SOCIAL PROTEST AND SPONTANEOUS DEVELOPMENT: A CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN FIJI

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Historically, prophet-led social movements in Fiji have exhibited a variety of characteristics common to the process of revitalization in response to rapid social change. Preoccupation with supernatural power in such movements is at least in part an adaptation to frustrated attempts to implement an economic and political agenda and related persecution of the leader. A contemporary movement called "the Lami" is connected with prophecy, a strong secular business orientation, and a relatively long period of stability. Members of the Lami initially defied the authority of village chiefs and refused to participate in a colonial structure and ceremonial regimen that inhibited capital accumulation. Instead, the members entered the modern market economy as a group, acting as middlemen with the goal of helping Fijian farmers and agricultural laborers. Lami ideology, founded upon egalitarian ideals, is linked to the Fijian priestly tradition of resistance to colonial authority and opposition to hereditary chiefs. The multipurpose organizational framework of the Lami contributed to their success in business but limited the scope of the organization's popular appeal. This movement represents a response both to the erosion of traditional values and to the need for progressive economic change.

Introduction

While I was conducting fieldwork in Fiji in 1983, the manager of a sugar mill alerted me to the existence of a group of rural Fijians called "the Lami." The members had separated themselves from the rest of society in the 1960s and spontaneously formed into a kind of business organization. I was intrigued both by the group's innovative involvement in commercial activities and by its emergence in resistance to the authority of traditional chiefs and the colonial government, seemingly

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with the objective of bringing about social reform. The Lami movement, unlike earlier social movements in Fiji, overcame initial opposition by outsiders and occupied a stable niche in society for more than twenty years. The recency of this movement, its survival following independence, and the degree of success attained in its program for Fijian development make it an interesting case.

This study of the Lami is based on short-term ethnographic fieldwork involving observation and several lengthy interviews, for my inadvertent discovery of the Lami soon evoked several intriguing questions. Under what circumstances did the movement originate? What was its relationship to historical predecessors? How did the particular background and experience of the leader shape the character of the movement? Why were supernatural elements downplayed? What contributed to the movement's appeal and longevity? Does the movement give insight into the process of economic development? The following discussion is intended to shed light on these and related matters in the context of Fijian colonial history, with brief reference to predecessor movements in Fiji and elsewhere.

Revitalization movements, of which the Lami group is one example, arise as a response to material and moral deprivation associated with rapid social change. Such movements are adaptive strategies aimed at achieving group, as opposed to individual, goals and establishing a new social order that will restore livelihood and a sense of purpose to the participants. These movements must be understood as having evolved under a set of specific socioeconomic conditions to which social organization and beliefs are adapted (Lawrence 1964:273). Social movements of this kind are widely reported to have occurred in Pacific Island societies, where they have been referred to as "cargo cults" (Worsely 1959:117-128).

Wallace's classic article describes six stages in organizational development of a long-lasting revitalization movement (1956:270-275): (1) prophecy based on revelation or inspiration, (2) communication to other people, (3) organization of followers, (4) adaptation to resistance, (5) cultural transformation based on widespread acceptance, and (6) routinization as normal social institutions and customs. Wallace finds that longevity is related to the amount of "realism," as opposed to supernatural ritual and belief, associated with the movement.

McDowell argues against the labeling of broad typologies and generalizations, as those above, which she finds are inappropriately abstracted out of indigenous cultural context (1988:121-122). Social movements may vary not only according to aspects of indigenous cul-

ture, as McDowell suggests, but also according to the nature of colonial domination and exposure to selected aspects of Western culture. Differences often are great. However, generalizations may be useful in assessing regional similarities and systematic variation according to local conditions and historical circumstances. Differences should not keep us from dealing with the broader principles that can be derived from comparison.

Like other Fijian social movements in Melanesia, those in Fiji typically have originated with prophecy, which facilitates group mobilization where the understanding of a drastically changed future must be conveyed by the leader in the absence of substantial knowledge acquired by followers; it also adds a dynamic element, allowing new directions and experimentation with alternatives. In fact, movements based on prophecy may succeed while purely secular organizations, such as the Fijian Chamber of Commerce, which existed briefly in 1968, may fail (Durutalo 1985:40).

Social movements in Fiji also exhibit distinctive characteristics when compared with those in the less stratified cultures of Melanesia, where followers sought to restore the influence of indigenous leaders (big-men) who had been left out of the colonial administration (Cochrane 1970: 51-66). The chiefs in Fiji did not suffer from similar deprivation; they were incorporated into the colonial hierarchy and often found their authority challenged by such movements. Social movements in Fiji began inland among unacculturated hill people, in areas away from the centers of power, where military pacification campaigns had been carried out to bring the people under colonial rule (Gravelle 1979:128-131). In these areas Christianity had few adherents and indigenous Fijian beliefs were stronger. Followers of such movements resisted the British takeover and focused their resentment on coastal chiefs for their compliance with a system of external domination.

Van Fossen insightfully characterizes Fijian social movements as seeking to displace traditional principles of chiefly hereditary succession with the supernatural power under control of the Fijian priesthood (1986:158-160). The influence of the priests had suffered from the introduction of Christianity, which at the same time had enhanced the status of the chiefs. Social movements in this context arose to restore a way of life and values based on the authority of the priests as opposed to the leadership of corrupt and selfish chiefs. The use of supernatural force transcended local ties of kinship and heredity upon which the power of the chiefs was based. The leaders of these movements, however, advocated an idealized theocracy rather than a modern type of

egalitarian democracy. In advancing a sociopolitical agenda, the priests sought to justify their own privileged position as the ruling class in the name of the public good. Their central focus was to restructure internal relations within Fijian society rather than to resort to external violence, which already had proved futile as a means of resistance. They spread their message and recruited followers through the exercise of such rituals as *yaqona* (kava) drinking, music, dance, and drills.

Early Social Movements in Fiji: Four Examples

Several of these early Fijian social movements have been described in the literature cited at the end of this article. The case that best fits Van Fossen's model is the Tuka movement of the late nineteenth century, which created a national stir and provoked persecution by the colonial authorities. This movement has been described by Thomson (1908), Brewster (1922), Worsely (1968), Scarr (1980), and most recently by Kaplan (1988). The leader, Dugumoi, who later took the name Navosavakadua,[1] was a hereditary priest from the hills near Rakiraki in western Viti Levu. Navosavakadua's father had been executed by the high chief Cakobau because of his prophecies. After his return from a four-year deportation (1878-1882), Navosavakadua announced that he had acquired supernatural power that prevented the whites from killing him. He claimed that it had been revealed to him that biblical characters were actually Fijian ancestor gods referred to by other names. He prophesied that the world would soon be *tavuki* (turned upside-down), and whites would serve natives and chiefs would serve commoners. Preparation for this event included rebuilding Fijian temples destroyed by missionaries, engaging in military-dance drills, and *yaqona* drinking. He promised that faithful followers would be rewarded with shops full of calico and tinned salmon. Navosavakadua sold holy water that he claimed would confer invulnerability, accumulating great wealth that he quickly dissipated in ceremonial exchange. Among his attendants were several concubines, and he promised them that the holy water would keep them in a state of perpetual virginity. The elderly were promised the renewal of their youth. Navosavakadua's movement spread widely in the area of the present-day hill provinces of Ra, Navosa, Naitasiri, and Namosi; and it emerged repeatedly despite attempts by the colonial government to suppress it. In the end the government deported the prophet's entire home village to the island of Kadavu.

A local movement on that same island of Kadavu in the 1940s has

been described by Cato (1947). It was founded by a traditional healer, Kelevi Nawai, who deposed and replaced a village chief in Nakausele. Kelevi was not an entrepreneur, but he set up his own church along with a new work regimen, in which he controlled the assignment of labor to his own gardens. Kelevi claimed that he could call forth the spirits of the dead, that his followers would not die, and that Christ spoke through him. Six young girls called "Roses of Life" were taken by him as mistresses and assisted in church services twice a day. Eventually the authorities confiscated Kelevi's books and religious materials, but they did not deport him.

Both Navosavakadua and Kelevi claimed absolute authority over their followers, opposed the chiefs, and attempted the transformation of social life through the exercise of ritual. Neither of these leaders had much knowledge of the economic and political culture of their colonizers; their response to social disruption and dissatisfaction with the colonial social order was to construct a syncretic ideology powerful enough to mobilize followers and challenge the dominance of Christianity,

Although incorporating elements of the same priestly tradition, other social movements in Fiji had a different agenda. Information about a historically important movement led by Apolosi Nawai is contained in Macnaught (1979), Gravelle (1979), and Scarr (1980, 1984). Apolosi was a commoner from Narewa village in the hills of Nadi in western Viti Levu who had been educated in Christian schools. By 1915 he had achieved a large following and nationwide prominence as founder and head of the Fiji Company, an all-Fijian cooperative that gained a near monopoly over the lucrative banana trade in competition with the Europeans and traditional chiefs. Apolosi's vision was that the Fiji Company, with thousands of native shareholders and under its own flag, would not only gain control of the country's economy but would take over politically and run communities and institutions including towns, schools, police, ships, and government offices. For this purpose he set up a rival bureaucratic organization to the Fijian Administration, which was the part of the colonial government dealing with Native Fijian affairs.

Apolosi accused the chiefs of selling too much of the land set aside for Native Fijians, as the leasing of land by the chiefs to East Indian immigrant farmers had forced many Native Fijians to become poorly paid laborers. Without an apparent system of accounting, Apolosi was charged by the colonial government with misusing Fiji Company funds to support a lavish life-style. Colonial officials first jailed him for eighteen months and then exiled him to Rotuma for seven years. In Apolosi's

absence the Fiji Company collapsed. After his return to Fiji, Apolosi announced the founding of the Church of Time, which was inspired by revelations from the old gods of Fiji and by newly acquired supernatural power gained from his discovery of a box lost from a mythical ancestor's canoe. Impressed by tales of miracles, many of his followers returned. Meanwhile the government accused Apolosi of rape, incest, and drunken debauchery, There was a rumor that he had more than a dozen wives. On one occasion Apolosi showed his followers a document that he said was signed by Queen Victoria and which, he said, made him King of Fiji. Again he was exiled to Rotuma, this time for ten years. Again, after being released for only a few days, Apolosi was sentenced to another eight years of exile at the outbreak of World War II. In one of his last sermons before his death on Yanuca island, he claimed that he was King of the World.

Garrett (1973) and Spate (1960) provide accounts of a related movement in the village of Daku, headed by Emosi Saurura. Daku, near Nausori on Viti Levu, originally had been settled by hill people from Lovoni on the island of Ovalau. Emosi received basic education on the chiefly island of Bau and later undertook Bible study and technical training in trades at a school run by the Methodist Church. He was expelled from this school for being involved in a strike. He learned his skills later working in carpentry and road construction in Lautoka, where he came to know several of Apolosi's followers who were engaged in a project to help villagers make use of modern technology in a cash economy. Emosi returned to Daku in 1937, proclaiming that he had experienced a revelation about a new kind of village society. He launched a renovation and construction program, using his experience in carpentry and road construction. He envisioned combining traditional ways of Fijian village life with the values associated with the factory and the clock. The village raised finances for the new buildings by selling handicrafts, shellfish, and firewood, but it had no bank account. Eventually, Emosi bought out the business of an Indian fuel merchant in the town of Nausori. Daku raised its own flag and, under Emosi's leadership, declared its independence from the jurisdiction of the Fijian Administration, taking the name "New Jerusalem." Two satellite villages were incorporated into the program for change. Emosi and his lieutenants spread the message of the "New Life" to many other villages in an unsuccessful attempt to bring all Fijians into the movement. Emosi had a sophisticated philosophy about the difference between, on the one hand, the immorality and lawlessness of large-scale, impersonal societies where people are obsessed with money and, on the other, the

superior morality of small-scale, theocratic societies where people care about each other and leaders provide moral guidance. In 1947 and again in 1967 Emosi burned down the houses of dissident Catholics who refused to join his program. After each incident he was sent to a mental hospital. During the five years of his second incarceration he wrote an account of his vision.

The attributes that the four movements just described have in common are leadership based on prophecy, opposition to hereditary chiefs and the colonial government sanctioning their authority, restructuring of the internal moral order, and the creation of a new ceremonial or ritual system to replace the old. This phenomenon of revitalization movements represents a reversal in the process of acculturation and social change, such that external institutions are modified to suit a way of life rather than the other way around. In all four instances, a leader's attempt to assert moral authority was viewed as a threat by officials of the colonial government, whose response was to administer punishment, the effect of which was to induce greater preoccupation with the manipulation of supernatural power.[2] The latter two movements, and to a lesser extent the first two, represent more than a reworking of Christianity or a restoration of traditional priestly prerogatives; they borrowed and adapted models of Western business enterprise and political organization to what they regarded as the true Fijian way of life and asserted a kind of political independence. The degree to which Western economic and political elements were introduced into such movements was the outcome of the leader's personal experience and still-incomplete knowledge about Western culture. The movements led by Apolosi and Emosi were better informed in this respect and more business-oriented, but they still did not adopt Western practices of accounting or managing money, perhaps because of a lack of knowledge, but also because of the disparities between Fijian and Western culture on how resources should be allocated. Moreover, they began to show concern for an incipient class of Native Fijians working for wages. The Lami pattern of cultural borrowing and adaptation can be similarly construed, but as a contemporary group, the Lami evolved toward a more secular orientation with less overt supernatural emphasis, which, after initial difficulties, enabled it to insulate itself from persecution.

Colonial Institutions in Fiji

The setting in which the Lami movement emerged was Fiji's late colonial period. The administrative system in Fiji, as in other British col-

onies, was characterized by indirect rule, in which native elites were trained to assist in local governance. However, as it unfolded historically, the system in Fiji developed unique features.

The colonial bureaucracy in Fiji extended to the village level as a means of maintaining control over every aspect of indigenous Fijian social life. The Fijian Administration, established as a separate arm of the colonial government to implement indirect rule, placed each village settlement under the jurisdiction of a chief appointed as a headman. Taxes known as *soli ni yasana* (provincial rates) were assessed on individuals, and the headman required contributions of labor for village maintenance and improvement projects decided upon at the provincial level. The headman also required all able-bodied men to plant a garden for raising food crops. All births and marriages had to be registered with the government. Children between the ages of six and twelve were obliged to attend school. Emigration from the village was restricted, and communal obligations were enforced to keep Native Fijians under close supervision and prevent them from crowding into urban centers. Justice was administered by a system of native courts extending to the *tikina* (district) level (Roth 1951:2-3).

Administrative policy in the colonial period was effective in segregating the rural subsistence economy of Native Fijians from the plantation export economy of the major towns and ports. (It is interesting that the politician chiefs of the Alliance Party who ruled after independence from 1970 to 1987 sought to revive the old Fijian Administration system as a means of coping with the post-independence problems of unemployment, crime, and the growth of urban ghettos [Durutalo 1986:51].) This policy, however, failed to address a continuing economic and class division in Native Fijian society, and this failure was a major factor in the founding of the Lami in 1959.

In the post-World War II era, a small but significant number of people left their villages under a 1911 law that allowed them to establish themselves as independent farmers by paying an annual tax in lieu of performing their communal obligations. These independent farmers were no longer responsible to the appointed village headman. Individuals who wished to escape the economic constraints of village life chose this option, but most rural Fijians remained in their villages, where a strong system of mutual support rewarded their participation. During the same period the Fijian Administration encouraged cash cropping in the traditional sector. However, the incentive for market production and individual gain in Fijian villages was inhibited by the custom of *kerekere* (sharing), according to which possessions and resources of indi-

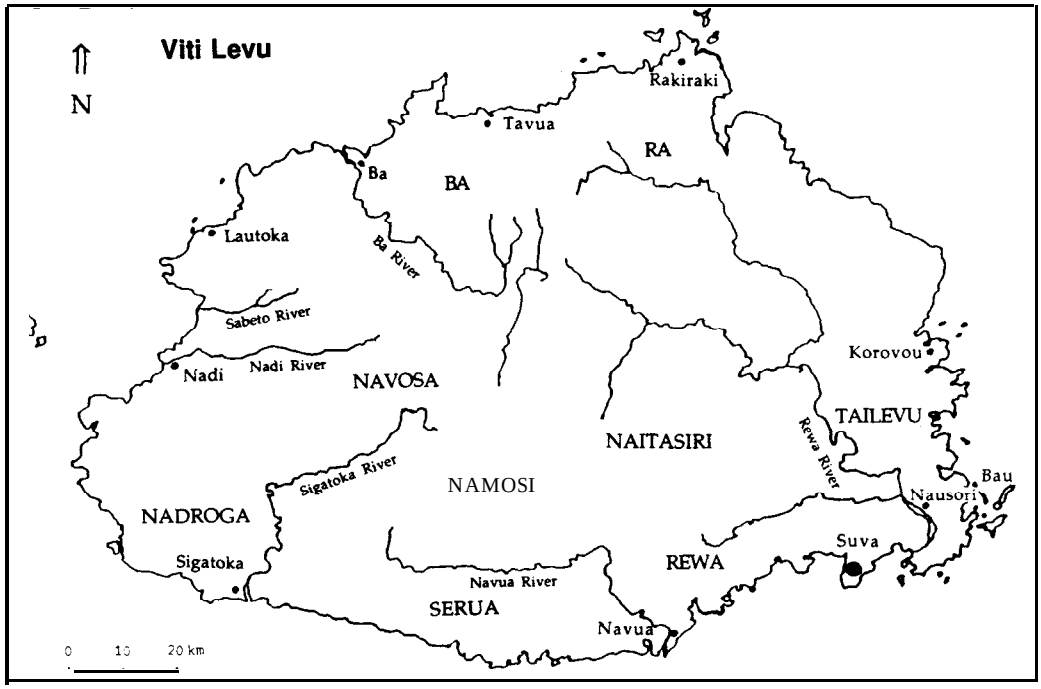
viduaIs and families could be borrowed with little or no obligation to repay and every household was obliged to help cover the expenses of ceremonial events.[3] For those who chose to be businesslike and "stingy," relations with kinsmen and fellow villagers could become strained. The Lami movement represented a reaction against village customs, which, combined with the rules and regulations of the Fijian Administration, seemed to be holding individuals back from economic advancement.

Finally, the Methodist Church, established by the earliest missionaries to Fiji and exercising a pervasive influence upon Fijian society from 1835 to the present, reinforced British colonial administration by sanctifying the power of the chiefs. The church accepted British colonial domination and required docile, obedient behavior from the villagers. In addition, the church placed its own demands on individual resources in the form of monetary donations. Thus the church itself could become, and was for the Lami in particular, a focus of resentment because of its financial demands and because it supported the demands of secular leaders associated with the Fijian Administration. Missionaries ran the schools as an adjunct to the church, placing similar emphasis on social conformity and the acquisition of Western ways. School fees represented a drain on resources, and classes took older children out of productive activities. The link between church and state in the colonial setting had the effect of undermining Fijian identity and making demands on vital resources.

Origins of the Lami

The Lami originated in Togovere village, a small settlement located not far upriver from the town of Sigatoka. Overall the Sigatoka Valley is the most productive agricultural region on Fiji's largest island of Viti Levu, but it also includes extreme internal variation in the suitability of soils for agriculture and in access to water. The conditions for growing staple root crops were not favorable in Togovere. Most of the community's cash income was provided by citrus crops.

The people of Togovere were descended from hill people, said to have come to the valley sometime before 1908 as refugees. They were regarded as guests or temporary settlers and were granted no land rights of their own. Historically the custom of allowing temporary settlement of outside groups was a way of accommodating populations displaced by warfare or internal disputes (Farrell 1977:102). Although the cause of the migration of the Togovere people has been lost in the past, their status as guests, rather than landowners, was well recognized in the



local area. When the Lands' Claims Commission met in 1911 to record land titles on the basis of kinship in each *matagali* (resident lineage), the Togovere people were left out. They were placed under the jurisdiction of the local Voua chiefs, who could repossess the land if they wished. Since the land was quite poor, the village remained small. (The 1983 population consisted of only eight households.) Several families split off at various times and founded other villages, including Kabisi and Tilivalevu (with five and ten households in 1983, respectively). Another household head departed to become a *galagala* (independent farmer). No matter where they moved, the Togovere people had no secure tenure of land. Togovere village itself was relocated on five different sites after it was first established.[4]

Little or nothing of any consequence happened to the Togovere people until the Lami became an active group. Apolosi's movement was known to residents of the Sigatoka Valley as late as the 1930s and its legacy may have influenced the Lami in some way, but consultants could point to no direct connections, either through membership or doctrine, between the two movements. All indications are that the Lami emerged independently, though sharing with Apolosi's movement similar perceptions of social needs and a strong opposition to colonial rule. The Lami drew followers primarily from the currently defined province of Nadroga between Sigatoka and Nadi, approximately the same area of western Viti Levu where Apolosi had achieved his greatest popularity.

The Lami movement was actually the third in a succession of closely related movements that started about 1959, according to Durutalo (1985:406-410). The first was an antigovernment peasant organization called the Dra-ni-Lami (Blood of the Lamb). Although this movement soon died, it was revived again in 1961 as the Bula Tale (New Life) Association by four Nadroga villages. The public spokesman for the group at that time was Apimeleki Ramatau, a former clerk in the Medical Department. Apimeleki claimed that the *Bula Tale* aspired to be a communist state where laws would regulate work and traditional customs, and Christian practices would be rejected. This movement received widespread support from other parts of Fiji. The Fijian Administration was initially alarmed, but stood aside upon finding that the main aim of the organization was economic. Probably after running into opposition from local chiefs, the Bula Tale Communist Party changed its name to the Dra-ni-Lami Club and established a branch in Navua. Today the group exists under the name "Lami" in Yolalevu, near the town of Ba.

On a June evening in 1983, accompanied by two university colleagues, I entered the Lami headquarters building for the first time. A picture on the door of the meeting room showed our elderly host, the spokesman for the Lami, Emosi Sove, as a younger man standing with an unidentified companion. Pictures of the Queen, high chiefs, and religious figures that usually adorn Fijian private quarters were absent. We were greeted by about twenty-five men and four or five women sitting cross-legged on the floor. They served us with *yaqona,* but did not partake themselves as it was the start of the sugarcane harvest season. We began to ask questions, and these were answered by Sove and his two assistants while the onlookers sat contentedly. As the night wore on, several left to return to their homes. We parted with good feelings on both sides. A month later I paid a second interview visit, during which we were taken to observe daily work activities. A third interview occurred in the home village of the Lami, where relatives and acquaintances lived. Finally, we conducted a fourth interview with a prominent politician from western Viti Levu, who was acquainted with the history of the Lami. The following account of the history, philosophy, and economic life of the Lami comes from these interviews and from observations in the field.

Kitione's Revelation

Although the original Lami followers were not well educated and spoke a nonstandard, western dialect of the Fijian language, their founder

and prophet came from a successful entrepreneurial background that must have given him a broader worldview. The prophet, Kitione, was a man in his early forties when he founded the movement. He had been known as a quiet person whom nobody thought capable of causing a stir. His father had been a comparatively successful commercial farmer. An outsider who knew him commented that Kitione's father was one of the best farmers in the area. The father grew rice and raised cattle for sale, something that the present generation does not do. He also built a barn for storing his bags of rice, corn, and yams; he had so much that he kept the surplus in his house and in the church. He even paid other people to work on his farm. By local standards, Kitione's father was wealthy. Perhaps for this reason, consultants said that Togovere village "always contained great differences in wealth."

The *turaga ni koro* (village chief) of Togovere heard Kitione prophesy for the first time when he was a young man staying at Naduri in the interior of the Sigatoka Valley. He speculated that Kitione probably came to Naduri to visit relatives and look for a wife. A younger man, Kitione's namesake,[5] followed him to Naduri with a message to return home. Kitione, who was related to the young man as a father's brother's son, told him about a new association called Bula Tale (New Life). Kitione said that he had been asleep in his bed when things like instructions fell down in front of his eyes, and he was told that all people needed to be equalized. The vision was in the form of a metaphor--one household should not be eating yams (a desirable and expensive food) while another household was eating *tapioka* (cassava, a less desirable and inexpensive food). Soon after this revelation Kitione sold off the pair of bullocks, horses, and farm implements that he had inherited from his father. His reason for selling these possessions was to set an example for others and demonstrate the strength of his conviction that everyone should be equal.

The news of Kitione's revelation spread quickly, but not through his own direct efforts. Close relatives and friends to whom he had initially communicated his vision went up and down the Sigatoka Valley to proselytize. The movement reached Nadroumai, Emuri, Nabua, Semo, Yagadra, and other villages throughout the length of the valley. A consultant who was a teacher at the time described his experience when he first heard about the movement.

> Lami members approached me saying that they had formed a new marketing and agricultural society. They also said that they did not agree with the government and social system in

> Fiji. Some spirit influenced them to form this society, but they were not very specific about it. Perhaps the spirit talked to Kitione. They wanted village people to join. I said that it was a free world and any villagers could join if they wished. I told them that people would think about it and let them know. Most people did not see how the society could succeed.

New recruits were asked to pay one shilling for each family member as a membership fee. They were urged to give up their possessions, following Kitione's example, and move to Emuri, another Sigatoka Valley village, where they would live in a communal setting to restore the basic principles of the traditional Fijian way of life. All property, including farmland and animals, was to be commonly owned. In Emuri the group built two dormitories, one for men and another for women, and set up a mess hall for communal dining. All men, women, and children were to eat the same food together in accordance with the vision of the prophet. Followers immediately began selling vegetables on the coast at Cuvu (near Sigatoka town) as a means of supporting themselves.

The Lami rejected everything associated with colonial domination that Kitione regarded as preventing the attainment of social equality and economic advancement for Fijians. The informal code of the newly formed group abolished the marriage ceremony, registration of births, formal education for children, and participation in Christian churches. One Sunday when a Methodist minister came to preach to the village, Kitione entered the place where the service was being held, walked straight to the pulpit, and seized the Bible away from the minister. Kitione asked the minister if he practiced what he preached, and chased him out of the village. Kitione also defied chiefly authority by prohibiting followers from contributing either money or free labor for village purposes and by rejecting Fijian customs associated with the existing social system. Whales' teeth, used as a special-purpose money to pay tribute to chiefs and facilitate ceremonial expenditure, were "thrown away into the forest," along with the *yaqona* bowl. The drinking of *yaqona,* a mild sedative drug, occurs in association with Fijian ceremonies where wealth is consumed and social status is recognized by serving individuals in order of rank. According to Kitione, drinking *yaqona* not only reinforced the social hierarchy and dissipation of wealth but also was not compatible with maximizing the use of human resources for social and economic development. (If ingested in large enough quantities, *yaqona* can be debilitating to motor coordination, alertness, and the productive use of time.)

In the early 1960s the Lami also defied the authority of the colonial government. The courts issued one-month jail sentences to some followers who had refused to pay their provincial taxes. The people of Cuvu, the chiefly village of Nadroga on the coast, were suspicious of the Lami and their resemblance to communists. The colonial government for the most part adopted a wait-and-see attitude and kept quiet about its opinion. A representative from the Fijian Administration came to discuss the problem with the chiefs in the area, but the fate of the Lami ultimately was left to local landowners, who objected from the start to the Lami organization and its activities. The village of Togovere also was badly split, since some residents refused to join the movement. Meanwhile the Lami, as guests or temporary residents on the land, had no power to control their own destiny. The landowners warned them that they would be forced to move out if they did not change their ways. After little more than a year, the Lami were ordered to leave the area. Membership in the movement during the early 1960s may have been as high as the one thousand claimed by consultants, or perhaps somewhat less. In any case it is likely that the population numbered more than the 271 reported in 1983. Forced removal resulted in followers scattering to various places on the island of Viti Levu in search of a livelihood. It seems that few (if any) returned to their home villages. A core group led by Kitione settled in Ba on the northwest side of Viti Levu, well away from the Sigatoka Valley on the southwest side of the island. Ba became their permanent home. Deceased members were buried in a cemetery there rather than in their villages.

Not all the original members left their villages immediately after the group was expelled. Some stayed behind until the members in Ba became successful in business. Every year some members from villages in the Sigatoka Valley would leave to join the group in Ba. For example, the namesake of Emosi Sove, the spokesman in 1983, was one of those who went later. Consultants said that new members joined the group primarily because of the appeal of the philosophy rather than for the practical reason of finding employment.

Social Philosophy

The name chosen for the Lami movement underwent a three-stage evolution. The memories of current members differ from the version in written records mentioned earlier. The earliest name was Bula Tale (New Life). According to consultants, this term signified the intention

to bring back the original Fijian way of life. When this attempt failed and followers were under threat from the government and local chiefs, they changed their name to Dra-ni-Lami (Blood of the Lamb). With respect to this name, group leaders indicated that the concept of sacrifice was meaningful to their interpretation of events and to their sense of shared purpose. Not only did individuals sacrifice their homes and belongings to join the group, but followers believed the group itself was making a sacrifice for the greater good of Fijian society. Later, as the group stabilized and gained a measure of economic strength, "Dra-ni" was dropped and followers referred to themselves simply as "the Lami." In 1983, the spokesman said: "The name Lami is taken from the Bible. It symbolizes togetherness in the blood of the lamb and that Jesus came to die for other people. This is the only aspect of the Bible that we have chosen to use."

The Lami believed in ethical principles that they felt would not be supported by organized religion. The spokesman elaborated as follows: "We do not want to be influenced by religious ideas that would lead us astray. What is important is to remain faithful to oneself and follow a righteous path. We believe in fairness in dealing with other human beings. Some people pray for forgiveness and come out of church only to repeat the same offense."

Although the Lami sought to restore certain basic Fijian values and to serve as a model for others to emulate, the members did not wish to appear backward. One striking symbol displayed on the door of one of their transport vehicles was a picture of a spacecraft along with the inscription "Apollo 11," referring to American astronauts who landed on the moon. In this way the Lami depicted themselves as forward-looking Fijian pioneers in the modern business world. They saw no contradiction between living a Fijian way of life and being economically successful. In fact they believed that Fijian culture could not survive without economic strength in the marketplace and that such strength could be achieved only by eliminating the influence of individualistic Western values.

The strategy of the Lami movement was to establish a collective business enterprise. The members did not believe that prosperity would be handed to them magically; they understood that economic strength would come through capital accumulation and investment. They also understood from experience that individual capital accumulation produced extreme differences in wealth. They were unwilling to tolerate such differences among themselves because they did not regard inequal-

ity as consistent with the Fijian ideal of communal sharing of basic resources. Doing things the Fijian way meant pooling possessions, labor, and income so that they could make business investments and balance this requirement against the need for consumption.

The Lami emphasized that their resistance to chiefs and colonial institutions in Togovere was calculated to bring about conditions that would promote capital accumulation and investment. They believed that Native Fijians were being robbed of their wealth by colonial taxes, church donations, school fees, ceremonial gifts, and unpaid labor conscripted by the chiefs. Thus their resistance had a purpose and was based on an assessment of village life in which Fijian economic advancement was being systematically thwarted.

In regard to the Fijian chiefly system, the Lami believed that there was a need for communal organization as well as a need for one voice in making important decisions. But this voice did not have to be the chiefs voice. It could be the voice of a commoner or anyone else as long as the people involved had the opportunity to sit down, debate, and think about what the person was saying. The spokesman commented:

> People must be allowed to give their reactions to ideas and decisions. A chief can remain in his position of honor but should not make all the decisions. The word of a chief should not be swallowed regardless of whether it is right or wrong. It is most important for people to reach a consensus. In villages where the chief controls all decision-making, material and social well-being is far below other villages. Problems arise because people fear to challenge the chiefs opinion. The result is that when the chief gives a command, nobody follows it. This happens in some villages. If everyone agrees to a decision in the first place, there is a greater chance of it being carried out. The result will be to enhance the status of the chief rather than to downgrade it.

The spokesman added that this concept of decision-making procedure derives from the Lami view of traditional society modeled upon the less stratified system typical of western hill people rather than the hierarchical system of the coastal and eastern islands. He argued that command-type decision-making was a later innovation, not representative of Fijian tradition. This view is consistent with the fact that the imposition of indirect rule by British colonizers strengthened the authority exercised by the chiefs.

Benevolent Middlemen

After moving to Ba, the Lami supported themselves by marketing fruits and vegetables. They sought to help Fijian village farmers by providing transportation and retail outlets to give them access to urban consumers. The Lami obtained much of their produce from villages in the Sigatoka Valley to which they had kinship ties. For example, they collected lemons and mandarin oranges annually from Togovere. Later they also began to obtain produce from commercial farmers who were independent of the village and from some Indo-Fijian farmers. By pooling their resources the Lami were able to purchase trucks that could serve the wholesale transportation needs of a number of villages too poor to afford their own vehicles.

The Lami rented market stalls for retailing in towns along the coast of western Viti Levu. In 1983 they operated a total of fourteen market stalls in six different urban places: four at Nadi, three at Ba, three at Lautoka, two at Tavua, one at Sigatoka, and one at Rakiraki. Individual members, sometimes with the help of children, managed these market stalls on a weekly rotation. Other members transported village products to the various market locations. Stall managers kept receipts and returned them to headquarters in Ba at the end of the week. Frequent communication between headquarters and market staff was maintained by telephone and supervisory visits. In more recent years the Lami began to supplement the sale of domestic produce with high-quality fruits and vegetables acquired from Australia and New Zealand. They did not grow food themselves; whatever they sold or consumed came through wholesale purchases.

Representatives for Labor

The recruitment of labor for the sugarcane harvest was the second major business of the Lami, aimed at improving the wages and living conditions of the harvest work force. Nationwide, four thousand Native Fijian men would leave their villages each year to work as sugarcane cutters during the six-month harvest period (Young 1983:19). Crews of twelve to sixteen laborers typically signed a contract with a “gang” or group of farmers to move between the fields harvesting the crops of each farmer. In the absence of mechanization, the use of unskilled, inexpensive labor was essential for the farmers, most of whom were Indo-Fijian and rented their land in ten- to fifteen-acre blocks from either the Fiji Sugar Corporation or Native Fijian landowners. Farmers were hard

pressed to find a reliable source of labor. In addition to paying wages, farmers had to provide necessary lodging, implements, and often food and clothes to keep the crews working. At the same time, with proper coordination, young Fijian men could be persuaded to leave their villages and join the sugarcane harvest because other wage labor opportunities were scarce. These men were eager to find jobs that gave them at least a small cash income. Sometimes workers from the same village would join together to earn money for a communal project. Although the overall economic advantage or disadvantage of the migrant labor system on Native Fijian village life has not been examined, two general observations can be made: one is that the potential exists for a significant infusion of cash into a village when one or more crews return from the harvest; another is that the laborers absent from the village for half the year are taken out of subsistence production and forced either to rely on relatives or to pay cash for what they consume. According to Lami informants, it was common for laborers to dissipate a large portion of their earnings before returning home. What was not spent for necessities was frequently used on drink, particularly *yaqona,* to relieve the hardship and monotony of working long days in the hot sun. Lack of savings resulted in workers contributing little or nothing of their earnings back to their home villages.

My second interview with the Lami was arranged for a morning in July after the sugarcane harvest had begun. Again accompanied by two colleagues, I was invited into the Lami headquarters by Emosi Sove, the spokesman, and Simione Nabenu, the general supervisor of field labor. Two other men were present to serve *yaqona,* but only to us as guests. Eight or ten women gathered to listen and sew clothes in the back of the room. In the afternoon we drove to the fields with Nabenu to observe the harvest in progress and visit two camps set up to house and feed laborers. There were two or three men and one women present at each camp. In the cane field a crew of fourteen laborers, all young men from Tailevu and Nadroga, was supervised by one Lami member. The crew was split in half, each loading two trucks during the day. Since the fields were suffering from drought, workers had to cover an unusually large area. A crew of young men from the Ba hills and Sigatoka Valley was loading ten rail cars in another location. The cars moved along portable tracks laid down in rows in the field. Men worked in pairs, while a boy carried a bucket of drinking water to the loading area.

The Lami goal was not only to feed and house laborers, but also to encourage them to save what they earned, thus ensuring that economic

benefits would accrue to their home villages. Farms served by the Lami were located in the Sigatoka Valley as well as in Ba. The Lami made their crews competitive by guaranteeing a labor supply well in advance of the harvest and by relieving farmers of the responsibility to provide food and personal articles such as clothing and tools. Farmers still had to provide transportation to and from workers' home villages and maintain permanent camps with sleeping quarters. Lami women went into the camps to prepare meals. Due to a shortage of Lami women who could be sent into the camps, crews sometimes brought their own cooks. In 1983 thirty women came in from outside. Unlike Lami women, the outsiders were paid for their work. Altogether eighty women were employed as cooks throughout the harvest season.

Each crew of cutters was led by a Lami member who was expected to set an example of hard work and thrift. Cutters did not have to spend their own money for necessities and were encouraged by the crew leader not to spend money on drink. Lami members themselves were forbidden to drink alcohol at any time under any circumstances. A ban on drinking *yaqona* for Lami members went into effect several weeks before the start of the sugarcane harvest and remained in place throughout the season. The purpose of this prohibition was not only to save money but also to keep work performance from being impaired. The Lami banned tea and coffee, mainly for cost savings, but also for reasons related to overall health. They claimed that the good health of field laborers increased their work capacity. The Lami said they paid their workers F$5 per day compared with F$4 per day paid by farmers to other workers. The Lami deducted the cost of food from wages, but this amount was less than that paid by non-Lami workers for their own food. The spokesman explained that better wages and benefits had a widespread effect.

> We make sure that our laborers go back to their villages with something to show for their work. Their earnings will not have been used up on daily expenses. In this way village people not living in sugarcane areas can receive some of the benefit from Fiji's major industry. Our main interest is in helping Fijian villagers to share in the wealth of the country and not in balancing revenues against expenses. Farmers prefer the Lami system. Now farmers who do not have contracts through the Lami are switching to the $5 per day system for their own cutters. They are feeling the competition from the Lami. If they want to keep

> the cutters that they depend on from year to year, they must offer similar benefits. Otherwise, the cutters will sign with the Lami.

One crew hired from the interior of Ba Province was reported to have made a particularly good impression for the Lami upon returning to their home village. On the way home their truck, loaded with rice and other goods, broke down. Another truck stopped to help, and the driver asked if they were carrying goods for a store. The crew replied that they had purchased their cargo with a surplus from harvest wages. When the crew arrived in the village, they distributed the goods to individual households. Villagers told a Lami member who had accompanied the crew that in the whole history of cutting cane, workers had never before brought home so many provisions or saved as much money.

The Lami tried to discourage field laborers from perceiving incentives in terms of tonnage cut, because this would promote individualism and selfishness. Instead they emphasized the importance of cooperative effort and communal work. In other words, they downplayed material incentives and sought motivation from the moral value of helping each other.

The Lami created greater efficiency by better harvest management, providing their own transportation, and using food obtained directly from farmers. Farmers paid the Lami on the basis of tonnage rather than a daily rate. Ordinary laborers normally received F$4 for loading one truck in one day. The possibility of additional earnings was restricted either by not having a second truck available or by the fatigue of the laborers. The Lami, however, owned one cane truck, which they used to supplement trucks sent from the mill, thus allowing some crews to load two trucks in one day. In flat fields the harvest was increased by using portable track to load small railroad cars. Presumably, well-fed and healthy Lami workers were capable of handling the extra workload in either case. If a crew is able to load the equivalent of two trucks in one day, this means that the value of the total labor input is F$8 per worker. The difference between F$8 and F$5 actually paid out to crew members then was used to provide food and other necessities.

Lami crews first established their reputation by working seven days per week while other crews took Sundays off for church. The Lami realized a savings in not having to feed idle workers on Sundays. However, what works in theory does not always work in practice. Lami leaders stated that money spent providing food, clothes, and cane knives cut deeply into their own earnings. They also pointed to the highly perish-

able nature of vegetable and root crops sold in the market as another liability that reduced their income. Maintaining an austere standard of living for their own members was necessary to provide others with social services.

In 1982 the Lami recruited four hundred cane cutters from villages in various parts of Fiji, including many from Nadroga, their own district of origin. They negotiated contracts with thirty-six groups of farmers to harvest a total of eighty thousand tons of cane. At this level of activity Lami crews accounted for about 10 percent of the cane processed through the large Rarawai Mill in Ba. Contracts for the next year were signed soon after the harvest. Gangs had to pay a F$2,000 advance to guarantee the return of a Lami crew. A consultant who had left the group remarked that the Lami were surviving on advance payments and had fallen behind in debt payments on the purchase of vehicles and rented housing. The Lami planned to recruit additional field laborers needed for the following year through radio advertising. The slogan was "Anyone who can get two hundred men should contact us."

In the off-season Lami crew leaders returned to Ba and were given a reduced workload. They periodically assisted with produce marketing, occasionally participated in logging with the use of horses, and sometimes cleared and weeded cane fields. Recreational and leisure activities included volleyball, soccer, and storytelling. Several men organized an electric band, which raised extra money by playing in the nearby towns of Ba and Lautoka. Women who were employed as cooks in the harvest season kept busy making woven handicraft items such as mats and baskets to fill wholesale orders from marketing outlets in the capital city of Suva and other centers of tourism. Fifty-five Lami women belonged to the Soqosoqo Vakamarama, a nationwide women's organization for sewing and weaving of traditional handicrafts. In June 1983 Lami women hosted the annual crafts fair for this organization. A female extension agent in Ba worked with them on this activity.

Consumption and Investment

The Lami managed their finances from the Ba headquarters. They reported keeping records of income and expenditures by saving receipts. Individuals assigned to manage market stalls or housing would total up their receipts and report back to the group. Leaders indicated that they kept track of expenses connected with the sugarcane harvest and measured them against the income received from farmers. However, they maintained no overall set of books.

The Lami preferred to treat money as a customary item of exchange similar to food, pottery, or whales' teeth, which are valued primarily when given away or distributed to others. The giver acquires social prestige, but the goods themselves are worthless if hoarded or kept as personal possessions. Lami leaders specifically mentioned a "principle of uniform consumption," which they believed to be essential to the traditional Fijian way of life. Leaders gave no money to individuals beyond what was needed to meet basic needs. Members received no wages. Instead, they used a common fund to provide communal meals, rented housing, and individual expenses for clothing, medical treatment, and incidentals on a first-come-first-served basis.

The Lami pooled the earnings of individual members along with the income of the group as a whole. There was no relation between the income earned by a particular individual and the amount allowed for individual expenditure. Leaders, in consultation with the membership, budgeted fixed amounts periodically for clothing, cigarettes, and other personal items. Members were able to withdraw what they needed from the appropriate account. Nobody kept track of individual expenditures. When an account had been used up, further withdrawals were postponed until the next budget period. In other words, when a budget of F$100 for a particular week was used up, no requests for money were honored until the following week. The consensus of all members assembled together was needed to make an exception to this rule. In such a case, the person responsible for managing the account would make a report and recommendation. The Lami provided for the needs of the nonworking elderly, treating them in the same way as other members. Leaders took responsibility for allocating funds for group projects, consulting with members before making decisions.

With the help of Burns Philp, the Lami established a store called Bula Tale (New Life) General Merchandise. Located on the main road into Ba, the store was communally operated and stocked with basics, such as rice, tinned fish, sugar, soap, and a few shirts. No luxury items were evident on the shelves. Members were allowed to take merchandise free of charge, but leaders frowned upon this practice, and if repeated too often it could result in a reprimand. Leaders viewed the store as a business enterprise that should be kept solvent, even if some individual needs went unmet.

The Lami attitude toward consumption was consistent with the Fijian custom of *kerekere,* in which mutual borrowing is allowed without strictly calculating individual gains and losses. To conserve capital, though, they limited what could be requested. A Lami member explained the internal allocation system this way:

> Individuals usually ask for only $1 or $2 unless they need $20 or so for medical treatment. Someone must withdraw funds for several days in a row in order to accumulate enough money to purchase a $10 item. When no money is available in the fund, the person must take what is needed from the shop. Emosi [the spokesman] controls the money and keeps a record of people who take items from the shop. He keeps no record of withdrawals from the common fund.

The Lami did not pursue business activities in order to achieve private or corporate ownership over land and resources. In fact they did not see ownership of any kind as important for Fijian advancement. The Lami owned no land or buildings, not even their own homes and headquarters, and no machinery except for eleven trucks used for business purposes. These vehicles included nine three-ton vegetable trucks, one large cane truck, and a small pickup. The Lami regarded ownership as necessary in this case because it was the only means available to accommodate their transportation needs. The Lami refused to follow advice from outsiders about registering as a legal corporation. Consequently, legal title to all Lami vehicles was held in the name of the son of the prophet. A substantial sum of money borrowed for purchase of the vehicles was still owed to creditors. The Lami had no investments other than the trucks, but said that they were not philosophically opposed to the general idea of investing their money. They claimed to be exploring such possibilities.

Family and Education

The Lami had no formal marriage ceremony; couples lived together by mutual consent. This practice may have caused domestic pairing to be somewhat fluid, but rumors among outsiders about the existence of polygamy could not be substantiated. Lami leaders said that they recommended keeping to one partner and tried to keep marital relationships as stable as possible to avoid jealousy and interpersonal conflict. Physical violence between members was, by all indications, completely absent. The only instances of assault were among outsiders hired to work in the cane fields. Nuclear families lived in their own quarters. Housing rented from Indo-Fijian landlords was completely subsidized by the organization, so that individual families did not have to pay rent. Members walked to the headquarters building, a distance of up to one mile, for meals scheduled at 7-8 A.M., 11 A.M.-1 P.M., and 6-8 P.M. It was against Lami rules to use trucks for transporting members to and

from meals. During the harvest season, four or five women were assigned on a rotating basis each day as cooks. During the off-season, a mixed group of men and women shared cooking duties. Flour and rice were the staples for all three meals, with occasional supplements of *tavioka* and *dalo.*

Field laborers from other villages sometimes joined the Lami for a short time and then left. In one case an outside laborer married a Lami cook and stayed on permanently. In three other cases Lami men married women cooks brought in from outside. Overall it seemed that few new members were recruited except through biological reproduction.

A general antiestablishment attitude precluded the Lami from participation in many mainstream institutions. On the basis of principle, the Lami did not register births and marriages with the government and refused to send their children to school (birth certificates are required for entering school in Fiji). With the possible exception of the prophet, Kitione, Lami adults were illiterate and had not learned English. Kitione himself went through only four years of formal schooling as a boy. Not only did Lami children fail to learn English, they were also unfamiliar with the standard Bauan dialect of Fijian; they spoke only their own western (hills) dialect. The Lami believed that formal education undermined morality by teaching children to lie and steal. Young people break laws, explained the Lami spokesman, because they are not members of a communal group where they can share in the resources of the community and are "not left out." He reasoned that "each human being is born with a brain given by God, and each person can use his brain for any purpose. We should not taint the pure brain given by God. Ideas picked up from education lead to shop-breaking and delinquency." The Lami educated their own children in the course of daily life by interpreting and explaining adult activities--why they do their work and why they believe as they do. Lami children were taught to be disciplined and not to squander money. They were supposed to learn enough mathematics, spoken English, reading, and writing as was necessary from on-the-job training helping adults in the market stalls and the store. As the spokesman stated:

> The difference between our children and other children is that a child of six or seven years of age is already an income earner. Other children who attend school wait until they are twenty years old to find a job. A Lami teenager will run a business better than a teenager who has been to secondary school because the latter is likely to steal from the market stall.

Business and Politics

The Lami stated a preference for taking direct action to solve social problems without waiting for government officials and politicians to do it for them. Lami activism began early in the group's history and was directed toward economic development, using members' own experience as a model. The Lami became philanthropists by donating business profits to encourage grass-roots development among Fijian villagers. Between 1962 and 1967 they spent F$100,000 on aid projects, including many small stores and transportation businesses, mostly in Nadroga villages. They helped villages to build simple store structures and purchase stock, after which the villagers themselves took over as managers. Inevitably, many of these ventures failed, and Lami aid subsequently tapered off. One cause of failure was lack of maintenance and the subsequent rapid deterioration of assets in the absence of new capital outlays. In one such project the Lami were forced to reclaim a poorly maintained truck and sell it for junk.

Business aid projects were one way in which the Lami maintained ties to Nadroga. As they became more successful in business and increased their income, they also began to contribute to their home villages for ceremonial events, such as births, funerals, and marriages. Contributions were small, as they believed that the use of resources for ceremonies and church activities must be kept to a minimum. The Lami made the donations as a group, not as individuals, and what was given was always for a group purpose and not for individuals. They felt that providing assistance for individuals, regardless of the need, would be counter to their ideals.

Consistent with their views on ownership, the Lami strongly identified with those who sold their labor or the products of their own labor. They saw themselves as middlemen who did not use access to markets for their own gain, but rather to help village farmers and field laborers to obtain better rewards for their work. In essence the Lami goal was to alter the well-known circumstances of geographical isolation and lack of organizational strength under which rural people are most often at a disadvantage. Moreover, the Lami viewed themselves as working people and attributed their own success to hard work and personal sacrifice rather than to control of resources. In contrast to the political rhetoric often heard in Fiji, the Lami expressed no concern about protecting native land ownership. Their lack of interest in this issue contains a note of realism; the fact that 83 percent of native lands remain communally owned has done little to alleviate poverty in Fijian villages.

Despite their skeptical attitude toward the postcolonial government, the Lami viewed politics as a potential means to bring progress and improve the lives of the majority of people in Fiji. Following independence in 1970, the Lami were known to have supported the National Federation Party, the leadership of which was dominated by Indo-Fijian merchants. In the national election of 1982 they switched to support the ruling Alliance Party candidate and prominent national political figure Apisai Tora, perhaps because of his earlier association with the labor movement. In the April 1987 election the Lami appear to have supported the newly formed and victorious Labor Party. The new prime minister, Timoci Bavadra, was from the Western District and was a commoner who had challenged the chiefs in electoral politics. A few months earlier the Lami also supported the winning efforts of the Labor Party candidate in the Ba Town Council election. That election was of practical importance to the Lami because town council officials regulated market stalls, set town rates and garbage rates, and granted direct favors.

While recognizing the inevitability of politics, the Lami were especially cynical about the many politicians who frequently changed party labels to maneuver themselves onto the winning side. The Lami spokesman commented: "Political party affiliation does not matter. The important question is progress and welfare--not whether a politician switches parties. If another party gets into office and there is no improvement, we must question what politics is all about."

The Lami believed that the food they provided for field laborers was a service that the present government should take over. The spokesman commented, "Government should begin to look after the needs of workers in the sugarcane harvest. The workers need good housing, sanitation, and food." He complained that the government looked after interests of the sugar mills and commercial farmers while neglecting village farmers and workers. Furthermore, he regarded government as remote and ill-informed about rural problems. "Government officials sit in their offices and think that rural people live in 'primitive affluence.' But if they were to visit rural areas, as your USP [University of the South Pacific] researchers are doing, they would find that people are not well off." Another criticism he leveled at the government was its failure to recognize the necessity of cooperative effort and communalism in bringing about development. He was convinced that the root of Fiji's problem was the kind of noncommunal development already carried out:

> Leaders in government sometimes say they believe in communalism and cooperative effort, but they have not put this into practice. These leaders have their stomachs satisfied because they are getting benefits from the present system. This is why their words are mere rhetoric. The answer to the problem of development remains with the masses of people and answers will come from the masses. Fiji must follow a communal path or else the problem will get bigger. Government leaders may say this or that, but if the masses don't follow, it will come to nothing. The masses should lead while the leaders act on the wishes of the masses. The leaders should not dictate policy from the top. It is the masses who have the direct experience which should be translated into policy. If the masses are allowed to determine the objectives of development, then the masses will be more effective in carrying out the details of development. Only if the masses set the objectives can government make laws that the masses will follow to implement policy.

The Lami spokesman asked us, the researchers, to bring a leader from the present government to learn from them and then go back to implement communal policy for all Fijians. He said that the Lami had been engaged in discussions on how to influence national policy, but that they had just begun thinking about it and would let us know their thoughts on our next visit. He added that because Fiji is a small country, it should be easier to implement cooperative policy. Workers at the Ba mill who lived at Naidradra and Rarawai settlements near Ba had met with the Lami at their headquarters the day before our visit to discuss how to expand the Lami effort to help Fijian workers. He promised to reveal the contents of this discussion the next time we went to see them. Despite my intention to return, time ran out on my stay in Fiji and the next time never came.

Leadership

The internal organization of the Lami, at least in principle, was based on an egalitarian ethic. Lami leaders attempted to keep followers highly committed to the group and sufficiently motivated to work by allowing universal participation in group decisions. They conducted general discussion in a group assembly to develop a consensus before

reaching a decision. The Lami spokesman said that Fijian chiefs used this method of leadership in precolonial times in contrast to the arbitrary authority exercised by present-day chiefs. He explained that authoritarian leadership was not effective because people who are not consulted will be less willing to cooperate. The egalitarian ethic of the Lami was further reinforced by rotating members between jobs within the organization (e.g., driver, market manager, crew leader, logger) so that all would share the same skills and experience. Job rotation also was designed to prevent members from forming close ties to any constituencies or individuals outside the group, thus maintaining greater solidarity and mutual reliance within the group itself.

The Lami did not readily admit to any titles or hierarchy of leadership positions within the organization. They identified leaders according to the special duties they performed for the group. In reality, however, leadership positions seemed well defined; they were divided into an inner, sacred circle and an outer, secular circle. The inner circle consisted of the sixty-year-old prophet, his twenty-year-old son, his son-in-law, and their wives. They lived in a house only a few feet from the headquarters. They bought their own food and ate separately from the rest of the group. The bases for Kitione's authority were his original vision, his status as group founder, and his demonstrated supernatural ability to predict the future. A former member elaborated on the last of these gifts.

> Kitione has mystical powers to make prophecy. For example, he predicted that there would be a change to dollars from the system of pounds, shillings, and pence. In 1961 he predicted the 1983 drought in the west. He said that the time will come when people will eat flour and rice instead of *dalo* and *tapioka.* Last year he took a load of flour and rice to a Nadroga village and warned that they would be eating this food next year, too. This statement was taken as a kind of prophecy.

The reference to flour and rice is symbolic of the store-bought food and inexpensive rations that people would eat instead of root crops if there was a drought. Also, these are the foods eaten by Lami followers and any other people who might switch from subsistence production to wage labor. Kitione's son was said to have inherited the same prophetic ability and was being groomed as successor. He held a position of second in command. When Kitione was absent, the words of his son had to be obeyed by group members. Kitione's son-in-law at one time held a lead-

ership position in the outer circle as supervisor of field labor for the sugarcane harvest. Later he was replaced, but he continued to live in association with the inner circle. The primary function of the inner circle was to control the finances, which were not well understood by ordinary members.

The outer circle was managed by the same person who acted as spokesman. This spokesman/manager stayed in close communication with the prophet and had no delegated authority to make policy on his own. In running the day-to-day affairs of the group, he had the help of one general assistant and a supervisor placed in charge of field laborers during the sugarcane harvest. One of his primary responsibilities was to manage the food service for field laborers. The use of a spokesman is a reflection of Fijian custom in which a designated orator speaks for the chief at ceremonial events and acts as a village herald announcing news and important activities. The spokesman and not the prophet handled all Lami business with outsiders. The prophet himself never discussed Lami affairs or his role in the organization with outsiders and did not seek public attention. We were told that he conducted himself in public "like an ordinary man." He had never met with Ratu Osea, who was at that time the most important political leader in Fiji's Western Division. In public Kitione would talk to anyone about everyday matters, but on organizational matters he always referred people back to his spokesman. On infrequent occasions Kitione would choose to meet in person with assembled Lami members and speak about issues of special importance. We did not discover Kitione's existence, his exploits, or his prophetic powers until making a visit to Togovere where knowledgeable outsiders volunteered this information.

Social Control

The Lami strongly believed that only communalism and cooperation would lead to development and progress among Fijians, and that individualism would lead to social conflict. They recognized the need for having material things, but they took firm measures to insure that this aspect of life was subordinated to the need for cooperation and social harmony. A member whose work performance was deficient was subject to recall and reprimand by the leaders, after which the person would be given a chance for vindication at the same job. A member who consistently violated the ethical standards of the group would be called in for counseling. In the absence of behavioral improvement, violators would eventually be asked to leave the group.

During our visit to Togovere, the village chief became extremely uneasy about answering questions. After narrating his story about the origins of the Lami movement, he left the room and was not present for much of the remainder of the interview. Meanwhile, we were able to question Ananaiyasa Neirube, a first cousin or "Fijian brother" to Kitione. Neirube had gone to Ba with the Lami in 1961. He was expelled from the group and returned home to Togovere early in 1983. He reported that two emissaries had come to his house to convey the order to leave. They told him that there had been a general meeting where the membership decided to exclude him. He himself felt that it was only the leaders who were against him, but nonetheless accepted his fate and took his wife and five of his six children with him back to Togovere. The eldest child, an eighteen-year-old son who had developed a strong affiliation to the group, stayed in Ba. Neirube estimated that a total of ten households had left the group since 1961.

Neirube complained that the prophet did not do any work: "As leader he hands down decisions without first holding meetings of the entire group for discussion and consultation. The group almost always agrees to carry out Kitione's decisions. I was the only one to buckle and resist. Even if the members as a group amend one of Kitione's decisions, he ignores it." Neirube viewed this style of leadership as a contradiction to the expressed egalitarian ethic of the group. When he had disagreed on several key issues, he found Kitione to be uncompromising. Neirube favored the idea of purchasing land and houses, which he said was desired by members, and supported the recommendation of government officials to register the group either as a cooperative or as a business. He criticized some Lami members for being lazy and not doing their fair share of work, and felt that the food served to members was of inferior quality--mostly *tapioka* and water--and did not provide sufficient nourishment for hardworking people. Moreover, he disliked walking more than a mile each way with his wife and children for meals at the Lami headquarters.

The above criticisms must be evaluated in context. While still a member in good standing, Neirube was caught taking market revenue and spending it on beer. He admitted to us that he did not like the rules against drinking *yaqona* and beer. It was undoubtedly as a result of his individualistic behavior and unrepentant attitude that he was asked to leave the group. Although his views offer insight into the actual workings of the organization, they were not necessarily shared by those who remained members. What is remarkable is not this exceptional case but the relatively long survival of a prophet-led organization with its dis-

tinctive ideology attempting with some success to become involved in the modern market economy.

Comparative Ideology

Lami ideology is a complete contrast to that of the indigenous elite who capitalized on their high status as bureaucrat chiefs under colonial rule to transform themselves into businessmen and politicians in post-independence Fiji. Having adopted a capitalist ethic, they gradually accumulated more wealth and power for themselves, while Fijian commoners, treated as a source of abundant and inexpensive labor, became an underclass struggling to survive. In this context the priestly tradition of egalitarianism and opposition to the rule of chiefs takes on new meaning in the struggle between well-defined social classes. Hence the Lami strongly identified with those who work for a living as opposed to those who derive income as property owners. They represent a response both to the widespread emergence of Fijian villagers as an underclass of poor peasant farmers and seasonal agricultural laborers and to increased social antagonism created by differences in wealth and competition for limited resources. The Lami directly addressed economic problems arising from the transition from a subsistence to a market economy (i.e., providing access to market for peasant farmers and improving wages and working conditions for agricultural laborers). Most importantly, perhaps, they overcame obstacles to the accumulation of investment capital by refusing to contribute to the upkeep of a burdensome social hierarchy. They dealt with increasing individualism and social conflict around them by emphasizing an internal morality featuring interdependence within a communal living arrangement. The Lami emphasized the importance of the group over the individual and attempted to minimize the impact of external cultural influences. The chiefly elite, on the other hand, had adopted the individualistic values of the external system, stressing the Fijian tradition of communalism only as a means of requiring unquestioning obedience from followers. Moreover, the chiefly elite camouflaged their preoccupation with protecting their position of power by linking their individual successes symbolically to that of all ethnic Fijians (Durutalo 1986:46-47). Unlike the chiefs, the Lami dealt with the external system in such a way to fit their own internal moral order.

Lami ideology resembles that of predecessor movements in several ways. Followers opposed the government and the missionaries and eliminated the ceremonial obligations that drained their resources and

supported the rule of the chiefs. While demonstrating their resistance, they also emphasized forward-looking elements that would give them a brighter future economically. Kitione's program of action was designed according to the nature of his personal experience and knowledge, just as were Apolosi's attempt to control the banana trade and Emosi's move into selling firewood in Nausori. The Lami enterprises--marketing village products to urban markets and negotiating contracts for cutting sugarcane--reflect Kitione's earlier activities in raising crops and livestock primarily for market sale rather than for subsistence use.

Like their predecessors, the Lami remained aloof from mainstream social institutions, but with less visible provocation. After being forced to evacuate their base in Togovere, the Lami regrouped in Ba and adopted a live-and-let-live policy. By escaping from the village environment and becoming urban tenants, they were able to avoid provincial taxes and social pressures for conformity. Like the movement in Daku the Lami used the term Bula Tale to describe their social and cultural transformation. In both cases "the new life" was founded on a strong belief in the traditional morality of a small-scale society as opposed to the immorality, deviance, and conflict typically found in large-scale industrial society. In effect, the Lami established political independence, but without the flags, military drilling, and ceremony associated with earlier movements. The prophet Kitione further exemplifies the pattern of low-profile separation. It is reasonable to conclude that his desire to maintain anonymity in public and project a secular image for his organization was a strategy designed for protection against the harsh treatment earlier prophets had received at the hands of colonial authorities. In their business activities the Lami interacted successfully with commercial farmers, truck dealers, and landlords. No setbacks arose to cause them to turn toward excessive ritual and become supernaturally preoccupied.

As with the previous Fijian movements, one feature missing from the Lami's implementation of their forward-looking ideology was a system of formal accounting appropriate to modern business. In all cases they collected funds centrally and then disbursed or spent them as the leader saw fit. This arrangement is consistent with the system of exchange in the traditional subsistence economy characterized by egalitarian redistribution. Financial accountability does not exist in such a system except in a social sense; the leader is expected to look after the welfare of the community. Details on the handling of funds are not available for any of these groups, but we do know that responsible financial conduct was controlled by a sense of moral duty and small-group sanctions typi-

cal of a subsistence economy rather than by formal legal requirements. In no case was the organization, enterprise, or company legally registered with the government. This manner of handling of funds was, of course, consistent with self-proclaimed, sociopolitical independence and a strategy of adapting the money economy to their needs rather than vice versa. AS a result, all leaders, including Kitione, were vulnerable to detractors, who accused them of financial abuse as defined in Western terms. Moreover, the lack of intricate accounting and investment procedures necessary to maintain solvency in the market economy constitutes an element of vulnerability in the Lami experiment, both in relation to the external threat of bankruptcy and the potential for internal dissention.

Conclusion

The appeal of the Lami is related to providing a new organizational framework and eliminating various customs and communal obligations that inhibit capital accumulation and investment. This break with custom was made possible by introducing a comprehensive substitute for the multipurpose organizational framework of the village that governed every aspect of people's lives.[6]

The advantage in providing a single framework for all aspects of social life is that the commitment of the participants must be total and without competing external interests to interfere with the collective effort. Those who join may feel free to donate all of their personal wealth and time because they see no use for it outside of the single framework. This type of organization, like the village, serves multiple purposes; political, economic, religious, and social relations are all subsumed under the same framework. In Fiji it is common for entire villages to embrace foreign institutions such as the Methodist Church in this single framework. Like the church, any economic organization established in the village context will be absorbed and co-opted into the single framework (see Young 1984). In contrast, an organization such as the Lami group, which is established as a complete alternative to the village, can be effective in implementing change. The lack of competing demands on the individual and the internal solidarity of the organization constitutes its strength.

What is a strength from one perspective, however, may be seen as a weakness from another. The structure of social movements in Fiji and elsewhere tends to be authoritarian despite professed egalitarian ideology to the contrary. Loyalty is to a single leader and his vision.

Lawrence observes with respect to similar movements in the Madang area of New Guinea: "There was no sense of what we might call 'civic responsibility' " (1964:258). Thus, the personal strengths and weaknesses of the leader will be magnified as the strengths and weaknesses of the movement.

The Lami certainly fit this leadership style, but at the same time cannot be said to be totally lacking in a sense of civic responsibility. They contributed to village development projects without government help and tried single-handedly to improve working conditions and wages for Native Fijian agricultural workers. Their women were involved in an islandwide organization and government extension program for handicraft workers. They also participated to a limited degree in party politics in 1983, stating their intention to move toward concern with broader issues affecting Fijian commoners. Moreover, at the conclusion of my study they had plans to meet with a group of sugar mill workers to discuss ways of mutual assistance and cooperation. The Lami obviously saw themselves as contributing to Fijian development as a whole and were searching for ways to address social needs they felt were ignored by leaders in government. Civic-mindedness along with concealing the role of prophecy in their organization gave them a degree of credibility with outsiders, greatly reduced the threat of persecution, and contributed to their longevity.

The lack of influence actually gained by the Lami in the larger society, however, is evidence for the limitations of this type of movement. In being totally committed to a single organization, Lami members had only superficial contact with outsiders and little impact on other organizations or groups cross-cutting geographical regions and other segments of Fijian society. Inquiries in nearby villages revealed that the Lami, though respected for their business achievements, still were regarded suspiciously as a kind of counterculture, as "Fijian hippies." Thus their single organizational framework carried with it an inevitable liability in regard to their self-imposed mission of societal reform.

Following political independence in 1970, many Fijians increased their participation in wage labor and lost their need to belong to the single framework of the village; they gradually began to free themselves from constraints against economic advancement associated with the control exercised by the colonial-based, chiefly hierarchy over the village environment. But the economic setbacks and reassertion of chiefly control that has been on the Fijian political agenda since the 1987 coup could once again aggravate tensions that have existed throughout Fijian history between hereditary chiefs and those who would claim leader-

ship based on moral authority. Social movements similar to the Lami, either in Fiji or in other Pacific societies, may still arise as alternatives to challenge postcolonial social hierarchies that violate traditional values and at the same time stifle the possibilities of ordinary citizens for desired economic innovation and change.

NOTES

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1. Navosavakadua means “he who speaks but once.” This was the term used by Fijians in reference to the colonial chief justice, who could give the death sentence against which there was no appeal (Brewster 1922:239).

2. Parallels exist with other Melanesian movements with respect to the relationship between ill-treatment and supernatural emphasis. For example, Lawrence (1964) observed that Yali, the leader of a post-World War II social movement in the Madang area of New Guinea, began to impress followers with his knowledge of native deities as a source of power after the government humiliated him by failing to deliver on promises related to his economic development objectives. Similarly, the accounts of Mead (1956) and Schwartz (1962) indicate that Paliau, the leader of the New Way movement in the Admiralty Islands, changed his focus from developing a community business enterprise before World War II to making supernatural predictions based on dreams and visions when, after the war, the Australians punished him for being a Japanese collaborator.

3. *Kerekere* is the practice of borrowing from kinsmen at the will of the borrower. This custom was a form of security against misfortune; it contributed to the solidarity of kinship ties, equalized consumption, and, most importantly, prevented the accumulation of wealth from becoming a threat to the social hierarchy. *Kerekere* was recognized early by the colonial government as a detriment to individual initiative and a drain on Fijians endeavoring to accumulate investment capital (Spate 1959:24).

4. All five sites occupied by Togovere belonged to Voua village, which is located near the main coastal highway. The landowners’ kinship group affiliations were said to be the *toka* or sublineage called Betobalavu and the *yavusa* or clan called Leweinaoroga.

5. A namesake is a person who is given the name of an older relative with the permission and future guidance of that relative. A namesake is expected to follow in the footsteps of the elder.

6. The term "multipurpose organizational framework" is used by Cochrane in describing the social system of the Solomon Islands where big-men controlled a single organizational structure that performed multiple functions (1970:71-72). The original concept comes from Lawrence's description of the salient features of New Guinea societies: "In contrast to the relatively flexible structure of Western pyramidal society with its separate systems for economic, political and legal, and religious activities, the same structure performed multiple functions in all these fields" (1964: 11).

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