the emergence of a new political generation characterized by its desire for greater modernity.

Kamilo Gata’s victory was also due to a set of favorable external circumstances. François Mitterrand’s election in France enabled him to benefit from the “legitimist reflex” of the population of both islands, who are inclined to go along with the majority in France. Developments in New Caledonia also played a role. The Wallisian and Futunan population in Noumea numbers 15,000, slightly more than live in the islands. As a result, the continued prosperity of many families in Wallis and Futuna and the social stability of the islands depend on the existence of this migrant community. Its return to the islands would be considered catastrophic. Anything that affects the Grande Terre is bound to have important repercussions in these two isolated islands.

The dialogue between the Rassemblement Pour la Caledonie dans la République (RPCR) and the Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS) in New Caledonia, which led to the signing of the Matignon Accord in August 1988, was approved, if only because it brought peace. Nonetheless, it puzzled Wallisian and Futunan voters used to rather more Manichaean political patterns. In the face of a shifting political scene, the change in voting patterns is an indication that most Wallisian and Futunan voters have chosen to wait and see and to adopt a neutral position. The majority who supported Kamilo Gata did not support the pro-independence movement, but rather asserted their own identity and autonomy. They expressed the need to establish their own political framework in order to avoid remaining the unconditional followers of the RPCR.

In the same vein, a new party made up of Wallisians and Futunans was established in Noumea to compete in New Caledonia’s provincial elections on 11 June 1989. The Union Océanienne kept an equal distance from both main parties, the RPCR and the FLNKS, and asserted the will of the Polynesian emigrant community to follow an “Oceanian” line, thereby reducing friction with Melanesian parties. The party captured 6.2 percent of the votes in the Southern Province, and gained two seats in the provincial legislature.

Kamilo Gata’s election and the creation of the Union Océanienne in Noumea signal changes in a situation that has remained static for a long time. But what seems even more significant is the structural link that now closely ties the situation in Wallis and Futuna to events, whether happy or unhappy, in New Caledonia.

Joël Bonnemaison

Western Samoa

On 26 February 1988, some 20,000 matai (chiefs) and 2000 individual voters (people of European and part-European descent) out of Western Samoa’s population of 175,000 went to the polls (SMH, 29 Feb 1988). The usual mass creation of matai titles that precedes every election had taken place throughout the previous year. Matai voters increased from 16,500 in 1985 to almost 20,000 in the 1988 election (IB, April 1988). Outgoing Prime Minister Vaai Kolone and Tupua Tamasese Efi,
holder of a tama-a-aiga title (the highest titles) and leader of the Christian Democratic Party, were unopposed in their electorates. The rest faced the rigors of the campaign.

As in previous elections, the 1988 campaign featured the practice of faatosina (literally meaning to attract using all the means at one’s disposal). In effect, this is an attempt to reconcile traditional gift exchange with the political anomaly of bribery. By 1988 it had come to mean the legal exchange of money and other gifts, such as carcases of beef, cartons of tinned fish, and liquor, between candidate and constituent up to twenty-one days before the election. Evidence of faatosina could be seen in Apia, especially in the RSA club at Beach Road where numerous matai enjoyed beer bought by the candidates.

There were allegations that thousands of tala (the Western Samoan currency) had been supplied by local and foreign companies for the campaign (IB, June 1988). Tofilau Eti Alesana, leader of the Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP), denied receiving large sums of money for his campaign but suggested an inquiry to investigate such allegations (PIM, Sept 1988).

Several weeks after the election, time enough for the independent candidates to be enticed by one or other of the major parties, it appeared that the result was a 23-seat tie between the outgoing coalition government and the HRPP. Then the coalition gained a one-seat majority when the court declared their candidate the winner in a Falealili seat tied on election night. However, when Parliament met on 7 April to elect a prime minister, an independent candidate, Tanuvasa Livigisitone, switched his allegiance from the coalition to HRPP, and the pendulum swung back in favor of the HRPP. Tofilau Eti Alesana was elected prime minister, and Tanuvasa was promptly rewarded with a cabinet portfolio as minister of economic development and tourism (PR, 14 April 1988). Meanwhile the coalition formed itself into a single political party called the Samoa National Development Party (SNPD) under the leadership of Tupua Tamasese Efi.

By May 1988, the HRPP majority had increased to six seats after three SNPD members lost their seats as a result of court decisions; one of them was the previous minister of education, Le Mamea Ropati, who was found guilty of “personation” at the polls (letting others vote on behalf of matai who were away on election day). The government’s majority increased to seven when Tupuola Siaosi, a former SNPD member, declared himself an independent. The four by-elections on 23 July gave two seats to each of the major parties. One of them resulted in the return to Parliament of Fiame Naomi, the only woman among the faipule (members of Parliament). Fiame had lost her seat at Lotofaga to Fata Siaosi on election night, but Fata’s subsequent loss of his matai title at the Lands and Titles Court had made him ineligible to be a faipule (PR, 28 April 1988).

Despite the clear majority, all was not well in the HRPP camp. The party was split over the question of cabinet positions, reminiscent of the situation in 1985 when Vaai Kolone and twelve others left to form their own party. The
issue was whether to favor the new-comers, with their impressive academic backgrounds, or the experience of the seasoned members. Party unity was saved when Toi Aukuso Cain, back for his fourth term and earmarked to be minister for public works, gave up his portfolio in favor of a newcomer (IB, June 1988).

In the absence of any clearly defined political ideology, the parties are loosely bound by personality ties and political expediency. To prevent its backbenchers from being enticed across the floor by offers of seats on the front benches, HRPP resorted to signed affidavits (PIM, Sept 1988). But without a common conviction, such pledges were as loose as a hat on one’s head.

The new style of party politics has had an adverse effect on continuity. HRPP went to the polls with promises to halt certain developments instigated by the former coalition government. One of the crucial areas was education.

A complete facelift of the education system, formerly based on the New Zealand model, had been in motion for some years. The curriculum was to include more local content, and the schools outside Apia were restructured to become junior secondary schools. The elitism that grew out of the old selection process, with the cream of the students going to Samoa College, was to be alleviated by turning that school into a senior secondary school, with Vaipouli College developed as its equivalent at Savaii. Another secondary school, Avele College, renowned for its fine tradition of rugby and singing, was to be closed down and its students absorbed by other state and mission schools. The wonderful site of Avele, half a mile up the hill from R. L. Stevenson’s former residence, was recommended for a university campus.

A petition to Parliament by the association of ex-pupils of Avele was taken up by HRPP and turned into an election promise. Educational developments in Samoa hinged on the outcome of the election. After its victory at the polls, HRPP duly carried out its promise. Avele College was reopened, and the old New Zealand model reinstated.

The National University of Samoa was also dealt a few blows by the new government. After losing Avele campus, the university had to face a review of its activities. The report of the review committee reflected ongoing disagreements among politicians, academics, and other interested parties over the aims and objectives of the University Act, 1984, and the ability of the economy to pay for such a venture. The prime minister’s preference was for slow progress for the university (PIM, Sept 1988). By the end of June 1989, slow progress meant no library, no laboratories, and staff sharing sub-standard facilities with students. Furthermore, the report recommended changes in course components, an indefinite halt to one degree program, and abolition of a new course before it started.

Ever since the Public Service Association (PSA) strike in 1981, HRPP had appeared to champion the PSA cause. But when the prime minister announced that the PSA would be one of his portfolios, there were loud complaints from within the association. The president of the Teachers Association, Le'aula Tavita Amosa,
demned the move as undemocratic and argued that it was a form of coercion designed to neutralize the bargaining powers of pressure groups. The two major newspapers, which had strongly supported the PSA in 1981, were equally loud in their protests. By the end of 1988, a new PSA executive had been elected, and the association’s independence from government control had been preserved.

A record budget of WS$134 million (US$67 million) was tabled at the end of 1987. Like all governments before it, HRPP faced the challenge of making the country economically self-sufficient. Without the WS$38 million in remittances from Samoans living overseas, the trade balance would be in substantial deficit (AFR, 9 March 1988). Up to 30 September 1987, exports were worth WS$8 million, while imported goods cost WS$48 million (SMH, 23 Nov 1987). However, statistics never truly reflect the standard of living in Western Samoa. With most of the food in the rural areas produced at little or no monetary cost, the bite of a depression is hardly felt. Church and traditional obligations are more demanding on the dollar than daily subsistence.

The government went ahead with a proposal tabled by the former coalition government for the establishment of offshore banking (AFR, 9 March 1988). The fish market, built with Japanese aid funds but later leased to a private company by the previous minister of economic development, was repossessed.

External and internal pressure for the government to review the suffrage issue was applied during the year, particularly by the women’s movement. One of their arguments was that a wider suffrage could decrease the amount of corruption in election campaigns. With only a small percentage of women matai, only a few women have the right to vote, let alone stand for Parliament. Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana supported the idea of a plebiscite to survey public opinion, but indicated his preference for a minimum voting age of thirty, and only matai candidates (PIM, Sept 1988).

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