manifestos. While it is true that leading candidates of both parties agitated against

reinscription during the campaign, the absence of the topic in the manifestos makes it even more of a stretch to construe votes for the two parties as votes against UN reinscription.

At the same time, however, Tahiti-based French historian Jean-Marc Regnault considers the French Polynesia Assembly resolution of August 2011 (in which the then UPLD majority expressed itself in favor of reinscription) a tactical mistake. According to Regnault's analysis, this resolution tied the issue down to one of majority support, which would eventually backfire on UPLD, as it no longer represents the majority since the 2013 elections. In contrast, the Kanak pro-independence umbrella group FLNKS (Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste) achieved New Caledonia's reinscription in 1986 without ever attempting to get a majority vote of the territorial institutions of New Caledonia and instead relied on international legal principles that protect minorities, especially indigenous minorities (Regnault 2013, 197, 223 n423).

Unimpressed by the French and French Polynesia governments' opposition, the UN General Assembly on 11 December unanimously passed the draft as resolution 68/93. The resolution once more affirms French Polynesia's inalienable right to self-determination and calls on France and the local government to cooperate with UN agencies in order to implement this right and, specifically, "to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of French Polynesia of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate

political status options.” Furthermore, the resolution “requests the Secretary-General, in cooperation with relevant specialized agencies of the United Nations, to compile a report on the environmental, ecological, health and other impacts as a consequence of the 30-year period of nuclear testing in the Territory” (UN 2013c).

Whereas the first sections of the resolution have merely symbolic value as long as both Paris and the country government continue refusing any cooperation with the United Nations on the matter—Flosse once more denounced the resolution as an “unacceptable interference” (11, 13 Dec 2013)—the section on nuclear testing is of great significance. Up until now, the debate on the effects of French nuclear testing (1966 to 1996) was held within the constraints of French domestic institutions; the resolution officially declares the consequences of French nuclear testing an international matter that must be addressed at the UN level. Since French Polynesia, unlike some totalitarian regimes, is not cut off from the outside world, France will hardly be able to prevent the compilation of the UN report on nuclear testing effects, even if Paris refuses direct cooperation with UN agencies in the matter.

In the annual UN General Assembly report on the NSGTs, released on 17 March 2014, one could see that of all seventeen NSGTs on the list, the only one for which the administering power had not transmitted information as required under article 73e of the UN Charter was French Polynesia (UN 2014b). France was thus openly defying principles of international law, but this would not discourage UN agen-

cies from accelerating their engagement with the territory.

On 26 March, the UN Decolonization Committee released its first working paper on the country, giving an overview of its political, economic, and social situation; listing the resolutions and documents issued hitherto by the United Nations in its regard; and providing summaries of the testimony given by Temaru and Tuheiava before various UN bodies (UN 2014a). The document was released in preparation for the annual regional seminar of the Decolonization Committee, which took place 21–23 May in Nadi, Fiji. While France participated, its submission referred only to New Caledonia and mentioned not a word about French Polynesia (Government of France 2014). Senator Tuheiava, in his submission as an expert from an NSGT, denounced the hypocrisy of the French government in adhering to UN principles only when it fits its interests, and he called on the Special Committee to include a passage to that effect in a draft resolution for the upcoming sixty-ninth General Assembly session. The senator furthermore mentioned the control of France over the resources in the territory’s Exclusive Economic Zone as well as over its airspace as exemplary evidence for the lack of true self-government (Tuheiava 2014).

At the meeting of the Decolonization Committee at the UN headquarters in New York, 30 June–1 July, the scene from Fiji was repeated. After the section on New Caledonia, in which French government representatives participated, the latter rushed out of the chambers when the issue of French Polynesia came up for discussion

(Overseas Territories Review, 30 June 2014).

If one analyzes the history of French decolonization during the past decades, Paris's arrogant attitude as displayed in the UN meetings is not very surprising. In his recent book on France's "belated decolonizations" in the Pacific, Regnault described how it took France decades to accept New Caledonia's 1986 reinscription as an NSGT. UN officials were not invited to visit New Caledonia until 1999, and the annual transmitting of information under article 73e was only begun in 2004 (Regnault 2013, 74–76). In that sense, the pattern of France's attitude toward New Caledonia seems to be recurring now for French Polynesia, almost down to exact details. For instance, the line of argument by the Françoise Hollande administration against French Polynesia's reinscription as being allegedly contrary to public majority opinion is virtually identical to the discourse of Mitterrand and Chirac in the mid-1980s in reference to New Caledonia (Regnault 2013, 225). While after decades of denial of colonialism some progress is being made in New Caledonia, decolonization of French Polynesia "still has a long history ahead" (Regnault 2013, 215).

Besides its visible effects on the political dynamics of French Polynesia and on the problem of belated French decolonization in general, the reinscription of the country as an NSGT also has ramifications for other issues of decolonization and related international legal issues throughout the Pacific region. It is interesting to note that during the debate on the rein-

scription resolution in the UN General Assembly on 17 May 2013, the representative of Indonesia, while endorsing the resolution, cautioned against using it as a precedent to "dismember or impair totally or in part the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign or independent States"—referring most likely to the disputed status of West Papua (UN 2013a). While the latter is a more complex legal issue (involving a sovereignty dispute and the denial of self-determination in its resolution rather than a classic case of denial of decolonization by an administrative power), Indonesia's concerns over the reinscription resolution show its potential for unforeseen far-reaching consequences.

Ni-Vanuatu Prime Minister Moana Carcasses Kalosil, Tahitian by birth and leading the one country that has consistently supported West Papuan self-determination, certainly interpreted the resolution in this way in his speech before the plenary session of the UN General Assembly on 28 September. He commended the reinscription of French Polynesia as a recent effort to bring decolonization efforts back to life at the United Nations, reminding the international community of other decolonization-related issues waiting to be resolved, such as West Papua, as well as the continuing French claim over Vanuatu's two southernmost islands (Carcasses 2013).

Geographically closer to French Polynesia, Rapa Nui also saw its struggle for decolonization from Chile significantly affected by the resolution. Earlier in 2013, the pro-independence umbrella group "Rapa Nui Parliament" had gained significant inter-

national momentum by being invited by the Temaru government to be a founding member of the Polynesian Parliamentary Group at its inaugural meeting in Papeete (TI, 4 March 2013). During a session of the UN Decolonization Committee on 21 June 2013, the representative of Chile first expressed his annoyance that a paper on Pacific decolonization created in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues that referred to both French Polynesia and Rapa Nui was supposedly inaccurate, and then he mentioned, truly inaccurately, that the country government of French Polynesia had less autonomy than a municipality in Chile—thereby implicitly arguing that French Polynesia could not serve as a precedent for Rapa Nui, which currently is administered as a municipality within Chile (UN 2013b). The statement was an attempt to curry favor with supporters of French Polynesian independence and thereby distract from Chile’s own atrocious colonial record in relation to Rapa Nui.

Even at the PLG meeting in Auckland in August 2013, which Flosse used as a platform for his propaganda as mentioned above, the atmosphere of awakening in Pacific decolonization and related issues apparently took some hold. Kamana’opono Crabbe, the chief executive officer of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, attended the meeting as an observer representing Hawai’i, which was duly mentioned in the communiqué (PLG 2013). It might not be a coincidence that it was Crabbe who in May 2014 would create a stir in Hawaiian politics when he sent an open letter to US Secretary of State John Kerry about

the Hawaiian Kingdom’s continued sovereignty under international law (Hawaiian Government blog 2014).

As far as domestic developments are concerned, the review period saw two attempts to introduce new currency to the country, one successful and regular in circumstances and the other unsuccessful and rather bizarre. Both, however, provide evidence of ongoing French colonialism. At the beginning of the year, the Institut d’Émission d’Outre-Mer (IEOM, the French central bank for overseas territories) issued a new series of CFP franc banknotes, which were put into circulation during the following months, with the old notes gradually phased out by September 2014. The change in banknote design was intended to pay lip service to the 1998 Nouméa Accord on New Caledonia, which stipulated that the future banknotes of New Caledonia shall show “Kanak cultural symbols” instead of the French colonial officials and nondescript “island paradise” scenes depicted on the previous series (which is issued for all three French Pacific territories). While the logical step would have been to create a separate series for New Caledonia satisfying the passage in the accord, which was originally planned and the designs released on a numismatic website (Banknote News 2012), the IEOM eventually decided to simply create a new series for all three Pacific territories, and only one out of the four new notes (the 10,000 francs note) actually displays Kanak cultural symbols, while the other denominations depict generic tropical flora and fauna.

While the IEOM was making those decisions behind closed doors, the

so-called Republic of Pakumotu (a self-proclaimed entity with about a hundred supporters and its headquarters in Outumaoro, within the municipality of Punaauia near its boundary with Faaa) announced the issuing of its own national currency, called the “patu.” In mid-October, Athanase Teiri, the leader of the “republic” (who, strangely enough, does not style himself as president but as “King Taginui I”), announced that his “government” had issued one billion patu, which would be put in circulation at the exchange rate of 145 CFP francs for one patu and would be the only legal tender starting in January 2014 (TI, 17 Oct 2013).

Even though most observers looked on the actions of the group with mild amusement, French prosecutor José Thorel announced he would prosecute the group for “issuing fake money” and would confiscate their patu notes, even though they resemble neither the old nor the new IEOM notes, nor do they bear any inscription saying they have any value in CFP francs. After a Pakumotu supporter tried to pay for her gasoline with a patu note, the police not only arrested her but a few days later also stormed into the group’s headquarters, seized all the patu notes, and arrested Teiri for “counterfeiting” money (TI, 11 Dec 2013). Eventually, however, the court did not follow the prosecutor’s excessive actions, and when Teiri was sentenced to six months imprisonment on Jan 21, it was not for issuing “patu” but for intimidation, since he had authored letters threatening IEOM and the territorial government for not complying with his “currency-issuing” scheme (TI, 21 Jan 2014).

Things turned ugly, however, when police arrived at Teiri’s house on 29 January in order to carry out the sentence and take him to jail, since he had not shown up to the court appointment. The armed bodyguards of the “king” opened fire at the approaching police cars and a gunfight ensued. Luckily no one was injured, and Teiri and his bodyguards were arrested on charges of attempted murder and illegal possession of firearms (TPM, Feb 2014).

The “Pakumotu” affair raises some important questions. It must be asked why people get arrested and charged within days for trivial affairs like attempting to defraud a business of a small amount of money in the case of the lady at the gas station, or merely for the act of producing tons of valueless fantasy money in the name of a fantasy state in the case of Teiri, whereas for various politicians, such as President Flosse, who have defrauded the public of the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of US dollars through embezzlement, the justice system takes years to prosecute them.

Second, the phenomenon of self-proclaimed governments—of which there are several others in French Polynesia, including two more emerging during the time under review (TI, 23 Oct 2013; TI, 26 April, 27 May 2014)—must be seen in a social context. The relative success of these eccentric groups is best explained as offering a utopian alternative to the increasingly desperate situation many poor and unemployed Tahitians find themselves in. This is even more the case as many of the latter become progressively disillusioned with tradi-

tional political parties, none of which have offered much to remedy the ever-aggravating social ills.

While Flosse and other pro-French politicians had constantly denounced the Temaru government for its perceived incompetence in dealing with such issues and, instead, for its “obsession” with decolonization, the new all-powerful Flosse government has not done much in its first year in office to alleviate the situation either. At the beginning, the new government undertook a few good concrete steps such as opening the country’s first shelter for homeless people in Tipaerui valley (TI, 4 June 2013) and announcing reform measures, such as the cutting of one thousand administrative positions (TI, 3 July 2013). However, it soon became obvious that Flosse’s government was not interested in real structural reforms but rather in continuing “business as usual,” that is, a policy of patronage and clientelism. Following this pattern, the new Flosse government created new posts with questionable purpose, for instance, reinstalling the so-called High Council of French Polynesia (an institution supposedly providing legal advice to the country government that had previously been abolished without any visible negative consequences) and nominating new members thereof (TI, 11 July, 29 Aug 2013), before the controversial institution ended up being declared illegal by the French Council of State (highest administrative court) (TPM, March 2014). Controversies also continued over the appointment of former French Minister for Overseas Territories Brigitte Girardin as the country’s “special representative in Paris” (TPM, Aug 2013), a quite vaguely defined

job that appears especially superfluous since there already is a well-staffed office representing the territory in Paris. In the same context of purely patronage politics should be seen the appointment of Teiva Manutahi, leader of a small political party that had joined Tahoeraa for the second round of the 2013 elections, to the similarly vague position of “mediator of French Polynesia” (TI, 5 July 2013).

In November 2013, the Flosse government went through its first major crisis when Bruno Marty, the minister for transport infrastructure, resigned after crashing his car while driving drunk. The irony of the situation was not lost on the opposition and the media, but, instead of punishing Marty’s scandalous behavior by severing all ties with him, Flosse announced he would appoint him director of a semi-public company (PIR, 18 Nov 2013; TPM, Dec 2013).

Marty’s resignation triggered a reshuffling of Flosse’s cabinet. Not only was his secretary, Albert Solia, appointed to succeed him, but Flosse also created a ninth cabinet portfolio for Manolita Ly, who became minister for labor, social, and family issues, while the other portfolios were redistributed among the remaining seven ministers (TI, 17 Nov 2013).

During the final months of 2013 another controversy struck Tahitian society, namely, the attempt by Hishan El-Barkani, an ethnic Arab Islamic cleric from France, to establish a mosque in downtown Papeete. Other than a few ethnic Arab French settlers, there are virtually no Muslims in Tahiti. Al-Barkani, however, started a campaign to convert Tahitians to Islam, and indeed a few local individu-

als joined his congregation (*NT*, 15 Oct 2013). Many local inhabitants were outraged by this, and the specter of Islamic fundamentalism was raised. On 9 November, about four hundred people marched through Papeete, demanding the closure of the Islamic community center El-Barkani had created in a Papeete office building and supporting a liberal and secular society (*TI*, 9 Nov 2003). While such concerns seem understandable, it should also be recalled that Tahiti has for decades hosted a synagogue, a Chinese Taoist temple, a few revived temples of traditional Polynesian religion, as well as churches of various Christian denominations (including some that are fundamentalist)—all without precipitating comparable reactions.

Party politics hit the headlines again when the municipal elections, held on 23 and 30 March 2014 in a complex two-round system, were approaching. The results mainly confirmed the existing political landscape, but the “orange wave” of 2012 and 2013, referring to the Tahoeraa Party colors, did not continue. Most of the mayors affiliated with Tahoeraa kept their offices, and Tahoeraa actually gained two more municipalities, but at the price of losing two others. Papeete Mayor Michel Buillard (Tahoeraa) was reelected, and in Pirae, Flosse’s son-in-law and French National Assembly member Edouard Fritch, who had already been mayor from 2000 to 2008, won an overall majority against ATP-affiliated incumbent Béatrice Vernaudon. In Mataiea, UPLD incumbent Tina Cross was defeated by Tahoeraa candidate Tearii Alpha in the first round, but in the neighboring

municipal district of Papeari, Tahoeraa incumbent and French National Assembly member Jonas Tahuaitu surprisingly lost the mayoralty. Tahoeraa also lost the mayoralty of President Flosse’s home island of Mangareva when the incumbent mayor was not reelected.

Despite all predictions by pro-French leaders, UPLD was able to hold on to its stronghold of Faaa, where the list of ex-president Oscar Temaru (mayor of Faaa since 1983) won a two-thirds majority in the first round. Temaru’s lieutenant and former Assembly Speaker Jacqui Drollet also won reelection as deputy mayor of his home district of Hitiaa on Tahiti’s east coast. The anticipated victory of UPLD in the entire East Coast municipality, of which Hitiaa is a constituent district, was prevented by the resignation of several Tahoeraa municipal councilors, which precipitated fresh by-elections. A similar tactic was used in the Western Tairapu municipality. These cases aside, UPLD was not able to further extend its municipal power base, since it lost the Moorea island municipality when its UPLD incumbent mayor, Raymond Van Bastolaer, missed reelection.

ATP, the third political force, held on to its strongholds. Incumbent ATP mayors Ronald Tumahai of Punaauia and Philip Schyle of Arue were confirmed in office, as well as former President Gaston Tong Sang, who retained the mayoralty of Bora Bora. The city of Uturoa on Raiatea, as well as Ua Pou island in the Marquesas, remained in the hands of ATP, and Mangareva’s new mayor is an ATP affiliate as well (*TI*, 26 March, 1 April 2014; *TPM*, April 2014).

The elections were overshadowed by multiple strikes of municipal employees throughout the country. According to *Tahiti-Pacifique Magazine* editor Alex du Prel, the strikes gave evidence, first, of the corruption of trade union leaders who have regularly been using strikes as a sort of protection racket to get concessions from politicians, and, second, of the impracticality of new municipal service standards that have been imposed by France as binding by the beginning of 2014 but that are beyond the capacities of most municipalities (*TPM*, April 2014; *PIR*, 26 March 2014).

The municipal by-elections in the Tahiti East Coast municipality on 15 and 28 June brought no change, as UPLD-affiliated Dauphin Domingo won the mayoralty, rendering the Tahoeraa challenge to the original results a waste of taxpayer money. Since French law no longer allows for the concurrent holding of national assembly membership and local political office, Edouard Fritch had to resign from his national assembly seat on his inauguration as mayor of Pirae, which necessitated a by-election for the first constituency (including the municipalities of Papeete, Pirae, and Arue on Tahiti as well as the Tuamotu and Marquesas Islands), also held on 15 and 28 June. Unsurprisingly, Tahoeraa candidate Maina Sage won in the second round, but the score of opposing UPLD candidate Tauhiti Nena (41.98%) was significantly higher than that of Fritch's 2012 UPLD opponent Pierre Frébault (36.78%) (*TI*, 30 June 2014; *TPM*, Aug 2014).

Overall it became clear that despite doomsday scenarios predicted after

the election loss in May 2013, UPLD was still a force to be reckoned with. On the first anniversary of the country's UN reinscription, a monument was unveiled in Faaa at the end of a commemoration march that was attended by about four thousand supporters and sympathizers (*TPM*, June–July 2014).

Support for UPLD was also shown during the European Parliament elections on 25 May, when the majority of votes cast in the country were won by the Tavini-supported Socialist list. However, participation was extremely low, with only 14.97 percent voting in an election that most people see as irrelevant for the territory. Tahoeraa had decided to boycott the vote, mainly as a strategy to then proclaim the overwhelming number of abstentions as actual votes in favor of Tahoeraa—a contentious logic furnishing a fit occasion for UPLD to denounce Flosse as a hypocrite and question his self-proclaimed loyalty to the institutions of the French Republic. In any case, besides the hot air thus created, the election proved not practically relevant for the country, since the three seats assigned to French overseas territories in the EU parliament were won by candidates from other overseas possessions (*TI*, 25 May, 26 May 2014).

In terms of economic development, the Flosse government did take a few promising steps to encourage foreign investment in the country. In December, Flosse visited China to initiate the negotiation of business deals with various Chinese companies (*TPM*, Jan 2014). One of those projects, which has been in the making for several years, is the creation of a tuna farm in

the lagoon of one of the atolls of the Tuamotu Archipelago. On 25 February, the country government signed a contract with the Chinese company Tian Rui International Investment, which promised to invest 150 billion CFP francs (approximately US\$1.66 billion) over fifteen years in order to create the fish farm. The lagoon of Makemo atoll was chosen as the site of the aquaculture project (*TPM*, March 2014). It is interesting to note that the negotiations for the project had started under the Temaru government and that as long as Flosse was in the opposition, he had denounced this and other Chinese investment projects as evidence that Temaru was “selling out our country to the Chinese.”

Whether the project will ever be realized or, like so many before, will remain an empty promise doomed to economic failure is still unclear. Only a few months after the contract was signed, the project was once more revised, with the location moved to Hao atoll instead of Makemo. As the site of a former French naval and air force base that supported nuclear testing on the atolls farther southwest, Hao has an existing infrastructure that would facilitate the building of the farm (*TI*, 9 May 2014). The new site choice precipitated new controversies, however, since the project required the expropriation of land, which many of Hao’s inhabitants were not happy to give up (*TI*, 1 June 2014), having had many of their lands already expropriated for the military base.

Conflicts like these remind us of the complex issue of land tenure in the country, which has been a source of contention for more than a century, starting with the colonial superimposi-

tion of French civil law in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries over previously existing customary land systems. Land tenure issues also surfaced near the golf course in Atimano, where Flosse ordered the eviction of families living on what the government considers public land in order to make place for another joint venture with Chinese capital (*TI*, 7 Jan 2014).

Another project that has long been in the planning stages by the Papeete Port Authority, supported by both previous and current country governments, is to upgrade the commercial port of Papeete to serve as a regional trade hub for the Southeastern Pacific, similar to the way Suva does for the Southwestern Pacific. However, *TPM* editor du Prel cautioned against being too optimistic about this scheme, since currently port operations are six times more expensive in Papeete than in Suva and since the potential foreign destinations to be supplied by Papeete (Cook Islands, Pitcairn, Christmas Island) are minimal in size, with merely one-tenth of the domestic population of French Polynesia and a much lower purchasing power, thus making a port with high costs of operation even less attractive for them (*TPM*, March 2014).

On 14 April, the government released a stimulus plan, elaborated by Vice President and Finance Minister Nuihau Laurey. It consisted mainly of a few suggestions to reduce bureaucracy, while at the same time creating new bureaucratic entities and new subsidies to stimulate economic growth but nothing that touches the basis of the economic system. Du Prel commented that local economy “essentially consists of a bubble fed

by the transfers and subsidies from France,” which feed an artificial system of economy based on consumption, a “colonial trading post economy that is limited to the urban population and the politico-administrative caste of Tahiti” (*TPM*, May 2014).

How important a major overhaul of the entire economic system and the creation of genuine economic growth would be is dramatically shown by the enormous French subsidies that constitute the lifeblood of the country. According to official statistics, in 2012 France spent 173.813 billion CFP francs (US\$1.937 billion) in French Polynesia, of which only 42 percent was spent exercising French government responsibilities (defense, internal security, justice, audiovisual communication, tertiary education, etc), while 51 percent went toward the territorial government and 7 percent toward the municipalities (*TPM*, May 2014). While New Caledonia is moving away from such extreme levels of dependency, and socioeconomic reforms are slowly being implemented there, the structural problems of French Polynesia remain unsolved. As Regnault commented, “In [French] Polynesia it seems that, to the contrary, the elites entrench themselves behind their privileges and refuse any fundamental reform” (2013, 213).

As if the aggravating economic situation was not bad enough, the country was also plagued by tropical diseases. An epidemic of dengue hit Tahiti throughout 2013, and, in addition, for the first time there occurred an epidemic of the Zika virus, a disease similar to dengue but less virulent (TI, 31 Oct 2013), and later the Chikungunya virus from Africa was also

imported (TI, 3 June 2014). All three diseases are mosquito-borne and thus more heavily affect the poorer sections of the population, who live in crowded shanty settlements on the bottom of valleys, with no window screens and surrounded by puddles and rubbish items that provide ideal breeding sites for mosquitoes.

As the poor neighborhoods are infested with mosquitoes, the ruling classes are infested with corruption. Reynald Temarii, the former Tahitian football star involved in a major corruption scandal of the Fédération Internationale du Football Association (FIFA) in 2010, once more featured in negative headlines, as he turned out to be one of the top FIFA officials who were bribed to award the 2022 World Cup to Qatar (*TPM*, June–July 2014). The more sinister affair of the alleged murder of anti-Flosse journalist Jean-Pascal Couraud (known by his byline, JPK) by henchmen of the presidential militia Groupement d’Intervention de la Polynesie (GIP) in 1997 received a new twist, as new testimony alleged that another former GIP member who committed suicide in 2003 had been part of the team, along with Tino Mara and Tutu Manate, who have been accused of having abducted and killed JPK in 1997 on orders of GIP commander Léonard Puputauki. At the end of the review period, the case was still under investigation, even though murder charges against Mara and Manate have been dropped (*TPM*, June–July, August 2014).

Flosse’s government created yet another controversy when it decided to remove a monument commemorating the victims of nuclear testing in the form of a marae (traditional place

of worship and burial), which had been built by the test victims association Moruroa e Tatou (MeT), from its prominent position in a seafront park. Whereas the Tamaru government had renamed the park “2 July 1966” to commemorate the first nuclear test, Flosse decided to re-name it after former French President Jacques Chirac instead (TI, 12 June 2014). In a press release, MeT declared its shock and outrage. After the firing of nuclear-testing expert Bruno Barillot from his position in the government, the dissolution of the government’s Orientation Council for the Follow-up on the Consequences of Nuclear Testing (COSCEN), and the elimination of MeT representation in the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (CESC, a lawmaking advisory body consisting of civil society representatives), the removal of the monument was denounced as Flosse’s final insult to the victims of nuclear testing (TI, 16 June 2014).

To put a good face on the matter, shortly after the monument removal, the government celebrated the country’s pan-Polynesian connections, albeit in a cultural-only, politically “safe” way, by naming a neighboring seafront park after the visiting Hawaiian voyaging canoe *Hōkūle’a*. In the center of the park another marae was built, which President Flosse inaugurated by conferring the Order of Tahiti Nui on the *Hōkūle’a*’s navigator Nainoa Thompson (TI, Aug 2014).

A major change in the local media landscape occurred in May, when the daily newspaper *Les Nouvelles de Tahiti* stopped publishing after more than five decades in existence, due

to bad financial management and competition from electronic media. Tahiti thus became a “one-newspaper island,” with *La Dépêche* remaining as the only daily. This is regretful, since *Les Nouvelles* usually provided deeper and more critical analyses of local politics (NT, 23 May 2014, TPM, June–July 2014).

The review period also saw the passing of three important local personalities. On 21 August 2013, Marc Maamaatuaiahutapu, more commonly known as Maco Tevane, passed away at age 76. A surveyor and government interpreter by profession, Tevane was one of the most prolific orators and authors in the Tahitian language and one of the cofounders in 1972 of the Tahitian Academy, of which he served as the president for many years (TPM, Sept 2013).

Another prolific writer in Tahitian and member of the Academy, Turo a Raapoto, died on 7 May 2014 at age 66. A trained linguist and theologian, Raapoto contributed to the academic study of the Tahitian language, for which he created one of the two currently used orthographic systems. Within the country’s largest religious denomination, which was then called the Evangelical Church of French Polynesia and under his influence became the Protestant Maohi Church in 2004, he was probably the most influential Tahitian intellectual in the second half of the twentieth century. Initially joined by his colleague Henri Hiro, Raapoto developed a Polynesian liberation theology, in which traditional Polynesian culture is syncretized with biblical ideas as a way of defending Maohi (native Polynesian) identity against French materialism and the

destruction of sacred land through nuclear testing. As a key figure in the cultural renaissance of the 1970s and 1980s, Raapoto promoted the term *Maohi* (hitherto rather obscure) as a self-designation for the indigenous population of the country. With more than a dozen theological and linguistic books published exclusively in Tahitian, Raapoto made a lasting contribution to the still meager corpus of high-quality Tahitian-language texts.

The country lost one of its political veterans providing links between current politics and those of the mid-twentieth century when, on 15 May, Jean-Baptiste Heitarauri Céran-Jérusalem passed away at the remarkable age of 93 (DT, 16 May 2014). A printer and trade-union activist, Céran-Jérusalem had assisted Pouvanaa a Oopa in the 1940s to found the party Rassemblement Démocratique des Populations Tahitiennes (RDPT), the first political movement to institutionalize Tahitian anticolonial nationalism and a predecessor to later autonomist and pro-independence parties. A colorful personality, Céran-Jérusalem had been Pouvanaa's deputy throughout most of the 1940s and 1950s but had then fallen out with the latter and actually campaigned against him in the 1958 referendum on the new French constitution, after which Pouvanaa was arrested and imprisoned. Since the 1960s, Céran-Jérusalem had not been in elected office but, after reconciling with Pouvanaa, continued to support various political movements that he saw as carrying on Pouvanaa's legacy, developing a pattern of frequently switching allegiances, which became a quasi-ubiquitous phenomenon in

local political culture. Even toward the end of his life he continued this erratic course, only recently switching from Temaru's Tavini Huiraatira to Gaston Tong Sang's pro-French To Tatou Aia Party (now a part of ATP), yet professing to still be pro-independence and tirelessly advocating for a judicial rehabilitation of Pouvanaa.

Céran-Jérusalem was lucky to witness before his passing one of the few positive actions by the French government during the review period, namely, steps toward retrying the 1959 case against Pouvanaa. After a colonial show trial on trumped-up charges, Pouvanaa had been sentenced to a decade of forced exile because France considered him a nuisance to its plans to build the nuclear-weapons testing facility that was being planned at the time. As a kind of would-be founding father of a nation on the verge of independence in the late 1950s, Pouvanaa is today regarded as a quasi-national hero by a wide political spectrum, epitomizing the tragic history of a country led astray from the regular path of decolonization by French nuclear neocolonialism.

In late February, French Minister of Justice Christiane Taubira announced that she would initiate a retrial (TI, 26 Feb 2013). Based on evidence gathered through the tireless research by historian Regnault in various hitherto classified French archives, the Assembly of French Polynesia had unanimously voted in early 2013 to send an official request to the Ministry of Justice for the retrial.

The affirmative reaction to the request, which was commended with great satisfaction by both Tahoeraa and UPLD, shows that the Hollande

administration can make a positive contribution to decolonization. It is regrettable that this attitude has not spread to other fields of French policy. To repeat Regnault's statement, indeed in French Polynesia "decolonization still has a long history ahead."

LORENZ GONSCHOR

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MĀORI ISSUES

Before considering how decolonization manifests itself for Māori, we must pause to remember those we have lost over the past year. Among our leaders we bade farewell to were three who left important legacies. In September 2013, we lost Denis Hansen of the iwi (tribal nations) of Ngāti Kahu and Ngāpuhi. He had worked tirelessly for the Māori community and was a loveable rogue who lit up any gathering he walked into. Thousands of people had attended his eightieth birthday celebration in June.

In February 2014, we lost Nin Tomas of the Ngāti Kahu and Te Rarawa nations. As an associate professor of law, Nin had trained a generation of Māori lawyers, some of whom are now judges. They turned up in large numbers for her tangihanga (funerary ceremony) at the University of Auckland's Waipapa marae. She had fought for recognition of the first law of New Zealand, tikanga Māori (Māori law), and its application to environmental issues.

In May 2014, Morvin Simon of Te Ātihaunui a Pāpārangi iwi passed away. He was a leading music composer and had dedicated his life to tutoring kapa haka (dance), composing songs, and preserving the language and customs of his people of the Whanganui.

For Māori, decolonization is about

removing the oppression and marginalization visited on us by British colonizers and repairing the resultant damage. The devastating effects and systemic injustices that Māori have suffered are the same as those that European colonization visited on almost all indigenous peoples. The colonization strategies employed by the British in Aotearoa/New Zealand have been extensively documented: genocide; land and other resource theft; usurpation of our authority, power, and sovereignty; marginalization; banning and denial of our language, institutions, and intellectual prowess; and social and cultural dislocation through the systematic ripping apart of our communities, urbanization, incarceration, and relocation offshore to Australia (Jackson 2004, 104; Smith 2012, 147; Mutu 2011; Webb 2012). The diseases of poverty that reduce our quality of life and shorten our life expectancy, the internalized violence born of oppression, and the despair among young Māori shaped by an unemployment rate almost four times higher than the general population rate are all products of the dispossession wrought by colonization (Jackson 2004, 104). And this is all in violation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the 1840 treaty between Māori and the British Crown that confirmed Māori sovereignty and control of the country and guaranteed to the Crown control of her hitherto “lawless” subjects.

Decolonization in Aotearoa/New Zealand has therefore focused on honoring, upholding, and implementing the treaty. It is about surviving as Māori and recovering from the devastation of colonization: recover-

ing our lands, resources, and territories, our language, our social and spiritual practices, our history and traditions, our identity and rights, our wealth and prosperity, our self-determination and sovereignty (Smith 2012, 121; Mutu 2011). It is about deconstructing the myths of colonization, breaking free of the Pākehā (European) state, reconstructing our Māori reality through our own laws and culture, and reclaiming effective sovereignty. This includes remedying the numerous breaches of Te Tiriti and restoring the balance between Māori as the indigenous owners and paramount authority of the country and British immigrants, who are here at our invitation and under our authority (Jackson 2004, 101). In the face of the often-ruthless exercise of unilateral Crown power, Māori have engaged in peaceful protest. We also organize and run decolonization programs to empower our communities to take back control of their lives and their territories. And we continue to fight the government through its own tribunal and courts, ever hopeful that it will eventually take heed of Māori and international pressure to do what is right and uphold widely recognized international indigenous human rights instruments such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNGA 2014), which it had endorsed in 2010.

Decolonization in New Zealand has been painfully slow. Pākehā have fought to retain unilateral power and privilege, to continue to assert White supremacy, and to recreate and readjust the myths that underpin these assertions. This is the only way they can keep justifying their illegitimate

status. For Māori, decolonization has to start with what is often referred to as “decolonization of the mind.” The journey has been one fraught with political conflict and social strife. Since 1840, the colonizers have fought to colonize the Māori mind and to replace the Pacific history, traditions, knowledge, language, laws, and social and political power structures of our ancestors with those of their culture, whose origins lie on the other side of the world. Empowering our culture to survive by privileging the world of our ancestors over that of our English visitors can be bewildering and painful for some. But as the devastation of colonization gnaws at the core of our existence, and the will to survive as Māori under our own mana (power and authority derived from the gods) pervades Māori communities, submitting to the oppression of the colonizer is an option that Māori are increasingly rejecting. Decolonization wānanga (workshops and seminars) have been operating in Māori communities for more than twenty years. They work on encouraging oral debate, confirming Māori culture and identity through our own history, traditions, language, and values; on identifying and deconstructing the myths of colonization; and on challenging us to break free of the suffocating oppression of the colonizers and to regain control of our lives. Māori immersion schools were established in the 1980s to ensure that our children had the opportunity to learn free of White oppression. Māori radio and, after lengthy battles, Māori television have made important contributions. To a certain extent, so have the Māori political parties—these days the Māori

Party and the Mana Party—although they have been restricted by the parliamentary system they operate within, which is defined and controlled by and for Pākehā.

Training Māori lawyers has contributed to some consideration of Māori culture in the courts but has yet to result in a reduction in the rates of Māori incarcerations (Webb 2012). Training Māori doctors and health professionals has started to improve the shocking Māori health statistics. On this front, there was a certain irony about a young Māori doctor, Dr Lance O’Sullivan, being named New Zealander of the Year for 2014 after being named Māori of the Year for 2012. He has publicly highlighted the racism in the health sector (incurring the wrath of his employers and of Pākehā practitioners) and has set in place his own programs to combat that racism and to address the health of Māori children and families in the Far North (Mutu 2014, 212).

At the international level, Māori have been engaging with other indigenous communities in working toward the implementation of widely recognized international human rights instruments such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Alliances have been formed not only through United Nations groups such as the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Special Rapporteurs on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but also through numerous exchange visits, indigenous conferences and gatherings, and international collaborative projects.

Despite the progress these initiatives have made, it has been clear for many decades now that unless major constitutional transformation takes place, Māori will remain disadvantaged and oppressed in our own land.

In 2009, the National Iwi Chairs' Forum, an informal group of chairpersons of iwi, established a working party to draw up a model for an inclusive constitution for Aotearoa/New Zealand based on *tikanga* (Māori law), *He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirenī* (the 1835 declaration of Māori sovereignty and independence), and *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, while taking into account other indigenous human rights instruments such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In 2012 and 2013, the working party, named *Matike Mai Aotearoa* (Arise Aotearoa), conducted more than 250 consultation hui (gatherings) with Māori groups throughout the country, including many Māori youth groups, to discuss the values they wish such a constitution to be based on. Preliminary findings indicate the very strongly held belief expressed at the hui that the Westminster constitutional system as introduced by the British Crown after 1840 does not—indeed cannot—adequately give effect to the terms of *He Whakaputanga* or *Te Tiriti*. In that context, the hui also indicated that the current Westminster constitutional system is necessarily at odds with *tikanga* and the values that might more adequately provide a just and effective means of governance of the country. A different type of constitutionalism is required. Implementing such a major constitutional shift may be difficult but there is a

clear belief that it is not only necessary, it is fundamental to the ongoing and long-term justice of the treaty relationship (Jackson and Mutu 2014, 3–4). Despite Pākehā governments being fearful of such change and the inevitability of having to share power, international standards are now well established, and it is becoming increasingly difficult for New Zealand to keep evading them.

In the education sector, the government has been exposed for violating Māori treaty and human rights. Despite acknowledging the Māori immersion schools and agreeing to resource them, government bureaucrats have fought to maintain White hegemony in the schools, denying them resources and interfering in their management in order to force compliance with Pākehā cultural norms. In 2012, the body representing Māori immersion preschools, the National *Kōhanga Reo* Trust, successfully pursued a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal aimed at halting this behavior (Waitangi Tribunal 2012). However, in the past year the trust has come under constant attack as government bureaucrats and the minister of education, who is Māori, refused to address the tribunal's recommendations and instead tried to force the trust to come under the authority and control of the Ministry of Education. The usual Pākehā tactics of divide and rule were adopted to set Māori communities against the trust using spurious claims of misappropriation and mismanagement. Lengthy official investigations proved there had been no criminal wrongdoing. The trust has refused to bow to the demands but rather has adopted a *tikanga* approach to restore

calm and address the damage caused by government interference.

One of the most seriously dysfunctional and deeply harmful aspects of the Pākehā education system for Māori has been exposed through the conviction and sentencing of James Parker in August 2013 to preventive detention, with a minimum of seven years imprisonment, after he was found guilty on seventy-four charges representing more than three hundred sexual offenses against twenty boys. Parker, whose parents are English, was a teacher who worked in primary schools in the Far North, rising to the position of deputy principal. As part of his work, he gained access to and immersed himself in local Māori communities. When the police finally charged him, he had been sexually violating young Māori boys attending those schools for more than thirteen years. Those who tried to have authorities stop him, including the headmistress of one school he taught at, were not believed. One boy who spoke out was forced to apologize to Parker and remain in his class. The Māori communities in the Far North that he had violated for so long have often buried knowledge of this type of offending because of lack of support from authorities (TVNZ 2013). Once Parker's offending was publicly recognized, several other pedophiles operating in the Far North were identified and charged. Decolonization includes removing our children from these harmful situations and being particularly vigilant in guarding against such behavior intruding into our Māori immersion schools.

Recovering our territories is another crucial part of the decolo-

nization process, but it continues to be fraught with difficulties. Despite the Waitangi Tribunal upholding our claims to our territories, governments have refused to discuss, let alone reach agreement, with Māori about how those territories are to be recovered or how the many other breaches of the treaty are to be remedied. Instead, in 1994, they formulated and then imposed a much-resented treaty claims settlement policy (Mutu 2011, 17–24). The primary aim of the policy is to retain the power, property, and privileges that Pākehā illegitimately acquired through their colonization process in the colonizers' hands, to bring Māori under their control and to silence Māori protest and dissent. As a result, an average of less than 1 percent of lands is being recovered, no compensation is being paid, and all claims for any and all historical breaches of the treaty are being extinguished fully and finally. Most aspects of the claims are not addressed before they are extinguished. The settlements aim to assimilate Māori into the European majority, denying Māori self-determination, sovereignty, and rights, and relegating Māori to a permanent underclass. In June 2013, one senior Pākehā media commentator claimed that Māori are being empowered to abandon *te ao Māori* (the Māori world) that has so severely disadvantaged them (James 2013, 15). These and many similar comments are designed to perpetuate the myths and fantasies conjured to preserve White hegemony and privilege.

Some Pākehā have attacked the Māori right to take claims to the Waitangi Tribunal or the courts for many years now. They often appear at

the select committee hearings objecting to Māori receiving anything. Some have organized extensive media campaigns aimed at preserving Pākehā control of the country, unashamedly making numerous false statements and accusations against Māori communities. In November 2013, one of the leaders of these attacks, Allan Titford, was finally unmasked when he was convicted and jailed for twenty-four years after being found guilty of thirty-nine charges including arson, threatening to kill, assault with a weapon, perjury, assault on a woman and children, and sexual violation.

Over more than twenty years, Titford received Pākehā media support for his attacks on the Treaty of Waitangi and on Te Rōroa, the rightful owners of land he had purchased in Northland. He was responsible for the government passing legislation that prevents the Waitangi Tribunal making recommendations over so-called “private land,” that is, land wrongly acquired from its Māori owners and sold to individuals. Titford had accused Te Rōroa of lying about sacred sites located on property he had purchased after he had bulldozed them, and of rustling his stock, damaging his bulldozer, and burning down his house. Pākehā media vilified Te Rōroa, labeling them terrorists and gangsters. Yet the High Court found that far from being a victim, Titford was a manipulative liar who burned down his own house in an attempt to earn sympathy and blacken the name of Te Rōroa. His wife, who had turned him in to the police, apologized to Te Rōroa (Day and Dudding 2013).

The Māori battle against the treaty claims settlement policy and process

over the past twenty years has been fought to uphold Māori treaty and human rights. It has the backing of international experts including the UN Human Rights Council. In its second Universal Periodic Review of New Zealand, which took place in January 2014, there were numerous recommendations relating to the government’s unacceptable treatment of Māori. Three of these addressed the need to improve the treaty claims settlement process, while another pointed out the need to start implementing and promoting the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Despite the injustices perpetrated by the settlement policy and process, many claimants have taken a pragmatic approach and accepted government-determined settlements in the mistaken belief that the only other option they have is to receive no redress at all for their proven claims and that money is somehow equivalent to their mana (James 2013, 16). In the 2013–2014 reporting period, legislation was passed extinguishing all the claims of the iwi of Waitaha, Ngāti Rangiteaorere, Tapuika and Ngāti Rangiwewehi of the Te Arawa confederation in the Bay of Plenty; Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Tama ki te Tau Ihu, Te Ātiawa o Te Waka a Māui, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne o Wairau and Ngāti Toa Rangatira of Te Tau Ihu o Te Waka a Māui (the top of the South Island) and the south of Te Ika a Māui (the North Island); Raukawa of the Tainui confederation in the Waikato region; and the Maungaharuru-Tangitū hapū of the Hawke’s Bay region. A total of forty-seven settle-

ments have now been legislated (OTS 2014; *MLR* 2014).

Large numbers of hapū (groupings of extended families) and iwi are legally disenfranchised and disempowered by the settlements and register their protest in the courts, in the parliamentary process, or, most visibly, on the streets. Protest against settlements is now a permanent feature of the process. So is the government's determination to ridicule or ignore those who point out the glaring injustices it perpetrates (Finlayson 2014). Courts have been unsympathetic and at times hostile to Māori. The under-resourced and overworked Waitangi Tribunal has been dismissing objections (Jones 2013, 28). Few claimants can afford to appeal their decisions through the courts, and in the past those who have done so have most often failed. However, some recent judicial reviews of Waitangi Tribunal decisions (Supreme Court of New Zealand 2011; High Court of New Zealand 2014b) and government decisions relating to settlements (High Court of New Zealand 2014a) have been at least partially successful.

The last resort of Māori trying to curb the greed and excesses of governments and stop gross injustices has often been protest action. When the hapū of the country's largest iwi, Ngāpuhi, took to the streets repeatedly as the government backed the negotiators it preferred against the wishes of these hapū, the government was eventually forced to acknowledge and talk to them. Throughout the entire reporting period, there was extensive coverage by Māori media of the deep divisions the process had fomented within the iwi. Desperate

attempts by hapū to keep control of their claims saw large numbers of them resorting to applications to the Waitangi Tribunal for urgent hearings into the government's settlement process, despite the decreasing confidence in the tribunal's ability to provide relief for Māori in these matters (Jones 2013, 28; Mutu 2014, 210). Government attempts to bulldoze through a settlement while the tribunal was still hearing the claims simply drove claimants onto the streets.

For some who have settled claims, Crown apologies made as part of their settlements started to sound hollow this year as the minister of treaty negotiations declined requests that government representatives attend ceremonies to commemorate the atrocities the government had acknowledged and apologized for. Between November 2013 and May 2014, Tainui and Tauranga Moana iwi commemorated the 150th anniversaries of battles they fought when they refused to give their lands to British settlers in the 1860s and were invaded by British troops. Ceremonies were conducted at Mangatāwhiri, Rangiriri, Waiari Pā, Rangiaowhia, Ōrākau, Pukehinahina (Gate Pā), and Te Ranga. Calls were made for the true history of British colonization to be taught in schools and for the battlegrounds to be relinquished to the hapū they belong to so that they can be properly cared for. A plea for British wars fought on New Zealand soil to be afforded the same recognition as those fought overseas was rejected by New Zealand's prime minister.

Battles to protect Māori resources continued around the country throughout the year. Many hapū

mounted protests against mining licenses issued for oil drilling in the seas off both the east and the west coasts, sand mining in south Taranaki, coal mining in North Waikato, and gold mining at Puhipuhi in Northland, where previous mercury mining had poisoned waters and led to long-term illness among *mana whenua* (indigenous owners) (Mutu 2014, 211). The battle continued to force insurance companies to remove the ship *Rena*, which had been wrecked on Ōtaiti (Astrolabe Reef) off Mōtiti island in the Bay of Plenty in 2011 (Mutu 2013, 168), as did the battle to stop the Ruataniwha dam project on the Tukituki river in Heretaunga (Hawke's Bay).

North of Wellington, Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai and Ngāti Awa ki Kāpiti finally won their battle to stop the New Zealand Transport Agency from taking Māori land and destroying wāhi tapu (sacred places) to build the Kāpiti expressway. And in the Far North, Ngāti Kahu's battle to stop an American billionaire from building luxury houses on their burial cave ended when he sold the property and the new Chinese owners agreed not to build there.

MARGARET MUTU

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RAPA NUI

Rapa Nui decolonization politics during the review period have been consistent on the island and in Chilean state and international arenas. Highlights include: the reelection of Leviante Araki as president of Parlamento Rapa Nui in August; community marches for decolonization in September; political engagement against state plans to privatize and develop the Rapa Nui island territory of Fundo Vaitea; and advocacy by Santi Hitorangi for reenlistment on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGTs) during the 13th annual UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May 2014.

Initially, there were four candidates running for president of Parlamento Rapa Nui: Mario Tuki, Ioni Tuki, Petero Cardinali, and Leviante Araki (the incumbent). However, as Ioni Tuki dropped out to focus on family responsibilities and Mario Tuki canceled his candidacy to concentrate on his work as a member of Easter Island Development Commission (CODEIPA), Petero Cardinali and Leviante Araki ultimately became the only two candidates. Public dialogues between the two candidates on Radio Manukena Rapa Nui, moderated by Joel Huckle (a leading member of Parlamento Rapa Nui), did not reveal significant differences between Araki and Cardinali on major social and political issues. Candidate answers to questions that Huckle posed about immigration—a problem the past three political reviews have highlighted as a focal concern of the community—stressed the value of continuing to “haito te me‘e” (measure the thing), in

other words, continuing to study the actual extent of the problem. But both candidates also agreed that immigration had to be stopped. Cardinali stated that, ultimately, “He oho tātou, he ture ki te gobierno Tire, he hakapuru te me’e ‘i runga o te henua nei” (We go fight the Chilean government, and close this thing on this island). Araki similarly stated, “Ka puru te me’e; te me’e hanga!” (Close the thing [immigration]; [this is] the thing desired). In response to questions about the increasing problems of waste and pollution on the island from unsustainable tourism, both supported added regulation and continued study of the problem, stressing that current policies administered by Mayor Petero Edmunds were failing the island.

While the candidates clearly agreed on the basics of the substantive issues, there were subtle—yet critical—differences in their political philosophies. In response to questions about what generally the candidates should work toward, Cardinali stated in broad philosophical terms: “Ta’aku pahono mo te me’e nei, he ma’u te henua nei a runga, mai mu’a ‘ā ki te hora nei. Te anga nei, he hakatitika te hora nei; ka oho mai ‘ā te ‘ara. Tō matou hā’ū’ū te anga nei, ma’u a runga” (My answer to this, is to lead the island, from its past to its present. The job now is to make things straight; to bring forth our awakening. This work is cooperative work to lead). Araki, in contrast, articulated his goals in a more specific formal political register: “Ta’aku anga mo anga, he ma’u te Rapa Nui. He inscribe mo te me’e decolonización. Ka tahi” (My job is to work to lead the Rapa Nui. The number one thing is to inscribe decolonization). Araki,

in other words, enunciates his primary goal as not simply leading Rapa Nui or helping its cultural awakening but also leading processes for official political decolonization, starting with inscription on the UN NSGT list.

As leaders met to organize the logistics for the elections, they discussed broader aspects of some of the practices Parlamento Rapa Nui identified as part of “me’e decolonización” (decolonization things). Meetings emphasizing me’e decolonización involved such matters as the following: contesting the Chilean government’s desire to expand its control of Rapa Nui by administering its marine resources and reserves in addition to lands, all of which members see as violating Rapa Nui rights to self-determination; writing letters to Bolivian President Evo Morales to inform him of the ongoing colonial condition of Rapa Nui and to request information about the Bolivian International Court of Justice; and continuing correspondence with Oscar Temaru and other Mā’ohi leaders regarding how French Polynesia was inscribed on the UN NSGT list—a topic publicized in local island media (*MV*, July 2013). In their meetings, Parlamento Rapa Nui members also discussed me’e decolonización in terms of a general concern with the continued colonization of their island and other Pacific Island worlds. Parlamento Rapa Nui members believe Rapa Nui and other Pacific Island nations are victims of international discrimination and injustice; they believe they should have the opportunity to decolonize and exercise self-determination like the postcolonial nations of Africa and Asia.

In July and August 2013, commu-

nity politics concentrated on organizing elections for the president of Parlamento Rapa Nui and discussing the official listing of Rapa Nui among the UN NSGTs. Logistical preparations for the 4 August 2013 election were organized in multiple weekly meetings by one dozen to two dozen leaders of Parlamento Rapa Nui during each week of July. At meetings, leaders discussed and developed materials and methods for registering voters and collecting and counting votes. Supervisory and organizational responsibilities were allocated among members: making vote cards, organizing voting rooms, checking identification, monitoring voting, and so on. Public announcements of the election were coordinated on the radio and local television, and fliers were distributed to key social groups, municipal institutions, and in central locations throughout the town of Hanga Roa. Written correspondence with the mayor and governor authorized holding the elections at the local public school, with the support of Chilean police to manage traffic problems.

On Sunday morning, 4 August 2013, Parlamento Rapa Nui leaders raised the Reimiro flags of the Rapa Nui nation outside the Chilean-administered public school, Lorenzo Baeza Vega, in Hanga Roa. Ma'eva Ika, a local journalist documenting the events, characterized the election as illustrating the democratic “transparency” of Parlamento Rapa Nui, and voters repeatedly expressed the view that the process was very well organized. Following an identification check, voters entered private booths in gender-segregated rooms to inscribe their votes for either Araki

or Cardinali. Voters then placed their folded slips in locked boxes and signed their names in a supervised log book, registering who cast votes among the approximately 1,800 registered Rapa Nui voters. Joel Hucke coordinated a process of vote certification by international observers from Argentina, France, and the United States as well as Chilean attorneys, as the votes were publicly counted after the elections closed Sunday evening.

Ultimately, Araki was reelected president for the next four years, having received 250 votes compared to 68 for Cardinali. Though the numbers fell short of the total possible votes, local journalist Moises Hereveri emphasized that key leaders participated. He stated, “I tu‘u rō atu te nu‘u o te Mata o te Rapa Nui” (The people that lead the Rapa Nui clans came [to vote]) (*Tāpura Re‘o*, Aug 2013). As one of the international observers, I was impressed by the diversity of voters, including not only elder leaders but also significant numbers of youth and women. At least 122 votes by women were registered, compared to 160 votes registered by men (36 votes were registered under a booth for the elderly that was not distinguished by gender). Moreover, as the numbers resemble the results of another important election discussed below, this may be more or less the kind of turnout one can expect currently in Rapa Nui elections. On Monday, hundreds of Rapa Nui gathered to hear Araki’s acceptance speech and celebrate his election with Reimiro flags, traditional songs, and a feast prepared from an umu (a Polynesian underground oven) in an inauguration ceremony staged confrontationally in front of the office

of the island governor, who is colonially selected by the Chilean president rather than the Rapa Nui people.

Regarding the significance of the election, Erity Teave Hey, a regular representative of Parlamento Rapa Nui at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and other international forums, emphasized that the votes demonstrate that Rapa Nui people have “not only consciousness, but conviction, decision, and vision for the future of the Rapa Nui children.” The elections, for her, signify that Rapa Nui people will continue the process of “self-determination, decolonization, and demilitarization; this is basically the right for freedom.” President Araki stressed that the elections were an “important historic moment,” as they mark the first time the Rapa Nui people have democratically elected the president of the organization. Araki sees the current goals of the organization as centered on work that will facilitate the development of “Rapa Nui based laws” for the administration of island resources and the Rapa Nui nation. Concurrent with the meetings and preparations for the election, over twenty Rapa Nui leaders from many of the leading *hua‘ai* (extended families, clans) and organizations, including Parlamento Rapa Nui members, met weekly in a private forum independent of Parlamento Rapa Nui in July and August to discuss and learn about Rapa Nui opportunities for decolonization at the United Nations. Coordinating discussion with UN decolonization materials gathered by Santi Hitorangi, a Parlamento Rapa Nui member based in New York and longtime UN representative of Rapa Nui, meetings

focused on the importance of joining the UN list of NSGTs and organizing a cohort of Rapa Nui to attend the 13th UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York City. A central local concern motivating the meetings was a heightened sense that Chilean state-based institutions and political offices, as well as the people occupying the offices—whether they were genealogically Rapa Nui or not—were, more often than not, serving Chilean rather than Rapa Nui interests and self-determination. Meeting participants lamented that in general the Rapa Nui community is “*mauiui*” (sick) because of “*te manera o te Tire ‘i runga o te henua*” (the Chilean ways on the island). Chilean institutions and people administering them were characterized in meetings as, respectively, “*me‘e mai haho*” (things from outside) and “*paihenga o te Tire*” (Chilean dogs). Alberto Hotus, who holds the Chilean-created office of president of the Council of Elders that replaced the Rapa Nui organized Council of Elders, was especially targeted in discussions. Meeting participants, who referred to him by the derogatory name “*Kete*” (pockets—as in the pocket of the Chilean government), hoped to remove him from the office or eliminate the office entirely, given that it was not created by Rapa Nui. Members stated, “*Ta‘e o tātou; o te Tire*” ([He] is not of us; [he] is of Chile). In other words, *Kete* is not seen by actual councils of family elders as their representative but rather is considered a representative of Chile. The expression “*paihenga o te Tire*” is a particularly interesting one: *paihenga* (dog) is metaphorically used in Rapa Nui to refer to Chilean

police. The metaphor recalls French critical philosopher Jacques Rancière's view that the everyday administration of society is a policing of the normalized status quo that must be distinguished from the real political acts of "dissensus" that redistribute a social order (Rancière 2010, 92). Instead of following the policing paihenga of Chilean institutions, meeting participants emphasized governing the island in terms of Rapa Nui traditions by "hakatere hai hua'ai" (governing through family clans)—a tradition the participants saw themselves practicing within the meetings.

While these UN-focused meetings were being held, some of the Rapa Nui leaders present also began organizing a political march to protest the annual Chilean state commemoration of the 9 September 1888 signing of a treaty between Rapa Nui chiefs and Policarpo Toro, representing the Chilean state. This treaty, or "Agreement of Wills" was never officially ratified by the state (IWGIA 2012, 5–11), and it remains of strongly contested significance among Rapa Nui (Delsing 2009, 245–246), despite a recent state truth commission designed to stabilize its meaning (Gobierno de Chile 2003). On 9 September 2013, as state government and military officials staged a rally at Plaza Atamu Tekena to celebrate the purported treaty and strategically modulate its affective significance in positive state terms, hundreds of Rapa Nui people, coordinated by Rapa Nui-determined organizations (such as Makenu Re'o Rapa Nui and Parlamento Rapa Nui) as well as Rapa Nui-influenced CODEIPA, engaged in a tactical "line of flight" (Deleuze and Guattari 1985, 9) and marched

for the decolonization of Rapa Nui. While Chilean media dampened the significance of the march by depicting it merely as a march for "autonomy" (BB, 9 Sept 2013), Rapa Nui-based media displayed images and expressions that highlighted the march as promoting decolonization for independence in flags, banners, and even bumper stickers (*Tāpura Re'o*, Nov 2013; SR, 9 Sept 2013). Trini Ferdinand, a key photographer of the event, emphasized that Rapa Nui are protesting the Chilean government's "lack of respect and misinterpretation of the Treaty of 1888" (SR, 9 Sept 2013). Mata U'iroa Atan, a Rapa Nui lawyer and politician, represented the march as symbolic of a growing Rapa Nui social movement toward "un proceso decolonización" (a process of decolonization) that he sees as critical in an era in which Rapa Nui still lack governance by Rapa Nui people acting in terms of Rapa Nui-determined laws. Recognizing variable forms as possible, including free association with another state that is not necessarily Chile, he encourages decolonization leading to the independence of Rapa Nui from Chile (U'iroa Atan 2013). Moises Hereveri reflected that this march for "independencia" (independence) was about "he ture tuai era 'ā te ŋa henua" (a long-standing fight for the island lands). He emphasized that the Rapa Nui must continue to recognize that it is important to "kī ō'ou i tu'u mana'u, 'ina ko hakari'ari'a" (speak your precious thoughts, do not be afraid) (*Tāpura Re'o*, Nov 2013).

In January 2014, Rafael (Rinko) Tuki Tepano, Hanga Roa community-elected Rapa Nui leader of the Cor-

poración Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas (CONADI), spearheaded local, national, and international political efforts against a state plan established under departing Chilean President Sebastián Piñera's administration to privatize the lands of the state-claimed territory of Fundo Vaitea. Since 1980, Chile had indirectly managed the land under the private company Sociedad Agrícola y Servicios Isla de Pascua Limitada (SASIPA) through a plan initiated by the administration of former Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet, who began imposing neoliberal policies in Chile nationwide in 1973 (Munck 2005, 65). SASIPA management followed fourteen years of direct Chilean control under the state agency Corporación de Fomento de la Producción (CORFO), which governed the territory following the 1996 passage of *Ley Pascua*, which established some civil rights for Rapa Nui (Gonschor 2011, 181). Piñera's plan had been reportedly organized in response to Rapa Nui political occupations that resulted in internationally condemned state violence against Rapa Nui in December 2010 (Young 2012). The plan proposed to distribute the 1,052 hectares of land of Fundo Vaitea among 264 families in plots of 2.5 hectares (EC, 26 Jan 2014; BB, 6 Jan 2014). On 1 January 2014, the Ministerio de Bienes Nacionales (Ministry of National Goods) tried to finalize the plan through actions the state considered as part of an official consultation process with the Rapa Nui community (LT, 5 Jan 2014). The process was to conclude on 26 January 2014 with community workshops to further inform and discuss the process of returning the land and a

plebiscite the same day for the community to register votes that would voice their opinions about the process. President Piñera's appointed governor of Easter Island, Rapa Nui Islander Carmen Cardinali Paoa, emphasized that the plebiscite was an important part of the "legal process" (BB, 6 Jan 2014). Minister of Housing and National Assets Rodrigo Pérez also saw the plan in very positive terms. He characterized it as explicitly complying with International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 on free, prior, and informed consent and an "unprecedented" return of land—the largest in ten years. Government "dramatizations" of the events in terms of a story of honoring Rapa Nui social goals in compliance with international law "overcode" the critical content of CONADI leader Rinko Tuki's publicized reports (Deleuze 2004). In January 2014, Tuki, in a report cosigned by other leading grassroots organizations of Rapa Nui—Parlamento Rapa Nui, Makenu Re'ō Rapa Nui, Asamblea de Clanes, Autoridades Tradicionales de Rapa Nui—emphasized that Rapa Nui political rights had been violated by the development of the plan and the organization of the plebiscite. Rather than engaging Rapa Nui in an official ILO 169 consultation mechanism, Tuki represented the state as having only applied a "reporting mechanism" (CR, 25 Jan 2014). As Tuki understands ILO 169, Rapa Nui generally, and particularly leaders of CODEIPA and CONADI, should have been involved in the processes of developing the plan. However, Rapa Nui were not given "access to technical inputs" that resulted in the plan; they were simply given a folder

with the plan on 1 January 2014 and informed to trust the government (CR, 22 Jan 2014). Instead, Tuki and other Rapa Nui leaders immediately recognized that the plan coded the territory in ways designed to avoid the need to complete an environmental impact statement. After scrutinizing the plan, Rapa Nui leaders and groups concluded that settling the territory with hundreds of new houses would further endanger the already unstable water supply, hasten increasing problems of waste management, and amplify questions of sustainability. As the area is rich in cultural heritage sites, Rapa Nui also noted that the plan could be severely destructive of their patrimony. Conceiving the Piñera plan as “colonial” and as violating international legal conventions on consultation, Tuki wrote to UN Special Rapporteur James Anaya (CR, 22 Jan 2014) and the director of the Chilean National Institute of Human Rights, Señora Lorena Fries (CR, 23 Jan 2014) to request their help to fight Piñera’s plan in general and to support Rapa Nui desires to delay any plebiscite until the Islander groups could study and discuss the plan more thoroughly on their own.

On 26 January, on-the-ground, active protests were staged by the Rapa Nui community, in particular members of Parlamento Rapa Nui and Makenu Re’o Rapa Nui, and community leaders such as Rinko Tuki and Marisol Hitorangi. But the Chilean government, coordinated by “a heavy police contingent,” proceeded with the plebiscite that day (EC, 28 Jan 2014). Voters were asked three questions: whether the Ministerio de Bienes Nacionales should continue to

administer land restitution to Rapa Nui people; whether the lands of Fundo Vaitea should be distributed to the proposed 262 Rapa Nui families in agricultural plots of 2.5 acres each; and, if the voter voted no to the first two questions, which of a set of five other options he or she recommended for use of the land and its governance (CM, 26 Jan 2014). While voters approved of the plan to continue to restore lands to the Rapa Nui people (329 votes in favor, versus 41 against), the community rejected the state plan to return the Fundo Vaitea lands to the families by a margin of 192 to 168 votes (PU, 10 Feb 2014). Chilean officials, had mixed responses to the results: Minister Perez saw the plebiscite as “a success” because it revealed “the real feelings of the Rapa Nui people,” while the mayor of Hanga Roa, Petero Edmunds Paoa—who has promoted development projects in the past against Rapa Nui will and resigned from being governor in 2010 amid accusations of corruption (Young 2012, 2014)—predictably called the results “a setback” to state policy (PU, 10 Feb 2014). Rinko Tuki extended his critique of the process. He challenged the “cultural relevance” of the plebiscite questions “since they were imposed in Santiago, which prevented their full understanding.” And he accused Chile of violating Rapa Nui rights to self-determination. He stressed, “This Sunday we witnessed a serious violation of our political rights, a process where the government has decided the questions, the polling station, and used government officials from the mainland” (EC, 28 Jan 2014).

With the departure of the Piñera

administration and the April inauguration of the new president of Chile, Michelle Bachelet, the Fundo Viatea plan appears to be dead. President Bachelet, who attended the first CODEIPA meeting under her administration on 9 April, promised “the full inclusion of indigenous peoples” in her administration (IP, 25 April 2014) and a “new relationship between the State of Chile and Rapa Nui” (BN, 28 April 2014). Her Ministerio de Bienes Nacionales, Victor Osorio, said that he hopes to “advance the resolution of outstanding issues on the island” in terms of the values of the new administration (LT, 28 April 2014). As the new government attempts to distinguish itself from past Chilean regimes, however, it is likely Rapa Nui will remain skeptical of profound difference. They will anticipate state dramatizations that simulate “difference” through “a displacement and a disguising within repetition” (Deleuze 1994, xx). International human rights organizations have been repeatedly challenging Chilean state policies toward indigenous peoples. In May, Amnesty International encouraged President Bachelet to pursue a different policy for the indigenous peoples of Chile so that “human rights do not remain on paper” (ME, 16 May 2014). Of particular concern to Amnesty International, amplifying the struggles of Rapa Nui against Chilean administration of Fundo Vaitea, is Chile’s lack of implementation of ILO 169 conventions of free, prior, and informed consent, but also its application of a Pinochet-era anti-terrorist law that the Piñera administration applied in conflicts with indigenous peoples including Rapa Nui. Amnesty International’s

concerns build on those of UN Special Rapporteur James Anaya, who also continues to challenge these policies of the Chilean government (ME, 16 May 2014; RU, 14 April 2014), as well as the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2013). The issues stem from Decrees 124, 66, and 40 that the Chilean state legislated to implement ILO convention 169 following government ratification of the convention in 2008. Decree 124, implemented by Bachelet in her first presidential administration (2006–2010), was found by indigenous peoples of Chile, UN officials, and international nongovernmental organizations to violate ILO 169; its supplemental replacements, Decrees 66 and 40, issued during the Piñera administration, remain similarly contested at indigenous, state, and international levels (*Americas Quarterly* 2014). Despite her promises for difference, President Bachelet’s administrative history does not suggest much hope for real change.

At the 13th UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, held on 13–14 May 2014, Santi Hitorangi advocated for the political decolonization of the Rapa Nui nation from the state of Chile during the “Decolonization Dialogues” at the UN Church Center in New York City. The dialogues were addressed to an audience of over a hundred participants of the UN Permanent Forum and were sponsored by the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church, the World Council of Churches, United Methodist Women, and members of the Decolonization Alliance organization housed at UN Plaza. Emphasizing that decoloniza-

tion must engage cultural minds, social bodies, and state governments, both political and theological decolonization were discussed during the dialogues. Hitorangi, a panel speaker, was joined by fellow Decolonization Alliance members of the Pacific Islands: Menase W Kaisiepo and Rosa Moiwend advocated for the political decolonization of West Papua, and Leon K Siu advocated for the political decolonization of Hawai'i. While engaged with the theological discussions of church panel members that criticized the historical and ongoing institutional role of Christianity in the destruction of indigenous peoples' cultures, lands, and natural resources worldwide (UMW, May 2014), Hitorangi's presentation articulated more with the concerns of moderator Reverend Liberato Bautista (United Methodist Church representative to the United Nations) that the three Pacific Island nations represented by members of the Decolonization Alliance were, in a sense, "political prisoners." Hitorangi traced Chilean colonial history in Rapa Nui to late nineteenth and early twentieth century violations of the terms of the aforementioned 1888 political treaty, which Rapa Nui see as having been drafted, wrongfully translated, and signed under fraudulent and duplicitous circumstances. In light of the internationally documented 2010 state violence of Chile against Rapa Nui people (IWGIA 2012), Hitorangi stressed that it is clear that "Chile keeps Rapa Nui by guns" and that Rapa Nui "remains a colony of Chile."

As a founding member of the Decolonization Alliance, Hitorangi emphasized that the organization is

striving to develop a "coordinating structure" to access the UN decolonization process. In part, this structure would assist colonially occupied nations with the process of becoming listed as NSGTs by the United Nations. Alliance members see themselves developing the coordinating structure in response to recent UN reports and resolutions: the "Study on the Decolonization of the Pacific Region" presented at the 12th UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues by Pacific Caucus leader Valmaine Toki and submitted to the UN Economic and Social Council (2013); the May 2013 UN General Assembly adoption of a resolution asserting the right of French Polynesia to self-determination and decolonization; and the July 2013 UN Human Rights Council Report of the Independent Expert authored by Alfred-Maurice de Zayas on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order. Consistent with the concerns of Parlamento Rapa Nui members as noted in the beginning of this review, Toki's study stresses that "decolonization in the Pacific does not follow the precedent set by Asia, Africa and the Caribbean" and encourages the United Nations to consider "convening an expert group meeting on the decolonization of the Pacific." The study offers detailed reasoning for considering the decolonization of New Caledonia, Hawai'i, West Papua, and French Polynesia and explicitly problematizes the colonial status of Rapa Nui. It stresses that "Chile maintains control over Easter Island (Rapa Nui)" and highlights that Rapa Nui people have recently become criminalized as "terrorists" in contexts of "peacefully

demanding that their human rights be respected.”

Hitorangi depicted both Toki’s study of decolonization in the Pacific Islands and the resolution adopted on the right of French Polynesia to self-determination as positively articulating with de Zayas’s report. That report notes that a “spirit of international solidarity” is increasingly being undermined by state governments that are more responsive to “special interests such as the military-industrial complex, financial bankers, and transnational corporations” than to the peoples of the world. In contrast, indigenous people “maintain that the right of self-determination cannot be exercised against the will of the population concerned, and that self-determination referenda should only allow the indigenous to vote and not the colonizers” (UN General Assembly Human Rights Council 2013, 5, 6, 11). Reform of UN instruments of self-determination is highlighted in this report by de Zayas as generally critical for the development of a more democratic and equitable international order, particularly for indigenous peoples.

Santi Hitorangi’s advocacy for the Rapa Nui decolonization alliance is the second time he has engaged the United Nations in 2014 as an advocate for Rapa Nui rights. On 7 February, he provided a statement of intervention at the Eighth Session of the Open Work Group on Sustainable Development Goals of the UN Millennium Development Goals Forum (SR, 10 Feb 2014). The intervention highlighted the lack of consultation of Rapa Nui in the Trans Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership (TPP) neoliberal

free-trade agreement being developed between Chile and other signatories (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam, and the United States). Hitorangi fears the TPP will result in the further “opening of the door for privatization of our natural resources without our consent.” In speaking at the UN Church Center and the UN Millennium Development Goals Forum, Hitorangi is fundamentally seeking to strengthen Rapa Nui capacity for realizing their human rights to self-determination at an official international level. Yet, at an abstract level, Hitorangi’s interventions on behalf of the Rapa Nui nation articulate with universal concerns for improving global social justice. The movement for indigenous rights is part of a general “international program to advance human rights” (Anaya 2009, 1). As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay has recently noted, the rights of indigenous peoples are “essential for the promotion and protection of all other human rights” (Barkan and Pillay 2014).

As the review period closes, international media report that the ecological and social sustainability of Chile’s development of Easter Island is facing increasingly severe problems (BBC, 17 April 2014). While Rapa Nui remain, in Reverend Bautista’s words, “political prisoners” subject to unsustainable state policies, armed plebiscites determined by the Chilean Ministerio de Bienes Nacionales, and international TPP projects without reliable access to internationally legal forms of free, prior, and informed consent, their decolonializing everyday practices and key political acts during

the year in review have been constant. Rapa Nui engagement illustrates an increasing trend in international indigenous politics: social movement beyond state politics of recognition and toward a “politics of refusal” of what settler colonial states consider officially settled (Simpson 2014, 11–12). While Rapa Nui refusal is, in part, necessarily reactive, an affective and affirmative “politics of hope” is manifest in the ways Rapa Nui are “navigating movements” within global and Chilean assemblages of power (Massumi and Zournazi 2002). While Rapa Nui leaders like Rinko Tuki react to Chilean plans by working in part within Chilean-determined institutions, Tuki’s consultation with UN Special Rapporteur James Anaya illustrates Rapa Nui capacity to affirm rights through alternative international discourse networks. The democratic and internationally transparent election of Leviante Araki as president of Parlamento Rapa Nui discloses—powerfully—not only that Rapa Nui are building capacity for self-determination but also that they are already affirming government by their own democratic institutions. Santi Hitorangi’s interventions at the United Nations for official decolonization of Rapa Nui, grounded in New York coordination of Rapa Nui-based meetings for UN representation, illustrate that Rapa Nui are not only building capacity for international diplomacy but are also already affirming pathways of international political engagement. Rapa Nui hope is growing across these multiple lines of me’e decolonización.

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