

Cook Islands contributions to the Pacific region and beyond on a variety of cultural, economic, and political fronts. An exciting era lies ahead.

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FRENCH POLYNESIA

In 1994 the French Pacific Testing Centre entered its thirtieth year. Since its installation the center has played a central role in French Polynesia's economy. The last French nuclear test was held at Moruroa in July 1991, before a moratorium was declared in April the following year. The quest for alternative sources of income in view of a prospective permanent shutdown of the test program continues to be a priority for the territorial government. The year 1994 also marked the tenth anniversary of internal autonomy but, apart from a new development plan concluded with Paris, there appeared to be little to celebrate by the end of the review period. The government, as often in the past, was beset by allegations of corruption against its leading figures. In addition, Pape'ete was plagued by an environmental crisis brought on by the closure of the main rubbish incinerator serving the greater urban area.

Although the future of French testing remains unclear, there have been signs of progress toward a comprehensive test ban treaty. Testing by nuclear powers other than China was phased out between October 1990 (last Soviet test) and September 1992 (last US test). In 1994 negotiations over a comprehensive ban proceeded in Geneva with the aim of producing a draft

treaty by 1995. President Clinton committed the United States to extending its moratorium until at least September 1995. President Mitterrand proclaimed an indefinite extension of the French testing moratorium in January 1993. Later that year he went one better when he announced on French television that "France will not recommence the nuclear tests as long as I am here," but this promise could expire along with Mitterrand's mandate in May 1995.

Prime Minister Balladur, in a debate in the French parliament in May 1994, reserved France's right to resume testing. The French defense minister, members of the ruling coalition, and an influential section of the armed forces are concerned about the potential impact of a permanent test ban on the maintenance and modernization of France's nuclear deterrent. They have not as yet been persuaded that computer-simulated tests would be an adequate substitute for explosions at Moruroa. China presents another stumbling block for a comprehensive ban, as it has conducted three tests in defiance of the global moratorium since September 1992. There are fears that France may use the Chinese tests as a pretext for further tests of its own. Despite these obstacles and delays, there appears to be an inexorable move toward a comprehensive test ban treaty, which both China and France support in principle, in part because of concerns about nuclear proliferation. Testing in French Polynesia seems destined to be short-lived, if it resumes at all.

Since the French test moratorium was announced in April 1992 the

Tahitian government has worked on the assumption that the testing era is over. It has spent one and a half years negotiating the terms of a ten-year development plan, the Pact for Progress, to be co-funded by Paris. In January 1994 the *Loi d'Orientation* or law governing the pact was finally approved by the French National Assembly and Senate; it committed France to providing extra funding, beyond its ongoing expenditure in the territory, of 44 billion French Pacific francs (FCFP) in the first five-year period covered by the pact (ie, 8.8 billion FCFP per year). In addition, the state and territory signed a five-year Contract for Development in May 1994, under which the two parties will make equal contributions to a 52 billion FCFP investment plan for the territory.

The Pact for Progress is to compensate for the loss in revenue incurred by the government as a direct result of the suspension of testing. The development plans are also designed to partly compensate for the moratorium's indirect effects on the economy and to promote alternative economic development. French financial assistance appears generous, but it pales when one considers that in 1990 alone, when the French Pacific Testing Centre was still operating, the Defense Ministry contributed 38 billion FCFP or 35 percent of the territory's total external income. Nevertheless, the president of the territorial government, Gaston Flosse, has expressed satisfaction with the deals struck in Paris.

The government in Tahiti has been far from pleased, however, with the French justice system's dogged investi-

gation of corruption cases implicating leading members of the governing coalition. Jean Juventin, deputy to the National Assembly and president of the Territorial Assembly, was already under investigation for his alleged abuse of office in two shady deals. One concerned alleged acceptance of bribes from a Japanese investor for approving the Opunohu golf-hotel condominium on Moorea, a project that was subsequently aborted. The other related to a possible conflict of interest when Juventin was president of the Tamara'a Nui Company. Juventin is standing bail for one of these charges. In January 1994, a local underworld figure, Mr Li Lem, also known as Hombo, made a startling public confession on the radio. He alleged that both Juventin and Flosse had allowed his illegal casinos to operate in return for generous kickbacks to fund their respective political parties. Flosse has appeared in court in Paris to answer questions about this case, and, curiously, neither of the accused has publicly refuted the allegations. Former President Léontieff is still under investigation in two cases of alleged corruption.

High-ranking political figures aside, French courts also clamped down on corruption at lower levels. In the period under review at least one mayor's election was annulled because of irregularities, and two other mayors were convicted of electoral fraud, for which they received suspended sentences, fines, and withdrawal of their civic rights. A number of other outstanding cases, not involving corruption, were resolved by the courts. In October 1993, Emile Vernaudon, former president of the Territorial

Assembly, was finally convicted for blockading the assembly building and preventing its function for eighty days in early 1992. He incurred a fine of 900,000 FCFP. In December 1993, three men, who were members of the presidential security service at the time of their crimes, were convicted for raiding documents from no less than fourteen safes, including two owned by politicians. One of the defendants, the former head of the security service, continued to draw a hefty salary from the presidency throughout the trial period. Finally, numerous businessmen and heads of semi-public companies have been convicted of various forms of corruption for personal enrichment.

These trends suggest that the French judicial authorities are becoming more serious now than in the past about preventing or prosecuting abuse of public office. The change in attitude can be attributed to two factors: First is popular concern about the issue expressed in both the 1992 Development Charter's conclusions and in a series of public demonstrations held in Pape'ete against official corruption. Second, the French state requires more rigorous accounting for its expenditures in French Polynesia, in view of the escalating cost of subsidizing the territorial administration and worsening economic circumstances on the domestic front.

In early 1994, the waste-disposal crisis resulting from the closure of the Tamara'a Nui rubbish incineration plant, which had experienced difficulties since its inception in 1991, assumed nightmarish proportions for the territorial government. Three main

factors contributed to the debacle. First, the technology for the plant was flawed from the beginning, so it was unable to cope with the volume and type of waste disposal required of the urban municipalities it serviced. Second, contrary to initial expectations, not only did the company fail to make a profit from by-products of energy generation and compost, but it incurred significant financial losses; these must be borne by the public because its principal shareholders were the territorial and municipal governments. Finally, the poor choice of site and the plant's frequent malfunctioning led to a number of environmental problems, including an unsightly 80-metre-high smoking mountain of waste and the emission of airborne pollution that engulfed the narrow valley encompassing the densely populated suburb of Tipaerui. These problems stemmed from hasty decisions and inadequate impact studies at the outset. Allegations over corrupt practices by the management are being investigated.

The Tamara'a Nui crisis came to a head at the end of 1993, in part because of a vociferous campaign by local residents and environmentalists in favor of the plant's closure. The then environment minister, Maco Tevane, submitted to the pressure and closed the plant just before Christmas, until such time as it could conform to environmental and planning regulations. The Faaa municipal government agreed to dispose of Pape'ete's waste at its dump in the interim, but after two months refused to take any more rubbish. To the horror of the public, the Pape'ete town council then turned to

burying the waste in l'Uranie cemetery. In March the Tamara'a Nui staff were dismissed, and in May the company was declared insolvent. With its troubled history and ongoing community opposition, the plant is unlikely ever to reopen. The greater urban area is faced with a long-term waste-disposal problem, and an acceptable solution has yet to be found. This problem is not unique to Tahiti; governments throughout the Pacific Islands have cited waste disposal as one of their greatest environmental concerns.

Tamara'a Nui is but one in a long and depressing history of semi-public enterprises that have collapsed, due to incompetent and possibly corrupt management, at great financial cost to the government. Many such cases have also constituted a political embarrassment because leading politicians were acting as presidents of the companies concerned.

In party politics the main development was a major rift in Here Ai'a, which is the junior partner in the governing coalition. Jean Juventin has led this party since 1983, and dissatisfaction with the direction the party has taken has been growing. Here Ai'a's once-radical agenda has been significantly toned down, particularly its antinuclear policy. By 1990, Juventin had shifted to the position of other mainstream parties, saying that the French Pacific Testing Centre was an economic necessity. This was quite a turnaround for a party whose former leader, John Teariki, was for two decades the most committed and vocal critic of the nuclear tests. Little resemblance can now be seen between Here Ai'a's program and that of its political

antecedent, the nationalist *Rassemblement Démocratique des Populations Tahitiennes* of Pouvanaa a Oopa. Consequently, in the past decade several leading members of Here Ai'a were either expelled or left voluntarily. In early 1992, Here Ai'a's vice-president, François Nanai, defected and set up his own party. He believed that Here Ai'a had betrayed the Pouvaniste heritage by joining a coalition government with their oldest conservative adversary, the Tahoeraa party of Flosse.

In May 1994 seven members of Here Ai'a were expelled for their opposition to Juventin, including two ministers and three territorial councillors. This time the reason for party disenchantment with Juventin was increasing unease over the numerous corruption cases in which he was implicated and the realization that the party was losing popularity as a result. This led to party dissidents refusing to vote for Juventin's reelection to the presidency of the Territorial Assembly. They agreed to vote for him once Juventin said that he would stand down a few months later in favor of a long-standing leadership aspirant in Here Ai'a, Milou Ebb. Juventin made this deal in anticipation that legal restrictions on the accumulation of elected office be relaxed enabling him to retrieve his former office of mayor of Pape'ete while retaining his position as deputy to the National Assembly. When this legal change did not eventuate Juventin reneged on his promise to step down from the presidency and expelled the dissidents.

One of the Here Ai'a rebels, Minister for Social Affairs Raymond Van Bastolaer, was greatly valued by the

president of the government, Gaston Flosse. Despite Juventin's demand that he sack Van Bastolaer, Flosse refused. The latest purge has undermined party solidarity and will exacerbate the steady decline in Here Ai'a's public image and electoral fortunes.

The tenth anniversary of internal autonomy was celebrated by the government on 29 June 1994, although few members of the public were on hand, and representatives of the state were notably absent from the ceremony. The high commissioner boycotted the proceedings because of a perceived slight in protocol. President Flosse had decided that the territory's national anthem would henceforth be sung last on territorial occasions instead of the Marseillaise. This move was similar to Flosse's unilateral decision while hosting the Pacific Island Conference in June 1993, when he referred to the territory as Tahiti Nui instead of French Polynesia. To the irritation of the French government, Flosse has also been campaigning for French Polynesia to be granted observer status at the South Pacific Forum. These nationalistic gestures are, however, symbolic and do not indicate a change in the president's position on political status.

Flosse's attitude was confirmed in a media interview when he said there was nothing to be gained by acceding to independence in association, much less sovereign independence, in the foreseeable future. He reiterated that economic autonomy was a prerequisite for full political autonomy and that his government's energies would be focused on developing the economy. Yet, he did bemoan the fact that the

state Administrative Tribunal has applied a particularly restrictive interpretation to powers granted under the statute, often ruling against actions by the government. For this reason, he saw a need to improve the terms of the statute so that the territorial government could enjoy the full scope of autonomy without interference from the state.

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References

Tahiti Pacifique

La Dépêche de Tahiti

HAWAIIAN ISSUES

The attainment of some form of sovereignty continues to be the goal for many 'Ōiwi 'persons of Hawaiian ancestry' who support their respective initiatives for self-determination. The common denominator is, none of the groups is satisfied with the current political relationship Native Hawaiians have with the United States. As a people, Native Hawaiians do not directly control trust lands set aside for them by US law. Instead, 'Ōiwi are political wards of the state, with no legal rights of redress or mechanism for making legal claims to their lands. Consequently, each initiative strives to advance its own agenda in a period of this movement when different groups are best understood as "separate paths that sometimes cross."

The centenary observance of the American military-aided overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom reached into