

pressed dismay at the Senate's unprecedented failure to approve a traditional high chief for this job, but ill feeling between Mauga and Senate members had predisposed a majority to vote against him. Mauga had made disparaging remarks during his confirmation hearings, apparently perturbed over the Senate's violation of the customary process whereby county councils select senators. He had contested the Senate's selection of one of its own members for a disputed Ma'uputasi County seat and supported another candidate for the position.

The rejection issue exacerbated existing tensions between the governor and the *fono*, and Coleman sought "official notification" from the *fono* of their reasons for rejecting his nominees (SN, 23 May 1989). For its part, the *fono* sought the removal of three directors, on the grounds that it was illegal for nominees rejected by the *fono* to continue to serve, even in an acting capacity (SN, 23 May 1989).

The political impasse raised the issue of whether senators should be elected by popular vote, rather than through Samoan custom. In an address in early May 1989, Coleman stated "senators should be responsible and responsive to the voters." Alluding to the excise tax measure having "died in the senate," the governor "indicated that voters are unable to influence senators because they are not accountable to the voters" (SN, 5 May 1989). A bill introduced in the *fono* calling for a referendum on senate election methods could have a dramatic impact on the existing balance between *fa'a Samoa* and Western political institutions. An interesting sidelight of the issue was

Paramount Chief Mauga's ardent opposition to popular election of the Senate, even though his own confirmation hearings had spurred Coleman to advocate reform.

The controversial visit of US Vice President Dan Quayle in April 1989 illustrated the divergent views of leaders in American Samoa. Congressman Hunkin was critical of Quayle's visit, calling it "a slap in the face" to other countries in the region, because it failed to focus attention on "the unique economic structures and other problems facing such nations" (SN, 5 May 1989). The governor called Hunkin "out of order and out of place . . . an embarrassment to our people and ourselves" for acknowledging Soviet "efforts to be friends with other island countries in the region" (SN, 5 May 1989).

Conflict over budget priorities further widened the breach between the congressional representative, the executive, and the legislature. The governor was upset by financial difficulties inherited from the previous administration, but attracted criticism for his "adversarial" attitude toward the legislature. The legislature was admonished for its handling of confirmation hearings, and for stonewalling executive initiatives. It was an inauspicious beginning for the new administration.

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### COOK ISLANDS

The year was dominated by the parliamentary elections of January 1989. The important issues were not policy matters, on which there was little differ-

ence between the parties, but rather personalities and practices.

The ruling coalition delayed the elections until the very end of the five years between elections permitted by the constitution. There was so much dissension within the coalition that each faction had its own candidates standing in opposition to its coalition "partners" in several electorates.

The main parties contesting the 1989 election were the Cook Islands Party and the Democratic Party. The Cook Islands Party, set up in 1965 by Mr Albert Henry, held power until 1978 when a corruption scandal led to the conviction of Henry together with Finbar Kenny, a US stamp dealer who had financed some of the illegal activity. Since then Mr Geoffrey Henry, a cousin of the founder, has led the main wing of the party. The Democratic Party was founded by Sir Tom Davis, who headed the government from 1978 until 1987, when he was ousted by the members of his own cabinet ostensibly because he was restrictive with finance, swore at them, and did not consult them enough. Sir Tom claims that he was attempting to restrain his senior cabinet colleagues from action that he believed to be corrupt and unethical. He was replaced by Dr Pupuke Robati, but the leader of one faction of the party, Mr Norman George, sought the leadership right up to the election.

Two parties formed late in 1988—the Cook Islands People's Party, led by S. M. ("Cookie") Sadaraka, and the Labour Party, led by Rena Ariki Jonnassen—also contested the election but won no seats.

A government ban on "political" material on the radio and in the news-

paper over the Christmas period kept the formal campaign brief. The two major parties published manifestos a few days before the election, but it is doubtful whether they had much impact. On the smaller islands the issues were even more personal and localized than on Rarotonga, the site of the capital, where over half the population live. The reelection of Dr Robati (of Rakahanga) and Mr George (of Atiu) was considered a foregone conclusion, as they had arranged government "employment" for at least one voter from each family on their islands before the election. Government wages were paid, but whether real work was done is debatable.

Travel allowances were a major political issue. The Democratic Party coalition leaders had been traveling very extensively and drawing allowances far in excess of costs. Some ministers reportedly made more money from their travel allowances than from their salaries. When the issue became public two months before the election, and seemed likely to cost votes, greatly reduced allowances were announced. A trip which would have entitled a minister to NZ\$12,942 (in addition to the cost of accommodation) under the old system, netted him NZ\$3,762 at the new rates (*Petitioner*, 10 Jan 1989). When Foreign Minister Norman George, who had just built a home for NZ\$250,000, was asked whether he put such travel allowance surpluses in his pocket, he replied "Where else?"

Crime was a matter of concern at many levels. Theft has increased considerably on Rarotonga, but international crime was a much bigger issue. Was the Italian hotel project for the

benefit of the nation, as the government claimed, or a Mafia-linked investment involving payoffs to key figures associated with the Democratic Party, as its critics claimed? The new government commissioned an inquiry into the matter. Meanwhile, allegations of links between the leadership of the Cook Islands Party and Australian organized crime surfaced again when a convicted Sydney criminal visited party leaders several times during the campaign. The connection between drugs and politics was also a matter of much speculation on Rarotonga. A ship registered in the Cook Islands was seized by the US Coast Guard shortly before the election, and its crew was convicted in Honolulu of transporting drugs from Asia to the United States.

There was also much debate about the increased size of the police force, and about whether the Cook Islands needed, or could afford to run, an Australian-donated patrol boat.

In the election, the Cook Islands Party won 13 of the 24 seats and, with the support of the two-man Demo Tumu faction of the Democratic Party, was able to form a government. The former Democratic-Cook Islands Party coalition under Dr Robati won 10 seats. The election for the seat representing Cook Islanders temporarily resident overseas was declared void as the result of a court case, and a by-election was called.

Constitutional issues have been raised, but not acted on, in recent years. The associated-state relationship that the Cook Islands has with New Zealand is not reciprocal. Cook Islanders have dual citizenship, and twice as many Cook Islanders live in New

Zealand as in the Cook Islands. New Zealanders, on the other hand, need permission to visit the Cook Islands. The Cook Islands can sever the relationship at any time, whereas New Zealand cannot. The last five New Zealand prime ministers have indicated privately to the Cook Islands government that they would be happy to see the Cook Islands adopt a status of complete constitutional independence.

Certain areas of ambiguity in the relationship are sometimes awkward for both sides. For example, although the Cook Islands has progressively taken over responsibility for its own foreign affairs since achieving self-government in 1965, the two countries are still supposed to consult on defense issues. But when New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange banned nuclear ships from New Zealand ports, Cook Islands Prime Minister Sir Tom Davis declared that nuclear ships were welcome in the Cooks. Cook Islanders in the Cook Islands, unhappy with government action they believed to be corrupt or unconstitutional, have appealed as New Zealand citizens to the New Zealand government to intervene, which it has been reluctant to do.

The prospect of complete constitutional independence was raised by Mr Makiuti Tongia during the 1989 election, but none of the parties has ever publicly advocated this step. This reflects a general preference for the present relationship, which gives access to higher salaries, old age pensions, child allowances, sickness benefits, and a level of services in New Zealand not available at home. Nevertheless, New Zealand has increased the pressure to

sever the constitutional tie by reducing the level of aid.

Shortly after the election a distinguished Cook Island civil servant, Mr Tamarii Pierre, published an article in the *Cook Island News* noting the progressive decline in New Zealand aid and advocating a carefully thought out, ten-year program leading to constitutional independence. By the end of June 1989, however, there had been no public response, and politicians seemed to be concerned with more immediate priorities.

The new government increased some welfare payments, postponed acceptance of the Australian patrol boat offer, set up an education commission to rethink educational policy, and replaced the chief administrative officers on the outer islands and the membership of various statutory authorities (these have been political appointments for some years). The government was also considering making Christian education a compulsory part of the school curriculum. The opening of Parliament was deferred to the last day permitted by the constitution (90 days from the election), and major new legislation was not expected until later in 1989. Prime Minister Geoffrey Henry, in his capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs, visited the United States, French Polynesia, China (for the Asian Development Bank meeting), New Zealand, Australia, and New Caledonia in his first three months in office. For a very small nation with limited resources, seeking aid from abroad remained a high priority.

RON CROCOMBE AND  
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## FRENCH POLYNESIA

Following the social unrest in Papeete in October 1987, and the subsequent defeat of Gaston Flosse's Tahoera'a Party, the new coalition government, led by President Alexandre Léontieff, managed to survive internal ideological divisions as well as challenges by opposition parties and the State Administrative Court. Léontieff maintained a careful balance between the often conflicting agendas of the state, the territorial assembly, the local clergy, business operators, labor unions, and the local people. The new government initially set the redressing of the social and economic issues as its first priority. But political issues preoccupied it so often during the year under review, that business, labor unions, and others were increasingly asking if it was indeed capable of dealing with these issues in the remaining years of its term.

Much of early 1988 was spent trying to achieve consensus and a unified platform. Ministers such as Jacqui Drollet, leader of Ia Mana te Nuna'a certainly have ideological positions quite different from others in the coalition. What really kept the group together was a willingness to set aside political differences in order to maintain stability and tackle important domestic issues. However, barely three months into the year, the government became involved in the politics of the national elections. Although most members of the coalition supported Mitterrand, Léontieff (like Flosse) backed Chirac in the presidential elections of April 1988. Not surprisingly, relations between the governments in Paris and Tahiti were not especially warm. State funding of over