

which urged Rabuka to “completely reject and throw out of the window with precipitated [*sic*] haste the devilish concept of government of national unity” (*FT*, 22 Dec 1992). The Fijian National United Front supported the idea but on the condition that Fijian interests always remain paramount. Many members of Rabuka’s own party agreed that non-Fijian parties will be junior partners in any government of national unity.

How, or if, the idea of a government of national unity will work will be a major challenge for 1993. Another, tragically, will be coping with the consequences of devastating floods, the worst in nearly fifty years, which hit the country soon after Christmas, wrecking the economy and the infrastructure and causing damage estimated in the millions. The devastation came just as the economy was showing signs of recovery after years of poor performance.

BRIJ V. LAL

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MUCH OF this review is based on my field notes, personal correspondence, and accounts in newspapers and newsletters such as *Canberra Times* (*CT*), *Fiji Times* (*FT*), *The Review* (*TR*), *Islands Business Pacific* (*IBP*), *Washington Pacific Report* (*WPR*), and *Pacific Islands Monthly* (*PIM*).

NEW CALEDONIA

Leaders of the *Front de libération nationale kanak et socialiste* (FLNKS) had set 1992 as the date of the first assessment of the Matignon Accords. There were many meetings of the various pro-independence parties during the year, although final results will not be known until after the FLNKS convention in mid-January 1993, and the meeting of the Matignon Accords monitoring committee scheduled for late January or early February 1993.

The month of March represented a dark period for the territory. While the first two cyclones of the season, Betsy in January and Daman in February, had narrowly missed New Caledonia and caused only minor damage, Cyclone Esau hit squarely during the night of 4 March. It was followed less than a week later by Cyclone Fran. These storms caused considerable destruction, particularly in the North Province.

As residents reeled under the impact of Cyclone Fran, they learned of the death at age forty-six of Jacques Iékawé, the man in charge of the economic development of the territory. In 1991 he had been appointed secretary-general of the South Pacific Commission. The territory, metropolitan France, and the whole Pacific region were unanimous in their tributes.

The Prisunic-Barrau shopping center, one of the oldest established commercial centers in Noumea, was burned and looted on the night of 13 March following a violent outburst outside a local nightclub. This was perceived by most observers as a sign of growing dissatisfaction among a young

—predominantly Melanesian—segment of the population, which feels excluded from the benefits of the Matignon Accords.

In September, two elections were held, a week apart. On 20 September, New Caledonian voters, along with all other French citizens, expressed their opinions in a referendum on the Maasticht Treaty concerning the future of the European Economic Community. No real political campaign on this issue was mounted in the territory and, apart from televised statements by metropolitan French political parties, few utterances were made by local politicians to induce voters to participate. Only about a third of the registered voters turned out at the polls, a bare majority of whom opposed ratification (50.32 percent). The South Province had the highest turnout (44.2 percent of registered voters), and returned a 53.3 percent vote against. In the North and Islands provinces, while voter participation was lower (20.5 percent and 8.8 percent respectively), the outcome was in favor of ratification of the treaty (61.5 percent and 72.7 percent respectively). Following the No vote of the South Province, some members of the *Union calédonienne* faction of the FLNKS, which had left its followers freedom of choice, later regretted that the independence movement had not taken a firmer stand during the campaign.

On 27 September, a more exclusive set of voters (known as the greater electors) made up of members of parliament and representatives of municipal councils, were called on to choose the territory's representative to the French Senate. Three candidates were competing for the post. Although incumbent

senator Dick Ukeiwe, member of the *Rassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la République* (RPCR, the largest anti-independence party), had expressed his intention of running for another term, his party's nomination committee preferred to put forward Simon Loueckhote, current president of the Territorial Congress. Dick Ukeiwe decided to run anyway, with the support of the smaller anti-independence group *Calédonie demain* (Caledonia Tomorrow). The other anti-independence parties gave their support to the RPCR candidate, with the *Front calédonien* calling for blank ballots in the first round of voting. At the other end of the political spectrum, the FLNKS nominated Rock Wamytan, a member of its largest faction, the *Union calédonienne*, the man responsible for the external relations of the FLNKS. Rock Wamytan enjoyed the support of Nidoish Naisseline's Kanak Socialist Liberation party, and of Michel Hema's *Union océanienne*. After the second round of voting Simon Loueckhote was declared the winner with 192 votes, against 188 for Rock Wamytan and 5 for Dick Ukeiwe, with 3 invalid ballots. The two major candidates had been neck and neck after the first round of voting, with 172 votes each, while Dick Ukeiwe had 44. Loueckhote, 35, comes from Ouvea Island in the Loyalty group, and is now the youngest member of the French Senate.

The fact that Dick Ukeiwe remained a candidate reflects the tensions that exist within the RPCR. Another symptom of this unease was the feud that developed during the second quarter of the year between representative Maurice Nenou, a Melanesian, and

party president Jacques Lafleur. The split took place over Maurice Nenou's decision to run in the March 1993 legislative elections, and over what he perceived to be a lack of consultation in the running of the party. The two men had finally made their peace by the end of May, but these tensions led to the creation of a new movement within the RPCR, called *Mouvement des Calédoniens libres* (Movement of Free Caledonians), which gathered some Melanesian elected representatives around Dick Ukeiwe. The movement, which called for a more democratic approach within the anti-independence party, decided to enter its own candidates in the March legislative elections. This decision may well lead to a split in the RPCR.

The *Union océanienne*, representing some members of resident Wallisian and Futunan communities, and created in 1989 to provide a third option in the territory's bipolar politics, experienced its own difficulties in 1992. In April, a splinter group within the party ousted its president, Michel Hema, who had held the post since September 1989. This splinter group called an early convention in July, and appointed a new managing committee under the chairmanship of Aloiso Sako, *Union océanienne's* former vice-president. However, both the mainstream and the splinter groups continue to share a growing tendency to support the independence cause.

The United Kanak Liberation Front (FULK), a small pro-independence party led by Yann Céline Uregei and hostile to the Matignon Accords, decided in January to disband and announced the holding of a Convention of the Kanak

People in September. This convention, which was attended by a number of traditional high chiefs, decided to reject elections and political parties in favor of a return to traditional Melanesian forms of authority and an immediate move toward independence. The great surprise of the convention was the nomination of Charles Attiti, high chief of the Goro tribe and RPCR militant, as spokesman for the convention and the Kanak people. He resigned from the position the following month, claiming that he had been misled about the non-political nature of the convention.

The conflict that had opposed Cono Hamu, mayor of Lifou (Loyalty Islands), and two of the island's three traditional chiefs continued in 1992, with the setting on fire of some twenty houses in the village of a clan that the mayor had supported in a land dispute. In April, Cono Hamu, his wife, and children were permanently expelled from their tribe by the traditional authorities of the Lössi tribal district. In November, the traditional authorities of the Gaicha tribal district also refused the mayor entry into their district, denying him access to his own town hall. The town hall was taken over by a Chiefly Coordinating Committee, which handled essential services and demanded the sacking of the mayor. The high chief of Wet, the third tribal district of the island, remained neutral in the conflict, and made possible the holding of municipal council meetings in a building located on his territory. There were disagreements within the various political parties regarding the conflict. Although this particular confrontation seemed to stem, at least in part, from the person-

alities involved, the fundamental question of a clear definition of the respective roles of the political and traditional (chiefly) authorities has yet to be answered in New Caledonia.

The slowing down of economic activity, evident over the past two years, persisted during 1992. The nickel industry, which produces the main export commodity, was in crisis following a sharp drop in world ore prices. Negotiations between New Caledonian exporters and Japanese buyers were suspended in September. Although the tourism sector has felt the effects of the global recession, it still appears to be a potential force for development in the territory. Two new tourist resorts opened this year in the North Province, the Malabou complex and the Hienghene Club Méditerranée. The luxury cruise ship Club Med II began service based in New Caledonia on 15 December, and it was decided to begin construction of a new five-star hotel in Noumea. The North Province, through an affiliate of its own South Pacific Mining Company (bought by the province from Jacques Lafleur in 1990), acquired a majority share in a holding company that owns two large hotels in Noumea and the Casino Royal gambling establishment.

The process of expanding New Caledonia's relations with the Pacific region proceeded throughout the year. A streamlining of customs procedures, decided early in the year, should facilitate the territory's economic participation in the region. At the same time, the provinces began to make use of their new-found authority and started forging their own regional ties, particularly with Vanuatu and Fiji. In August,

Secretary-General Ieremia Tabai of the Forum Secretariat came on an official visit, the first Forum official to do so. The South Pacific Commission finally decided to keep its headquarters in Noumea, although this had to be decided by a vote, rather than by consensus as had been the Commission's tradition in the past.

FRANÇOIS SODTER

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The newly elected government of Paias Wingti in 1992 embraced a package of economic and administrative reforms more radical than any since independence in 1975. According to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Sir Julius Chan, the economic initiatives were designed to "revolutionize the whole economic structure" (Callick 1992a, 8). In addition, long-neglected rural communities were to be "empowered" by the Village Services Programme, described by Minister for Village Services John Nilkare as "the most fundamental policy shift in our national history" (TPNG, 13 Aug 1992, 32-33). Furthermore, Wingti promised to disempower the country's nineteen provincial governments, whose "whole dream and purpose [had] gone wrong" (TPNG, 8 Oct 1992, 32-33). Meanwhile, the secessionist crisis in Bougainville spilled over into neighboring Solomon Islands, severely straining Papua New Guinea's relations with that country.

Polling for the fourth national parliamentary elections since independence took place from 13 to 27 June 1992 without any major disruptions. The new 1000 kina nomination fee