ever, a request from Australia that Fiji participate in the so-called “Pacific solution” to the burgeoning refugee problem was withdrawn after a public and political outcry in Fiji. Also in December, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group lifted Fiji’s suspension from the Commonwealth Councils, paving the way for Fiji to attend the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. New Zealand and Britain then announced the resumption of full relations with Fiji. Only the European Union continued its aid sanctions on the country, to be reviewed once the constitutionality of the government had been resolved.

As the year drew to a close, the nation’s fate was again in the hands of the Court of Appeal. Although the election was a major step forward and its outcome was seen to reflect the “will of the people,” Fiji’s return to democratic rule was far from complete or secure. In its first months in office the (elected) Qarase administration confronted a legal challenge that had the potential to force a change of government. It also confronted a political challenge (a Fiji$25 million farming assistance scandal) and a security challenge (a plot to kidnap and assassinate members of government in order to force the release of George Speight and his companions on Nukualau). The repercussions of these were still unfolding in early 2002, but they threatened further instability and unrest. Fiji remained on a political knife-edge, balanced precariously between the forces of racial extremism on the one hand and democracy on the other.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the debate in parliament in December over the Qarase government’s proposed legislation to provide affirmative action programs for indigenous Fijians. As critics attacked the legislation for being “racially discriminatory” and unconstitutional, its defenders (including the prime minister) described the bill as necessary for peace and stability, in other words, national security (Sun, 17 Dec 2001, 1). But such attempts to “buy” stability by removing “barriers to Fijian advancement” had failed in the past to avert political crises and had instead fostered massive corruption and abuse of public funds (the farming assistance scheme being only the latest example). The vicious cycle of political instability, racial policies, and economic mismanagement thus looked set to continue. In such a situation it was perhaps no wonder that so much seemed to depend (however unrealistically) on the rulings of the courts.

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References

NEW CALEDONIA

As France continued to delegate administrative and fiscal responsibilities to the territory in compliance with the 1998 Noumea Accord, the March 2001 municipal elections, challenges in forming the executive council of the Congress, and senatorial elections in
September all revealed growing complexity in local politics as well as disarray in the pro-independence coalition. John Connell (1988, 231) once argued that the confrontation between a pro-independence indigenous front and an entrenched colonial system bolstered by resident loyalists gave New Caledonia more nationalist cohesion than other linguistically diverse Melanesian countries, which have been wracked by secession movements, civil wars, and military coups. The inverse of his idea may also be coming true, that is, in an officially postcolonial era, New Caledonia’s ethnic and linguistic diversity may undermine the old polarized fronts (even as Fiji’s harden) in ways that would make the martyrs of the 1980s scratch their heads in wonder. In the context of a local labor strike, a commentator declared, “It’s no longer class struggle, but a struggle for places [posts]” (NH, 22–28 Feb 2001; the rhyme works better in French), and perhaps those words could apply just as well to local politics.

One of the ironies of the municipal elections in the territory is that they are directly controlled by Paris, which unilaterally seized that power in 1969 as part of its withdrawal of autonomy from the territory during a nickel boom. At this most intimate level of the democratic process, even 3,000 local residents who come from member countries of the European Community other than France are eligible to vote in the thirty-three Caledonian communal elections. Another imposition from the metropole was a new electoral law that requires gender parity, that is, each party must present as many women candidates as men. This progressive proposal was opposed by some Caledonian leaders, such as loyalist Kanak Senator Simon Loueckhote, who argued that the territory was simply not prepared for such a sudden change—a stand that set off street protests by local women (Chappell 2001, 544–545) and led to a compromise that exempted smaller communes of less than 3,500 inhabitants. Another factor was the March 2000 law against the “accumulation of mandates,” which prohibits politicians from holding more than one major elected office, for example, mayor of a large commune, congressional president, or member of French parliament. For 753 seats on municipal councils, 3,559 candidates campaigned on 149 party lists; voters had to opt for an entire list, not individuals, and seats were allocated on the basis of proportional representation (minimum: 5 percent of votes cast).

In larger communes, a list that won an absolute majority gained not only that, but also a proportion of the remaining seats; if no list won an absolute majority, a run-off election was held, and losers who won between 5 and 10 percent of the votes could form new coalitions to contest the second round.

The loyalist Rassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la République (RPCR) generally showed more unity, with the notable exception of Paita, where Harold Martin won reelection by defying party chief Jacques Lafleur, who wanted to replace him as mayor with his cousin Ronald. The pro-independence Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS), in contrast, proved rather weak as an electoral framework at the local level,
as its coalition members ran at times on one list, at other times on separate lists, and sometimes on lists combined with other parties, and local Kanak factionalism became pronounced. The two main coalition partners, the Union Calédonienne (UC) and Palika (Parti de Libération Kanak), once again ran separately, but even the UC was split, ever since seven of its congressional representatives had broken away from the leadership of Rock Wamytan the previous year. On each of the outer islands of Lifou and Mare, about 5,000 voters had to choose between eight or nine lists, including several alliances “against nature” (ie, loyalists and independence supporters). The RPCR predictably dominated the multiethnic southern province, where Jean Leques was reelected mayor of Noumea (he was also president of the congressional executive but had to give that up; see below), and Pierre Froger was reelected mayor of nearby Mont-Dore (which he immediately gave up to remain a deputy in the French National Assembly). In an upset, Jean-Pierre Aifa, the longtime “caliph” (he is of North African descent) of Bourail and a dissident loyalist, lost to Guy Moulin of the RPCR, but Bernard Marant, another dissident loyalist, defeated his RPCR rival in Dumbea. One woman, Ghislaine Creugnet, was elected RPCR mayor of the smallest commune, Farino. In the northern province, Paul Neaoutyine won reelection as Palika mayor of Poindimie and kept his presidency of the province because Poindimie is so small, while dissident loyalist Robert Frouin retained his multiparty mayorship in Koumac, the north’s fishing port. In very close runoffs in the islands province, Palika took Ouvea, the UC took Lifou, and an anti-FLNSKS coalition won on Mare—where high chief Nidoish Naisseline, once a radical nationalist, allied with the RPCR and its congressional majority partner, the FD de Coordination Indépendantistes (FCCI, former FLNSKS leaders) (NC and NH, Mar 2001, various).

Altogether, two-thirds of the mayors elected were Kanak (only two of which were RPCR) and pro-independence lists won in almost twice as many communes (19) as the RPCR-FCCI coalition (10): 9 Palika, 6 UC, 3 UPM (Union Progressiste Martinienne), and 1 FLNSKS, compared to 8 RPCR and 2 FCCI, while the new municipal council majorities in four other communes did not fit readily into either camp. But the loyalist communes of the south are much more populous, amounting to over 60 percent of the total inhabitants (NC, 20 Mar 2001). The RPCR kept a firm grip on the capital, Noumea, where one-third of the registered electorate lives, winning 39 council seats compared to 10 for a mixed opposition led by dissident loyalists of the Alliance list; and Leques won the mayorship for a fourth six-year term. Ironically, the Kanak vote in Noumea was almost invisible, despite a large resident population (sometimes called the largest Kanak “tribe”), because Kanak voters tend to register in their home villages and commute to cast their ballots, in order to ensure the allocation of development funds there and to support local Kanak politicians. That strategy makes it very difficult for centrist or pro-independence lists to succeed in
the capital and contributes to a polarization among the provinces, with Kanak dominating the north and islands. It is one reason why independence supporters place so much hope in mining and fishing projects in the north, and in tourism in the islands, to draw business and population away from Noumea (Sylvain Pabouty, pers comm, Mar 2001). In France itself, apart from leftist upsets in Paris and Lyon, conservatives seized forty formerly leftist communes. This can be attributed to President Jacques Chirac’s appeal to the insecurity felt in smaller towns in the face of Socialists Premier Lionel Jospin’s controversial concessions to Corsican autonomists and general support for regional decentralization under the command of large cities. Chirac now feels confident of reelection as French President in 2002 (NC, 20 Mar 2001; Monde, Mar 2001; Libération, 22 Mar 2001; Figaro, 12 Mar 2001).

In the September election for senator (to the French parliament), Loueckhote of the RPCR won a second nine-year term with 250 votes, defeating Marie-Claude Tjibaou (wife of deceased UC leader Jean-Marie), who had 174 votes, and Aifa, the ex-mayor of Bourail, who had 51. The FLNKS hesitated even to participate, then opted to try to block the RPCR candidate but failed. The 484 “great electors” who choose the senator are selected by the municipal councils (weighted in favor of the more populous) and provincial assemblies (NC, 31 Aug, 26 Sept 2001; PIR, 25 Sept 2001). Loueckhote had been involved in a violent altercation with an older FLNKS supporter from his home island of Ouvea in March. The two were waiting at Magenta airport for a flight to Ouvea to participate in the election of a mayor by the new municipal council, of which both were members, when the older man apparently began berating the senator. Before airport gendarmes could separate them, the senator punched and kicked the older man, who died of a heart attack shortly afterwards, though coroners could not establish a “direct and certain” link between the fight and his death. A subsequent lawsuit clearly did not affect Loueckhote’s political career. Besides being senator, he is also president of the Territorial Congress, islands provincial assembly delegate, and municipal councilor on Ouvea (NC, 26 Mar, 28 Mar, 12 Apr 2001).

Leques had to resign from his presidency of the congressional executive (an eleven-person cabinet elected by the Congress and called “the government”), a position he had held since May 1999, in order to retain his mayorship of Noumea. The municipal election results thus precipitated a new election of the territorial government in April, which in turn exacerbated the disunity in the FLNKS. Frogier of the RPCR replaced Leques as president, but Leopold Jorédé of the FCCI, who had been convicted of corruption charges the year before and given a suspended sentence, was replaced as vice president by Dévé Gorodey of Palika. A pro-independence activist of long standing as well as a teacher and writer, she became the first woman to hold such a high office in New Caledonia. This victory for gender “parity” (the RPCR had one woman in the cabinet) was also celebrated by the FLNKS, because it had already been complaining of a lack of “collegiality”
(ie, power-sharing) between it and the RPCR-FCCI, which together hold a congressional majority of 28 to 26 seats. The RPCR retained six cabinet portfolios, the FCCI one (Jorédié), and the FLNKS four (divided among Palika, Wamytan’s UC, the dissident UC group, and the Wallisian Rassemblement D mocratique Oc anien, or RDO). (NC, 6 Apr 2001; PIR, 8 Apr 2001) Unfortunately for the FLNKS, the French State Council ruled in October that one of the cabinet seats held by the pro-independence front had been awarded improperly and gave the eleventh seat to Raphael Mapou of the FCCI instead of Tino Manuohalalo of the RDO. The two had received almost the same number of votes, so Congress had given the FLNKS that seat, on the basis of Article L338 of the Electoral Code, because Manuohalalo was younger than Mapou, but the decision was reversed because Mapou had received slightly more votes (proportional rules normally average the votes). As a result, the FLNKS representation on the cabinet was reduced to only three out of eleven, and Wamytan, who had been threatening to boycott the government for two years over the collegiality issue, resigned from the cabinet, arguing that the FLNKS had won 40 percent of the votes in the 1999 provincial elections and deserved a bigger voice in decision making (NC, 3 Oct, 17 Oct 2001; PIR, 26 Sept 2001). “It is out of the question,” Wamytan said, “that we should go on sitting in a government that has been made completely out of balance as a result of Court decisions which, in my view, are bordering on political decisions” (PIR, 23 Oct 2001).

Others argued that a more united FLNKS would easily have secured the disputed seat. Vice President Gorodey of Palika did not join Wamytan’s cabinet boycott, nor did Gerard Cortot of the dissident UC group. The breakaway of seven congressional UC representatives from Wamytan’s leadership in April 2000 thus continued to haunt the FLNKS. In April, soon after the municipal elections, Wamytan called a meeting of the UC governing committee at the Club Med in Noumea. He denounced in strong terms the “permanent putsch” by dissidents that threatened to ruin New Caledonia’s oldest political party, which had lost control of seven communes the month before. Pascal Naouna resigned as UC vice president in protest, claiming that his dissident group wanted to preserve a UC identity separate from the FLNKS coalition (Wamytan was head of both). The embattled president warned against the embourgeoisement (becoming middle-class) of party militants, which had already drawn former FLNKS members like Jorédié and Mapou into the collaborationist FCCI: “Will we know how to resist the pressures of the [French] State and the multinationals?” (NC, 9 Apr 2001). Wamytan received a vote of confidence in July when the Melanesian Spearhead Group held its annual summit in Noumea. After a diplomatic wrangle over whether it was France, New Caledonia, or the FLNKS that was hosting the meeting, the regional group showed its opinion by electing Wamytan its president for the next two years (PIR, 17 July 2001; NC, 30 July 2001). But in November, the UC’s thirty-second annual congress elected Naouna president by a vote of...
174 to 74 against Wamytan; Naouna had lost to Wamytan by only four votes the previous year (NC, 5 Nov 2001; PIR, 9 Nov 2001). And in December, the annual FLNKS congress refused even to choose between Wamytan or Palika’s Neaoutyine as its president. FLNKS spokesperson Victor Tutugoro, of the UPM, explained, “The Congress confided the direction of the management of the party to the Political Bureau for a period of one year” (NC, 24 Dec 2001).

It is worth noting that Palika normally operates exactly that way, without a president, and its star is rising as the UC struggles. The FLNKS is still respected as a “tool of struggle” by pro-independence militants but as less than useful as an electoral mechanism. At its November congress Palika asserted that FLNKS coalition members (UC, Palika, UPM, RDO) will campaign as autonomous parties in elections, and that Palika will continue to try to convert people to its goal of “revolutionary socialist Kanak independence” based on Kanak values and the principles of “justice, equity, equality and solidarity” (NC, 8 Nov 2001). Yet people have prematurely predicted the demise of the UC for decades; by January 2002, Naouna of the UC became head of an FLNKS delegation to Paris (NC, 19 Jan 2002). The difference between the UC and Palika is partly one of generations, since the latter was formed by student radicals in the 1970s and still tends to attract younger, university-educated Kanak such as Charles Washetine and Sylvain Pabouty. The FLNKS is also divided by internal Kanak rivalries based on family, chieftaincy, language group, or region, in addition to the emerging class divisions that Wamytan and others warn about. In the March municipal elections on Mare, for example, discord within the UC, local rivalries within and between tribes, and “customary” vs “administrative” Kanak factionalism gave the mayorship to a motley anti-FLNKS coalition (Jean-Paul Caillard, pers comm, Apr 2001; NH, 22–28 Mar 2001).

Meanwhile, the RPCR coalition partner in Congress, the FCCI, tends to be regarded either as “realistic” pro-independence people who are trying to work constructively with loyalists, or as stooges of the RPCR who are fleeing to Lafleur’s patronage from legal or financial problems or political eclipse. In July, the FCCI congress elected François Burck, mayor of Moindou, as its party president by 38 votes to 28 for incumbent Mapou, a former Palika militant. Burck, an old companion of Jean-Marie Tjibaou and moderate head of the UC for seven years until 1998, vowed to work for local citizenship and a common destiny for all Caledonians, as the Noumea Accord prescribed (NC, 22 July 2001). The sticky ideas of local citizenship and preferential employment for long-term residents have yet to be seriously addressed, and the Noumea Accord raises other complex cultural issues. As Naisseline pointed out in May, an organic law of 1999 proposed that territorial residents had to choose within five years whether to live under French civil law or indigenous custom; but after two years, no real preparation has been made to educate people about making such a decision (PIR, 31 May 2001). A founding leader of Palika, Naisseline
broke away in 1981 over the issue of whether Kanak culture or “scientific socialism” should guide the party. Naisseline uses his chiefly power base on Mare to retain political office and defend custom. He attacks former Kanak militants who seek “French respectability” as untraditional professionals, yet says France “is no longer an enemy to combat, but a partner” (NC, 2 Nov 2001)—evidently against FLNKS domination at this stage of his career. After the nineteenth annual congress of his party, Lib ration Kanak Socialiste (LKS), in November, he again criticized the new Kanak political class for excluding from power “the customary, religious masses and young people,” and denounced the French State, the RPCR, and the FLNKS for imposing a European political system that did not fit: “We want to install an Oceanian democracy.” Criticized by the FLNKS for repeatedly forming expedient coalitions with the RPCR, FCCI, and other dubious liberationists, he says “politics is a game of alliance” (NC, 8 Nov 2001). Naisseline holds provincial and municipal office and occupies the sole LKS seat in Congress.

The RPCR may dominate territorial politics (just as some critics of the Noumea Accord’s plan to delegate increasing authority from Paris to Noumea once predicted), but it too faces dissident opposition in the loyalist camp. At the head of the RPCR since its founding in 1977 is millionaire businessman Lafleur, who is a deputy to the French parliament and member of the Territorial Congress. His social receptions have been likened to the court of Louis XIV, whom he in fact occasionally quotes; if courtiers do not receive a handshake from him, it is whispered that their political careers are ruined. Less respectful critics refer to Lafleur’s powerful political and economic patronage system as a “mafia.” In the past four years his regal attitude has cost him six convictions for public slander and other civil injuries to people ranging from a former French administrator to a local newspaper editor. Frogier and Loueckhote, his fellow parliamentarians in Paris, wrote a joint letter in October to President Chirac protesting against the many damages Lafleur has had to pay, calling it “colonial justice” (NC, 18 Oct 2001; PIR, 12 Feb 2001). Meanwhile, dissident loyalists of the Alliance party led by Didier Leroux and Sonia Lagarde continue to condemn Lafleur’s monopolism, and Martin remains “RPCR” mayor of Paita in defiance of his official exclusion from the RPCR. At the congress of the RPCR in June, supporters of Martin spoke in favor of more democracy within the party and the need to prepare for a successor to Lafleur, who himself has talked of retirement. But Lafleur still opposed Martin’s reinstatement, accusing him of wanting power only for himself and stressing the need for unity and discipline (NC, 11 June 2001). Lafleur was reelected president of the party by a show of hands, and Loueckhote asserted, “Which political party is now able to unite so many people? Only Jacques Lafleur’s party. It just needs to utter his name” (PIR, 27 June 2001).

On the economic front, New Caledonia’s normal trade deficit was reduced by about one-third in 2000, thanks to that year’s rise in world
prices for nickel, the territory’s largest export. France still provided 82 percent of the territory’s imports (PIR, 19 Mar 2001). Local commercial farming and livestock raising increased another 4 percent, for a total of 60 percent since 1989, and a new tuna fishing fleet based at the northern port of Koumac received its first two vessels in March (NC, 26 Mar 2001; PIR, 23 Apr 2001). In December, the Congress approved a law that delegated control of the territory’s coastal zone from France to New Caledonia and its provinces, though the LKS, UC, and Alliance voted against it, while the FLNKS abstained, because of concerns expressed by the new Customary Senate over the impact of applying French-derived littoral law on Kanak customary rights (NC, 22 Dec 2001). The local tourism industry was already in crisis as some airlines had recently cancelled their routes to New Caledonia, and the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington DC led several tour agencies to drop the territory from their destinations (PIR, 5 Oct 2001). Various local groups expressed opposition to those attacks, including the FLNKS, for whom Tutugoro said, “Blind terrorism is to be condemned since it mainly strikes the innocent.” He reminded the superpowers, however, of “other peoples around the world, who have or still endure violence on a daily basis and in the name of a certain established order, whether in central Europe, in the Middle East, in central Asia or on the African continent” (PIR, 19 Sept 2001).

The Frogier government expressed official optimism about a number of developments, such as the July decision by Paris, after long negotiations, to approve the territory’s purchase, tax-free, of two 278-passenger Airbus A330 planes for Air Calédonie International, whose expanded tourism service to Japan will replace Air France on the Tokyo–Noumea run (NC, 28 July 2001; PIR, 15 Aug, 31 Oct 2001). Moves to localize the police force with better training and more recruitment from the interior went forward, as French Secretary of State for Overseas Territories Christian Paul called New Caledonia the envy of the Pacific because of its new political stability and autonomy (NC, 27 Nov 2001). The Congress also revamped its recent General Tax on Services (now called a Tax of Solidarity on Services) of 4 percent so that its revenues could be applied to the ailing social services fund; this will enable the implementation of a new Unified Social Coverage plan. The latter was particularly supported by Palika, which voted with the loyalist majority against the UC and FLNKS on the tax reform (NC, 24 Nov 2001). The Congressional Finance Commission predicted an economic boom, primarily because of new investment in nickel mining and processing plants, but that industry was a cause of concern for the opposition parties (NC, 21 Dec 2001). In January, the government voted to give the new nickel plant at Goro, a joint venture between the State and Inco of Canada in the South, twenty years of full or partial tax exemption, compared to only thirteen for the new plant at Koniambo in the Kanak-ruled North, a joint venture between the province and Falconbridge of Canada. Pro-independence parties cried foul, as did Mapou of the
and environmentalists criticized potential coastal pollution by the Goro plant (NC, 31 Jan, 1 Feb, 16 Feb 2001). Furthermore, nickel prices dropped almost 50 percent in 2001, causing the northern province’s mining firm to reduce working hours for 600 of its employees (PIR, 16 Nov 2001). Others warned that a boom in nickel production would increase immigration and repeat the political crisis of the early 1970s, when loyalists gained a demographic majority for the first time (Jean-Paul Caillard, pers comm, Apr 2001). Despite these obstacles, the government is making every effort to expand production, which so far provides only 6 percent of the world demand (PIR, 28 June 2001).

In spite of embourgeoisement among politicians, militancy survived on other fronts. A “social pact” negotiated in 2000 was designed to prevent wildcat labor strikes (NC, 24 Mar 2001), but the pro-independence Union Syndicaliste des Travailleurs Kanak et Exploités (USTKE) waged its usual militant battles against various employers periodically throughout the year. In February, it closed down the French overseas radio and television station (RFO) in Noumea for a week, its ninth such action against the RFO in five years, and in April it began four months of rotating strikes against Jean-Lefebvre Pacifique over the firing of unionists (NC, 21 Feb, 28 July 2001). After celebrating its twentieth anniversary in December, when it reaffirmed its goal of building a multi-racial, independent Kanaky (NC, 7 Dec 2001), the USTKE closed out the year by occupying the Club Med after the latter closed its doors following the September 11th crisis in tourism (NC, 12 Jan 2002). The eighth Conference of Pacific Women met in Noumea in September (PIR, 12 Sept 2001), and in October, 300 New Caledonian women marched through the city demanding the creation of women’s centers in each commune and a territorial ministry of women’s affairs. Women workers outnumber men in New Caledonia and hold more than 60 percent of higher educational degrees but receive less pay than men for the same jobs (PIR, 22 Oct 2001). The Melanesian Spearhead held its Festival of Melanesian Arts on Lifou in the islands province in December (PIR, 12 Nov 2001), but New Caledonia’s bid to host the 2007 South Pacific Games was defeated by a council vote of 25 to 16 in favor of Sāmoa, which the territory’s promoter Eric Gay typically attributed to an “Anglo-Saxon” conspiracy (PIR, 11 Dec 2001). Land reform to redress Kanak grievances about colonial expropriation continued (PIR, 12 Oct 2001), and the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center welcomed the return of eighteen Kanak artifacts from the Musée de l’Homme in Paris for a three-year exhibition (PIR, 14 Aug 2001).

While most political news focused on Caledonian loyalists and Kanak nationalists, relations with Wallis and Futuna, which has sent over half its population to New Caledonia in the past half century, were also an important issue. The Noumea Accord proposed the negotiation of a special agreement between the two French territories, because local Caledonian citizenship and hiring preference were clearly perceived as threats to contin-
ued access to New Caledonia’s mineral-rich economy by migrant workers from its resource-poor Polynesian neighbor. Talks continued during the year, and a draft text was signed in June. It proposed the full integration of Wallisians long resident in New Caledonia, but also called for more French investment in developing Wallis and Futuna “to better fix the populations and limit the flow to New Caledonia” (NC, 2 June 2001). The RDO, which belongs to the Flnks coalition, called for more aid to Wallisian communities in New Caledonia. Wallisians often live in poor conditions and are still treated like immigrants, RDO leader Aloisio Sako said; even though “we have contributed to the wealth of this country, we have worked hard. . . Yet today most of the aid measures and re-balancing benefits Kanak not us” (NC, 12 Feb 2001). Bitter Kanak memories of hired Wallisian militias in the service of loyalists during the violent 1980s still affect relations between the two groups. In early December, an armed conflict erupted in the St. Louis community in Mont-Dore near Noumea. After school, students from both groups fought, and six houses near the Catholic church were set on fire. In 1985, 500 Wallisians had received a gift of twenty-three hectares of land and had followed appropriate customary protocol to gain acceptance in the Kanak tribe of St. Louis (of which Wamytan is a chief). But when the Wallisians appeared to receive more benefits from the government (such as water, electricity, and housing), while the Kanak had to barricade the road to demand streetlights, and later Wallisian immigrants acted without respect for the Kanak, tensions exploded. Recent peace talks produced a truce and a proposal to relocate the Wallisians to a new site, but the underlying problem was delinquency among unemployed young Kanak and Wallisians, due to the unequal distribution of economic growth in the territory (NC, 10–18 Dec 2001; PIR, 12 Dec 2001; Kanaky, 12–18 Dec 2001). Wallisians now comprise almost 10 percent of the territorial population, and in the municipal elections in March, their performance groups danced for whichever party, loyalist or nationalist, would support their claim to a place in the territory’s proposed “common destiny.”

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References
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