

time of the Jopaipi's story's translation).

Leenhardt's curiosity about Kanak artifacts opened his eyes to deep cultural changes taking place in Houailou. He noticed how the Christian converts slowly lost interest in traditional objects such as war stones. According to Naepels, if the Protestant pastor won the cultural battle over the Kanak soothsayer, it was because European medicine was better at saving lives than the local pharmacopeia and magic amulet. If Kanaks converted in droves, inversely Leenhardt claimed to have taken, albeit jokingly, the opposite route. Along with his missionary colleague Paul Laffay and a young English scientist Paul Montague, he used "a rare magic stone" (105) to put a spell on the German kaiser during the First World War. But Naepels remains dubious about such powers. If the kaiser ended up losing the war, his fellow missionary and the English scientist also lost their lives during the conflict, highlighting the mixed results of local magic.

Naepels answers Foucault's original question in his study: violence is indeed a potent anthropological tool as well as topic of investigation, one that affords an examination of social relationships in their singularity and their banality. Noting that one and a half centuries of violent colonial history have branded the seal of historical determinism on the Kanaks' social and political life, at least in the eyes of some ethnologists, Naepels's pragmatic approach yields a different insight into the history of conflicts in Houailou. His purpose is neither to explain nor to generalize but rather

to articulate questions about relationships between violence, conflict, and power in order "to look differently at the history of Houailou" (16).

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Une mairie dans la France coloniale: Koné, Nouvelle Calédonie, by Benoît Trépied. Paris: Karthala, 2010. ISBN 978-2811104115; 391 pages, maps, tables, illustrations. Paper, □29.00.

Multiethnic parties or even stable electoral alliances are a rare breed in the postcolonial world. In *Une mairie dans la France coloniale*, Benoît Trépied attempts to chart and make sense of one such uncommon alliance over a tumultuous period in a complex colonial context. The Union Calédonienne (UC) was ascendant in New Caledonian politics between the post-World War II discontinuation of the exclusionary colonial regime and the 1980s, a period marked by increasing ethnic strife. Its slogan, "Deux couleurs, un seul peuple" (Two colors, one people), and its ability to effectively mobilize a variety of constituencies across the indigenous-nonindigenous divide make it an extraordinary occurrence both in the Pacific and in the context of colonial France. Think, for example, about the nefarious consequences of a political system dominated by ethnically affiliated parties in nearby Fiji or, as eminent historian of colonialism Frederick Cooper remarks in a note appended to Trépied's text (369), about the ways in which the settlers of Algeria mobilized after World War II against the prospect of

gradual and limited emancipation for indigenous Muslims. How can exceptions to broadly recognized patterns be accounted for, especially in a setting characterized by a violent history of colonial dispossession, segregation, insurrection, and repression? Trépiéd's grounded micro-historical ethnography of political and social life surrounding the town hall in Koné, New Caledonia, offers a convincing explanation to this question.

Was the UC ultimately an expression of European paternalism and a political movement that aimed to enlist Kanak support in order to sustain a "petit blanc" (working-class white) agenda? A superficial analysis would support this contention, especially if one were to focus merely on the background of elected representatives. Trépiéd's work uncovers, however, a dense network of localized relationships that support the notion of an empowered Kanak subjectivity. Trépiéd reconstructs Koné's social landscape by focusing on ambivalences, ambiguities, and tensions. At the local level, colonialism emerges as a multiform and contradictory process in which actors operate in a context that is informed by hierarchy but in which they also find significant room to adjust and craft an autonomous response. It is this complexity that at the local level enabled "unprecedented alliances and combinations" (359).

The UC was indeed an "alliance" of "colonial outsiders" including Kanak communities, Asians, descendants of unfree European laborers, salaried workers, and Europeans who had engaged in interracial relations. As such, it can only be understood through a careful analysis of localized

structures of power and with reference to a particular set of colonial relationships and legacies slowly transitioning toward a more postcolonial dispensation. It is in an analysis of the totality of these relationships that the explanation to the above question is sought, and it is significant that *Une mairie dans la France coloniale* does not focus on a particular milieu or community but constitutes a grounded ethnographic analysis of power after the end of the explicitly colonial era. Kanak communities entered politics in the 1950s and 1960s, the years of political ascendancy for the UC and in a context characterized by significant continuities with the previous era. This alliance is especially significant because it was this alliance that allowed previously marginalized communities to exercise a significant degree of political agency.

This conclusion prompts a reconsideration of colonialism's impact in New Caledonia. In the light of Trépiéd's analysis, the colonial enterprise emerges as fundamentally limited, and if the colonized are finally seen as exercising agency, then colonizers, especially those petit blancs who sustained the UC for decades before exiting it, emerge as eminently vulnerable. Relations were porous, and social mobility went in both directions, but it is especially significant that as a political movement the UC was able to simultaneously offer different agendas to different constituencies. Class was crucial for one component of the UC but not for indigenous communities—the latter were more interested in engaging with the state in order to improve dire circumstances. In this sense, Kanak

actions were fundamentally informed by “political pragmatism” (360). But while a double agenda worked for decades, it came apart when the colonial determinants that characterized New Caledonia in the period between the 1950s and the 1970s were eventually superseded. New waves of immigration from France and elsewhere in the French Pacific, including French Polynesia; the nickel boom and subsequent modernizations; the emergence of “Calédonien” as a new ethno-social descriptor; and the emergence of a new class of educated Kanak leaders all contributed to the final demise of the structural logics of the previous colonial era and the UC.

Is this historical context relevant today? Trépiéd seems to think so, and the book’s opening draws an explicit link between the evocation of a “common destiny” for the indigenous and nonindigenous inhabitants of New Caledonia that is proclaimed by the Nouméa Accord of 1998 and the multiethnic practice that characterized the UC before the emergence of a more radical type of Kanak militancy (7). Ultimately, if the colonial enterprise was eminently incomplete and the rich density of Kanak social life can at least partly be explained with reference to colonial seclusion, whereby social practices could survive in isolation, as Trépiéd argues, there is room for reinterpreting the past as more benign than previous accounts have led us to believe (360). The future, then, could be conceptualized as a return, not to an era of political strife, but to a preceding moment of multiracial cooperation.

Beyond the Pacific and the rest of colonial France, the study of this

“alliance” is also relevant to settler-colonial studies as a comparative scholarly field. Settler colonialism as a mode of domination inevitably faces the contradiction arising from simultaneous settler expressions of indigenizing and Europeanizing impulses. In the context of this interpretative framework, the UC could be understood as a party of indigenizing settlers aiming to chart an autonomous settler course against constituencies that could be represented as exogenous: colonial landowners, metropolitan immigrants, immigrants from Wallis and Futuna, and the central state. In the face of emerging indigenous insurgencies in the 1980s, this creole indigenizing option could not be sustained.

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Décoloniser l'école? Hawaï'i, Nouvelle-Calédonie: Expériences contemporaines, by Marie Salaün. Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013. ISBN 978-2-7535-2165-0, 303 pages, bibliography, table of contents, French. Paper, □17.00.

With *Décoloniser l'école?*, Marie Salaün provides a highly informative, detailed, and thorough comparative study of the school systems of New Caledonia and Hawaï'i, with a fixed gaze on the relationships and experiences of indigenous populations with state-sponsored education. An anthropologist and historian of education, and one of the very few French specialists of colonial and postcolonial studies in Oceania, Salaün starts from