Political Reviews

Micronesia in Review: Issues and Events, 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012
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**French Polynesia**

During the period under review, political stability slightly improved as, for the first time in many years, no change in government took place and no attempt was made to overthrow the current one through a no-confidence motion. However, the severe economic crisis partly caused by years of instability continued, and no major changes in financial and economic policy to improve the situation appear to be in sight. On the other hand, there were significant advances in the international plea for the country’s decolonization by the current government under President Oscar Temaru. At the end of the review period, a change of the executive government and legislative majority in France took place, with the prospect of a new deal in relations between Paris and Papeete in the near future. At the same time, a comeback of Gaston Flosse and his party is happening in local politics, as shown in their surprise win of the elections for local representatives in the French National Assembly.

With Temaru’s coalition government of his own Union Pour La Démocratie (upld) and the outer islands party Te Mana O Te Mau Motu (tmmm) in power since April 2011, the review period started with controversies over two projects of the new government: a bill to reform the country’s land legislation and a resolution to reinscribe the territory on the United Nations List of Non-Self-Governing Territories (nsgts).

A bill for a *loi de pays* (country law, ie, an act of the French Polynesia Assembly with legal standing slightly lower than French national law) to regulate the acquisition of landed property by the country government in the case of a landowner dying without heirs met with strong negative reactions as soon as it was introduced in the assembly in mid-August. The bill’s opponents—led by heir to the Tahitian royal family Terihiinoaatua Joinville Pomare, land rights activist Monil Tetuanui, and assembly members Sandra Manutahi Lévy-Agami and Sabrina Birk—accused Temaru’s government of attempting to acquire private lands in order to resell them for profit (TP, 16 Aug, 19 Aug 2011). Despite reassurances by Vice President Antony Geros that the bill would not be less favorable to landowning families than the current legal situation (TP, 7 Aug 2011), the protests went on and eventually led to an indefinite postponement of the bill (TPM, Sept 2011), even though the issue later reemerged, with Pomare accusing the upld of “neo-colonialism” (DT, 2 Nov 2011).

The main focus of Temaru’s government throughout the review period, however, was to pursue the country’s
reinscription on the UN List of Non-Self-Governing Territories. For the last six decades, the absence of French Polynesia from that list, having been unilaterally removed by France in 1947, has represented a great anomaly in the Pacific, since virtually all other dependent territories in the Pacific have been listed.

On 18 August, after passionate debates, the assembly adopted a resolution asking the French president to reverse the removal of the territory from the list. The vote for the resolution was a historic moment in the country’s history, since French Polynesia’s government now for the first time had received an explicit mandate to pursue decolonization on an international level. The decolonization issue had always been the fracture point in Temaru’s earlier governing coalitions, since they included anti-independence politicians who accused Temaru of breaking assurances of neutrality on the independence question made in coalition agreements. This time, however, Temaru had made support for reinscription an explicit precondition for any coalition agreement, so it passed rather smoothly with support from all but one (who abstained) of the thirty-one member UPLD-TMMM majority (TP, 18 Aug 2011).

On the other hand, members of the three opposition caucuses—Tahoeraa Huiraatira (leader Gaston Flosse), To Tatou Aia (Gaston Tong Sang), and Ia Ora Te Fenua (Jean-Christophe Bouissou)—reacted with fierce hostility bordering on hysteria. Among other issues, opposition leaders argued that the resolution was not legitimate because several of the TMMM representatives had been elected on pro-French lists and had only recently crossed the floor and therefore lacked the mandate to vote for the country’s decolonization (TP, 22 Aug 2011). This line of argument is rather absurd and hypocritical since, first of all, in a representative democracy members of Parliament are free to change their opinions on issues and, second, all three opposition parties had earlier been part of Temaru-led coalition governments and found nothing wrong with working under a pro-independence president as long as it gained them ministerial portfolios.

More reasonable in her approach was TMMM representative Éléanor Parker, who in her speech identified herself as an opponent of independence but argued that only a decolonization process under UN oversight could guarantee a reasonable debate on the topic and a fair vote of self-determination, without fear of manipulation by the French government (TP, 18 Aug 2011). In that sense, it is indeed difficult to understand what local pro-French leaders fear from the territory’s re-listing as a non-self-governing territory, since listing does not imply independence unless expressly wished for by the population. The only rational motivation for those ferociously opposed to reinscription might be the fact that almost all of them were members and associates of the corrupt and authoritarian Flosse government before 2004 (see below), and one could assume they might worry about the country being too thoroughly audited and examined by a neutral outside body such as the UN decolonization committee.

The assembly’s resolution had
broad repercussions across the Pacific. The Pacific Conference of Churches, at its fiftieth annual reunion in Apia, Sāmoa, in the presence of President Temaru, passed a resolution supporting French Polynesia’s reinscription (TP, 29 Aug 2011). Similarly, Fijian interim Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama declared himself in favor of reinscription during the second “Engaging with the Pacific” meeting in Nadi, Fiji, on 1–2 September. With Senator Richard Ariihau Tuheiava attending as Temaru’s special envoy, the Final Communiqué of the meeting includes a resolution in favor of reinscription, which besides those of Fiji and French Polynesia, carries signatures representing the governments of Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Nauru, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia (Government of Fiji 2011).

The French government, on the other hand, showed itself to be hostile toward reinscription and started a vigorous campaign before the annual meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) on 7–8 September in Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand, in order to lobby Forum member states into dropping or watering down the proposal. Apparently alarmed by Temaru’s obtaining increasing support for reinscription Pacific-wide, Paris for the first time sent its foreign minister, Alain Juppé, to attend the Forum as an observer alongside a delegation including Gaston Tong Sang.

Despite Temaru’s and Tuheiava’s efforts as official representatives of their country, French lobbying proved at least partially successful, since the passage referring to French Polynesia in the 2012 Forum Final Communiqué was visibly reduced from what was originally expected. Instead of supporting reinscription, the communiqué merely mentions recalling the Forum’s “2004 decision to support the principle of French Polynesia’s right to self-determination” and reiterates an “encouragement to French Polynesia and France to seek an agreed approach on how to realise French Polynesia’s right to self-determination” (Pacific Islands Forum 2011, 11). Since, unlike in New Caledonia, France has refused for decades to such an “agreed approach” for French Polynesia, the passage in the Forum Communiqué sounds rather ironic.

A crucial factor in the absence of strong PIF backing was the lack of support from New Zealand and Australia, both of which have abandoned their once strong espousal of decolonization of French territories and are now increasingly cooperating with France in political and military matters. Australian Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs Richard Marles later reiterated that his government only supports a bilateral process between Paris and Papeete but no reinscription at the UN level (ABC Radio Australia, 17 April 2012).

Despite the disappointing outcome of the PIF meeting, individual Pacific Island states continued to support French Polynesia more intensively. In late September, the prime ministers of Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, Meltek Sato Kilman Lituvanu and Danny Philip, demanded the country’s reinscription in their speeches on the floor of the UN General Assembly (Kilman Lituvanu 2011; Philip 2011),
and Sāmoa’s Prime Minister Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi allowed Temaru and Tuheiava to be included in the Samoan UN Delegation. Within the UN organization, no less than Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had shown genuine interest in Temaru’s quest for reinscription while attending the Auckland PIF meeting (TP, 7 Sept 2011).

While politics focused on these important issues relating to the international political status and long-term development goals of the country, urgent domestic reforms were neglected and the local economy remained in a precarious state, with no recovery in sight. Due to the logic of clientele politics, no serious reform of the overstaffed and overpaid territorial administration has been attempted by any previous governments, and the UPLD is no exception, despite its noble goals of decolonization. The inaction of the country’s government in that respect caused the French national government to enact some reforms in its stead and implement them from above. For instance, on 30 June 2011, the French National Assembly voted to reduce the salaries of French Polynesia Assembly representatives by 10 percent after the local assembly had refused to follow earlier recommendations to do so (TPM, Aug 2011).

While forcing some cuts in the territorial administration, the French State also reduced the amounts of money directly injected into the country. According to a press release by the French High Commission, the amount of money France spent in 2010 within French Polynesia amounted to 179 billion CFP francs (US$1.79 billion) (TPM, Aug 2011), a significant decrease from the 239 billion CFP francs spent in 2009.

In September, the French and territorial governments formally announced the construction of a second prison on the south shore of Tahiti, the current one in Nuutania in Faaa being run down and heavily overcrowded. The project, at an estimated cost of 8 billion CFP francs (US$80 million), is fraught with controversy, especially in the district of Papeari where the complex is to be built. In an editorial comment, Tahiti Pacifique editor Alex DuPrel semi-jokingly argued that “the fact that the construction of a prison is currently the only large building project under way in Tahiti could be interpreted as rather symbolic,” while the issue’s headline dubbed French Polynesia the “Greece of the Pacific,” in reference to the current severe financial crisis in the European country (TPM, Oct 2011). Shortly after the prison announcement, Tahiti’s infrastructure received a significant improvement; a tunnel bypassing the coastal cliffs at Arahoho Blowhole, hitherto passable only through a narrow winding road that had been a hot spot for traffic accidents, was opened in mid-October (TP, 11 Oct 2011).

Also in October, the topic of post-colonial nation building once more filled the headlines when President Temaru suggested using the primary elections of the French Socialist Party (of which Temaru’s Tavini Huiraatira, the chief component of the UPLD, is the local partner) as an unofficial referendum to change the country’s name from French Polynesia to “Maohi Nui” (Greater Maohi, referring to the Tahitian term for native Polynesian).
already during the pif meeting in
August, Temaru had designated him-
self as “President of Maohi Nui.” The
president’s suggested name change
sparked an intense debate and led once
more to the pro-French opposition
bringing forward all sorts of charges
against the president, including alleged
racism since the term “Maohi Nui”
would supposedly exclude non-Poly-
nesians (TP, 4 Oct, 7 Oct 2011).

“French Polynesia” is, of course,
anachronistic colonial name, akin
to such obsolete entities as “French
Indochina,” “British East Africa,” or
“Netherlands Indies.” In addition,
the name is imprecise since there are
other Polynesian islands under French
rule not included in the territory (ie,
Wallis and Futuna). The name “French
Polynesia” was imposed by Paris
in 1957 to replace the earlier name
“French Establishments of Oceania”
against the will of local leaders at the
time. Given these facts, a change of
the country’s official name is over-
due. However, one of the problems
is that French Polynesia, unlike most
other modern Polynesian polities, is
an artificial entity created through
French colonization that does not
 correspond to any precolonial politi-
cal, cultural, or linguistic unit and,
therefore, there is no original native
name for the entire country. While the
majority of local politicians in 1957
opposed “French Polynesia” and sug-
gested to simply rename the territory
“Tahiti” (Regnault 2006, 200–204),
the most common suggestions for
a name change in recent times have
been “Tahiti Nui” (Greater Tahiti)
and “Maohi Nui.” “Tahiti Nui” has
been criticized as too Tahiti-centric, as
it could be construed as denying the
other islands any importance, but at
a closer look, “Maohi Nui” is hardly
less problematic. Even though from
a Tahitian point of view inclusive of
other Polynesians, it is nevertheless
also a Tahiti-centric term, since the
word “Maohi” is uniquely Tahitian
and not found in many of the outer
islands languages. Overall, “Tahiti
Nui” appears more preferable, since
it has already been used in the names
of several semi-governmental institu-
tions, such as the country’s airline (Air
Tahiti Nui) and TV station (Tahiti Nui
Television), as well as the national
anthem (“Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui”) and
order of merit (Order of Tahiti Nui).
While it was initially championed
only by Gaston Flosse, during the
middle of the past decade there was a
short-lived consensus on “Tahiti Nui”
when Temaru for a while settled for
that name as well. In addition, of all
suggested names, “Tahiti Nui” is the
most internationally recognizable, an
important factor for a largely tourism-
based economy. In terms of name
recognition, “Tahiti Nui” actually
scores higher than “French Polynesia”—most tourists vacationing in
“Tahiti” only learn of the existence of
the name “French Polynesia” at immi-
gration—and it scores far higher than
the rather obscure “Maohi Nui.”

While “Maohi Nui” might be
impractical internationally, making
charges that the term is “racist” is
very much baseless. It remains unclear
what would be racist about replace-
ing a colonial name with one in a
native language referring to the native
people, a practice that has been com-
mon in processes of decolonization
elsewhere, often long before actual
independence.
While the debate on the name change went on—albeit with no substantial consequences, since an official name change would require a complex French legislative process (TP, 4 Oct 2011)—attention focused again on former President Gaston Flosse’s troubles with the law. In early October, Flosse was sentenced to four years in jail for the so-called fictional employments affair, while several of his former associates, including leading politicians such as Jean-Christophe Bouissou, Justin Arapari, Bruno Sandras, and Michel Buillard, were sentenced to prison or suspended prison sentences and high fines (TP, 4 Oct 2011). During his presidency between 1991 and 2004, Flosse had employed the codefendants at the president’s office as “consultants,” or “task officers,” for which they were paid high salaries, while in reality none of them ever worked there. All of them filed appeals, so the trial will drag on for a long time and none of them will go to jail unless and until their sentences are confirmed by the appellate court.

Another notoriously corrupt politician, Emile Vernaudon, who had previously been convicted of massive embezzlement of public funds, was released from prison in the first week of June (TPM, June–July 2012). Vernaudon was the first local politician in a long time to actually serve a long prison sentence for corruption, and one can only hope that his case will serve as a precedent for the various other corruption cases currently ongoing.

Another judicial controversy was resolved in late October, when the French Council of State (highest court) found the budget plan Gaston Tong Sang had attempted to enact by decree in February of 2011 to be unconstitutional. The decision had no immediate effect, since the government has since changed, but it increased Temaru’s legitimacy by denouncing his predecessor’s handling of the country’s financial affairs (PIR, 28 Oct 2011).

Meanwhile, Senator Tuheiava is emerging as a new leader in local politics. Over the last few years, Tuheiava has increasingly become one of the public faces of the UPLD, besides Temaru and his longtime lieutenants such as Jacqui Drollet and Antony Geros. In October, Tahiti-based French journalist Serge Massau published a book of collected interviews with the senator (the youngest in the entire French Senate) and his innovative political ideas (Massau 2011). In *Paroles d’un autochtone* (Words of an indigenous man), Tuheiava presents his long-term social and political visions of sovereignty (preferring that word over “independence”), indigenous rights, and pan-Pacific solidarity. In the latter respect, Tuheiava has been indeed very active, promoting the inscription of Raiatea’s Marae Taputapuatea (a historic temple of great significance throughout Eastern Polynesia) on UNESCO’s World Heritage List, while also actively supporting the rights of other Polynesian countries under foreign rule, such as Rapa Nui during the violent crackdown by Chilean forces on the island’s people in 2010.

In the same context, on 29 September, Tuheiava posed an official question to French Prime Minister François Fillon about the legal status of relations between France and Hawai‘i.
Since Hawai‘i was not acquired by the United States in conformity with international law through a treaty of annexation but was unilaterally occupied in 1898, and previous executive agreements between the Hawaiian Kingdom and the United States were never carried out, the current legal status of the international treaties between Hawai‘i and third countries, none of which were ever formally terminated, is unclear. In his written question, Tuheiava referred to a treaty made in 1857 between French Emperor Napoleon III and Hawaiian King Kamehameha IV, referring to the importance of clarifying the status of that treaty for French Polynesia, since Hawai‘i is an important economic partner for the country today, as it was in the 1850s when Tahiti was a French Protectorate (Government of France 2011).

While engaged in assisting his own and other Polynesian countries under foreign rule, Tuheiava also came under attack for questionable dealings in his profession as a lawyer. In mid-March 2012, a judicial indictment against the senator was initiated, charging him with breach of trust, forgery, and use of forgeries, as he was accused of taking payment from clients but not properly serving them. Tuheiava, however, considered this a politically motivated conspiracy attempting to remove him from office because of his pro-sovereignty convictions (TPM, April 2012).

In November 2011, two ceremonies marking important historical eras took place. In Papara, a monument honoring Opuhara, the leader of the traditionalist party slain in the decisive 1815 battle between Christians and traditionalists, was dedicated in front of the town hall by a group of political leaders (TP, 12 Nov 2011). As the leader of resistance against both Christianization and Pomare hegemony, Opuhara is regarded as a hero by movements to revive the traditional religion as well as by Pomare critics, thus making the ceremony, attended by practicing Christians and Pomare descendants, a symbolic gesture of reconciliation between the two religions and between rival lineages.

Late November also saw the re-dedication of historic St Michael’s Cathedral on Mangareva, the largest nineteenth-century church building and one of the oldest in the Pacific. Built in 1846 with a length of 55 meters and a steeple height of 25 meters, the historic monument had fallen into disrepair by the early 2000s and was threatened with collapse. The restoration, which began in 2008, cost 537 million CFP francs (US$5.4 million) and was jointly funded by the Catholic Church, the French State, the government of French Polynesia, and private donors (TPM, Dec 2011; TP, 12 Nov 2011).

Around the same time, another political controversy gained attention when Jean-Paul Barral, a long-term independence activist, high school teacher, and government official, resigned in disgust from his office as advisor to assembly Speaker Jacqui Drollet and harshly criticized the politicians of all parties. While arguing that the pro-French territorial government under Gaston Flosse from 1991 to 2004 “in complicity with the French State had created the largest corruption machine ever existing in the territory of the French Republic,”
the succeeding governments led by Temaru, Drollet, and other independence supporters, despite their slogan of “Taui Roa” (Great Change) had done nothing substantial to do away with that corrupt system. On the contrary, during Temaru’s presidency, a single politician (Emile Vernaudon) had embezzled hitherto unparalleled amounts of public funds, and the political culture had fallen to such a low level that some politicians were now changing their party affiliation every few months, just to be on the side of the government majority. When Barral had recently suggested to Speaker Drollet to work out a new consensus-based project inclusive of all political camps and wider elements of society in order to enable the credible and responsible conduct of government, Drollet and other UPLD colleagues reportedly advised him to postpone his suggestions until after the next elections. Barral took this as another indicator of how politics continue to operate on the short-term logic of power strategies (TPM, Dec 2011).

Mostly concurring with Barral, Tahiti-based political scientist Sémir Al-Wardi and historian Jean-Marc Regnault in late 2011 published a book with the appropriate title Tahiti en crise durable (Tahiti in a sustainable crisis), deploiring the seemingly irresolvable political and economic impasse in which the country has been stuck for almost a decade (Al-Wardi and Regnault 2011).

With no changes in sight within the formal political system, it should not come as a surprise that alternative political projects are flourishing. In mid-December, French police arrested Teatuaura Temataru, the self-proclaimed “King of Tahiti,” as well as several supporters of his “government.” Hailing from the island of Maupiti, Temataru had attracted attention when he first proclaimed himself king of his home island and then created a Pacific confederation with representatives of other self-proclaimed “kingdoms” on other Polynesian islands. Eventually, in late 2011 he opened his own tribunal in Papeete and appeared with a guard of twenty uniformed bodyguards and a service vehicle inscribed “Police Royale.” The last two steps provoked police intervention because, according to the 2004 organic law of French Polynesia, the judiciary and internal security are responsibilities of the French state, which does not tolerate messing with its prerogatives (TPM, Jan 2012). For similar reasons, in early July 2012, police cracked down on another self-proclaimed government, “Hau Pakumotu,” and arrested its leaders (TNTV news, 13 July 2012). These and other, similarly bizarre-looking fantasy states founded recently in Tahiti might seem to be merely comic operas, but there are deeper reasons for the increasing popularity of these movements. Growing numbers especially among the poorer rural Tahitian population have lost confidence in the pro-independence political parties they traditionally voted for, because the latter have increasingly become part of the political establishment, while an improvement of social and economic conditions for the lower classes is nowhere in sight.

The New Year started with the closure of Tahitipresse, the country’s official news agency, which,
being staffed with rather few people in comparison to other government agencies, fell victim to the hesitant, unsystematic, and rather symbolic cuts in government expenditure. Tahitipresse had usually been a reliable source of information for this review. Also during the review period, the French Pacific territories lost an important figure in the development of print media when in September 2011, journalist and printer Daniel Tardieu passed away in Nouméa at age ninety. Tardieu cofounded the oldest currently existing newspaper of the country, *Les Nouvelles de Tahiti*, in 1948, then moved to New Caledonia where he created *Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes*, which is still the major daily newspaper there (*TPM*, Oct 2011).

The first major political event in the New Year was the visit by French Minister for Overseas Territories Marie-Luce Penchard from 5 to 14 February. During the visit, Vice President Geros signed a contract with the minister, pledging to sell the building that houses the French Polynesia office in Paris in order to be eligible for an advance in funds from the French treasury. On 19 February, however, Geros announced that the country government would not sell the building, since this would constitute a gesture of self-humiliation by Tahiti vis-à-vis Paris. The French government subsequently blocked release of the promised funds (*TPM*, March 2012).

In March, another infrastructural pet project was inaugurated: a new harbor station intended to facilitate ferry traffic to Moorea. Typical for official buildings in Tahiti, the station is an impressive display of architecture but not very practical and, with a price tag of 2.5 billion CFP francs (US$25 million), very costly (*TPM*, April 2012, May 2012).

While the government keeps wasting funds for ill-conceived prestige projects such as this, the private sector continues to stagnate. Among the few exceptions was the purchase of the luxury hotel Le Méridien in Punaauia by the Samoan Hotel company Aggie Grey’s in January, one of the few recent instances of foreign investment in the country’s tourism industry and, interestingly enough, by a small company from a neighboring Island nation (*TPM*, Feb 2012).

In late April, President Temaru announced another giant economic project, a large-scale tuna farm in Hao atoll, to be financed by Chinese investors (*TPM*, May 2012, June–July 2012; ti, 2 June 2012). Similar projects to take advantage of the infrastructure leftover from the former French military base on Hao and of the atoll’s huge lagoon had been announced by several preceding governments, so it remains to be seen whether the project will indeed be implemented.

During the remaining period under review, the country was mainly preoccupied with the French national elections. During the presidential elections on 21 April and 5 May, the majority of French Polynesia’s voters, contrary to the metropolitan trend, voted for incumbent President Nicolas Sarkozy. During the first election round, Sarkozy received 45.21 percent of the votes (27.18 percent in France), against 32.43 percent for Socialist candidate François Hollande (28.63 percent in France). Marine Le Pen of the extreme right-wing Front National, who polled third in France
with 17.90 percent, reached only 5.73 percent in French Polynesia. Fourth place was claimed by François Bayrou of the liberal Mouvement Démocrate party, with 5.72 percent locally (9.13 percent in France). All other candidates received insignificant local results, including Philippe Poutou of the radical left Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste; although he was the only French presidential candidate to have unambiguously declared himself in favor of French Polynesia’s independence, he gained only 0.59 percent of the local vote (1.15 percent in France). Local participation was a record low of 49.35 percent, as opposed to 79.48 percent of the voters in France.

In the runoff, won nationally by Hollande with 51.64 percent, Sarkozy still led the local vote with 53.26 percent (48.36 percent in France) against 48.11 percent for Hollande. Compared to the last presidential election, the local vote for Sarkozy even increased, since in the 2007 runoff, Sarkozy had received 51.90 percent. Hollande lead the vote only in the Marquesas Islands, some of the Tuamotu and Austral Islands, the islands of Tahaa and Moorea, as well as in the municipalities of Faaa and West Taiarapu on Tahiti. At 58.94 percent, local participation in the runoff was still much lower than in France (80.35 percent) but relatively high for local standards. Irregularities in the counting of votes compelled the French Constitutional Council to declare the election in the municipality of Papeete to be void, but because of the overall insignificance of those votes, this had no effect on the results of the presidential election as a whole (RNZI, 10 May 2012).

The specifics of the local results, and their divergence from French national trends, can be best explained by looking back at the positioning of the local political parties in the preceding electoral campaign. A large front encompassing virtually all of the otherwise divided local pro-French parties, including Flosse’s Tahoeraa and Tong Sang’s To Tatou Aia, had declared themselves in favor of Sarkozy, which explains the latter’s surprisingly good score. Temaru’s formal partnership with the French Socialist party explains why Hollande won in UPLD-ruled municipalities. Bayrou scored third, since he had the local support of Nicole Bouteau’s minor centrist party No Oe E Te Nunaa. The negligible scores of all other candidates, including the nationally strong Le Pen and even Poutou, the only candidate specifically engaged for a local political topic, are the results of their lack of a local political party supporting their campaign.

Especially interesting from a political point of view was the local campaign for Sarkozy, since in his case, several competing parties had rallied behind one French candidate from the first round, a strategy that allowed them to conceal their individual strength and make it possible for each of them to count Sarkozy’s votes as theirs. This strategy was most evidently used by Gaston Flosse, whose once all-powerful Tahoeraa had suffered extreme losses during the last territorial election in 2008 and had subsequently lost the endorsement from Sarkozy’s Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) party as its local partner to Tong Sang’s To Tatou Aia. To rally behind Sarkozy
Despite all of that was thus a brilliant move for Flosse to save face and at the same time outmaneuver Tong Sang and other recently created pro-French splinter groups (NT, 22 Apr 2012).

When on 12 April, Sarkozy’s Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs François Baroin visited Tahiti for a campaign speech, he was supposed to be hosted by representatives of all local parties that had declared support for Sarkozy, but at first Flosse was conspicuously absent. After Tong Sang and other leaders of small pro-French splinter parties had waited for a while, Flosse suddenly showed up with 5,000 of his party members, all uniformed in orange, the Tahoeraa party color, and crowded the hall where Baroin was to speak, making an overwhelming impression on both the minister and the local party leaders (TPM, May 2012).

The election of Hollande might mark the beginning of a new era. The five years of Sarkozy brought no visible change in the French attitude toward Tahiti. Essentially, Sarkozy had continued Chirac’s policy of cultivating special relations with a local pro-French client leader (Flosse for Chirac, Tong Sang for Sarkozy) and had manipulated the political process in that client’s favor, while maintaining an overall arrogant and chauvinistic attitude against independence in general and Oscar Temaru’s party in particular. The active campaign of the Sarkozy government against reinscription once again was evidence for that continuing colonialist attitude.

Hollande’s position on these questions remains to be seen. Even though on 25 February the Socialist presidential candidate had replied to a provocatively asked question by a journalist that he was not for the independence of French Polynesia, he has also stated that this is a personal disagreement between him and his partner Oscar Temaru (TPM, March 2012), implying that he was not intending to limit the country’s right to self-determination as Sarkozy had done. Since his election as president, Hollande has thus far avoided making any further explicit statements on the issue.

With the change of power in Paris thus raising significant hope for a new deal with Tahiti, the bid for reinscription as a non-self-governing territory received a new boost at the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. On 9 May the representatives of Papua New Guinea and Fiji introduced a resolution, which was approved and included in the meeting’s communiqué, stating that the organization, consisting of 120 member states, “affirmed the inalienable right of the people of French Polynesia–Ma‘ohi Nui to self-determination in accordance with Chapter x of the United Nations and the UN General Assembly Resolution 1514(xv)” (Fiji Ministry of Information, 11 May 2012). Representing two-thirds of the UN member states, in the words of a Fijian journalist reporting on the issue, “the support by the 120 members of the movement will greatly assist the advancement of the issue in the United Nations,” referring to the next General Assembly meeting in September 2012 (Fiji Sun, 13 May 2012).

The news once more drew sharp criticism from the pro-French opposition parties. In a press statement,
Tahoeraa called the resolution of the Non-Aligned Movement an “inacceptable interference in the internal affairs of France,” while Tong Sang denied the legitimacy of Fiji’s and Papua New Guinea’s activism, based on their governments’ poor democratic performance (T1, 15 May 2012). This reaction by Tahoeraa and its former member was rather hypocritical, since Flosse had been one of the chief outside supporters of the earlier Fijian military dictatorship of Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka in the 1980s (Regnault 2011). What makes Tahoeraa’s position even more ironic is the fact that Rabuka’s regime was based on indigenous ethno-nationalism and Christian fundamentalism, the very ideologies pro-French Tahitians have constantly accused Temaru of harboring, while the current Fijian military government under Bainimarama advocates a secular and multiethnic Fijian state.

If the campaign for the French presidential election gave some indications of Tahoeraa’s comeback, the subsequent French legislative elections, held in French Polynesia on 2 and 16 June, restored Flosse’s party to a position of strength not seen since 2004. Due to the increase in population, the number of deputies to represent the country in the French National Assembly, each to be elected in a single-member constituency in two rounds, was increased from two to three.

Already in the first round of voting, Tahoeraa candidate Edouard Fritch (Flosse’s son-in-law and leader of the Tahoeraa caucus in the assembly) led the vote in the first constituency (municipalities of Papeete, Pirae, and Arue on Tahiti as well as the island of Moorea and the Tuamotu and Marquesas Islands) with 36.62 percent, a significant advance over UPLD candidate and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Pierre Frébault, who gained only 18.30 percent. The incumbent, Papeete Mayor Michel Buillard (To Tatou Aia), was not running again. The balance of the votes went to several candidates of small splinter parties.

In the second constituency (rural municipalities on Tahiti as well as the Austral Islands), Tahoeraa candidate Jonas Tahuaitu (assistant mayor of Papeari) scored highest with 29.18 percent of the votes, but the UPLD candidate, attorney and political newcomer Philippe Neuffer, who obtained 24.34 percent, scored significantly higher than Frébault did in his race. Incumbent Bruno Sandras, the mayor of Papara who had recently left Tahoeraa to found his own party and who received official support from the French UMP, came in fourth with 9.44 percent, overtaken by Teiva Manutahi (of the small independent party Poringetia Ora), who received a surprising 10.28 percent.

Only in the third constituency was UPLD leading the vote in the first round, where its candidate, Minister of Education, Youth, and Sports Tauhiti Nena, received 30.52 percent against Tahoeraa candidate Jean Paul Tuaiva (a young businessman and political newcomer) with 23.90 percent. Former President and Bora-Bora Mayor Gaston Tong Sang, whose party To Tatou Aia had won the last territorial elections in 2008, scored third with only 16.45 percent. At 45.79 percent, local participation was
significantly lower than the French national turnout of 57.23 percent.

In the runoff election, Fritch virtually doubled his votes and won the first constituency with a solid majority of 63.36 percent. In the second constituency, the trend of the first round was also reinforced, with Tahuaitu scoring 53.42 percent in a clear victory over Neuffer, even though the latter had the support of Sandras as well as several small splinter candidates from the first round (TI, 13 June, 16 June 2012). In the third constituency, however, the runoff went against the trend of the first round, and Tuaiva won a bare majority of 50.24 percent against Nena (TI, 16 June 2012). Since the difference between the two was only 152 votes and there were rumors about irregularities in Tahoeraa-controlled municipalities, Nena challenged the results in the third constituency (DT, 4 July 2012). The complaint, however, had no injunctive consequences, and Tuaiva has been declared winner until proven otherwise. At 53.99 percent, local turnout for the runoff drew closer to the French national figure of 55.41 percent.

Tahoeraa is not officially supported by any French party after having been dumped by the UMP in 2008, so it was at first unclear in which parliamentary caucus the three Tahoeraa deputies would sit. Eventually, they decided to become members of the Union des Démocrates et Indépendants Caucus, which groups the deputies of various small center-right parties in opposition to Hollande, under the leadership of Jean-Louis Borloo of the Parti Radical (TI, 20 June 2012)

An analysis of the election results shows that the majority of local voters, similar to the presidential elections, did not follow the French trend—the Socialist Party and its center-left allies won an overall majority of 331 of 577 seats in the National Assembly—but continued to vote for the local pro-French parties affiliated with the center-right French opposition. Temaru’s Socialist-allied UPLD was not able to capitalize on the political change in France and reach out to voters outside of its traditional support base. At the same time, within the pro-French camp, voters’ support is shifting from To Tatou Aia and other Tahoeraa breakaway groups back to Tahoeraa.

However, as is usual in French Polynesian elections, gerrymandering had a part in the election results as well. Previously, the first of the two constituencies had included the western half of Tahiti plus the western outer islands, while the second constituency covered the eastern half of the main island and the archipelagos to the east. Since roughly two-thirds of the population live on Tahiti and one-third on the outer islands, a logical redistricting would have split Tahiti into two and made the outer islands one constituency, thus giving the outer archipelagos their own voice in Paris. Instead, the French government decided to make each constituency once more consist of a slice of Tahiti and lump each of them together with a few outer islands, a system that could hardly be more absurd. Besides, the gerrymandering was also clearly designed to minimize the chances of Temaru’s party gaining a seat, since the third constituency lumped together Temaru’s main stronghold of Faaa
with the neighboring, largely pro-French district of Punaauia, home to many French settlers, while excluding the nearby island of Moorea, another stronghold. Moorea is located nearest to Faaa and Punaauia but against all logic was included in the first constituency.

Undeniable, however, is the fact that Tong Sang and his party have fallen back among the ranks of minor splinter groups, as if their 2008 election victory had never happened. Their comet-like rise and fall may be explained through the obvious manipulations by the then French government under Sarkozy, who wanted to build up Tong Sang as a loyal and complacent client leader, while the latter apparently lacks both the charisma and the organizational talent of Temaru and Flosse. The local political scene has thus largely reverted from a triangular configuration of Temaru versus Flosse versus Tong Sang (with permanently shifting alliances between two of the three) back to a bipolarization between Temaru (pro-independence) and Flosse (anti-independence).

In view of the 2013 territorial elections, however, a new third force is currently in formation by politicians hitherto in the background, led by Teiva Manutahi, Nicole Bouteau, and Philip Schyle (TI, 2 July 2012). The latter two scored between 8 and 9 percent each in the first constituency and have been known for a long time as proponents of a moderate “middle path.”

The review period ended on a positive note when the Administrative Court in Papeete decided in favor of six nuclear-test veterans whose request for compensation for radiation-induced disease had been rejected by the French Ministry of Defense. Nuclear test victims’ association Moruroa e Tatou considered the verdict an important breakthrough (TI, 25 June 2012). On the negative side, the end of the period under review was again marked by a strike at the airport at the beginning of the school holiday season, an initiative by trade union leaders to defend their members’ privileges without consideration of the overall impact of such actions on the country’s already severely affected economy (TPM, June–July 2012).

While all these troubles continued at home, at least one small group of Tahitians were able to fulfill a lifetime dream when the voyaging canoe Faa-faite, having made previous voyages to Hawai‘i and other Polynesian islands, traveled via Sāmoa, Fiji, and Vanuatu to Solomon Islands to attend the 11th Festival of Pacific Arts in Honiara, the first modern voyage of a Tahitian canoe to Western Polynesia and Melanesia (TI, 30 June 2012).

LORENZ GONSCHOR

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MāORI ISSUES

In a year when tensions between Māori and the government were increasing, hosting the Rugby World Cup was a welcome albeit temporary distraction. Despite a strong Māori presence at the opening and on the New Zealand All Blacks team, displays of racism marred the event on more than one occasion. This very
destructive characteristic of New Zealand society is becoming more pronounced as Māori success is being perceived by some as a threat to the white supremacy that has thrived in New Zealand for over a century and a half. It surfaced on several occasions during the year, most notably in Pākehā (European) media, in some court decisions, in industrial disputes, in Treaty of Waitangi “settlements,” in government policy, and in the actions of several government agencies. In the November general election, the most telling result was the very low Māori voter turnout of 49 percent (New Zealand Parliament 2011). The Māori Party lost a member of Parliament, reducing its numbers to three, but once again they joined the National Party–led coalition government. The new Mana Party has only one member in the House, with the remaining three Māori seats going to the Labour Party (Electoral Commission 2011). During the year, the government pushed through “settlements” of five iwi (tribal groupings), which legally extinguished their treaty claims. A further four have had similar “settlement” legislation pending in Parliament (OTS 2012). As a result of the Crown’s relentless drive to extinguish all historical claims, the Waitangi Tribunal has been inundated with claims opposing the so-called settlements, to the point that it has had to put other work on hold (Waitangi Tribunal 2012).

The Rugby World Cup riveted the nation for two months. The opening ceremony was dominated in spectacular fashion by the Māori face of the country, and twenty traditional waka (war canoes)—one for each nation represented—were out in force on the Wāitematā Harbour in Auckland. Māori appreciated the chairman of the International Rugby Board, Frenchman Bernard Lapasset, speaking Māori as he opened the tournament, even if it did highlight the fact that Prime Minister John Key chose to ignore the Māori foundation of the nation when he spoke. The country was euphoric when the All Blacks eventually won the World Cup, narrowly beating the French in a nail-biting final. There were eight Māori on the thirty-man team. Piri Weepu was named Man of the Match in the quarterfinals against Argentina, and Israel Dagg was named one of the five players of the tournament.

It was therefore disappointing that the racist underbelly of New Zealand society was in evidence against Māori and our Pacific cousins during the tournament. Members of one of the waka crews, including young women, were physically and verbally attacked when they came ashore on the overcrowded Auckland waterfront during the opening ceremony; several required hospital treatment. Meanwhile the Tongan, Samoan, and Fijian teams felt particularly disadvantaged with a draw that treated them unfairly by having only short times between their games while the opposition had a week. Then there were the International Rugby Board rules, which prevented a number of outstanding Tongan, Samoan, and Fijian players from playing for their own countries (Taonui 2011). Biased refereeing against these Pacific Island teams is common, and when the Samoan center angrily pointed out the racism of a Welsh referee and refused to back down, he was suspended.
Nowhere is racism more clearly evidenced than in Pākehā-controlled media. Totally unacceptable socioeconomic statistics for Māori (McIntosh and Mulholland 2012) are often quoted with no analysis or history of the causes provided. Yet the successes of an increasing number of Māori and Māori organizations in areas that were traditionally the preserve of Pākehā are rarely mentioned. Positive reports about Māori rising to the top of professions and about Māori organizations established to look after the economic well-being of their hapū (group of extended families) and iwi (group of hapū) making substantial gains are fully covered by Māori news media. Yet if Pākehā media cover these stories at all, there is usually no acknowledgment that the person or group is Māori. What is newsworthy for Pākehā is the chance to vilify or demonize Māori who succeed, often deliberately misreporting them. Māori academics have long been subject to such treatment, as are Māori judges and lawyers. Such reports invariably bring out the worst in Pākehā who feel threatened by Māori success.

In September, immediately before the Rugby World Cup, the Sunday Star Times, a Pākehā weekly newspaper, misrepresented what I, as the Professor of Māori Studies at the country’s largest university, had told their reporter when I commented in an interview on the fact that white immigration had done far more damage to Māori than Asian immigration (Hill 2011). The attacks in the Pākehā media and via e-mail started immediately, and when I corrected the misreporting, they became even more strident (Abel and Mutu 2011, 7–8).

This reporting contrasted sharply with the more balanced and factually based reporting by Māori media in which commentary focused on the need for the country to recognize and address the damage that racism causes (Mutu 2012a). Similarly, the Taranaki Daily News misquoted Māori language lecturer Keri Opai, who referred to the atrocities suffered by Taranaki Māori as a holocaust (Radio New Zealand 2011). The Pākehā media vilified him, but he was in good company; the Waitangi Tribunal had made the same reference in 1996 (Waitangi Tribunal 1996) and had been similarly vilified.

Yet when the Weekend Herald, the sister publication to the country’s largest daily newspaper, the New Zealand Herald, published a vitriolic diatribe against Māori written by a prominent Pākehā broadcaster, it was Māori who had to take action to have the damage repaired. Paul Holmes’s opinion piece (Holmes 2012), while initially aimed at protestors who were following a long Waitangi Day tradition of highlighting injustices against Māori, went on to attack all Māori. Taitokerau MP Hone Harawira’s response, published four days later, described the Holmes piece as “mean and nasty,” “deliberately offensive and uncaring,” and certain to “hurt a lot of people” (Harawira 2012). In the New Zealand Press Council decision uphold- ing seven complaints filed against the article and the newspaper, Holmes’s statements of “hopeless failure of Maori to educate their children and stop them bashing their babies” and “raid a bit more kai moana [seafood] than they need for the big, and feed themselves silly, speak of the injustices heaped upon them by the greedy
Pakeha and work out new ways of bamboozling the Pakeha to come up with a few more millions” were described as “inaccurate,” “beyond what is acceptable,” and “a gratuitous offence to Maori” (New Zealand Press Council 2012). Unfazed, the Herald went on to publish equally inflammatory remarks from the right-wing ACT party’s largest donor, Louis Crimp, in an article entitled “Act Backer: We All Dislike Maori” (Fisher 2012). An emerging opinion being expressed by some Māori leaders is that racism is a Pākehā problem and it is not the responsibility of Māori to fix it (Mikaere 2011, 68).

In October, Tauranga Moana hapū were faced with an escalating environmental disaster following the grounding of the mv Rena, a 47,230-tonne container ship carrying over 350 tonnes of toxic oil. It smashed into the reef Ōtaiti (Astrolabe Reef), which is the traditional fishing ground of Te Patuwai hapū of Mōtīti, the island immediately adjacent to the reef. A storm hit the area in the following week, resulting in most of the oil being spilled into the sea and more than eighty-eight containers going overboard (Akuhata 2011). Local hapū and iwi were initially ignored by government officials struggling to cope with the disaster. The environmental impact affected the whole of the Bay of Plenty and spread some way down the East Coast region, highlighting how unprepared the country is to manage such disasters. It took some time for officials to start recognizing that the extensive knowledge held by local Māori was essential for a successful clean-up operation (Waatea News 2011).

Early in 2011, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui had authorized a flotilla of vessels to shadow the vessels of the Brazilian oil giant Petrobas, which the government had allowed to explore for oil in their sea territory (Mutu 2012b, 188). Apart from the fact that the oil belongs to the iwi, the greatest concern was the potential for a major oil spill. The mv Rena incident confirmed fears that the country could not manage such a disaster. The government had attacked Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, sending in the navy and the police to arrest the skipper of one of their boats. In July 2012, the case was thrown out of court because the New Zealand government has no jurisdiction in that part of Te Whānau-ā-Apanui’s seas (Bay of Plenty News 2012).

In another prominent case, the outcome confirmed the courts’ preference to incarcerate Māori, even for minor offenses (Webb 2012, 250–251). The long-awaited trial of the four people arrested and charged as a result of the police terrorist raids into Tūhoe country in 2007 took place in March 2012. It saw the jury hung on the more serious charges and only some of the minor firearms charges upheld. The two-and-a-half-year prison sentence handed down in May to two of those charged appeared to confirm the increasing concern that many Māori prisoners are in fact political prisoners.

Increasing anger with the newly elected National Party–led government and long-running industrial disputes saw large numbers turn out in cities around the country for the Aotearoa Is Not For Sale protest march earlier in May. Its aim was to demonstrate
public opposition to privatization and the continued selling of the country’s natural resources, land, and public services to private investors. Large blocks of land are increasingly being made available for purchase by foreign companies and individuals rather than being returned to their rightful Māori owners. The aggressive oil drilling and mining tendering process that saw such vehement protest from Te Whānau-ā-Apanui is being extended throughout the country. Major industrial disputes were taking place at the Ports of Auckland and in AFFCO meat-processing plants around New Zealand where the overwhelming majority of the workers are Māori. Treaty “settlements” were continuing to divide Māori communities, and Māori were leaving the country in the thousands, heading mainly for Australia, looking for work and respite from the increasingly oppressive racism in New Zealand.

In the Ports of Auckland dispute, an injunction issued by the Employment Tribunal in March ensured that striking workers were not made redundant and that collective bargaining continued over their work conditions (Anglican Diocese of Auckland 2012). In the AFFCO disputes, which saw large numbers of workers locked out around the country, iwi leaders who had been meat workers themselves broke the deadlock by bringing the company owners and the workers together in one room in May and not allowing them to leave until a resolution was reached (National Iwi Chairs’ Forum 2012, 9–10). On the treaty “settlements” front, the Waitangi Tribunal issued a memorandum stating that the unprecedented increase in applications against pending settlements was having an impact on the tribunal’s other inquiries and report writing, causing unavoidable delays (Waitangi Tribunal 2012).

Despite the growing opposition to these so-called settlements, the government continued to push ahead with them, convincing claimants that they had no alternative but to accept the very mean and unfair terms it had unilaterally decided. Legislation was passed extinguishing all the historical claims of Ngāti Manawa and Ngāti Whare (of the Central North Island); Ngāti Pāhauwera (Hawkes Bay); and Ngāti Porou (East Coast); and legislation was introduced into the House for Ngāti Manuhiri (Northland); Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei (Auckland); Ngāi Tāmanuhiri (East Coast); Maraeroa Block (Central North Island); and Rongowhakaata (East Coast) (OTS 2012). While the names of the settling bodies would be entered onto the titles of some of the sacred sites that had been stolen from them, the settlements do not allow full authority and control or even privacy with respect to the lands to be returned to those iwi. Those settling must maintain public access to almost all of these sites, effectively guaranteeing their continued desecration. Small monetary provisions ranging from NZ$1.6 million to NZ$110 million [NZ$1 = ~US$0.82] are also made in the legislation (OTS website: Deeds of Settlement), although the government will retain most of this. Rather than simply relinquishing the lands they have stolen, the government forces the iwi to buy back the very small proportions of the land that it has decided it is prepared to sell to them (Mutu...
The monetary provision made is never enough to purchase all lands offered. Rather, the already impoverished claimants are expected to find money from other sources to pay the government the ransom money it demands if they want their lands returned.

Meanwhile, apart from the urgent applications opposing these extinguishments, the Waitangi Tribunal is also hearing other urgent contemporary claims. Most hotly contested is the claim to fresh water. Māori have mana (power and authority derived from the gods) with respect to all their natural resources, which includes proprietary rights to, and ownership of, their own waterways. The claim is urgent because the government is pushing ahead to sell 49 percent of its power-generation companies, and these companies rely on water to generate power. Māori are insisting that, prior to any sale, their interests in and legal rights to the water be clarified, acknowledged, and provided for. The government is refusing to discuss the matter, asserting that no one owns the water. The Waitangi Tribunal has previously ruled that Māori own water (Waitangi Tribunal 1984), and if the government ignores the tribunal this time, as it has done repeatedly in recent years, this matter is likely to end up before the High Court.

In the meantime the tribunal has set a precedent by agreeing to hold hearings for orders to force the government to return land and to pay compensation to claimants. For many years the tribunal refused to hold such hearings because of threats from successive governments to remove their legal powers if they ever did so (Hamer 2004, 7). In May 2011, the Supreme Court quashed a decision by the Waitangi Tribunal not to hear an application for orders from the Mangatu Incorporation (Supreme Court 2011). This opened the way for Māori to exercise their legal right to have the tribunal make such orders. The government fought bitterly to stop the tribunal from hearing the Far North iwi, Ngāti Kahu. It failed, and the hearing has been scheduled to go ahead in September 2012.

MARGARET MUTU

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RAPA NUI

“¡Fuera la Schiess! ¡Fuera! ¡Fuera Platovsky! ¡Fuera! ¡Fuera Chilenos! ¡Fuera! ¿Cuándo Inmigracion? ¡Ahora! ¡Horo te henua! ¡Horo te henua! ¡Horo te vaikava! ¡Horo te vaikava!” (Get out Schiess [family]! Get out! Get out Platovsky! Get out! Get out Chileans! Get out! When immigration [laws]? Now! Demand the island! Demand the island! Demand the ocean! Demand the ocean!) These exclamations, first yelled by leaders and then collectively yelled by more than a hundred Rapa Nui people in cars and on foot, were repeated, with some variation, over and over for more than an hour during a march along the main streets of Hanga Roa town on 23 July 2011. They are symbolic of many of the sociocultural and political concerns articulated in Rapa Nui during the year under review.

On the first and second days of August 2011, international and national organizations concerned with indigenous peoples and local groups met at the auditorium of the public school Lorenzo Baeza in Rapa Nui for two days to discuss indigenous human rights issues and social problems confronting the Rapa Nui people. The majority of the Rapa Nui community was in attendance. The meetings, officially entitled “Indigenous Peoples’ Human Rights: Implications for the Rapa Nui People,” were sponsored locally, independently of the Chilean state–organized municipality and governor’s office, by leaders of Rapa Nui hua’ai (clans/extended families), Parlemento Rapa Nui, Consejero Nacional Indígena Pueblo Rapa Nui (CONADI), and Makenu Re’o Rapa Nui Women’s Organization. At the request of the local sponsors, two nongovernmental organizations helped facilitate and develop the proceedings: Observatorio Ciudadano (which is concerned with Chile’s indigenous peoples) and the Indian Law Resource Center of Washington DC (which provides legal representation for indigenous groups throughout the Americas). Jose Alywin, Consuelo Labra, and Nancy Yañez were the leading representatives of Observatorio Ciudadano. The Indian Law Resource Center was represented by its founder and executive director, attorney Robert “Tim” Coulter, and by Leonardo Crippa, the center’s attorney who filed precautionary measures at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights amid the 2010–2011 occupations and political demonstrations of Rapa Nui against Chile. In addition to myself, there were three official international observers of the proceedings: Clem Chartier, president of the National Council of Métis Aboriginal Peoples of Canada; Alberto Chirif, a Peruvian...
anthropologist affiliated with the Indigenous Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA); and Dr Nin Thomas, a Māori professor of law at the University of Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand. Following the meetings in Hanga Roa, members of the local, national, and international organizations continued the discussion of the plight of Rapa Nui with Chilean state officials in Santiago and Valparaiso. The delegation ended with a public discussion at the Universidad de Chile.

As stated in various program documents, the meetings were held in support of “Rapa Nui’s efforts to re-claim their ancestral lands and as a response to the criminalization of members of the Rapa Nui clans who reoccupied their lands.” The fundamental goal of the meetings was to provide “the members of the Rapa Nui clans with legal and political tools to enable them to advocate for the full recognition of their collective human rights.” The proceedings were officially focused on four major topics: “land rights, self-government, the island autonomy bill and control over migration to the island by the Rapa Nui people.” The topics were discussed in a context in which leaders reviewed international law on the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination that are recognized in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) human rights agreements such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; UNGA Resolutions 1514 and 1541; and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as rights to autonomy recognized by the International Labour Organiza-

tion Convention 169. Representatives also discussed methods for accessing the Inter-American Commission and Court of Human Rights; mechanisms available to indigenous peoples (site visits, thematic hearings, injunctions, cases); and ways to encourage involvement on the part of the Inter-American Commission with the Rapa Nui case. Comparative legal cases of indigenous peoples throughout the world (eg, Peru, Nicaragua, Aotearoa, and Native North America) involving indigenous rights issues thought to be relevant to the Rapa Nui people were also discussed. Representatives of local organizations, Rapa Nui hua’ai, and nongovernmental organizations led discussions and gave presentations, and throughout the proceedings there were extensive public question-and-answer periods. Rapa Nui language was spoken extensively by Rapa Nui people, and Spanish was integrated throughout as well. Talk in English by some of the representatives and international observers was translated into Rapa Nui language but typically not into Spanish.

A major question in the conference—one that resonated with a major demand of the July march through the middle of town—concerned how to “horo te henua” (demand the island). Professor Thomas made suggestions to the Rapa Nui community based on her experiences with Māori struggles in New Zealand. She emphasized that Māori learned that their initial focus on engaging the Pākehā settler colonial community proved ill advised. She suggested that radical change for Māori in New Zealand may have been stifled in part by divisions within Māori communities that could have
been tempered by more discussion among Māori. In considering the plight of Rapa Nui she encouraged them to avoid that problem: “The first thing is unity on this side, rather than what you are not getting from Chile.” She stressed that the strength of the Rapa Nui community in creating change will depend on unification and “work as a single entity of a political nature.” However, Indian Law Resource Center Attorney Coulter cautioned against worrying about complete unity. He stated, “In almost every situation involving self-determination, there is always a question about who really speaks for the people seeking self-determination. That is always an issue. There is always controversy about it, and it does not ultimately defeat your claim. That is a normal situation and it should not be viewed as a terrible impediment.”

Since the meetings, the Indian Law Resource Center has continued to support Rapa Nui struggles for self-determination through consultation on various matters of concern to the Rapa Nui community (ILRC 2011a). The international observers have also been supportive. After the events, Chartier emphasized support of the Rapa Nui community (ILRC 2011a). At the conference, Chirif had discussed cases of indigenous peoples in Peru similar to the situation in Rapa Nui. In his contribution to the IWGIA report of the Rapa Nui proceedings, he considered Rapa Nui demands for self-determination and title to the entirety of the island “supported on the basis of their original occupation and ancestral rights” (IWGIA 2011).

As the indigenous rights meetings concluded in early August, an interesting lawsuit against the Chilean government that had been developing prior to the meetings began to be formalized. Tereruti Riroroko Tuki, a descendant of Simeon Riro Kainga—the last king of Rapa Nui—was publicly recognized as king of Rapa Nui in front of the governor’s office by a few hundred community members—including a large number of living tupuna (elders), officials, and media. The coronation included raising the Rapa Nui national Rei Miro flag, singing, speech giving, and sharing the umu tahu sacred meal. (An umu tahu is completed to ask the ancestral world of Rapa Nui—the tupuna—to bless an event, person, or thing. It involves the sacrifice and consumption of a white rooster prepared in a traditional underground oven, known as an umu.) While the events ostensibly contradicted her authority, the governor of Rapa Nui at the time—Carmen Cardinali Paoa—not only attended the coronation but also sang along with the traditional songs honoring Tereruti Riroroko as king.

The coronation was seen by indigenous Rapa Nui leaders, organized by Parlamento Rapa Nui, as fundamental to a lawsuit filed against the Chilean state on 3 August (El Informador, 11 Sept 2011). Osvaldo Galvez, attorney for Tereruti Riroroko, filed the case in the Second Civil Court of Valparaiso and emphasized two goals for the case: first, compensation for the seventy-five
years of confinement of the royal family to a small reservation on the island while the island was leased to sheep-ranching companies; and second, recognition that the initial annexation treaty between Chile and Rapa Nui is invalid, given the breach of its terms immediately after its conception when the state leased the island without Rapa Nui consent (Noticias Terra, 15 Oct 2011). According to Leviante Araki, president of Parlamento Rapa Nui, the case is designed as a step toward independence from Chilean rule and the return of island land that Chile stole from the Rapa Nui people (Noticias Terra, 15 Oct 2011). Tuhi’ira Tuki Huke, a thirty-one-year-old Rapa Nui mother, who considered the coronation like a “dream,” stressed its importance to resisting a Chilean system destroying the Rapa Nui as a people. She stated that every day “we lose a little more because they are imposing a system that doesn’t allow us to develop socially, spiritually or economically” (Nelson 2012).

As the year in review closed, there is a possibility that the case will not formally be heard, as the state has disputed the legitimacy of the kingship. Erity Teave, a leading representative of Parlamento Rapa Nui, emphasized that, irrespective of whether the state considers the case, the act of filing the case establishes an important step for Rapa Nui to pursue matters at international courts (pers comm, Aug 2012). International forums such as the Inter-American Court require that peoples attempt to resolve conflict initially at a national level; if resolution of conflict proves impossible at a national level, then international courts are willing to hear the case.

Perhaps responding to the international meetings and radical lawsuit, Chilean officials subsequently held meetings in August 2011 with Rapa Nui Governmental Working Committees in attempts to achieve more modest reforms of the system decried by Tuhi’ira. Working within the Chilean system as a given, Chilean officials organized meetings to discuss ongoing problems in Rapa Nui in terms of four topics: possible new forms of government under special status, migration policy, land restitution, and future development opportunities (MV, Sept 2011). Committees discussed the creation of a government that would retain a governor appointed by the Chilean president and a locally elected mayor who would coordinate administration of the island with a local council of six island residents—four of whom would be mandated to be ethnically Rapa Nui. Current Governor Cardinali proposed that this government (one that on reflection is not much different than the current one, which involves a development council, president-appointed governor, and a mayor elected by all island residents, not just Rapa Nui) would be designed to offer “technical and economical support” for Rapa Nui—developed projects, rather than imposing “mandates as before” (MV, Sept 2011).

Twelve individual land claims filed with the official Land Claims Committee were reviewed during the meetings with the government; however, there is no record of discussion of the long-standing demand of Rapa Nui to return the entire island to Rapa Nui title—meetings focused solely on individualized claims. Land claims of the Hito family against Hotel Hanga-
roa were not discussed, as they had not been filed with the official committee but were addressed to national and international courts. Development discussion focused on the investment of US$10 million for the new hospital being built. The meetings recognized that constitutional amendments would be fundamental to the creation of a context for “greater self-government” and new policies for the control of immigration, return of ancestral lands, and future development of the island. Carlos Llancaqueo, commissioner for Chilean President Sebastian Piñera, asserted that a new immigration policy could “consider different types of residents (temporary and permanent) with their corresponding rights and obligations” (MV, Sept 2011).

Following a four-hundred-person protest march in Hanga Roa on 3 December 2011 (the date in 2010 when Chilean Special forces committed state violence against the Rapa Nui people [see Young 2012]) over Chilean state failures to address migration and other political issues (in, 4 Dec 2011), the Chilean government began to officially incorporate an amendment to the constitution. On 21 December, a joint congressional committee approved a text amending article 19 of the constitution, which had previously provided all Chilean citizens the right to freely live, stay, and move within any territory of the Republic of Chile. On 10 January 2012, the Chilean Senate approved the amendment by a vote of 32 to 0; on 17 January, the House of Representatives approved the amendment by a vote of 95 to 6 (Abarca 2012d).

An amendment of article 126b established the right of Rapa Nui, as a special territory of Chile along with Juan Fernandez, to develop special laws governing residence, visitation, and movement on the island (Abarca 2012c). As of 28 February 2012, Presidential Commissioner Llancaqueo, along with the Department of Interior, had received six different proposals for the drawing up of actual laws to regulate immigration in Rapa Nui. In addition to proposals by the municipal government and CONADI, proposals were received from Parlamento Rapa Nui, a Rapa Nui Council of Tupuna (a new council of elders from the major clans), and two Chilean individuals (Abarca 2012c). The proposals varied in content but broadly shared a concern with defining different migration and settlement policies for indigenous Rapa Nui, current Chilean residents on the island, Chilean citizens, tourists, temporary residents, and travelers passing through to other destinations (Abarca 2012d). Proposals recommended the development of official tourist cards that specified length of stay on the island, as well as taxes and fees appropriate to different kinds of settlers, visitors, and tourists in Rapa Nui. Various administrative and policing procedures to implement and enforce the policies were also addressed in the proposals (Abarca 2012c).

Interestingly, national and local mass-media representations of the amendment conflicted. Officials, Chilean and Rapa Nui, were quoted in the national press as framing the significance of the amendment in terms of a discourse of sustainable tourism. For example, Chilean Senator Chahuán Francisco saw the amendment as important for preserving the
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“environment and natural and cultural heritage” of Rapa Nui and its “very high tourism potential” (LT, 10 Jan 2012). Rapa Nui Mayor Luz Sazzo Paoa highlighted the amendment as fundamental to the preservation of Rapa Nui as an “open-air museum for the whole world—not just for foreign tourists, not just for Chileans, not even just for the islanders—but for the whole world” (Santiago Times, 19 Jan 2012). In contrast, Leonardo Pakarati, editor of El Correo Del Moai, the independent Rapa Nui–based newspaper, explicitly portrayed the struggle for the amendment as part of Rapa Nui struggle for “justice” amid the “community violence” perpetrated by the Chilean state in December 2010. He hoped that the amendment would help Rapa Nui establish their island not as a “property of a government” but as a place that “belongs to its people” (Pakarati 2012). Moreover, in the local Rapa Nui language newspaper Tāpura Re’o, Ivonne Calderon, a member of the Women’s Makenu Re’o group, notably questioned the current form of the amendment. Given a stronger formulation of the amendment in 2009, proposed under former Chilean President Bachelet, Calderon characterized the current form as “kai tano” (not properly correct). She further suggested that discussion focus on stronger platforms supporting the self-determination of indigenous peoples, such as International Labour Organization Convention 169 (Tāpura Re’o, Feb 2012).

Perhaps, as Rapa Nui Governor Cardinali hopes, the amendment will be “he me’e nui-nui” (a very big thing) for the Rapa Nui people (Tāpura Re’o, Feb 2012). However, on 22 April, Rapa Nui greeted the arrival of the Chilean First Lady, Cecilia Morel Montes, in part, with protest. Banners draped around the airport and town expressed exclamations such as “Solutions, not negotiations!” “Corrupt Government!” “Liar, Keep your promises!” (Abarca 2012a). Rapa Nui, such as Joyce Pokomio, voiced concern that the Chilean government was still not listening to “the voice of the Rapa Nui, the people’s voice, the voice of the community” (Abarca 2012a). At the close of the year under review, no actual laws had been established to curb migration to Rapa Nui (Abarca 2012c; Pakarati 2012). Many Rapa Nui, in conversations with me in June 2012, expressed concern that it would be a long time, given the complexities of the Chilean system and ongoing deceit of Chilean officials, before any actual migration policy was likely to become established law. Additional airport occupations over migration have taken place in the months since then (Latin American Herald Tribune, 16 Aug 2012). Despite the amendment, and official self-congratulations, the issues of migration remain unresolved on the ground.

Besides the issues of immigration, as signified by the denunciations directed at Daniel Platovsky during the street protests of July 2011, Rapa Nui have voiced concern over island energy infrastructure supplied by the Sociedad Agrícola y Servicios Isla de Pascua (Corporation for Agricultural Services in Easter Island, or SASIPA), of which Platovsky is president. Questioning of Platovsky is not a new topic in Rapa Nui. During the 2010 occupations and protests of Rapa Nui, Platovsky attempted to cut water and
power to all demonstrating families, an act in violation of universal human rights to water (El Ciudando, Sept 2010). He is also currently accused of creating an infrastructure that only elite can afford and that will lead to further privatization of Rapa Nui in foreign hands (Panoramas News, 6 Nov 2011). Questions about island energy peaked following power failures during four days of the annual Tapati Cultural Festival that left some sectors of Hanga Roa without power for more than twenty-four hours. Platovsky emphasized that current infrastructural failures of SASIPA reflect twenty years of neglect by the Chilean government and asserted that he and SASIPA are addressing the problems as best as possible (Abarca 2012b). He claimed that SASIPA has recently ordered larger generators from General Electric to resolve the problem and that these should arrive within a year. Platovsky’s current promises follow broken promises in 2011 to fix electricity problems by 2012 (Abarca 2012b). During my 2012 visit to the island in June and July, power failed regularly, nearly every week, sometimes for much of a day or an evening—a situation that seemed worse than what I had encountered during a year and a half of residence in 2007–2008, when power failed a few times a month.

On my arrival in Rapa Nui in July 2011, in addition to being excited about attending the aforementioned August international meetings, I was particularly interested in learning about the situation of the Hito hua’ai and their struggle to regain title to ancestral lands that had been developed into the Hotel Hangaroa by the Chilean private equity investment corporation Empresas Transoceania (2012), headed by Christoph Schiess. A quick walk around the hotel was quite enlightening. Along the Pont Avenue side of the hotel, a police truck and one or more armed Chilean policemen stood guard twenty-four hours a day. Within the hotel area, additional security could be observed patrolling the grounds all day and night. Across a dirt road from the multimillion-dollar hotel development—the first completely foreign-owned hotel on the island—resided some of the members of the Hito family in very small houses, some of the abodes less houses than shacks. A sign of protest draped across a fence outside one of the homes facing Pont Avenue that read “¿Carabineros de Chile o Carabineros de los Schiess? ¿Donde esta Piñera?” (Police of Chile or Police of the Schiess? Where is Piñera?) distilled some of the Hito rage.

Life within the Hito residences starkly contrasted with the opulent hotel buildings. I sat with Hito family members amid an area of burned-out home foundations, shacks, and tumbleweeds as they struggled to prepare hock meat from a bucket of butchered cow and pig hoofs to tide them over the next few days. As Mercedes vans pulled in and out of the hotel grounds, family members dressed in ragged clothes discussed work they were doing to raise money for legal costs accruing for the various court cases pending with the hotel. One young woman, tapping the bark of the paper mulberry tree, emphasized that she was currently applying her family knowledge about how to make traditional Rapa Nui tapa cloth
In order to earn a little extra money for the family. She hoped to sell the cloth to other Rapa Nui families who would be needing extra tapa for the forthcoming Tapati Cultural Festival.

Such experiences with family members render the consequent legal situation of the Hito hua’ai particularly heart wrenching. While during the previous year reviewed the Hito hua’ai found significant legal support both internationally and nationally, during the current year Chilean courts generally decided against the Hito family. On 16 August 2011, the Court of Appeals in Valparaiso rejected Hito claims to land currently occupied by the Hotel Hangaroa. The court decided that the Hito family had failed to provide “proper documentation demonstrating the living members of the Hito clan had legally inherited the land from their ancestors” (in, 28 Aug 2011). Hito members consequently appealed the decision to the Chilean Supreme Court, but on 28 May that court upheld the decision of the appeals court. The Chilean Supreme Court ruling “explicitly rejected the notion that the Hito’s ancestral territory qualified as indigenous land”; citing official Chilean legal history, the court stressed that Chile had gained title to all island land since 1888, rendering all individuals remaining on the island effectively “squatters” (in, 30 May 2012). Eliza Riroroko, representing the family-owned Hotel Iorana and a member of the Makenu Rapa Nui women’s group, insightfully stressed that the Hito case affects not only the Hito clan but all Rapa Nui people. Every day that the Hotel Hangaroa operates, she emphasized, is a day that a foreign company is taking revenue from Rapa Nui families.

Interestingly, while the courts found against the Hito hua’ai, they did however find the Chilean state violence perpetrated against the Rapa Nui people in December 2010 excessive—at least initially. Since the violence occurred, various state investigations have been conducted to reconstruct and assess the events (lt, 6 Aug 2011). In April 2012, Fernando Albornoz Silva, captain of the Chilean Special Forces responsible for the violence, was detained in prison at the police station of Vina Del Mar.
while he was being prosecuted for his alleged role in the use of “unnecessary violence” that resulted in serious injuries to nine people of Rapa Nui on 3 December 2010 by the First Military Court of Valparaiso (lt, 25 April 2012). The violence in this case consisted of the use of riot shotguns against Rapa Nui who were involved in political protest of Chilean policies. Those seriously injured by the buckshot of the shotguns included Ricardo Tepano Paoa, Juan Salvador Tuki Atan, Ricardo Sepúlveda Tepano, Rodrigo Araki Hey, Roberto Carlos Icka Pakarati, Edith Chavez Atan, Gaspar Tepihe Tepihe, Claudio Tuki Hito, and Pedro Araki Tepano (El Mercurio, 25 April 2012). The attorney for Captain Albornoz, Patricio Cares, in defense of the captain, emphasized that the standard device for dispersing demonstrations, a water cannon, was not available in Rapa Nui (El Ciudadano, 26 April 2012).

Prosecuting Attorney Rodrigo Lagos noted that Captain Albornoz has a history of questionable policing practices (Cambio 21, 26 April 2012). Alfredo Morgado, attorney for the Rapa Nui victims, saw the case as setting an important precedent “regarding the protection of fundamental rights of citizens against police excesses” that have been increasing in Chile generally (El Mercurio, 25 April 2012). Sergio Ojada, president of the Chilean Human Rights Commission, emphasized that attention should be given to the case as one that does not illustrate simply another instance of excessive Chilean police violence but the “criminalization” of social protest in a purportedly “democratic society” (Cambio 21, 26 April 2012). Marisol Hito, a leading spokeswoman for her hua’ai, stressed a need to investigate further the agents responsible for engaging the special forces in the first place (LT, 26 April 2012). Unfortunately for Marisol, Sergio, Alfredo, as well as all of the Rapa Nui people and Chilean citizens broadly concerned with a rise in police violence and the criminalization of social activism, it appears ultimately that the case will not provide an example of social justice. In May, Captain Albornoz was released following a unanimous decision by the Court of Appeals that rejected the ruling of the First Military Court of Valparaíso (Biobio, 10 May 2012).

This past year Rapa Nui leaders working within the Chilean system, like the presidentially appointed Governor Cardinali, see themselves as promoting “greater space for autonomy, with the right to participate in decisions which affect the Island.” The governor aims to “work for the Rapa Nui community, but always within legal norms and with respect for the established laws in the Chilean constitution.” She contends, “The current Government of Chile is, for the first time, listening to us. As a result, they created the Working Committees with the objective of finding solutions to the real needs of the community” (MV, Oct 2011). While such a perspective appears to make coherent liberal sense, in juxtaposition to the events of the past and recent years, one can “trace” (Derrida 1997, 70–71) an alternative interpretation. The legal norms that the governor respects have suggested, in the case of the Hito ruling, that the Chilean government potentially considers none of the land
of the island of Rapa Nui indigenous. The ruling makes it obvious that the Chilean state can and will situationally manipulate the law (see Moore 2000)—law such as the “Indigenous Law” (Ley 19/253) that by many accounts was explicitly created by the state to prevent anyone but Rapa Nui people from owning land (Delsing 2009, 202–203; Gomez 2011, 93–94; Rochona-Ramirez 1993)—and that it sees Rapa Nui people as mere “squatters” on land it can “reterritorialize” (Deleuze and Parnet 2007) and sell to non–Rapa Nui people and corporations. The “honorable” Chilean legal system has also this past year officially sanctioned state shotgun violence against “criminalized” Rapa Nui people in a context of democratic political demonstration—violence condemned on the floor of the US Congress (2011) and opposed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (ILRC 2011b). The Chilean system that the governor sees as “working” and “listening” to the Rapa Nui community more than in previous years has over this past year heard and defended competing interests. It has heard the demands of a multimillion-dollar corporate hotel rather than those of a Rapa Nui family struggling to feed themselves on hock meat. It has heard the voices of Platovsky and Sasipa over those of young Rapa Nui women who question the ability of the system to allow Rapa Nui “to develop socially, spiritually or economically.” It has represented constitutional amendments that the Rapa Nui community actively cultivated for the development of immigration policy to explicitly address Rapa Nui community problems of settler colonialism as tools for sustaining Rapa Nui as an “open-air museum for the whole world.”

Cita Atan Chavez described the December 2010 state violence against the Rapa Nui community as “like a war” (LT, 26 April 2012). The political and legal actions of the Chilean state the past year, when carefully scrutinized, appear to have perpetuated the “continuation of war by other means” (Foucault 2003, 15). Settler colonialism has been seen to essentially involve a logic of elimination (Wolfe 2006). This past year, the Chilean system has indeed used its system to eliminate Rapa Nui family land; a sense of security from irrational use of state force; and confidence that an infrastructure will be developed on the island that favors a Rapa Nui family–based tourism economy, rather than a corporate hotel economy based on increasing numbers of Chilean and other foreign settlers. The texts of Governor Cardinali, despite her best intentions and hopes, when examined “under erasure” (Derrida 1997, 60), reveal yet another case of a local leader manipulated into serving colonial interests (see Lal 2000, 231). If Rapa Nui people only pursue “greater autonomy” and not their indigenous rights to full self-determination, they remain colonized—that is, dominated by “the power and control over one people by another” (Porter 2009, 87). Recent legal scholarship (Gomez 2010, 99–133) as well as statements by international leaders of the August 2011 meetings on indigenous human rights in Hanga Roa support the idea that Rapa Nui people have the human right to enjoy the full self-determination that the United Nations suggests
settler states grant to all indigenous peoples (UN 2007) and that they do not have to settle for “participation” in a Chilean-determined system of “squatter” greater autonomy. The alternative seems to be hastened settler colonial elimination of Rapa Nui.

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The 2011 Territorial Day in Wallis and Futuna was very unusual. On the 29th of July, Wallisians and Futunans celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of their becoming French citizens. Feasts and cultural exhibitions were performed on both islands on 28 and 29 July. Marie-Luce Penchard, who was the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) minister of Overseas France at that time, traveled to Wallis and Futuna to attend the celebrations. Other political personalities who took part in the event included Harold Martin, president of New Caledonia, and representatives of the Wallisian and Futunan diaspora in that country. As a reminder of the ancestral links between Wallis Island (East Uvea Island) and the island of Ouvéa (West Uvea Island) in the Loyalty Islands of New Caledonia, members of Chief Nekelo’s clan also

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made the trip, accompanied by Marie-Claude Tjibaou. Richard Marles, the Australian parliamentary secretary for Pacific Island affairs, was also among the guests.

In the field of digital telecommunications, the whole territory was to switch entirely to digital television service on 27 September 2011, a transition that was completed only in November due to defective technical equipment in a few households.

From 4 to 7 October, the main labor unions held demonstrations. The aim was to bring to the attention of the superior administrator the expensive cost of living. Both sides came to an agreement on 28 November with the creation of the Social and Economic Consultative Committee. This new office, in cooperation with the price-monitoring committee established in June 2009, has the responsibility of shaping propositions regarding economic and social issues in the territory.

In mid-October, the Royal Council and a few territorial assembly members sought to increase the territory’s ownership in the Entreprise d’eau et d’électricité de Wallis et Futuna (EEWF, the islands’ power company) to 52 percent, but the EEWF denied the request.

On 3 November, in the village of Vaitupu in Hihifo District, northern Uvea Island, an EEWF worker was attacked and wounded by members of the public. On the same day, as a mark of protest, colleagues of the injured worker decided to stop working. The Royal Council called on the head of EEWF to ensure that its workers would provide at least the minimum level of service. The next morning a meeting was held at the Territorial Assembly with the prefect (the senior administrator of the territory, appointed by France), the assembly, and the Royal Council, but without any representatives of the company. The goal of the meeting was to resolve this awkward situation. On 5 November, the head of EEWF and representatives of the Electricité et Eau de Calédonie (EEC, EEWF’s parent company) flew to New Caledonia. On the following Monday, Wallis Island experienced an island-wide cutoff of power and water. This uncomfortable situation led the assembly to call another meeting; this time two workers represented the EEWF, and the talks ended with an accord: The employees would resume their work, and the Royal Council would guarantee the safety of the workers. Things returned to normal on 8 November.

On 7 December, during the plenary assembly of the Territorial Council, the issue of the EEWF came back on the table. This time the Royal Council asked the company to rehire six workers who had been fired at the beginning of the conflict. The company refused.

In the New Year, one issue came up that dominated the rest of the review period: that of the elections. The election campaign was monitored by the French media authority (Conseil Supérieur de l’Audiovisuel, or CSA) and broadcast on radio and television by Wallis & Futuna 1ère, previously RFO (Réseau France Outre-mer), the sole local media source. Other national channels (France 2, France 3, France 4, France 5, France Ô, Arte, and France 24) are also available in the territory.
For the Territorial Assembly elections, which are conducted using a proportional representation system in multi-seat constituencies, thirty party lists contested to fill the twenty seats. Three topics dominated the debates during the campaign period. First was the high cost of living, including the high prices for electricity, gasoline, and basic commodities. Second was the issue of Wallis and Futuna’s territorial status, which is set in French law dating back to 1961. This issue was first raised in 1980 when members of the Territorial Assembly asked the prefect to amend the 1961 status. This requested revision aimed to substitute a government council for the current Territorial Assembly, but the effort sank into oblivion. Finally, the overriding question of economic development occupied a large part of the debate. For instance, what structures must be created in order to keep young people from leaving the territory? Many interesting issues were discussed during the political rallies, but the actual voting remained clan-based. Wallisians and Futunans still make their political choices not according to policies or programs but following the familial vote.

In the northern district of Hihifo, there were 1,188 valid votes, and the two incumbents were reelected: Nivaleta Iloai (24.7 percent) from the Union pour Wallis et Futuna (UPWF, akin to the French Socialist Party) and Atoloto Kolokilagi (17.4 percent) from the UMP. Also elected was newcomer Sosefo Suve (30.10 percent), a secondary school teacher, who ran as an independent.

In the central district of Hahake, with a total of 2,158 valid votes, David Vergé, a European shopkeeper married to a Wallisian woman, polled 30.3 percent, followed by Mikaele Kulimoetoke (25 percent), Patalione Kanimoa (17.5 percent), and Petelo Hanisi (15.7 percent). All these candidates are independent, apart from Kanimoa, who is the UMP economic and social counselor. There were noteworthy defeats in the district, including those of UMP candidate Victor Brial, the former deputy from 1997 to 2007, and centrist Pesamino Taputai.

In the district of Mu’a, out of 2,004 valid votes, Laufilitoga Mireille’s party secured two seats (22.6 percent), allowing her to appoint the second candidate on the party’s list, Emile Selui. They were followed by UMP Yannick Feleu (17.7 percent, reelected), Munipoese Mulikakaaka (17.3 percent), Bernard Taufanana (16.5 percent), and Eselone Ikai (9.7 percent). The outgoing president of the assembly, Socialist leader Siliako Lauhea, was defeated.

In the kingdom of Sigave on the island of Futuna, with a total of 880 valid votes, independent Petelo Falelavaki was elected (18.8 percent), beating independent Savelina Vea (16.8 percent) and the centrist Paskale Niu Toua (16.8 percent). In the kingdom of Alo, which had a total of 1,340 votes, all the candidates from the former assembly were reelected including the UMP’s Toma Savea (22.2 percent), independents Sosefo Motuku (21.9 percent) and Alesio Katoa (20.4 percent), and the UPWF’s Vetelino Nau (17.9 percent). From the 2007 assembly, only nine members were renewed. The remarkable electorate turnout (85.95 percent) showed the aspiration of Wallisians and Futunans to bring...
about notable change. However, there was a huge loss of 2,259 registered voters between the 2007 (11,167) and 2012 (8,908) elections. Some of this may be due to deaths, but more of the decline is likely due to the emigration of Wallisians and Futunans.

On 2 April the Territorial Assembly convened with a new majority shaped by independents (mostly leaning Socialist, except for Suve and Vergé) and UPWF members. UPWF Vetelino Nau was elected assembly president over Sosefo Suve, with Mikaele Kulimoetoke elected as vice president. Petelo Hanisi was elected president of the permanent commission.

On 22 April 2012, 6,407 voters (71.67 percent) went to the polls for the French presidential elections. There were ten electoral rolls at the first round, with the following results: Eva Joly 100 votes (1.56 percent); Marine Le Pen 152 votes (2.37 percent); Jean-Luc Mélenchon 76 votes (1.19 percent); Philippe Poutou 42 votes (0.66 percent); Nathalie Artaud 48 votes (0.75 percent); Jacques Cheminade 29 votes (0.45 percent); François Bayrou 410 votes (6.40 percent); Nicolas Dupont-Aignan 43 votes (0.67 percent); Jean-Jacques Ménard 3,093 votes (48.28 percent). The second round took place on 6 May 2012. At this time Wallisians and Futunans again showed their desire for change. Of the 6,769 valid votes cast, Socialist François Hollande gained 3,795 votes (56.06 percent) against 2,974 (43.95 percent) votes for outgoing President Nicolas Sarkozy. The archipelago swung to the left as people voted for an alternative after seventeen years of right-wing rule.

Wallis and Futuna was the national record holder among France’s overseas territories in electoral turnout with 76.4 percent for both rounds.

Wallisians and Futunans went back to the ballot for the first round of legislative elections on 10 June 2012. Six candidates competed for the deputy’s seat. There were 8,980 voters registered. Of the 6,934 valid votes cast, David Vergé (Divers Droite) got 1,997 votes (28.80 percent), followed by Mikaele Kulimoetoke (Divers Gauche) with 1,345 (19.40 percent); Albert Likuvalu (Radical de Gauche), the outgoing deputy, with 1,179 (17 percent); Epifano Tui (Socialist) with 913 (13.17 percent); Atonio Ilalio (Centre) with 858 (12.37 percent); and Simione Vanai (Socialist) with 642 (9.26 percent). The novel issue in this legislative election was the failure of four candidates from the left wing to support a single person. The second round brought a three-way election among David Vergé (supported by the local UMP but also by the former socialist supporters of his father-in-law Tialetagi Penisio, who had been a candidate to the deputy’s position running against Victor Brial in 2002) and two socialist candidates, Mikaele Kulimoetoke and Albert Likuvalu.

On 17 June 2012, the three-way race allowed David Vergé to be elected with 3,068 votes (41.61 percent) of the 7,374 valid votes, followed by Mikaele Kulimoetoke with 3,026 (41.04 percent) and Albert Likuvalu with 1,280 (17.36 percent). Once again, Wallis and Futuna had the highest electoral turnout with 78.08 percent.

Wallis and Futuna will host the 2013 South Pacific Minigames, in
which twenty-two countries will take part. The building of sporting facilities is currently underway, including the construction of the Kafika multipurpose structure, whose cost is projected to exceed US$5 million. The committee is still working on the logistics of the games such as accommodations and dining facilities for the athletes.

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