



The Pacific Islands

Part I: Polynesia

by Donald M. Topping



POLYNESIA, MICRONESIA, MELANESIA

The Pacific islands form one of the last areas in the world to begin the process of post-World War II decolonization and development. While cultural and linguistic similarities link Polynesians, the differences among them are pronounced.

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March 1977

Oceania. The Pacific Islands. The South Pacific. The South Seas. These are but some of the names used to refer to the thousands of outcroppings of land, some fairly large but mostly small, interspersed throughout the Pacific Ocean between 140° east and 130° west, and 20° north to nearly 25° south. When we look at a map of the world our eyes are usually drawn to the continents and the seas, overlooking the little specks in the blue or in our minds we lump them together as "the islands." But there they are, thousands of them, and they form one of the last areas in the world to begin the process of post-World War II decolonization and development, a process which formally began in 1962 with the independence of Western Samoa and is still very much in progress with some of the last outright colonies in the world now asking for the right to govern themselves.

In a series of three papers I will present an overview of these Pacific Islands, grouping them into what has now become a traditional three-way partition: Micronesia (the little islands), Polynesia (the many islands), and Melanesia (the black islands). This tripartite grouping suggests homogeneity among the islands that fall within a particular grouping. Nothing could be more misleading, for homogeneity is rare in Oceania, even within single island groups or, in some cases, on a single, small island. Indeed, this fantastic diversity in the Pacific has fascinated anthropologists, linguists, artists, and folklorists for generations, especially during the past two decades. And it is this irreplaceable diversity that is in jeopardy in some places as the result of a strong drift toward Westernization. The desire to be an independent, twentieth-century island nation while preserving traditional social systems and cultures has become a source of great conflict among the islanders.

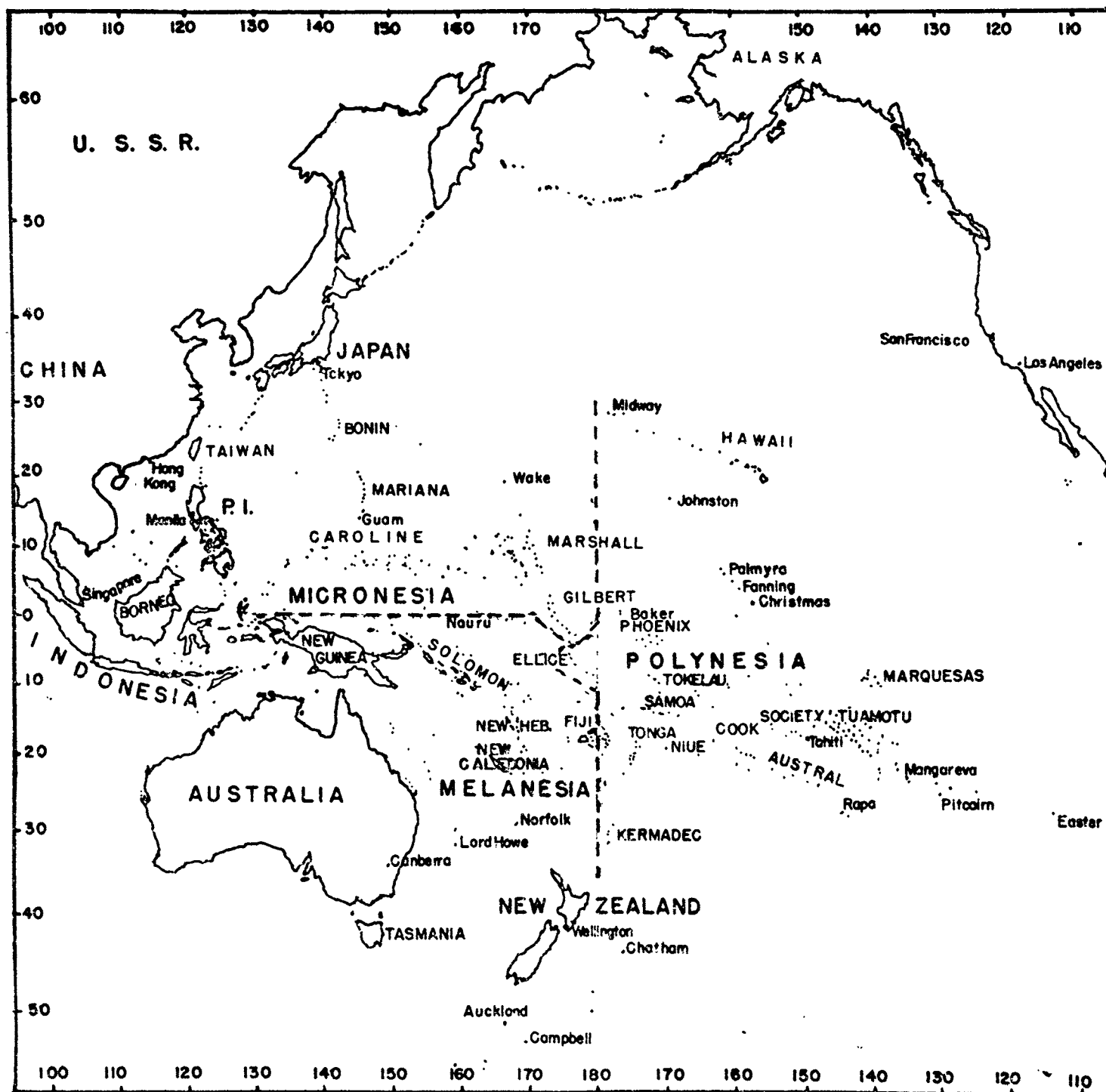
Because of the great diversity of languages (more than 1,000), cultures, and traditional ties in Oceania, the political boundaries imposed by the colonial powers are becoming more and more difficult to maintain and justify as the island states move onto the international arena as independent states.

For example, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, which includes at least ten diverse languages and cultures, was forced into a political marriage by Germany at the turn of this century, a status that was enforced by Japan, and later by the United States. This enforced union has recently begun to break up with the Mariana Islands joining the United States in a Commonwealth status, and the Marshall Islands asking for independence.

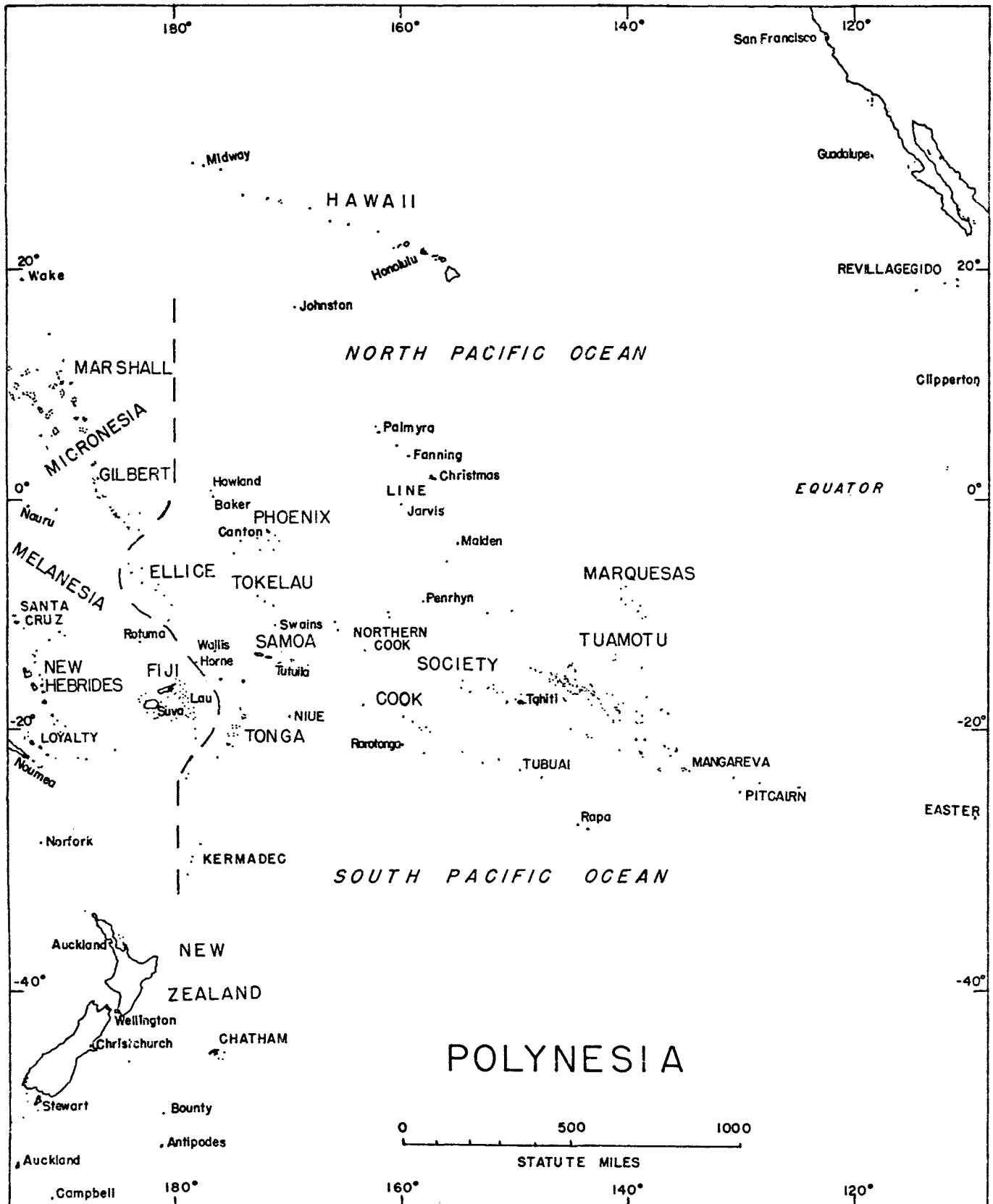
The Gilbert Islands, which have long-standing ties with their northern neighbors in the Marshalls, have separated from their colonial partner, the Ellice Islands, with whom they were united for 84 years as the Gilbert and Ellice Colony under British administration. And the Bougainvilleans feel no particular kinship with the rest of Papua New Guinea (PNG), and consequently have become a separate province since PNG became independent in 1975.

The sorting out of where each island group belongs politically in the post-colonial period is no easy matter. Their populations are small. Their isolation is great. The realities of international economics and politics must also be carefully studied.

The conflict between traditional concepts of group identity and the colonial divisions of the island groups is intensified by the economic ties that still persist strongly along the colonial lines.



Map courtesy Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Pacific Scientific Information Center.



Map courtesy Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Pacific Scientific Information Center.

Western and Eastern (American) Samoa, for example, were settled at the same time by the same people, and the family ties still remain. Yet, Western Samoan currency is not exchangeable in American Samoa. Furthermore, Western Samoa's economy is geared to that of New Zealand, while in the eastern part, everything is made in the United States. Likewise, the inhabitants of Puka Puka in the northern Cook Islands are basically Samoan in language and culture, but are in the New Zealand orbit by virtue of having been placed in an arbitrary political grouping.

Until World War II American interest in the Pacific Islands was pretty much restricted to her two inhabited territories, Guam in the north and American (eastern) Samoa in the south, and the uninhabited atolls of Wake, Johnson, Howland, and Baker. However, following the war U.S. control was extended throughout the Pacific north of the equator through the formation of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands which encompasses the Mariana, Caroline, and Marshall Islands—all of Micronesia except the Gilbert Islands which have been under British control since 1892, and Nauru, which is generally assigned to the Micronesian linguistic and cultural group.

Surprisingly, direct U.S. interest in the South Pacific has been slight and her presence minimal. A consulate in Fiji and a new embassy in Papua New Guinea constitute the only official residences. Small amounts of American aid are provided through Peace Corps volunteers in Fiji, Tonga, Western Samoa, and the Solomon Islands; a \$200,000 annual contribution to the South Pacific Commission; and USAID support of an agency called Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific.

But with the emergence of new nations in the Pacific, the anticolonial pressures rapidly building up in the non-self-governing states, the growing importance of the international boundaries of the sea, the U.S. fallback from Southeast Asia, and the recent emergence of the U.S.S.R. and China in Polynesia, it is most likely that the United States is going to develop a stronger interest in the 4.5 million persons of the islands of the Pacific, which, with their 12 million square miles of waterways, cover approximately one-fifth of the surface of the earth, an area much too large to be ignored any longer.

It has been felt and expressed by some that implicit in the ANZUS Treaty¹ was the understanding that the United States would leave the management of the South Pacific to her trusted Anglo-Saxon allies, assuming that the development would be directed in the best interests of all. Some have argued that the U.S. part of ANZUS, although it comes at the end of the acronym, is a giant tail wagging a dog that has only recently, since World War II, begun to find its own footing in the international arena of industry and commerce. The dog has lately been asleep, and has let the communists slip into the very heart of Polynesia. Perhaps it is time for the tail to wag a little stronger.

Growing U.S. interest is becoming manifest, despite the denials by U.S. State Department officials. That the State Department, for the first time in years, sent a career foreign service officer to attend a South Pacific Conference, paying an official call on Prime Minister Tupuola Efi of Western Samoa while en route, is one indication. (The United States has been represented by the Interior Department at previous conferences, while other metropolitan and island countries have frequently been represented by heads of state.) Operation Kangaroo II, a combined military exercise of the ANZUS forces in the fall of 1976, followed by a cruise through the Solomon Islands by nine U.S. warships, might be construed as another indication of America's growing concern, if not presence in the South Pacific. And the recent (January 1977) U.S.-sponsored trip by the King and Queen of Tonga to Guam and selected parts of Micronesia—the first such gesture ever extended—suggests the dawn of a new awareness on the part of the United States.

Pacific Islanders are somewhat amused at the suddenness of the U.S. revival of interest, attribute it to the obvious causes (the official presence of China and the Soviet Union in Polynesia; Prime Minister Somare's recent visit to China), and are calmly awaiting to see what additional moves the United States is going to make.

1. ANZUS is an acronym for Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. The ANZUS Treaty was signed September 1, 1951, with the aim of enabling mutual aid to be provided in the event of aggression and of settling disputes by peaceful means. The ANZUS Council, consisting of the foreign ministers of the member states, may meet at any time.

Perhaps the most important question the Pacific Islanders must face collectively is that of regionalism. Prior to World War II they never really thought of themselves as forming a region. The distances between them were too great to encourage the development of such a concept. However, the jet age and satellite communications have served to bring them much closer together, and so, with some external encouragement, the idea of regionalism is growing. In view of the difficulties that each of the separate island communities would face if each tried to go its own way, some form of cooperative regional identity appears more and more attractive as a means to bring them together to deal with issues that pertain to the entire region.

Will regionalism work any better in the Pacific than in the Caribbean, for example? Are the advantages to be gained strong enough to offset the inherent obstacles in trying to impose some form of unity on people of so many diverse backgrounds?

Some see regionalism as the only hope, particularly for the smaller groups, and there already exist some important regional institutions that need to be described briefly here.

The oldest of these regional institutions is the South Pacific Commission (SPC) which was formed in 1947 by the metropolitan countries—Australia, France, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and the United States—as a “consultative and advisory body.” Although its role has changed considerably over the years, it has served to bring Pacific Islanders together to consider areas of common concern and interest. Many islanders feel that the SPC has outlived its usefulness, and that too much of its appropriated money is spent on maintaining an elaborate administrative bureaucracy in Nouméa, where they are housed in an American-built mini-pentagon that served as the command post for the South Pacific campaign during the later stages of World War II. Since 80 per cent of the SPC budget now goes for staff salaries and travel, criticism is to be expected. The reorganization of the SPC adopted at the Sixteenth South Pacific Conference in October 1976 has caused some changes in the organization that may serve to give it new vitality.

The South Pacific Conference was established in 1967 as a separate entity whose function was to bring together the leaders of the independent countries, the Senior Commissioners of participating governments, and the SPC staff. The Conference members meet annually to review the SPC's work program and policies, and they provide financial contributions to the SPC budget, thereby supplementing the larger amounts provided by the metropolitan countries. A Memorandum of Understanding, signed in 1974 in Rarotonga, specifies that each member country of the Conference has an equal vote on all matters regarding the SPC activities and expenditures.

The South Pacific Forum (SPF) was formed in 1971, comprising the heads of state of all the independent countries of the region. Since it is still a relatively young organization, and still growing as new island nations appear, its relative importance is yet to be determined. It is, however, recognized as the heavyweight regional organization in the Pacific, formed by and of Pacific Islanders themselves, with the metropolitan countries excluded, sometimes to their consternation.

The youngest and perhaps most important regional organization is the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation, commonly known as SPEC. Formed in 1972 as the economic arm of the Forum, SPEC's charge was “to encourage and promote regional cooperation in the economic development of the island countries of the South Pacific. This concept is based on a close partnership with the more industrially developed countries of the region, Australia and New Zealand.” SPEC's interests include “trade, economic development, transport, tourism, and other related matters,” such as handling financial aid from donor agencies, and communications, which promises to be fairly large in the far-flung islands still relatively untouched by mass media other than government-owned radio.

The ANZ special interest in SPEC is rather blatant. The largely Pacific Islander staff (the director is a Tongan) are now housed in lavish living and working quarters in Suva, built by New Zealand for A\$1.5 million and furnished by Australia for a comparable figure. Since most of the trade in the region is currently with Australia and New Zealand, it seems certain that they will make every effort to keep it that way as the island nations develop.

SPEC's biggest challenge at the moment is to make the concept of regionalism work through the promotion of regional trade, transportation, and telecommunications. Since most of the islands currently produce similar exportables—copra, bananas, cocoa, citrus, and taro—the potential for trade among themselves is not there. New products and markets would have to be developed.

Without viable trade, a regional transport system would be difficult to sustain. And, without the transport, trade can hardly be developed. Regional air transportation exists now, but is a money-losing proposition for each of the carriers, which seem to be competing largely for nationalistic reasons. Air Nauru is reported to have lost \$10 million during the past year, and Fiji's Air Pacific must be bailed out annually by the Mara government. Not to be outdone, Tonga, Western Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea also operate international airlines within the region. The coordination of efficient regional air transport provides an immediate and serious challenge to SPEC and its philosophy of regional cooperation.

It is most likely that SPEC will continue to grow as economic development picks up steam, which it must. Some predict that SPEC will render the SPC obsolete, thus contributing to its demise. The Pacific Islander staff of SPEC will no doubt provide advice and influence on the kind of economic development that will take place within the region. To what degree their ideas for development jibe with those of ANZ remains to be seen, for it is likely that Japan and perhaps China will try to edge in; they have, in fact, already made some rather strong moves.

The University of South Pacific (USP) was established in Suva in 1968 as the regional university, although it did not receive its Royal Charter until 1975. Since most of its 1,100 students are Fiji-born Indians, the USP is still struggling to develop its regional image. The satellite-linked extension centers in Rarotonga, Tonga, Western Samoa, and the Solomon Islands are abetting the regional identity, as is the USP Agricultural College at Alafua in Western Samoa. However, many still consider it a University of Fiji.

Nevertheless, island governments are sending some of their most able students (and potential

future leaders) to USP for learning, the best of which seems to come from one another, for it is at the campus of USP that most of the students get their first real exposure to people from neighboring island states. In the seminar and common rooms, some students discuss political, social, and economic issues germane to their own areas, and in the process discover many things in common. Their reading material for their courses is often supplemented by circulated copies of the writings of Mao, Marx, and Nyerere, as well as by the ever-growing number of papers and pamphlets produced by emerging political parties in the various islands. The growing political consciousness of the students will likely be heightened when the first research component of the University, the Institute of Pacific Studies (1976), gets rolling.

Other regional institutions include the *Pacific Islands Monthly* (PIM), a Sydney-based monthly now in its forty-seventh year, and the Pacific Theological College (PTC) in Suva. PIM provides the only regional news coverage, though it is still shy on information about the American Trust Territory where it receives, in turn, almost no circulation. The PTC, with a new Tongan principal, is likely to start having greater influence on reform of the churches in the South Pacific, particularly those of Polynesia.

The number of international organizations involved in the Pacific on a regional level is already large, and growing: WHO, FAO, UNDP, Peace Corps, Volunteer Services Abroad, YWCA, the East West Center, the U.S. Agency for International Development, Asia Development Bank, Canadian International Development Agency, and the International Planned Parenthood Federation, are but a few.

Reflecting the need for some kind of regional identity and cooperation is the emergence of a popular slogan, "The Pacific Way," the meaning of which is extremely broad and deliberately imprecise. In a recent publication by the same title, Professor Ron Crocombe of the University of the South Pacific says that the term has caught on since first introduced in 1970 by the Prime Minister of Fiji because "it satisfies both psychological and political needs, in that it helps to fulfill a growing demand for respected Pacific-wide identifying symbols and for Pacific unity."

Professor Crocombe goes on to say: "There is increasing awareness that the common interests of all island peoples can best be served by collaboration, and that effective unifying concepts can reduce the extent and intensity of neo-colonial dependency of the island countries on the richer Pacific borderlands."

Other factors that may serve to foster the development of a South Pacific regional consciousness are: (1) The need for some kind of defense against foreign (Japanese, Okinawan, Taiwanese, and Korean) fishing fleets, which cast their nets in utter disregard of territorial boundaries; (2) Common resentment, to one degree or another, of colonialism. The degree of resentment varies considerably from almost none in the new Commonwealth of the Marianas to bristling hostility in parts of Melanesia where colonialists are still firmly entrenched. This has contributed to a spirit of alliance among islanders who see themselves as a team united by skin color against a common opponent. This form of alliance, however, is literally only skin deep, and is quickly forgotten when problems between specific island groups emerge.

On the other side, there is one major deterrent to the concept of regionalism: the English-French linguistic dichotomy. Whereas most educated Pacific Islanders can communicate with each other and the rest of the world by using English, those living in the French-controlled areas—French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna Islands, and the Francophone portions of the New Hebrides—are much more restricted. In New Caledonia, especially, Francophone Melanesians express a desperate sense of isolation, while their Anglophone counterparts in the other parts of the Pacific speak ruefully of their ignorance of the French territories.

In this series of three papers I will try to present an overview of the way things are in 1976 in Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. The overview will give only glimpses of some of the many complex problems the islanders are facing as they join the Third World family of small underdeveloped nations. I will also attempt to describe some of the approaches to the problems that the islanders and their metropolitan mentors are working out.

Omitted from the discussion, except in passing, are Nauru, Niue, Tuvalu, Gilbert Islands, and

Tokelau Islands, all of which are considered important segments of the South Pacific picture, but could not be included because of lack of space and time.

POLYNESIA

The many and fabled islands of Polynesia form a neat, straight-sided triangle (if one excludes the little Polynesian outliers) ranging from the Hawaiian Islands in the north to Easter Island in the east to New Zealand in the south, encompassing millions of square miles of ocean and, if we exclude New Zealand, only a few thousand square miles of land. Because of their distance from any land masses, they were relatively unknown to the Western world until the eighteenth century when the explorer-navigators of Europe, most notably Captain James Cook, began to chart the islands on their maps.

To claim that these European seafarers discovered the islands of Polynesia is to ignore the fact that the Polynesians themselves had been sailing the Pacific waters and discovering landfalls nearly 3,000 years before when, according to current archaeological theory, the islands of Samoa and Tonga were settled. The Polynesian migrations continued for the next 1,500 years or so, with the last settlements being made in Hawaii, New Zealand, and various outlying Polynesian islands in the east and west, in some cases crossing into areas now defined as Melanesia and Micronesia.

Since the coming of the European explorers and the bands of traders, whalers, and missionaries who followed them, the people of Polynesia have until recently been under the rule of one Western government or another: Germany, France, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, or Chile. But since the end of World War II, in which Polynesia was only peripherally involved, the island communities have been moving toward some form of self-government. For some groups, this has meant independence. For others, the relationship with the former colonial government is defined as free association. And still others (i.e., the islands of French Polynesia and American Samoa) remain as colonies of a metropolitan country, but with a semblance of self-government. The political status of each of the Polynesian communities to be discussed is given in Table 1, along with other relevant data.

TABLE 1

Island Group	Political Status	Area (in km ²)	Population (1975)	Major Exports	Distance from nearest continent (km)
American Samoa	U.S. Territory	197	30,000	fish	3,700
Western Samoa	Independent (1962)	2,842	151,000	Copra, cocoa, bananas	4,020
French Polynesia	French Territory	4,000	130,000	Coconut oil, vanilla	6,000
Cook Islands	Self-Governing Free Assoc. with N.Z. (1965)	240	19,500	Citrus, copra	5,000
Tonga	Independent (1970)	549	99,000	Bananas, copra	3,700
Fiji	Independent (1970)	18,272	569,000	Sugar, coconut oil, fish	2,850

It will be noticed that several of the Polynesian island groups have been omitted from the table, and will be mentioned only in passing in the discussion to follow. These include the Tokelaus, Ellice Islands (now Tuvalu), Wallis Islands, and several separate islands such as Easter, Pitcairn, Niue, and Futuna. Hawaii and New Zealand are excluded from the category of developing island nations for obvious reasons.

It should also be borne in mind that within each of the major island groups there are two distinctly different types of societies: the one found in all major towns (usually one per island group), and the other, which constitutes the majority, the members of which still follow a traditional subsistence life-style in the outer islands. And in all cases there is a tremendous gulf between the two.

While there are deeply rooted cultural and linguistic links among all the Polynesians, the differences are quite pronounced, and have been accentuated through more than a century of Western influence and rule. However, from this foreign experience, all of Polynesia shares at least one common element: the Protestant religion, stemming directly or indirectly from the famous London Missionary Society that hit Polynesia like a typhoon in the 1820s, just at a time, it seems, when the Polynesian religious system was in shambles.

This European religion still plays an important conservative role in all Polynesian societies today, and may emerge as a major force of change if some of the staff of the Pacific Theological College in Fiji have their way.

Other similarities can be seen in traditional architecture, foods, languages, and social systems, but these similarities do not make for homogeneity. On the contrary, the differences among Polynesians—even between Eastern and Western Samoans—are very real and pronounced once we go beneath the surface, and they have existed since prehistoric times.

As “emerging nations” of the Pacific, the Polynesian islands have a head start on the other island groups, Melanesia and Micronesia. As such, they have come face to face with some of the problems that are inherent in being an independent island state. How realistically they are facing these problems is debatable.

Throughout Polynesia, even where independent governments are found, there are strong ties with metropolitan governments, such as those binding Western Samoa and Tonga to New Zealand, or those between Fiji and Australia. The strength of the ties can be measured in terms of economics.

This economic reliance on the metropolitan countries is a fact of life that Polynesian leaders decry and vow to end. The various country development plans optimistically talk about reduced aid and increased production, resulting in economic self-reliance "in the near future."

Along with this popular and widespread notion of political and economic independence is the equally ubiquitous refrain of the preservation of traditional cultural values and integrity. The ethnic awareness that began sweeping Polynesia in the 1960s is quite strong, and has already caused conflicts between efforts to develop and efforts to conserve. Whether the Polynesians can reconcile development with conservation—both high priority items—is extremely doubtful, although Polynesians are still maintaining, without much evidence thus far, that it can be done.

In order to further economic development, all of Polynesia is turning to foreign aid, most of it coming from the metropolitan countries to which they were previously tied in the colonial relationship. The amount of foreign aid in Polynesia is substantial. In a recent study commissioned by the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation (SPEC) it was estimated that in 1976 more than \$500 million would go into foreign aid for the entire South Pacific region, with perhaps 10 to 20 per cent more coming through voluntary agencies. While the authors of the study admit that hard statistical data are hard to come by, their estimates are based upon fairly reliable information. Assuming their figures are accurate, the amount of foreign aid per capita (more than \$120) far exceeds that of most other parts of the underdeveloped world.

Characteristically, much of the aid is not very effective in terms of economic development (e.g., a police training academy in Tonga, heavy farming machinery in Western Samoa). Much of it, according to the SPEC report, is manipulated to the advantage of groups with political power among both donor and recipient countries—not an uncommon phenomenon in developing countries. And large amounts go into the maintenance of the infrastructures and bureaucracies left over from the colonial period. Very often lingering expatriate "technicians" are supported through aid, thus assuring continued maintenance of the donated technology. The result of much of the foreign aid

seems to work against the stated objectives of increased self-reliance for the island states, claims the SPEC report. And the presence of highly paid expatriate technicians breeds growing resentment in most areas.

The economic ties to metropolitan countries are strengthened by the existing communications and transportation routes. One can telephone more easily from Papeete to Paris than from Papeete to Pago Pago, a mere 1,200 miles away. Planes fly non-stop from Honolulu to Pago Pago and Fiji (en route to Australia), but one must do considerable criss-crossing or backtracking to get from Honolulu to French Polynesia or the Cook Islands. Although regional air and shipping lines out of Nauru, Fiji, and Samoa are emerging (with substantial government subsidies and losses), the old colonial patterns of communications and transport are still dominant, thus inhibiting the development of intra-regional commerce.

There are still other common problems that the island states of Polynesia must face. The similarity of resources—copra, bananas, vanilla, root crops, and fish—does not look promising for intra-regional trade, even if the transport problems could be worked out. The isolation from large consumer markets in the Americas, Asia, and Australia is another negative factor with regard to increased trade. The small but high density populations with soaring birthrates provide another serious problem still to be faced realistically anywhere in Polynesia.

Unemployment simply defies calculation, but is widely admitted (except in some official reports) to be shockingly high. As the young people matriculate through the Western education systems—another legacy from colonial times—and flock to the towns in search of nonexistent white-collar jobs (only 12 per cent of Tonga's secondary school graduates found jobs during the past two years), the problem becomes intensified, and is compounded by the additional problems resulting from rapid urban drift, especially alcohol addiction and larceny.

The more successful, and usually more able graduates of the education system tend to emigrate to the metropolitan countries. According to Professor Ron Crocombe of the University of the South Pacific,

Over half as many Samoans live outside Samoa as in it; more than three times more Niueans live overseas than in Niue; more Wallis Islanders and Futunans live outside the territory than within; and nearly as many Cook Islanders live in New Zealand as in the islands. These trends are very recent—mainly over the last ten years.

By world standards, Polynesia is far from being a poverty area. No one goes hungry. In fact, nearly everyone is well fed, or could be were he willing to plant and fish. But despite the massive amounts of aid, there is not much cash filtering out to the villages. And it is more cash that most people seem to have in mind when they talk about economic development in Polynesia.

Since the Polynesian island states are so small, forms of regional cooperation should help, and, indeed some are beginning to appear. However, most attempts at cooperation have thus far bred competition. Fiji's Air Pacific is continually quibbling with Samoa and Tonga's Polynesian Air Lines over routes and landing rights. Tonga is in the process of launching her own airline (with Japanese financing), while Air Nauru is still swooping all over the region in search of new passenger and cargo routes. The regional University of the South Pacific is still considered by most Pacific Islanders to be the University of Fiji since the great majority of its students come from there. Still, attempts at regional cooperation are being initiated and supported, mainly by externally funded organizations such as SPEC and the SPC.

While regionalization may hold great promise for the development of Polynesia, there are still many obstacles, not the least of which are the metropolitan alliances of the individual island states since they are tightly bound by the forces of bilateral economic aid.

All of Polynesia, except the American and French territories, is likely to be affected in the near future by developments in three unrelated areas: the Pacific Theological College, the immigration policies recently instituted by the conservative Muldoon government in New Zealand, and the presence of Russia and China in Polynesia.

The Pacific Theological College (PTC) on the outskirts of Suva recently celebrated its tenth anni-

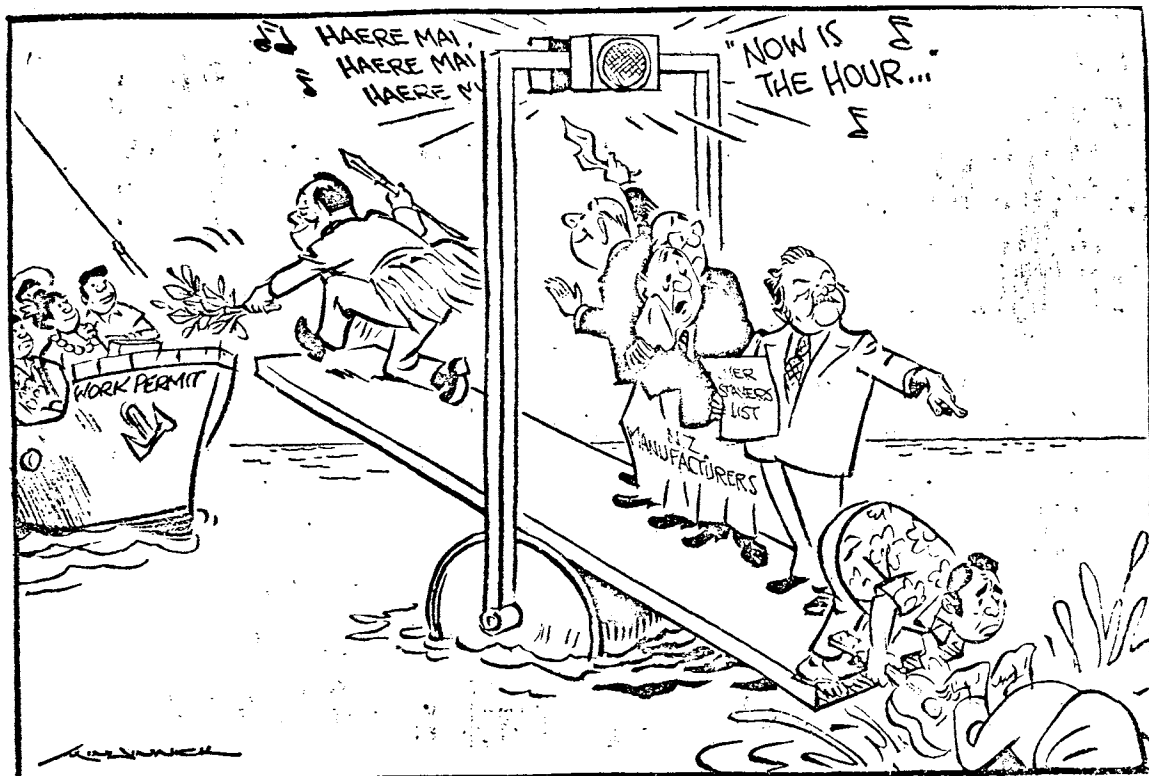
versary as a regional, nonsectarian Protestant training center for the upcoming corps of clergymen in the region, drawing students from Melanesia, Polynesia, and one from Micronesia (Marshall Islands). The three-year program covers a range of basic theological subject matter, plus a heavy infusion of political ideology, economics of developing countries, sociology, and community development. The new clergy who complete this course are forced to examine the century-old role of the pastor, particularly in Polynesia, and then decide if they want to be agents of change at the village, island, or national level, or continue in the clergyman's traditional conservative role in the Pacific.

A growing number of critics in Polynesia complain that the ministers, like the *matai* (chiefs), abuse their prestigious positions by exacting too much allegiance from their supporters in exchange for what they themselves produce. They are frequently accused of being leeches.

The PTC wants to change this role of the clergy in Polynesia from that of a passive consumer to one of active leadership. The feeling is that since neither regional governments nor foreign aid is reaching the grassroots, the logical role for the minister, as he is the one official with genuine grassroots contacts and unquestioned authority, is to capitalize on his ready-made status in the villages and begin to give them some direction.

(Some of the Melanesian graduates and students are plunging into the thick of national politics in the hope of having some influence on the initial directions taken toward and with independence. The National Party of the New Hebrides for example, which is aiming for independence with or without French sanction, is headed by a clergyman.)

For the past decade and more, emigration to New Zealand has provided a much needed escape valve for the population pressures in Polynesia, particularly for Western Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Niue, and the Tokelaus. Since the Islanders from the last three are New Zealand citizens, they move freely to and from New Zealand, but mostly to. Not so, however, for the citizens of independent Tonga and Western Samoa whose entry to New Zealand hinges upon having a proper



THE GANGPLANK

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visa and a work permit, and whose island economies have become dependent on cash remittances sent from workers in New Zealand back to families still in the islands.

Until 1975 New Zealand encouraged Pacific Islanders from all over Polynesia to come to Auckland where they formed the backbone of the New Zealand industrial force, and the largest concentration of Polynesians to be found in the world. However, when the worldwide economic recession hit New Zealand's industry, Islanders (often referred to as "fuzzy-wuzzies" and similar derogatory kiwi-isms²) became a "problem" which the Muldoon government wasted no time in attacking as one of the major causes of social as well as economic ills.

The "problem" centers on the "overstayers"—the 10- to 12,000 Polynesians who are believed to be working in New Zealand without valid visas or work permits. Some of these overstayers have been apprehended through 2:00 A.M. raids on suspected households, a tactic that has not gone over too well with the governments of Tonga and Samoa. Thousands more are quietly working for their equally silent bosses for somewhat less than the going wage.

The islanders are happy with the arrangement because they are earning money (which they couldn't do at home), a good portion of which is sent to their families back in the islands as remittances, which in both Tonga and Western Samoa represent a sizable portion of the gross national income. Should these remittances be suddenly cut off, all of the Polynesian islands in the New Zealand orbit would be hurting financially.

It appears that New Zealand has definitely closed the doors on continued Polynesian immigration.

2. Kiwi is the common, nonderogatory term for New Zealanders; the term comes from the name of their national emblem, a flightless bird, which some Kiwis consider an appropriate symbol.

The potential effects could be disastrous for the burgeoning young populations of Tonga and Western Samoa who will soon find themselves with insufficient land and no place to go. In view of New Zealand's unemployment problem (which is ridiculously small when compared with the United States), it seems unlikely that immigration from Polynesia will be encouraged in the future.

However, the new presence of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China in Polynesia appears to be having a softening effect on Mr. Muldoon's hard line regarding Polynesia, to which he once referred as just another territory of "a few thousand acres with a few thousand coconut trees which nobody wants."

The extent of the intended Soviet involvement in Tonga is not generally known, except by rumor, most of which seems fairly reliable. All reports agree that Russia will assist in developing fisheries, agriculture, and a bigger airport in exchange for maritime facilities for Russian fishing boats and (possibly) ships of the Russian Navy. Many people have interpreted "maritime facilities" to mean a Soviet naval base.

The People's Republic of China opened an eight-man embassy in Apia, Western Samoa in October 1976. Although the new legation has made no dramatic moves so far, its presence has already triggered responses from New Zealand and the United States. Prime Minister Muldoon recently sent a group of legislators on a "goodwill" mission through Polynesia—the first such diplomatic gesture—and created a governmental Pacific Island Industrial Development Committee. The United States is reported to have extended an official invitation to Prime Minister Efi of Western Samoa, and sent a Deputy Undersecretary of State to call on Mr. Efi in his Apia office.

Thanks to the presence of the two big communist powers, Polynesia has become central to international diplomacy and, it would appear, rivalry.

In the following sections we will examine selected areas of Polynesia individually in the following order: American Samoa, Western Samoa, French Polynesia, Cook Islands, Tonga, and Fiji.

American Samoa

American Samoa is America's lone outpost in the South Pacific, a distinction which sets the American Samoans quite apart from their Polynesian brothers in the rest of the South Pacific. The 30,000 U.S. National Polynesians residing on this mountainous island, 2,600 miles southwest of Hawaii, have not seen much in the way of dramatic change that has hit America's other territory in the North Pacific, Guam. But, this dormant state may change if the big powers of the communist bloc continue their initial moves in the area.

Assumed by the United States in 1899, the four islands of the group remained under Navy control until 1951 when they, along with Guam and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia), were placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior. During the first half century of American rule, the islands were considered a U.S. Naval Station. Since 1951, after the decline in Navy's interest, the islands have become the southernmost branch of the U.S. family of Pacific Island communities under the administration of the Director of the Office of Territorial Affairs, and have been subjected to many of the same kinds of influences.

The symbols of the Americanization of American Samoa are everywhere: greenback dollars, oversized cars with CB radios, and squads of armed police cruising in blue and white patrol cars. In preparation for the July 4th bicentennial celebrations, red, white, and blue became the standard colors for everything from trash cans to basketball court nets. Even the Lucky Lager beer, the only beer available in many of the small village stores, and consumed in staggering quantities in American Samoa, came in specially packaged tri-colored bicentennial cans. For the bicentennial July 4th celebrations most Samoans of Tutuila (the main island) were involved in Boy Scout marches, athletic events, dancing, singing, weaving, or other types of contests in celebration of the 200th year, the major attraction of which was the longboat race between the villages and church organizations of American Samoa. These are hardly traditional canoes, but more like the American whaleboats that came to Samoa in the nineteenth century, perhaps reflecting another example of the Americanization of the eastern islands of Samoa that



Workers, mostly from Western Samoa and Tonga, in Van Camp fish cannery in Pago Pago, American Samoa. Photo courtesy George Chaplin.

started back in 1900 when they were formally placed under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Navy.

In addition to the 30,000 American Samoans living in the South Pacific, there are another 50- to 60,000 living abroad either in Hawaii or on the U.S. mainland. They all enjoy a rising birthrate that does not seem to cause them much concern, since Samoans are the number one export item from the islands. The more babies born, the higher the export.

The economy of American Samoa reflects the parent country. The term "cash flow" has become the catchword since the economic disaster that hit American Samoa in 1974 and 1975 when the government found itself \$10 million in the hole. "Cash flow" is now used as synonym for hard times. It is something that will be solved, of course, and the solution is the infusion of more money from federal sources. (The increase in direct federal appropriations from \$31.5 million in 1975 to \$47 million for 1976 is a good indicator of the U.S. method of coping with the "cash flow" problem.)

Government bureaucracy is evident everywhere, and is by far the largest employer, with approxi-



Boy Scouts on parade in American Samoa. Photo courtesy George Chaplin.

mately 4,000 career employees with an additional 2,841 on government retirement. With this kind of payroll to meet, it is not surprising that the government of American Samoa found itself with a debt that was in part caused by inflation and partly by a drastic drop in tax revenue from the canning industry during the 1975 drought.

The second largest employer in American Samoa is the Van Camp Star Kist Fishing Cannery operation, which provides a significant amount of funds in revenue when it is operating in full capacity (\$6 million in 1975). However, most of the wage earners in the cannery are either Western Samoans or Tongans, for most American Samoans prefer other types of employment, or even no employment, to working in the cannery. Very little of the money paid in wages at the cannery stays in Tutuila, since most of it is sent to employees' families in Tonga and Western Samoa.

One of the major factors in the economic difficulties of American Samoa is that the Samoans, like their American mentors, are trying to maintain an inflated U.S. standard of living in a small, very mountainous island in the Pacific which could not possibly support itself by such standards. On the

main island of Tutuila there is an elaborate infrastructure built by the United States, including 40 miles of paved roads, full electrification (with frequent power failures), indoor plumbing throughout the island, two television stations, and supermarkets where 46 pounds of imported frozen meat for every man, woman, and child in American Samoa were sold during 1975.

This elaborate infrastructure is based 100 per cent on imported goods, mostly from the United States, and, as might be expected, the components of this infrastructure don't always work, especially the power system. For the 40 miles of paved road, there were 3,242 registered vehicles in 1975. During the same year, 1,183 of them were involved in accidents: one out of every three cars. The road on which all of the vehicles seem to be driving at all hours of the day is a very narrow, winding ribbon that follows the jagged coastline from one side of the magnificent Pago Pago harbor to the other, and beyond to the more remote villages of the island. Following the American principle of universal vehicular mobility, it is now possible to drive nearly everywhere on Tutuila. And nearly everybody does just that, often.

The oversized infrastructure is maintained by a public works program that, after education, consumes most of the money that goes into the government. Virtually all capital improvement projects are handled by outside contractors and alien labor.

There is talk about developing the economy in the areas of tourism and agriculture. The tourism industry is and has been rather sick despite the many duty free shops that can be found in American Samoa, put there in an attempt to lure tourists as they are lured in such duty free places as Fiji, Guam, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The one major hotel on the island has changed hands three times since it was built by Pan American Airlines in the mid-1960s, and is owned now by the government of American Samoa. Pan American's monopolistic service from Hawaii to Pago Pago does little to encourage tourist traffic, with their often overbooked flights arriving between 4 and 5:00 A.M. And the tourist attractions, aside from the cable car ride to the top of Mt. Alava, are hardly extraordinary, except for the once magnificent Pago Pago harbor, now the site of the stark malodorous fish cannery.

There is also some talk about developing commercial agriculture, but it is not very high on the priority list. The little bit of agriculture that now exists is on a miniscule scale, and is largely in the hands of retired military families who grow fresh produce for the local market and taro for their taro-hungry relatives in Honolulu and San Diego who can afford the exorbitant costs of air freight. The more enterprising of these farmers hire (illegally) Korean and Taiwanese laborers who have either jumped ship or are waiting for their fishing vessel to be repaired or resupplied.

It would seem highly unlikely that any significant agricultural development will ever take place in American Samoa, mainly because there is so little arable land and even less interest on the part of the Samoans in cultivating it, except for the few taro and bananas for immediate household consumption.

Education in American Samoa is basically an American system, supported exclusively by federal funds. All of the educational leaders are either Americans or American trained, with nearly a third of the high school teaching staff on two-year contracts from the United States. There is some effort being made, as in many places in the United States and its territories, to establish a sound bilingual, bicultural education system, but, like most other things in American Samoa, this too is dependent upon federal funding.

American Samoa's education system is probably best known for the multimillion dollar educational television scheme that was introduced in 1964 and, for all practical purposes, was considered dead by 1974. With a full production studio, receivers in every classroom, and a transmitter constructed atop Mt. Alava, the educational television scheme in American Samoa, which was originally planned as the complete educational program, is now generally admitted to have been a colossal flop. However, it paved the way, and provided the facilities for commercial television in the islands, now a thriving business, with Hawaii Five-O and wrestling as the favorite shows. (The entrepreneurs recently offered their surplus outmoded transmitter to Western Samoa, which rejected it, preferring to remain without television for the time being.)

In a sense one can say that the education system is doing its job. Of the four high schools in American Samoa (for a population of 29,000), 70 percent of the graduates are no longer in American Samoa within one year after graduation. Fifty to 60 percent of the young men and women go into the United States Armed Forces, usually the Navy or the Army, both of which now have recruiting offices in Pago Pago. The Director of Education reported that those high school graduates who do not pass the Army entrance exam given in American Samoa simply go to another recruiting station that needs to make its quota, and take the examination again, usually passing.

It seems that American Samoans are content with their present situation. They have come to expect the kind of United States assistance that currently is the mainstay of their economy and way of life. Until recently there has been apparent contentment with the political structure, which is a unique marriage between the standard American system coupled with some aspects of traditional Samoan chieftainship. There is a bicameral legislature, to which the representatives in the House are elected at large, while the members of the Senate are selected through the traditional *matai* (chiefly) system. Both the *matai* system and the legislature wield insignificant powers when compared with those of the Governor who is appointed by the President of the United States, and who answers directly to the Director of Territorial Affairs in the Department of Interior.

In three separate referenda held during recent years, the American Samoans indicated convincingly that they did not wish to elect their own Governor. However, in November 1976 the Samoans did an abrupt about face, and voted to elect their own chief executive. This sudden change was no doubt motivated, at least in part, by the pan-Pacific movement toward self-government. Another motivation—possibly an even stronger one—was the last appointed Governor, Earl Ruth, from North Carolina, who left office shortly after the referendum. Governor Ruth (sometimes referred to as “Governor Ruthless”) was widely known throughout the island for his heavyhanded way of dealing with Samoans. To say that he was a racist is an understatement. Perhaps he will be known as the Governor who persuaded the American Samoans to elect their own governor, not because

they particularly wanted to, but because they wanted to get rid of him.

What changes an elected governorship of American Samoa may cause are not known, but they will probably not be meaningful. The Territory, regardless of how its chief executive is chosen, will probably remain under the Department of Interior along with the other U.S. Territories. It is very likely, however, that the American Samoans may follow the example set by Guam and the new Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, both of which are negotiating for constitutions that would give the islanders more authority over such things as land alienation and usage, customs, excise taxes, and their relationship with the U.S. Congress.

What lies ahead for American Samoa? At this point it looks as though it will continue along much the same pattern, getting its annual dole from the U.S. government, while exporting its youth on to the American military forces. There have recently been whispers about the possibility of a major military base in American Samoa, motivated by recent talks between the Soviet Union and Tonga relating to the possibilities of fisheries development, building a major wharf, and the establishment of naval facilities in Tonga which could serve Russian ships. If these talks lead to action, it is conceivable that the United States would re-establish a major naval complex in the American territory of Samoa as a counterbalance of naval power in the South Pacific.

Not to be outdone by the Russians, the People's Republic of China recently established formal diplomatic relations with Western Samoa. With both China and the Soviets moving into the heart of Polynesia, the likelihood of an American counter-move seems very strong.



Village store in bicentennial colors, American Samoa.

Western Samoa

In contrast to the American Territory 50 miles to the east, Western Samoa was struggling for its independence in the 1920s, shortly after the four large (and several smaller) islands were transferred from Germany's to New Zealand's control as part of the global partitioning following World War I. And since 1962 her people have been struggling to cope with the problems of being an independent island nation—the first in the Pacific—caught in the bind between their aspirations and the realities of limited natural resources, isolation, and traditions which most islanders don't want to change.

The aspirations of the Samoan people and their leaders are, on the surface, simple and straightforward: better education, better health care, better housing, more public services, more cash income, and self-sufficiency in achieving these goals. This is a tall order for any society, and it would seem to be particularly difficult for an island country of less than 1,500 square miles and a population of 151,000 persons whose daily lives are regulated with considerable restraint by a traditional family system and the Christian Congregational Church. This church is the direct and almost unchanged successor to the London Missionary Society (LMS), which arrived in Samoa in the 1820s and took firm roots throughout. To understand the problems of developing Samoa, one must take these two institutions into account.

The elections that brought Prime Minister Tupuola Efi to office in February 1976 created a resurgence of optimism and energy among the ministerial and administrative members of the government, who oversee a work force comprising over 50 percent of the salaried workers of the country. Described as a liberal intellectual (degree in Law from New Zealand) with socialist leanings, Efi sees his country's problems with absolute clarity: the lowest per capita income of Pacific nations, declining exports, increasing imports, emigration of the more able young adults, a staggering birthrate, exhaustion of agricultural lands, and continued reliance on external aid, to name but a few. Nevertheless, the new Prime Minister is undaunted in his desire to set a new standard for island nation development in the Pacific.



One of the ubiquitous churches of Western Samoa.

"We Samoans are the most paradoxical people in the Pacific," says the Prime Minister. "We are the most conservative in our family system and the most progressive in developmental change."

The conservative family system refers to the *aiga*, or extended family, with its elaborate network of social and economic tribute, and the *matasi*, or chief, of extended families. This complex social system has been analyzed and described by more than one Westerner, but its role in Samoa's developing society may not be fully recognized.

At the present time the family system is exceptionally vital, and plays a strong conservative role in preventing some of the radical social changes that are occurring in other parts of Polynesia at a devastating pace. At the same time, it is, in the minds of some, hindering the development of the country inasmuch as it discourages individual initiative and enterprise, the cherished virtues of the Western system which Samoa learned from its two colonial mentors.

Some of the leaders in Samoan society see cracks beginning to appear in the very foundations of the system; others say (and perhaps believe) that the system is unshakable, while at the same time lamenting that the system as practiced by their brothers in American Samoa functions at a superficial level only, having succumbed to Americanization.



Prime Minister Tupuola Efi (right) of Western Samoa chats with State Senator John Ushijima of Hawaii.

The constitution of Western Samoa, which was carefully worked out with New Zealand administrators over a period of several years preceding independence, made strong provisions for following the Samoan *matai* tradition. Only *matai* can vote or be elected to political office. Only *matai* can own customary land (nearly 80 percent of total) or award it to others for personal use. And only *matai* can award *matai* titles to others, thereby creating more *matai*. J.W. Davidson, the chief adviser for Samoa during its move to independence, saw both advantages and disadvantages to this system when he wrote:

Because of its political traditions, Samoa is well protected against the tyranny and disorder that have marked the early years of many other new states. For the same reason, it is in danger of failing to keep pace with events. (*Samoa Mo Samoa* Oxford, 1967, p. 427)

During the past couple of years new *matai* titles, which must be approved by the central government's Office of Lands and Titles, have been proliferating at an unprecedented pace, reaching a peak just before the 1976 election when Tupuola Efi defeated the conservative incumbent, Tupua Tamasese Lealofi IV. It is generally acknowledged that the new titles, created almost wholesale by the

Efi forces, enabled the new Prime Minister to gain office. This political move apparently started a trend—which has still not abated—toward the proliferation of new titles, and therefore franchised landholders. Should the trend continue, the traditional system, which has exerted a strong conservative influence, could become weakened to the point of becoming another cultural relic. The logical outcome is that everyone will hold a title, thereby rendering it meaningless in the traditional sense. Should this happen, then the process of Westernizing the social, political, and economic systems can run its course more freely.

Not to be overlooked among the elites of the Samoan social structure are the clergy of the various churches that abound throughout the islands. When the LMS missionaries came to Polynesia in the 1820s, they fulfilled an ancient prophecy that a white-skinned messenger would come to herald a new and living god, while simultaneously showing the inefficacy of the traditional Polynesian gods who were quickly cast aside. Thus, the new ministers of the gospel were accorded an elite status that has not been challenged for the past century and a half. The authoritarianism of nineteenth-century Protestantism is still intact in Samoa today, and serves in no small way along with the *matai* system to retard social change.

The monopoly of the London Missionary Society, however, has given way to other churches: the Roman Catholic, Mormon, Seventh Day Adventist, and various other denominations within the Protestant framework. The Mormons are the most visible of the newcomers. With their handsome church buildings, schools, and plantations, they are bringing the message of affluence through enterprise, a message which may run counter to the ways of the *matai* and the *aiga*, thus providing still another challenge to the oldest and most traditional of the institutions.

In spite of the traditional obstacles to development, Samoa continues to plan for a better and independent future. The aspirations of the leaders and the people are reasonably modest, and perhaps attainable. But the obstacles are very real.

One of the primary goals is to bring about a more favorable balance of exports and imports, which at present is extremely uneven. In 1974, the country exported slightly over \$7 million worth of copra, cocoa, wood, bananas, and fresh vegetables (in that order), and imported more than twice that amount (\$15,874,000), mainly for foodstuffs and manufactured goods. Like most of the other Poly-

nesian communities, Western Samoa, which is basically an agricultural country, spends the largest amount of its foreign exchange on imported foodstuffs, much of it in the form of tinned meat and fish!

Western Samoa, it appears, faces the problem of all agricultural societies, that of trying to pay for manufactured goods with the proceeds obtained from selling raw materials. The government sees this problem clearly. But since agriculture is their only viable export product, the new government is placing number one priority on the systematic development of better, more efficient agricultural methods while simultaneously encouraging that more land be put under cultivation. Some effort is being made to encourage the fledgling furniture, soap, and tourist industries, but the major thrust is agriculture. What might now be described as subsistence affluence—nobody goes hungry in Samoa—is expected to form the economic backbone of the country. What steps must be taken to bring this about?

A high-priority item is the construction of an international airport so that the fresh fruits and vegetables can be airshipped directly to overseas

Family huddled in neo-traditional house during rain shower in Western Samoa. Note corrugated iron roof, which is replacing thatch throughout the Pacific.



Mom and Pop village store in Western Samoa, where tinned meat and fish are best selling items. Photos courtesy George Chaplin.



markets (particularly New Zealand) rather than through the costly and time-consuming transshipment point at Pago Pago's international terminal. Whereas the previous administration resisted the construction of such an airport for fear of its social impact, the present government and business community, especially those in the tourist-oriented businesses, are strongly supportive. Although no definite plans have yet been made, there is a strong probability that there will be a new international airport within the next couple of years.

More land must be put under cultivation. The land is available, and is being distributed for farming by *matai* to members of their clans, and to other *matai* through the proliferation of new titles. The concept that land, even though it cannot be sold, can be used to generate money through commercial agriculture is rapidly taking hold, thereby creating an unprecedented demand for land to be awarded through the traditional system. Since there is still no real shortage of arable land, its tenure and utilization has not yet become a problem, but may in the not too distant future as the population still under 15 years of age (more than 50 percent) reaches maturity and is unable to emigrate freely to New Zealand as it has been doing for the past generation.

Better farming techniques must be introduced and implemented. The banana crop of 1975 was scarcely 20 percent of the previous year due to unusually dry weather and soil exhaustion. Droughts, of course, are beyond anyone's control, but soil exhaustion must be corrected either by fallow fields, which the country can ill afford, or through agricultural technology, which must be supplied through external aid, a considerable amount of which is already being supplied by New Zealand in the form of technical advisers, heavy equipment (of questionable value), and teachers at the Alafua Agricultural College (recently designated the South Pacific Regional College of Tropical Agriculture, a branch of the University of the South Pacific).

In the minds of some Samoan critics, the traditional role of the *matai* must change so that the title holder will become a producer rather than a consumer. Traditionally the *matai* demanded and received portions of whatever was produced on the land that he controlled or awarded. A good *matai*

manager could, without much effort, live off his title under the traditional system of subsistence agriculture.

The introduction of cash crops, however, has presented certain problems relating to the peculiar fact that a farmer is much more willing to remit a portion of his produce to the *matai* than an equivalent amount of cash derived from the sale of the produce. This phenomenon lends considerable credence to the argument that a money-based economy is incompatible with most traditional Pacific island lifestyles, an argument that has been put forward by more than one social anthropologist, but has by no means convinced the Samoan leadership.

The question is, can the *matai* be persuaded to change from their traditional role as privileged consumer to a new role that calls for productive leadership? This still forms a substantial obstacle in the way of significant agricultural development.

Timber, which seemed most promising ten years ago, has proved disappointing. The Potlatch Corporation, an American company based in Idaho, established a sizable timber operation on the big island of Savai'i a few years ago, but will cease operations in mid-1977 due to lack of profits. Since Potlatch employs 380 people—25 percent of full-time paid employees on the island—the government will purchase the equipment from Potlatch, and attempt to take over the entire operation. This plan will be impossible to implement without considerable amounts of external aid.

The small furniture industry that was expected to develop has not, despite a recent contract with affluent Nauru to supply some household furniture. The furniture that is now produced is crudely fashioned, and could not compete on the world market. The most popular item for the local market is the wooden coffin with a plate glass face mask and various amounts of decorative chrome-plated crosses, handles, and figurines, depending on the price a bereaved customer is willing to pay.

There is some talk of fisheries as another area of economic development, but the prospects are not too good without a very sophisticated fishing fleet comparable with those of Japan and Russia.

And, of course, there is tourism which, at the present time, is not doing very well. The new government-owned (75 percent) Tusitala Hotel, comfortable and modern by any standards, had a 27 percent occupancy rate in 1975. Still, the third five-year development plan targets 85,000 annual visitors by 1981, which may reflect more wishful thinking than calculated projections.

Regardless of which area of economic development the leaders of Western Samoa choose to emphasize, outside sources of cash are required, even to maintain the status quo. Although bilateral foreign aid is the most readily available source, it has become a less attractive one to Western Samoa and some other countries of the Pacific because of the inevitable restrictions and obligations.

Another important external source of cash is found in the remittances sent back to families by the thousands of expatriate Samoans living in New Zealand. There is no way to calculate the amount of money coming from this source, but it is a rare family that doesn't have money coming in from at least one family member living abroad. This source of revenue, however, is likely to dwindle, owing to New Zealand's growing economic problems, and the new quota system imposed on immigrants from Western Samoa.

A new potential source of revenue is now looming on the horizon in the form of recently established relations with the two major communist powers, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. It is generally acknowledged that both of these countries want a toehold in the South Pacific, although the extent of their anticipated activities is not yet known. The strong rumors that Russia will build a maritime facility in Tonga could mark the beginning of a series of military and related developments in the region which, at the moment, is free from any military bases except those in French Polynesia, approximately 1,500 miles to the east. What the United States is likely to do in the event of a communist force of any size in the South Pacific—an area hitherto ignored—remains to be seen. But it is highly unlikely that the United States will not react in some way, possibly in the form of generous amounts of aid. The fact that Prime Minister Efi was visited in late 1976 by a U.S. Deputy Undersecretary of State may be an indication of things to come.

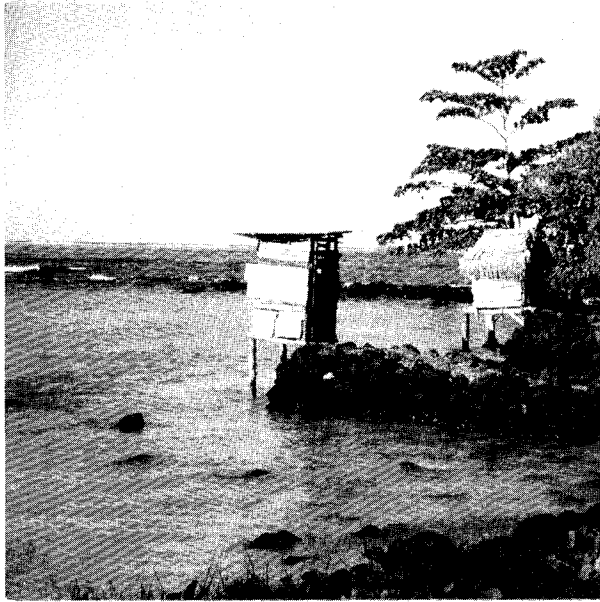


Western Samoan police in Apia. Unlike their counterparts in Pago Pago, they walk and do not carry weapons.

The new Chinese Embassy in Apia will no doubt lead to increased trade between the two countries, but it is too early even to speculate about what it might amount to. The extent of China's activities in Western Samoa may be determined, at least in part, by the extent of Soviet activities in nearby Tonga, and perhaps in Western Samoa itself.

How do the Samoan people feel about the state of things in 1976 in the face of a rising population (3.5 percent growth rate) and decreasing job opportunities? (More than half the population is under 15, a distinction that Western Samoa shares along with the Cook Islands.) Their feelings are best expressed by their actions.

Urban drift is most evident. From the villages, the young men and women migrate to Apia in search of work and new experiences. From Apia the drift has been toward Auckland, with a small fraction going to Pago Pago to work in the fish cannery



Tide-flushed toilets in Western Samoa. The government is eliminating this type in favor of open pit privies in the villages.



Building a traditional style house in Western Samoa. Photo courtesy George Chaplin.

Some of Western Samoa's 80,000 children under age 15, who are the focus of the country's population problem. Photo courtesy George Chaplin.





Young village men in Western Samoa. Will they follow their brothers to Apia or Auckland, or stay behind to cultivate the land? Photo courtesy George Chaplin.

earning several times more than they can earn as laborers at home. In 1974, 4,244 persons emigrated from Western Samoa, most of them in search of salaried employment in New Zealand, for there is almost no work, except for agriculture, in the islands. The government is powerless to alleviate this unemployment problem, but will soon have to face the situation head on in view of the New Zealand quota system which was instituted within the past two years.

Those who choose to remain in the villages express satisfaction with their lot. There is little money, but adequate food, and, most important, each man is his own boss within the traditional Samoan system. The *matai* and the pastors rule supreme, and succeed in maintaining an extremely orderly and peaceful society, with no police and virtually no crimes that cannot be dealt with through the traditional judiciary process, which may include a fine or a caning.

Samoan villagers appreciate *fa'a Samoa*—the Samoan way—and are flattered to be able to share some of their life with the occasional visitor. The new government has recently established a Village

Development Plan that is designed to help maintain the independence and integrity of village Samoa, utilizing the existing systems of governance through the *matai* and the churches.

As for the future, Western Samoans express different attitudes. The Western-educated (usually New Zealand) government worker expresses guarded optimism that he can play a part in developing a more prosperous country that will retain its traditional Polynesian customs and values, even though he has already divorced himself to one degree or another from the *aiga*. The businessman (also Western educated) looks for increased activity to be stimulated by a new airport and foreign monies coming either from tourists or from foreign aid, and he doesn't really care which. The young men and women of the villages hope for escape to Apia or to Auckland, but are becoming vaguely aware of the saturation of the job market in the city and the new quota system of the Muldoon government, which permits no more than 1,300 new Samoans per year to enter the country.

When asked what he would do were he young again and starting over, a 58-year-old man from the

village of Fa'ala on the island of Savai'i, who had been a constable in Apia from 1940 to 1950, chuckled and replied: "Go to school, get a job, and run away from the *aiga*."

Does he speak for the majority of village Samoans? Probably. But, the facts of life are going to render escape from the village and the *aiga* more difficult. Perhaps then Western Samoans will re-appraise their aspirations in the light of what is possible for an independent island nation to achieve.



Main Street in Apia on a weekday (top) and on Sunday.

French Polynesia

Perhaps none of the islands of Polynesia conjure up such visions of romance and beauty in the South Seas as those of French Polynesia: Tahiti, Bora Bora, Moorea, the Marquesas. Indeed, the 39 islands and atolls, spread over two million square miles of some of the Pacific's bluest and warmest waters, deserve their reputation for some of the most dramatic scenery in the Pacific. All is not beautiful in French Polynesia in 1976, however. As the only outright colony left in Polynesia—except for Wallis and Futuna Islands, also French, and about to become an integral Department—the French Polynesians from the Marquesas, Tuamotus, Austral, Gambier, and Society Islands—the five major groups—are beginning to talk about more self-government in the form of *autonomism*.

Technically, French Polynesia has been a French Overseas Territory since 1946, a status confirmed by referendum held in the islands in 1958; however, the colonial relationship with France goes back to 1843, when Du Petit-Thomas took formal possession of Queen Pomare's dynasty in the name of France.

Under the present arrangement, a French governor for the islands is appointed in Paris through the office of the Secretary of State for Overseas Departments and Territories. Since 1946, the French government has appropriated an annual operating budget for French Polynesia that is administered through the Governor and the Territorial Assembly, the locally elected governing body. French Polynesia in turn is represented in the French National Assembly by a locally elected deputy. This arrangement, while acceptable in the 1950s, has not proved satisfactory to many, perhaps even the majority of French Polynesians in 1976.

The simmering unrest began to boil in early 1976 following the appointment of the new governor, M. Charles Schmitt, whose expulsion of the head of the Tahiti Labor Office signaled a "tightening up" of governance in the territory. In a show of force, the Papeete-based Territorial Assembly refused to meet, thus blocking the theoretical governing procedures. At the same time, Assembly leaders and the French Polynesian Deputy to Paris submitted a letter to the French National Assembly demanding the right to manage their own affairs

(the autonomists' basic platform). The letter opened with the warning, "The way things are going between Paris and Tahiti, Polynesia will not remain French much longer."

Confrontation of such magnitude is new to French Polynesia, though not, of course, to France, which has bitterly resisted the defection of more than one colony. The response from France has been low key, but clearly negative. There was, for example, no budget for the Territory for 1976, which forced each department to operate month-to-month based upon the previous year's allocation. The French Secretary of State for Overseas Departments and Territories withdrew a statute he had proposed more than a year earlier to give Tahiti more self-determination in running its own affairs, but stopping short of internal autonomy or independence. And, the national government has not responded to the autonomists' demand to dissolve the Territorial Assembly and hold early elections rather than wait until 1977 when the next election is scheduled to take place. Finally, on June 10, 1976, when the autonomists blocked Governor Schmitt from entering the grounds of the Territorial Assembly in Papeete, government forces confronted them with arms, thus preventing any sort of legislative proceedings.

While the autonomists are claiming to speak for the majority of French Polynesians, it is not clear at this point that they do. As more and more Polynesians are brought into the cash economy, either as a result of "*l'expériment*" (a euphemism for the nuclear bomb operations centered on Mururoa Atoll, officially known as the Centre d'Expérimentation du Pacifique, or C.E.P.) or through migration to nickel-rich New Caledonia, the demand for change is softened. Many of the Polynesians are either indifferent or do not wish to see any change in the status quo that might threaten the good life, as they see it, provided by the French administration, even if it is colonial in its approach. That the elected President (by one vote) of the Territorial Assembly is pro-French is a sign that the Polynesians are far from unanimous in their desire for greater independence, and the French have certainly not overlooked this.

In the eyes of most other Pacific Islanders, the French Polynesians who want no change in their

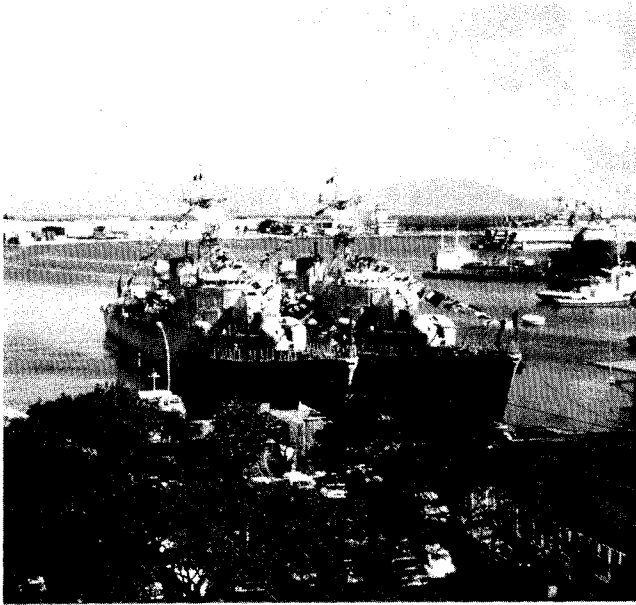
present relationship with France have been "bought out." Salaried jobs are more meaningful than the personal satisfaction that might come from being independent Polynesians. The truth of this judgment is borne out in part by the internal migration figures of French Polynesia that indicate a greater movement of people toward urban areas than anywhere else in Polynesia, if we exclude the combined Polynesian movements from Western Samoa, Tonga, Niue, and the Tokelaus to Auckland.

Most movement is to greater Papeete, which spread into suburbs at an annual increase of 9.5 percent between 1967 and 1971 (most recent available figures). The closest suburban areas of Faaa and Pirae grew by 184.5 and 125.8 per cent between 1962 and 1971 and the rate of movement has accelerated considerably during the past five years. More than half the French Polynesians are now living in the "urban" area, which is where the jobs are.

Coupled with the urban spread is the inevitable development of *les bidonvilles*, crowded shantytowns that are cleanly divided into distinct outer island groups from the Taumotus, Marquesas, and so on.

Not to be overlooked are the more than 7,000 French Polynesians who have gone to France's other major colony in the Pacific, New Caledonia, to work in the nickel and building industries for what by Pacific standards are incredibly high wages.

Such massive migration produces many effects, most of which appear to strengthen the French position. It serves to accelerate the change from a Pacific-style rural subsistence economy to a cash-based economy that is totally dependent upon the "*expériment*" and a modest amount of tourism. Traditional values and identification are badly strained as Polynesians leave their home islands and families to follow the job market. Dependency on the metropolitan country that provides these jobs is continually strengthened. All of these factors argue against any serious movement toward independence, at least until the job market becomes significantly overloaded, which has not happened yet.

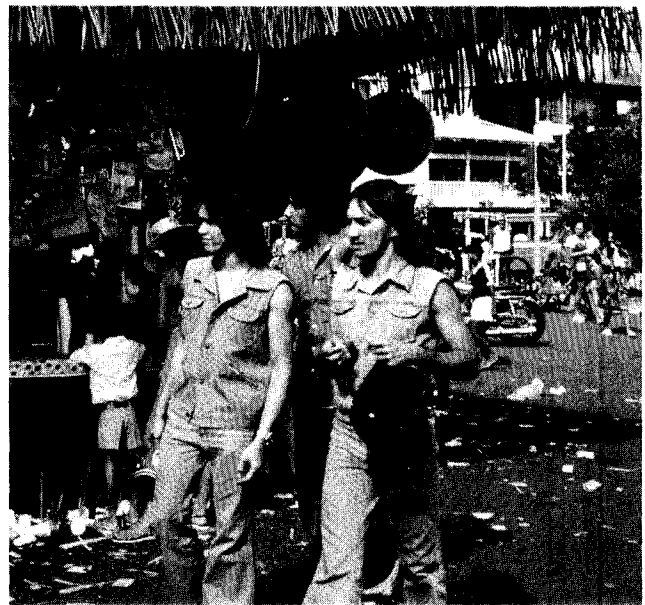


French Navy visits Papeete on Bastille Day, in between atomic blasts at Mururoa, site of L'Expériment.

Since the French government is doing nothing to discourage migration both within French Polynesia and to New Caledonia, it will likely continue along the same pattern for the near future, thus further weakening the cause of the autonomist movement.

One must ask, what is in it for France? There are at least three reasons that come to mind, not the least of which is France's desire to maintain her military presence in the Pacific. Despite the sometimes highly visible and vociferous protests by Pacific Islanders and others for a nuclear-free Pacific or a moratorium on all nuclear testing, the C.E.P. set off two unannounced nuclear explosions in July 1976, just before and after Bastille Day. French Polynesia is France's major nuclear shooting gallery, and she is not likely to give it up easily.

Another reason is that if France relinquishes her hold on one territory, it might set a precedent for the others, particularly New Caledonia and the New Hebrides where a growing number of Melanesians are talking in terms of total independence. Given the vast mineral deposits remaining in New Caledonia, where thousands of *pieds noirs* immigrated from former colonies in Africa and Indochina, France would be most reluctant to let it go.



The new Tahitian youth in Papeete, Bastille Day 1976.

A third reason is that virtually 100 percent of the money that is floating around in French Polynesia—a considerable amount by Pacific standards—goes toward the purchase of French-made imports, thus creating a substantial market for foodstuffs, consumer goods, and heavy machinery.

Finally, there is probably an element of French pride at stake as well.

For the French Polynesians, what is the alternative? Aside from sagging copra and vanilla production, agriculture beyond the subsistence level holds virtually no promise. Tourism might prove viable except for the incredibly inflated prices that discourage most first-time tourists from returning for a second visit. Commercial fishing on a scale beyond supplying the local market does not exist, and is not being encouraged by the government. In short, the prospects for self-sufficiency are pretty dim.

This current situation, coupled with the extreme social dislocation, is likely to serve as a good preventive to a significant change in the political or economic status in French Polynesia, which, from all indications, is just the way France wants it.

The Cook Islands

The Cook Islands are every Pacific buff's favorite place to visit in Polynesia. The natural beauty, the climate, the people, the music, and the prices are right. It is a country with relatively few of the problems found in the rest of Polynesia. One can't help wondering how this state of affairs came to pass.

The noted Pacific scholar, Douglas Oliver, referred to the Cooks as "the crumbs that were left after the choicer morsels had been swallowed up" by the European colonial powers in the nineteenth century. Since the 14 islands and atolls are relatively small (93 square miles in total) and widely scattered (1,000 miles from Mangaia in the south to Penrhyn in the north), they never held much attraction for the more ambitious colonizers. New Zealand assumed the role of mother country in 1901, and in 1965 granted the Cooks internal self-government in a status of Free Association, an arrangement that is being carefully studied by some Micronesians.

Perhaps the most advantageous feature of this political arrangement with New Zealand is that Cook Islanders are British subjects and citizens of New Zealand, and therefore, unlike most other Polynesians, are exempt from the New Zealand "overstay" problem that is causing difficulties for Samoans, Tongans, and, to a lesser extent, Fijians. The Cook Islanders are at liberty to travel to and from New Zealand at will, and enjoy all the working rights of any other Kiwi.

Cook Islanders, both the Maoris from Rarotonga and the Samoic-type peoples from the northern islands, have made considerable use of this freedom to immigrate to New Zealand. In 1936 there were 135 Cook Islanders in New Zealand, by 1945 there were 354 and in 1976, there were more than 25,000, while only 19,000 remain in the islands, more than half of them living on little Rarotonga. Still, the Cook Islands do not appear to run the risk of complete population attrition, as do Niue and the Tokelau.

This massive postwar emigration has helped alleviate two common problems that plague the rest of Polynesia: overpopulation and unemployment. Since the Cooks share with Western Samoa the distinction of having more than 50 percent of the

population under the age of 15, the unimpeded emigration route to New Zealand serves to release what could soon prove to be unbearable population pressures. (The Tokelau Islands and Niue, both with negligible populations of under 5,000, also share this privilege of unlimited immigration to New Zealand.)

The Free Association status with New Zealand also guarantees other privileges to the Cooks. New Zealand controls foreign affairs and defense for the islands. Air New Zealand provides convenient transportation to Fiji and New Zealand, linking once a week with Tahiti. New Zealand provides a steady market for the Cook Islands major export items: tinned Raro brand orange juice and fresh vegetables. Perhaps more important, New Zealand provides much of the islands' New Zealand currency that keeps Premier Sir Albert Henry's (K.B.E.) government from going broke. (Twice during recent years Sir Albert simply advanced the date of the beginning of a new fiscal year because the treasury was running out of funds.) In short, the Cooks have a good thing going with New Zealand, an arrangement which nobody talks seriously about wanting to change, except for a few conservative Kiwis who grumble that high-cost foreign aid is being spent on ungrateful islanders.

Despite the generous arrangement with New Zealand, which helps Sir Albert (the most colorful politician in the South Pacific) maintain a full complement of cabinet ministers and civil servants, the Cook Islands are not without their problems. There is, of course, internal politics, with a vigorous opposition party headed by Dr. Tom Davis, a Rarotongan who, like many of his compatriots, spends a good bit of his time in New Zealand. The election season invariably gives rise to renewed charges and accusations, mostly against Sir Albert for being a spendthrift and for placing friends and relatives from his home island of Aitutaki in appointed positions. Sir Albert's response to the accusation of nepotism is candid: he trusts his friends and relatives more than he does other people, and apparently there are enough of them to help maintain control of Cook Islands' politics.

While people acknowledge Sir Albert's basic integrity, there is great concern (mostly unspoken) about who will succeed the 68-year-old Premier when he dies. Since he had one serious heart attack

while attending the 1976 South Pacific Arts Festival in Rotorua, New Zealand, concern is growing. However, the Henry clan is so firmly entrenched, the dynasty would probably persist even without its pioneering leader.

People also talk about economic development and economic independence in the Cook Islands. Yet, a report from the 1976 economic analysis states: "All the productive sectors are withering while the consuming sectors are seemingly blooming. This is a situation which cannot and should not continue." One looks pretty much in vain for countermeasures.

The increased consumption in the Cooks indicates that there is no great shortage of money. Because the islands use New Zealand currency, it is impossible to determine how much of it comes from the remittances of Cook Islanders living in New Zealand. Foreign aid transactions are so obfuscated as to be equally incalculable, yet these must be the primary sources of funds that permit the consuming sector to bloom. Retired Cook Islanders on the New Zealand superannuation scheme also help to support the growing consumerism.

As in the rest of Polynesia, Cook Islanders look to agriculture for increased productivity, even though the crops, aside from citrus, are the standard ones found everywhere in Polynesia: bananas, copra, taro, and some vegetables. Excepting the successful Raro juice factory, agricultural development is lagging, as elsewhere in Polynesia, due to poor transportation and marketing. With direct flights to Auckland, a few Rarotonga-grown fresh vegetables are finding their way to the New Zealand winter market. This type of agricultural enterprise is barely off the ground, however, and even if more fully developed would be of benefit only to Rarotongans, while their relatives in the outer islands are limited to copra and possibly taro as their only cash crops, all others being too perishable to survive the erratic shipping schedules.

In view of the Cooks' reputation as the most delightful place in the Pacific to visit, tourism development would seem a logical choice, yet the islands were excluded almost completely from the tourist circuit until the international airport was



Cook Islands National Arts Theatre performing at Rarotonga Airport.

opened with much Polynesian and European fanfare by Queen Elizabeth in 1974. Rarotonga is still a terminal point from Auckland and Nadi, except for the once-weekly flight from Papeete, and the traffic from New Zealand and Fiji is anything but heavy. Consequently, tourism is still an infant industry in the Cooks.

If the mass tourist market were tapped—which is the only way to gain significant revenues—Rarotonga would certainly lose its fabled charm. The island is simply not big enough to absorb any more than the 10,000-odd annual visitors, mostly from New Zealand, it now entertains. Still, changes are on the way. The number of rooms in the handful of small motels and the one 30-room hotel will soon be doubled by the completion of Stage I of the partly government-owned 150-room Rarotonga Hotel, although plans for the hotel's second stage have been cancelled by the government because of increasing concern over the social impact of larger numbers of tourists in such a small community. It would appear that the Cook Islands are seriously studying the question "What Price Tourism?"

Partly in connection with the potential for tourist development, the education system in the Cooks places considerable emphasis on Cook Island Maori song and dance, which is the finest in the

Pacific, according to most observers. Cultural conservation is achieved through the universal participation of the school students, who have annual competitions which include modernized versions of traditional action songs lionizing Sir Albert. In the process, many of them develop marketable talents for the tourist industry in the Cooks as well as in other parts of the Pacific. This aspect is in keeping with the apparent underlying educational philosophy in the Cooks, that is, to prepare the students for emigration in the absence of a salaried position at home.

In terms of regional development, the Cooks are definitely on the periphery, particularly as long as French Polynesia, the closest neighbor, maintains exclusive links with France. The population and land area are too small to be of any real significance except to Cook Islanders. Apart from having the best dancers in the Pacific and passable tinned orange juice, the Cooks don't really have much to offer to the other island groups in the region.

Perhaps the present arrangement with New Zealand, which does not generate any serious complaints, is the optimum one. It allows for free migration. It permits Sir Albert to conduct a government with all the pomp and circumstances of any head of state. And it somehow makes for what is the highest overall standard of living in Polynesia, possibly in the whole Pacific (except for the phosphate islands of Nauru and Banaba). Under the circumstances it is likely that development will not be dramatic in the Cooks in the near future. It might even be that the Cooks have hit upon a workable arrangement with a metropolitan country that some of the other small island groups, especially those of Micronesia, could follow.

One might ask what New Zealand gets out of this arrangement. Part of the answer can be found by looking at the place of origin of most consumer goods in Rarotonga, save at the duty free shops which are loaded with Sonys, Nikons, and other Japanese products. There is also a conspicuous number of New Zealand expatriates holding government jobs. Nor should one overlook the fact that Cook Island Maoris blend very nicely with their New Zealand Maori cousins, and form a reliable addition to the industrial work force. It is one of those arrangements, it appears, whereby everybody gains something. And that is rare in the Pacific.

Perhaps they have hit upon the ideal method to maintain a steady balance, and at the same time to keep the cash and goods flowing in a modern kula-ring system.

Tonga

To talk of Tonga one must begin with the church, or the state, or both, for in no other place in Polynesia—or possibly in the modern world—are the two so close and so powerful, both working, some say, to keep the Tongans the poorest of all the Polynesians by almost any standard, while the ruling elite are among the richest. Nowhere else in Polynesia is the contrast so stark.

Western visitors constantly remark on the similarity between the present-day ruling elite in Tonga and the eighteenth-century divine monarchies of Europe. The similarities are surely there. Generally regarded as oppressive and outdated, it was probably this strong blend of church and state that kept Tonga a self-governing protectorate of Great Britain from 1900 to 1970, while all of her Polynesian neighbors became colonies of one Eastern power or another.

The history of this church-state development is a fascinating one which has been well-described by a Tongan intellectual who currently teaches history at the University of Papua New Guinea. While Germany, Great Britain, and France were carving up various fragments of Polynesia during the late 1800s (their way having been paved by the front-running missionaries), a lone, highly energetic and creative missionary, the Rev. Shirley Baker, steered Tonga's then ruling monarch (King George Tupou I) to a middle ground which kept the Western powers at bay. His argument was that if Tonga didn't want to become a colony, it should declare itself a country and acquire the necessary accoutrements.

Working with the complete support of Tupou I (who appointed him to the post of prime minister and several other ministerial positions), Baker then proceeded to write a constitution, design a flag, compose a national anthem, and provide all the other necessary appurtenances to legitimize the kingdom in international circles. Baker's Constitution for the Kingdom of Tonga, adopted in 1875, has been only slightly modified during the past

hundred years. Since it was designed to support a constitutional monarchy, it is probably one of the most archaic constitutions in the world today, and it still stands as an almost irrefutable source of sanction.

The 1875 constitution specifies that the titles of the king and of the 33 *nopele* (Tonganized form of "noble") are inherited. The nearly 100,000 Tongans are thus ruled by 34 males whose power, virtually absolute, is vested in them by accident of birth. The present constitution also specifies that 7 of the 21 members of the legislative assembly be elected by popular vote. But, since the other 14 members, as well as the entire cabinet and privy council, are appointed, largely from among the *nopele*, popular representation in the government of the kingdom is only token.

The church in Tonga (meaning the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga) supports the monarchical system, and is in turn supported by it in a symbiotic relationship which places the Tongan clergy in a stronger position than any of their counterparts elsewhere in Polynesia. King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV still makes all important announcements at Sunday services in the church, and maintains his own private chapel on the palace grounds, a beautiful nineteenth-century wood structure of classic Victorian design. This show of royal support for the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga strengthens the position of the clergy, a strength that can often be measured in economic terms.

Although the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga is the king's church, and therefore the dominant one, its position is being challenged by other groups, one of which emerged from the schism that occurred within the original Wesleyans whom the Rev. Shirley Baker established as the Church of the State. They are known simply as the Wesleyan Church. The Catholic Church, which has been in Tonga since the days of the earliest French missionaries in the Pacific, now claims 16 percent of the population.

Mormons from Salt Lake City are the most conspicuous church group in Tonga today. With their flashy American-style churches and schools complete with chain-link fences, lighted black-topped basketball courts (often powered by the only generator in the village), and white shirts and black ties (though shoes are not required), they are gaining converts by the score. Many young Tongans see the Mormon Church as a way out of Tonga to either Hawaii or Salt Lake City, both sites of Brigham Young University, and it is not unknown for bright Tongan youths to stay with the Mormons through a tertiary education program, and then to drop out of sight to seek careers overseas. Young Tongan Elders are rewarded by overseas scholarships after fulfilling a prescribed quota of converts.

While the great majority of Tongans scratch a fairly difficult subsistence living from the increasingly crowded land, the royal family, nobles, and

The King's palace and chapel in Tongatapu.



The Mormon Church has sunk firm roots in Tonga.





Young Tongan Elders of the Mormon Church. Enough new converts can mean a ticket to Hawaii or Salt Lake City.

clergy live in relative splendor, deriving most of it from payments of one form or another from the peasants. All land in the 150 islands of the kingdom belongs to the king, who in turn authorizes the 33 *nopele*, each of whom has a traditional allotment, to lease the land at relatively low rates to their countrymen. Theoretically each male, upon reaching the age of 16, is entitled to eight and one-fourth acres of farm land and two-fifths of an acre of town land on which to build a house. But, as the population grows at one of the fastest rates in Polynesia (3.5 percent), land becomes less and less available. Already, there is not enough land for every 16-year-old male to receive his quota.

The land issue is being exacerbated by a relatively recent practice: the nobles are simply not leasing the land as provided in the constitution. One Tongan intellectual and clergyman recently published that there are at least 50,000 acres of unreleased land in Tonga while 14,000 landless Tongan taxpayers go begging, which usually means sharing the land allocated to an older brother.

Such an outdated and inequitable system of land tenure seems incompatible with Tonga's stated economic objectives, which give priority to agricultural

development. Although blessed with the richest, most productive soil in the Pacific, plus a spread of climates from tropical in the northern Vava'u group to subtropical in the southern Tongatapu group, agriculture is still practiced by largely traditional methods, and none too successfully. On the other hand, the clergy and the nobles place such heavy demands on the individual farmers for their fruits, produce, and cash, that farmers are discouraged from trying to develop cash crops. Weekly feasts for visiting pastors put a steady strain on the individual farmers who are compelled by tradition to contribute what they are told; church demands for cash "contributions" of up to 25 percent of an average family's \$300 annual income keep the church members (which includes every Tongan living in Tonga) money poor. Such contributions are used to pay for the church buildings, schools, pastors' salaries, and, of all things, Tongan missionaries serving overseas. The church, therefore, plays a significant role in blocking commercial agricultural development.

There are, however, signs of reform from within the church. Equally important, since the combined churches provide more than 75 percent of the secondary education in Tonga—with newly initiated adult education programs complementing conventional efforts—they may be in a position to sow the seeds of change in fertile minds. Moreover, the church in Tonga has a voice that is second only to that of the king, and it is a very close second. If the spirit of reform catches on within that venerable institution, it could possibly spread throughout the kingdom.

Some of the younger clergy in Tonga, both in Protestant and Catholic circles, are talking publicly of reform. Such talk does not please the government, which is known to impose heavy levies on school supplies and books, delay visas for expatriate staff, and refuse to provide any form of financial assistance. Echoing the new theology of the Pacific Theological College in Suva, the reform-minded clergy of Tonga, still a minority, are teaching that the church has grown more parasitic with time, and the clergy along with it. To fulfill their proper role, claim the reformers, clergymen must turn from being consumers to being producers, from being followers of royal decrees to being community leaders and developers. Their aspirations are based on the strength and status of

the clergy in the community, a status they hope to use to lead reform within the kingdom. As one leading Tongan clergyman put it:

We need to change the feudalistic system of governance and the feudalistic concepts of the church. We must help people recognize their individuality, their potential as free people, rather than as servants of a man or God. We must shift our concern from the soul to the whole person, including his place in society.

One example of the action of the reform-minded clergy in Tonga was the Conference on Land and Migration (1976) sponsored by the National (Tongan) Council of Churches. Some of the papers presented advocated reform in the land tenure system which would be considered heretical by the king and the landed class of *nopele*.

Also feeding the spirit of reform is the fact that the people of Tonga, like other Polynesians, want "development," which may have different meanings depending on who is using the term. The subsistence farmer-fisherman would like some cash and a frame house to replace his thatch one. The town-dwelling government clerk would like electricity and refrigeration. The higher level civil servants, particularly those in Nuku'alofa, the capital, want a new Toyota (or Holden), while the king wants a newer Mercedes-Benz limousine, an airline, and a bigger defense force—the only one in Polynesia except for Fiji's.

Development in Tonga is still pretty much in the talking stage. There is talk of developing fisheries, agriculture, tourism, and light industry, and there are rumors about a Soviet maritime facility, which could service fishing and other types of vessels. It is difficult to determine at this point how much of this talk will materialize soon enough to save the government of Tonga from bankruptcy (about which there is even more talk throughout the Pacific).

The desire is certainly there, and there are possibilities of fulfillment. But there are certain obstacles, more perhaps, than anywhere else in Polynesia.

The most viable possibility for immediate development, agriculture, is paralyzed by the land tenure system. Since no one, except a noble, has

access to more than eight and one-quarter acres of farm land (and many Tongans have less or none), even medium-scale agriculture is impossible. The best a farmer can hope for is irregular sales of small amounts of coconuts, bananas, taro, yam, and a few fresh vegetables. His coconuts are collected as they drop from the tree, then sold at a fixed price to the government-owned Copra Commodities Board, where they are husked, shelled, and dried for shipment to a foreign coconut oil processing plant. Bananas and fresh vegetables find a small market in Nuku'alofa, most of whose residents have left the land for salaried jobs.

Some fresh produce actually gets shipped to New Zealand, but the amount is small and dwindling. Transportation is irregular and unreliable. New Zealanders prefer bananas from Ecuador because they are prettier, though not nearly so tasty, and the importers can depend upon a regular supply. Tongan tomatoes are "not the right size" for New Zealand tastes, and few of them survive shipment anyway. In addition, the growing racism in New Zealand with regard to the Pacific Islanders has not helped in the efforts to develop an island-supplied fruit and vegetable market there.

Whole coconuts and taro, both hardy enough to survive the vagaries of shipment by the notoriously inefficient government-owned Pacific Navigation Company, find their way to the New Zealand Polynesian community (ca. 100,000) where resident islanders pay five times the home market price for the cherished starch and fresh coconut cream, both basic to Polynesian cuisine. However, the scale of this agricultural market is minuscule, and the Tongan farmers must compete with their counterparts in Samoa for their share of it.

Despite Tonga's fertility, climate, and proximity to New Zealand, the prospects for economic development through agriculture are not good. The land tenure system, the lack of reliable transport, and an uninterested target market are formidable obstacles.

Fishing too lacks promise—unless Tonga follows through with the widely rumored plan to go into business with the U.S.S.R. or Japan. Most fishing in Tonga today is done with a one-man net, a 60-pound line coiled around a 25-ounce beer bottle, or a homemade spear gun. Since there are no



Tongan fishermen's cooperative in Ha'apai.

storage facilities outside the Burns Philp or Morris Hedstrom food markets in Nuku'alofa, fish are sold and eaten locally on the day they are caught. Such a system provides fresh fish for Tongans, but forms a weak base for economic development.

Tonga is approaching tourism with caution, as are most other Pacific communities. At a Pacific Tourism Conference held in Nuku'alofa (at the money-losing government-owned Dateline Hotel) in September 1976, the Director of SPEC, a Tongan, voiced a somber note of caution, shared by many Pacific Islanders, regarding the conflict between the preservation of island cultures and the development of a profitable tourist trade. Fiji's many empty resort hotel rooms stand as a grim reminder of the economic risk involved. What is more, most Pacific travelers agree that Tonga, despite the romantic allure of its name, simply doesn't have much in the way of natural attractions to draw tourists away from other accessible resort areas, such as Fiji, Samoa, Rarotonga, New Caledonia, and Norfolk Island, which has succeeded in developing a small Australian tourist market. The absolute flatness of the island (save for the Vava'u group far to the north) is far more suitable for farming than for scenery, and the beaches, where they can be found, are not out of the ordinary and are generally off-limits on the Sabbath.

In short, tourism in Tonga may have already peaked with its twice monthly (average) visit of P & O cruise ships which call at Nuku'alofa for 24 hours or less. Proposed new air service between Pago Pago and Nuku'alofa, with intermediate stops



The ubiquitous Burns Philp Company—the J.C. Penny of the South Seas—Ha'apai, Tonga Branch.

in the northern and central groups, may strengthen the efforts in tourism.

There is some talk of developing light industry in Tonga, where none currently exists, through the assistance of the Asia Development Bank. Primary emphasis would be given to manufacturing items for domestic consumption, such as soap, matches, corrugated iron, cement, and construction lumber, virtually all of which is now imported from New Zealand, thereby adding to the increasingly lopsided negative trade balance (1972 imports: \$6,304,900; 1972 exports: \$2,200,200). Industrial development would have to start from ground zero, however, for Tonga is the least industrialized of all the independent Polynesian communities. Even little Rarotonga has its Raro juice factory, which perhaps was the example that inspired the Tongan government to start planning seriously for its own tomato cannery.

With all the apparent odds against self-development in Tonga, what are the options? Status quo, or more developmental aid, some of which may be forthcoming from non-ANZUS sources?

Even if Tonga should opt for the status quo—most unlikely—it might prove difficult to maintain. With each new birth, the land grows scarcer, thus aggravating the already problem-ridden land tenure system. The primary escape valve for overpopulation—emigration to New Zealand—has been nearly closed off by the Muldoon government.

The "overstayer" (one who has stayed in New Zealand beyond the period of his work permit) problem has become especially acute in New Zealand since 1975. In addition to the nearly 5,000 registered Polynesian migrant laborers, there are thousands more who are working without permits or valid visas. The former New Zealand Minister of Immigration stated: "New Zealand industry is dependent on illegal island labor. Unless they use such labor, production and export targets cannot be met." Still, overstayers are not only being actively sought and deported, sometimes as a result of 2:00 A.M. raids in the Polynesian sections of Auckland, but the number of visitor permits for Tongans to New Zealand has been reduced from 4,133 in 1974 to a mere 714 for the first half of 1976.

The remittances from working Tongans in New Zealand to their families back in the islands has provided a sizable amount of income to Tonga, being for some families the only source of cash. The recent cutbacks hurt. While there is no way to calculate the exact amount from remittances,³ all agree that it is considerable, and that Tonga would be in even worse financial shape without it.

With dwindling agricultural exports and remittances, the revenues for maintaining government services are likely to become more strained unless additional foreign money is obtained. Like all the other Polynesian communities, Tonga is heavily dependent on foreign aid. In 1970, the United Kingdom and Australia were the principal donors of official development assistance. New Zealand aid is quite visible, and reportedly increasing. United States aid is limited to 80-odd Peace Corps Volunteers, most of whom are teaching in the intermediate and secondary schools, and two ancient PT boats, which form the Royal Tongan Navy. In an attempt to secure more foreign capital, the Tongan government recently rented the largest ship of its Pacific Navigation Company, the 6,500-ton Tauloto, to the People's Republic of China, a move that was possibly more political than economic.

3. An Auckland newspaper gave the following figures for remittances to Tonga: 1974: \$2,435,341. 1975: \$1,538,656. January-June 1976: \$392,555.

It is now generally accepted in the Pacific that Tonga has entered the international aid game in earnest. The Crown, with the solid backing of the growing cadre of civil service elite (many of whose jobs are supported by foreign aid), has been conducting serious discussions with the U.S.S.R. and Japan concerning the development of an international airport for Tonga in exchange for maritime facilities, both to be built by the donor country. It is the nature of the "maritime" facilities that worries the ANZUS members, particularly New Zealand, which sees it as a potential Russian naval base in the South Pacific, although Russia has maintained that it wants only anchorage for its fishing fleet.

Japan has more recently entered the picture with a better offer which includes not only the upgrading of harbor facilities and airport, but an airline as well! Meeting in Nuku'alofa in September 1976, the Royal Tonga Club (whose members include Acting Chairmen M. Fusimoto, Secretary Yasuichi Yasuno, Legal Consultant Yochi Kawagoe, and two regular directors Messrs. Yamanaka Katsuo and Yoshihiro Matsunaga) announced its intention to establish an airline in Tonga, develop fisheries, and explore for oil. Which of the offers will actually materialize and be accepted is still a matter of conjecture, but it is certain that ANZUS is wary of any greater Russian presence in the Pacific. A delegation from the New Zealand Parliament flew to Tonga for a "goodwill" visit soon after the news of the Russian and Japanese offers were made public, and the United States invited the King and Queen to visit Guam and selected parts of Micronesia in January 1977.

Tonga needs foreign aid badly just to maintain the status quo. Without fairly sizable increases, her chances for development are slim. The outcome of the aid game now beginning in Tonga, and already spreading to Western Samoa, will be crucial to the balance of power in the South Pacific which, until now, has been safely in the hands of ANZUS, the United Kingdom, and France. With the manganese deposits and other mineral potential lying within Tonga's ocean waters (to be defined eventually, they hope, by the International Law of the Sea), plus the promise of good anchorage for fishing and possibly military vessels, the little Kingdom of Tonga may indeed be in a good position to drive a hard bargain with the competing giants.



Traditional Fijian *bure*. Government building stands at upper left.

Fiji

Fabled Fiji stands at the crossroads of Polynesia and Melanesia and in many respects represents a blend of the two with identifiable features of each. It is a land of notable contrasts, not the least of which is that between the high, middle, and low income classes, with a larger group in the middle than exists anywhere else in Polynesia.

At the helm of this island nation is Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, the elected Prime Minister, who is emerging as the top political dog of the South Pacific region, followed closely by the comparatively young Michael Somare, the first elected Prime Minister (1975) of Papua New Guinea. Ratu Mara brings with him a traditional chiefly title which serves to solidify his already strong position with the Fiji electorate.⁴ Dropping bits of socialist rhetoric in selected places, he continues to lead the country into the Australia-New Zealand (ANZ) economic orbit, and at the same time is fast becoming known by the U.S. Department of State, having been invited to the East-West Center, Inc., in 1975 to give a lecture in the prestigious Dillingham Series on "The Pacific Way," and subsequently appointed to the Board of Trustees of that institution.

4. In an astonishing upset, the Hon. Siddiq Koya defeated Prime Minister Mara in a recent (April) election, throwing the government in a state of panic. In an unprecedented move to avoid possible racial unrest, the Governor General appointed Ratu Mara to continue as Prime Minister of the minority government until the issue is resolved by a new election.

In addition to the problems attendant to any developing society, Ratu Mara faces the problem of potentially explosive racial tension in Fiji. With slightly more than 50 percent of the population being Indian, most of them descendants of sugar plantation laborers imported by the British from Gujarat between 1879 and 1916, the Fijians are simply outnumbered, especially in the towns, where the ratio is even more out of balance, and where the number of landless Indians grows at an accelerated pace.

As land becomes more valued as a source of cash crop agriculture, the short-term leases (ten years) held by Indian farmers are often not renewed. This situation leaves the Indians with little choice: either go to the towns and hope to find work, or emigrate to Commonwealth countries, all of which are tightening their immigration quotas.

The ultimate consequence of this land squeeze on the Indians is something that most people prefer not to talk about. The newly displaced Indians are visible in the towns, doing such chores as sweeping streets with push brooms, while their more entrepreneurial kinsmen, previously urbanized, can be seen in knee-length white stockings (the mark of the colonial uniform) overseeing the workers, running the Indian-owned shops, and working in major government and commercial offices. Reticence, however, is becoming more difficult to maintain since it has become a major political issue, with the Honorable Siddiq Koya, leader of the opposition National Federation Party, arguing loudly for Crown Land leases to be granted to Indians in perpetuity, and at the same time advocating the abolishment of that part of the constitution which allocates seats in Parliament along racial lines, which results in acute underrepresentation of the Indian majority.

Like the rest of Polynesia, Fiji is predominantly an agricultural country and there as elsewhere agriculture is in trouble. It is not that there is a shortage of arable land or people to farm it. Both are in plentiful supply. There are problems of transportation and marketing, but these could be overcome, and in fact are being improved upon steadily through a highly visible and mechanized Public Works Department that is linking up hitherto isolated areas of Vanua Levu, the second largest and least developed of the islands. The real problems lie again in the racial make-up of the



Indian women working Fijian rice fields. What will happen when the lease expires?



Indian-owned duty free shops line the streets of Suva, waiting for the dwindling ranks of tourists.



Mixed government school in Fiji where Fijians and Indians study in English. Photos courtesy George Chaplin.

country, the land tenure system, the traditional life-style of the village Fijians, and some singularly unenlightened government policies.

While the Indians do not predominate in rural Fiji as they do in the towns, Indians are found on farms in virtually all parts of Fiji. In most instances, they are living and working on leasehold land, and here they have retained their traditional dress, food, language, and schools for more than three generations. As aggressive at farming as they are at merchandizing in the towns, they can make the soil produce, and are known for their ability to do so. Given free rein and just minimum support

they could possibly have the country on a solid agricultural footing and keep it there.

However, the Fijians own the land, and land alienation for any purpose is virtually impossible. A Fijian may be awarded lease-hold land through the traditional *mataqali* (clan) system. The deal is made on a very personal and generous basis, in terms of length and amount of lease, and is then sanctioned by the powerful Native Lands Trust Board. Since an Indian cannot belong to a *mataqali*, his land comes on different terms: ten-year maximum leases, or none at all, even if the Indian has been leasing and working the plot for decades.



Above, Indians flock to the towns in Fiji in search of new livelihood.

Right, Fijian dining room staff. Is waiting tables for the tourists preferable to village life?

Photos courtesy George Chaplin.



When the Fijian landholder refuses to renew even a ten-year lease to the Indian tenant, who has nowhere to go but to the town or to virtually non-arable land, it is not necessarily because the Fijian wants to work the land himself. As a result of growing land consciousness in the Pacific Islands, the Fijian wants to take the land back from the Indian so that his own son can have it, even though the son may be only three years old. Thus a growing number of abandoned farms are rapidly being taken over by boondock, and a concomitant number of Indians are flooding the towns in search of nonexistent jobs. (In its most recent session, Parliament passed legislation introduced by the Hon. Siddiq Koya to extend leasehold periods to 30 years.

The Fijian villager has never been geared to the sort of work ethic that seems to be needed for successful commercial agriculture. Traditional Fijian agriculture has always provided amply for domestic consumption. With abundant seasonal tree crops, mangrove swamps, and a sea full of fish within reach of coastal dwellers, Fijians have always enjoyed a good diet with minimum effort. The cash crops of copra, cocoa, sugar, and rice require a different approach to life involving regularity and tedious, hard work, none of which Fijians are yet ready to accept to any great extent. The demand for cash is growing nevertheless and some Fijians are beginning to accept the demands of agricultural entrepreneurship.

Unfortunately, small farmers are not getting much support from the government despite its professed emphasis on agriculture. Agricultural development loans of up to \$200 are available for a maximum 12-month period. Heavy machinery is available through the Department of Agriculture on a rental basis, but at a price only few can afford. And, the ten-year maximum lease period for Indians (now being challenged hotly by the opposition party) offers further discouragement. All things considered, the picture does not look good. Though no one will formally admit it, as the Indians leave the land, production dips.

In an effort to develop agriculture on a larger, commercial scale, the government has become involved in some grandiose schemes that, if successful, could lay a solid base for continued agricultural development. The two largest government-backed enterprises in the country—and probably in the entire Pacific region—involve sugar (Fiji's principal

export) and pulpwood. Both look promising, and the schemes may be expanded, thereby assuring Ratu Mara and his Alliance Party continued tenure in office.

The government's decision to get more directly involved in production stems partly from a frightening decline in exports between 1970, when Fiji exported 335,000 tons of sugar, and 1974, when the export tonnage declined to 269,000 tons. Other motivations for the government's action in economic matters are given in the Seventh Development Plan (1976-1980):

Fiji's economic situation has long been dominated by three major problems:

1. dependence on one crop (sugar);
2. dependence upon the outside world for capital, and expertise;
3. rigidity of economic and ethnic divisions.

The Mara government also pursued development in tourism and transportation, but with rather disappointing results. In the great tourism rush of the early 1970s, numerous posh resort hotels were built along a fair weather stretch of beachfront now known as the Gold Coast, extending along the southern coast of Viti Levu. Mostly foreign owned (with generous tax concessions from the Mara government), the hotels now stand completely or partially empty, with some of them having locked their doors during the past year.

Fiji's Air Pacific (started in 1971)—one of four regional airlines—is, like its competitors, losing money and must be bailed out regularly by supplemental government appropriations, usually requested by the European Minister of Finance, who also happens to be the wealthiest businessman in the country. An increase in tourism would help put Air Pacific in the black, but there is little real hope for a positive change until the world economic picture brightens. (The South Pacific area seems to be about two years behind Western economic changes.)

Some light import-substituting industries are already well established in the Suva area, and are producing such items as flour, beer, biscuits, soft drinks, textiles, steel roofing, paints, cement, matches, and soap. According to the Development Plan, "a number of these industries are already

making inroads into the export markets of the Pacific." However, the Plan fails to specify which ones.

Suva (population 70,000) is rapidly emerging as the commercial and political hub of the South Pacific region. Its leaders would like to see it recognized as a sort of regional capital, though such talk is generally avoided because that is what leaders of other states in the region suspect.⁵ Already the site of the regional University of the South Pacific, the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation (SPEC), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Chinese Trade Commission, an American Embassy Charge, Air Pacific, and other regional commercial enterprises, Suva is throbbing with the increasing energy of development within the region, but not to everyone's satisfaction, particularly the leaders of some of the smaller states who are wary of concentrating everything in Suva. Suva seems destined nevertheless to solidify its position as the hub, jealousies from such places as Apia and Port Moresby notwithstanding. Basic lines of communications and transport are already good, thanks to the usually thorough British Colonial Office, and it would take any of the other towns in the region a long time to match them.

The path of development that Fiji has taken, under the leadership of Ratu Mara, is patterned after the Australian model, and is being supported by Australian funds, both private and government. Urban housing projects, government superannuation schemes, and the courtship of foreign donors and investors are clear indicators that Fiji will try to realize the Western middle-class dream. The free enterprise system, introduced by the British, still operates unabated, and is dominated by Indians and a few expatriates. Such a situation is not the best palliative for the already strained race relations.

The approach to development has also encouraged the urban drift by young Fijians and Indians who, having finished their Western-style schooling

(students still sit for the New Zealand Certificate), come to Suva in search of jobs. Unemployment in the city is astronomical, as are the numbers of arrests for drunkenness, theft, and other crimes against people. The social problems of Suva are as grave as anywhere in the Pacific, including infamous Port Moresby, and everyone despairs of knowing what to do about them.

Given Fiji's underdeveloped land resources, minerals potential (\$8.5 million in gold in 1974), location, and already developed infrastructure (particularly in the towns), it may be that it can set an example for Pacific Island development. However, most cynics throughout the Pacific feel that Fiji is so hopelessly trapped in Australia's economy that development, if it does succeed, will continue to benefit foreign investors primarily, with local politicians and public servants getting their share, while the great majority of the population plods along in traditional ways. Such a scenario might prove workable, except that the aspirations of the rural population have already been raised by the various devices of a consumer-oriented mercantile class.

The feeling throughout Fiji is that seeds of discontent have been sown, albeit inadvertently. What the eventual harvest will be—aggravated turmoil or peaceful development for all—will be determined in the near future by the directions that the Mara government and its Australian backers decide to take. The decisions affecting race relations and land tenure will be most critical to Fiji's future.



Traditional Fijian Kava ceremony. Photo courtesy Fiji Visitors Bureau.

5. The only major regional organization not in Suva is the South Pacific Commission, which is housed in an American-built, minipentagon-type structure of World War II vintage in Noumea, the strongest outpost of colonialism remaining in the Pacific. While most of the participating countries and states would like to see the SPC relocated, they don't want it to go to Suva, which is the only logical choice.