author also interviewed a number of key players in the struggles for land and independence, including Jimmy Stephens and Barak Sope.

Van Trease cites Sope’s remark that “land is also a [political] tool that can help to bridge the educated-uneducated and the urban-rural gaps” (210). After independence, land still retains its function as a powerful symbol of political determination and unity. Port Vila’s “riot” of May 1988 in support of Barak Sope’s leadership challenge within the ruling Vanua‘aku Pati was conceived and organized in terms of local rights over urban lands.

As indicated by his subtitle, Van Trease has actually written about the politics of land in the old New Hebrides. He offers only scattered speculations about land’s politics in independent Vanuatu. For example, he remarks that urban elites could inveigle control of Vanuatu’s land, despite its constitutional return to custom owners (240). Still, this book provides excellent grounding from which to follow land in Vanuatu’s future.

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The dilemma faced by Pacific peoples—to choose between their traditions and the European world—is elaborated in this book, a readable by-product of several years of research on Tanna, a southern island of Vanuatu, by a French geographer, Joël Bonnemaison, attached to ORSTOM, the French Institute for Research Overseas. This book is a personal observation of the Tanna population, based on interviews, the collection of myths and stories, and archival research. La Dernière Ile is a distillation of the author’s two-volume doctoral thesis in cultural geography, research on land tenure and traditional spaces. The author, obviously fascinated by the customary and the imaginary worlds of Tanna, describes the resilience of its people in resisting all outside interference and political centralism, from the days of European exploration to the present time. As a book that reconstructs the main events and ideas that shaped Vanuatu, and Tanna in particular, it is a useful contribution to historical and ethnological research. Written in French, it deserves to be translated into English. It is an accessible book, providing original glimpses into customary traditions and the political events of 1980 alike. The original creation myths, the story of the John Frum movement, and in particular the description of Vanuatu’s political evolution since 1975, are a welcome addition to available works on Vanuatu.

The three main themes developed relate to early European exploration and colonization in “the invaded archipelago,” the importance of custom and myths in “the tree and the canoe,” and the resistance to outside forces in “the fighting in the island.” The first part of the book presents the historical background at length: the discovery of the archipelago by Spanish, English, and French explorers and its consequences for the indigenous
populations; the discovery of sandalwood in 1825; the blackbirding trade in the 1880s and its disastrous effects on the population; and the displacement of the remaining population by the Christian missions trying to regroup their faithful in one place. Bonnemaison explains how the alienation of traditional lands by settlers increased European control of the archipelago, and states that by the nineteenth century, the French held the land, the British dominated commerce, and Anglo-Saxon missionaries controlled souls. Since Melanesian society was in turmoil, religion appeared as a double-sided derivative, a means to get material power and education that at the same time eroded traditional customs. The religious attitudes of Melanesians are described as being associated with millenarian beliefs in the second coming of Christ and accompanying changes in status and material wealth and knowledge. The setting up of the Condominium is traced back to a deterioration in relations between Melanesians and European settlers. At that time the British and French governments established a joint naval commission to protect their citizens; it evolved into the Condominium in 1906, with a joint administration and a joint court to settle land problems. By 1972 a new nationalist party, the National Hebrides Party (later the Vanua'aku Pati), was created to quickly establish Melanesian independence and build a strong nation with a centralized government. This gave rise to opposition from cultural minorities—francophone, Roman Catholic, and mixed-race—and division between the so-called moderates and the nationalists. The two colonial powers continued to disagree, as the British supported independence while the French wanted to delay it.

The second part of the book deals with the original creation myths and how Tanna people revived them in response to changes brought in by missions and foreign governments. Bonnemaison traces the rebellious attitude toward any central religious or political power and finds it first expressed against the Presbyterian mission. Under customary rule, myths originated from the land because men were linked to the specific places of their mythical ancestors and women were exchanged to reinforce links between clans. During the land and political disputes of 1977, the custom groups on Tanna created a unified political structure that was opposed to outside interference. The custom groups sought the descendants of the first men, the founders of the clans, and a return to a customary egalitarian society linked to their magical powers.

The third part of the book elaborates the idea that the world is meaningful only through its origin and that space rather than time is important to Melanesians. Bonnemaison describes the resistance to Christianity as political, because missionaries nominated the wrong chiefs and decided to reorganize the whole society under their new order, "Tanna Law," which established courts to punish customary practices seen as pagan. Followers of custom retreated to the bush, and coastal people pretended to go along with the missionaries.

In this context, Bonnemaison analyzes the success of the millenarian
John Frum Movement in Tanna, as people found a new identity after years of cultural repression. The movement was a combination of cargo cult and ancestral religion, marking both a return to custom and a rejection of European-imported ideas. The later myth of the return of John Frum from America to protect indigenous culture emphasized the resistance to the new political movements bringing about independence.

The final chapters of the book deal with the violent opposition of Tanna to the newly established government of National Unity. The bloody outcome will no doubt interest readers trying to understand the present-day political life of Vanuatu.

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There are times in every society’s history that come to be recognized as great turning points. Often these periods are not recognized as such at the time, but only later with the advantage of hindsight. Looking back from the late 1980s over the major changes that have occurred in the 1980s in New Zealand’s race relations, the late 1970s was probably such a time. It was a period when the myth of racial harmony in New Zealand was challenged as never before by assertions of cultural identity from within the Maori community.

One such assertion was the so-called haka party incident on 1 May 1979 when a Maori group confronted the University of Auckland Engineering Students’ capping group over what they considered to be an ongoing abuse of Maori culture. The engineering students had annually conducted a mock haka as part of their pregraduation celebrations. Their actions took no account of the ceremonial significance of the haka within Maori culture. A male war dance that symbolized the strength and power of the tribe, the haka was usually reserved for ceremonial occasions.

In this brief study Kayleen Hazlehurst has undertaken a systematic analysis of the incident and its immediate aftermath in an attempt to see why the conflict occurred and why different groups reacted as they did. A New Zealander herself, Hazlehurst trained in political and sociocultural anthropology in Canada. Since then she has been involved with legal aspects of intercultural problems in both New Zealand and Australia.

The study is divided into three sections. The first deals with the incident itself and the reaction to it in the following weeks. Hazlehurst clearly documents mounting tensions as years of formal requests for the mock hakas to cease were ignored. If anything, the mock hakas became increasingly offensive in the 1970s. In the wake of the mock haka confrontation, the New Zealand media generally proved