

The Struggle for Control of Solomon Island Forests

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In the past fifteen years the export logging industry in Solomon Islands has grown from being one of several primary export industries with a moderate and sustainable level of production, to being the largest industry in the country totally dominating the national economy. Exports of unprocessed logs now account for 50 to 60 percent of total export revenues and up to 31 percent of total government revenue (King 1994; Montgomery 1995), a situation that has come about through maximizing the rate of extraction far above sustainable levels of forest harvesting. The resource itself is largely owned by Solomon Islanders, yet the logging industry is dominated by foreign companies based in Asia. Among all those who are involved in the industry the resource owners receive the least benefit (Duncan 1994) and have had least control over the way the industry has developed. As a consequence they have seen one of their most valuable resources extracted very rapidly through capital-intensive, environmentally damaging, large-scale operations, with very little continuing economic advantage to themselves. Even though logging did offer some prospects for economic and social development in rural areas, and was initially accepted by many because they thought it would bring such development, those prospects have not been realized. Instead logging has only worsened the condition of rural people and increased the inequality that has developed between them and the urban population.

The growth of the export logging industry has to be seen against a background of continuing protest and concern from Solomon Islanders. Of all the different kinds of rural development that have been tried since World War Two this has been the most divisive and controversial. In one locality after another, it split communities apart and brought on what

Scott (1989, 5) described as “everyday forms of resistance” against the logging companies and their supporters. One outcome of this activity has been strong interest among rural people in alternative forms of forest development, such as different kinds of small-scale forest processing. This interest gave rise to a loosely organized oppositional movement, starting in Western Province in the early 1980s when that province was the leading exporter of round logs, and then gradually spreading to other provinces as commercial logging expanded. The movement was encouraged and strengthened by support from international and national nongovernmental organizations, the most important of which was the Solomon Islands Development Trust (Roughan 1990, 1993, this volume). As the movement grew in size and strength it disrupted, and in some cases halted, logging operations, but it was not able to prevent the expansion of large-scale commercial harvesting. What it came to represent was a broadly based countervailing force challenging the large-scale capital-intensive development preferred by the central government. In essence it was similar to other “new social movements” found in third world countries and now very common in the Pacific Islands region (Larmour 1994).

The history of export logging and rural reactions to it bring into question the role of the postcolonial state and the interests being served by expansion of the logging industry. Examination of the distribution of benefits from logging shows that after logging companies, the state has gained most from the industry. Forest exploitation has been crucial to maintaining foreign exchange earnings and financing further imports of capital and consumer goods. It has also been a major contributor to government revenue through the duty imposed on export logs. Resource extraction was used to bolster the economy and maintain a high level of government spending in the early years of independence. Furthermore, it has been carried out without much consideration for the interests of resource owners, who have been left to work out the different options for forestry development themselves and try to decide which option might best serve their interests. The widespread support given to the counter-movement shows how much the interests of the state and those of rural people have diverged in relation to forest policy.

These issues are addressed in this paper, concentrating on the forces that have undermined the interests of traditional resource owners and their attempts to withstand those forces. A second struggle that will be taken into account here involves the political and bureaucratic arms of

the state. When export logging spread into traditionally owned forests, the Forestry Division attempted to institute closer controls over logging companies and slow down the rate of logging. As the heirs of the Forestry Department that had been set up during the late colonial period (Bennett 1995, 246), they saw their role as formulating policy and trying to manage forestry development in the long-term national interest. They found themselves constantly thwarted in this role and their recommendations countermanded by politicians who used their power in support of logging companies.

The outcome of both these struggles was largely determined by a *de facto* shift in power and administrative authority from public servants to politicians (Connell 1988, 6), against a background of worsening economic conditions. As government officials lost power to the politicians, long-term economic planning and resource management were abandoned in favor of short-term economic expediency. At the same time the ties between foreign capital and the political elite steadily strengthened. What started out as an opportunistic relationship in the early 1980s grew gradually into a firm alliance by the early 1990s, as is shown by the close relationship between the main body representing foreign logging companies, the Solomon Islands Forest Industry Association, and the ruling Solomon Islands National Unity, Reconciliation and Progressive Party. Such is the strength of this alliance that since the party came to power in November 1994, the association has had far more influence over government forest policy than the Forestry Division, even though the Forestry Division is still officially the main adviser to the government (personal communication).

After looking at the colonial background to present economic policy, I review the history of export logging in Solomon Islands and the responses of rural people, including a history of the logging industry and an account of the rise of the anti-logging movement over the last fifteen years. I examine how conditions changed for the movement as provincial governments started to take a more active role in logging decisions and Solomon Islanders began to set up their own log-exporting businesses. Between 1993 and 1995, in the context of high international prices for round logs and record levels of production, public concern over forest policy intensified, and support for slowing the rate of forest harvesting widened and grew. For a brief period, when the National Coalition Partnership came to power, a firm commitment to reducing log exports and regaining con-

trol of the forestry sector from the logging industry was evident. These initiatives failed when the National Coalition Partnership collapsed and the pro-logging government of Solomon Mamaloni was returned to power in November 1994.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Solomon Islands consists of a double chain of six large islands and numerous smaller islands stretching for around 1600 kilometers in the southwest Pacific. The total land area is 28,369 square kilometers and sea area (exclusive economic zone) 1.34 million square kilometers (SPREP 1993, 5). In the past, these islands supported a culturally diverse and politically fragmented population, divided into small, isolated communities linked by trade and exchange, and depending on a subsistence economy that variously combined horticulture, fishing, hunting, and gathering. The present national boundaries took shape only when the British annexed the territory in the late nineteenth century and formed a colonial state. British and Australian plantation capital followed soon after and led to the establishment of a plantation economy based on the production of a single export commodity, copra (Bennett 1987; Howard and Durutalo 1987). Solomon Islanders were used as plantation workers under an indentured labor system. There was no attempt to transform existing relations of production, except to encourage in the late colonial period household production of export commodities. In this way copra output was expanded extensively, rather than intensively, and the smallholder contribution to export production grew steadily in the two decades prior to independence.

The foundation for the present export-driven economy was laid during the pre-independence period not so much by the expansion of smallholder production as by a new wave of foreign investment, now concentrated in large-scale resource-based industries as well as new agricultural projects. The investments were determined initially by government control of the resources involved. The expansion of large-scale agriculture and forestry was constrained by the relatively small area of alienated land owned by the government, estimated to be around 8 percent of the total land area in the country (Larmour 1979b, 249). Government-owned forests were largely concentrated in Western Province and were sufficiently extensive to allow export production from 1963 through to the early years of inde-

pendence. Continuation of the industry after that would depend on moving into the more substantial forests located on customary land. Tuna fishing, by comparison, benefited from the creation of the 200-mile exclusive economic zone in January 1978.

In most of the export industries, joint ventures were formed with the intention to reduce the heavy dependence on foreign capital and provide the basis for steadily increasing local control over those industries (Carroll 1984). One major exception was forestry. An attempt to form a joint venture with the largest logging company, Levers Pacific Timber Limited, did not go ahead and the industry remained dominated by foreign companies without local equity.

At independence in 1978, power passed to an administrative and political elite largely bound to continue the state-led capitalist development introduced in the late colonial period, relying on primary export production and foreign investment. They were also committed to a large and increasingly expensive state apparatus, which they controlled and depended on for their power, and which for the most part was centrally located in the country's capital and only urban center, Honiara.

This last commitment subsequently became one of the main influences on economic management, including management of resource extraction. Whatever ideas had existed of creating long-term development strategies leading to self-sustaining economic growth were soon overshadowed by the more immediate imperative of maintaining and consolidating the state. The consequence was a much closer alliance with foreign capital and a steady intensification of resource extraction. Two export industries came to dominate the economy: tuna fish and round logs. Their importance was determined largely by the demand from Japan and other industrializing countries of the Pacific Rim, especially Taiwan and South Korea. Together the two commodities have made up an average two-thirds of the total value of exports for the last fifteen years, alternating in importance depending on relative price levels (Houenipwela 1994, 1995).

POPULATION, ETHNICITY, AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS

The total population of Solomon Islands is now estimated to be 372,765. The last census in 1986 showed an annual growth rate of 3.5 percent (Groenewegen 1989, 4). The one main urban center, Honiara, has an estimated population of 46,660. When smaller population centers are taken

into account, the urban population constitutes around 20 percent nationwide. The other 80 percent live in villages and hamlets widely distributed throughout the islands.

Solomon Islands is noted for its cultural and linguistic diversity. There are up to eighty different language groups, none large enough to assert political or economic dominance nationally. Language is only one basis for identity and not always the most salient. Of far more importance to most people is their local clan or tribe and the community with which it is associated. At the wider level, people also identify with large islands or island groups, a tendency that became increasingly prominent under colonial rule as a result of the greater movement and wider social interaction brought about by labor migration, mission activity, and the introduction of local government. At the time of independence, regional loyalty was much stronger than any national feeling and was a major factor underlying demands for decentralization. These demands led to the introduction in 1981 of provincial governments, shortly after independence (1978).

Currently, the country is divided into nine provinces (figure 1), each with its own elected provincial assembly. Provincial government was intended to provide greater political autonomy to the regions and through that to reduce economic dependence on the center. So far the former is much more noticeable than the latter. Provinces still depend on the central government for a large proportion of their annual budgets (*ss*, 17 Mar 1995). Among the many difficulties they face in taking responsibility for provincial development are large differences in land area and resources.

THE HISTORY OF COMMERCIAL LOGGING

Large-scale commercial logging has been taking place in Solomon Islands for just over thirty years. During that period there have been two distinct regimes, each marked by differences in the ownership and location of the forests being harvested, the number and size of the companies engaged in export logging, and government management of the industry. During the first period, from 1963 until the early 1980s, most logging took place on government land or customary land leased by the government. According to estimates made at the time, around one-third of the exploitable forest was on government land (Groves et al 1985; Bennett et al 1991). The logging was controlled through licenses issued by the Forestry Department. After an initial period of fluctuating demand for timber, total output set-

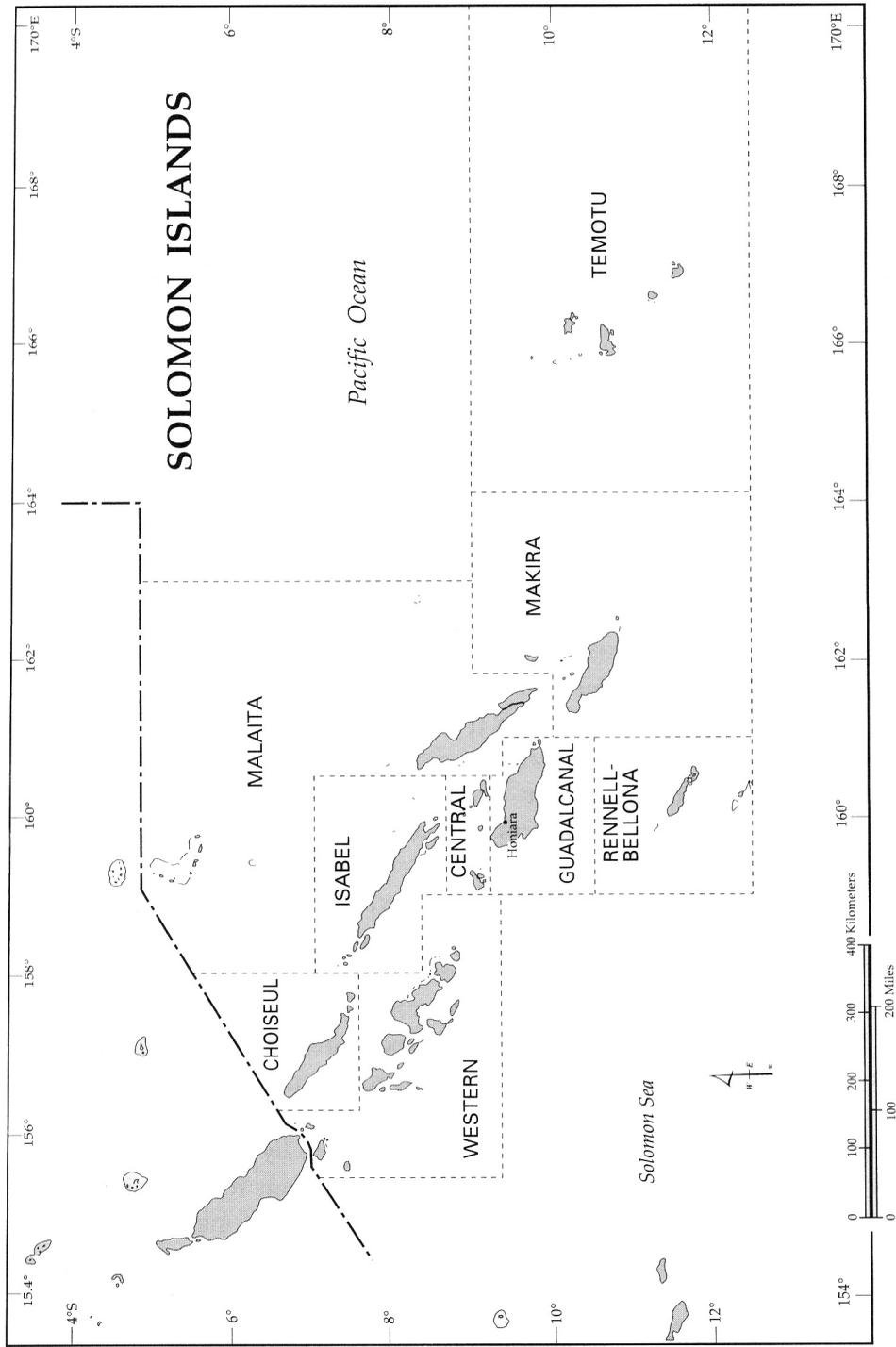


FIGURE 1. Solomon Islands provinces, 1995.

tled at around 260,000 cubic meters per year (figure 2). Around 75 percent of production came from one company, Levers Pacific Timber Limited. Soon after logging started, the government established a reforestation program, run by the Forestry Department, which achieved a rate of replanting equivalent to one hectare of forest plantation for every four hectares of natural forest cleared (Byron 1986, 21–22). There was also an attempt to set up a national forest estate large enough to allow a long-term cycle of sustainable logging, but it had to be abandoned when the government failed to secure the necessary land (Larmour 1979a, 105–106; Bennett 1995; nd).

The second period of logging began in the early 1980s and continues today. It has been marked by a shift from government land to customary land, which became necessary as the government-owned forests were depleted. Moreover, with customary land making up around 87 percent of the total land area in the country, and holding around twice as much commercially exploitable forest as was on government land, these forests were very attractive to prospective investors. The harvesting of forests on customary land first began in a small way in the 1970s and then accelerated quite rapidly in the early 1980s under the first Mamaloni Government (1981–1984). The number of companies licensed to operate increased fourfold from 1981 to 1983; there was a much wider spread in the location of their operations and an overall increase in the level of production, with output climbing in two stages, from 1980 to 1986 (when Levers withdrew from the country), and from 1989 to the present (figure 2). Since 1992 annual timber production has climbed above 600,000 cubic meters, which is twice the volume (325,000 cubic meters) regarded as a sustainable level of harvest by the Solomon Islands Resource Inventory Project (SI MNR 1994). Reforestation of government land has continued during this period, but virtually no reforestation of customary land has occurred, except for a New Zealand–sponsored trial project on Malaita (Thorpe 1988). This period also shows many undercapitalized companies joining the industry, especially from 1981 to 1989 (Shield 1990).

The second period of logging came to be marked by a greatly reduced level of control over logging companies. Even though forest legislation was amended on several occasions with the intention of making it more suitable for controlling logging companies working on customary land, the principal bodies responsible for enforcing that legislation—Forestry Division, provincial governments, and area councils—did not have the

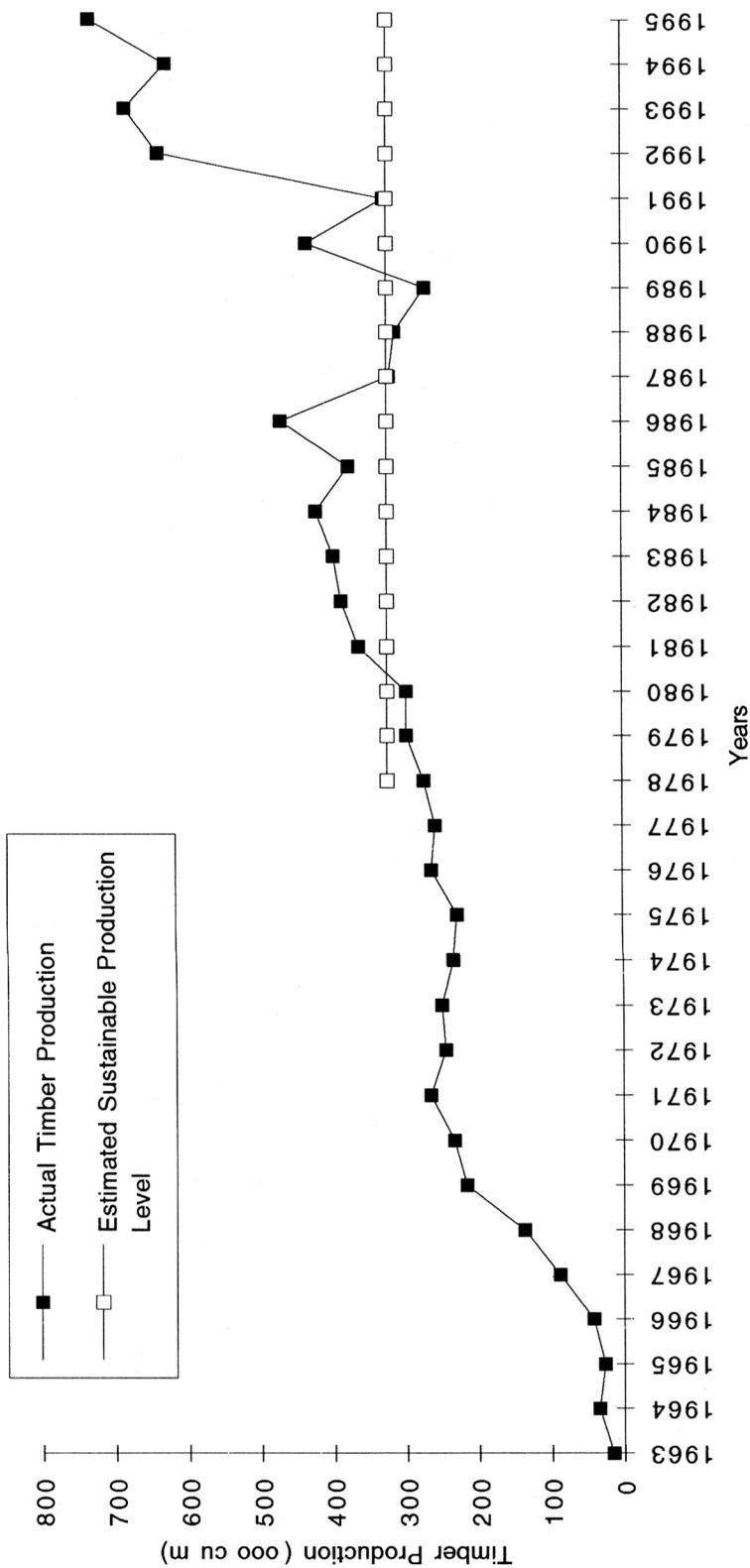


FIGURE 2. Annual timber production, 1963-1995.

Sources: Solomon Islands Statistics Office *Statistical Bulletins* 9/85; 15/88; 22/93; Central Bank of Solomon Islands *Annual Reports* 1993-1995; Solomon Islands Ministry of Natural Resources 1994.

staff or the resources to properly carry out their statutory duties. In practice, the legislation was ineffective because compliance was left to “the whim of the logging companies” (Boer 1992, 93). The situation was exacerbated by the increasing use of corrupt practices by the new companies entering the country during this period (Larmour 1983, 270–271; SI 00 1988, 1989).

THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

Prior to 1963, commercial timber production was restricted to a number of small timber companies, many of them producing sawn timber for local use, others producing sawn timber and logs for export. The longest-running company was the Kauri Timber Company based at Vanikoro, in the Santa Cruz group. It was exporting kauri logs to Australia up to 1964 (BSIP 1965, 31). Another company exporting sawn timber and logs between 1951 and 1957 was the Tenaru Timber Company Proprietary Limited (BSIP 1955, 23; 1960, 26). The turning point for the growth of an export timber industry came in 1962–1964 with the first demand for timber from Japan and the arrival of several new investors in export-timber production. The three most important companies to get established during this period were Levers Pacific Timbers Limited, a subsidiary of the United Africa Company [Timber] Limited; Allardyce Lumber Company Limited, formed by an Australian firm, Colonial Timber Company Limited, then operating in Sarawak; and Kalena Timber Company Limited, financed mainly from the United States (BSIP 1965, 31). These three companies accounted for most timber production well into the 1980s. The largest of the three, Levers, produced between two-thirds and three-quarters of total export volume up to 1982. All three companies originally began operations on government land, or land leased by the government, and later moved onto customary land. During this period most export timber production was confined to a small number of sites among the islands that now make up Western Province (figure 1). The only substantial logging to take place outside Western Province was that undertaken by the Allardyce Timber Company on the island of Santa Isabel between 1964 and 1974.

Levers began operations on Gizo Island in 1963. In 1968 it shifted its base to Ringi Cove on Kolombangara Island and began clearing land that the parent company held under certificate of occupation. Through a deal made with the government, involving the reversion of 82 percent of this

land to the government after logging, Levers obtained perpetual title to the other 18 percent of the land and options for further timber rights on customary land (Bennett 1995, 252). Through Levers' operations on Kolombangara, and through a replanting program organized by the government, Kolombangara became the main center of the timber industry in the 1970s.

The intensive extraction of timber on Kolombangara brought an end to the government-owned forests in this area and from then on Levers was forced to seek timber-cutting rights on customary land in order to maintain production. The main focus of their attention was the neighboring island of New Georgia. Except for negotiations over timber-cutting rights on Guadalcanal by Foxwoods (BSI Timbers) Limited (which took over and upgraded the Tenaru sawmill), Levers' efforts to obtain further timber-cutting rights represented the first major push onto customary land by a commercial logging company. It gave rise to one of the longest and most contentious episodes in the history of commercial logging and eventually led to Levers withdrawing altogether from the Solomons in 1986 (Rence 1979; Larmour 1979a, 1981, 1989; Hailey 1982; Seed 1983; Wright 1987).

These negotiations were protracted mainly because of disagreements over land rights and the leadership of landowning groups. The area sought by Levers was in North New Georgia and comprised 40,000 hectares. The first attempt to negotiate timber rights started in 1972 and involved the government and resource owners. After six years of meetings and litigation, the negotiations were deadlocked without agreement on landownership or leadership (Rence 1979). To break the deadlock, the government proceeded to separate timber rights from land tenure. Using special legislation passed in 1979, it formed the North New Georgia Timber Corporation, made up of representatives from the five main landholding groups in the area. The timber rights were transferred to the corporation, which became the main body dealing with Levers. Disputes over landownership did not end, but were carried on under the umbrella of the corporation's board, affecting arguments over board membership, policy, and distribution of the royalties received from Levers (Larmour 1981, 136). Levers subsequently obtained timber-cutting rights from the corporation and began operations in the area. The protests against their operations in North New Georgia, which led to their withdrawal from Solomon Islands, are taken up in the next section.

By the late 1970s annual timber production was averaging around 230,000 cubic meters, of which 90 percent was being exported, almost all as unprocessed logs. The main countries buying timber were Japan (83 percent), Germany (7 percent), France (4 percent), and Korea (4 percent). Sawn-timber production in 1978 was 10,800 cubic meters, just over two-thirds of which was produced by Foxwoods on Guadalcanal. Fifteen other small sawmills were producing the balance. The total area of forest replanting up to 1979 was 17,890 hectares, representing much less than the area that had been logged (SI CPO 1980, 85–86).

The years between 1963 and 1981 represent a period of moderate growth in timber production. Because it was small, largely confined to one province, and working mostly on government land or land leased by the government, the industry was easily managed by the Forestry Department. This relatively stable regime was in marked contrast to what followed when logging operations spread from government land to customary land. Besides a rapid increase in the number of companies that were granted licenses and a dramatic increase in the total allowable cut granted to these companies, three other provinces joined Western Province and started engaging in export logging. The three new provinces, Guadalcanal, Malaita, and Makira-Ulawa, all comprised relatively large islands with substantial stands of commercially attractive lowland forest.

The larger number of companies brought a marked change in the structure of the industry. The three oldest companies maintained their dominant role (without Levers after 1986). The only new company of similar size and volume of production was the Hyundai Timber Company, a subsidiary of the giant South Korean Hyundai Group. It started logging at Aola in East Guadalcanal in 1983 and became the fourth largest producer between 1983 and 1989, with 11 percent of the total volume harvested. Hyundai was the largest producer outside Western Province. Another South Korean conglomerate tried to obtain a license on Choiseul Island at this time but because of opposition to their application did not obtain their license until 1987. Eagon Resources Development Limited started logging on Choiseul in 1989. Most of the other new companies that entered the country in the early 1980s were small undercapitalized operations, with relatively low levels of production (averaging between 10,000 and 20,000 cubic meters annually when operational), poor profitability, and frequent changes of ownership. A survey of these small companies in the late 1980s, when log prices were depressed, showed that they were barely viable commercial operations (Shield 1990, 35).

The arrival of a large number of new companies in the 1980s was associated with a much higher level of political involvement in the industry and the frequent use of political influence in the interests of those new companies. Regulations relating to the acquisition of timber-cutting rights and the granting of logging licenses were routinely disregarded as political leaders gave their support to individual logging companies seeking timber rights in their constituencies. Officials in the Forestry Division, who were ultimately responsible for upholding the regulations, became the main target of this political pressure. Slowly and relentlessly they were forced to compromise on forestry regulations and on policy guidelines relating to management of forestry development. This is shown by cases that were investigated by the ombudsman in the late 1980s (SI 00 1988–1991).

The report on Hyundai illustrates what took place (SI 00 1989, 18–42; 1991, 15). It shows a large company using its considerable powers and influence to obtain timber rights. Originally one of the company representatives obtained a directorship and majority shareholding in a local company that had been formed in East Guadalcanal. Once Hyundai had control of the local company they used it to form a subsidiary of the Korean-based company. Less than twelve months later they had obtained a license to cut 75,000 cubic meters annually for twenty years. There was no technical assessment of the resource or the sustainability of the volume allocated. Proper agreement was not obtained from all the resource owners in the area. The license was granted despite strong objections from provincial officials and the Forestry Division, a grossly unfair and one-sided contract, and considerable confusion and ignorance among resource owners about the intentions of the company. Inducements were used to get around difficult or confused officials and to divide the resource owners among themselves. One official who tried to uphold the regulations was transferred out of the area. Ultimately, pressure from the minister overcame the last resistance to the agreement.

Foreign companies like Hyundai readily took advantage of the divisions among landholders, manipulating the limited authority exercised by leaders (and self-appointed representatives) of landholding groups in pursuit of timber-felling rights. They also took advantage of changes made to the forestry legislation, which treated timber rights differently from customary land rights. The procedures for dealing with timber rights were speeded up in comparison with the procedures for land (SI 00 1989, 11–14). The ombudsman's report and other survey evidence show that East Guadalcanal people were deeply divided about commercial log-

ging. Those divisions worsened once logging started and the negative impacts became apparent (Fitzgerald and Schoeffel 1991). Numerous disputes arose as the company attempted to obtain the cutting rights it needed and uphold earlier agreements with resource owners (SI 00 1989, 32).

Another case investigated by the ombudsman involved Kayuken Pacific Limited, which obtained a license to carry out logging in the West Kwaio area of Malaita in 1986. The license was granted under intense political pressure, even though a moratorium on the issuing of new logging licenses was in place. By their action, Malaita Province forced the lifting of the moratorium. It was found later that at least one of the local leaders involved in vetting the company's application was working for the company. The ombudsman's investigation showed that the license was granted illegally, for a quota of logs that was three times the volume recommended by the Forestry Division. There were numerous other irregularities, including suspected forgery (SI 00 1988, 25-42). Despite the ombudsman's findings, no action was ever taken against Kayuken or any of the officials implicated in the ombudsman's report.

Most of the new companies that entered at this time were subsequently surrounded by controversy once logging operations got started. The Forestry Division did not have the staff or resources to monitor their activities, and companies were left largely to their own devices, ignoring the regulations with impunity. Resource owners were powerless to do anything about it. They found that even when contracts were broken they could not terminate agreements made with logging companies (Boer 1992, 89).

A number of moves were made by the Forestry Division in the 1980s to try and reassert some control over the industry. They included a two-year moratorium on the issuing of new licenses (later extended), another amendment to the Forest Resources and Timber Utilization Act strengthening the powers of area councils and provincial executives in the granting of timber rights and imposing new environmental safeguards on logging companies, and a special form introduced called the Standard Logging Agreement with thirty-nine clauses governing the operations of logging companies (Fingleton 1989; Boer 1992). In 1984 the Forestry Division also released a new policy statement calling for sustained-yield harvesting, increased reforestation, strengthening of the Timber Control Section, increased domestic processing, and the reduction of log exports (SI 1984). This policy statement was virtually ignored. In 1989 a new and

more comprehensive policy statement was released, putting forward again the commitment to sustained-yield management, reforestation, domestic processing, and greater forest protection (SI FD 1989).

This statement, like the previous one, made no difference to further expansion of the timber industry. Established companies started moving to new sites. Both Allardyce Lumber Company and Hyundai got concessions on Vella Lavella, opening up the island to large-scale logging for the first time. By 1990, licenses had been issued for a total allowable harvest of 924,000 cubic meters per year, well above what was considered a sustainable volume (Shield 1990, 13). By 1992 the allowable harvest had risen to 1.2 million cubic meters, and by 1994 to 3.3 million cubic meters (Hughes 1993; *ss*, 31 Mar 1995). Even though the National Coalition Partnership government introduced a moratorium on the granting of new logging licenses in March 1994, and extended it to include all licenses for foreign and local companies in July the same year, the total licensed volume represented around one-quarter of the total commercial volume left in the country.

The two-tier industrial structure described earlier has continued, with changes of ownership and consolidation at the top and the entry of many new local companies at the bottom. Logging on customary land attracted larger companies from Southeast Asia, especially Malaysia. These companies proved as adept as their predecessors at obtaining foreign investment approval and getting concession areas for timber cutting. One such company, Golden Springs International, came in under the North New Georgia Timber Corporation Act, allowing it to commence operations in North New Georgia in 1989 without being subject to the administrative control of the Forestry Division (Shield 1990, 39). New investors like Golden Springs proceeded to acquire smaller companies along with the licensed concession areas held by those companies. An attempt by the ombudsman to challenge the legality of these acquisitions failed (SI 00 1988, 81-83; 1991, 14). The period from 1987 to the present shows increasing consolidation of ownership around these new investors. By 1994 the export logging industry was made up of eight foreign companies, several of which had a number of subsidiary companies. Three of these companies controlled 75 percent of the total volume licensed to foreign companies. The two South Korean companies, Hyundai and Eagon, had another 14 percent (168,000 cubic meters) (personal communication).

THE GROWTH OF OPPOSITION TO LARGE-SCALE LOGGING

From the time large-scale logging operations started on customary land, there was opposition from rural people, beginning in the 1970s and continuing to grow as logging grew and expanded into other provinces. Most of the protests originated in local communities and were directed at specific companies. Major difficulties hampered attempts to organize more widely than this because of the poor communications within and between islands, the constant demands imposed by the subsistence lifestyle, and the low education and poor literacy among the majority of the population. The wider communication that did take place was largely through assistance from nongovernmental organizations and other outside support. Local protests were sometimes conducted within the law, at other times illegally. They did not take the form of open confrontation so much as different kinds of covert action or “everyday forms of resistance” (Scott 1989, 5). They included sabotage and arson attacks on logging camps and the destruction of property and machinery belonging to logging companies. The most recent of these attacks have been in North New Georgia, Western Province, in 1994 (ss, 22–27 Apr 1994), and on Pavuvu Island, Central Province, in 1995 (ss, 6 Jul 1995).

Though many of these protests have been isolated events organized independently of each other, the growth of opposition to large-scale logging came to take the form of a loosely organized and widely dispersed social movement among rural people. It is described this way because of the shared interest in trying to stop (or at least to control) large-scale logging and encourage alternative forms of forest development, and also because of the many informal and formal connections that have grown up between those opposed to logging. Two of the nongovernmental organizations involved in the movement, Solomon Islands Development Trust and Soltrust, hold frequent workshops and training sessions for rural people and publish regular broadsheets reporting protests against logging companies and publicizing small-scale, community-based forestry development projects. The movement has not been able to achieve a high level of mobilization or political power, but it has developed a strong national presence. The closest it has come to influencing government policy and setting a new direction for forestry development was during the brief term of office of the National Coalition Partnership government in 1993–94.

The strongest protests from local communities in the 1970s and early

1980s were against Levers on Kolombangara and in North New Georgia. On Kolombangara, the village of Iriri made a stand against the logging of their customary land (Waddell 1993, 10–16). In New Georgia, the differences among landowning groups that had become apparent in the early years of negotiations over timber-cutting rights were not resolved by the formation of the North New Georgia Timber Corporation, and in 1982 people from one of the disaffected groups raided a new logging camp at Enoghae and destroyed houses and logging machinery. The damage was estimated to be over S1\$1 million. Seven people were arrested and sent to prison for two years for their part in the raid (Hailey 1982, 51; Seed 1983). Soon after the raid the Western Provincial Assembly passed a motion to remove Levers' operations from Western Province. The central government did not back this motion but set up a commission of inquiry instead (Hailey 1982, 54). In early 1984, one of the main opponents of Levers, a clan leader from North New Georgia, Job Dudley Tausinga, was elected premier of Western Province after winning a seat in the provincial assembly (ss, 20 Jan 1984; Tausinga 1992). Tausinga was also elected to the national parliament in 1984 as the member for Roviana and North New Georgia. Logging was one of the main election issues in that constituency (*Sunset News*, 14 Nov 1984, 7–10). In 1984, with assistance from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, the Western Provincial Executive proceeded to prepare a development strategy for the province in which they declared their opposition to foreign logging operations and their preference for small-scale forestry. The forest policy included proposals for sustainable exploitation of the forest, closer control over logging operations, and high priority for new forestry legislation giving better protection to resource owners (*Sunset News*, May 1986; Feb 1987; Mar 1987).

Unable to get access to all their concession areas and under constant pressure from the Western Provincial Assembly and landholders in North New Georgia, Levers decided to wind up its operations in 1986 and withdraw completely from the Solomons (Wright 1987; *IB*, Oct 1986, 36, 38). The withdrawal of the largest logging company in the country might have led to a reevaluation of postindependence development policy and forced a new approach to the exploitation of resources on customary land, but this did not happen. Other foreign companies such as Allardyce, Kalena, and Earthmovers retained their concessions and continued their operations through agreements with customary resource owners. Subsequent

protests over their activities by local communities brought a swift response from the central government, as when a ministerial delegation was sent to the Shortland Islands in 1989 on a navy patrol boat to look into a dispute involving Allardyce company operations (SN, 16 May 1989). Eagon obtained its license on Choiseul and began logging in 1989. The volume of production dropped temporarily when Levers pulled out but soon climbed back to earlier levels (figure 2). Much of the energy shown by the anti-logging movement had been directed at Levers, and once they departed the movement lost some of its momentum. It also suffered a major setback when Tausinga unexpectedly changed his views and threw his support behind a new foreign investor in North New Georgia, the Indonesian-based company Golden Springs International.

The main problem for the anti-logging movement was the new business climate that became established in the 1980s, the main feature of which was a rising level of corruption. It started as early as the first postindependence Mamaloni government between 1981 and 1984 (Larmour 1983, 270–273). In the logging industry this involved the generous use of bribes and inducements by company representatives to gain the support of resource owners, local community leaders, and, most critical of all, politicians and other national leaders. Resource owners and political leaders succumbed easily to these practices, which one commentator in the press referred to as the “Asian disease” (SS, 24 Nov 1993). Some indication of what these practices involved came to light in 1994 when the then minister of commerce, employment and trade, Josep Tuhanuku, revealed that he had been offered S1\$10,000 by the managing director of a Malaysian company, the Berjaya Group, which was then trying to get approval for a takeover of the Star Harbour Logging Company in Makira-Ulawa Province. Tuhanuku rejected the offer and deported the businessman involved (SS, 20 Jul; 22 Jul; 27 Jul 1994). The prevalence of these practices has exposed a serious weakness in postcolonial government: the lack of effective checks on executive authority, parliamentarians, and national leaders generally. The responsibility for such checks should have come from the leaders themselves, but the small attempts they did make were more symbolic than real, as was shown by the findings of the ombudsman between 1988 and 1991 (SI 00 1988–1991). Detailed investigations of several companies showed that in the acquisition of timber-cutting rights and in the monitoring of logging companies, corruption was very common. The ombudsman had no power to take these matters further himself, and no other government body took the necessary steps.

After Levers pulled out of Western Province, the main center of protest action against logging companies shifted to Guadalcanal and Malaita Provinces. On Guadalcanal there was increasing opposition to Hyundai's operations in the eastern part of the island. In trying to get agreements from more resource owners, Hyundai precipitated a rapid increase in the number of land disputes accompanied by increasing antagonism toward the company (*Link*, Mar–Apr, Jun–Jul, Aug–Sep 1989). People originally agreed to logging because of the income from royalties (at S1\$7 per cubic meter) and because of the roads constructed by the logging company. They later found these advantages far outweighed by the disadvantages (Fitzgerald and Schoeffel 1991, 33). The royalties only boosted household income for a short time and were quickly spent. Fitzgerald and Schoeffel estimated that commercial logging provided a 15 percent increase in average household income for a period of twelve to eighteen months (1991, 20). Other problems included major environmental damage, difficulties with royalty payments, fraudulent agreements, poor logging practices, poor labor relations, and the divisiveness caused by land disputes (Fitzgerald and Schoeffel 1991, 34). In 1988 the East Guadalcanal Area Council voted unanimously to get the minister of natural resources to suspend the company's license until all complaints against it were investigated. In 1989 the people showed their dissatisfaction in a by-election for the East Guadalcanal constituency by voting in Hilda Kari, an outspoken opponent of logging in the area (*PIM*, Aug 1989, 51–53; *Link*, Jun–Jul 1989). Because of the level of protest directed at the company and the impact this had on its activity, Hyundai was forced to reduce its operations halfway through the twenty-year period over which it was licensed to cut timber.

The experience of commercial logging in East Guadalcanal led a number of forest owners to look for less destructive and more sustainable forms of forest development. Portable sawmills had been introduced in the Solomons long before logging companies started working on customary land, but interest in them only picked up as customary resource owners looked for alternatives to large logging operations. One of the first places this happened was Western Province, among communities affected by Levers. They were encouraged through educational visits from an Australian-based conservation group, the Rainforest Information Center (*WRR*, Jan 1984; Tausinga 1992, 63–64).

After Cyclone Namu hit the eastern and central Solomons in May 1986, portable sawmills were promoted by several relief agencies in an

attempt to salvage the damaged forests and help communities replace their houses. One of the agencies involved was the Foundation for Peoples of the South Pacific. It was responsible for importing the first *woka-baot* sawmills into the country (Thorpe 1992, 1). Other nongovernment organizations started promoting smaller timber operations in the later 1980s as part of their campaign to raise awareness of alternative ways in which forest development could take place (Link, 1989–1992). Thorpe estimated that by 1992 there were more than seven hundred portable sawmills in the country. The most popular brand, the “Alaskan” sawmill, was selling at the rate of twenty per month (1992, 3).

Surveys conducted in the early 1990s by the Forestry Resource Inventory Project and enquiries carried out among provincial representatives during the same period showed a high level of interest in small-scale methods of timber extraction (SI MNR 1994; SI 1993, 78–81). Given a choice of the kind of forestry development they would prefer, rural people from the main timber-producing provinces showed a clear preference for methods that would allow them to extract and market the timber themselves.

In East Guadalcanal the interest in portable sawmills came to form part of the protest campaign being conducted against Hyundai. One resource owner acquired his own portable machinery in the mid 1980s, slowly taught himself how to use it, and then began training other resource owners. Even though his brother had signed a contract with Hyundai to log the trees on their land, Sosimo Kuki was opposed to it and persuaded the company to drop the contract so he could cut and process the timber himself. He subsequently set up the Komuniboli Training Centre in his village and offered courses on portable sawmilling to other resource owners. He was so successful that many other resource owners followed his example and stopped Hyundai from logging their land. This is one of the reasons Hyundai had to reduce its operations in the area (Kuki and Thorpe 1992, 4). The adoption of portable sawmilling in direct opposition to foreign logging companies has been taken up in other locations since then. In 1994 this was being pursued by a resource owner in north Choiseul in an attempt to stop Eagon advancing its logging operations (ss, 29 April 1994).

In the last ten years nongovernment organizations have been the main promoters of small-scale forest processing in Solomon Islands. They include Solomon Islands Development Trust, Soltrust (originally supported

by the Foundation for Peoples of the South Pacific), Greenpeace, and some Solomon Island churches. These organizations have received funding from a wide range of sources, both national and international, including support from bilateral aid donors and some support from the central government. Their interest in forestry has arisen out of more general involvement in rural development. The two largest organizations, Solomon Islands Development Trust and Soltrust, support only forestry projects that are community based. They promote technology and methods that are within the capacity of resource owners using household labor, with a heavy emphasis on training and special courses conducted regularly in rural areas. Soltrust formed a commercial arm in 1993, called Lumi Tugetha Holdings Limited, with the aims of assisting small producers improve the quality of their timber and helping them find export markets.

These developments have been supported by the central government but, unlike the nongovernment organizations, the central government does not see small-scale forestry organized on a community basis as an alternative to large-scale logging. Instead it wants to encourage both kinds of forest development in parallel with each other and to continue to receive the short-term economic benefits from exporting unprocessed logs. This has meant an uneasy relationship with nongovernment organizations, occasionally erupting into open confrontation, as occurred most recently in 1995 in relation to a logging operation on Pavuvu, the largest of the Russell Islands in Central Province.

This clash involved around six thousand hectares of lowland forest on land that was formerly owned by the joint-venture company Levers Solomons Limited. When Levers decided to sell up and withdraw from the Solomons, the land was transferred to the government. The land is claimed by indigenous Russell Islanders, and the government is promising it will return it to them in due course. A tree-felling license was issued to an Asian company, Maving Brothers, in 1992. After some delay the company prepared to start logging in early 1995. The indigenous Russell Islanders who oppose Maving Brothers' operation say that they would rather exploit the Pavuvu forests themselves in a sustainable manner, using small-scale methods and technology. They are supported by nongovernment organizations, including Greenpeace and Soltrust (ss, 15 Mar 1995). For several months in early 1995 there was a strong campaign to prevent logging from going ahead. In the course of this campaign the anti-logging provincial premier was forced out of office and replaced with a

pro-logging member of the executive. This led a large group of Russell Islanders to protest and present a petition at Parliament House. In May 1995 Maving Brothers started felling and exporting trees under the protection of members of the Solomon Islands Police Field Force, with Pavuvu Islanders continuing to threaten industrial sabotage (ss, Jan–Jul 1995; sv, Jan–Jul 1995).

The protests over logging on Pavuvu Island have been the largest carried out by the anti-logging movement in the history of commercial logging, and they show how much the movement has grown over the fifteen years in which such protests have been taking place. The length of the Pavuvu protest and the support it received nationally show the level of concern over the present direction of forest development. The anti-logging movement has a number of different elements. Central is the defense of a form and scale of development that are within the capacity and expertise of rural communities. In this respect it is a conservative movement fighting to retain household-based production and customary ownership of resources in the face of strong commercial pressures threatening to undermine them. It has also been fighting for a more sustainable level of exploitation of natural resources under the overall management of the owners of those resources. Another element that came out clearly in the Pavuvu episode is the antagonism toward foreign companies and the kind of power they hold over the central government. One of the strongest criticisms made against the government in its handling of the Pavuvu logging project was that it was nothing more than a puppet of foreign investors (ss, 6 Sep 1995).

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS AND LOCAL COMPANIES

The provincial government system was introduced under the 1981–1984 Mamaloni government at the same time as commercial logging started taking off on customary land. Provincial governments were expected to throw their support behind national development policy, with its emphasis on large-scale natural resource extraction. Except for the short-lived stand against large-scale logging made by the Western provincial executive in the mid-1980s, most provincial executives have come to accept central government policy. Being dependent on the central government for the greater proportion of their revenue, they have not had a lot of choice. They have come to adopt the same attitude as the central govern-

ment and look for short-term economic benefit from their resources, sanctioning rapid exploitation of their lowland forests. By 1995 seven out of nine provinces were exporting unprocessed logs. Closer examination of what has taken in place in two of these provinces shows that they are now coming under pressure from both foreign and local logging companies.

In Choiseul Province there is one foreign logging company, Eagon Resources Development Company Limited, a subsidiary of the South Korean multinational Eagon Group. The island of Choiseul was still part of Western Province when Eagon first started negotiations for a logging license in 1983. Choiseul was very divided over the proposal, and while the company was forced to comply with the regulations and consult resource owners, it was unable to obtain the consent required for a license. In 1985 this situation began to change as political pressure was used to circumvent the regulations. In the end the pressure prevailed and the license was granted in 1987. The license provided for an annual allocation of 150,000 cubic meters for twenty years over the whole of Choiseul Island. It was granted even though statutory procedures had only been completed for 9 percent of the island. The majority of the island's population found that their forests had, in effect, been compulsorily acquired (SI 00 1990, 12-15).

Eagon started logging in 1989, and in 1990 Choiseul separated from Western Province and became the eighth province in the country. Through the setting-up of the Eagon-Choiseul Foundation, much support and assistance has flowed from Eagon to the province ever since. This includes building a small hospital, providing educational scholarships, sponsoring sports teams, and other services. The company is one of the first foreign companies working on customary land to start a long-term reforestation program, replanting logged areas. It is also building a processing facility for veneer and plywood production (ss, 7 Sep, 4 Nov 1994). Since the company began logging, court injunctions have been served against it for trespass and environmental damage. There has also been a marked increase in land disputes (*Link*, 1991; ss, 15 Jan 1993). Eagon has the political support it needs, both provincially and nationally, for long-term forestry-based development, but in Melanesia that has not always been enough to ensure the security of large-scale resource extraction. In Solomon Islands the political support has been easiest to obtain; agreement at the local level has been much more difficult. Choiseul people are still strongly divided over the kind of deal they have been

asked to accept with Eagon and now question the outcomes: lower than average prices for their timber, conversion of customary land into fast-growing plantations, damage to the environment, social unrest, and being employed as wage laborers by a company that is exploiting their resources (*ss*, 26 Apr, 23 June 1995).

One of the most extreme cases of forest depletion in the last fifteen years has been Malaita Province. Deforestation has been carried out mostly by foreign companies, but more recently local companies have become involved and the competition for what remains of the lowland forests has increased dramatically. Malaita is 4225 square kilometers in area and the third largest province after Western and Guadalcanal. It is also the most heavily populated province in the country with around 28 percent of the national population.

Until 1982 no large-scale logging was undertaken in Malaita Province, and commercial timber production was confined to four small sawmills. A survey of the province's timber resources showed around 725,000 cubic meters of commercial exploitable timber. The province was advised that with proper management and some reforestation the existing resources would be enough to meet the long-term needs of the small sawmills (Groom and Associates 1982, 24-25). Despite this recommendation the provincial executive proceeded to approve a number of large-scale logging operations, inviting rapid liquidation of the forests by offering grossly excessive volumes to the companies concerned. The most controversial of these approvals was that given to Kayuken Pacific Limited in 1986 (mentioned earlier). In 1990 Golden Springs International bought into a local company, Waibona Sawmilling Association, and started logging in West Kwaio. The company bought out Kayuken in 1991 and became the largest operator in the province.

Within less than ten years the approach to forest management shifted from an emphasis on sustainable management of the forests for the long-term benefit of local sawmills to a policy that favored maximal extraction of the resource for the benefit of foreign companies and their local partners. The main gains for the province have been the annual business license fee paid by each company, the employment opportunities, and the royalties paid to resource owners. For these limited benefits there has been rapid clearing of lowland forest associated with widespread environmental devastation. The small sawmills that operated previously have been forced out of business by competition for timber from the large log-

exporting companies. Other local timber-based industries, such as the boat-building industry that was located in and around Auki, have been wound down for lack of timber. No post-logging development has been started or proposed in the areas that have been harvested.

In 1992 local companies started moving into the log export trade. Ndai Island Sawmill Limited obtained a license to remove 12,000 cubic meters from Ndai Island, a small island (17 square kilometers) 40 kilometers off the north coast of Malaita. The timber was cut out in two shiploads for a gross value of over S1\$4 million (SV, 18 Jun 1993). The Ndai Island businessman behind this venture has since become one of the leading local entrepreneurs involved in export logging.

When the National Coalition Partnership government introduced a new sawmilling license for local companies in 1993, with provision for a one-off export quota intended to allow them to raise the capital needed for setting up in the timber industry (SV, 18 Mar 1994), fourteen local companies were formed in Malaita Province. The pressure from these local companies, coming on top of the timber allocated to foreign companies, heightened the trend toward rapid exploitation of the last-remaining forests in the province. By November 1994 the annual volume of timber allocated to foreign and local companies was 690,000 cubic meters. The annual allowable cut recommended by the National Forest Resource Inventory for long-term sustainable harvesting of the forests is 19,800 cubic meters (SI MNR 1994). Both the provincial and the national governments would appear to have completely given up any responsibility whatsoever for the long-term management of forest resources.

The expansion of large-scale logging over the last six years has been rapid and relentless, taking in most islands, both large and small, in which there is any natural lowland forest remaining. In some cases, like Ndai Island, tracts of forest small enough to provide only one or two shiploads of logs have been involved. Provincial governments have largely thrown their weight behind the central government policy of liquidating the lowland natural forest as rapidly as possible and maximizing rents through accelerated depletion of the resource.

CONCLUSION

When the Solomon Islands Government released its Forest Policy Statement in 1989, many believed that it heralded a new era in forest develop-

ment. The statement acknowledged the important economic benefits from forestry and allowed for further exploitation of the forests; it also urged much stricter management of forest resources for long-term sustainable use, greater investment in reforestation, closer control over the logging industry, more support for the work of the Forestry Division, more equitable sharing of the benefits from forest harvesting, and greater participation in forestry development by Solomon Islanders (SI FD 1989). The policy was approved by parliament and saw two new Australian-funded projects—the Forest Resource Inventory Project and the Timber Control Unit Project—being started in line with the objectives. As it turned out, these and other initiatives fell far short of what was intended. In reality, 1989 marked a different kind of turning point in forest development, the main feature of which was a much closer alliance with international capital through the arrival of new Asian investors and further intensification of forest exploitation without any of the controls, or the stepped-up reforestation and more equitable sharing of the benefits, that had been called for.

The main justification for this divergence between policy and practice was the worsening economic situation in the late 1980s and early 1990s, marked by an unfavorable balance of payments, expanding budget deficits, and growing government debt (Callick 1991; Fallon and Karabalis 1992). At the time little attempt was made to moderate government spending or adopt a less-expansionary fiscal policy; instead more concern was expressed with trying to expand export production. The main beneficiaries of this approach to economic management were state employees, a large proportion of whom were urban based; excessive natural resource extraction was being sanctioned in order to preserve the relatively large state apparatus that had grown up since independence and the urban bias associated with it (UNICEF 1993).

The anti-logging movement represents an ongoing attempt to regain control over rural development. It has never been a well-organized movement and does not have anywhere near the same influence over the government as the highly unionized public servants and private-sector workers (Frazer 1992). It has been unable to slow the rate of logging because much of its following is found among the scattered rural population, and all the protest action they have taken has been carried out in divided communities, in isolated local situations, with limited impact and success. The most successful action was that taken against Levers in North New Georgia, forcing the withdrawal of the company. There has

been nothing similar since. In some cases the opposition to logging has been strong enough to hold up tree-clearing operations; in others it has prevented companies from getting a tree-felling license. The most recent case has been in West 'Are'are, Malaita Province, where a logging company has been trying to get a tree-felling license for more than six years. During that time there has been an intense and bitter fight between pro- and anti-logging factions in the local community. Both factions have their supporters among West 'Are'are wage earners, professionals, and businesspeople in Honiara, and the fight has been pursued in both locations. So far, the anti-logging faction has outmaneuvered the other group and held off the logging company (Naitoro 1993). In other places, like Pavuvu Island, anti-logging protesters have been less successful.

The most critical period for the anti-logging movement came between 1993 and 1995. Following a steep rise in overseas prices for round logs, rapid expansion in export production, and huge windfall profits being secured by logging companies, national debate over forest policy heated up and support grew for phasing out log exports and restricting the activities of foreign logging companies. A report made in 1994 highlighted the massive loss in revenue to resource owners and to the government through underreporting of harvest volume and underreporting of log prices. Duncan estimated that in 1993, when logs were commanding record prices internationally, the surplus that was foregone through underreporting was S1\$130 million, an amount estimated to be 35 percent of gross domestic product and 53 percent of government revenue (1994, 40-44).

When the National Coalition Partnership came to power in June 1993 (Premdas and Steeves 1994), it set about trying to reduce the level of export logging and restoring government management of forest development (Tuhanuku 1995). It introduced a price-monitoring system, strength-ened the operations of the Timber Control Unit in monitoring logging operations and timber exports, raised the export duty on round logs, started work on a National Forest Action Plan, advanced the introduction of new forestry legislation, set 1997 as the date for phasing out all log exports, made plans to engage a foreign trade inspection company for surveillance of log shipments, and increased the proportion of logging revenue being returned to the forest owners by guaranteeing them 20 percent of the export duty on round logs (SS, 1993-1994; SV, 1993-1994; Grynberg 1994).

The National Coalition Partnership made little progress with these reforms before it was brought down by a succession of cabinet resigna-

tions and defections. The strong stand on logging was one of the main reasons for their being forced out of office. In late 1994 Solomon Mamaloni returned to power at the head of the Solomon Islands National Unity, Reconciliation and Progressive Pati (SINURPP). Mamaloni is the director of a log-exporting company and among national politicians has always been one of the strongest advocates of large-scale logging. Once in office, the SINURPP government immediately began dismantling all the reforms introduced by the National Coalition Partnership, reducing the export duty on round logs, putting back the date for halting log exports, halting work on the National Forest Action Plan and new forestry legislation, and rejecting any need to improve monitoring of logging operations and surveillance of log shipments. They dismissed foreign technical advisers working in the Forestry Division and reduced the operations of the Timber Control Unit (SS, 1994-1995; SV, 1994-1995).

The outcome of all this is a return to the kind of conditions that prevailed in the 1980s, when there was very little government control over the logging industry. However, one critical difference helps to account for the collapse of the National Coalition Partnership and its reforms, and that is a much higher level of participation by Solomon Islanders in the logging industry. This was boosted by the new sawmilling license for local companies that was introduced in 1993. By the end of 1994 there were forty local companies and they had been allocated a total export quota of 1.43 million cubic meters (personal communication). With more and more Solomon Island businessmen engaged in log exporting, the forestry sector has become important to capital accumulation among the business and political elite.

With these changes there is now an uncompromising determination on the part of the SINURPP government to maximize exploitation of the last remaining lowland forests on customary land. They introduced a policy document immediately after coming into power, with nationalistic attacks on conservationists, foreign advisers, and "foreign concepts of development" (SINURPP 1994; SI OPM 1994). They introduced another expansionary budget with a record deficit in early 1995, and engaged in unprecedented attacks on nongovernment organizations involved in the anti-logging movement during the protests over logging on Pavuvu Island. They also made it clear by the use of the paramilitary forces on Pavuvu Island that they would not tolerate interference with logging operations by local protesters.

The export-led growth policy that has been followed since independence and has relied on large-scale, capital intensive resource extraction, has brought deep divisions in Solomon Island society. Export logging has been the most intrusive and destructive resource-based industry so far. The oppositional movement that formed in response to this situation continues to mobilize rural Solomon Islanders in defense of alternative forms of development. It is now much stronger and more active nationally than it has been at any time in the past, but it is pitted against a ruling elite that is far less committed to democratic decision-making and more popular forms of rural development than it is to fostering, in its own interest and the interests of foreign capital, intensive exploitation of the last-remaining forests in the country.

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Abstract

Large-scale logging began in Solomon Islands in 1963. Since then there have been two distinct regimes. The first lasted until the early 1980s and the early years of independence. It involved a small number of companies harvesting government-owned forests or government-leased forests, confined to a few isolated locations, operating under close government supervision. The second regime came about through the expansion of logging to customary land. There was a greater spread of operations, with an increased number of companies and much less central-government control. Resource owners had little real protection against foreign loggers. This paper concentrates on the second period, reviewing the history of the logging industry during this time and the extreme divisiveness it brought about in rural areas. As logging expanded there emerged a loosely organized anti-logging movement in provinces affected by logging. The movement came to represent a direct challenge to the large-scale, capital-intensive development policy followed by the postcolonial state. The movement has had some local successes against logging companies but has failed to match the power being wielded by the logging industry and failed to slow the high rate of timber extraction nationally.

KEYWORDS: logging, Melanesia, new social movements, Solomon Islands