

September, the group warned that national government responses to its demands were unacceptable and threatened further action against the mine (*TPNG*, 4–10 Aug 1988, 5). The threat was realized in late November and December when buildings were burned, personnel and equipment stoned, and facilities bombed with stolen explosives. Squads of police were flown in and issued with shoot-to-kill orders as the violence escalated (*PR*, 8 Dec 1988, 1). Production resumed later in the month after the protagonists agreed to negotiate, but a long-term settlement was not in sight as 1988 drew to a close.

The year was generally good for Papua New Guinea's foreign relations. The Matignon Accord took some of the steam out of the New Caledonia decolonization issue, allowing relations with France to improve. There were indications that the Namaliu government would place less emphasis on the Melanesian Spearhead grouping than had its predecessors, and a decision was made to allow the Soviets to open their first resident mission in the Pacific Islands. However, relations with Indonesia were soured by a series of incidents on the Irian Jaya border, including one in July when Papua New Guinea and Indonesian soldiers exchanged fire. Nevertheless, Foreign Minister Somare returned from a brief trip to Jakarta in early November apparently reassured that good relations had been restored.

It was a particularly busy year for the Defence Force, which got involved in hostile encounters with both Indonesian security forces and the Papua New Guinea government. In February, Foreign Minister Doi lambasted the Aus-

tralian media for suggesting that Ted Diro, sacked army chief Tony Huai, and other disgruntled Papuans were plotting a coup (*TPNG*, 4–10 Feb 1988, 3). Early in June there was a brief standoff of another sort between Wingti's ailing government and the army, when two planeloads of armed soldiers took over the Lae airport ordered closed by the civil aviation minister, Hugo Berghuser (*TPNG*, 9–15 June 1988, 3). Meanwhile, the cooperative arrangement negotiated with the US military in 1987 moved into high gear in 1988. Officials and military officers met several times during the year to exchange information and discuss training requirements. In November, American army engineers arrived to start the first of several planned civic construction projects in North Solomons Province (*TPNG*, 1–7 Dec 1988, 4). The Australians did their part for regional security by earmarking one million kina to upgrade the naval facilities on Manus Island, supplying additional patrol boats, and agreeing to support the development of a helicopter capability for border patrol work (*Backgrounder*, 9 Nov 1988, iv).

TERENCE WESLEY-SMITH

SOLOMON ISLANDS

The year 1988, marking the tenth anniversary of Solomon Islands independence, was simultaneously exciting and difficult. Among the events that reflected political and social change in the islands were the retirement of Sir Baddeley Devesi as governor general, and the inauguration of his successor, Sir George Lepping. The Americans upgraded their consulate in Honiara to

an embassy, and several new institutions, including the National Agricultural Training Institute at Fote, Malaita, and the Japanese-funded Malaria Training and Research Centre in Honiara, were opened in the service of economic development. The year was difficult largely because of concerns for the state of the economy—especially the growing deficit in the government's recurrent budget—and its effects; debates over whether the form of government should be changed; and charges of corruption leveled against the government of Ezekiel Alebua.

The weak economy and budget constraints have resulted in the general deterioration of public facilities, including schools, in recent years, a situation made more poignant by the revelation in late 1987 of a major scandal involving the misuse of millions of dollars of educational development funds. Among the top-ranking government and business officials implicated in the affair were former Prime Minister Sir Peter Kenilorea (in 1988 deputy prime minister and foreign affairs minister), and then Minister of Education Danny Philip (*TPNG*, 10–16 March 1988, 1–2). Despite attempts by the Alebua government to stall the proceedings because of their likely impact on the national elections scheduled for late 1988, an official inquiry into the matter headed by Michael Lodge finally got underway in early March.

The affair centered on a 1981 low-interest loan of A\$9.8 million provided by the World Bank to fund a five-year project designed to dramatically upgrade curriculum, buildings, and equipment in primary schools. However, according to the Solomon Islands

National Teachers' Association (SINTA), which insisted on the inquiry, many of the classrooms were never built or shoddily built; textbooks were purchased overseas instead of locally; expatriates were hired to prepare curriculum materials rather than to train local curriculum writers; school materials were purchased at several times their normal price from Honiara Stationery Supplies through the intervention of then Minister of Education Danny Philip; and about A\$3.4 million of the funds were unaccounted for. Large consulting fees were paid to Australians, particularly to a Dr Rod Treyvaud, who has been implicated in similar scandals elsewhere. His company, South Pacific Development Associates (SPDA), whose directors included Sir Peter and several other government officials, had been awarded the contract to administer the funds.

The inquiry panel eventually produced a 111-page report that was presented to Cabinet in October 1988 (*SN*, 10 Oct 1988, 1). However, this and other alleged scandals, together with mounting dissatisfaction over prevailing economic and social conditions, prompted charges of government ineffectiveness. Indeed, the Alebua government was obliged to deal with two protest demonstrations as well as a motion of no confidence in Parliament during 1988.

On 22 March, between six hundred and fifteen hundred people (newspaper accounts varied) led by Alvin Wako, member of the Honiara Town Council for Vura Ward, marched down Mendana Avenue to Parliament. The group presented a petition to Alebua that alleged government corruption and

secret French aid. It also criticized the government for its financial practices and handling of certain development projects (*SN*, 25 March 1988, 1). Alebua denied the allegations in the government-owned newspaper, but not until May (*SN*, 13 May 1988, 4–5). Two days later, another peaceful demonstration by an estimated one thousand Guadalcanal people and their supporters was held outside the high court building. Concerned about recent brutal murders of Guadalcanal people by in-migrants, the demonstrators petitioned the government to repatriate unemployed persons from other provinces living illegally on Guadalcanal. They wanted all alienated lands on Guadalcanal, including Honiara, taken over by the Guadalcanal Provincial Government, squatters removed from traditional land, and customary land registered to prevent individual sale. The group also insisted that the government abolish the present system of provincial government in favor of a federal system that would give each province autonomy to run its own affairs (*SN*, 31 March 1988, 3).

The government withheld several calls for the dissolution of Parliament during the year and survived a vote of no confidence by one vote on 31 March. Allan Qurusu, MP for North Choiseul and parliamentary leader of the Solomon Ano Sasafenua party (SAS), authored the motion, charging corruption, lack of control over the Public Service, investment policies favoring foreigners, low morale among cabinet ministers, and economic policies that hurt domestic consumers. Had the no-confidence motion succeeded, former Prime Minister Solo-

mon Mamaloni stood ready to form a caretaker government (*SN*, 8 April 1988, 1–2).

One victim of the challenge to the government was Minister of Natural Resources Danny Philip, who was sacked by Alebua after he failed to show up for the parliamentary vote (*SS*, 8 April 1988, 1). In his press statement of 5 April, Alebua said that he was under "considerable pressure from his Constituency and his Party" to dismiss Philip, who had been implicated in the World Bank loan scandal (*SN*, 15 April 1988, 1).

Reviews of the Constitution and system of government were among the most important tasks undertaken by the Solomons government during the year. A variety of issues prompted these investigations. First, there is strong support in some areas for splitting up existing provinces into two or more smaller provinces. For example, Choiseul leaders have for some time wished to break away from Western Province to form their own province (see Rilifia 1988, 9). Second, most provincial leaders favor further decentralization of political power to provincial governments, although they disagree strongly about the appropriate distribution of other government-controlled resources. Third, traditional chiefs and elders have periodically argued for the "restoration and recognition of the roles once held by traditional leaders" (*SN*, 27 May 1988, 3). The difficulties associated with this quest for recognition became apparent in August when traditional leaders were not invited to attend the Provincial Government Conference (*SS*, 9 Sept 1988, 3).

At that conference the Provincial

Government Review White Paper 1988, which had been endorsed by Parliament in April, was presented and discussed by provincial premiers and area council presidents. This was one of two reports recommending changes to the structure of government that the Solomons government had before it in 1988. The other was the three-volume, 800-page report of the Constitutional Review Committee, led by former Prime Minister Solomon Mamaloni, submitted to the prime minister in early February 1988 after eleven months of study (*Solomon Islands 1988a*). This made two distinct sets of recommendations without indicating a preference for either. Under the first plan, the Solomons would become a "federal republic" consisting of an unspecified number of states of equal status, each with considerable autonomy. Customary law and leadership would be given prominence, and the paramountcy of indigenous Solomon Islanders vis-à-vis other citizens would be established. A president would replace the queen as head of state and would enjoy significantly more power than the governor-general does under the existing constitution. The second plan was much less ambitious, calling for retention of the present unitary form of government, but with a further decentralization of power to the provinces. More significant was the proposal for a bicameral legislature, with senators appointed to a new upper house. A president with largely ceremonial functions would replace the governor-general. By year's end, no decision had been made regarding which, if any, of these options would be adopted.

The Solomon Islands faces many

challenges, including a rapidly growing population, a sluggish economy, the lowest educational levels in the Pacific Islands (Cromcombe 1988, 12), pressure to restructure national and local governments, and the need for local development. The urgency of these problems was more widely recognized in 1988 than in previous years and, more important, the political will to do something about them began to emerge. This was especially evident in the area of national human resources planning, where activity reached a level in 1988 that would have been unthinkable even a few years ago. The spur here was undoubtedly the release of the results of the 1986 census that showed population growing at 3.5 percent or more annually, one of the highest such rates in the world, and revealed that more than fifty percent of the population is under the age of sixteen. The situation was discussed at a high-level seminar in Honiara in June, to which Andrew Nori, minister of home affairs and provincial government, delivered a preliminary population planning policy statement (*Solomon Islands 1988b*). In July, Prime Minister Alebu dwelt on population issues in his speech marking the tenth anniversary celebration (*SN*, 8 July 1988, 8–9), and in September a second high-level workshop on population issues and policy development was held in Honiara to discuss a draft national population policy (*Solomon Islands 1988c*). In October, Governor-General Sir George Lepping added his endorsement of the need for human resource development in a speech to Parliament (*SN*, 10 Oct 1988, 4–5).

In the international arena, the Solomons joined Papua New Guinea and

Vanuatu in signing the Principles of Cooperation that formalized their relations as members of the Melanesian Spearhead group. Under the terms of the document, signed in Vila on 14 March, spearhead members agreed to conduct cultural exchanges; to promote local and regional culture; to undertake economic and technical cooperation; to work toward arms control, disarmament, and the reduction of international tensions; and to limit super power influence in the region (*SN*, 18 March 1988, 1-2).

DAVID WELCHMAN GEGEO

VANUATU

What to many outsiders has been the unpredictable course of Vanuatu politics continued on its turbulent way through much of 1988. The year was marked by a bitter leadership struggle between Prime Minister Father Walter Lini and Barak Sope, the two most prominent individuals in the ruling Vanua'aku Pati (vp). At year's end, Lini was the apparent victor with Sope, four of his supporters, and the young republic's president all in police custody facing serious charges.

The leadership struggle began at the end of 1987, a year of difficulties that included a devastating hurricane, growing external concern over Libyan and Soviet influence, an apparent loss of confidence in the country's financial center, a decline in the price of copra, a slump in tourism, and a cut in French aid in retaliation for Vanuatu's support for the Kanak independence struggle in New Caledonia. Despite these problems, and the effects of a serious stroke, Walter Lini managed to lead

the vp to a solid victory in the general elections of November 1987, thus consolidating the political control he had exercised since the country achieved independence in 1980.

However, the vp suffered some loss of support in the 1987 elections. Although its members won 26 of the 46 seats in Parliament, the predominantly francophone Union of Moderate Parties (UMP), led by Maxime Carlot, captured 42 percent of the vote, significantly more than the 33 percent it had attracted in the 1979 elections. Furthermore, for the first time in three victorious elections, Lini faced a challenge to his leadership of the vp. Barak Sope, longtime secretary-general of the party and member of Parliament for the capital, Port Vila, was left out of the new nine-member cabinet after an unsuccessful bid to replace Lini (*PIM*, Jan 1988, 13-15). Sope was eventually appointed minister for transport, tourism, and public works in January 1988, but the resultant political peace proved short-lived.

On 16 May an antigovernment demonstration in Port Vila erupted into a major riot that caused extensive damage to city shops and resulted in the death of one man (*IB*, June 1988, 13; *PR*, 26 May 1988, 1, 3). The protest was a response to the abolition by the minister for lands of the Vila Urban Land Corporation (VULCAN), which had managed urban land in Vila on behalf of the government and the landowners since independence. The abolition was justified by the government on grounds of cost efficiency and suspected financial irregularities, but it was widely perceived to be primarily a political move aimed at Barak Sope, a