

of a style that fosters the feeling that Tokelau retains a meaningful connection with a wider whole, and thereby achieves not only the human connection, but also the possibility for broader material support and assistance."

As part of the effort to devise a constitution and gain greater insight into political status alternatives, the Council of Faipule has held talks in New Zealand, Fiji, Niue, Western Samoa, and Tuvalu. A national competition to design and approve a national flag has been launched. Tokelau's principal policy-making body, the General Fono (General Council), has decided to allow Tokelauans living in New Zealand to send representatives to Fono meetings. This step reaffirms links among Tokelauans generally and is consistent with efforts to attract expatriate Tokelauans back to Tokelau. A meeting held by the UN mission with Tokelauans resident in New Zealand found that most wanted to retain a voice in Tokelau's affairs. There was support for the "Voice of Tokelau," a preference for free association with New Zealand, and backing for the direction taken by Tokelau's leadership with respect to constitutional developments leading toward a future act of self-determination.

The concerns about Tokelau's telecommunications and transport links are being addressed. Progress is being made toward using a satellite earth station for communications purposes, while alternatives to the freighter used by the UN mission are being explored (as a matter of some urgency because the charter arrangement has come to an end). The question of airstrips, con-

sidered in the past (but rejected by Tokelau), is back on the agenda, with a principal issue continuing to center on a willingness to sacrifice scarce land to permit one or more airstrips to be built.

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THE KINGDOM OF TONGA

The formation and naming of Tonga's first political party, in August 1994, bitterly divided leading parliamentary People's Representatives and other prodemocracy supporters. Futa Helu, a prominent intellectual force behind political reform, said that he thinks Tonga is not ready for an independent political party, and repeated the adage that in Tonga the churches *are* the political parties. On 11 August 1994, however, it was announced that five of the elected People's Representatives, 'Akilisi Pohiva, 'Uiliami Fukofuka, and 'Uhila Liava'a, the first, second, and third, respectively, of the People's Representatives for Tongatapu, and Teisina Fuko and 'Uliti Uata, the first

and second People's Representatives for Ha'apai, had organized the Tonga Democratic Party in an effort to build a "strong, united" political platform for the reform movement and to ensure that the People's Representatives in the Legislative Assembly voted in a bloc. Pohiva noted in an interview that the kingdom's legal system has no provision for the registration of political parties. Nevertheless, a party constitution that allows anyone to join had been approved by party members. The party's aim, Pohiva said, is to bring about a more democratic government, accountable to the people, who would have a greater part in decision-making. "We believe in and are pursuing common goals," he said of the founding members. "If there are individual differences, we will compromise" (TC, 11 Aug 1994, 1).

Serious differences among the founders soon surfaced, fired by the change of name to the "People's Party" by 20 August, when the constitution was signed. Helu was particularly furious with the decision to leave out the term *Democratic*, and orchestrated a vigorous criticism of the parliamentarians responsible in a number of letters appearing under a variety of names in local newspapers, particularly *Taimi 'o Tonga*. A great deal of his concern appears to have revolved around his not being consulted about the key decisions. "It seemed that there was a lot of secrecy associated with the formation process—for these five members of parliament did not call a meeting of supporters to consult with them on their constitution or their plans," he told *Lali* magazine. "They met by themselves, approved their own consti-

tution, voted themselves in to hold all the positions of authority in the party, then they announced that the people can now become members. . . . this is not democratic. It's downright dictatorial!" (*Lali*, Oct 1994, 17). Pohiva joined Helu in opposition to the cofounders of the party in a move that reflected earlier, long-standing, differences of opinion between them over his more confrontational actions and the means and goals of reform. Helu has philosophical reasons and Pohiva personal and political reasons for pursuing avowedly democratic goals; others in the reform movement are less certain about them.

The fuss over the party's name does not merely indicate conflict about a formal movement toward democracy in Tonga, although that conflict exists among the party's leaders. It points also to a very much underplayed but fundamental split over Christian beliefs, or the lack of them, held by reformers and the role that religious commitment should play in the life of the newly formed party. Helu's values and distinctive mode of critical enquiry are based on qualities he associates with an ancient Athenian elite, an intellectual and ethical debt expressed in the name 'Atenisi, given to the educational institution he founded. He opposes all types of oppression of the common people, which, he believes, were imposed by traditional notions of rank in Tonga and have continued in the modern social and political order largely through the support of the order by the Christian churches. He and many of his students and followers are openly atheistic and agnostic. Other people in the prodemocracy

movement pursue the goals of social justice and political reform because they believe it to be their duty as Christians. They would not welcome reform won at the cost of religious commitment. Their point of view was expressed simply in a brief statement released by the party in early September. "The People's Party . . . seeks to apply Christian principles to political affairs as the only way of 'protecting the dignity of mankind'." It reiterated its members' loyalty to the monarch as the head of state, together with the party's aim of "representing the voice of the people" and seeking the redistribution of political and economic powers to allow citizens greater participation in the institutions that shape and control their lives. (*TC*, 1 Sept 1994, 6). The chairman of the People's Party, 'Uliti Uata, hit back at Helu's criticisms, saying discussion about democracy had gone on for too long in Tonga without a firm basis. The strongest objection to the formation of a party had come from the 'Atenisi Institute, which "publicly stated a few months ago that it was definitely not the right time yet to set up a democratic political party. It was on this ground that they were not consulted when the constitution was drafted" (*Lali*, Oct 1994, 18).

Predictably, the establishment has come to the party by questioning the need for any reform because, it maintains, the government of Tonga has been essentially democratic since the 1875 Constitution. Prime Minister Baron Vaea of Houma claimed that, despite revisions, the Tongan system of government was originally based on the British Westminster model to

which the People's Party aspires. He nevertheless wished the People's Party "good luck" and reminded people once again of his own attempt in 1992 to launch a Christian Democratic Workers of Tonga Party to contest the early 1993 general elections (*Lali*, Oct 1994, 11). This was the first attempt in Tonga to start a political party, but the government bid for popular support failed to win the approval it needed from church leaders and was put aside. Joining the confusion surrounding democracy in Tonga was the comment from a journalist, Erina Reddan, broadcast over Radio Australia in March 1995, that the king had told her, in November 1994, that "democracy is inevitable in Tonga." The king immediately denied having made any such improbable statement or having said that "a fully elected government is only a matter of time" (*TC*, 23 March 1995, 1). The king later reiterated that Tonga has no laws covering the operation of a political party and that there was no recognized political party in Tonga.

By June 1995, a beleaguered 'Uliti Uata was tending to agree with his monarch. "The People's party is standing still because of dissatisfaction among members," he said (*MT*, April-June 1995, 5). The most serious split within the party continues to be that with its vice-president, Pohiva, who continues his colorful litigious career, although it is proving costly. In July 1994, he was served by the Tonga Supreme Court with a garnishee order that stopped his parliamentary salary because of the T\$10,402 he still owes Crown Prince Tupouto'a's lawyers after the prince won a defamation case

against him. To that point, in 1994, Pohiva had paid ₺\$56,000 in fines to various people who had taken him to court on defamation cases (*MT*, June–July, 1994, 5). His behavior caused Uata, the chairman of the party, to call him “unreliable” and refute Pohiva’s criticisms of the party that he had helped found. In November 1994, on the closing day of the Legislative Assembly session, Pohiva was the cause of further dissension when a petition signed by four hundred women was presented to the House seeking action to be taken against him because he had called the king a “dictator” in an interview he had given to a US newspaper. Pohiva apparently is not honoring his parliamentary oath of allegiance to the king when he goes about telling reporters that the king is a dictator. The unusual petition was tabled by three of the executive members of the newly formed party, but then the members voted against one another over whether or not the petition should be accepted. This outcome seems to contradict one of the party’s goals that members should toe the party line (*MT*, Oct–Dec 1994, 41). In addition, Pohiva threatened to sue 26 members of parliament for what he claimed were unlawful overtime payments during the annual parliamentary tour, 4 of the 26 in question being executives of the new party. For publishing the criminally libelous claims in the periodical *Kele’a*, of which he is both editor and publisher, he was fined a further ₺\$600 on 29 May 1995. Despite the several setbacks occasioned by the opposition of first Futa Helu and then Pohiva, the People’s Party members are continuing their

working program, explaining their aims to church, village community, and professional leaders (*MT*, Jan–Mar 1995, 6).

Personalities continue to dominate the political scene. Minister for Finance Cecil Cocker was forced to resign on 12 May 1995, after being censured by New Zealand’s Acting Prime Minister Don McKinnon, over allegations of misconduct at the Asian Development Bank Conference in Auckland earlier that month. Cocker was alleged to have sexually harassed three women during the meeting, including his official driver. Cocker denied the allegations and imputed the unfortunate interpretation of his behavior to “cultural misunderstanding” (*MT*, April–June 1995, 7). Cocker was also reportedly affected by alcohol when he delivered his speech to the meeting, during which he was asked several times by the chair to stop when he repeatedly attacked the Asian Development Bank for denying Tonga a loan for a hotel.

The Finance portfolio has been taken by the Honourable Tutoatasi Fakafanua, who is also acting minister for Labour, Commerce and Industries and acting minister for Tourism. The minister made the news earlier in the year when he was the target of a shooting incident. Two men, unhappy with the government’s refusal to approve increases of 3000 tonnes to the pumpkin squash export quota, set at 17,000 tonnes, fired guns outside his house in November 1994 and damaged a van belonging to him. On 6 December, the Honourable Fakafanua formally pardoned the men in a traditional cere-

mony of forgiveness. The squash quota was not altered.

The visible trade deficit for 1994 hit T\$72.7 million, an increase over the 1993 visible deficit of T\$61.8 million that was attributable largely to the poorer performance of squash on the export market than in previous years. Despite the loss in tariff revenue, Tonga would be better off joining the World Trade Organization, advised a World Bank report, and the country may soon do so. On the plus side, the kingdom grew bigger with the emergence of a new volcanic island 120 miles north of Nuku'alofa, on the Metis Shoal. Notwithstanding the 67,000-square-meter increase to his kingdom, the king, in his address at the opening of the 95th Legislative Assembly, in June 1995, again drew

attention to proposals to lease land in Sarawak, and possibly also in Papua New Guinea, to ease Tonga's acute lack of resources.

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