

THE 1987 WESTMINSTER CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS IN FIJI

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During the 1965 debates of the London Constitutional Conference, Legislative Council member S. M. Koya made a prediction in his arguments questioning the legitimacy of maintaining the communal roll electoral system:

If we accept today the proposition that the Fijian community has a special position in this country it follows . . . that they should have a special position in everything else--in the recruitment for the civil service, in the armed forces and any other services. It follows that as time goes on, from within the Fijian community--and I predict this--there will be a national movement purely on communalistic lines to say "Fiji for Fijians, Indians and others get out." . . . Can anyone really suggest that such a movement is not in existence in Fiji at the moment?¹

On 14 May 1987, the Fiji Constitution of 1970 came to an abrupt end through the forceful seizure of government by elements of the Royal Fiji Military Forces under the command of Lt. Col. Sitiveni Rabuka, acting to restore the paramountcy of indigenous Fijian interests.² After only one month of rule, the government of Prime Minister Timoci Bavadra was overthrown and the political future of the former British Crown Colony seemed uncertain as Koya's prediction was being fulfilled.

It is the purpose of this essay to analyze the course of these remarkable events in the context of political, constitutional, and social institu-

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tional relationships and transformations since national independence in 1970. More specifically, this analysis will focus on constitutional ideology and legitimacy, on the organization and transformation of native Fijian (*taukei*) political and military elites in tandem with class formation, and on popular reaction as indications of the changing nature of institutional relationships and conditions in island society. Rather than reconstructing an anecdotal scenario of events, this essay seeks to interpret the May 14 coup³ as the culmination of a progressive failure of constitutional ideology and legitimacy in the collective consciousness of many *taukei* (and perhaps many non-*taukei* as well), reflecting the inability of island social, economic, and political institutions and interests to resolve their respective differences so as to reconcile themselves into a unitary expression of national sentiment. It is, moreover, asserted that the primary consideration in the nation-building process in Fiji has been the ambivalence and persistence of traditional *taukei* elites in maintaining power and influence beyond traditional institutions and norms, particularly within the institutions of state.

Constitutional Ideology and Legitimacy

Postindependence Fiji has been described as a pluralistic society organized on a consociational model through which dialogue between the *taukei* and their Indo-Fijian counterparts occurs about the order and allocation of power and authority. Consociational democracy exists when the interests of the political elites are in preserving a unitary multiethnic state over countervailing interests that tend to break down state institutions into ethnic components.⁴ With respect to eventual independence, a constitution based upon the Westminster model was seen as desirable, if not necessary, for the orderly transfer of power from Great Britain to the new island state. Constitutionalism, as an ideology, is the primary charter of law and, in most instances, the sole source of legitimacy.

In many ways the constitutional system defines the new state, secures its territorial integrity and (if we may indulge in some excess of style and assertion) its institutions fasten themselves like a grid upon the scattered islands and their unadministered parts. By vesting public power in prescribed national institutions, it enables the ousting of competing claims and jurisdictions, whether at the local or regional levels, whether informal or organised. It seeks to establish a new basis of authority. But the capacity of the constitution to confer legitimacy upon the new system depends in considerable part on the process of its

making, and in particular the extent of the popular consultation and consensus on which it was based.⁵

Thus, any forthright analysis of constitutionalism as the source of both law and legitimacy must recognize that from the very beginning of its formulation in Fiji its legitimacy has always been suspect. As used here legitimacy, as a feature of political culture, is a claim to authority founded upon some separate, accepted source of entitlement apart from those people who exercise actual power. Legitimacy is a form of moral code supporting trust and confidence among people toward the institutions of governance.

Prior to the 1969-1970 London Constitutional Conference on independence, the commitment from both the Colonial Office and island elites to resolute changes in Fiji's constitutional structure seemed to be marginal at best. As J. W. Davidson critically observed,

Fiji lives in the past, constitutionally, both because of the complexities of its social structure and of the operation of factors of a more directly political and administrative kind. In Britain, ministers and permanent officials of the Colonial Office have been preoccupied with the problems of more opportunate colonial peoples; and, although they have regarded it as necessary that Fiji should eventually become self-governing, they have shown only an intermittent and unimaginative concern with the process by which this change should be brought about. In the colony itself, senior officers of government have largely retained an attitude of benign, but out-dated, paternalism. To these men, there has seemed little need for change. When London has required them to discuss constitutional development with representatives of the local people, they have done so without any deep sense of commitment to self-government and, partly as a consequence, without much political sensitivity or skill. The leaders of the Fijian and European communities have been very wary of change lest, in particular, it should enhance the political influence of the Indians. The old technique of 'divide and rule' has thus been maintained, not primarily for the reasons that anti-colonialists are wont to assume, but because it has been supported by those groups in the colony that are in closest touch with the official establishment.⁶

Any analysis of the constitutional decision-making process prior to independence indicates that the process itself was largely a negotiated

compromise between political elites, namely the *taukei*-dominated Alliance party and the Indo-Fijian-dominated National Federation party (NFP).

The Alliance party's approach to the issue of independence was based upon the principle that the *taukei* wished to preserve their tradition-based society, not only as a political majority, but also in a separately constituted form under the tutelage of the Fijian Administration. The rationale of such a position was the prevailing belief that since the sovereignty of Fiji was ceded to Great Britain by the island chiefs, it was both logical and equitable that sovereignty be returned to the *taukei* themselves.⁷ The 1874 Deed of Cession, for the *taukei*, was not merely a formalized transfer of power, but rather a covenant between themselves and Britain for the protection of Fijian interests. Thus the proposal for a common roll was not responsive to such doctrine even though the Alliance openly conceded that a common roll was a desirable long-term objective.

The NFP, on the other hand, initially endorsed a common roll as a primary constitutional feature. Based upon a simple democratic principle, a common roll was viewed by the NFP as necessary to any concept of "one people, one country, one nation."⁸ Rather than persist in a perhaps endless ideological debate, the NFP proved to be flexible on the issue and was prepared to accept a communal/national roll formula in the proposed House of Representatives. The NFP leader, S. M. Koya, proposed to his Alliance counterpart, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, that a second chamber be created that could function, *inter alia*, as a means of protecting Fijian interests.⁹ Although this proposal was acceptable to Mara, he was obligated by custom to present the matter to the Great Council of Chiefs, an influential body of traditional and administrative *taukei* elites constituted as an advisory body during the colonial period. The council, less than pleased, was critical of Mara for permitting such a high percentage of non-Fijian representation in the proposed parliament. It became clear that any further consultation with groups not party to the negotiations could jeopardize efforts to reach a final agreement. The Alliance strategy of discretionary, closed-end consultation on the proposed constitution was raised five years later by Fijian Nationalist party leader S. B. Butadroka during the parliamentary debates on his infamous motion to repatriate Indo-Fijians from Fiji. His lengthy speech, if closely analyzed, was directed more at the Alliance leadership than at the merits of the uncouth subject matter under discussion:

. . . One of the conditions reached during the London Constitutional Talk in 1970 . . . is that all alien races residing in Fiji,

if they so wish, could be permanent citizens of Fiji. The agreement was made without direct consultation with the Fijian chiefs and people. We, the Fijians, who have been taught by the British Government during the 97 years of colonial rule, have been made a "yes man" to our leaders. . . . As an example of that . . . a meeting . . . was called for the Fijians in the Central Division and was held at Nausori. The meeting passed the unanimous resolution that when asked about the position of the Indians in Fiji if it could be asked at the London Constitutional talks that the Indians be asked to leave Fiji after Independence. If I remember rightly . . . Fijians in all parts of Fiji passed the same tune of resolution. . . . The London constitutional negotiators, as far as the Fijians were concerned, did come back with a different picture altogether. The Fijians at home were calmed down by a speech made by the Prime Minister, while in London . . . to the Fijian people here.¹⁰

The Fijian Nationalist party view was interpreted into a broader rhetorical analysis following the 1982 elections, which restored the Alliance party to a parliamentary majority.

Since independence, a Native-Fijian-dominated party, led by a paramount chief and consisting of several other high chiefs, has been at the helm. In the eyes of several other ordinary Native Fijians as well as the indigenous elite, this is only natural and just an expression of the concept of Native Fijian paramountcy in national life; they have come to see this as more or less a permanent arrangement. If they had to, the native Fijians would *share* power with others, it has been argued by some, but they are unprepared to become subordinated to some other group. . . . If this perception of native Fijian sentiment is accurate, then it is pertinent to ask whether the paraphernalia of politics --elections, political parties, etc.--has much meaning in the ultimate analysis. In the present situation, a prior and determined claim (probably at the expense of some upheaval) to political power by one section of the Fijian society sharply contradicts the letter and the spirit of the constitution.¹¹

Legitimacy and the Modern Nation-State

British approval of a communal roll mode of election was less than enthusiastic. As Lord Shepard, minister of state for foreign and com-

monwealth affairs, said, "You have also got to take into account that when you become independent . . . you are to be judged by others. An election system that is clearly and utterly wrong and so rigid that there is to be no change will not bring credit to an independent sovereign Fiji."¹² Lord Shepard's remarks constituted a metropolitan restatement of the doctrine of state sovereignty, which is the primary ideological principle of the modern nation-state. Independence for Fiji was not merely a formalized transfer of power, but also a reconstitution of Fiji into a new jural expression with international significance, transcending all other forms of political organization. The transformation of a former Crown Colony into a nation-state is not only a political process, but also a moral one. While the political process may involve practical and legal terms and understandings, the moral process provides the nucleus of legitimation, embodied in the fundamental provisions of its constitution: "Modernity requires national sovereignty, which, in the minds of its supporters, presupposes the existence of a nation which rules itself through indigenous organs and persons. With or without representative institutions, the modern sovereign state is held to embody the essence of its society. National sovereignty means not only authority, but also an influential place as a modern nation on the world stage."¹³

Lord Shepard's concerns were obviously with this latter issue. British colonialism in Fiji could not legitimate itself even under the terms of the Deed of Cession. Independent Fiji would not only emerge as a nation-state, but also as a member of the international state system of which Britain was a foremost exponent. On the world stage, "there is a tendency to assume the primacy of the nation-state, and to assign universal legitimacy to its existence and without elaborating the normative justification for the validity of the nation-state. . . . Even then the idea of nation-building, which is assumed to be the central focus of sociopolitical activities in newly-independent states, is more closely reflective of a process of transition from state to nation rather than from nation to state."¹⁴ In spite of this, however, the transfer of power must be a rational process governed by fundamental notions of legitimacy and assumptions of validity. Such principles posed a dilemma for the Fiji elites since precolonial social institutions resisted the notion of having one racial community dominate contemplated national institutions. This dilemma, more accurately described as a crisis prolonged, needed to be either resolved or avoided altogether, as a barrier to independence. With seeming irony, a 1953 Hansard Society study on this issue noted:

It is always necessary for a state, if it is to be based on a fair degree of agreement on the part of its citizens on essential principles, for them to possess a sense of solidarity and common interests, an agreement on a few fundamental matters so strong that it allows differences of view on matters less fundamental. . . .

. . . *Plural society* is not so much a diagnosis as an admission that there is a condition to be remedied. Plural societies are not identical in character, and there is no standard prescription to be applied in all cases. Though . . . various constitutional devices . . . have been proposed for the plural society, it should not be thought that the answer lies solely in the construction of appropriate constitutional machinery.¹⁵

The political reality of the state-building process is that it necessitates recurrent activity involving the periodic renewal of state institutional legitimacy and the means by which the state ministers to the needs of its constituent groups. Even if such activity amounts to mere dialogues and slogans, the reconstitutive effect of such interaction is necessary to open up the possibility of even greater interaction and integration. Aside from their shared membership in the Commonwealth, Britain's influence in postindependence Fiji would be abruptly discontinued and confined to token, though competent, gestures about the eventual outcome of pluralistic politics. The assumption of such terminal gestures was based on the view that independence, as the final rite of passage, acknowledges that a colony has been adequately prepared to assume its position in the international state system as well as to assure its own internal order. This view of the nation-state as the primary vehicle for integration and consolidation was derived from previous decolonization experience in Africa and was deemed to be a suitable model for Fiji.

Nonetheless, Lord Shepard agreed with the negotiators that the modified communal roll system would be an interim measure and that a royal commission would be constituted within five years to make recommendations to the Fiji Parliament on possible changes to the electoral system. As a political strategy temporizing had the value of postponing a crisis indefinitely in favor of more immediate concerns on the assumption that no substantive changes will occur over the long term. In mid-1975, a royal commission was appointed by the Fiji governor-general to conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the existing electoral system. By year's end, the Street Commission submitted its recommendations. Essentially, the commission urged that the National Roll be

amended to eliminate all racial restrictions. Constituencies were to be reconfigured so as to permit single-member units that, by their very nature, would be more responsive to their electorates. The overall concern of the commission was to permit a gradual evolution toward a common roll consistent with the existing political and demographic realities and to encourage in the Fiji Parliament a balance of political parties rather than a balance of races.¹⁶ The Street Commission report represented Britain's last substantive statement on the independence Constitution and, once more, reflected the general disfavor with which metropolitan officials viewed Fiji's electoral configuration.

The response of the ruling Alliance party to the Street Commission recommendations was less than enthusiastic, though it was hoped that, after the 1977 elections, some movement toward electoral reform could commence. The arguments of the Alliance were oriented toward the security of the status quo, a desire anticipated by the commission's report: "The common theme running through the aspirations of any racial group was that its members must be given a tangible feeling of security. They must be able to feel that they would not be overwhelmed or dominated by any other group. It would be a potent factor of insecurity if a system of election were to be introduced under which no race would know how many of its members would eventually arrive in Parliament until the votes had been counted."¹⁷

The vagaries of popular voting behavior in the tumultuous elections of 1977 and 1982 convinced the Alliance party leadership, beyond any doubt, that preservation of the electoral status quo was necessary to its hegemony in Parliament. Its decisive defeat in the 1987 elections, however, precipitated a more definitive crisis when a military government was established. The reality of the communal roll was to categorize Fiji as a liberal parliamentary ethnocracy.¹⁸

Configuring a New Regime

On the issue of constitutionalism, the commitment of the Fiji Interim Military Government to legitimating the paramountcy of *tauvei* interests under the rubric of formulating a new constitution was continuously evident, though clearly contradictory. Rather than revoke the independence Constitution, Governor-General Ratu Sir Penaia Gani-lau assumed executive authority under the Constitution itself and issued emergency regulations that permitted the Fiji Interim Military Government to operate the machinery of power in a constitutional fashion until a decision could be made about the political future of the islands.¹⁹ The

option for a republic at that time was rejected, though discussed at length. The ambivalence created by the confluence of rapid changes with a long-standing political conservatism was pervasive during this brief period. Three options for constitutional changes, submitted by a group acting in the name of the Great Council of Chiefs, proposed to modify the existing Constitution on a compromise model of both the Westminster and American systems.²⁰ At the same time the governor-general organized a sixteen-member Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) selected from the dissolved House of Representatives, the Great Council of Chiefs, and others authorized to “make a useful contribution to the committee’s deliberations.”²¹ Most important, Ganilau emphasized:

Timing dictates that the committee will need to deliberate, receive representations and reach its conclusions fairly quickly. Members of the public will be given an opportunity to make submissions to this committee. The aim of this committee will be to produce a report which will be presented to me. I will then form a council of national reconciliation to arrive at a consensus to agree on the proposed changes to the Constitution and to agree on a covenant of national reconciliation. If that consensus is reached . . . the recommendations will need to be translated into an Act of Parliament, to be passed in accordance with the present Constitution. To achieve that I will need to call for new elections under the present Constitution for a new House of Representatives. Under the Covenant of National Reconciliation, a formula will have been agreed to for a national slate of candidates which, as far as I can call on the goodwill and understanding of the people of Fiji, will result in an uncontested election.²²

The problem for the governor-general was how to reorder the composition of the House prior to the elections so as to guarantee representativeness, constitutionality, and, above all, results that would assure the paramountcy of *taukei* interests. Such a complex exercise was fraught with risk. Once such amendments were put into final form, the governor-general would dissolve Parliament and general elections would be called that would complete Fiji’s return to parliamentary democracy. This plan was rejected by ousted Prime Minister Bavadra, who insisted that “any consideration for constitutional changes should involve the widest possible consultation, and must be considered by the current

Parliament duly elected on 11th April 1987 under the present Constitution."²³The concern for constitutional legitimacy and its pragmatic reconciliation with the realities of power would be the central challenge for the primary political personalities and groups in Fiji until year's end. The declaration of the Fiji republic on September 28 was an explicit acknowledgment that the constitutional reformation process had not secured the paramountcy of *tauvei* interests as defined by the military and that the political elites would not be permitted to once again negotiate a political settlement that would in any way dilute such expectation. Ancillary to this important issue was the maintenance of regional and sectional integrity. During the early postcoup days, resolutions were submitted to the Great Council of Chiefs to permit Rotuman independence and create a separate republic out of Ba province. Proposals that would strengthen the provincial councils of the Fijian Administration--or, more accurately, give them parliamentary recognition--were also submitted.²⁴ Above all, the separation of Fiji from the Commonwealth was always a working consideration among the less conservative *tauvei* factions.

From 1970 to the present, the issue of constitutional ideology and legitimacy has been a troublesome question for independent Fiji. For the *tauvei* elite, constitutional legitimacy meant the paramountcy of their interests, not merely confined to land, tradition, and customs, but also the numerical control of Parliament. This preoccupation with political numbers rather than with constitutional principles was founded on the conviction that *tauvei* interests could only be protected by the *tauvei* themselves and by the perception that non-*tauvei* were void of any concern for the *tauvei*. Suspension of parliamentary democracy could be justified under such assumptions with the proviso that such actions needed to be constitutionally transformed to assert any claim of legitimacy within the international state system. Indeed, the paramountcy of *tauvei* interests could only be assured by control of the institutions of the nation-state itself. The politics of numbers articulated through revised constitutional provisions would therefore assure the power of scale. Thus, *tauvei* acceptance of the independence Constitution was always tentative.

This outlook was compounded by a limited general understanding of the Constitution by most *tauvei*, due largely to the failure of the political elites--*tauvei* or otherwise--to disseminate the meaning of Fiji's fundamental document of governance. This fact emerged during the CRC review.

Whilst many submissions made to the Committee showed a good understanding of the existing protections and mechanisms of the 1970 Constitution, it was also often evident that this had only been acquired recently after the events of May 14. The unavailability of the Constitution in Fijian and Hindi was frequently stated to have contributed to a general unawareness amongst many in Fiji of their political and constitutional rights.

The Committee doubts that the translation of the Constitution is the best way to bring a wider understanding of its provisions. The 1970 Constitution is a complex document written in formal and legal language not readily understood by even well-read laymen. Moreover, it does not readily lend itself to translation into the Fijian and Hindi language forms.²⁵

More so than any other public statement, this admission revealed the elite nature of Fiji's political culture, which eschewed any substantive public ratification of its own national constitution. The CRC aversion to popular scrutiny of the island Constitution undermines its own legitimacy and, furthermore, tends to mystify the document, transforming it into a legal mantra to be recited by barristers on behalf of their political clients. Though the CRC agreed that its report should be translated into a number of languages with a colloquial explanation of its constitutional recommendations, the limited number of copies made available (some six hundred in all) revealed a lack of commitment by Fiji's political elite to popular input. Yet, to reiterate, the principle of legitimacy encompasses both substance and process, which cannot be divorced.

During the entire crisis, the governor-general was fully aware of the necessity of preserving what precarious legitimacy was left, not only under the independence Constitution, but also as the Queen's representative. Though the army possessed almost total power, it lacked legitimacy and, moreover, like the governor-general, it owed allegiance directly to the Queen, a fact that had considerable psychological value.²⁶ The process of constitutional revision, though less than thorough, was considerably more broad-based than that which had occurred during the preindependence negotiations. Hearings were held and some eight hundred public submissions, oral and written, were accepted from the major social constituencies, particularly the Great Council of Chiefs, the provincial councils, professional organizations, the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches, the deposed Bavadra gov-

ernment, and Muslim, Sikh, Gujerati, and Girit associations. Given the prevailing influence of *tauvei* interests upon the sixteen-member CRC, the fundamental question of adequate representativeness and impartiality always remained a serious challenge to the committee's legitimacy. It does not seem unreasonable to assert that the CRC's purpose was merely to arrive at some consensus as to the means by which the paramountcy of *tauvei* interests was to be constitutionally assured. In total, while the process of constitutional review possessed ostensible qualities of popular input, the assumptions under which the process was conducted negated any viable claim to complete legitimacy under any cognizable standard embraced by constitutional ideology. The end result of such events and circumstances has been the almost total breakdown of consociational pluralism in Fiji.

To summarize, the importance of constitutional ideology lies primarily in the self-declaration, acknowledged by popular consensus, that the constitution itself forms the basis and source of all lawful power and authority, even to the extent that it may determine the continuing validity of traditional institutions. Constitutions formalize and structure power in the form of institutions, which act as the organs of state authority. Above all, constitutionalism, in this context, derives its legitimacy from a representative vote that justifies the existence of the nation-state itself on a periodic basis. The electoral system is an institutional control mechanism, a process whereby political elites are made aware of popular sentiment and the people themselves are reminded of their own sovereignty. Though policies or personalities may remain unchanged, elections provide a means whereby they at least may be debated. It is, therefore, not surprising that Ganilau's sense of urgency in his postcoup agenda was directed toward an electoral termination of military rule. Elections, at the very least, serve to terminate popular polemics about political issues.

On its own terms constitutionalism directly competes with, if not subordinates, traditional notions of authority. It is therefore not difficult to understand why the 1970 Fiji Constitution failed after seventeen years--the foundations of its formulation and existence failed to incorporate the fundamental features of constitutional ideology previously mentioned. It would not be unfair to suggest that the independence Constitution was considered by the party elites to be an agreement of the moment to resolve the political issues of the day, rather than a perpetual yet evolving instrument of governance. This particular notion has been especially evident in parliamentary debates where political questions were argued in the light of what was agreed upon by the personalities

during the constitutional conferences rather than upon an interpretation of the words of the Constitution itself.²⁷ Moreover, Fiji has never developed a catalogue of national independence symbols aside from those inherited from British institutions. While this failure may not be peculiar to Fiji, it is an important indication that social and political integration has been limited or nonexistent.

The Ideology of Taukei Paramountcy

The stridency inherent in the paramountcy of *taukei* interests and Whitehall's lack of leadership enthusiasm were at the very beginning never subordinated to the principles of constitutional ideology. Rather, these elements were negotiated into the political background in the justified hope of attaining more urgent short-term objectives. The process, when taken as a whole, severely compromised the legitimacy of the independence Constitution.²⁸

What is especially remarkable about post-May 14 events was the almost ritual necessity of constitutionalizing the paramountcy of *taukei* interests through the ostensibly legitimating proposals of the governor-general. This may be an indication of generalized ambivalence, precipitated in part by the influence of island barristers and Queen's counsels as well as by the realization that *taukei* interests could only be actualized through the institutions of state power as set forth in the national constitution. For many *taukei*, Fiji's sovereignty meant *taukei* sovereignty, whose legal ancestor was the Deed of Cession. This important notion, though argued during the constitutional debates in London and Fiji, was treated as a peripheral idea and consigned to the independence Constitution's preamble. The logic of living continuity imparted to the Deed of Cession by many *taukei* had been largely overlooked by Whitehall and island elites. Whether the Deed of Cession had any constitutional significance in the postcolonial legal regime has never been adequately resolved. The dilemma posed by the coup was whether *taukei* institutions should be safely disengaged from the machinery of state, which by its definition would incorporate non-*taukei* constituents, or whether *taukei* domination of state instrumentalities would itself assure institutional paramountcy as a matter of course.

Transformations in Elite Organization

The political history of Fiji has been largely determined by the actions of its elites, which today may be arbitrarily categorized into traditional

and nontraditional systems. Though there is considerable overlap between these two systems, both have separate, distinct, and often antagonistic histories. It is argued here that the May 14 coup was largely the result of long-standing tension between the traditional and nontraditional elite systems. Following a seventeen-year hiatus, the two elite systems would confront each other for institutional supremacy in the islands during much of 1987.

The British colonial administration followed the paradigm of "indirect rule" with the creation of the Fijian Administration in 1875. This separate, but not necessarily autonomous, bureaucratic hierarchy was entrusted to the custody of the paramount chiefs and their subordinate nobility. Seemingly from the outset, the ideological conflict between the privileges of rank and the principles of administrative responsibility occasionally muddled the legitimacy of the Fijian Administration from a colonial point of view.²⁹ The inclination of many chiefs to assume that their administrative position was due to personal rank rather than to executive discretion was an ongoing issue, continuing to this day. The Fijian Administration, however, did institutionalize the ruling chiefs into a traditional elite system.³⁰

With the approach of greater home rule for the islands, a shift in emphasis toward political parties eroded the supremacy of the Fijian Administration in *taukey* affairs. With the contemplated transfer of power the necessity of political parties, operating on the Westminster model, created the very real probability that a new, nontraditional system of elites would govern an independent Fiji. Mara himself considered the origin of party politics to have begun with the "sugar politics" of 1959.³¹ This suggests that he did not consider the Fijian Association, formed in 1956, to be a true political party, but rather, as others have suggested, merely a populist arm of the Fijian Administration that had become aware of Indo-Fijian pressures for fundamental political change.³² Once Britain announced forthcoming constitutional change, members of the Fijian Affairs Board (the executive arm of the Fijian Administration, which included Mara, Ganilau, J. N. Falvey, and Ratu George Cakobau) issued the famous Wakaya Letter to Colonial Office officials. The 1965 letter set forth the *taukey* position on constitutional change and also asserted the primacy of the Fijian Administration in the *taukey* affairs and political action:

It is the Fijian view that the possibility of severance of this link [Deed of Cession] with the Crown--a link forged in the spirit of mutual trust and good will--should never be contemplated. . . .

We propose a new constitutional instrument which would embody this understanding of the relationship and would make provision for the safeguarding of Fijian interests, building on and strengthening the spirit and substance of the Deed of Cession. There would have to be precise re-statement of the guarantees on Fijian land ownership. . . .

The provisions in the Fijian Affairs Ordinance that all legislation should be referred to the Fijian Affairs Board or, on the recommendation of the Board to the Council of Chiefs, should be retained.³³

The position of the Fijian Administration in such matters, however, could not be assured if the *tauvei* themselves were granted suffrage rights, as had occurred in 1963. Direct election of *tauvei* political leaders thus undermined the primacy of the Fijian Administration even prior to independence. The Fijian Administration, moreover, had come under considerable expatriate criticism. The Burns Commission of 1959 expressed dismay toward Fijian Administration operations at the district and village levels and its authority to impose taxes, albeit on the *tauvei* alone. This was especially important in view of the commission's tendency to consider the Fijian Administration as an "almost independent government." Almost at the same time, the Spate Report characterized the Fijian Administration as "to a large extent a state within a State."³⁴

The Burns Commission noted it had "been informed that the absorption of the Fijian Administration into a multi-racial local government organisation would mean consequent loss of racial identity, custom and culture to the Fijian. We consider that customs and culture are of their essence changeable, and that those which are truly alive and viable will survive. . . . We have in fact, received many recommendations from witnesses (especially Fijians) for the immediate abolition of the Fijian Administration, which is said to be inefficient and an unnecessary expense."³⁵ The commission recommended that, under such circumstances together with fiscal considerations, the Fijian Administration should be abolished and absorbed into the bureaucracy. A more critical 1964 academic evaluation stressed that

my data and arguments support the view that the Fijian Administration is archaic and operating in a world of unreality, and that it is a major factor holding back the development of the Fijian people. . . .

The atmosphere is one of internal discussion and debate

between administrative officials, which in fact it is. In no sense is it 'the people' arriving at a policy which its appointed officials must carry out; in fact the officials are not appointed by the [Provincial] Councils and are not legally responsible to it, but to the Fijian Affairs Board or to the substantive department of Government. Nevertheless, the officials legislate an advisory policy, confusing the roles of legislators, technical advisers, and executive officers.³⁶

Expatriate criticism was based upon the belief that the administration's operation and existence were inimical to the state's ability to control the island economy through the formulation and application of government policy. The possibility that a large segment of Fiji's population, and an even greater portion of its natural resources, could have constitutional and statutory autonomy beyond direct parliamentary control was considered unacceptable by nation-state theorists. E. K. Fisk's 1971 study recapitulated such misgivings contained in the Burns Commission and Spate reports, that

this dual system of administration is clearly inappropriate to a modern dynamic economy in pursuit of a multiracial society. In fostering an outdated communal system divorced from the central government, the energies of the Fijian Administration have been diverted into political, administrative and communal matters. The administration has adopted a somewhat narrow and uncritical attitude towards the more immediate requirements of development, particularly at the village level. Above all, at a time when a major objective of development policy is the achievement of a multiracial society, the existence of a separate Fijian Administration accentuates the social and economic plurality of society and does nothing to channel the activities, interests and similar aspirations of the Fijians and Indians in the same direction to the greater mutual benefit of both races.³⁷

Such criticisms were not given serious consideration by *tauvei* policy-makers, though Fijian Administration control at the village and district levels declined progressively after statutory changes were initiated in 1966. In political terms, the heretofore inert Fijian Association suddenly assumed considerable importance. The decline of the Fijian Administration's direct influence over *tauvei* affairs and the rise of party politics among many *tauvei* were by no means coincidental. Rather, both circumstances are directly related and perhaps antagonistic developments.

In the changing Fijian political system, two major types of political leadership may be seen; one closely related with customary leadership and the other with modern associations such as trade unions. . . .

The established leaders are either government officials or chiefs; in either case their authority is closely related to traditional authority, which, at least in today's form, cannot be easily questioned from below. The emergent leaders, on the other hand, are a new *elite*, whose political importance has grown primarily out of the exigencies of the urban situation. They have risen from modern and more democratically-based associations, and are, therefore, dependent upon free elections for their authority as well as their continuance in leadership. They are leaders of organizations in which they must be responsive to their members, who may appoint or fire them as they please.

But while some friction has appeared between the two kinds of leaders, there is still a high degree of accord between them regarding issues concerning the political status and privileges of Fijians, as opposed to other peoples, throughout Fiji.³⁸

There was some concern among the paramount chiefs that the Fijian Association might usurp the functions not only of the Fijian Administration, but also of the Great Council of Chiefs. Only the adroit efforts of Mara allayed such reservations. The association, in a 1964 submission to colonial officials, reiterated the terms of the Wakaya Letter and added demands that only *tauvei* occupy the position of prime minister and, most important, hold a majority of seats in Parliament.³⁹ As long as the Fijian Association became the "lightning rod" of the communal roll debates, it would find the search for political legitimacy elusive. In the meantime, the Fijian Administration could maintain a discreet distance from politics while appearing to adhere to the standard of "responsible authoritarianism."⁴⁰

With the formation of the Alliance party in 1966, the scale of *tauvei* political action assumed an ostensible multiracial character. As a political organization, the Alliance party "was and remains a party of constituent structures, not a unitary body with a single membership at large. . . . In its formative stages, the Alliance thus followed a pattern of political parties that are created 'from the top' for the mutual satisfaction and joint interests of particular elites concerned to legitimise and maintain such interests under conditions of increasing electoral competition."⁴¹

The Alliance's subsequent victory in the 1966 election marked the

beginning of its parliamentary hegemony. The Westminster model, however, demands an Opposition. This key requirement structured the relationship between the Alliance and its National Federation party rival; the NFP and communal politics provided an adequate foundation for a Westminster-style parliamentary system. Although the NFP emerged from the tumultuous events of "sugar politics," the party came to be dominated by "lawyers and businessmen." Under the inaugural leadership of A. D. Patel, the NFP was concerned with the "ever present dangers of factionalism" and the necessity of having its "credibility as the dominant political voice of the Indian community fully endorsed."⁴² After Patel's death in 1969, the possibility of a consociational relationship between the NFP and the Alliance increased under the leadership of S. M. Koya. This relationship between political elites, however, was always premised upon the Alliance's assumption that the NFP would remain the minority party. As a general proposition, each party has been the reciprocal opposite of the other. Alliance leadership, under Mara, has been stable, if not entrenched. Its Indian Alliance and General Electors components have been relegated to unequivocally subordinate status to the Fijian Association component, though the rubric of multiracialism had always been political party doctrine. The main problem of the Alliance elites has been maintaining *tauvei* loyalty, especially under challenges made by the Fijian Nationalist Party and the Western United Front (WUF). In contrast, the NFP leadership, in spite of Koya's ability, has been beleaguered by internal factionalism. The NFP-WUF coalition victory in the 1977 elections was remarkable, yet the failure (or reluctance) of the party to nominate a prime minister to form a new government precipitated a political default to the Alliance.⁴³ The dominant electoral strategy has been for one political party to capitalize on division within the other.⁴⁴ Thus, the strength of political party elites--and indeed the legitimacy of the independence Constitution--has been tested periodically through the electoral process, which until 1987 had a preordained outcome.

The dynamics of party politics and electoral history have been discussed elsewhere in detail. To those aware of the less obvious though nonetheless cardinal permutations occurring within the more subtle sources of political power, the events of May 14 were not surprising. The emphasis here is upon the more obscure, though important, power groups and how they became chief actors during the institutional upheavals of mid-1987.

The Great Council of Chiefs has been the single most enduring remnant of the colonial era. While its origin is colonial, its purpose

and membership draw upon tradition for authority. Its legitimacy, therefore, has rested upon something more than colonial sufferance. Through more than a hundred years of existence, the council has guarded its advisory prerogatives on *tauvei* policy and expanded its membership to include *tauvei* parliamentary members, administrative officers, and provincial council officials through amendments to the Fijian Affairs Ordinance. Today, the council consists of some 154 members. In recent years, it has increased its meetings from once to twice a year, and during the period following the May 14 coup, the council met virtually *sine die* to consider policy recommendations from the military government. In the final analysis it, during this period, acted as a virtual parliamentary surrogate.

Politicization of the Fijian Administration

Historically the council's initial advisory role to the colonial governor expanded with the creation of the Fijian Administration. Though the council, under the 1970 Constitution, rendered its advisory input and eight senatorial nominees to the governor-general, the Fijian Affairs Board (chaired by the minister for Fijian affairs) acts as the executive arm of the council as well as the directorate for the entire Fijian Administration. During the post-World War II ministerial tenure of Ratu Sir J. L. V. Sukuna, the Fijian Administration underwent its first period of modernization. The words of Ratu Sukuna became its primary standing order:

. . . We can only be sure of our people continuing to follow us provided they appreciate that our authority is better than anyone else's, that as a result of our fore-thought and our energy they prosper--that is, when we cease to rely on status to see us through. . . . If we are merely decorative, our position is finished forever, we will soon be tossed aside when some other race rises to the fore. Chiefs, if we unanimously lay down a policy for all to follow, if we agree to select for the responsibility of administering provinces and tikina [districts] only those who are specifically qualified to do so through status and education, I have no doubt . . . we can achieve a lasting progress.⁴⁵

Ratu Sukuna's major reorganization of the Fijian Administration was the first since cession. Through his policies and speeches, he provided a modern rationale for its existence and functioning consistent with changing conditions in Fiji. As one observer noted:

It was the most important single source from which was derived the framework of ideas associated with 'building on traditional institutions', 'adaption', and change 'within the framework of traditional culture'. This is a powerful set of ideas in which the Fijians believe firmly. But it contains a basic contradiction in that one cannot change and preserve the same thing at the same time. Yet the very contradiction gives these ideas their appeal, for they provide an admirably ambiguous philosophy in terms of which the Fijians think they can resist change and yet embrace it, retain their culture and yet change their way of life, or again, simply take the middle of the road and either confidently or with resignation avoid the painful choice between change and preservation. . . .

It seems to me that one of the greatest obstacles facing the Fijians is the failure to recognize that there is a contradiction; they must now make the momentous choice between preserving and changing their 'way of life'.⁴⁶

The history of the Fijian Administration, particularly the Fijian Affairs Board, indicates that it has remained a virtual administrative province of the chiefs of the Koro Sea confederacies. It is a bureaucratic by-product of the political configuration that existed even prior to colonial rule. This reality emanates primarily from the power of key parliamentary offices. Since the prime minister appoints the minister for Fijian affairs, who in turn serves as the chairman not only of the Fijian Affairs Board, but also of the Great Council of Chiefs, the amount of political leverage in the Fijian Administration by the Fijian affairs minister is considerable. The minister, moreover, appoints fifteen members to the Great Council of Chiefs. Thus this ministerial portfolio is an administrative equivalent of political paramountcy over nearly half of the island population and its resources. This fact of politics has been fully appreciated by the chiefs of the Koro Sea confederacies. Since the debut of direct *tauvei* suffrage, the key political offices of prime minister, governor-general, minister for Fijian affairs, and membership on the Fijian Affairs Board have been monopolized for over twenty years by Ganilau (the Tui Cakau), Mara (the Tui Nayau), Ratu William and Ratu David Toganivalu (Bauan chiefs), and Ratu Sir George Cakobau (the Vunivalu of Bau), all of whom are high chiefs of Cakaudrove, Lau, or Bau provinces.

Today there is argument about whether Fiji should be divided into two or three major divisions based upon political alliances

of former days. In any case, the *matanitu* (confederacies) of Bau and Rewa are of independent status, Bau being recognized as superior. The 'Tovata' (the united states of Vanua Levu and Lau) are sometimes regarded as independent also, but at others as being part of the Bau confederacy. The significance of these arrangements today is that if political decisions or statements of policy affecting the whole of the Fijian people are made by a high chief of Rewa, or by him with one or more of the high chiefs of the *Tovata*, such decisions or statements will probably be supported by the whole of the Fijian people, because of a legitimacy based on the traditional political structure.⁴⁷

The administrative tradition of employing chiefs as bureaucratic officials is rooted in British colonial policy, which has lingered well into the postindependence period, especially with respect to the Fijian Administration.⁴⁸ A seminal postindependence study of *tauvei* leadership arrived at important conclusions on some of the inconsistencies between tradition-based leadership and administrative authority.

When traditional chiefs are also members of the Fijian Administration, they are to some extent set apart from their people, while their role as 'also of them' is not entirely lost. In such a situation they too are regarded with ambivalence, for although they are chiefs and therefore leaders, they are also officials and therefore bureaucrats. Criticisms made against the administration are also made against them as a class; we hear people say '*O ira qa na turaga era tabaki keda sobu tiko*' (only the chiefs are pressing us down). People cannot always look with absolute consistency to them or to the Fijian Administration for leadership. The Fijian Administration is, in part, a bureaucracy and, in part, a system for Fijian political representation. It does not involve 'real' political leadership. Such 'leadership' as it does provide is that of a benevolent autocracy, relying heavily on the legitimacy traditionally accorded to chiefs.⁴⁹

The influence on party politics by these chiefly personalities, though less than in the Fijian Administration, has been considerable. Thus control over the Alliance party as a means of control over Parliament has been the primary means of assuring the continued personal dominance of the Fijian Administration by this coterie of chiefs from eastern Fiji. As early as 1944 under the Fijian Affairs Ordinance, the reconstitution of the former Native Regulations Board into the Fijian Affairs Board was sta-

tutorily effected for the purpose of improving the relationship between the colonial bureaucracy and the Great Council of Chiefs. Such reorganization, if nothing else, has provided another forum from which chiefly power can be wielded in bureaucratic fashion. This particular political reality, of course, has not gone unnoticed, especially by those who have been less subservient to chiefly hegemony. During the course of parliamentary debates, trade unionist Apisai Tora of the Western Division, whose political career has been noted more for longevity than loyalty, candidly remarked:

Let me . . . speak for the silent majority of Fijians who come under the category of *na kai yasaysa vakaRa* (people of the western provinces), who suffer in silence at the heavy-handedness in the one-sided distribution of power . . . political-wise and otherwise in this country, as has been the policy of Fijian leadership and its predecessors, namely the British Colonial Administration, since the time of the great Fijian nationalist from the Western Division, Apolosi R. Nawai. . . . There is heavy suspicion amongst us Fijians . . . that we have been . . . and still are, the victims of nepotism and a conspiracy by at least three groups of people in this country, where the main stream of Fijian leadership are mainly drawn from, namely, the Confederacy of Kubuna in Tailevu and from the Confederacy of Tovata in Lau and Cakaudrove, and slightly from Burebasaga in Rewa, and probably one or two others but definitely not from the Western Division.⁵⁰

In another instance, the outspoken Butadroka, during debate on a Motion of Confidence in the Alliance party, seized the opportunity to inveigh against the paramount chiefs of eastern Fiji: "It is a *tovata* Government. The two Fijian Members from the Western Division where most of the economy of this country is derived from, only one became an Assistant Minister, the other is not. They own land where most hotels are built, sugar industry and gold industry and nearly every economic development of the country depended on the Western area. . . . Is this a Fijian Government?"⁵¹ This theme was articulated again by Butadroka in 1982 on the retirement of Governor-General Ratu Cakobau. The FNP leader urged that Burebasaga chief Ratu Mosese Tuisawau be appointed his successor in order that all three confederacies be accorded equal recognition.⁵² While the question of Tovata domination of status positions in government has generally been ignored by most commenta-

tors, it nonetheless has been a fundamental consideration in *taukei* politics, not only because of its historical implications, but also as an explanation of eastern political domination over the economic resources of western provinces.

In 1966, an effort was initiated in the Legislative Council to amend the Fijian Affairs Ordinance to eliminate the district and village level organization and consolidate the functions of the provincial councils. The motive for the reorganization, admitted almost twenty years later, was a decline in the Fijian Administration's finances due to inefficiencies and provincial rate evasion by many Fijians. Though the amendment passed, debate over the measure reflected non-*taukei* opposition to the Fijian Administration itself. Koya argued:

I will be quite blunt; in my view, the dual system of government in this colony is an anachronism. The sooner we abolish it the better. . . . If we look at the present Bill it is nothing in substance but a repetition of the old system. You are still going to have your Council of Chiefs with the power to recommend; you are still going to have the Fijian Affairs Board, which in my humble opinion amounts to an official political party in this colony recognized not only by this Legislature but perhaps His Excellency the Governor and the Government in the United Kingdom. . . . Their activities are not confined merely to help and better the conditions of the Fijian people socially or economically. They go into the area of politics too.⁵³

Since 1967, however, the Fijian Administration has declined due to fading control over district and village level councils and still-falling revenues. The Great Council of Chiefs became increasingly concerned about the general state of affairs and began asserting its identity in parliamentary politics. Once this occurred, potential institutional conflict with Parliament increased. Non-*taukei* members of Parliament harbored particular reservations about the council, which debated entirely in Fijian and acted on matters affecting all *taukei* without direct accountability to any constituency. This parliamentary attitude became most apparent during Senate debate on a resolution petitioning travel funds for the council to investigate electoral systems in other Pacific nations. The measure was defeated because its opponents argued successfully that such activities were not in the purview of the council and, further, that many council members were also parliamentarians who could undertake such a mission in their legislative capacities.⁵⁴

Taukei Challenge to the Constitution

Perhaps the most aggressive display of direct political involvement by the council was the 1982 Bau Resolution. In a belated reaction to the parliamentary elections that had restored the Alliance to a precarious majority, the council opened its annual meeting to media coverage. There, council members inveighed against Opposition criticism of certain paramount chiefs during the electoral campaign as having been highly disrespectful. Then the council passed a resolution demanding that two-thirds of the House seats be reserved for *taukei* as well as the offices of prime minister and governor-general.⁵⁵ Though Mara and his cabinet ministers abstained, the resolution was the first open indication that the council was beginning to reassert a direct political presence in national affairs, and also revealed a general apprehension among some of its members that the Alliance party was losing control of the government. Though Mara repudiated the Bau Resolution, the Opposition challenged his commitment to the Alliance's multiracial policies. The Bau Resolution was a clear instance where Mara, as a senior parliamentarian and a paramount chief, had difficulty in reconciling his traditional and modern roles in the face of controversy.⁵⁶

The significance of the Bau Resolution lay in its plea for changes in the 1970 Constitution to guarantee the paramountcy of *taukei* interests. It was the initial but firm indication of the *taukei* elite's lack of confidence in the existing electoral system, which placed such paramountcy at periodic risk, as demonstrated in the wake of the 1977 and 1982 general elections. Butadroka, in his own nonconforming manner, had offered his particular, but not necessarily inaccurate, evaluation of *taukei* reaction to the momentous 1977 election:

The Fijians thought all along that the Fijians would always become Governor-General, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Fijian Affairs et cetera. But when we [FNP] in one of our circulars showed that this was not the case . . . the Fijians then woke up. . . . The Fijian Association through the ex-Ambassador to the United Nations, Semesa Siki-vou, translated and argued our points in the Fijian Vernacular paper, *Nai Lalakai*. . . . [The Alliance] worried, because they later realised that what they were hiding in the Constitution were now forced out. That is the reason why I said, Sir, that the appointment of the minority [Alliance] Government was done deliberately in order to hide the . . . mistake done at the London Constitutional Conference.⁵⁷

The lengthy 1982 speech of Alliance backbencher K. S. Qiqiwaqa, made a few weeks after passage of the Bau Resolution, proved to be an adequate summary as well as a political prophecy.

We have just turned our backs on a most gruelling and hotly-contested General Elections, and if what happened then are indications of things to come, then it behooves everyone of us in this House to think very seriously about the future. . . . There is a definite need to a review and indeed a revision of the Constitution of Fiji. . . . The present Constitution is, to me, a recipe for a caretaker government. It is a recipe for the continuation of the Government that ruled Fiji during the colonial days. It is first and foremost non-racial. . . .

Understandably, all Fijians with nationalistic leanings are now questioning the wisdom of our leaders' agreeing to the adoption of this Constitution; but on analysis, however, I have come to the conclusion that the British Government had no option but to provide us with this Constitution, knowing fully well that to devise a constitution with "race" as its principal philosophical determinant will be up for serious questioning once the main races become conscious of their respective rights, privileges and power.

I must admit, however, that the present Constitution with its built-in systems of checks and balances is a masterpiece of political balancing act. . . . As I see it, the end of the road of the present Constitution is here. The events of the last General Election (and that of 1977) were and are indicative of this. There are definite signs of (and the hardening of) processes towards polarisation. . . . I personally feel that this Constitution poses a real threat to the long-term peaceful and orderly progress of Fiji as a whole; and to persist in adopting it would destroy democracy; to persist in it would lead to dictatorship; to persist in it would create political fanatics; to persist in it would lead to perpetual political stalemate and instability; to persist in it would titillate the palates of those susceptible to political bribery and corruption; and to persist in it would result in the permanent partitioning of Fiji into racial groupings of conflicting interests. . . . and I believe . . . a constitution that recognises and protects the Fijians' vested interest will in the long run be beneficial to Fiji as a whole. . . .

The Fijians have accepted their subservient role in the socio-economic sphere with grace, but judging from their reaction to

the last General Election, they are jealously watchful over their right to political dominance in Fiji. . . . Their reaction to being let down by some at the last General Election was so unusually and surprisingly violent that one would have thought that the Alliance Party had lost the election. . . . In the interest of Fiji, let us open dialogues on the Constitution.⁵⁸

Such movement by *tauvei* proponents of substantive constitutional changes was a manifestation of changes within the Great Council, stimulated largely by nontraditional elites who had been gradually incorporated into the council via the Fijian Administration; as a new *tauvei* constituency, this segment was keenly interested in making national civil service an issue to be included as a *tauvei* interest, the paramountcy of which could only be assured through constitutional amendments.⁵⁹ The Alliance in general and Mara in particular were not prepared to implement the general will of the council in Parliament, for that would jeopardize the multiracial structure of the party and also concede Mara's (and Ganilau's) titular and political leadership in both legislative affairs and the Fijian Administration. Yet it had become clear that expansion of the advisory functions of the council was, to a very large extent, a reflection of changes occurring within its membership. The council, journalist Robert Keith-Reid remarked, "is no longer the exclusive preserve of chiefs. Many of its present members are people who have won a place at its meetings not as an inherited privilege, but because of their own abilities and drive or because of their election to office by political processes far removed from the old Fijian way of choosing leaders. . . . However, with improvements in transport, communications [and] education, and with the exposure of commoners to ideas and doings in the towns, where the new breed of Fijian leader is a trade union leader, lawyer, or university educated young man with no chiefly background to help him on his way, the power of the traditional chief is under attack."⁶⁰

In 1983, the council seized the initiative in attempting to revitalize the Fijian Administration at the district and village levels. It commissioned the Honolulu-based Pacific Islands Development Program, an arm of the U.S. State Department-sponsored East-West Center, to review the Fijian provincial administration and to assist the Fijian Affairs Board in making recommendations accordingly. Consultation with administrators and village residents during a three-month period yielded the "Cole Report," recommending that the village and district level councils be reinstated and reorganized in a manner consistent with

rural finance and development planning. The Fijian court system, moreover, should be reinstated and empowered to enforce the administrative rules of the Fijian Administration. Submitted to the Great Council of Chiefs in early November 1984, the report's recommendations were approved for implementation.⁶¹ The report, in effect, was the charter for a reorganization of the Fijian Administration based upon the Sukuna model and for direct control over district and village level activities. It was, in essence, a restoration of the "state within a state" and an attempt to lay the foundation for future political mobilization of the *tauvei* electorate, as well as a prelude to council challenges to the 1970 Constitution. The Great Council of Chiefs was adjusting its own political agenda to conform with the provisions of the Bau Resolution.

The Militarization of the State Bureaucracy

It is important to note that subtle, yet substantive changes were occurring in the middle-level bureaucracy of the Fijian Administration. A considerable number of *tauvei* retirees from the British Army were returning to Fiji. Many of them began to seek second careers in the deteriorating Fijian Administration. Their presence in the administrative ranks was no doubt in part responsible for the reorganization initiatives, since expansion of the Fijian Administration was only possible at the district and village levels. In early 1985, Opposition House member J. V. Smith expressed dismay at the "militarisation" of the district administration by such retirees.⁶²

The influence of returning retirees in newly independent states is an important social development. While their individual experiences abroad tend to expand their capabilities and knowledge, their suddenly retired status, often at a comparatively young age, stimulates an interest in politics and a second career in the state bureaucracy. The 1963 coup in Togo, for example, was precipitated by returning veterans from the demobilized African regiments in the French Army following the end of the Algerian war. In that case the small west African state could not absorb them into the national army or the state bureaucracy and then had to contend with them in a violent seizure of the government. Quite often, however, returning servicemen are seen as suitable candidates for lower-level positions, often at the local levels of the bureaucracy. Fiji has not been a notable exception to this characteristic of colonial rule. It is important to underscore that young military retirees often become influential in both social and political institutions. A long period of military service generally provides a suitable background for

the development of common symbols and aspirations on various political and social issues. To the extent that such characteristics apply to veterans, they may assume all the characteristics of a distinct social group, if not a social class. In Fiji, members of this new constituency would make their presence known after the May 14 coup.

The institution of standing armies is a European concept, extended to other areas by colonial policies. A problem emerges when the colonial power transfers power to a new state, leaving in its wake an active military infrastructure that retains many of its former colonial characteristics. This aspect becomes increasingly problematic when the possibilities of internal social, political, and economic conflict remain unresolved.

In fact, the removal of the colonial power, which had so often promoted ethnic divisions and rivalries as part of the strategy of divide and rule, left behind a crippling legacy of intergroup tensions and communal mistrust. The uneven development of different regions, different education policies that had favored particular ethnic and tribal groups, merchant minorities that had been introduced to fill the intermediary commercial and bureaucratic roles in the colonial economy, and the selection of so-called "martial races" to monopolize the military and policy functions . . . combined to place an ethnic curse on so many postcolonial regimes.⁶³

The Royal Fiji Military Forces has been the most dynamic, yet least known, segment of institutionalized power in Fiji. From a seven hundred-man force in 1975, the R.F.M.F. has now grown to nearly two thousand, with possibilities of further expansion to a five thousand-man force complete with more sophisticated hardware.⁶⁴ Yet like all colonial period by-products, the R. EM. F. has not escaped the politics of communalism since its rank and file is over 90 percent *tauvei*. As an arm of government, it is seen by many *tauvei* not only as a prestige occupation, but also as a primary provider of unskilled employment. The military in newly independent states often attracts recruits from aspiring social groups who are prepared to expose themselves to the physical rigors of military life because it is an assured means of social mobility. The career process for such individuals, even in a hierarchial society, is less likely to be affected by their humble social origins: "Among the Fijians themselves, new relationships had been acquired during service in the army. Local and tribal prejudices were broken down and friendly relation-

ships extended. The once localised chiefs who had become officers in the army extended their influence and were respected in other areas where men who served under them lived. Those who did not have traditional chiefly titles assumed new status by still being referred to by their rank in the army."⁶⁵

The armed forces, as a latent source of *taukei* power, have always been seen by Indo-Fijian elites as problematic. The 1977 remarks of parliamentarian Irene Jai Narayan on behalf of the NFP were a reflection of such controlled apprehension:

. . . it has always been the considered view of my Party that the composition of the Fiji Military Forces should broadly reflect the racial composition of our population. When this matter was first raised in the Legislative Council in 1966 by the Opposition, the Rt Honourable the Prime Minister had given the assurance that the recruitment into the forces would be considered as a matter [but] was neither raised here nor in London. Some years after independence many of us began to feel strongly that a definite policy for recruiting Indians into the army must be formulated. And even, as it is stated in the Constitution that the policy of the Public Service Commission should be to ensure that each community in Fiji receives fair treatment in the number and distribution of officers . . . the same policy should be to adopt a policy of parity in regard to the recruitment of the Fiji Military Forces.

In 1972 when I had raised this subject on the floor of this House, the late honourable Ratu Sir Edward Cakobau [Home Affairs Minister] assured the House that the recruitment to the army was not discriminatory in any respect but as many Indians did not apply for recruitment only a few were selected. We believe that if they do not apply in sufficient numbers, they should be encouraged to do so.

. . . the preponderance of one racial group in the army may be harmful to the public interest because members of that racial group which is inadequately represented may have little faith in the impartiality of the Forces and may perhaps even fear them.⁶⁶

Since that time, it appears that the Home Affairs Ministry has incorporated a policy of attracting *taukei* school-leavers into the ranks as a means of promoting both employment and rural development.⁶⁷

Recruitment practices tend to set the framework for future policies. Indications presently suggest that coup leader Brig. Rabuka himself has taken a personal interest in recruiting select groups of *tauvei* in a paradigm resembling British colonial practice. In a recent tour of the northern Lau Islands, perhaps Fiji's most remote constituency, Rabuka addressed Mualevu villagers, offering ten billets for recruits. He was reported to have said that the men "possessed skills which could be used to improve the economy of their village" and urged parents to "consider ways and means of making use of youth manpower." After completion of their military training, Rabuka suggested, recruits should return to their village, rather than remain away as apparently has been the case with others.⁶⁸

The personnel composition of government agencies is difficult to alter since public servants are apt to be career-oriented and hence their employment may span twenty- or thirty-year periods. Once heavy recruitment of favored ethnic groups begins, it is likely to continue since the criteria may be framed to replicate the desired results earlier deemed to be objective in nature. In an ethnically divided country, the politicization of the military may be the direct result of military-politician cooperation, producing a patron-client relationship between the armed forces and key ministers and parliamentarians: "Jobs in the ordinary rank and file of the military can be politically valuable in periods of high unemployment. . . . In ethnically skewed governments, such politicization can also intensify pressures to preserve the existing state-sanctioned communal distribution of power."⁶⁹

Consequently, when the Bavadra coalition reiterated Narayan's insistence on racial balance in the military, the R.F.M.F. replied that the percentage of Indo-Fijians entering military service was minimal to negligible, that those who were recruited would leave prior to the completion of training, and that to change training policies to encourage racial balancing "would be detrimental to the professionalism of the force in general."⁷⁰ Unlike the state of Fiji, the R.F.M.F. had resisted its own independence from colonial policies in a manner consistent with the attitudes of Fiji's political elites. As with almost every government agency, the institutional instinct for self-preservation applied to the Fiji military. In a 1985 Labour party manifesto, Bavadra had promised, "Something should also be done about the Fijian military. Our army is in danger of becoming little more than a band of mercenaries. . . . We must see to it that our military serves our needs and not those of others. In this regard, we must be particularly mindful that we can pay for it ourselves and especially the pensions."⁷¹

Given the preexisting facts, the R.F.M.F. had a direct interest in the outcome of the April 1987 elections beyond a mere change in government. Though the general policies of standing armies are directed to the security of the state, military forces that are dominated by a single ethnic group are apt to focus their loyalties upon the political destiny of that group. Such sentiments, however, occasionally take political form and, in doing so, create a dilemma. Political activity among military personnel tends to precipitate internal organizational deterioration. Military involvement in national politics extends that same deterioration to the state itself. Bavadra's statement indicated a lack of awareness that the army, like its counterparts in the civil service, would react to protect its privileges. The R.F.M.F., as a distinct corporate group, was an armed bureaucracy, capable of direct action if its patron political party could no longer maintain parliamentary hegemony.

The Fijian army, as with other former colonial military forces, is also part of a greater system existing beyond the boundaries of individual nation-states. This system consists of arms standards, warfare doctrine, and institutionalized training devoted to specific purposes, namely the monopolization of technological force that, in its total sum, transcends national boundaries and ideologies. Such relationships, though modified at independence, are occasionally maintained with little or no attention to indoctrinating institutional loyalty to the newly created state. The transfer of political power does not automatically mean the transfer of military loyalties to the independent state, especially when the armed forces played no significant role in any independence movement. In Fiji's case, army loyalties generally were directed to both the Crown and the paramount chiefs, rather than to Fiji and its constitution.⁷²

Taukei domination of the military rank and file, moreover, is perhaps the most salient evidence of the failure of both the colonial and postcolonial governments to engage in substantive nation-building. Military recruitment is a primary index on how far a particular nation, especially one with pluralistic features, has developed a sense of national unity and citizenship. Popular participation, on a voluntary basis, in the military functions as one of the rights of citizenship. Popular representation in the military is therefore a primary indication of the legitimacy of the armed forces as an institution of the state.⁷³

Formal analyses of military governments in Africa and Latin America suggest that such regimes may actually be an impetus for "modernization."⁷⁴ Another analysis, to the contrary, argues that soldiers as bureaucrats may be forces for "political retraditionalizing" of govern-

ment, as readily seen in East Africa.⁷⁵ This hypothesis may be applicable in circumstances where ethnic differences tend to be institutionalized and specialized along ethnocratic lines. The very constitution of the nation-state may lend political and legal legitimacy to such institutions, thereby creating inherent inequalities and disequilibrium in the distribution of political resources and attainment of political goals. In this context, military forces--especially those that have been ethnocratically institutionalized--readily assume that rivalry with other ethnic groups is part of a continuing process that legitimately incorporates economic dimensions as well.⁷⁶ Such an outlook may have originated in traditional political strategies where an aggressive warrior tradition existed and functioned as a means of subduing economic institutions to the political control of a single chief or kin group. Military regimes with such histories and under such circumstances may very well attempt to revive such traditional political strategies and "retraditionalize" the existing political configuration of the state. In short, the monopolization of force may be used by such military regimes as a means of dominating internal activities that have economic significance. The peculiar matrix that may be established under such circumstances is one in which military governments seek to transform themselves from those who control the means of destruction to those who control the means of production.⁷⁷ The process of such transformation is a part of a more generalized change. It is this transformation that seems to be occurring in Fiji, albeit with its own peculiarities, as manifested later in the process that formulated the proposed terms and conditions of Fiji's second constitution.

One of the major problems for military regimes is how to manage power once it has been obtained. Rabuka, just a few days before the "second coup" on September 28, studied the plan for a caretaker government and reiterated his disengagement policies: "I believe that we are still duty-bound to make sure that whatever course of action is taken will achieve the aim of the coup. The minimum of that is a demand made by the Great Council of Chiefs that changes to the Constitution would ensure that the interests of the Fijians in their own country are guaranteed in perpetuity within the Constitution, not only their political control but also their economic interests. . . ." ⁷⁸

Attempts to reach a political compromise between Mara and Bavadra had culminated in the Deuba Accords, which would have provided a caretaker government until constitutional revisions had been completed and a return to parliamentary rule concluded. The terms of the Deuba Accords, however, failed to satisfy Rabuka. His dissolution of the civil

administration under the governor-general was a prelude to his declaration of Fiji as an independent republic.⁷⁹ His candid explanation of this dramatic and seemingly irreversible act was interrelated with his policy of eventual military disengagement from government.

I made a statement . . . that I had been monitoring the progress of the tripartite talks at Deuba between the two political groupings and the Governor-General. . . . When I looked at the progress I realised that even the Governor-General himself had been influenced. . . . When I looked at this Interim Government or Caretaker or Council of State, I realised that they would have the [Labour/NFP] Coalition having equal numbers as the Alliance Party and the Governor-General would have his own input. . . . If now we allow the Coalition group to come in then the chances of achieving my coup objectives were really nil. That is why I had to re-exert military authority yesterday.⁸⁰

Under the authority of the new Fiji republic, Ganilau as president granted all coup participants an unconditional pardon in January 1988.⁸¹ Thus, the prevailing pattern of military disengagement had been nearly completed. All that remained were the finalization of the republic's constitution and the reinstatement of parliamentary rule. While administering a government by decree is an efficient method, it is necessary for the military regime to press the return to parliamentary government with dispatch. For purposes of setting long-term policies a "neo-administrative state," a mode of government in which the army and bureaucracy determine and implement policy, is not competent to structure ongoing commitments. Rabuka has adopted such a mode of governance until the return to parliamentary rule is completed. In the process of establishing the Fiji republic, Rabuka opposed the idea of having an interim constitution.⁸² Indications, however, are that Rabuka has an undisclosed agenda that he intends to complete prior to disengagement and return to parliamentary rule. His timetable for military government was at least one year, with a possible extension to two additional years. More importantly, Rabuka was not certain or concerned as to how any forthcoming constitution would be implemented. During the interim, the military and the bureaucracy would continue to enact legislation by decree.

Though military doctrine incorporates group discipline as a policy of control, such strategies may be ill-suited to the management of politics

and bureaucracy once entrusted to civil administration. Military officers, unlike their civilian counterparts, have little of the bargaining skills necessary for effecting political decisions and compromises. Political culture--and Fiji's is no exception--is a process of continual bargaining among its participants.⁸³ Rabuka's method of integrating the military's role into civilian government has been to incorporate the Home Affairs Ministry's long-standing policy at a higher level of involvement. In an effort to stimulate economic development within its capabilities, the army has become involved with "large-scale farming for soldiers and commercial fishing for sailors."⁸⁴ Various schemes involving purchase of freehold land from Carpenters Fiji Ltd. and Burns Philp have been initiated.⁸⁵ As with other political endeavors, the necessity of legitimating the military's sudden intrusion into civilian affairs has followed a model not unlike similar regimes elsewhere. As noted previously, an army, once it has seized power, is often called upon to give direction to the economic system. While the possibilities for success in this respect depend on the training and material capabilities of the armed forces, the potential of the military to initiate long-range economic planning over a broad range of wealth-producing activities is normally quite limited or, at least, too specialized. Military skills and experience, furthermore, are not directly transferable to large-scale organizational cadres such as a state bureaucracy.⁸⁶ Yet the very idea of military direction of state policy gives the regime some sense of legitimacy or at least the hope of achieving it. Such developments were best summarized in a Nausori address by Rabuka to the R.F.M.F. Sixth Battalion wherein he declared, "You are the government. The present government will be glorified or criticised over how you perform."⁸⁷

The R.F.M.F., as with its African counterparts, may be considered a unique class unto itself. In some social settings, recruitment into the army is preferred over formal education. Furthermore, rugby and respect for social superiors are coherent aptitudes among many *tauvei* that have suitable military application and social value. Hence military service becomes particularly attractive because its social and economic benefits accrue social recognition similar to other elite professions.

Rabuka admitted that he had formulated a policy for military involvement in civil affairs while attending the Indian Defence Staff College in 1979: "It was there that I wrote a thesis on the role of the military forces in the socio-economic development of nations. As part of the thesis I studied coups in various African and Latin American states, It reinforced my belief that the Royal Fiji Military Forces could have a very active part to play in the socio-economic development of Fiji."⁸⁸

The Politicization of Class

A major consideration in the political culture of any parliamentary government is how electoral outcomes are influenced by changes in the domestic economy. Such characteristics generally indicate the growing presence of class interests, which are rooted in the market economy. As discussed previously, the military in this context may be forthrightly considered as one such category in the midst of others. For my purposes here, a class is defined as a social and economic category that results when a group feels and articulates that its common interests are different from, if not opposed to, those of others.⁸⁹ The 1987 elections were an unequivocal expression of increasing class development in Fiji and its incipient significance in island political life, thus complicating the existing dichotomy of the Fiji political configuration. The displacement of loyalties based upon ethnicity to those based upon class interests jeopardized the prevailing political strategies of the ruling elites. The emphasis here is not upon the dynamics of island class formation, but rather on the way class, like ethnicity, has become politicized and taken into serious constitutional consideration in the postcoup period. Contemporary commentaries, with good reason, have tended to stress ethnicity as a dominant feature of the island political landscape. The statistical results of periodic elections have value beyond their ostensible worth because the communal roll makes this politicization of ethnicity quantifiable. Class formation, however, is more elusive, though no less important in the modernization process in developing areas.⁹⁰

The existence of class-based interest groups, as a factor in political and social action, needs to be emphasized as a major feature of recent Fijian history unobscured by the dominance of ethnic issues. There is reason to believe that ethnicity as a political issue is often used to conceal status group dominance of intra-ethnic relations.⁹¹ As an elusive social and economic phenomenon, appropriating a workable definition of class reveals its evasive nature. It must be emphasized as well that class is merely a "common tool" for analyzing the social structure of societies in which "money and monetary exchange are the principal determinants of one's social position."⁹² Yet the significance of class-based response to political change can be realized in relationship to two general considerations, namely the state and its economy and the challenge of class-based interests to indigenous traditional authority.

Recent studies have attempted to address class formation and its consequences for modern Fiji.⁹³ But the question here is to determine the immediate political consequences of class formation among *tauvei* who

have harbored political aspirations in derogation of ethnicity as the primary measure of political affiliation.

In pursuit of class formation, it is first necessary to discover some of the elementary and relevant institutions and conditions responsible for its development. The single most important institutional occurrence in post-Cession Fiji and certainly the most important postindependence legacy is the apparatus of state and its attendant economy. Great Britain, through its early policies and administrations, created both a colonial state and a colonial economy based upon exportable agricultural crops marketed chiefly in Europe.⁹⁴ The imperial insistence on fiscal self-sufficiency gave each colony a sovereign self-interest in the orderly expansion of its natural and human resources that, through its various mechanisms and strategies, may be termed the colonial state economy. Aside from the commercial objectives of such endeavors, the reorganization and mobilization of the island economy was a moral exercise in the maximization of sources of exploitable wealth that was largely beyond the capabilities of the *tauvei* leadership. Although the authority of the Fijian chiefs was largely preserved through the policy of indirect rule, the traditional *tauvei* elites were discouraged from directly participating in the colonial economy. A complex dilemma arises as the status of the chiefs, directly attributable to the traditional social economy and its attendant obligations, requires a stable demographic base, yet comes under challenge from an aggressive market economy requiring a mobile pool of wage labor. The true irony is that the traditional *tauvei* economy is a necessary component of the greater market economy, that the "reality . . . is that the whole cash economy is based on the so called subsistence sector in the first place," because of the land resources and the extra-subsistence demands of its participants.⁹⁵

It is not surprising, therefore, that the state economy demands a "greater sense of national unity and national identity."⁹⁶ The use of imported and indentured labor, the rise of mercantile enterprise, and the circulation of capital as part of the expanding colonial economy created a corresponding civil state greater than the sum of its constituent parts. Yet even under such circumstances, the traditional *tauvei* economy and its hereditary lords survived, although in modified form, to a substantial degree. The role and position of the traditional *tauvei* elites in the postindependence state is complicated by the indisputable fact that the chiefs, while accorded full titular status in their respective traditional estates, cannot as a group lay the same patrimonial claim to the Fijian state, which in its totality consists of a demographic majority of non-*tauvei* and is dominated by an array of non-*tauvei* institutions.

Thus the current, ongoing issue involves the confrontation between these two institutional systems in the forum of political conflict. Common to all principals is the realization that Fiji's national economic condition is still based primarily upon the production of exportable commodities, a dependence that is increasing not only in importance, but also in unreliability.⁹⁷ Political mobilization based upon class-based interests is likely to occur under such conditions, as the possibilities for continued economic prosperity become less promising. In a recent study of military seizures of governments, Fiji was identified as "being vulnerable to a coup" based upon the downturn in its highly concentrated export economy and a correspondingly low per-capita gain in individual earnings.⁹⁸ If nothing else, the rise to social action by class-based interests is a major index of political behavior peculiar to a modern state, especially when long-standing partisan loyalties are transcended.

The principal actors in this dilemma are the traditional *tauvei* elites and their nontraditional and neotraditional counterparts. Access to both power and wealth for these groups has been marked by considerable differentiation and specialization under the preexisting parliamentary regime. For purposes of this discussion, access to wealth and power is confined primarily to the state-sponsored wage economy, particularly the civil service. Those individuals, particularly the nontraditional *tauvei*, who have managed to maintain a livelihood in the elite sector of the wage economy, have become largely separated from their rural counterparts who have continued in the traditional social economy. Money--more specifically, the development of a monetized economy--has been the single most influential factor for many *tauvei* in providing an economic alternative to the traditional social economy.⁹⁹ Payment of commutation fees to the Fijian Administration is an obligation, however, that links urban *tauvei* to the bureaucracy. For this social category, the costs of maintaining their social obligations in this context have been problematic and occasionally prohibitive.¹⁰⁰ Both social segments, additionally, have been linked in the periodic ritual of elections in support of the Alliance party. In recent years, though, economic downturns, high unemployment rates, inflation, and labor disputes between government and the public service union have precipitated a political rethinking on the part of many *tauvei* wage earners in the elite economy.¹⁰¹ Under such conditions, social control of this social and economic constituency by the political elites has been difficult to maintain by traditional means. To a large extent, this challenge has been met by traditional *tauvei* elites by manipulating the careers of select titleholders through modern educational and administrative institutions.

Nontraditional Elite Formation

Hence, political interest in educational institutions by *taukei* of all social categories has been a "recent development."¹⁰² The colonial legacy of separate educational systems has left the postindependence state with a public and private school system marked by significant religious, sectional, and linguistic differences. For many *taukei*, access to status occupations is greatly influenced by their attendance at Fiji's elite secondary schools and Australian or New Zealand universities, usually on government scholarships. For those less politically or socially positioned, the University of the South Pacific provides the only possible alternative. The politicization of entrance requirements at U.S.P. has taken the form of "positive discrimination" whereby examination scores for *taukei* have been discounted in their favor, causing a major confrontation with Indo-Fijians who have obtained higher scores on their entrance examinations.¹⁰³ While such a policy has been rationalized as a remedial measure to improve the educational opportunities for otherwise disadvantaged *taukei*, the controversy has revealed the social reality that what land is for the *taukei*, education is to the Indo-Fijian.¹⁰⁴ Such maneuvers should not have been unanticipated. The politicization of the public service was a harbinger that political pressures on heretofore neutral ground would continue unabated.

Politically active chiefs were fully aware of the actual and potential power of their commoner counterparts who had achieved elite status. Realizing that ascriptive qualifications have become increasingly important to political and personal advancement, many chiefs have come into gradual political opposition with *taukei* elites of commoner background over the issue of national leadership. Status differentiation in *taukei* society, though still potent, has become increasingly troublesome in modern life. While the leadership role of the chiefs has been continually stressed over time, reconciliation with the ideology of initiative and achievement has never been fully resolved. Perhaps the most diplomatic restatement of this perplexing dichotomy is the following:

Fijians regard their society in terms of a fundamental unity between the people and the chiefs. They often refer to this unity as *turaga ni tamata* and *tamata ni turaga*, that is to say, the chief belongs to and is of the people, and the people belong to and are of the chief. This unity is cemented by a common bond of allegiance, loyalty and reverence binding together the people and their chief, and is demonstrated by the reciprocal duties

each side has for the other. The Fijians realise that they must serve their chiefs and at the same time, the chiefs are obliged to look after the people. . . .

The major factors of change are largely economic through wage employment and cash cropping which have brought close involvement in the cash economy to an increasing number of Fijians. Through this process thrift and acquisitiveness are being encouraged among many Fijians throughout the country. Although these values are not yet characteristic of Fijian society generally they are accepted as essential components of Fijian progress in the modern world and spreading. A new balance in Fijian social relationships seems to be developing; it encourages individual effort and does not appear to be paying much attention or giving much support to the traditional groupings in society. If this trend continues the value of social groups, based on . . . the chiefly system could be seriously undermined and weakened. . . . Chiefs have particular and specific functions in the social milieu; this should be reciprocated by the people in order to continue the social system as a living entity and as a going concern.¹⁰⁵

Penetration of the rural economy by the state economy has been a process of continuous concern to many *taukei*. Politically ambitious *taukei* have manipulated this fact into fungible terms, casting this perception in more generalized terms as the appropriation of *taukei* land by non-*taukei*, largely because of the higher profile and vulnerability of non-*taukei* and because of a reluctance to admit that some chiefs are themselves involved in such a process. Historically, chiefly power over commoner labor was the primary means of inducing material productivity on the traditional estates of the chief. Since the colonial period, however, this relationship has been almost reversed through the bureaucratization of *taukei* tenancy and the politicization of lease arrangements with non-*taukei*.¹⁰⁶ It has been forthrightly suggested that land is the "focus of clashes between two economic and social systems, not simply between two ethnic groups."¹⁰⁷ Land as a metaphor for *taukei* security, as an issue for cross-ethnic conflict, also reflects *taukei* aversion to economic risk in contradistinction to the aggressive capital investment peculiar to a market economy. While many have stated that the Indo-Fijians control the economy, such has not been the reality. *Taukei* control their own social economy, although considerable market influences have penetrated its fabric, Resort to such rhetoric reveals the fact that

tauvei do not consider their traditional social economy as an autonomous system, but rather as a subordinate part of their traditions.¹⁰⁸ The political penetration of rural communities by the state economy has formed a part of the rhetorical lexicon in *tauvei* political discourse even prior to independence.¹⁰⁹ A postelection speech of A. V. Tora's to chiefs of the western provinces illustrates such strategies:

Already two million acres of our land, most of it our best and most fertile land, has already been leased to 24,000 tenants, of whom 18,000 or 75 per cent are non-Fijians. . . .

Those who do not want us; those who do not want our chiefs, they should vacate our land. . . .

We are not a wealthy community, but we have shared our only asset, land, generously with others. . . .

Our generosity, our willingness to share and care have been used to slap us in our faces. They have been used to push the *tauvei* aside. They have been used to deprive us of the paramountcy of interests which the Deed of Cession guaranteed and which the fathers of the present Constitution undertook to uphold and protect for all *tauvei* forever.

This sacred covenant, this sacred agreement is now broken. Our independence is now broken. . . .

We cannot remain silent as our traditions and customs are endangered, as the leadership of our *turaga* is spurned, as our land, our only asset and the source of our security, is put in the control of others.¹¹⁰

The Politicalization of Nontraditional Tauvei Elites

The formation of the Fiji Labour party (FLP) on 6 July 1985 occurred amid an array of economic and social problems resulting from high unemployment rates, low wages, and labor disputes between the government and civil service. Stimulated largely by the Fiji Trade Union Congress, the FLP faced the immediate challenge of integrating the manual labor trades into a political movement centered largely on public sector employees. Timoci Bavadra, a physician and recently retired president of the Fiji Public Service Union, was elected party president. A former member of the Alliance party and member of the Great Council of Chiefs, Bavadra made an appeal for national integration of Fiji's economic, social, and ethnic communities.

Tupeni Baba, a reader in education at the University of the South

Pacific, became one of the FLP orators who appealed directly to the economic reality of the day: "There is an increasing income difference between the rich and poor, between the professional and businessman and the ordinary worker, between the chiefs in politics and those who are not."¹¹¹ He continued criticizing the chiefly system of political leadership at a Suva conference with fellow academician Simione Durutalo, where he emphasized that many chiefs were becoming increasingly involved in accumulating wealth directly from commercial enterprises. Disregarding traditional norms of prescriptive generosity, many of the modern chiefs were not sharing the rewards of such business ventures with their traditional following.¹¹² Seemingly by fortuitous circumstances, Baba's accusations were verified by disputes among the *rentier* high titleholders of western Fiji, whose revenues occasionally exceeded that of their extended km groups collectively. As Ratu Osea Gavidi, one of the disputants, remarked, "People feel that it is their democratic right to question something they are not happy about. This did not happen in the past when disputes were dealt with in the Fijian traditional system."¹¹³

Baba and a cadre of intellectuals at the university became the most virulent source of criticism against the chiefs active in the Alliance party. Rather than confining their attacks to the regional concentration of political power among the chiefs of the eastern confederacies, Baba and his colleagues challenged the clientism and patronage system afforded to the political chiefs as being irrelevant and counterproductive to the operations of a modern government. Some of the conclusions to be drawn from the events and rhetoric of the months immediately preceding the 1987 elections inevitably point toward the rise of class consciousness as a political force. Differences in income and access to basic economic resources were becoming increasingly disparate.¹¹⁴ Efforts by the FLP to forge political alliances with other organizations proved successful. While an alliance with the Western United Front came easily, negotiations with the NFP were more difficult because of concern, especially by Koya, about accusations that Labour was only for "rich civil servants who enjoy automatic payraises, and not for the labour . . . who can't afford to wear ties."¹¹⁵

Communal politics, though still a barrier to cross-ethnic cooperation, was subrogated to a pragmatic alliance between the FLP and the NFP when Jai Ram Reddy assumed the leadership of the latter party. The formation of the Coalition proved decisive. The "educated Fijians" of the Coalition were criticized by dockworker unionist Taniela Veitata as working to undermine the chiefly leadership system.¹¹⁶ During the

period immediately preceding the elections, a move by part-Europeans to support the Coalition indicated that class-based interests would be the margin of victory for Bavadra.¹¹⁷

Postelection reaction to the Bavadra victory came after the new prime minister selected his Cabinet, which was composed of six *tauvei*, seven Indo-Fijians, and one part-European. Bavadra retained the Fijian affairs and home affairs portfolios for himself, a move particularly audacious from the viewpoint of the paramount chiefs and the military. Under such circumstances the *Tauvei* Movement mounted a series of large demonstrations in Suva. Veitata, fellow unionist Apisai Tora, and a few Methodist church ministers were some of the movement's orators. The thrust of the movement's demands was summarized by a *tauvei* journalist:

One is that they want the country's leadership to be always in the hands of Fijians. The second is their preference that the chiefs should always be at the leadership helm. And they believe that their culture, identity and heritage will be protected if their demands are allowed. . . . For those who do not fully comprehend Fijian mentality, the protest could be simply seen as sour grapes in the wake of the Alliance party defeat in the recent elections. But the stark reality of the situation is that the marchers' sentiments appear to be similar to the Fijian Nationalist Party's policies. Yet the organisers of this new exclusive Fijian struggle say theirs is a subtle difference. They are saying that Sakiasi Butadroka's Fijian Nationalist Party is anti-Indian whereas their movement is simply pro-Fijian.¹¹⁸

Butadroka himself kept a discrete distance from the leaders of the *Tauvei* Movement. His interpretation of the protest conformed to his historical interpretation of Tovata dominance of government: "When you begin to talk about the three traditional Fijian confederacies (Tovata, Kubuna and Burebasaga) then you have a different perspective. I see Prime Minister Dr Timoci Bavadra as a man from the Burebasaga confederacy. This is the first time that a man from this confederacy has risen to high office. Why don't we support him?"¹¹⁹

The shifting composition of the *Tauvei* Movement characterized group ideology, though the consistent demand was for a change in the 1970 Constitution that would assure *tauvei* dominance in Parliament. Movement leaders were occasionally at odds with each other, especially when the possibility of physical force was discussed.¹²⁰ Perhaps for the

first time since the tumultuous days of Apolosi R. Nawai, the political elites had to contend directly with nonelites on a collective basis. The Taukei Movement and its activities, however, did provide Rabuka with a reason (or pretext) to assume military control of the government. Bavadra's reaction was contained in his submission to the Constitutional Review Committee: "The Alliance Party has distanced itself from the Taukei Movement and so has the Taukei Movement from the Alliance. Who does the Taukei Movement represent? We submit that the Movement represents elements who are being used by vested interests to maintain their elitism through control and influence of politics in this Country."¹²¹

Organizational and advocacy efforts by the Taukei Movement leadership continued at the parish level. Indeed the Protestant churches were the single most influential source of group communication (or agitation) of Taukei Movement sentiment. Rabuka, at one church service, told the congregation to seek peace for the country and spiritual support for the Taukei Movement.¹²² It is apparent that Rabuka depended upon the Taukei Movement for support (or a *raison d'être*) during the early weeks of military rule. He appointed Tora, Veitata, Kelemedi Bulewa, Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Adi Litia Cakobau, Ratu Meli Vesikula (a retired career commando in the British Army and the assistant Roko Tui of Naitasiri), and Butadroka to his council of advisors, all of whom were highly visible in the crowd politics of the Taukei Movement.

As noted earlier, the Great Council of Chiefs came to be regarded as a surrogate parliament by many *taukei* during this period. The council's proposals for constitutional revisions were aimed at restoring the "consensus" system of government based upon the recommendations of the 1984 Cole Report and upon the system that existed prior to 1963. Under such a system, *taukei* would no longer vote directly for parliamentary candidates, but rather would exercise their franchise through village, district, and provincial councils. (Other ethnic groups would retain direct elections.) Urban *taukei*, moreover, would be compelled to participate in the rural districts of their birth for the selection of their representatives. The "consensus" system as a mode of *taukei* decision-making is perhaps the least understood institution in Fiji. It stands in almost complete contrast to party politics as a social strategy, requiring prolonged discussions in a formal, face-to-face setting, punctuated with ceremony and protocol. The opinions of the paramount personalities are accorded deference and great weight. Most important, personal accusations, a favorite device for politicians, are avoided altogether as a vulgar breach of decorum. This explains why interethnic tensions are

greatest during political campaigns, not only because of the contest for power, but also because many of the paramount chiefs are subjected to intense criticism by their opponents.

The council, exercising its titular authority over the Fijian Administration, was fully aware that the changes envisaged by the Cole Report would be difficult to implement under the 1970 Constitution. The constitutional safeguards concerning key Fijian Affairs statutes required a three-fourths Senate majority for change, assuring the paramountcy of *taukei* interests could not be left in the hands of a minority of non-*taukei*. The same provisions, however, could act as a political obstacle to statutory amendments initiated by the Fijian Administration itself. In such instances, the Senate Opposition could comfortably veto any changes.¹²³

The FLP's Baba reacted quickly to the council's proposals, saying that they were aimed at strengthening the traditional chiefly system at the expense of the "urban and educated minority" of *taukei*.¹²⁴ Inoke Tabua, a senatorial nominee of the Great Council's and a Taukei Movement personality, agreed with Baba and said that the *taukei* must accept that the pre-1963 "nomination days are over" and that such an electoral configuration was unacceptable.¹²⁵ Nonetheless, the Constitutional Review Committee accepted the council's proposals, at least in principle.

Attempts to create a consensus caretaker government were made by Mara and Bavadra at Deuba. Once an accord was announced in late September, Rabuka examined the terms of the proposals, declared them unacceptable, and by decree pronounced Fiji a republic. He then proceeded to dismiss Ganilau, Mara, and other members of the interim military government. In early December, he dismissed from his Executive Council Minister Butadroka and several Taukei Movement personalities (except Veitata and Tora) whom he felt were using their portfolios to further elective political aspirations.¹²⁶ The nature of Rabuka's replacements--mostly military officers--suggests that loyalty was an important consideration as well. In an interview, Vesikula, one of the more articulate and aggressive members of the Taukei Movement, commented on the sudden changes: "I see no chance at all of my two ratus [Mara and Ganilau] here changing their outlook and their life and the running of the country in general. This is their life. They were responsible for the 1970 Constitution and putting them back there is tempting fate. What has the old system achieved for the Fijian people? It has achieved the erosion of traditional leadership, it has achieved a lack of patriotism. It has achieved disparity between the races in Fiji. It has

culminated in two military coups and the possibility of another or in some other form of violence.”¹²⁷

The Taukei Movement, seeking ideological succor from the Great Council of Chiefs, soon began to see itself as the “only meaningful opposition to the government.”¹²⁸ Whether the Taukei Movement is a genuine nationalist group is uncertain. Its demands have been remarkably simple and direct. The movement, however, has not been able to resolve adequately the question of political leadership. Though the chiefly system is used as a rubric, the reality is that the traditional *taukei* elites do well at the policy-making level, but tend to monopolize all sources of political emoluments at the expense of well-deserving, qualified commoners. Such group behavior is counterproductive to an efficient government worthy of public confidence. The Taukei Movement envisions, in almost religious terms, a *taukei* state. As Vesikula said, “Fijians have sovereignty and sovereignty is God-given to any race and Fiji belongs to the Fijians.”¹²⁹ Such rhetoric is not uncommon among Taukei Movement leaders. As a neomillenarian movement, it lacks only a singular and unchallenged prophet. Ethnic sovereignty, as the political objective of the Taukei Movement, may be sufficient to classify it, however, as at least a quasi-nationalist group: “Nationalism is also a form of ethnicity, but it is a special form. It is institutionalization of one particular ethnic identity attaching it to the State. . . . Ethnic groups do not necessarily act together except when they have special interests to secure. When these interests are to obtain a State of its own (or part of a State) the group becomes a *nationality*. Those which become successful become *nations*. . . . Nationalism refers to movements, to activities and ideologies developed in order to acquire or sustain a State of one’s own.”¹³⁰

The question for the Taukei Movement and the Great Council of Chiefs was how to properly and constitutionally subordinate the Fijian state to the norms of *taukei* society. The possibility of a pure *taukei* state is illusory because of the demographic superiority of non-*taukei* and the reality of a state economy that has become increasingly internationalized since independence. Yet movement within the council suggests that some rethinking about its own composition has occurred recently to conform with a more traditional mode of *taukei* governance. One paper circulated for tabling before the council in mid-1988 proposed a restructuring from the current 154 members to some thirty-eight. As noted earlier, following the adoption of the Sukuna model of the Fijian Administration, the council expanded--with some reluctance on the part of the paramount chiefs--to include a variety of members, including military. The paper in question has proposed formation of an upper house to

include only the ten chiefs of the Tovata, Burebasaga, and Kubuna confederacies. A lower house would consist of the fourteen provincial representatives and fourteen chiefs of unspecified titles.¹³¹ Thus status and class, as dual social characteristics in seemingly continuous opposition in *tauvei* society, have surfaced once more within an important institution. The present constitutional proposals submitted by the Great Council of Chiefs, in tandem with such a proposed configuration, would virtually eliminate nontraditional *tauvei* elites from any policy-making role in government. These proposals, moreover, place the military in a curious, perhaps precarious position. Currently the Fiji ministries consist of an armed and unarmed bureaucracy, with the former in support of the Fijian Administration in its present form. With the return to parliamentary government postponed for the immediate future, the political elites of Fiji will have time to consider the options for change more or less at their leisure. The discussion here of class-based interests has been deliberately confined to a *tauvei* context. The issue has, of course, broader application to island society.

When and if competition between races is superseded by rivalry within races then, just as moderately able Indians miss out, the not-so-able Fijians will do likewise, and the elite of both races may be subject to the intense pressures from within their own ethnic groups. Then history might take two courses. The first may lead to class formation. The elite of the two races might unite to preserve their own class interest. Or, Fijian elements will continue to be placated at the expense of Indians. Just as now the not-so-able and average ones are unable to receive the plums, later the most able will find themselves in a singular predicament; it becomes a question of time. If the first occurs, then there is class competition . . . we might have a multiracial bourgeoisie battling a multiracial proletariat with dramatic consequences. Although race will not be eliminated it should become secondary. If the second alternative occurs then racial polarization will be the deciding factor. Indians will be left with two options: either to leave Fiji or to serve on Fijian terms.¹³²

Conclusion

This study has attempted to address some of the key institutional questions surrounding the constitutional crisis in Fiji in terms of sentiment,

substance, and process as it applies to the *tauvei* and their institutions, apart from the more dominant issue of interethnic conflict. While much political commentary has been expended on Fiji's *constitutional* processes, the May 14 coup suggests that the sudden penetration of military forces into power, and their subsequent administration of the state, is an authentic process in itself. When Fiji is viewed in conjunction with other former colonial areas, the militarization of government appears to be a process rivaling that of its constitutional counterpart. Such a process may arise when the export sector of the economy becomes destabilized to the point where government loses its popular support.¹³³ Of some consequence for the future is whether the party system as it existed in precoup days will continue to function as the major institution of popular political mobilization. The disintegration of the General Electors Association and the Indian Alliance following the 1987 elections suggests otherwise. The forthcoming constitution, as it seems, would make the role of political parties irrelevant or redundant, for the political outcome in ethnic terms will have been constitutionally decided. What appears to be an alternative, though less formal, institution is clientism, which has existed as an integral means of obtaining and maintaining influence in island politics. Ironically, under the contemplated constitutional regime, clientism will become a more important avenue of interethnic collaboration than previously existed during the Alliance era. Clientism in Fiji, with its own traditional and nontraditional history, has thus acquired a form of recognition as a means of obtaining or maintaining power. At the focal point of the patron-client relationships will be the chiefs and the military/public service bureaucracy.

When the privileged holders of state power consent to recognise informal authority and thus give it formal status, they do so largely for self-interested purposes; to co-opt that power into their own ranks or to aggrandise their own positions. Yet this act requires that those at the top extend power and privilege to others. In the course of human events, the extension of power has not been freely made, but comes as a result of the recognition by ruling elites that to keep power they must retain--through real or illusory means--the compliance of the people they govern.¹³⁴

Clientism may well be a normal part of the political process. The question is whether patron-client relationships will be sustained at the

expense of the general public welfare. The irony of the above is that island democracy and multiracial collaboration may come about as a result of clientism if such a system is sanctioned. Clientism, of course, is no substitute for democratic parliamentarism, merely an alternative until more stable configurations of constitutional administration emerge in more dominant form.

NOTES

Special thanks to Brij V. Lal and Norman Meller for their helpful comments and contributions, some of which made all the difference in the outcome of this essay.

1. *Legislative Council (Hansard) Debates*, 17 December 1965, p. 703.
2. An account of the early months of the coup may be found in Roderic Alley, "The Military Coup in Fiji," *The Round Table*, 1987: 489-496.
3. In my view a military coup, like a constitutional government, often takes a long period of time to sweep aside the institutional remnants of the previous government. In Fiji, I consider there to have been a single coup, initiated on May 14 and not completed until September 28 when the Republic of Fiji was unilaterally declared by Brig. Rabuka, severing Fiji's ties with the Commonwealth.
4. R. S. Milne, "The Pacific Way--Consociational Politics in Fiji," *Pacific Affairs* 48 (1975): 413-431. See also Ralph Premdas, "Ethnic Conflict Management: A Government of National Unity and Some Alternative Proposals," in *Politics in Fiji*, ed. Brij V. Lal (Laie, Hawaii: Institute for Polynesian Studies, Brigham Young University-Hawaii, 1986), 107-138.
5. Yash Ghai, "Constitutional Issues in the Transition to Independence," in *Foreign Forces in Pacific Politics*, ed. Ron Crocombe and Ahmed Ali (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies-University of the South Pacific, 1983), 27.
6. J. W. Davidson, "Constitutional Changes in Fiji," *Journal of Pacific History* 1 (1966): 164.
7. Remarks of Ratu W. B. Toganivalu, *Legislative Council (Hansard) Debates*, 17 June 1970, p. 221.
8. Roderic Alley, "The Development of Political Parties in Fiji" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Victoria University of Wellington, 1973), 33.
9. *Ibid.*, 35.
10. *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) House of Representatives*, 9 October 1975, pp. 1104-05.
11. Brij V. Lal, "The 1982 General Election and Its Aftermath," *University of the South Pacific Sociological Society Newsletter*, July 1983: 9.
12. Quoted in R. K. Vasil, "Communalism and Constitution-making in Fiji," *Pacific Affairs* 45 (1972): 14.

13. Edward Shils, "Political Development of the New State," in *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*, ed. John J. Johnson (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962), 11.
14. Ladun Anise, "Ethnicity and National Integration in West Africa, Some Theoretical Considerations," in *Ethnic Autonomy--Comparative Dynamics in the Americas, Europe, and the Developing World*, ed. Raymond L. Hall (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979), 338.
15. *Problems of Parliamentary Government in Colonies* (London: Hansard Society, 1953), 55, 76.
16. *Report of the Royal Commission Appointed for the Purpose of Considering and Making Recommendations as to the Appropriate Method of Electing Members to, and Representing the People of Fiji in, the House of Representatives*, Parliamentary Paper 24 of 1975, 14-18.
17. *Ibid.*, 14.
18. An ethnocracy has been defined as "a system of government based upon either ethnic exclusivity, or ethnic division of labor, or quantified ethnic balance" (Ali M. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda* [Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1975], 215).
19. *Fiji Times*, 10 June 1987.
20. *Ibid.*, 12 June 1987.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, 13 June 1987.
24. *Ibid.*, 5 June, 10 June 1987.
25. *Report of the Constitutional Review Committee*, July/August 1987, Parliamentary Paper 21 of 1987, 60.
26. *New Zealand Herald*, 1 October 1987.
27. For example, see the remarks of K. C. Ramrakha, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) House of Representatives*, 15 May 1980, pp. 296-298. The thrust of the NFP doyen's comment was directed at the political relevance of the independence Constitution to existing circumstances, which, in his opinion, had changed from the assumptions that had formed the basis for the actual negotiation of the 1970 Constitution.
28. This phenomenon has been observed among former colonial states in Africa:

Decolonisation typically involved the adoption of an independence constitution to provide an institutional framework for the new state. . . . However, they were usually abandoned in the decade following independence in the face of rising civilian and military authoritarian regimes. . . . Suffice it to say that they were alien frameworks for European cultures that had little meaning for most Africans who were expected to live under them. . . . African rulers who had accepted them in order to gain independence were not necessarily prepared to stick by them at the risk of losing power afterwards. Their opponents also had little more than instrumental attitudes then. In short, they lacked real legitimacy. (Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosbery, "Sovereignty and Underdevelopment:

- Juridical Statehood in the Africa Crisis," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 24 [1986]: 15-16)
29. Deryck Scarr, "A Roko Tui for Lomaiviti," *Journal of Pacific History* 5 (1970) : 3-31.
30. T. J. Macnaught, "Chiefly Civil Servants? Ambiguity in District Administration and the Preservation of a Fijian Way of Life, 1896-1940," *Journal of Pacific History* 9 (1974): 3-20.
31. *Selections from the Selected Speeches of Ratu Sir Kamisese T. Mara* (Suva: n.d.), 24.
32. Alley, "Development of Political Parties," 61.
33. *Legislative Council (Hansard) Debates*, 21 December 1965, pp. 752-753.
34. O. H. K. Spate, *The Fijian People: Economic Problems and Prospects*, Legislative Council of Fiji, Council Paper No. 13, 1959, p. 31.
35. *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Natural Resources and Population Trends of the Colony of Fiji, 1957*, Legislative Council Paper No. 1 of 1960, pp. 31-32.
36. Cyril Belshaw, *Under the Ivi Tree: Society and Economic Growth in Rural Fiji* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 221.
37. E. K. Fisk, *The Political Economy of Fiji* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1971), 39.
38. R. R. Nayacakalou, *Leadership in Fiji* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1975), 129.
39. Alley, "Development of Political Parties," 44.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ahmed Ah, "The Fiji General Election of 1977," *Journal of Pacific History* 12 (1977): 189-201. See also the remarks of Jai Ram Reddy, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) House of Representatives*, 25 May 1977, p. 45.
44. Brij V. Lal and Simione Durutalo, "The 1982 Fiji General Elections," *Review [Fiji]* 3 (November 1982): 19.
45. Quoted in Deryck Scarr, *Ratu Sukuna: Soldier, Statesman, Man of Two Worlds* (London and Suva: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1980), 147. The Sukuna model was aptly summarized in his own words: "To train chiefs and people in orderly, sound, progressive local government better to fit them eventually for the give and take of democratic institutions" (*Parliamentary Debates [Hansard] House of Representatives*, 24 May 1966, p. 147).
46. Nayacakalou, *Leadership in Fiji*, 138.
47. Ibid.
48. T. J. Macnaught, *The Fijian Colonial Experience: A Study of the Neotraditional Order under British Colonial Rule prior to World War II* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1982), 38-74; Ahmed Ali, "Fiji Chiefs and Constitutional Change, 1874-1937," *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* 33, nos. 54-55 (1976) : 55-64.

49. Nayacakalou, *Leadership in Fiji*, 122-123.
50. *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) House of Representatives*, 2 December 1975, pp. 1768-71.
51. *Ibid.*, 26 May 1977, p. 117.
52. *Fiji Times*, 4 November 1982.
53. *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) House of Representatives*, 24 May 1966, pp. 82, 87.
54. *Ibid.*, *Senate*, 18 July 1974, pp. 195-204.
55. *Fiji Times*, 5 November, 17-18 November 1982.
56. *Ibid.*, 18 November 1982.
57. *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) House of Representatives*, 26 May 1977, p. 115.
58. *Ibid.*, 22 November 1982, pp. 943-946.
59. Nayacakalou, *Leadership in Fiji*, 128.
60. *Fiji Times*, 13 November 1982.
61. The review team consisted of Rodney V. Cole, School of Development Studies of the Australian National University; Stephen I. Levine of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of Victoria University of Wellington; and Anare V. Matahau, a Fijian lawyer. See R. V. Cole, S. I. Levine, and A. V. Matahau, *The Fijian Provincial Administration: A Review* (Honolulu: East-West Center, Pacific Islands Development Program, 1984). This report has a perhaps unusual history, having been prepared following a request from the Great Council of Chiefs to Felipe Bole, then director of the Pacific Islands Development Program of the East-West Center and former member of the Fijian delegation to the United Nations. (Bole is currently minister of education, Republic of Fiji.) The report was subsequently translated into the Fijian language and distributed throughout the villages and communities inhabited by ethnic Fijians. See also Stephen I. Levine, *The Fijian Provincial Administration Review: Regional Report* (Honolulu: East-West Center, Pacific Islands Development Program, 1985), for a summary of the philosophical rationale underlying the review team's approach and recommendations.
62. *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) House of Representatives*, 28 February 1985, p. 179.
63. John Stone, "Ethnicity versus the State: The Dual Claims of State Coherence and Self-Determination," in *State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*, ed. by Donald Rothchild and Victor A. Olorunsola (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), 85.
64. *Fiji Sun*, 28 July 1987.
65. Asesela Ravuvu, *Fijians at War* (Suva: South Pacific Social Sciences Association, 1974), 60.
66. *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) House of Representatives*, 8 December 1977, pp. 235-236. Her remarks paralleled similar concerns expressed five years earlier (*ibid.*, 5 December 1972, pp. 2151-52).
67. Such a policy was explained by Home Affairs Minister S. S. Momoivalu in 1977 as part of a response to Narayan's criticisms: "The only point worth mentioning about the

Army is the recruitment of our younger people leaving school in order to join the engineer squadron. This will be used extensively in rural development exercise. . . . I must say there is no barrier whatsoever, for anyone to walk into camp when the advertisement appears in the Press. . . . But there is one aspect that must be borne in mind. I repeat, it is the physical endurance that the standard in the Army requires. . . . A number of Indian recruits have been taken and they chose to ask for their de-mobilisation because of the rigor of the Army discipline and, perhaps, the insufficiency of pay and the unpalatability of Army food" (ibid., 12 December 1977, p. 360).

68. *Fiji Times*, 12 January 1988.

69. Cynthia Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 175, 185.

70. *Fiji Sun*, 14 July 1987.

71. Brij V. Lal, "Postscript: Emergence of the Fiji Labour Party," in Lal, *Politics in Fiji*, 154.

72. *Islands Business*, September 1987, 9.

73. Morris Janowitz, "Military Institutions and Citizenship in Western Societies," in *The Military and the Problem of Legitimacy*, ed. Gwyn Harries-Jenkins and Jacques van Doorn, Sage Studies in International Sociology (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1976), 79.

74. Lucian W. Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization," in Johnson, *Role of the Military*, 80-89.

75. Ali M. Mazrui, "Soldiers as Traditionalisers: Military Rule and the Re-Africanization of Africa," in *The Warrior Tradition in Modern Africa*, ed. Ali M. Mazrui (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 236-258.

76. Ibid., 255.

77. Ibid.

78. *Fiji Times*, 25 September 1987.

79. *Fiji Gazette*, 3 October 1987. A reorganization of the Fijian state, as Rabuka saw it, could only be accomplished outside of the institutions prescribed by the 1970 Constitution.

80. *Islands Business*, October 1987, 16.

81. *Fiji Republic Gazette*, 16 January 1988, Decree No. 10.

82. *Fiji Times*, 12 January 1988.

83. The "give and take" of politics was underscored by Mara (*Fiji Times*, 26 August 1987).

84. *Fiji Times*, 27 August 1987.

85. Ibid.

86. Morris Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations: An Essay in Comparative Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 39-40.

87. *Fiji Times*, 10 August 1987.

88. *Islands Business*, September 1987, 7.
89. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 9.
90. Shehu Othman, "Classes, Crises, and Coups: The Demise of Shagari's Regime," *African Affairs* 83 (October 1984): 441-462; Onigu Otite, "Ethnicity and Class in a Plural Society: Nigeria," in *Research and Ethnic Relations*, ed. Iona Bagley Marrett and Cheryl Leggun (Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press, 1979), 91-93.
91. E. G. Mukonoweshuro, "Underdevelopment and Class Formation in Sierra Leone: A Neglected Analytical Thesis," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 21 (1986): 159.
92. William M. Reddy, *Money and Liberty in Modern Europe: A Critique of Historical Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), ix.
93. Alex Mamak, *Color, Culture, and Conflict: A Study of Pluralism in Fiji* (Sydney: Pergamon Press, 1978); Alex Mamak and Ahmed Ali, *Race, Class, and Rebellion in the South Pacific* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979); Jay Narayan, *The Political Economy of Fiji* (Suva: South Pacific Review Press, 1984).
94. John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman, "Coping with the Contradictions: The Development of the Colonial State in Kenya, 1895-1914," *Journal of African History* 20 (1979): 487-505.
95. Vijay Naidu, "Fijian Development and National Unity: Some Thoughts," *Review [Fiji]* 2 (May 1981): 7-8. See also Asesela D. Ravuvu, *The Fijian Ethos* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies-University of the South Pacific, 1987), 326.
96. *Fiji's Development Plan, 1986-1988: Policies, Strategies, and Programmes for National Development*, Parliamentary Paper No. 69 of 1985, 30.
97. *Ibid.*, 7-9.
98. Rosemary H. T. O'Kane, *The Likelihood of Coups* (Avebury, Connecticut, 1987), 100-101.
99. Bruce Knapman and Michael A. H. B. Walter, "The Way of the Land and the Path of Money: The Generation of Economic Inequality in Eastern Fiji," *Journal of Developing Areas* 14 (January 1980): 207.
100. Lasarusa Vusoniwailala, "Communication, Social Identity, and the Rising Cost of Fijian Communalism," and Nacaneila Rika, "Is Kinship Costly?" in *Fijians in Town*, ed. Chris Griffin and Mike Monsell-Davis (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies-University of the South Pacific, 1986), 166-179, 189-195.
101. For economic data, see *Fiji's Development Plan*, 9, 24, 28-33.
102. Mamak, *Color, Culture, and Conflict*, 61.
103. Naidu, "Fijian Development," 7-8; Ahmed Ali, "Indians in Fiji: An Interpretation," in *The Indo-Fijian Experience*, ed. Subramani (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1979), 20-21.
104. Ahmed Ali, "Fiji's Indian Politics," *Journal of Pacific Studies* 4 (1978): 13.

105. Isireli Lasagua, *The Fijian People: Before and After Independence, 1959-1977* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1984), 128, 130.
106. Henry J. Rutz, "Capitalizing on Culture: Moral Ironies in Urban Fiji," *Comparative Studies of Society and History* 29 (July 1987): 539-540. Examples of the politicization of leases to non-*tauvei* are given during the debates on the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Ordinance Bill of 1976 (*Parliamentary Debates [Hansard] House of Representatives*, 12 October 1976, pp. 865-939). Such leases became an issue after the Bavadra election victory (*Fiji Sun*, 22 April 1987).
107. Robert Norton, "Colonial Fiji: Ethnic Divisions and Elite Conciliation," in Lal, *Politics in Fiji*, 59.
108. This perception has been used by government planners to formulate the integration of the rural sector into the national economy. See John D. Weston, "Roads, Rice, and Cane: Regional Planning and Rural Development Projects in Western Vanua Levu, Fiji" and Michael Sofer, "Progress through Transformation--A Fijian Village," *Pacific Viewpoint* 28 (May 1987): 41, 17.
109. *Broadsheet* [Auckland], August/September 1987, 35-37.
110. *Fiji Sun*, 22 April 1987.
111. *Fiji Times*, 8 July 1985. For a summary analysis of the political shift in emphasis from race to class by the FLP, see Stephanie Hagan, "The Party System, the Labour Party, and the Plural Society Syndrome in Fiji," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 25 (July 1987): 126-140.
112. *Fiji Times*, 8 July 1985.
113. *Fiji Sun*, 29 May 1986.
114. Remarks of I. S. Busawaiya, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) House of Representatives*, 4 March 1985, pp. 227-228.
115. *Fiji Sun*, 25 May 1986.
116. *Ibid.*, 20 March 1987.
117. *Ibid.*, 21 March 1987.
118. *Ibid.*, 25 April 1987.
119. *Ibid.*
120. *Ibid.*, 21 April 1987.
121. *Ibid.*, 23 July 1987.
122. *Ibid.*, 27 July 1987.
123. *Report of the Constitutional Review Committee*, 47-48.
124. *Fiji Sun*, 29 July 1987.
125. *Ibid.*, 1 August 1987.
126. *Fiji Times*, 12 January 1988. The dismissals may have been executed in anticipation of the return of Ganilau and Mara to power. When Mara formulated his Cabinet, he gave

military officers four portfolios including youth and sports, rural development, and Fijian affairs. Rabuka became home affairs minister, giving the military administrative control over the key ministries integral to its political survival.

127. *Islands Business*, February 1988, 11. Vesikula was adamantly opposed to the return of the "Tovata group" to power (*Fiji Times*, 8 December 1987).

128. *Fiji Times*, 17 February 1988.

129. *Islands Business*, February 1988, 11.

130. Johnathan Crush, *The Struggle for Swazi Labour, 1890-1920* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 247-248.

131. *Fiji Times*, 10 February 1988.

132. Ali, "Indians in Fiji: An Interpretation," 24.

133. O'Kane, *Likelihood of Coups*, 48.

134. Sandra T. Barnes, *Patrons and Power: Creating a Political Community in Metropolitan Lagos* (London: Manchester University Press, 1986), 219.