

Polynesia in Review: Issues and Events,
1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004

Reviews of American Sāmoa, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga, and Tuvalu are not included in this issue.

COOK ISLANDS

This was a year of birthdays in the Cook Islands. The nation's first political party, the Cook Islands Party (CIP), celebrated its fortieth birthday in March 2004. By October, the Girl Guides, the oldest uniformed women's organization, commemorated seventy-five years of activity since its arrival in the country. And the Baha'i faith, the earliest non-Christian denomination to come into the Cook Islands, celebrated its fiftieth birthday. Also in October, the Child Welfare Association commemorated seventy years of service. The year also saw the continuation of a worrying population decline, unpopular political party switches by members of Parliament, cabinet reshuffles, land controversies, immigration concerns, and apprehension about economic development. High-profile personalities dominated the media, influencing election preparations, government actions, and policies. The dramas included convicted New Zealand business tycoon Mark Lyon; Ministry of Marine Resources Secretary Navy Epati; and Eddie Drollett, former chief of staff of the prime minister's department.

Efforts by Mark Lyon to seek sanctuary in Rarotonga attracted much attention, generating demands from the newly formed Concerned Citizens Group for an investigation,

as well as expressions of unease from the two major political parties and trenchant media queries about the circumstances surrounding his residency. In an effort to win public sympathy, Lyon issued an open letter to the people of Rarotonga, declaring, "I came here for the first time in 2002 and fell under your spell. I have since moved my family here, in the hope of sanctuary from the lifestyle I wish to leave behind. Given my past, I do not expect you to embrace me nor to invite me into your daily lives. I can only hope that, given enough time, you may see that I have learned to live by your example. Like you I want my children to do better in life than I have done, not to repeat my mistakes" (CIN, 17 Dec 2003, 3). Some 100 unconvinced demonstrators marched in the capital, Avarua, openly opposing Lyon's effort to stay in the Cook Islands, but the fiasco continued when he was granted twelve-month residency and a suspected "\$150,000 payout" was revealed. It was clear that the two major political parties did not support the government's actions in this regard: the Democratic Party condemned the government for granting Lyon the residency permit, and the Cook Islands Party demanded answers over related issues.

Rumors persisted that Lyon had given money to assist the Democratic Party in its reelection bid. This was never confirmed, but the local media did discover that Lyon had received \$100,000 of his money back, minus

\$50,000 that his lawyer, Norman George (also a member of Parliament), had reserved for legal coverage. Cook Islands Prime Minister Dr Robert Woonton's revelation that Lyon was one of several people interested in purchasing the on-again, off-again Vaima'anga (or Sheraton) hotel project only added to the debacle (*CIN*, 6 Dec 2003, 1). Amid all of this confusion, Lyon traveled to Mangaia on his "Miami Vice-style launch" and arrived unannounced, much to the annoyance of residents. He was asked to leave, but damage to his boat forced a two-week stay. To make peace with the Mangaia people, he donated a processor for the island's growers of noni fruit (*Morinda citrifolia*). However, such acts of "inspired" aid did not help Lyon's situation. After meeting with citizens concerned about Lyon's lifestyle and influence on others, and reviewing allegations of pornography, drug use, and assault, the prime minister finally withdrew his support and banned Lyon from reentering the country (*CIN*, 16 Jan 2004, 1). Only months after calling them wonderful and inspiring, Mark Lyon branded the people of the Cook Islands "boring as hell" (*CIN*, 12 Feb 2004, 1).

Lyon shared the media limelight with Navy Epati, head of the Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources, whose ownership of a fishing company generated suggestions of conflict of interest. Epati had a 70 percent stake in Te Maroro Fishing Company Ltd, a commercial fishing venture he had set up in May 2003 while head of the marine resources ministry. He also owned half of a fish processing company. Members of the fishing

industry later charged that Epati's chartered vessels were flouting rules he was supposed to be enforcing. The crews of Korean vessels named *Chong Myong 701*, *703*, and *705* brought in by Epati's fishing company were accused of several irregularities, including illegally transshipping fish—transferring catches from one boat to another without registering them (*CIN*, 9 Dec 2003, 1). Eventually Epati quit his ministry post over integrity and credibility issues.

Another personality receiving national political attention during the year was Eddie Drollett, former chief of staff to the prime minister. After lengthy court proceedings, Drollett admitted to illegally receiving \$25,000 of taxpayer money while he was working in the Office of the Prime Minister (*CIN*, 2 July 2003, 1).

Although Parliament had relatively few sittings, it was a busy if not agonizing year for some of its members. In July, Teina Bishop resigned as member of Parliament for Arutanga/Reureu/Nikaupara, Aitutaki Island, expressing disappointment over the budget and the inadequate allocation for Aitutaki. In August, Geoffrey Heather won the parliamentary seat for Ruaau, Rarotonga, replacing his wife Maria, who had died earlier in the year. Just days after winning the election, Heather was appointed undersecretary to the prime minister, giving him an extra \$15,000 a year. In September, the overseas seat occupied by Dr Joseph Williams was abolished, effective the date of the upcoming general election.

Visitors to the Cook Islands included Governor General of New Zealand Dame Silvia Cartwright and

New Zealand First Party leader and former Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters. Meanwhile, political undercurrents continued with constant realignments in allegiance—seemingly based on personal gain—much to the disappointment of most Cook Islanders. Teariki Heather, founder of a new political party, National, joined up with the Cook Islands Party as part of a personal effort to win a seat in Parliament. In the process he shifted his intended constituency from Ruauu to Akaoa in Rarotonga, displacing Keu Mataroa, an already elected CIP candidate. Mataroa subsequently abandoned support for his party in favor of his former opponent.

By November 2003, Dr Woonton had become the new leader of the Democratic Party, and efforts at unifying the various factions within the party received much support. The goal of winning the upcoming election, scheduled for September 2004, was a strong driving force. However, an attempt by some factions of the Democratic Party and the Cook Islands Party to unseat Prime Minister Woonton backfired, and two ministers (Dr Terepai Maoate and Tangata Vavia) were obliged to resign. The leadership struggle within the Democratic Party continued into 2004. At the last party conference before the general election, Maoate fought off a challenge by the prime minister to become the Democratic Party leader by a 26–24 vote. A new Maoate faction now in control of the party initiated efforts to make life more difficult for the continuing Woonton government by challenging constituency MP seats where possible.

Their prime target was lawyer Norman George—considered to be the “kingmaker” because of his pivotal role in all government coalitions to date. Businessman Eugene Tatuava was put forward as the Democratic Party candidate at the September 2004 general elections in the Tenga-tangi-Areora Ngatiarua Atiu Island constituency, even though George was the incumbent. George described efforts to oust him as the work of “a small breakaway of Demo fundamentalists” (*CIN*, 4 March 2004, 1), but the pressure eventually forced him to become an independent candidate. The looming September 2004 election encouraged other new developments. Joshua Ngamatau founded a new Republican Party to enter the 2004 general election, although it seemed to be offering candidates only on the island of Aitutaki. And in spite of public pressure to create more party loyalty, the cabinet resisted reform efforts. It appeared to the general public that the cabinet wanted members of Parliament to continue changing parties without penalties.

Lack of penalties also emerged as an issue at the regional level. The Cook Islands has always willingly committed trained personnel and financial resources to the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), based in Sāmoa, and even provided its first administrative head. So the dismissal of senior SPREP officer I’o Tuakeu-Lindsay came as a surprise to many. A former Cook Islands Environment Services director and a well-known hardworking professional, Tuakeu-Lindsay was one of two women sacked by SPREP Director General Asterio Takesy. She and the

other woman, a Samoan, accused Takesy of sexual harassment (*CIN*, 17 March 2004, 1). The Samoan government expressed displeasure at Takesy's actions and demanded an investigation, but the Cook Islands government showed little interest. While Takesy may have had legitimate reasons for his actions, the lack of follow-up from the Cook Islands undermined an opportunity to clear the matter appropriately.

Perhaps Cook Islands government interest was more focused on regional security and national developmental issues. At the 2004 Pacific Islands Forum meeting, the prime minister expressed support for the idea that the Forum Island countries create stronger and deeper links. Other issues considered important included environmental concerns, transport links, role of women, decision-making, elimination of domestic violence, human rights, and the needs of youth. Forum leaders agreed that the Pacific should (1) assess options and provide for deeper and broader regional cooperation, taking into account the wider international agreements in which forum countries participate; (2) identify areas where resource-sharing and policy alignment would yield the best results for the region; and (3) provide clear recommendations to leaders on the sequence and priorities for intensified regional cooperation (*CIN*, 7 April 2004, 1).

The return in 2003 of three Cook Islands policemen who served in the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), and the commitment of more Cook Islands personnel, marked an important element of Cook Islands regional participation. The Cook Islands does not

maintain a military force, and the involvement of its police force in a regional defensive role was a challenging and historical step. An incident in Holland also brought worldwide attention to the Cook Islands and its police when a visiting Dutch citizen, Karen Harvey, requested Cook Islands police protection from underworld gangs in Holland. Her husband had been arrested by the Dutch police for kidnapping a millionaire's seventeen-year-old son and demanding a \$19-million ransom. Harvey claimed that her husband had been forced into the crime by an underworld gang (*CIN*, 19 Dec 2003, 1).

During the year under review police began using radar traps to counter speeding on the road, and businessman Teanaroa Worthington appeared before Justice Norman Smith for smuggling shoes in from Hawai'i (*CIN*, 9 July 2003, 1). Well-known writer Alistair Te Ariki Campbell returned to the Cook Islands to visit his home island of Penrhyn; Janice Nicholas became the latest local woman to win the Miss South Pacific title; and Pukapuka held its third annual global conference for people from that island.

Hundreds attended the funeral of Niki Smith, daughter of wealthy businessman Ewan Smith, the owner of Air Rarotonga (Air Raro). The tragic motorcycle accident in which she died highlighted an ongoing problem with drinking and driving on the roads of Rarotonga, and the lack of an efficient first aid accident response capacity. The accident precipitated major efforts to begin an air ambulance "angel" service.

Another incident that had wider

ramifications involved rugby, the country's national sport. Referees had lodged a complaint with the Cook Islands Rugby Union over an incident in which player Tu Potoru had splashed water on referee Simiona Teotu while Junior Areai had struck the match official with his hat. When the Rugby Union dismissed the complaint, the Rarotonga Referees Association expressed their disappointment by calling a historic boycott of the annual Town and Country games.

A conflict over the Pa Ariki and Makea Ariki chiefly titles in Rarotonga, and over various subchiefly titles, suggested that monetary interests linked to land were taking precedence over traditional concerns with family and sharing. Another paramount chief on Rarotonga, Tinomana Ruta, had already leased out several blocks of land in her capacity as Ariki, often over the strong objection of legitimate landowners.

The increased involvement of the Chinese government in major development projects was very obvious during 2003–2004. A multimillion-dollar Chinese commitment to the construction of the Cook Islands Ministry of Justice offices and courthouse in Rarotonga drew much interest on the island. Awareness was amplified when work finally began on the downtown courthouse on 29 October 2003, with about forty imported Chinese government workers assisting in the construction. People's Republic of China Premier Wen Jiahao told visiting Prime Minister Woonton, "China is ready to enhance friendly relations with all South Pacific nations including the Cook Islands." He declared that "by providing the Cook Islands with assistance China had gained

economic and social benefit from it." Wen also expressed appreciation for a Cook Islands commitment to the one-China policy. Other discussions focused on a \$4.8-million Rarotonga courthouse, as well as a new police station that the Chinese offered to fund and build. The Cook Islands prime minister expressed appreciation for China's equal treatment of small countries such as the Cook Islands (CIN, 29 April 2004, 1).

Chinese interest in the Cook Islands extended to the private sector. A Chinese company (privately owned but headed by a government official) placed a bid to take over the export of black pearls from the Cook Islands. The value of pearl exports had dropped from \$18.3 million in 2000 to only \$6.4 million in 2002 (CIN, 21 July 2003, 1). China offered to pay \$40 to \$50 apiece, compared to Japan's current purchases at \$30 apiece. That interest has yet to materialize.

In August, a New Zealand surveillance plane spotted two fishing vessels, suspected to be Taiwanese longliners, inside the exclusive economic zone of the Cook Islands. A month later, the fishing vessel *Young Duk* ceased operation due to mechanical problems and the financial difficulties of its owner, making it the second vessel to sit idle in the main harbor of Avatiu (CIN, 29 Sep 2003, 1). By October, the *Mabr-Leena*, another fishing vessel operating out of the Cook Islands, had gone into receivership (CIN, 20 Oct 2003, 1), and in February 2004 the *Walara K* tried to leave the country without settling outstanding debts. To make matters worse, fishing giant Sealord pulled out of the Cook Islands only nine months

after declaring itself the leader in the development of the fishing industry there. Hawkes Bay Fisheries also withdrew from the country. Representatives of both companies declared that the strong value of the New Zealand dollar affected the price of catches (*CIN*, 10 April 2004, 1). In response to these developments, Temu Okotai, a leading Cook Islands businessman, called for the Pacific region to regulate the price of tuna in overseas markets—by catching less. “Catch rates are calculated on what is sustainable, but I think there’s another measure and that is how much fish is needed to get a decent return” (*CIN*, 19 March 2004, 1).

Unlike the fishing industry, tourism continued its strong development. New Zealand and Europe still represented the strongest tourism markets for the Cook Islands. By the end of October 2003, some 21,104 New Zealand tourists had visited, followed by United Kingdom/Europe with 17,623, and Australia with 8,810. Interestingly, of those coming from New Zealand, 2,090 were actually Cook Islanders living in New Zealand—a reminder that many more Cook Islanders live in New Zealand than in the Islands (*CIN*, 30 Dec 2003, 1). However, only 17,067 tourists came during the first three months of 2004, a reduction of some 1,143 compared to the same period in 2003 (*CIN*, 18 May 2004, 1).

Although most visitors stayed in Rarotonga, an increasing number visited the outer islands, particularly Aitutaki. In an effort to further expand the visitor industry in Aitutaki, a new international airport opened there during the year. How-

ever, the huge expenditure on the airport attracted much criticism. Most critics saw it as an excuse to assist the privately owned Air Raro at taxpayer expense. The newly sealed runway dramatically reduces the maintenance costs of Air Raro, and there is apparently little possibility that global carriers will use the Aitutaki “international runway” on a regular basis.

Tourism development in Aitutaki underlines the need to control operators and monitor environmental impacts. In July 2003, a tour boat visiting the smaller island capsized, injuring several of its passengers. The island council began to look at new bylaws to regulate such activities. A proposed Captain Cook Hotel development for Aitutaki was also heavily criticized for its potential impact on the environment. The development of necessary infrastructure, including systems for solid and liquid waste disposal and water supply, has not kept pace with tourism development projects, which seem to be spiraling out of control.

Such environmental concern is also evident on the main island of Rarotonga, where most tourists visit. Calls for a full environmental impact assessment were not uncommon during 2003–2004, and the need for such studies was validated by the reported erosion at the Rarotongan Resort, one of the oldest and largest accommodations on the island. Increased tourism has generally placed a strain on the Rarotonga resources, but problems with pollution, water, and general infrastructure have not dampened the government’s drive to increase the volume of tourist traffic into the Cook Islands. Royal Tongan Airlines

inaugurated service during the year, although their regular flights did not last long. Air New Zealand and Aloha Airlines continued their Cook Islands operations while the viability of a national airline was again considered. Pacific Smart Saver fares were available on Air New Zealand flights to New Zealand, Fiji, and Australia, offering up to 35 percent off the regular economy fare. Although the fare cuts were designed to increase tourism, there was concern that they would also add to an already massive out-migration of Cook Islanders.

Ironically, as the growth of tourism increases job opportunities, more Cook Islanders have been leaving the country. Undaunted, the government has tried to meet the needs of tourist-related trades by establishing training schemes. The signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Cook Islands Hospitality and Tourism Training Center and the University of the South Pacific Institute of Technology was seen by Prime Minister Woonton as a historic step. It allowed for a large number of training schemes designed to create jobs and stem the outflow of young people. Nonetheless, the high cost of living in the Cook Islands, relatively low wages, and increased demand for cheaper contract labor from overseas continue to discourage locals from staying.

The growing tourism industry also impacts the environment in a variety of ways. In a historical legal action, Gerald Garnier and his wife Marie-France Cowan were granted occupation rights on Motu Tapu, in spite of strong opposition from the community and many landowners (*CIN*, 12

March 2004, 1). The incident raised fears about anticipated damage to this particular motu (small island) from human settlement, the growing inaccessibility of what was once available to the extended family and other people, and the impact of the decision in setting a precedent in Rarotonga.

The people of Rarotonga have also been concerned about environmental issues not caused by human activities. These included toxins thriving in Muri Lagoon and an unidentified problem in the waters close to the village of Titikaveka, which has caused health problems and reduced the number of visitors to the area. These problems prompted the Taporoporo Ipukarea Society to call on government to ratify the UN Stockholm Convention, which is designed to address the problem of organic pollutants—the suspected culprit in Titikaveka.

The Cook Islands remained on an international money-laundering blacklist. By 4 June 2004, in the Cook Islands and elsewhere, operators of offshore companies, banks, insurers, and trust accounts must make full disclosures and comply with the same procedures and principles (*CIN*, 28 Feb 2004, 1). A new law removing certain protection provisions in offshore banking operations was adopted, moving the country toward compliance. New Financial Action Task Force rules call for information on the capital adequacy of offshore institutions, detail prudential requirements, as well as on-site inspections and a physical presence. A top-level Indian politician is among those rendered vulnerable by the new requirements. Parkash Singh Badal, former

chief minister of the Indian state of Punjab, has been under scrutiny for allegedly laundering millions of dollars through the Cook Islands (*CIN*, 16 Oct 2003, 1). The country's offshore banking industry is also implicated in the disputed takeover of English premier league soccer club Chelsea by Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich for \$388 million. An investigation revealed that the Cook Islands-based company Ceranites held five million shares in the Chelsea club (*CIN*, 29 July 2003, 1). In yet another incident, the state-owned Bank Negara Indonesia was swindled out of US\$300 million by two exporters who were reportedly given loans using letters of credit issued in Kenya, Switzerland, and the Cook Islands (*CIN*, 13 Nov 2003, 1).

During the year, government pursued other, new revenue-generating activities. In an effort to raise funds locally for the Aitutaki airport runway upgrade, the government tried to implement a \$20 landing tax for flights between Rarotonga and Aitutaki. The tax proposal proved very unpopular with Aitutaki residents, who pointed out that the landowners at the airport site were not compensated, and that most residents had not requested the project in the first place. The proposal was eventually scrapped, but as much as \$20,000 had already been expended on preparing Rarotonga airport and buying thousands of "free paid" stickers for the proposed Aitutaki landing tax (*CIN*, 2 Oct 2003, 1).

The Cook Islands government acknowledged that the cost of living increased by 2 percent in 2003. (Inflation is measured by checking the prices of various goods in the

consumer price index [CPI] and shows how quickly prices are rising.) The highest increases came in the housing category (including rents and maintenance costs), which jumped by 4.2 percent, and in miscellaneous goods and services, which rose 5.15 percent (*CIN*, 24 May 2004, 1). The inflation problems faced by the average Cook Islander were exacerbated by overpricing in many stores. Four months after the price order came into effect on 26 February 2004, price inspector Helen Maunga said that "most of the 46 shops visited so far were found to have breached the price order" (*CIN*, 28 May 2004, 1).

During the year, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced two loans totaling US\$5.3 million for the country over the next three years. The loans were to fund improvements to the power supply on Rarotonga, as well as water projects on Aitutaki and Rarotonga (*CIN*, 15 Aug 2003, 1). A number of factors, including the Iraq war and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) scare, caused the bank to revise its projection of overall economic growth downward from 3.2 per cent to only 0.2 percent (*CIN*, 7 Oct 2003, 1).

The ADB readjustment underlined the vulnerability of small economies such as that of the Cook Islands. While the politicians continued to portray an image of economic success, boasting that there were more jobs available than there were job seekers, most locals were emigrating out of the country, and the number of foreign workers taking up positions continued to increase. The growing number of foreign permanent residents who are automatically eligible to participate fully in parliamentary

elections suggests a potential for dramatic changes to the judicial system and land laws. Unless such issues are addressed, the future for the ethnic Māori of the Cook Islands looks uncertain.

JON TIKIVANOTAU M JONASSEN

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FRENCH POLYNESIA

Two overriding issues stand out in the past year or so in French Polynesia: another change of statute, this time to a supposedly more autonomous “overseas country” of France rather than an “overseas territory,” and a surprising assembly election in May 2004, which ended the twenty-year reign of Gaston Flosse as president and brought into office his longtime pro-independence rival, Oscar Temaru. No local leader, however, can easily escape the harsh reality of severe economic dependency caused by the introduction of nuclear testing in the 1960s. French military spending distorted the communal Polynesian society and created a middle class that fed on French-subsidized government jobs and patronage and enriched itself through corrupt business monopolies and real estate investments at the expense of the laboring majority.

French Polynesia, whose capital Papeete is on the populous main island of Tahiti, is still in quest of a post-nuclear economy, since French funding for the former Centre d’Experimentation du Pacifique (CEP)

ended in the late 1990s. France continues to transfer massive aid for development, as much as US\$1 billion a year (*PIR*, 26 Aug 2002). Flosse built himself a monumental presidential palace that houses “623 employees and courtiers” and invested public money in many grandiose projects in Tahiti and overseas, but Temaru’s demand for a referendum on independence is necessarily tempered by a vision of ongoing French subsidies and compensation for the impact of nuclear testing. Editor Alex W du Prel of *Tahiti-Pacifique Magazine* called the situation a “social and economic fiasco” due to “cut and paste programs prepared in Paris for a great industrial country, which French Polynesia is certainly not.” The Flosse administration, which du Prel said encouraged only a “consumer society of privileges, of ecological looting and corporatist castes [and] above all made the rich more rich and marginalized the part of the population that remained authentic,” at one point even asked the local people for “fresh ideas” (*TPM*, July 2004).

The number one local industry remained tourism. In 2003, the number of visitors was over 200,000 (nearly equaling the local population), which represented a recovery from the negative impact of the events of 11 September 2001 on air travel. North America, and mainly the United States, provided the largest number of visitors, with 77,000 or 40 percent of the market (and also the largest single increase over 2002, about 25 percent); it was followed closely by Europe, with 74,000 or 38 percent of the market; then Japan with 20,000 (10 percent); Australia, New Zealand, and New Caledonia with 16,000 (8

percent); and South America (mainly Chile) with 3,800 (2 percent). Despite special efforts to cater to the Japanese market, such as increasing Tahiti Nui service to three flights a week to Osaka and Tokyo and holding a scuba-diving exhibition, the number of Japanese visitors—mainly wedding couples (who spend on average twice as much as other tourists and especially enjoy the over-the-water bungalows for honeymoons)—did not quite match the previous year (*PIR*, 4 April 2003; 5 Jan 2004).

The number two industry, cultured black pearls from the Tuamotu atolls, declined drastically in 2003, as prices dropped by 80 percent. Despite government regulatory reforms aimed at controlling quality, informal trading to foreign buyers evaded taxes and undercut sellers. The local government continued to promote tuna fishing, by increasing the country's fleet size, as well as vanilla production, a once-profitable export for which world prices were increasing (*PIR*, 24 June 2002; 18 Feb, 13 May, 10 June 2003). State-funded infrastructure construction continued to grow, and scholarships for overseas training increased, but government efforts to curb rising deficits in public health insurance and civil service pension funds pushed doctors to strike for a month in 2003 over reduced payments, while public workers demonstrated against extending the required number of years for pension contributions (*PIR*, 1 May, 29 May, 9 June, 12 Aug 2003).

French Polynesia has received several statutes of autonomy, notably in 1977 and 1984, but French notions of "autonomy" are usually defined

through the lens of a political system that is more highly centralized than many others in the western world. Although the relationship between French Polynesia and Paris has been described as "similar to that of the Cook Islands and New Zealand" (De Deckker 1994, 272), many would dispute just how "self-governing" Papeete really is. Temaru complained that France still controlled foreign relations, immigration, external communications, currency, finance, defense, courts and police, and higher education, among other things (1988, 279–282). Flosse managed to get the statute changed twice, first in 1984 when he became president of the new government (and New Caledonia was in rebellion), and in 1996 after the last round of nuclear tests and anticolonial protests, when more nationalist symbolism was added (Von Strokirch 2001). In 1998, when New Caledonia's Noumea Accord promised gradually expanding autonomy with a prospect of voting on independence, Flosse proposed further expansion of French Polynesia's autonomy, to include the favoring of local citizens in hiring and establishing businesses, as well as increasing the authority of the president and Territorial Assembly (TA). French President Jacques Chirac agreed in May 1999, and negotiations began over a new statute that would confer the high-sounding but ambiguous label of "overseas country" within the French republic (*PIR*, 1 June 1999; Von Strokirch 2000).

During a visit to Papeete in August 2002, French Overseas Territories Minister Brigitte Girardin said, "Without French Polynesia, France would

not be a great power, and France never failed to help Tahiti when needed.” She promised more financial support from the post-nuclear Economic Restructuring Fund created in 1996, tax exemptions to encourage outside investment, and “new political evolution” that would upgrade local administrative power so that new French laws would not infringe on bills passed by the local assembly as long as the latter conformed to the French constitution and the European Union courts. Flosse, a career Gaullist closely allied with Chirac (who had been newly reelected in 2002), complained about the meddling in French Polynesian lawmaking by the previous Socialist government in Paris, but he got along well with Gaullist Premier Jean-Pierre Raffarin, who supported his desire to expand self-government. “Independence would lead to dictatorship and misery,” Flosse said, “[but] our autonomy statute was meant to evolve” (*PIR*, 24 June, 24 Aug 2002). By March 2003, the French Parliament passed some “decentralization” amendments to the constitution, which called overseas territories “overseas collectivities.” Flosse said he would request a further name change to “overseas country” and sponsor an organic law that would allow the French Polynesian Territorial Assembly to pass its own “laws of the country,” protect local job hiring, enable French Polynesia to share more governing powers with Paris, and contest any new French laws that interfered with its own authority (*PIR*, 20 March, 27 May, 7 July 2003).

In July 2003, the Territorial Assembly began to debate the proposed new

statute but Flosse wanted to limit the discussion of its 194 articles to only four days. The opposition threatened to boycott the proceedings if all the articles were not debated, since the new laws would affect the territory for decades, but Flosse’s absolute majority of 28 of 49 TA seats passed the statute as he wished, while the opposition sang a nationalist song in the public gallery in protest (*PIR*, 2 July, 7 July 2003). Flosse also wanted Paris to grant French Polynesia a second senatorial seat in the French Parliament by 2004, in order to mimic New Caledonia, but the additional seat will not take effect until 2007 (*PIR*, 14 July 2003). Also in July, Chirac came to the South Pacific, visiting not only the French territories but also anglophone ex-colonies and powers. He said that he wanted France to be a “player” in the region’s security and development, one that could provide additional assistance directly or through the European Union. Old superpower rivalries were a thing of the past, he said, and now a spirit of cooperation should guide the Pacific countries. He supported Australia’s intervention in Solomon Islands, but Prime Minister John Howard was reluctant to allow France to take part in that peacekeeping operation in order to avoid making the exercise appear “neo-colonial” (*PIR*, 3 July, 29 July 2003). Chirac suggested that French Polynesia be given observer status at the Pacific Islands Forum, as New Caledonia had, but at their Auckland meeting the Forum countries expressed mixed feelings. Temaru and Rock Wamytan of New Caledonia had criticized France’s “checkbook diplo-

macy” and warned that the Flosse regime was a “Trojan horse” for French interests. Unlike New Caledonia, whose Noumea Accord specifically mentioned the prospect of independence, French Polynesia’s new statute contained no such option, and Temaru countered Flosse’s anti-independence ploy by continuing to call for his country to be inscribed on the United Nations decolonization list (*PIR*, 25 July, 4 Aug, 22 Aug 2003; *ABC*, 15 Aug 2003; *IB*, May 2004).

In Papeete, Chirac said that because Polynesia had hosted nuclear tests for thirty years, France was forever in its debt and would provide the territory with about US\$150 million a year in compensation for “lost revenues.” In response to protests during his visit by people from the contaminated atolls of Moruroa and Fangataufa, he also said that France would take responsibility for any test-related health problems if proof could be provided that such a link existed (*PIR*, 28 July, 29 July 2003). In fact, the director of France’s Atomic Energy Commission, René Pellat, had already admitted in May 1999 that the nuclear tests had caused cracks in the coral atolls, and since August 2002 former French Pacific test site workers had been demanding a complete medical investigation into their abnormally high rates of cancer (*PIR*, 5 May 1999; 21 Aug 2002). Instead, Chirac presided at a France-Oceania Summit in Papeete that was attended by the leaders of twenty Pacific Island countries, where he promised to double France’s Pacific Fund for financial aid: “Oceania is today at the heart of a new basin of world development.” Flosse donated another US\$1 million

of French Polynesia’s “own” money to the fund, though he was already under investigation for trying to spread influence by “humanitarian” aid giving in the region (*PIR*, 30 July, 4 Aug, 8 Aug, 12 Nov 2003; *NC*, 30 July 2003).

In late November 2003, the opposition in the Territorial Assembly criticized Flosse’s deficit spending, in particular an additional US\$1 million requested by the president and his cabinet to cover “outside works and services” and “subsidies to diverse associations.” Nicole Bouteau called that waste “scandalous,” and Tamara Bopp-Duppon of Tavini said it was “shameful,” adding, “You throw public money out the windows. When will you think of the little people?” Meanwhile, French military veterans were joined by a Polynesian association, Moruroa e Tatou, in filing a formal lawsuit, backed by the French Green and Communist parties, against the French state for “involuntary homicide” by exposing nuclear test site workers to harmful radiation (*NT*, 29 Nov 2003). Despite his history of corruption convictions, revenge against media criticism, and well-known clientelism (Von Strokirch 2002; *Le Monde*, 22 May 2004), Flosse continued to push the new statute through French legislative and legal channels until the Senate approved it just before Christmas. He also called for public bids to construct, at government expense (“outside works”?), a statue of Charles de Gaulle in the garden outside his presidential palace (*PIR*, 31 Oct, 11 Dec, 19 Dec 2003).

In January 2004, the French National Assembly approved the

new autonomy statute, which Flosse vowed would allow French Polynesia to establish its own diplomatic and trade missions abroad to promote economic growth. His opponents countered that it would also concentrate more power in his own office, to the point of allowing the head of the government to propose laws without TA initiative and making it theoretically possible for the president to be chosen without consulting the assembly, thus creating a quasi-monarchy without a popular referendum (*PIR*, 31 Oct 2003; 16 Jan, 30 Jan 2004). While awaiting the final verdict of the Constitutional Council in Paris, some French legislators lodged an appeal against the new statute, arguing that it vested too much power in the territorial president (*PIR*, 4 Feb 2004). Flosse had argued for a strong, stable executive that could run the country effectively and represent it abroad, much as in France; in 1958, de Gaulle had created a strong presidency with emergency powers when the Fifth French Republic replaced the weak, coalition-bound Fourth Republic. But socialists and even some Gaullists saw danger in creating a potential banana republic in Papeete. The president of French Polynesia, they warned, as opposed to the TA-elected president of the government of French Polynesia, might someday be chosen directly by the people and thus bypass the established democratic process, as in some African ex-colonies. Defenders of Flosse in the French Parliament said it would be “neo-colonial” to do otherwise, but Socialist Deputy René Dosière said, “This ‘presidentialization’ is not a good thing for Overseas, any more than it is good

for the métropole [mother country]” (*TPM*, March 2004).

Flosse assured his metropolitan backers and local loyalists that expanded autonomy was definitely “not a first step towards independence. French Polynesia wants to remain French. It is French, it is even more French than Polynesian.” In early March, the Constitutional Council formally approved the revised autonomy statute, but it also deleted key provisions, such as restricting land tenure in French Polynesia to local-born inhabitants or their descendants, putting police under local government control, and granting the local government the right to hold a referendum without French permission. Most importantly, it deleted a provision allowing the Territorial Assembly to pass “laws of the country” without prior approval from the French Parliament—New Caledonia received that last power in 1999, but the now-country of French Polynesia would not (*PIR*, 5 March 2004). In the March 2004 issue of *Tahiti-Pacifique Magazine*, du Prel published a detailed analysis that revealed several points about which Flosse seemed less than candid. First, the term “overseas country” meant nothing in French constitutional law, so it was only a cosmetic name change, as was the change in title of TA members from “territorial counselors” to “representatives” (Flosse had wanted “deputies”). The provisions for recognizing and preserving Tahitian identity were essentially already part of the previous statute, and the Tahitian language had become co-equal to French in court proceedings the previous year. The “country” government

could “participate” with the French State in a list of powers over the territory but not control them unilaterally; foreign relations conducted by French Polynesia still had to have the approval of Paris; and, as Girardin had made a point of emphasizing to the Senate, “laws of the country” were simply “administrative acts,” which did not carry the same authority as those in New Caledonia. The local government could, however, practice affirmative action in favoring local residents in hiring, and the president of the country could name his own cabinet of ministers, with the approval of only the French High Commissioner (not of the elected assembly, as in New Caledonia) (*TPM*, March 2004). In a sense, Flosse was really seeking more autonomy for himself, not necessarily for French Polynesia, except in some nationalistic-sounding terminology.

What was perhaps more significant was the modification of the electoral laws, by means of amendments slipped into the statute by Flosse without any discussion in the French Parliament. The number of TA seats expanded from 49 to 57, giving 5 more to the populous Windward Islands (Tahiti and Moorea), 1 more to the Leeward Islands (Huahine, Raiatea, Bora Bora), 2 more to the Tuamotus-Gambiers (which were divided into two districts with 3 seats each), but the Australs or Marquesas would retain 3 seats each. Although the Tuamotus received 2 more seats and the Leeward Islands 1, and Flosse was most popular in the rural outer islands where he was born (the Gambiers), the increase of 5 seats in the urban Windward Islands, which

already had 32 (three-quarters of the total population lived in Tahiti-Moorea), actually favored Temaru’s Tavini Huiraatira, by 37–20 or a net gain of 2 seats. The new rules also gave a one-third “bonus” of seats to whichever list won the majority in a district and set a minimum of 3 percent of votes cast to win a seat in the assembly, theoretically eliminating the need for a second round runoff vote and enabling larger, stable majorities to rule the country (*TPM*, March 2004).

Also in March 2004, only two years after he had crushed the left in his reelection to the French presidency, Chirac’s party experienced a disaster in the metropolitan regional elections, losing twelve out of fourteen regions that it had previously controlled. This amounted to a very negative referendum on Premier Raffarin’s administration, in part because of a sagging economy (*L’Express*, 29 March 2004). In spite of this setback to his patron in Paris (or perhaps because of it), Flosse urged Chirac’s cabinet to dissolve the French Polynesian Territorial Assembly and call for new elections two years early, arguing that the change of statute made new elections appropriate, as in 1985 (*PIR*, 7 April 2004). Temaru’s Tavini Huiraatira party, which in 2001 had won only ten out of forty-nine TA seats, joined with three other opposition parties in requesting that the French Council of State delay the new election, but to no avail. Tavini then formed coalition lists of candidates with the pro-independence parties Ai’a Api, Here Ai’a, and Ia Mana Te Nunaa. In May, this Union for Democracy (UPD) organized marches

into Papeete of about 6,000 people, who rallied around the statue of Tahitian nationalist Pouvanaa a Oopa outside the TA hall. “Our objective,” Temaru said, “is to do like the French in France during the recent regional elections—to overturn the government in place and install a political change.” The French Socialists, who had just made a comeback in the regional elections, signed a partnership agreement with Tavini (*PIR*, 21 April, 3 May, 17 May 2004; *TPM*, June 2004). Temaru said that the UPD had only one opponent in the election, Flosse’s Tahoeraa Huiraatira party, and he denounced the “abuses and waste of a single man” (*Le Monde*, 21 May 2004).

On 23 May, 78 percent of registered voters went to the polls, an increase of 10 percent over the 2001 election. Flosse’s gathering of one thousand supporters in his palace took heart when Tahoeraa Huiraatira won most of the outer islands (whose polls closed earlier), and it wound up with twenty-eight seats, more than any other party. But the UPD won twenty-seven, due mainly to votes in the Windward Islands, which left two autonomists holding the balance. Flosse had been president for twenty years, but this outcome threatened his status as a pillar for Chirac overseas; in fact, Jacques Lafleur of New Caledonia had already met defeat earlier in the month. Flosse had scoffed at the UPD marches but now called for a referendum on independence to remind voters of what Temaru really stood for. Equally ironic, Temaru said on television that independence needed to be prepared for, especially economically, for another ten or

fifteen years (a formula similar to that proposed in New Caledonia’s Noumea Accord). There appeared to be a stalemate, since neither Tahoeraa nor Tavini-UPD had a clear majority, but the two small autonomist parties, Philip Schyle’s Fetia Api and Nicole Bouteau’s No Oe E Te Nunaa, did not want to ally with Flosse (*PIR*, 26 May 2004).

Chirac’s cabinet in Paris was not amused by the prospect of another defeat overseas, after the surprising defeat earlier that month of pro-Chirac lists in both Guadeloupe and New Caledonia, as well as a setback in the French Antilles in December 2003 (where voters in Martinique and Guadeloupe had been asked to choose between their present “department” status and a vaguely defined unification of the two entities with more autonomy; they had rejected the “unknown” details). Chirac’s political empire overseas, like his party structure in France, depended on very personal ties to loyal clients—despite the problems that arose from subsidizing a class of overpaid civil servants and politicians with “free money” from the “big mother hen,” as journalist Eric Conan put it, and thus promoting economic dependency instead of production (*L’Express*, 27 Nov 2003; 28 June 2004). Girardin warned the Socialists not to celebrate prematurely over the UPD success in the election and, according to the newspaper *La Dépêche de Tahiti*, she told Flosse that France would “turn off the taps” if Temaru took power (Girardin later denied that quote and said she was only concerned about the negative effect on outside investment if the pro-independence leader won). When

Flosse claimed that the UPD success had “opened a crisis,” Girardin sent 300 extra police to Papeete—in order, she told Dosière in the National Assembly, to ensure a “serene” climate for the electoral process (*PIR*, 28 May, 3 June, 4 June, 9 June 2004). Flosse said on television that the election results had only expressed a warning from the people, not a real desire to get rid of him (*ABC*, 1 June 2004). Wallis and Futuna’s senator in Paris, Robert Laufoaulu (who represented the pro-Chirac government of that very dependent overseas territory), wrote a letter of support to Flosse, calling the election result “unfair” but urging him to learn from it and “rectify your policies” (*PIR*, 4 June 2004).

The first test of which party would find enough allies to muster a majority in the assembly was the election of the TA president on 3 June. Both sides courted partners, but Schyle and Bouteau decided to support the UPD against Flosse. Those two autonomist votes should have given the UPD the twenty-nine-seat majority it needed to elect Antony Géros as TA president. But Emile Vernaudon, who had been on the UPD list in the May elections but was also a former Flosse ally, oddly ran as the Tahoeraa candidate in the TA ballot, a move that even the official French media called a “destabilization” maneuver. With Vernaudon’s crossover, the UPD needed an additional vote from Chantal Flores of the Austral Islands to elect Géros, 29–28, to cries of joy in the public gallery. Schyle and Bouteau said they would also support Temaru’s candidacy for president of French Polynesia but did not immediately agree to be part of the UPD. Flosse then tried

another maneuver: he did not apply to run for the presidency by the required deadline and instead said he would appeal to the French Council of State to nullify the 3 June election of TA officers, which he said violated “public rights and liberties” by not giving Tahoeraa five of the ten positions. He would also try to have an administrative tribunal postpone the presidential election, which was scheduled for 10 June. The Council of State quickly rejected the first petition, and Temaru won election to the new presidency on 14 June—unopposed, with thirty votes, and against a Tahoeraa boycott. He said he still wanted independence but would wait ten to twenty years until the “political, economic and social conditions are ripe” to seek it (*PIR*, 4 June, 8 June, 9 June, 15 June 2004; *RFO*, 7 June 2004).

Because Temaru had to depend on the support of autonomist or independent parties to keep his TA majority, and opinion polls showed that the majority of the population of French Polynesia did not support complete independence, he said he would ask France to negotiate an agreement similar to New Caledonia’s Noumea Accord of 1998, which gave that autonomous territory the right to organize a self-determination referendum after fifteen to twenty years. He also supported Flosse’s efforts to adopt the Euro as the local currency instead of French Pacific francs, and vowed to promote tourism and cultured pearl sales to boost the local economy (*ABC*, 16 June 2004). By mid-June, he announced his presidential cabinet, which he reduced almost in half, from sixteen to nine ministries, in order to cut administrative

costs. Temaru himself took charge of foreign relations and municipal development, with Jacqui Drollet of the pro-independence Ia Mana Te Nunaa as vice president and minister of tourism, the environment, air transport, and handicrafts. Other cabinet members included Emile Vanfasse, a retired official of the French revenue department in Paris, who became minister of finance and commerce; Jean-Marius Raapoto, a Tahitian language professor, who became minister of education, culture, youth, and language policy; Keitapu Maamaatuaiahutapu, a marine biology professor, who became minister of natural resources, the pearl industry, fishing, and farming; and the lone woman on the team, Marie-Laure Vanizette, who became minister of health, human services, and women's affairs. The resilient Vernaudeau became minister of communications, decentralization, outer islands, and sports (*PIR*, 17 June 2004; *TP*, 6 July 2004).

Temaru hoped to gain observer status at the Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Apia in August 2004, because he wanted the Forum's help in gaining independence for his country, including support for getting French Polynesia onto the United Nations decolonization list the way New Caledonia had been added after the Kanak uprising in the 1980s (*PIR*, 21 June 2004). He also planned to travel to Europe in July, to meet with Chirac and Girardin to discuss development aid, nuclear compensation, and decentralization, and to discuss the Euro issue with European Union officials in Brussels (*PIR*, 22 June 2004). Drollet told Nic Maclellan on ABC's *Go Asia Pacific* program that when the new government conducted

a financial inventory it found that France had not yet paid the US\$250 million promised as compensation for nuclear testing, as well as other amounts pledged for infrastructure improvement. Drollet expected France to live up to commitments it had made to the previous regime: "We're obliged to be partners as we have years of shared history and things don't change that much from one day to the next" (*ABC*, 30 June 2004). Temaru also met with Moruroa e Tatou (French Nuclear Weapons Test Veterans) and agreed to create a subcommittee to look into the impact of nuclear testing (*PIR*, 6 July 2004). As the annual Heiva i Tahiti festival was about to begin, he met with French High Commissioner Michel Mathieu and said he was "glad we're on the same wave length" (*TP*, 11 July 2004).

The June issue of the independent monthly magazine *Tahiti-Pacifique* carried several analyses of the Temaru "revolution," calling it a vote not for independence but against the "Flosse system." Temaru's slim TA majority depended on cooperation with autonomists, though he did inherit Flosse's reinvented presidency. Editor Du Prel highlighted several factors that helped to explain Flosse's setback. For example, his own electoral reform backfired (by giving the bonus of seats to the UPD rather than to Tahoeraa in the populous Windward Islands), as did his decision to call an early election instead of waiting until 2006. In addition, the nuclear-testing era had disrupted French Polynesia, which had languished under benign neglect before 1965 and thus maintained its communal, rural traditions until the influx of CEP money and metropolitan personnel with high salaries changed

everything. The autonomy statute that Flosse himself achieved in 1984 kept the outside money flowing in and created new class divisions, which for the majority meant a “loss of dignity, and that is not accepted by the Polynesian” (*TPM*, June 2004, 10).

Thus Tavini came to represent the have-nots, who had migrated to the capital but had been excluded from the Flosse patronage system and from the high salaries that raised prices for everyone. In 2001 alone, Flosse’s ministers received pay increases of 42 percent, which, combined with the extra pay that metropolitan civil servants earned by working on contract in the overseas territories, forced local families to pool their resources to survive. Ultimately, Flosse was trapped in his own ivory tower, surrounded by yes-men and cut off from reality. Even the expatriate business community turned against him because of high taxes. Political scientist Sémir Al Wardi noted that under the old voting system Tahoeraa would have preserved its absolute majority, that the very lack of debate over the details of the new statute had allowed a determined opposition to misunderstand or misrepresent some of its provisions, and that the more Flosse created nationalist symbols to defuse a desire for independence, the more he made that concept itself less dramatic. As the mass marches in Papeete of 15 May showed, Flosse had enabled the UPD to become the champion of democracy, defending republican liberties against tyranny and privilege, the autonomy of “them, not us” (*TPM*, June 2004).

DAVID CHAPPELL

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HAWAIIAN ISSUES

On 7 September 2003, Native Hawaiians and supporters from all walks of life flooded Waikīkī, Hawai‘i’s tourism Mecca, with a sea of red shirts symbolizing the red ‘āweoweo (a school of small red fish seen as predicting a big change). Clad in t-shirts that read “Kū i ka Pono!” (Stand for Justice), an estimated 8,000 people marched in support of native rights and institutions and in protest against efforts to dismantle them (Bernardo 2003). The primary sponsors, ‘Īlio‘ulaokalani (a coalition of kumu hula [hula masters]) and the Kamehameha Schools, were able to rally often-disparate voices within the Hawaiian community. Students, teachers, community leaders, representatives from several ali‘i (chiefly, royal) trusts, state offices, and civic clubs stood together as one to face a common threat. Other notables participating in the march were Governor Linda Lingle and Lieutenant Governor Duke Aiona, who delivered a speech from atop a makeshift podium. Even University of Hawai‘i President Evan Dobbelle, UH Mānoa Chancellor Peter Englert, and other supportive university administrators made the trek down the tourist-lined streets.

The 2003 Kū i Ka Pono march was organized in response to the numerous lawsuits challenging the existence of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, as well as

the Hawaiian-preference admissions policy of the Kamehameha Schools—in particular, the *Arakaki v Lingle*, *Mohica-Cummings v Kamehameha Schools*, and *Doe v Kamehameha* cases. Since the march, the *Mohica-Cummings* case has been settled out of court, allowing the student in question to stay at the school provided he remain in good standing. The Kamehameha Schools prevailed in the *Doe* case. In *Arakaki v Lingle*, the courts ruled that the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, a US federal agency, could not be included in the litigation; the case is still pending.

‘Īlio‘ulaokalani was planning another Kū i Ka Pono march for 6 September 2004, the one-year anniversary of the original march. But this time, one man would be noticeably absent from the ranks of marchers. As a result of a controversial decision by the University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents, Evan Dobbelle was unceremoniously fired from his position as the university’s president.

Evan Dobbelle came to Hawai‘i with a substantial reputation for enacting change and reinvigorating stagnating institutions. Born in Washington, Dobbelle earned his bachelor’s, master’s, and PhD degrees from the University of Massachusetts and an additional master’s in public administration from Harvard. He went on to occupy such positions as mayor of Pittsfield, Massachusetts; chief of protocol for the White House; assistant secretary of state during the Carter administration; chief financial officer of the Democratic National Committee; president of Middlesex Commu-

nity College; chancellor and president of the City College System of San Francisco; and president of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

While at Trinity College, Dobelle was credited as the driving force behind the revitalization of surrounding neighborhoods, previously overrun with drug dealers and plagued by crime. The new “Learning Corridor,” which includes a Montessori elementary school, a middle school, a high school, a job-training center, and a police substation, rejuvenated the area surrounding the college. On campus, a performing arts center, a studio arts building, and an expanding library made the struggling college more appealing. As a result, the number of applications to the school increased 34 percent in the following years (Wolfe 1998).

Meanwhile, the University of Hawai‘i was beset with sliding national rankings, significant budget cutbacks, and a faculty strike in April of 2001. Someone of Dobelle’s background was just what the university was looking for to energize and revitalize the institution. His accomplishments stood out among the seventy other applicants to fill former President Kenneth Mortimer’s shoes. On 1 July 2001, President Dobelle took the reins, with an annual salary of \$442,000 and a seven-year contract (Gima 2004).

Immediately on taking office, Dobelle began remodeling the university by replacing the old community college system with one in which the various regional campuses were components of one cohesive system. He sought to model the University of Hawai‘i after the successful University

of California system by streamlining administration, unifying all ten campuses, and turning the community colleges into four-year baccalaureate schools. In his first-year evaluation as president, Dobelle was praised by the UH Board of Regents and credited with inspiring “a change in attitude” throughout the system (Creamer and Depledge 2004). However, faculty, junior administrators, and the powerful board of regents soon grew dissatisfied with the systematic upheaval of the ongoing reorganization.

Perhaps his greatest misstep, and indeed the turning point in Dobelle’s career in Hawai‘i, was his endorsement of Democratic Lieutenant Governor Mazie Hirono in the 2002 gubernatorial race. After Hirono was defeated by Republican Linda Lingle, the new governor shared with the press her disappointment in Dobelle’s endorsement.

In addition, the grand promises Dobelle made on his installation had yet to show tangible results. In a scathing essay called “Dangerous Equations,” Amy Agbayani, Director of Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity, along with Dr Ralph Moberly, Senator Donna Mercado Kim, and Representative Mark Takai, wrote that, after two years of Dobelle’s administration, they saw “an institution where student tuition is being raised while administrative salaries are boosted by more than \$4 million, where substance and services take a back seat to marketing and public relations, and where a globe-trotting President fails to bring home the money he promised.” The authors concluded that “our beloved University is in turmoil—from highly paid

administrators who have not proven their worth to concerns about cronyism, from constituencies who have been ignored and million-dollar logo and marketing plans to questionable expenditures of research funds, from inattention to administrative arrogance and deception” (Agbayani and others 2003). Meanwhile, Governor Lingle appointed four new members to the university’s board of regents. Ultimately, she would appoint eight of the twelve-member board. Supporters of Dobelle decried the mounting criticism as arising from political retribution for his endorsement of a defeated gubernatorial candidate, and as cheap shots based in political patronage (Rees 2004).

By April 2004, rumors of the dysfunctional relationship between Dobelle and the board of regents were circulating rapidly and seemed to be confirmed by an unfavorable second-year evaluation of Dobelle by the board. Dobelle was highly criticized for having politicized the university when he endorsed a gubernatorial candidate the year before; hiring former contacts as consultants and top administrators; and spending too lavishly on travel (Gima 2004).

However, Dobelle was able to earn a few allies at the university. One of his first acts as president had been to grant an unprecedented \$1.5 million for Native Hawaiian programs at the university. In addition, acknowledging that the university itself sits on land formerly belonging to the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, he committed to creating a “Hawaiian place of learning.” By this, he earned the loyalty of the Kualii Council (the Mānoa division of Pūko‘a, the Native Hawaiian

advisory council to the UH system), as he was the first president to acknowledge the needs of Native Hawaiian students and the positive impact of incorporating Hawaiian ideals at the university level. When the board of regents announced their decision to fire Dobelle as president in June of 2004, members of the council were quick to deliver their objections to the board.

The board’s decision to fire Dobelle came as a surprise to most, including Dobelle, who was away on the US continent visiting colleges with his son at the time. While the tension between Dobelle and the board was well known, their decision to fire him and announce it to the media before informing Dobelle was perceived as political retribution. Former Governor Benjamin Cayetano characterized their actions as “no class, that is absolutely no class” (Creamer and Depledge 2004). In addition, the board said that Dobelle was being terminated “for cause,” which was defined in his contract as one of the following: conviction for a felony offense; mental instability or other inability to perform the duties of the office; or conduct that “(a) constitutes moral turpitude, (b) brings public disrespect and contempt or ridicule upon the university, and (c) proven in a court of law, would constitute grounds for criminal conviction of the president or civil liability of the university” (Daysog 2004). In the event of a “for cause” termination, Dobelle would be ineligible for his \$2.2 million severance package.

In the weeks following the announcement, the exact “cause” was not revealed, but members of

the board hinted at financial inaccuracies in Dobelle's expense accounts. Inevitably, Dobelle challenged the firing and was able to win back most of his original severance package, after he was absolved of wrongdoing and the board admitted that there was no "cause" to fire Dobelle in the first place. Dobelle has been given a two-year research appointment with the UH Urban and Regional Planning Department.

In a related political issue, Hawai'i's congressional delegation put forth a new version of the bill for the federal recognition of Native Hawaiians as indigenous peoples of America. Previously referred to as the "Akaka Bill" (after Hawai'i's Senator Daniel Akaka who introduced the original bill in 1999), the bill has been officially renamed the "Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act." In the new version, the bill stipulates a twenty-year statute of limitations on claims against the United States after passage of the bill and provides more detailed procedures for the defining and registration of "Native Hawaiians." The bill continues to incite controversy both within and outside the Native Hawaiian community. On the US side, however, it seems that federal recognition is preferred, at least compared to any other kind of self-determination initiatives. In January 2004, the US Congress passed legislation creating the Office of Native Hawaiian Relations under the jurisdiction of the US Department of Interior, parallel to the existing Bureau of Indian Affairs. [For more on the "Akaka Bill," see the article by J Kēhaulani Kauanui, this issue, pages 1-27; and the interview with Mililani

Trask by Noe Noe Wong-Wilson, this issue, pages 142-156.]

Another controversial issue is the fragile relationship between the Bishop Museum and the Native Hawaiian community. This time, the controversy centers on the handling of burial artifacts. For centuries, native peoples all over the world have had bones and other sacred objects exhumed and put on display in museums and in other private collections. In 1990, descendants of these stolen ancestors—at least those in the United States—found relief in the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). The act was designed to provide a process for repatriating human remains, associated funerary objects, objects of cultural patrimony, and sacred objects to Native American and Native Hawaiian descendants. As a result, bones and other funerary items formerly held by museums and in private collections have been reclaimed by their descendants.

But the situation in Hawai'i is considerably more complex. The characteristics of a "Native Hawaiian organization" are less stringent than those of Native American groups, leaving room for multiple interpretations. Hawai'i's own Bishop Museum seeks to be recognized as such an institution.

In the museum's Interim and proposed Final Guidance of NAGPRA statement, they argue that "Bishop Museum" was "conceived and made real by the ali'i (chiefs) and other people of the Hawaiian Kingdom" and that the museum has a "dual role as a steward of Native Hawaiian culture as well as a museum with

repatriation responsibilities.” The museum recognizes itself as a “Native Hawaiian Organization” (NHO) for three reasons. First, “no NHO is culturally affiliated with NAGPRA cultural items from Hawai‘i [as a result of] the breaking of the kapu system in 1819 and the rapid metamorphosis of the traditional forms of Hawaiian governance that were maintained through the kapu system into Westernized forms of government and religion.” Therefore, “it is difficult to conclude that any existing NHO can be traced back to a specific ‘identifiable earlier group,’ other than all Hawaiians existing before traditional practices were discontinued in 1819.”

However, if we view the idea of “shared group identity” from a broader perspective, then all groups, including the museum, “meeting the NHO requirement of purpose, function and expertise in respect to Native Hawaiians has a relationship of shared group identity to the Native Hawaiian people of old.” Anyone engaged in the perpetuation of the Native Hawaiian culture qualifies.

Third, the Bishop Museum became the stewards of the objects formerly held by the Hawaiian National Museum established during the Hawaiian Kingdom after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. Because the museum has continued its role as repository and steward of the objects to the present, it is a direct descendant of the national repository. This is portrayed as establishing the Museum’s “close cultural affiliation to cultural items in the collections.” (Bishop Museum 2004).

Besides funerary objects, NAGPRA also sets up policies for the repatria-

tion of objects of “cultural patrimony” and “sacred objects.” “Cultural patrimony” refers to objects that have an “ongoing historical, traditional, or cultural importance” and “cannot be alienated, appropriated, or conveyed by any individual” (NAGPRA, 2[3][d]). “Sacred objects” are those “specific ceremonial objects” which are needed by “their present day adherents” (2 NAGPRA, [3][c]). However, the museum does not recognize that it has in its possession any objects that meet either of these definitions. In addition, the museum declares that it has “right of possession” of unassociated funerary objects by virtue of “voluntary consent of an individual or group that had authority of alienation.” In other words, the items were not stolen, as was common with Native American objects.

Opponents object to the museum’s claim for three general reasons. First, it is a direct conflict of interest that “the Bishop Museum would be able to claim cultural items from its own collection while at the same time hold responsibility for repatriation of such items under NAGPRA” (Ayau 2004). The museum could obstruct the repatriation of objects to other Native Hawaiian Organizations in favor of their own claims. Second, opponents also argue that the museum’s claim runs contrary to the intent of the law that seeks redress for harms committed when Native people’s remains and other objects were taken and put on display in museums. Third, it “undermines the ability of Native Hawaiians to provide proper care” by obstructing claims and opening new wounds instead of healing old ones, thereby canceling out NAGPRA objectives

(Ayau 2004). Twenty-three cultural practitioners signed a letter asserting these arguments and further characterized the proposed policy as “insulting, paternalistic and colonial” (Ayau 2004). Hawai‘i’s Senator Daniel Inouye, contributing author of NAGPRA, also opposes the Bishop Museum’s claim: “It is not a Hawaiian organization, it’s a museum” (Viotti 2004).

In November 2003, the ongoing tug-of-war over land in Hawai‘i reached two milestones: the return of Kaho‘olawe to the State of Hawai‘i, and a historic sail to the Northwest Hawaiian Islands to promote awareness of environmental concern. For over a century, land in Hawai‘i has been under the control of the federal and state governments. Following the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor, Kaho‘olawe was seized by the US Navy for use in target practice. Sixty-two years later, in November 2003, the US military returned the devastated island to the State of Hawai‘i to be held in trust for Native Hawaiians. As auspicious as the long-awaited event was, there are mixed feelings about the transfer of management from the federal to state governments. The decade-long clean-up effort by the US military has only cleared a small portion of the island. In fact, when the navy officially left the island on 12 March 2004, only about 71 percent of the surface and 9 percent of the subsurface cleanup was estimated to have been completed (Boyd 2003). In the minds of many involved in the transition, as well as cultural practitioners poised to access the island, is the question of whether or not the navy will continue its clean-up efforts now that control of the island

has left their hands (Boyd 2003). During the period of transition, access remains guarded, as both the land and surrounding reefs continue to be dangerous.

Many people think of the Hawaiian Islands as extending only as far as the northernmost inhabited island of Ni‘ihau. However, the archipelago includes ten additional islands stretching 1,200 miles, with reefs covering approximately 9,000 square kilometers. The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are a haven for the most pristine reef ecosystem in the world, with nearly 7,000 species, one-quarter of which are endemic to the area. The reserve protecting the area was established in December 2000 by federal executive order. In May 2004, a crew on the legendary double-hulled voyaging canoe *Hōkūle‘a* visited these islands, piloting the multiagency effort, “Navigating Change,” designed to raise awareness of the environmental decline of the main Hawaiian Islands and encourage people to care for and protect remaining natural resources. (For more information, please consult the web sites of the Polynesian Voyaging Society and the “Navigating Change” project: <http://www.pvs-hawaii.com/voyages/voyaging_03_nwhi.php> and <<http://www.navigatingchange.org>>).

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MĀORI ISSUES

2003–2004 has been a year of massive upheaval for Māori. In June 2003 the New Zealand government announced its intention to legislate the confiscation of the country's fore-

shore and seabed from Māori. At the time there was a furious and uncharacteristically united outcry from Māori. The level of anger among Māori against the government on this issue has increased over the past year as the government has refused not only to back down but also to enter into any meaningful consultation or dialogue with those who will be directly affected, the numerous coastal whānau (extended families) and hapū (groupings of extended families), many of whom have had rights to their own particular areas of the coast for many hundreds of years.

Māori have organized their opposition with unprecedented levels of cooperation, while the government has tried desperately to undermine them. Both the policy and the legislation have come under sustained attack as Māori have used every forum, strategy, and mechanism they could identify to try to have it removed. This included mounting the biggest protest march ever seen in the country. They also attacked the male Māori members of the Labour government caucus, including the minister of Māori affairs, labeling them as traitors when they ended up supporting the legislation and ignoring the clear and unequivocal instructions of their constituents. Two Māori women members of government who opposed the legislation drew huge support from Māori. When one of them, Tariana Turia, resigned from Parliament, forcing a by-election, voter turnout was unusually high, even though none of the main political parties offered any candidates. After setting up and then co-leading the new Māori Party, Turia took 92 percent of the vote,

returning triumphantly to Parliament with a new mandate.

But the government has remained resolute and determined to pass its foreshore and seabed legislation well before the 2005 general election, launching attacks on Māori leaders and several judges in an attempt to deflect their criticisms. Opposition parties, except for New Zealand First, opposed the legislation but made it very clear that they were not doing so to support Māori legal entitlements. Only the Green Party supported Māori. And in the midst of the foreshore and seabed turmoil, highlights on the Māori calendar—such as the successful launching of the long-awaited Māori Television Service in March 2004, the nomination of Keisha Castle-Hughes to win an Academy Award for her role in *Whale Rider*, and the launch of the Māori Party—were all seized on by Māori to assist them in their battle to stop the government's foreshore and seabed legislation.

The government decision to pursue legislation to remove Māori rights to the foreshore and seabed was a knee-jerk reaction to the Court of Appeal's unanimous decision in the Marlborough case (that is, the case of *Ngati Apa, Ngati Koata, Ngati Kuia, Ngati Rarua, Ngati Tama, Ngati Toa and Rangitane and Anor v the Attorney-General and Ors* CA CA 173/01). The decision, issued on 19 June 2003, indicated that the Crown's assertion of its ownership of the country's foreshore and seabed was not correct, and that the Māori Land Court had the jurisdiction to investigate the status of that land and to determine whether it is customary Māori land.

The decision upheld domestic law (The Māori Land Act); English common law (which recognizes that when the English colonize another country, indigenous peoples' "customary rights and title" to their lands remain and cannot be extinguished in times of peace without their consent); and international law (with respect to the rights of indigenous peoples). The decision brought huge, albeit very temporary, relief for coastal whānau, hapū, and iwi (tribal groupings) throughout the country. After 134 years of pursuing ownership of the foreshore and seabed through the courts, blockages were now removed and the court could investigate Māori property rights claims, including ownership.

Four days later, in a move that showed flagrant disregard for all constitutional conventions and due process, the government announced that it would legislate to stop all New Zealand Courts from considering cases that were already before them on the matter. The legislation would overrule the decision of the Court of Appeal and vest complete and absolute ownership of the seabed and foreshore in the Crown, confiscating it from the whānau and hapū throughout the country who hold mana whenua and hence ownership of them. (Very simplistically, mana whenua can be defined as the power, authority, control, and responsibility derived from the gods for a particular area of land.) However, the government would protect any non-Māori interests in the foreshore and seabed. So the harbor boards, port companies, and an increasing number of private individuals, many of whom

are foreign investors and speculators, would not have their property rights removed. Such a blatantly racist approach meant that the government was effectively singling out Māori and declaring war on them. The Māori response was immediate and unanimous: complete opposition and abhorrence of what the government was suggesting. But for Māori it was also simply history repeating itself. In the 1860s the government had legislated to confiscate Māori land in order to satisfy settler greed for Māori land and resources. Predictably, that led to the New Zealand land wars. This was no different. The ease with which the government could flout fundamental constitutional norms, and domestic, common, or international law, took legal scholars by surprise and brought into question the sanctity of the rule of law (Tomas and Johnston 2003; Brookfield 2004; Ruru 2004; Waitangi Tribunal 2004; Bennion 2004a, 2004b).

The powerlessness and marginalization of Māori within the New Zealand Parliament was clearly on display as their increasingly angry protests went unheeded. By August the government had published their proposal (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2003). In December its policy was released. In April 2004 the Foreshore and Seabed Bill was introduced in the House. In July, a parliamentary select committee started hearing submissions on the bill; it is scheduled to report back by November 2004. Although all ten government members of Parliament who have declared their Māori background strenuously opposed the proposed confiscation when it was first

announced (NZH, 25 June 2003), Māori were stunned and mystified when all but two of them were subsequently persuaded to support it. Their support, along with the belated support of the New Zealand First Party, would ensure its safe passage through Parliament. It was as a direct result of these betrayals that the Māori Party was set up, with a mandate that the clearly articulated wishes of the people must take precedence over the wishes of the party.

It did not take long for the sinister, anti-Māori underbelly of the Pākehā population to display itself, as reports of a poll indicated that most were happy to support the legislation (NZH, 18 Aug 2003). They were happy, it seemed, for the Crown to take ownership of the foreshore and seabed regardless of the strong Māori interests already there, or the fact that, in the Court of Appeal, the Crown had been unable to prove ownership. This theft by legislation was an easy way of getting a very substantial resource for free. After all, the high standard of living enjoyed by the great majority of Pākehā New Zealanders has always depended on their being able to gain access to Māori land and resources at little or no cost, regardless of how unfair and unjust that might be for the Māori owners, or the fact that most of those acquisitions were illegal. Just when Māori were hoping that the treaty claims processes were finally signaling an end to such discrimination, it resurfaced with even greater vigor and determination.

The opposition recognized the growing Pākehā backlash against Māori and was quick to exploit it. In January 2004, leader of the National

Party and the opposition Don Brash, to his considerable political advantage, promised to abolish “special privileges” for Māori. He portrayed the Waitangi Tribunal as delivering privileges to Māori, deliberately misrepresenting its role of identifying breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi and recommending strategies for removing the prejudice caused. When Māori and the media asked him to identify the “special privileges,” he could not do so, but it didn’t appear to matter. His ratings in the opinion polls continued to climb, ignoring the fact that, as both history and statistics show, it is Pākehā who enjoy substantial privileges in New Zealand, and Māori and their Pacific Island relations who are overwhelmingly the country’s most disadvantaged groups. Georgina Te Heuheu, who had been Brash’s spokesperson on Māori Affairs and the only Māori in the National Party caucus, was sacked after she declined to support her leader’s attacks; she was replaced by the deputy leader, who was happy to launch even harsher attacks on Māori. The attacks were unashamedly and openly racist, and the long-held pretense that most Pākehā New Zealanders do not harbor racist attitudes toward Māori could no longer be sustained. But that did not stop them from attacking one of the country’s foremost and internationally acclaimed entertainers, Bic Runga, when she told an Irish newspaper in March that New Zealand can be a racist country and that racism had been a constant feature of her childhood in Christchurch (*BT*, 26 March 2004).

The National Party’s success in

attacking Māori was quickly picked up by the government, with the prime minister announcing her own “review” of Māori programs. In fact the government had already started withdrawing funding from Māori programs, so the opposition attack allowed the withdrawal to proceed more expeditiously. Most Māori programs would have difficulty surviving without government assistance. But the unpublicized withdrawal of \$6 million from the Māori Television Service just six weeks before it was launched did not prevent it from going on the air in March and enjoying good reviews from all commentators. One of its very few detractors was the National Party, which promised to close it down. But a poll taken in June indicated good support for the service, with non-Māori making up 65 percent of its audience (*NZH*, 25 June 2004). The service is unashamedly supportive of Māori and often very critical of the government. It is unlikely that government funding will be restored, but given the quality and professionalism of the service it is expected that the private funding provided to launch and keep the service running will continue to be available.

Māori leaders were relying in part on the media in their battle against the government’s foreshore and seabed legislation, and the Māori Television Service was a welcome addition to their resources. Since July 2003 they had been organizing hui (gatherings) and running information campaigns to keep Māori and the general public fully informed on the issue. Within three weeks of the government’s first announcement they had

convened a national hui to discuss the issue. The resolutions from the 1,000-strong gathering of iwi from throughout the country signaled very strong warnings to both the government and all Māori members of Parliament not to attempt to extinguish or redefine Māori customary title or rights. Representatives returned home from the meeting to inform their communities of the outcomes and to seek instructions on measures to be taken to resolve the problem. Hui were convened by iwi groups throughout the country and a second national gathering was held at the end of August.

The August 2003 hui established a collective called *Te Ope Mana a Tai*, a name that translates approximately as “the group that holds paramount authority for the coast and seas.” It was made up of tribal leaders, legal advisors (including judges), policy analysts, media experts, and other professionals. It was headed by the iwi that had won the Court of Appeal decision and included representation from most other coastal iwi. Its mandate was to gather and disseminate information to Māori and the general public and to carry out work on behalf of Māori on this issue. The group undertook an extensive publicity campaign in an attempt to inform the country of the seriousness of the issue—and to counter the misinformation, being promulgated by the government, that if Māori ownership was given legal recognition, Māori would close off access to the country’s beaches and sell them. *Te Ope Mana a Tai* also relied heavily on decisions from the many local and regional hui convened to discuss the matter, and from the three

further national hui that they convened. Other important means of strategizing, keeping people informed, and seeking the support of non-Māori included a website <www.teope.co.nz>; e-mail groups; teleconferencing; public and conference presentations; university seminars and lectures; advertising through pamphlets, posters, and education packages; meeting with government ministers and other members of Parliament; supporting the national Hikoī (protest march); Māori radio; and mainstream news media. Several iwi also presented formal complaints before a number of United Nations committees responsible for human and indigenous peoples’ rights.

In October, *Te Ope Mana a Tai* led a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal against the government’s foreshore and seabed policy. One hundred forty-nine claimants representing almost every coastal tribal group around the country pooled their resources and expertise to bring the claim under urgency. In March the tribunal reported, upholding the claims and issuing very serious warnings to the government about the foolhardiness of proceeding in the manner announced in the policy. One commentator noted that the report “is damning of the Crown framework policy, using some of the strongest language seen in a tribunal report to date” (Bennion 2004a, 1). The tribunal noted that the government’s policy contains numerous breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi, stating that “the Government’s unilateral decision to do away with these Māori property rights . . . could only be justified if chaos or disorder would result if

there was no intervention, or if we were at war or facing some other crisis” (Waitangi Tribunal 2004, 108). It also strongly urged the government to act in fairness and recommended that the government go back to the drawing board and engage Māori in proper negotiations. According to the tribunal, there is no need for the government to implement any policy, and the law should be allowed to take its course.

Yet on the day the tribunal released its foreshore and seabed report, the government announced that it had already rejected the report (NZH, 8 March 2004). Matters covered in the accompanying press release bore little resemblance to the content of the report and there was speculation that government leaders had not even bothered to read it. The present government has rejected all recent findings of the tribunal.

Many iwi had also applied to the Māori Land Court to have cases involving their own foreshore and seabed heard as soon as the Court of Appeal decision was issued. However, when the court began to process the case in one district in March 2004, the prime minister ignored constitutional convention and launched a stinging public attack on the judge hearing the case, demanding that she not hear it because she was from the same tribe as the applicants (NZH, 13 March 2004). While it would be unheard of for a politician to launch a personal attack on a non-Māori judge, it seemed to be acceptable to attack a Māori judge. The judge formally reprimanded the prime minister in her decision.

It was the government’s ongoing

refusal to listen to any Māori advice or to consider the Waitangi Tribunal’s recommendations that led to the biggest and most successfully organized protest march ever witnessed in New Zealand. It was called the Hikoī. Whānau, hapū, and iwi from throughout the country, with their colorful tribal banners and flags, joined it on its way from Te Rerenga Wairua in the very far north, starting on 22 April, and ending in Parliament grounds in Wellington on 5 May. The number of people who were mobilized throughout the country was unprecedented. The Hikoī itself was highly disciplined, yet good-natured, and a dignified stance was maintained throughout. Police reported experiencing no trouble and there were no arrests (NZH, 6 May 2004). While many New Zealanders had become confused on the issue, the clear message of the Hikoī was that the foreshore and seabed legislation was terribly wrong and had to be withdrawn from Parliament. Māori simply would not tolerate yet another treaty breach that was so clearly illegal, immoral, and unjust.

On the final day of the Hikoī through Wellington, the police estimated there were 50,000 participants, including the several thousand kaumātua (Māori elders) who awaited its arrival at Parliament. The government tried desperately to play down both its size and impact, claiming that there were only 15,000 participants, and that it was a reaction to an attack on Māori by the leader of the opposition. However, while media reports varied hugely on size estimates (ranging between 10,000 and 30,000), they were very clear on the

message (NZH, 6 May 2004). All media reports described the march as a protest against the government's foreshore and seabed legislation. The media coverage was extensive, both locally and nationally. It also attracted significant international media attention.

The prime minister's constant criticisms of the Hikoi over the two weeks of its duration simply fueled the determination of the participants to deliver a clear and unequivocal message. As the numbers swelled, she referred to the participants as "haters and wreckers," telling the media she preferred the company of a sheep to that of iwi representatives leading the march. Yet even she was unable to ignore the Hikoi. Television cameras caught her watching from the window of her office as the marchers completely filled Parliament grounds (*Te Kaea*, 5 May 2004). Many participants could not get into the grounds and remained outside on the surrounding roads and pathways to listen to the speeches of Māori leaders, including Tariana Turia, which were broadcast from inside the grounds.

MARGARET MUTU

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WALLIS AND FUTUNA

In a speech on 1 July 2003, Wallis and Futuna High Commissioner Christian Job officially announced that the institution of direct income taxation was being considered. This reform, which had been proposed by French Overseas Minister Brigitte Girardin during her visit to the territory in December 2002, would be undertaken slowly and deliberately. For indeed, Wallis

and Futuna's main problem lies in the deplorable state of its finances. On the one hand, tax revenue is essentially related to the taxation of imported products, because exports are nearly nonexistent. On the other hand, the territory has lived beyond its means for a long time, as generous but budget-consuming measures have gradually led to a chronic deficit in the local budget. Staff expenses have increased by a factor of 2.5 in ten years. Welfare has increased fivefold. Connected to this, although the airfare between Wallis and Futuna has an actual cost of 20,000 FCFP, passengers only pay 9,000 FCFP, thanks to a deficiency grant for the air service. To date, in addition to its direct spending, the French State contributes to balancing the local budget to the tune of 376 million FCFP.

All of this explains the implementation of a recovery plan that includes overhauling welfare schemes, revising the prices of domestic services, improving the tracking of expenses, retaining rather than systematically replacing government agents, and even considering changes to the tax system. With this aim, an additional clause to the development contract was signed on 23 July 2003 for 1.5 billion FCFP. The 2004 budget was carefully set up so as not to overestimate revenue or omit the slightest expense, including debts from previous years.

Wallisians and Futunians greatly regretted that when Jacques Chirac, president of the French Republic, visited New Caledonia on 23 July 2003, he did not stop in Wallis before flying on to French Polynesia. It was finally on 1 December 2003 that the special agreement between France,

New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna was signed in Paris. The agreement endorses the autonomy of French State services in Wallis and Futuna, and clarifies the support of France and New Caledonia for the economic development of the archipelago. A tripartite committee is to monitor this agreement.

In spite of signing the special agreement, it would seem that the archipelago of Wallis and Futuna actually remains closely linked to New Caledonia, both economically and demographically. The main problem between Wallis and Futuna and New Caledonia is the overseas territory debt owed by Wallis and Futuna to Caledonian administrations for airline, hospitals, and education facilities. This debt comes to nearly 3 billion FCFP, and France is considering a deficiency grant to discharge it. When the agreement was signed, Senator Robert Laufoaulu pointed out that the health agency's sizeable debt was the responsibility of the French State.

Epifano Tui, a councillor in the opposition, resigned from his term of office on 18 July 2003. Tui "wanted to attract the attention of the elected officials, who according to him, only have deliberative powers, but no responsibility as far as the executive is concerned" (*FM* 45). Because of the law on male/female parity, the second candidate on the slate, Salome Moeliku-Seo, was allowed to become the second woman in the current assembly.

Marie-Claude Tjibaou, an economic and social advisor in New Caledonia, traveled to Wallis as head of a delegation on 8 September 2003 in order to carry out a study on social

housing. On 15 September, Secretary of State for Transport Dominique Bussereau went to Wallis before visiting Futuna the next day. He agreed to help the territory find a new airplane for its domestic services. He also visited the site of the future fishing port of Halalo, the development of which will cost one billion FCFP.

Administratively, it seemed that High Commissioner Job was appointed to remind the public service of its duties. After the major postal services strike of February–April 2003, which ended inconclusively for the strikers, a strike by the staff of the Réseau France Outremer (RFO) in May–June 2004 also ended in a return to the status quo. Local RFO employees were calling for the dismissal of the agency’s Melanesian director; additional jobs; and an increase in their salaries to match the expatriate workers’ 2.05 percent “index” (the increase in wages for public servants working outside metropolitan France). However, they were already the highest paid workers in the territory, with a staff of seventy to run a service that could well operate with fewer people.

In July 2003, France carried out a general census of the territory’s population, an operation that allowed the state to reevaluate its financial contributions. Wallis has a population of 10,094, and Futuna 4,873, representing a total increase of 5.7 percent over the 1996 population of 14,166. In Futuna the increase was 5.1 percent and in Wallis 5.9 percent. Alofi is no longer considered uninhabited, as two permanent inhabitants have been registered there.

The public works department has ordered three drilling operations into

the water table from a Caledonian company (Forapac), with financing from the French State and the Fonds d’investissement pour le développement économique et social de l’outremer (FIDES), in order to secure the island’s water supply for the next fifteen years. In parallel fashion, the water and electricity company (EEWF) had drilling carried out on its Mata-Utu concession, in order to be able to cool its machines using less costly “untreated” water. As for infrastructure, a large part of west coast roads is being tarred: a twelve-kilometer section will provide access to homes and food-producing gardens. This state-financed work is being carried out in an ecological way, as the runoff is directed toward deep ditches from which it can infiltrate the water table, thus avoiding any dumping of muddy water into the lagoon.

On the judicial scene, in August 2003 the criminal court of Mata-Utu convicted Soane Uhila, the former president of the Territorial Assembly, for the misuse of public office and the misuse of company assets in the affair of the express ferry. This conviction was upheld by the Noumea Court of Appeal in May 2004. Uhila is now ineligible for public office for five years. In another case, a twenty-six-year-old employee of Général Import entered the shop during the night and stole 3 million FCFP from the till. This young man, who had been in debt, was arrested the very next morning. In the local context, where 90 percent of households owe money, he was sentenced to only four months’ imprisonment and allowed to serve his sentence in Wallis. This theft, much bigger than the usual burglaries, raised the issue of credit in a territory

where the whole population practices “le marquage,” that is, the deferred payment of purchases, and where great indebtedness is common.

A dispute between the SWAFEPF company and the customary owners of the land on which Futuna’s fuel depot sits led to the beginning of a fuel shortage on the island. In fact, after the company refused to hire a member of the family in question, in August this family prevented the docking of the oil tanker that usually supplies the island from Fiji every three weeks. In addition, damage was done to the site, including dismantling the fence and even some tank valves. Finally, on 26 August an army plane arrived from Noumea via Wallis with twelve members of the security police. The tanks were filled and the parties met to reach an understanding.

By and large, Wallis and Futuna society continues to live on the fringes of modern life and there is a clear-cut difference between national regulations and local practices. Because it comes under the auspices of the French State, all gambling—including bingo—is prohibited; yet, for families, villages, and clubs throughout the archipelago, bingo is one of the main forms of entertainment. Another contrast is found in the fact that the number of driver’s license holders remains low, while the number of accidents on the road is double the national average.

Emigration to France continues, by way of sports and the army. On 1 August 2003, John Babin, stationed in Alsace, became the first Wallisian captain of the French army. At the same time, the “40 cadres” program (modeled on New Caledonia’s “400

cadres” program for mid-career executive training) had just gotten underway, its first four beneficiaries having flown to Lyon or Noumea in August 2003. Senator Laufoaulu, a strong supporter of the project, reminded them as they were leaving that they were going to become the professional elite of the territory and that, like their elders, they would have to put the general interest before their own.

In the medical sector, the infectious disease brucellosis reappeared on pig farms at the beginning of 2004. Measures were taken to isolate and slaughter the infected animals, thus eradicating the epidemic. As the archipelago no longer has a veterinary doctor, the rural economy department regularly brings veterinarians over from New Caledonia. Their work deals essentially with pig breeding. It emerged that the cost of a family-run farm was higher than the revenue it produced. The 150-hectare pine forest of Malae was affected by a fungus; as a result the villagers chopped down and burnt the diseased trees.

Regarding cultural activities, on 26 July 2003, Leonella Tuulaki was selected Miss 2003, out of eleven candidates. Dance groups traveled to New Caledonia in May 2004 on the invitation of the International Council for Organising Folklore and Traditional Arts Festivals, presided over, on behalf of the Pacific, by Isai Pagatele, a Caledonian of Wallisian descent.

On the sporting scene, the delegation to the July 2003 South Pacific Games in Fiji brought home nine medals, including four silver medals: javelin, shot put, karate, and taekwondo. The drop in the number of medals compared to the Guam games

can be explained by the new regulations that require athletes to live in the territory they represent, thereby excluding Wallis and Futuna members from New Caledonia. Criticized for these results, the president of the Sports and Territorial Olympic Committee declared: "There isn't a competition for gossiping yet; but if that day came, you would win the gold medal" (*FM* 46).

In New Caledonia, the Saint-Louis affair started up again on 25 August 2003 when a judge, by judicial letter, instructed 270 gendarmes to besiege the Saint-Louis tribe at dawn in order to question those guilty of the 25 June extortion (see Angleviel 2004). Four Melanesians were arrested and eight weapons seized. Kanak customary leaders announced that because many youths considered this operation to be provocation, they would be uncontrollable. On 26 August, three roadblocks made from tires and wood were erected by the two sides facing each other: the Kanaks from the Saint-Louis tribe and the Wallisians-Futunians of Ave Maria. Five armored police vehicles were needed to clear these roadblocks.

This affair ended on 18 September 2003 with the departure from Ave Maria of the last thirty Caledonian families of Wallisian or Futunian descent. The houses were stripped bare and the roofs removed. Some of the departing residents set fire to their homes rather than abandon them to the Melanesians who until that time had been living on the other bank of the river. The Southern Province, led by the Rassemblement pour La Calédonie dans le République (RPCR), had ensured that everyone involved was

rehoused. On 16 September, Didier Leroux, president of the Alliance party, spoke of "ethnic cleansing." On 19 September, High Commissioner Job answered, "If those words have meaning, we have opposed what some call ethnic cleansing. Ethnic cleansing means one population killing another, and this is precisely what we have avoided, for months and months." In his address, New Caledonia High Commissioner Daniel Constantin pointed out that the Saint-Louis affair had caused three deaths, six serious injuries, and thirteen minor injuries; had involved 200 victims of extortion of various kinds; 19 cars and 18 houses had been shot at; one armored police vehicle had been set on fire; and 1,600 gunshots had been fired during the month.

It is to be noted that Laurent Vili was transferred at the beginning of August from the Noumea prison, Camp Est, to the Fresnes prison (Paris region), from which he was released in early September for medical reasons. Put on probation in Montpellier, he resumed his position on the rugby team. After one year of detention pending trial, he remains indicted for the murder of Jean Marie Goyetta.

The Rassemblement Démocratique Océanien (RDO) organized a big pre-electoral party for its tenth birthday on 14 February 2004. In April 2003, Tino Manuohalalo, former RDO vice president, had created the Mouvement des Citoyens Calédoniens (MCC). His first conference, on 26 February 2004, gathered 550 natives of Wallis and Futuna. This new community party wants to become partners with the RPCR in the context of the

Noumea Agreement and represent a “bridge” between the RPCR and the Front de Libération Nationale Kanak Socialiste (FLNKS).

The Wallisian and Futunian community of New Caledonia played an important part in the local elections of May 2004. On the one hand, it was represented in the Southern Province by three community slates, which obtained 1,140 votes (MCC), 749 (Union Océanienne), and 429 (Rassemblement Océanien dans la Calédonie). Because the required 5 percent of registered voters would be 3,600 votes, none of these slates had members elected. Nevertheless, as other Wallisians and Futunians were present on anti-separatist slates, Anne-Marie Siakinuu (Avenir Ensemble) and Ana Logologofolau (RPCR–UMP) were elected. Thanks to the appointment of some elected officials to the local government, Corinne Fuluhea (RPCR) recovered her position as provincial adviser. On the other hand, this community only comprises one community party in favor of independence: the RDO. A FLNKS member, this party had presented a common slate with the Palika (UNI). It gathered about 5 percent of Wallisian and Futunian votes, showing that a large majority of Polynesians wants New Caledonia to remain part of France. Angéla Manakofaiva (RDO) was elected in the

North province, on the UNI–FLNKS list. It must be pointed out that on 7 March 2004 the RDO president, Aloisio Sako, became president of the Wallisian community from the Hihifo district.

In the sports sector, Bertrand Vili, a Caledonian of Wallisian descent, beat New Caledonia’s record in the discus at the New Zealand championships. He won the gold medal for the discus and the shot put in the Espoir category at the championships of France in July 2003. In June 2004 Amete Luaki became the French champion of weightlifting in the 105 kg category.

After only a year of existence, the weekly *Fenua Magazine* ceased publication on 20 September 2003, after the advertising market proved inadequate; there is no longer any written press whatsoever in Wallis and Futuna. The disappearance of the weekly *Fenua Magazine* increases the territory’s media isolation.

FRÉDÉRIC ANGLEVIEL

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