REVIEWS

Ahmed Ali, Ron Crocombe, and Ronald Gordon, eds., *Politics in Polynesia.* Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1983. Pp. xii, 262, photos, maps, bibliography, index. F$5.00.

Politics in Polynesia is the second volume in a three-volume series on political development in the Pacific islands. Consisting of eleven essays authored by expatriates and Pacific islanders alike, this volume attempts to provide an understanding of a politically fragmented region from the "inside perspective of a person of that country." Perhaps the most salient feature of Polynesia is its range of political character from the traditional to the metropolitan, with all the permutations of such a broad spectrum.

Emiliana Afeaki's "Tonga: The Last Pacific Kingdom" focuses on traditional social roles and relationships in Tonga where there is a "general acceptance of the belief that nobility and royalty are divinely preconditioned as social/government leaders" and where "the people's representatives are not only too few in number, but according to popular view . . . often not the most suitable for the job as the people are often not well prepared for voting." Hereditary claim to traditional elite status and the ability to provide others with access to limited land resources are the two major sources of power in the islands, though access to education is quickly becoming an alternative avenue for commoners to rise to positions of authority and influence.

Western Samoa, described by Malama Meleisea and Penelope Schoffel as a "slippery fish," is a curious blend of constitutionalism and traditionalism. In spite of the influences of previous colonial administra-

tions, government and politics represent a bold compromise between the traditional elites and the "families and ordinary people who are the majority of Samoa's population." Indeed, the present status of Western Samoan political structure has been the result of a nine-year period of "cautious consolidation of the internal administration and the economy." The influence of the Apia merchant community is being felt through its support of political candidates by the distribution of food and liquor to constituents. The influence of nontraditional interest groups has been responsible in part for "considerable discussion and debate about the merits of electoral reform." It is, however, difficult for any government to achieve a solid base of popular support, particularly when power is exercised by an aging minority of chiefs,

American Samoa, on the other hand, is probably the "best example of how a territory can grow politically without a plan." After over half a century of benign neglect by the American Congress, abundant political advances have come about, advances that, according to Fofo Sunia, could not have materialized without corresponding advances in the standard of living. The elected offices of governor and delegate to Congress were important by-products of renewed political interest in the island territory. The legislature has become "much like those in the other U.S. states and territories," especially since the competition for seats has become both serious and expensive. In an ideological sense, American Samoa is both American and Samoan with all the attendant benefits and contradictions.

French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna are remarkable political contrasts in the French Pacific. Karl Rensch characterizes the latter and smallest of the French Pacific territories as a "total dependency," ruled from three sources of power. The kings of Alo, Sigave, and Wallis are the traditional rulers operating within the statutory institutions. As an overseas territory, the French administrator is the second source of authority, with veto power over legislative acts deemed contrary to metropolitan interests. The third source of power is considerably less formal. The local hierarchy of the Catholic Church continues to play a powerful role in politics, a fact that has carried over from the nineteenth century. While there are declared political parties, traditional respect for social rank, lineage, and seniority still affect the outcome of elections more than political issues. Although there is no independence movement, there is much concern over the future status of New Caledonia in the wake of Vanuatu independence, when many Wallisians returned to the islands. Should similar circumstances occur in New Caledonia, the islands would be unable to reabsorb an even greater

number of repatriates. Isolation has helped diminish its participation in regional affairs, a factor compounded by its small francophone population. Rensch concludes that these considerations and characteristics will not make Wallis and Futuna a major influence in the Pacific for the forseeable future.

By comparison, French Polynesia has a more engaging political character. Termed a "nuclear colony" by Bengt Danielsson, the islands have "vegetated in a sort of cultural vacuum" and have become economically more dependent on France. Beginning with a useful review of recent political history, the author elaborates on the independence/autonomy movements and all the personalities who have made interesting copy over the last two decades. Lacking a traditional political elite, the Tahitians have established the party system as an integral part of political culture. The thrust of Danielsson's essay revolves around the political effects of the nuclear tests, which have had both local and regional ramifications for France. An ironic development of the political scenario was the recent triumph of the local Gaullists in the territorial assembly elections and the subsequent defeat of their national counterparts in parliament and the presidency. Danielsson confidently concludes that "genuine self-government will sooner or later lead to independence" for the islands, but that will depend on how quickly the present metropolitan government makes good on its promises.

Niue, the Cook Islands, and the Tokelaus still have formal political relationships with New Zealand. How each of these jurisdictions has proceeded in regional and international settings has followed a remarkable scenario exceeded only by the respective political evolution of each. In the Cooks, the party system has had considerable counter-productive results. While such a system may be suitable for metropolitan countries,' "serious division in the community" has often resulted from differences in political alignments, The nature and results of the recent elections seem to support such an observation. Party politics has not been without historical antecedents. According to Pamela Pryor, New Zealand never fully prepared the Cook Islanders for self-government. The charismatic appeal and organizational abilities of Albert Henry placed the Cook Islands Party in power for thirteen years. In spite of the political defeat of the CIP, Henry managed to make a place for the Cooks in regional organizations and issues. In many instances, the Democratic Party under Thomas Davis's leadership has benefited from this, negotiating agreements and treaties with the United States and the Republic of Korea directly, without the participation of New Zealand.

Niue is an example of political development "marked by stability"

that is "second to none in the Pacific." While this has simply meant that Premier Robert Rex has been returned to power continuously since 1975, the political development of Polynesia's smallest independent state has been cautious and gradual. The Tokelaus are described as a "non-self-governing territory under New Zealand's administration." Such an administration is centered in Apia through the Office of Tokelau Affairs. Island currency is Western Samoan as well, which may in due course signal the final political affiliation of the islands,

Originally part of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands colony, Tuvalu's separation from the British protectorate in 1975 and its independence three years later was the fruit of protracted and emotional negotiations. Though the new republic has not adopted a formal party system, local politics revolves around the two principal political personalities, Tuaripi Lauti and Tomari Puapua.

Hawaii and Rapanui have the distinction of being the only two Polynesian islands to have been fully decolonized through their complete integration into Pacific rim nations. As with Wallis and Futuna, little has been written on the politics of Rapanui. Grant McCall sees island politics as functioning separately on the local and national levels. While family and clan affairs dominate local politics, the armed forces control the course of national politics. Unlike other Chileans, the Rapanui accord a "different prestige" to the armed forces. Local needs, however, deviate little from those of their Polynesian neighbors and encompass improved education and transportation, and economic development. In Hawaii, according to Norman Meller, centralization of political, economic, and social activity has been the major characteristic underlying island life for over a century. The "newest element appearing in the Islands' political scene has been the emergence of various spokesmen of Hawaiian ancestry," a phenomenon similar to that occurring among the New Zealand Maori. The 1978 Hawaii State Constitutional Convention addressed some of the concerns of this developing political force by enacting a variety of measures, including the creation of a new state agency entrusted with the betterment of conditions of the native Hawaiians. Political parties in Hawaii, however, appear to be losing much of their former importance due to greater fragmentation of interest groups, Such a development "may unbalance Hawaii's extremely concentrated government and lead to further decentralization."

Since the various authors worked separately on their respective essays, it would have been appropriate if the editors had included a final entry drawing together some broad observations and conclusions

concerning the overall political development in Polynesia. Nevertheless, this inexpensive volume is perhaps the best work yet issued by the Institute of Pacific Studies. It is readable, even in quality, and useful to both student and scholar alike.

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Judith Binney, Gillian Chaplin, and Craig Wallace, *Mihaia: The Prophet Rua Kenana and His Community at Maungapohatu.* Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1979. Pp. 208, illustrated, index. $33.00.

Peter Webster, *Rua and the Maori Millenium.* Wellington: Price Milburn for Victoria University Press, 1979. Pp. xii, 328, illustrations, maps, index, bibliography.

Prophetic movements and religious fervor in the Pacific are quite commonly associated with Melanesia. Yet Polynesia has had a significant history of prophets who have taken upon themselves the frequently awesome task of translating and mediating two opposing cultural traditions. In New Zealand, where there have been several such movements, the opposition and antagonism between Maori and European have become more, rather than less, complex over time. Moreover, the very fact that numerous individuals have undertaken, with varying but never complete success, the tasks involved in messianic leadership, indicates the shifting patterns of shadow and mutual illumination that have played across the colonial landscape.[1] To understand such events from the distance of several decades, to unravel the intricacies of revelation and intergroup rivalries, requires special skills. As Ivan Brady (1982: 185) has recently written:

> History is a hard thing to know. Although visible in the present through cultural developments that have survived the past, history is still never quite known to us, perhaps ever knowable in the extreme. Its combination of mystification and material circumstance always holds point through our puzzling over it, and we know. . . that it must be interpreted to be understood.