



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies

State **Society** and **Governance** *in* **Melanesia**

DISCUSSION PAPER

Discussion
Paper 2005/1

CONFLICT AND RECONCILIATION IN NEW CALEDONIA: BUILDING THE MWÂ KÂ

In the language of Djubéa-Kaponé from the south of New Caledonia, Mwâ Kâ means 'the big house' – the high chief's house that all people belong to. But can all the population of this French Pacific territory live together peacefully in one house?

Between 1984 and 1988, New Caledonia was wracked by violent clashes, following an election boycott launched by the independence movement *Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste* (FLNKS). Two decades later, this conflict has been replaced by a new engagement with French institutions, following the 1988 Matignon-Oudinot Accords and the 1998 Noumea Accord. Today, the FLNKS has entered the institutions of government, and Kanak independence leaders serve in a multi-party executive alongside their conservative opponents.

Since the conflict of the 1980s, New Caledonia is often presented as a haven of stability in the region, in comparison to neighbouring Melanesian countries like Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. But this paper will argue that there are cultural, political and social tensions in New Caledonia, and the issue of peace building and reconciliation is just as relevant today for the French dependency as for neighbouring independent countries.

New Caledonia faces similar challenges to its Melanesian neighbours, even though massive French financial transfers have given the territory one of the region's highest per capita incomes: how to involve the indigenous population in local and national governance; promote economic rebalancing between the capital and the bush; provide suitable education and jobs for young people; halt the HIV / AIDS pandemic; manage the wealth of the territory's vast natural resources.

A focus on ending armed conflict needs appropriate and ongoing efforts to address the sources of conflict: clashes between land owners, government and transnational corporations over distribution of natural resources; the impact of resource projects on culture and environment; militarised responses from the State to the demands of landowners, indigenous groups and movements for democratic rights and self-determination; and social conflicts arising from the effects of economic "reform" programs, with responses from urban squatters, trade unions or isolated rural communities.¹

Since the clashes of the mid-1980s, pro- and anti-independence forces in New Caledonia have negotiated political agreements to end the upsurge of armed violence. After a complex series of negotiations, the Noumea Accord for

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The contribution of AusAID to this series is acknowledged with appreciation.

New Caledonia was signed on 5 May 1998 by the Government of France, the conservative settler party *Rassemblement Pour la Calédonie dans la République* (RPCR) and the Kanak independence coalition *Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste* (FLNKS).

There is an extensive literature in English and French on the economic, legal and constitutional changes in New Caledonia that has contributed to the process of peace building and reconciliation after the conflict of the 1980s.²

This process involves efforts at economic *ré-équilibrage* (rebalancing), to deal with the legacies of over 150 years of colonial rule. Since the 1980s, there have been major programs of land reform, and attempts to restructure control and exploitation of New Caledonia's vast reserves of strategic minerals – especially nickel – and maritime resources (fisheries and sea-bed oil and gas reserves).³

There are also significant constitutional changes to New Caledonia's status within the French Republic, creating “shared sovereignty” and a new citizenship for New Caledonians. These changes have ended the previous status as a *territoire d'outre-mer* (overseas territory) of France and New Caledonia has developed a unique political status within France's network of “overseas collectivities”. There are new political institutions (three provincial assemblies, a national Congress and a Kanak customary Senate), together with a multi-party Cabinet that unites pro- and anti-independence leaders.⁴

However, a focus on constitutional change and civil and political rights downplays the larger question of addressing the underlying causes of conflict, often relating to issues of land, cultural identity, leadership and social and economic rights. As one Pacific activist has noted:

There is a limit to legislative justice. You cannot legislate away racial discrimination or for peaceful co-existence. Enlightened constitutions and legislation must be supplemented by social engineering initiatives that are aimed at social cohesion and human security in a multi-ethnic milieu. These must include educational curricula that promote multi-ethnic tolerance and unity. It must include affirmative action or social justice programs that are geared towards rebalancing the inequities in access to educational, commercial opportunities and state services (health, water, electricity) and resources that were inherited from the colonial government. It must include national dialogue between the different racial and ethnic groups to

address the ‘problems of history’ relating to the alienation of land and natural resources during the colonial era, and also the place of indigenous peoples in the scheme of democratic governance.⁵

Therefore this paper will focus on community reconciliation as a vital part of the peace building process.

In journalistic shorthand, New Caledonia's conflict is often presented as “Kanak versus French”. But the complexities of reconciliation arise from the interplay of class and ethnicity – as in all recent Pacific crises, conflicts within ethnic communities are as significant as those between ethnic communities. There are also political differences between locally born New Caledonians (Kanak and “Caldoche”), public servants and military personnel from metropolitan France (the “metros”), and immigrant communities from other French territories.

New Caledonia's population has evolved through the process of colonial settlement and immigration, and the indigenous Melanesian population is currently a minority in its own land. Today's political institutions are the latest attempt to recognise the rights of indigenous Kanaks, but also those of the “victims of history” – the descendants of convicts and settlers who have been born in New Caledonia, and those immigrants from other French colonies (such as Wallis and Futuna and the New Hebrides) who have made New Caledonia their home.⁶

In Pacific cultures, the public expression of peace and reconciliation is a central element of conflict resolution.⁷ Grassroots activists around the region are drawing on a synergistic mixture of Christian and Melanesian values to promote “restorative justice” – for example, in Bougainville, reconciliation efforts emphasise traditional peace-making processes to promote the reconstruction of social harmony and transcend the “payback” mentality.⁸

Many organisations have also drawn on traditions of spiritual peacemaking, given the central role played by Christian churches throughout the region. In New Caledonia, Christian theologians like Pastors Pothin Wete and Wanir Welepane have contributed to a theology that recognises Kanak heritage.⁹

A notable feature of efforts for peace building, reconciliation and reconstruction after recent Pacific conflicts has been initiatives by women. Advocacy centres have combined with local women's groups to address the specific impacts of violence against women during and after situations of armed conflict, as has been seen in Bougainville, Timor Leste and Solomon

Islands.¹⁰ Like other Melanesian countries, this is also apparent in New Caledonia, where Kanak women's groups and organisations like SOS *Violences Sexuelles* are involved in a range of activities to support women and children affected by sexual violence, assault or rape.¹¹

Some of the most successful reconciliation processes have involved the often undervalued Pacific traditions of consensus and *la parole* – the power of the spoken word, talking together, shame and personal pledges of commitment. Custom, ceremony and a sense of history are a crucial part of post-conflict reconciliation, together with the importance of time – allowing people to meet, consult and decide at their own pace. But not all these processes have been successful, and it's important to compare and contrast experiences across the region.

This paper discusses examples of on-the-ground reconciliation efforts by NGOs, churches and indigenous groups in New Caledonia, drawing on custom and Christian values that meet with the values and experience of island communities. It discusses the success and failure of four initiatives: attempts to bring together communities destroyed by the Ouvea crisis of 1988-89; the erection of the Mwâ Kâ in Noumea; efforts to end armed clashes in Saint Louis; and the transformation of local literature, art and history to promote Kanak identity while recognising the rights of immigrant and settler communities.

A) RECONCILING GOSSANAH AND THE TRAGEDY OF OUEVA

The 1988-9 Ouvea crisis has become an important symbol of New Caledonia's conflict, creating political, moral and social gulfs that are only slowly being bridged by the current mood of reconciliation.

Throughout the conflict of the mid-1980s, Kanak tactics were marked by alternating periods of violence and negotiation.¹² With dialogue impossible after the introduction of the 1987 Pons statute, the FLNKS moved to boycott the May 1988 French Presidential elections, and elections on the same day for a new local government. The FLNKS had planned a nationwide mobilisation to highlight its opposition to French policy, but the uprising took place only in Canala on the main island of *Grande Terre*, and on Ouvea in the Loyalty Islands.

As part of the uprising, a local group of Kanak independence activists attempted to take over a police station at Fayaoué on Ouvea on 22 April

1988. In the subsequent *melée*, three *gendarmes* were killed and another mortally wounded.¹³ Twenty-seven others were taken hostage and hidden in caves in the north of the island, near the village of Gossanah. The Ouvea crisis led to a major military mobilisation on the island, and the torture and maltreatment of villagers by French troops trying to find the location of the hostages.¹⁴ Djubelli Wea, a former Protestant theology student and leading independence activist from Gossanah was dragged from his sick bed, questioned about the location of the hostages, and tied to a tree. His father, beaten by French troops, later died.

The assault on the caves to free the captured police co-incided with a final (and unsuccessful) attempt on the part of then Prime Minister Jacques Chirac to glean votes between the two rounds of the 1988 Presidential elections. The conservative government wanted to show it would not bow to Kanak demands – Overseas Territories Minister Bernard Pons even discussed use of a 250 kilo napalm bomb which would have killed both the hostages and hostages takers.¹⁵

On 5 May 1988, the French government abandoned negotiations and launched a military attack, with elite police and a commando unit storming the cave. Nineteen Kanak activists were killed, with at least three executed after surrendering. Their leader Alphonse Dianou was shot in his knee during capture, and left to die.¹⁶ Twenty-nine other men from around Ouvea, including Djubelli Wea, were arrested and transported to jail in Paris. Ouvea was left with a legacy of bitterness and tragedy – men from over half the 27 villages in Ouvea were dead or in jail, and tensions were created with the FLNKS leadership.

The Ouvea tragedy made all parties step back from the brink and incoming Prime Minister Michel Rocard proposed negotiations, leading to the 1988 Matignon and Oudinot Accords. The Accords included a provision for amnesty for crimes committed before August 1988. After the Accords were approved by referendum in November 1988, the French Parliament extended the amnesty to those charged with murder, covering both the killers of the four police at Fayaoué and the police and soldiers responsible for the alleged torture at Gossanah and murder of surrendering Kanaks.

But the legacy of grief and division after the Ouvea massacre contributed to the assassination of Kanak leaders Jean-Marie Tjibaou and Yeiwene Yeiwene. The two FLNKS leaders came to the island on 5 May 1989 to mark *la levée du deuil*, the end of a year-long period of mourning. At

the ceremony, Tjibaou and Yeiwene were shot and killed by Djubelli Wea, who was immediately gunned down by Tjibaou's bodyguard.

These events meant that the people of Ouvea, and especially the community of Gossanah, were isolated politically and morally from many New Caledonians. This included much of the independence movement, because Tjibaou was a charismatic and popular leader of the FLNKS.¹⁷ For many years, the community could not recover from the 1988 Ouvea massacre and the 1989 assassinations, and a sense of isolation, frustration and bitterness marred their capacity to rebuild links with the FLNKS leadership. The Gossanah community largely supported the "*Front Anti Néo-colonialist*", made up of various forces opposed to the 1988 Matignon Accords, which led to divisions in subsequent years that were slow to heal.

Journalistic shorthand, which dubs the slain Kanak leaders as "moderates" versus the "extremists" of Ouvea, masks a more complex reality.¹⁸ The reconciliation process – between the Gossanah community, the family, clan and supporters of the slain FLNKS leaders, and the families and supporters of the four slain police officers – has involved a complex process of trust building that has broader national implications.

The author travelled with a delegation to Ouvea in August 1990, just 15 months after the killing of Tjibaou, Yeiwene and Wea, and was invited to visit Gossanah. At the time, the community was widely shunned, and some people regarded contact with the militants on Ouvea as a slur on the memory of the two FLNKS leaders. For others, their deaths were seen as part of a more complex whole – on the same visit, I saw a mural to commemorate the "three leaders" painted on the side of a bus shelter near Tiendanite, on the east coast of *Grande Terre*. The mural, in the style of a Christian triptych, showed Tjibaou flanked by both his lieutenant Yeiwene and his assassin Wea.¹⁹

On Ouvea, the 19 slain Kanak activists were buried together at Wadrilla – over time, their graves were transformed into a shrine, with elaborate marble headpieces. The veneration of "the 19" was matched by an opposing French campaign to recognise the four gendarmes killed in the assault on Fayaoué on 22 April, and the two commandoes killed in the assault to release the hostages. In France, the "*Comité du 22 Avril 1988 à la mémoire des gendarmes d'Ouvea*" – a solidarity committee for the police officers – gained support from the Right and maintains a polemical campaign against the French Socialist Party, which granted amnesty to the killers. The

Committee set about creating four memorials around France for the four policemen, which were unveiled in 1989, 1992, 1994, and 1995. Every year, they still organise a ceremony to light a flame at the Arc de Triomphe in memory of the Fayaoué gendarmes.²⁰

In 1995, an attempt to reconcile the divided Kanak families and clans was initiated by Anselme Poaragnimou (a customary leader who today serves as chairman of the Paicî-Ciamuki customary council). Poaragnimou started travelling from Poindimié to Tiendanite (Tjibaou's village near the east coast town of Hienghène), to Ouvea, then to Yeiwene's home on the island of Mare, always using the traditional paths that link clans all over the country, across the mountains and the valleys, across the sea.

The negotiation of the Noumea Accord in April 1998 opened the way for more public gestures of reconciliation. As French political leaders prepared to travel to New Caledonia for the signing of the agreement on 5 May (the 9th anniversary of Tjibaou's death), they felt a need to mark the events in Ouvea. Thus on 22 April 1998, a decade after the attack on the Fayaoué gendarmerie, an ecumenical service was held in a Catholic church on Ouvea to mark the reconciliation of the Ouvea community and the police force.

Further gestures of reconciliation were to follow. In August 1998, France's Overseas Territories minister Jean-Jack Queyranne, from the French Socialist Party, travelled to Gossanah and planted a tree in the village. This first visit by a government minister was an important symbol, breaching the tribe's isolation. It also signalled a political shift for key Ouvea activists, from opposition to the 1988 Matignon Accords towards support for the 1998 Noumea Accord. Queyranne later told the National Assembly in Paris:

I want to recall the memory of an intense moment, one afternoon in mid-August this year in Ouvea. I saluted the memory of the police officers at the monument at the police headquarters at Fayaoué, I was received at the monument for 'the 19', and I was the first member of the Government to visit Gossanah. After the traditional welcome and the exchange of customary gifts, the chief and the pastor took the microphone to recall the trauma that the tribe had suffered ten years ago, and welcomed me as a representative of the French Republic. After having affirmed their strong and ongoing commitment to the independence struggle, before me they

called on those assembled to vote 'yes' in the referendum [to approve the Noumea Accord]. We saw the positive outcome of this in Ouvea on 8 November [date of the referendum].²¹

The central role of the churches is a crucial element in the Kanak struggle and the reconciliation process for Gossanah. It's worth remembering that Jean-Marie Tjibaou was a former Catholic seminarian; leader of the Ouvea hostage takers Alphonse Dianou trained for the priesthood at the Pacific Regional Seminary (PRS) in Suva; Djubelli Wea did pastoral training at the Pacific Theological College (PTC) in Suva; and leading Kanak theologians Jean Wete and Pothin Wete are originally from Gossanah.

In 2000, the main Protestant denomination *Eglise Evangélique en Nouvelle Calédonie* (EENC) held its synod in Gossanah. EENC President Pastor Jean Wete went on to play a central role in the reconciliation process between the Wea, Tjibaou and Yeiwene families. Joined by Father Rock Apikaoua (Vicar General of the Catholic Church in New Caledonia), Pastor Wete worked over five years after the Noumea Accord to promote dialogue, face-to-face meetings and ultimately reconciliation between the wives, then the children and then the clans of the three central figures of the Ouvea tragedy. Although some family members were reluctant to participate in the process and many tears were shed, this process has been vital in sealing a breach that could not be healed by judicial mechanisms.

Another set of ceremonies was held around the country on 5 May 2001, the thirteenth anniversary of the deaths of Tjibaou and Yeiwene. Then FLNKS President Rock Wamytan expressed:

the wish that New Caledonian and Kanak collective memory does not forget the sacrifice of its 19 valorous men of Ouvéa, which inspired the intelligence of all parties to come up with the Matignon Accords. May they remember too that the charismatic memory of Jean-Marie and Yéyé has strongly influenced on the decision to pursue peace through the Nouméa Accord.

By 2003, even Brigitte Girardin, Overseas Minister from President Jacques Chirac's conservative UMP party, felt obliged to travel to Ouvea to mark this spirit of reconciliation. In June 2003, in the lead up to the French President's visit to New Caledonia the following month, she was welcomed by local authorities in ceremonies at the gendarmes' memorial at Fayaoué and the Wadrilla gravesite for the 19.

During his July 2003 visit to New Caledonia, President Chirac stressed the importance

of consensus and reconciliation between the territory's different ethnic communities. In a major speech in Noumea's Place des Cocotiers, President Chirac said France and New Caledonia could work together "hand in hand" for the future.

But President Chirac has made no public atonement for his personal role in the events of 1988. When Chirac travelled to the northern town of Kone in July 2003, his visit was marked by protests, with nearly 1,000 members of the pro-independence party Union Calédonienne and the trade union confederation USTKE rallying against the President's visit. Police fired tear gas to disperse the crowd, but the wind blew the tear gas back across the official welcoming party. USTKE spokesman Pierre Chauvat explained:

Remember that when Chirac was Prime Minister between the two rounds in the Presidential elections in 1988, he took the responsibility to murder 19 Kanaks in Ouvea. So we said to him that he had Kanak blood on his hands.²²

It seems that the spirit of reconciliation only goes so far. In the face of ongoing political differences, the Ouvea tragedy still has vital symbolic power.

B) ERECTING THE MWÂ KÂ IN NOUMEA

A central feature of the Matignon Accords and the Noumea Accord is economic, social and political *re-equilibrage* (rebalancing), to bridge the gap between the southern province and the rural areas and outer islands where the bulk of the Kanak population live. The southern part of New Caledonia's main island *Grande Terre* hosts major economic infrastructure, and the capital Noumea has long been the centre of economic and political power. In contrast, the north of the main island and the outlying Loyalty Islands have had less economic development, and the process of colonial settlement pushed the bulk of the indigenous Kanak population into tribal reserves. Kanaks make up the overwhelming majority of the population of the Loyalty Islands (97 per cent) and Northern Province (85 per cent), while settlers and immigrants from France, Wallis and Futuna and other areas make up nearly three quarters of the Southern Province population.

The Southern Province remains a stronghold of anti-independence sentiment, and many Europeans and Wallisians have only grudgingly accepted the agreements that mark an end to the conflict of

the 1980s. Against majority Kanak support, 67 per cent of the residents of the southern province voted against the 1988 Matignon and Oudinot Accords, and over a third of southern province residents voted 'No' in the 1998 referendum to ratify the Noumea Accord, with 42 per cent in central Noumea rejecting the agreement.²³

For many years, Noumea was dubbed "*ville blanche*" (white city), but the demography of the southern province has been changing in recent years. Many Kanaks have moved to Noumea and its outskirts over the last fifteen years, and the immigrant Wallisian population has increased in numbers. For this reason, attempts to transform Noumea from a European provincial city to a Pacific capital take on important symbolism.²⁴

September 24, 2003 marked the 150th anniversary of French colonisation of New Caledonia. Five years after the Noumea Accord, a coalition of Kanak activists and community leaders hoped to use the anniversary as a time to highlight the Kanak heritage of the nation. The *Conseil Nationale des Droits du Peuple Autochtone* (CNDPA, National Council for Indigenous People's Rights) hoped to place a symbol of Kanak identity in Noumea's central square – the Place des Cocotiers.

Place des Cocotiers is a popular meeting place in the heart of the city – it also resonates with symbols of French colonialism. Originally divided into four sections, the oldest area with an ancient music bandstand is the Place Feillet, named after the French Governor (1894-1903) who promoted mass European immigration and smallholder landowning. The Place Courbet, named after the French painter, has the monumental Céleste fountain. The Place de la Marne, commemorating the World War One battle, has an open market. Finally, the Place d'Olry overlooks an ornamental pond – a bronze statue of Admiral Olry (governor from 1878-1880) was erected in 1893 to commemorate his victory over Kanak tribes during the 1878 rebellion, when Chief Atai rose up against the theft of Kanak land.

The Communard leader Louise Michel (exiled at the time in New Caledonia) denounced Olry as the same type of assassin as those who butchered over 20,000 people during the crushing of the 1871 Paris Commune:

The Kanaks were seeking the same liberty we had sought in the Commune. Let me say only that my red scarf, the red scarf of the Commune that I had hidden from every search, was divided in two pieces one night. Two Kanaks, before going to

join the insurgents against the whites, had come to say goodbye to me. They slipped into the ocean. The sea was bad, and they may never have arrived across the bay, or perhaps they were killed in the fighting. I never saw either of them again, and I don't know which of the two deaths took them, but they were brave with the bravery that black and white both have ...

The Kanak Insurrection of 1878 failed. The strength and longing of human hearts was shown once again, but the whites shot down the rebels as we were mowed down in front of Bastion 37 and on the plains of Satory. When they sent the head of Atai to Paris, I wondered who the real headhunters were. As Henri Rochefort had once written to me: 'the Versailles government could give the natives lessons in cannibalism'²⁵

The Place des Cocotiers has become a rallying point for the city and a symbol of French pride. Thousands of Rassemblement supporters have massed in the square to cheer visiting French Presidents. Kanak political activists have also gathered there in defiance, as if encroaching on enemy turf. In the 1970s, young independence activists defaced the Olry statue with graffiti and put a bucket on his head – the young radicals went by the name *Foulards Rouges* (the Red Scarves – memories of Louise Michel). In 1987, at the height of armed clashes in the territory, a peaceful group of independence protestors sat in the square, armed only with balloons as a sign of their non-violence. They were set upon by CRS riot police, battered, tear gassed and driven from the square – images that flashed around the world.

In recent years, Noumea's town council – dominated by the anti-independence Rassemblement party – has been refurbishing the Place des Cocotiers. Could this be an opportunity for a symbol of Kanak identity to be placed in this arena of French nostalgia? This idea of placing a totem in the square as a symbol of reconciliation became a test of wills.

The Mwâ Kâ is a carved wooden totem, 12 metres high and weighing three tonnes. It was carved by sculptors from the eight customary *aires* that make up the Kanak nation: Hoot Ma Whaap; Paici Camuki; Djubéa-Kaponé; Ajié Aro; Xaracuu; Iaai; Drehu; Nengone.

In the language of Djubéa-Kaponé (the southern part of the main island), Mwâ Kâ means 'the big house' – the high chief's house that all people belong to. It represents the eight Kanak

cultural areas but also the united homeland – a significant symbol of unity for the independence movement which has to work hard to transcend regional, religious and political divisions. The unity of the eight *aires* takes on contemporary political importance – the Noumea Accord has created a 16-member Senate for Kanak customary chiefs, with two representatives from each of New Caledonia's eight customary regions. The Senate must be consulted on issues that affect Kanak identity (e.g. questions of land tenure).

In the lead up to the 150th anniversary of colonisation, Kanak activists organised a range of events. CNDPA publicised the anniversary with a book, T-shirts, leaflets and radio interviews, and public protests at the time of President Jacques Chirac's July 2003 visit to New Caledonia.

In August, the committee organised "People, Land and Human Rights", a seminar held at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Noumea, which called for greater recognition of the indigenous Kanak population in French law. For organiser Pastor Sailali Passa, the former President of the Evangelical Church of New Caledonia:

We're trying to read the Noumea Accord again in the light of international law on the rights of indigenous peoples. We're trying to see if the rights of the Kanak people are respected, or whether we need to go further. We feel that in spite of the preamble of the Noumea Accord, there are many things that are still missing. The Kanak people have some specific rights and we're going to continue to claim those rights.

Since the dawn of time, the West has always sought to defend individual human rights. But many communities and many governments do not recognise or do not support collective human rights. However, since the arrival of indigenous peoples within the structures of the United Nations, lots of doors have opened. Defining human rights as the rights of the individual is no longer sufficient. We have to go beyond that. There are other peoples who have different ways of living, different ways of understanding, different ways of relating to the land and the natural environment.²⁶

On 20 September, CNDPA activists went into the squatter settlements around Noumea, calling on young people to join the events marking the 150th anniversary. One activist noted:

For months, practically every day, we've

been calling on the population, and especially the Kanaks, to come and help erect the Mwâ Kâ in the place Courbet, situated in the middle of the Place des Cocotiers, between Olry (symbol of military repression and armed authority) and Feillet (symbol of free colonisation and profit, nothing but profit).

But on the day, Noumea's conservative mayor Jean Lèques refused permission for the Mwâ Kâ to be raised in the Place Courbet. Rassemblement leader Jacques Lafleur offered to give the carving a temporary home in the courtyard of the Southern Province headquarters. But anti-independence parties dominate the province, and disappointed Kanaks greeted Lafleur's offer with anger and scorn:

There can be no chance of a Kanak monument in Noumea White City, but Jacques Lafleur wants to admire his latest spoils of war in his own garden. Then, before the end of the year, it will be placed in front of the Museum. Hardly born, already mummified.²⁷

A year later, things had changed after the defeat of Lafleur's *Rassemblement UMP* party in May 2004 elections. By September 2004, New Caledonia had a new coalition government led by two women, President Marie-Noëlle Thémereau from the anti-independence party *Avenir Ensemble* (The Future Together) and Vice President Déwé Gorodé from the Party of Kanak Liberation (Palika). The Southern Province administration, now headed by *Avenir's* Phillip Gomes, agreed that they would support the erection of a Kanak emblem in Noumea. The Mwâ Kâ was finally unveiled on 24 September 2004 near the Museum of New Caledonia at the Baie de la Moselle.

For Sarimin Boengkih, CNDPA Secretary General, the unveiling ceremony highlights improved relations between the indigenous and immigrant communities in New Caledonia:

It is part of the process that consists of gathering people towards the same horizon, which is to set up that new society, new identity. In his speech [before the unveiling], Phillip Gomes the head of the southern province said that it was time that the white city of Noumea would have a Kanak image, Kanak statue, Kanak sculpture, big enough to remind people that they were on Kanak land. Didier Leroux, the member of the government in charge of economy even said Noumea cannot be seen as only a white city in

New Caledonia but should be seen as a white bubble in Melanesia, because New Caledonia is part of Melanesia and all people coming from elsewhere should always keep that in mind.

So this totem has now a new significance because the non-Kanak people are saying ‘Yes, we go along with you Kanak people, to say that this is Kanak land and we go along with you to build that new identity that we all signed for on May 1998’. Since it has been supported by the non-Kanak people, it is now representing the entire country and the whole population of New Caledonia.²⁸

For long-time grassroots activist Gabi Monteapo, reflecting on the image of young people carrying the three-tonne Mwâ Kâ, the importance was not the implantation of the totem but the mobilisation of young people to carry on the spirit of independence:

We must not forget ... the feelings of these young Kanaks, proud to carry the totem like the rising tide, lifting the symbol of their dignity and identity as if it was a feather, allowing it to slide through the streets of Noumea like a canoe along the river.²⁹

The erection of the Mwâ Kâ is not the only attempt to reclaim history in the White City. In the aftermath of the Noumea Accord, Kanak community leaders sought to remind city leaders of the hidden history of Kanak service to the French state during wartime. As well as many French New Caledonians who fought in France in the 1914-18 war, a Pacific Battalion was organised including Tahitians, New Hebrideans and Kanaks who went to fight in Europe (the great Tahitian independence leader Pouvanaa a Oopa, the most decorated Tahitian in the colony, fought in France during World War One, and later rallied to General de Gaulle’s Free French forces in 1940).³⁰

The transformative power of warfare and conflict should not be underestimated – Chief Noel’s 1917 revolt against French colonialism came at a time when Kanak troops were defending the “motherland” in the trenches. The arrival of tens of thousands of American G.I.s in Noumea after 1942 – still marked by the names of suburbs such as Receiving and Motor Pool – was also a significant blow to French colonial racism. Kanak soldiers returning to New Caledonia after service in Europe during World War Two issued a petition in 1945, calling for the transformation of the *Indigénat* system that denied them citizenship

and the vote:

“We ask to be liberated from an outdated regime, which is all too often oppressive and unjust, and which tends to keep us in a subordinate condition.”³¹

Statues play a central role in the symbolism of colonialism, and Noumea is dotted with markers such as the *Monument aux Morts* – the war memorial that commemorates New Caledonia’s contribution to the slaughter of the World Wars. On three sides of the monument, European soldiers who died in the Great War are listed by name. On the fourth side, those Kanaks who died are not named, but simply listed by village or island, even though hundreds of Kanaks and Tahitians fought in France in defence of *la patrie*. After the Noumea Accord was signed, Kanak leaders sought changes to the *Monument aux Morts* to recognise those Kanaks who had served and died, and some recognition was granted in an exhibition organised in Noumea’s Town Hall that ran for six months from November 1999.³²

C) SAINT LOUIS – THE FAILURE OF THE PACIFIC WAY

The state of relations between the Kanak and Wallisian communities in the Southern Province of New Caledonia has political import, as the minority Kanak population in the south must win political support from immigrant Wallisians who make up at least 9 per cent of New Caledonia’s population.

But the difficulties of utilising ‘the Pacific Way’ of consensus and discussion to promote community reconciliation are best shown by the conflict at Saint Louis. Attempts to reconcile a long running conflict between Kanaks and Wallisians in the village of Saint Louis have been hampered by rivalry between chiefs aligned with the pro-and anti-independence parties and heavy-handed intervention by the French police.

The tribes of Saint Louis and La Conception, located on the outskirts of the capital Noumea, were formed after 19th Century clashes in the north of the country. To avoid retaliation from those clans resisting Christianity, Catholic missionaries fled to the capital from Pouebo and Balade, taking with them Kanaks that had turned to the Western faith. These first “transported” Kanaks served as domestics and field workers for the Ave Maria mission at Saint Louis. Later other Kanaks came from different areas of the island to strengthen the mission work force. From the 1960s, Wallisian families were also settled on land near Saint Louis’ church. As

Wallisian numbers have grown, local Kanaks have been seeking their relocation to Noumea and neighbouring suburbs.

In recent years, there have been armed clashes between supporters of two high chiefs in Saint Louis: Robert Moyatea of the anti-independence Rassemblement party and Roch Wamytan of Union Calédonienne, the largest party in the FLNKS. At the heart of the dispute are arguments over land and customary authority between the two chieftainships, but the clashes have serious implications for relations between different ethnic communities and political parties in the southern province.

This dispute has spilled over into violence between indigenous Kanak landowners and islanders from Wallis and Futuna. Since 2001, there have been clashes between rival groups of Kanak and Wallisian youths, and also between Kanaks. Three people have been killed, including two young Kanaks and an islander from Futuna. Over a dozen other people have been shot, including a Lieutenant Colonel of the mobile police, who was seriously wounded in a shooting in April 2002.

At the beginning of the conflict in 2001, there were 171 Wallisian families living at Saint Louis. Half were rehoused over the next year, but many families remained as no public housing could be found for them in the capital.

Kanak and Wallisian representatives were initially able to forge an agreement to resolve the conflict in November 2002, after a series of community consultations. But in June 2003, renewed violence broke seven months of relative calm. After a traditional *case* (Kanak hut) was burnt down, rival groups in Saint Louis traded rifle fire, and police moved in firing tear gas to disperse the crowd. Five people were wounded, including a nun and a police officer. Political rhetoric escalated, with opponents of the independence movement describing the treatment of the Wallisian families as tantamount to “ethnic cleansing.”³³

Further attempts to settle the conflict in the “Pacific Way” – through reconciliation between church leaders, the tribe’s customary chiefs and leaders of the Wallisian community – had some impact. But the dialogue was scuttled when politics, and the police, intervened.

In August 2003, police launched a major raid on Kanak communities in Saint Louis. More than 250 French police entered the village before dawn, arresting three people and seizing weapons. Jean-Charles Nemoadjou, member of the council of chiefs of Mont Dore, said that the police operation exacerbated anger from young people

on all sides, damaging the faltering attempts at customary reconciliation and discrediting their elders:

There were over 250 men, five armoured vehicles and five trucks, as well as two helicopters which flew overhead to supervise the operation. They came straight in and went straight to the houses they’d targeted... They hassled the women, broke people’s roofs, smashed down doors. They even forced young kids – no older than four or five years – to kneel down like they were terrorists!

After that, the whole tribe of Saint Louis reacted. As we’ve been in conflict with the Wallisians who live at the mission on the other side of the river, we took up positions to block access for the Wallisians. We also blocked the access roads for the police. When they came with their armoured cars to get past our roadblocks, they fired tear gas and grenades that damaged the mission. Three mothers were wounded, and after that they left again.³⁴

Pro-independence leader Roch Wamytan, a High Chief from Saint Louis, is a former President of the FLNKS and was serving as Chair of the Melanesian Spearhead Group in 2003. Wamytan argues that Saint Louis is not simply an ethnic clash between Kanaks and Wallisians, arguing there are underlying political reasons for the latest resurgence of violence:

Behind the problem at Saint Louis is a fundamental issue at stake – a political issue. The local representatives of the Right have always used Saint Louis and its Wallisian community as a way of restraining the Kanak community, which we know is 90 per cent in support of independence and the FLNKS. We could have resolved these problems using the Pacific Way, using custom, if the political stakes hadn’t been so high. They’re high because Saint Louis is so close to the capital Noumea, because the tribe largely supports independence and because it’s the home of me as High Chief.³⁵

The eruption of conflict in July 2003 coincided with the visit of French President Jacques Chirac that month, and Wamytan has argued that there were conscious provocations by Rassemblement supporters:

Saint Louis has become a sort of beacon for these people. They hope to sabotage the peace and destabilise the tribe. They

want to point and say independence in New Caledonia is not viable, when you see what's happening in the very village of the Chair of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, a signatory to the Noumea Accord and former President of the FLNKS.³⁶

The clashes at Saint Louis provide the backdrop to the defeat of pro-independence parties at the May 2004 elections in the Southern province.

During the 1980s, the Wallisian population largely supported the conservative RPCR party. Young Wallisians were often at the front line of Right-wing militias that attacked independence supporters in street fighting between 1984-8. But after the signing of the Matignon Accords, Wallisians, Tahitians and ni-Vanuatu in Noumea were sidelined and had to define their own place in the country's future.

Working class co-operation through unions such as the USTKE has strengthened links between the Kanak and islander communities. But efforts to create pro-independence political formations that can attract support across ethnic lines have been largely unsuccessful, with the FLNKS gaining most of its support from the Kanak community.

On 12 February 1994, members of the islander community formed the *Rassemblement Démocratique Océanien* (RDO). The RDO, led by Aloisio Sako, has declared support for Kanaks seeking restitution of their sovereignty, and calls for an independent, democratic and multiracial state. RDO formally joined the FLNKS in 1998, and Sako was elected to the new Congress on the FLNKS ticket in May 1999. Votes from the Wallisian community made a significant contribution to the FLNKS vote in the South, as many Kanaks living in Noumea are still registered in their own municipality in the north or islands, and vote by absentee ballot for candidates in the North or Loyalty Islands provinces.

By 2004, there were more than four Wallisian electoral lists competing directly for the community's vote in the provincial elections.³⁷ Lingering distrust from the Saint Louis crisis and disputes within and between the major independence parties meant that one united ticket could not be forged. As a consequence, none of the FLNKS member parties won a seat after splitting the vote, even though a unified ticket had elected six representatives at the previous elections in 1999. Now only three conservative settler parties – *Rassemblement UMP*, *Avenir Ensemble* and *Front National* – are represented in the 2004 assembly. Former FLNKS President Wamytan lost his seat in the Southern

Assembly and Congress and his ministerial post in the government.

In contrast, in the Northern province pro-independence parties won 18 out of 22 seats. This de facto partition, with independence parties dominating the North and Loyalty Islands but having no representation in the Southern assembly, is in stark contrast to the spirit of partnership and “working together” that the Noumea Accords encourages.

D) CULTURAL REVIVAL

A central element of reconciliation in post-conflict New Caledonia has been the development of a sense of Melanesian and pan-Pacific identity. But with a conservative media dominated by RFO, commercial broadcasters and newspapers opposed to independence, it's a difficult task.

The independence movement has always stressed the importance of Kanak culture and identity as a pillar of the transition to sovereignty. In 1975, the late Jean-Marie Tjibaou was one of the main organisers of the “Melanesia 2000” festival in Noumea, which highlighted Kanak dance, culture and identity.³⁸ But the conflict of the 1980s destroyed such initiatives – the Right's disdain for Kanak culture was best shown when thousands of books and documents from the Office of Kanak Culture were burnt in a sinister *auto da fé* on Noumea's rubbish dump.

In contrast, the post-Matignon period has seen a cultural renaissance, increasingly connected to the regional networks through exchanges, exhibitions and research. From introducing Kanak languages into the educational curriculum to hosting the Pacific Arts Festival, there are widespread attempts to transform local cultural institutions to reflect regional realities.

Young artists and musicians form *kaneka* bands in the rural towns and tribes, as well as the suburbs of Noumea.³⁹ Publications like *Mwâ Vée*, the journal of the *Agence de Développement de la Culture Kanak* (ADCK) document Kanak culture and oral history, promoting research into art, dance and Kanak languages. The Museum of New Caledonia has promoted major displays of Kanak artefacts and art, and millions of dollars have been lavished on the creation of the Tjibaou Cultural Centre, the *Ngan Jila* (“house of riches”) – a striking series of buildings designed by famous architect Renzo Piano, surrounded by a ceremonial path and Kanak garden.⁴⁰

Women have played a crucial role in the cultural and political mobilisation since the 1980s, with exhibitions of poetry, painting and

sculpture by Kanak artists, including painters such as Micheline Néporon, Denise Tiavouane and Paula Boi.⁴¹ Kanak playwright Pierre Gope has explored issues of women's rights in Kanak culture and white society, touching on sensitive topics such as rape and incest in plays like *Ou est le droit?*⁴²

Since the Matignon Accords, Kanak and *Caldoche* authors have published numerous collections of poetry and prose through small publishing houses such as *Editions Grain du Sable*. The publishing boom is best symbolised by Déwé Gorodé, the Kanak teacher and poet who currently serves as Vice President of New Caledonia. Ms. Gorodé has written in her own language Paici, as well as French and English.⁴³ Her collaboration with other writers – such as joint publication of poetry with Nicolas Kurtovich (a New Caledonian of European heritage) – symbolises her attempts to transcend the ethnic divisions created by French colonisation. Gorodé and Kurtovich toured Australia in August 1997, writing poems together on common themes – a remarkable symbol of post-Matignon rapprochement. In 2001, Kurtovich also collaborated with Kanak playwright Pierre Gope to create a comedic farce which tells the tale of Captain Cook's interactions with an 18th Century Kanak, a 21st Century Kanak, and Princess Lotha.⁴⁴

In another positive sign, a resurgence of interest in *Caldoche* history and identity is no longer counterposed to Kanak culture, but seen as complementary for some younger *Caldoche*.⁴⁵ As occurred in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s, the descendants of the first European settlers in New Caledonia have begun to take pride in the territory's convict past. In late 1997, the community organisation *La Nouvelle* commemorated the centenary of the end of penal transportation, a public acknowledgement of convict roots that would have been difficult twenty years earlier.

In recent years, local researchers have studied the fate of criminals and political agitators exiled from France to the other side of the world. In November 2003 in a ceremony in the town of Bourail, a local government school was renamed as the Louise Michel Primary School.⁴⁶ Bourail's mayor Guy Moulin of the conservative *Rassemblement* party and former mayor Jean-Pierre Aifa both attended the dedication of the school, reflecting Bourail's multi-racial community. Aifa is a descendant of the Kabyle Algerians who were deported to New Caledonia in 1871, after rebelling against French rule in North Africa.

For some, the name Louise Michel is a

controversial choice. Rebel leader Louise Michel was one of more than 4,000 people deported to the French colony after the fall of the Paris Commune in 1871, when citizens of the French capital rose up to establish their own government.⁴⁷ For Kanaks, she's a symbol of those few deportees who supported indigenous culture and identity. A local publisher in Noumea has reprinted Louise Michel's writings about Kanak legends and songs, and in 2002 the Tjibaou Cultural Centre hosted a play about her time in New Caledonia.⁴⁸

In November 2004, politically divided *Caldoche* historians met at the Tjibaou Centre (ironically considered as a "neutral" meeting ground) to debate their differences, meet with Kanaks and "discuss how to examine future perspectives of the expression and writing of History, the country's History." This debate is part of a broader process to develop new schoolbooks that address both Kanak and settler stories, and promote publication of histories of New Caledonia that meld Kanak and *Caldoche* perspectives – a contrast to the often polarised analysis of past decades.

For a younger generation of New Caledonians, there are some signs of blurring in the racial boundaries of their forebears, most evident in common interests in music and dope smoking – in April 2004, a multiracial crowd of over 20,000 people gathered at Noumea's Kuendu Beach for a reggae festival, organised by New Caledonia's pro-independence trade union confederation USTKE.⁴⁹

Increasing political and economic engagement with the neighbouring Pacific region fosters this growing sense of Pacific identity. In 1999, New Caledonia gained observer status with the Pacific Islands Forum and political leaders are actively engaging with other regional institutions. But in the absence of armed conflict, New Caledonia has dropped from the headlines. Will the Pacific region continue to assist the transition towards a final decision on self-determination, at the end of the Noumea Accord process in 2014?

AUTHOR NOTE

Nic Maclellan has worked as a journalist, researcher and community development worker in the Pacific islands. Between 1997-2000, he lived in Fiji, working with the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC) in Suva. He is co-author of three books on Pacific issues, including: *La France dans le Pacifique – de Bougainville à Moruroa* (Editions La Découverte, Paris, 1992); *After Moruroa – France in the South Pacific* (Ocean Press, Melbourne, 1998); and *Kirisimasi* (PCRC, Suva, 1999). Special thanks to Sarimin Jacques Boengkih, Jimmy Nâunâa and David Chappell for advice and comments on earlier versions of the paper.

ENDNOTES

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³ On land reform, Agence de Développement Rural et d’Aménagement Foncier: *La réforme foncière en Nouvelle-Calédonie 1978-1998* (ADRAF, Noumea, 2000); *Foncier et développement en Nouvelle-Calédonie – Actes du séminaire Octobre 2001* (ADRAF, Noumea, 2002). On nickel: Frédéric Angleviel: “L’enjeu nickel en Nouvelle-Calédonie – développement ou ré-équilibre économique?” in *Géoéconomie*, No.27, Autumn 2003. For a critique of French economic policies, see Jean Freyss: *Economie assistée et changement sociale en Nouvelle Calédonie* (Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1995).

⁴ Nic Maclellan: “From Eloi to Europe – interactions with the ballot box in New Caledonia” in *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*

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⁶ The concept of “the victims of history” was invoked at the 1983 roundtable at Nainville-les-Roches in France, where pro- and anti-independence leaders jointly agreed that all residents of New Caledonia – indigenous and non-indigenous – have a part to play in building the country’s future. For some Kanaks, this is a compromise on the principle that the indigenous people alone have the right to self-determination.

⁷ For examples, see Sinclair Dinnen (ed.): *A Kind of Mending – restorative justice in the Pacific Islands* (Pandanus, Canberra, 2003).

⁸ Pat Howley: *Breaking spears and mending hearts – peacemakers and restorative justice in Bougainville* (Federation Press, Leichhardt, 2002). See also Liz Thompson’s award winning video “Breaking Bows and Arrows” (Firelight Productions & Tiger Eye Productions, 2001).

⁹ Pothin Wete: *Agir ou meurs – L’Eglise Evangélique de Calédonie vers Kanaky* (PTC, Suva, 1988); Wanir Welepane: *Aux Vents des Iles – poemes de Wanir Welepane* (ADCK, Noumea, 1993).

¹⁰ For Bougainville, Ruby Mirinka: “Our mothers and children are dying – military offensives against the island of Bougainville” in ‘Atu Emberson-Bain: *Sustainable development or malignant growth? Perspectives of Pacific Island women* (Marama, Suva, 1994), p230; Michelle Tonissen: “The relationship between development and violence against women in post-conflict Bougainville” in Pamela Thomas (ed.): “Conflict and peacemaking in the Pacific – social and gender perspectives”, *Development Bulletin*, No.53, October 2000, p26. Marilyn Havini and Josephine Sirivi (eds): *As Mothers of the land – the birth of Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom* (Pandanus, Canberra, 2004). For Timor, *Violence by the state against women in East Timor* (East Timor Human Rights Centre, Melbourne; 1998); Melinda Sissons: *From one day to another – violations of women’s reproductive and sexual rights in East Timor* (East Timor Human Rights Centre, Melbourne; 1998); For Solomon Islands, Amnesty International: *Solomon Islands – Women confronting violence* (AI report, London, November 2004).

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- Mourir à Ouvea* (Editions La Découverte/Le Monde, Paris, 1988) give key background to the Ouvea crisis. Alexandre Sanguinetti et al: *Enquête sur Ouvea* (EDI, Paris, 1989) outline evidence of the military's action and breaches of human rights. The GIGN police officer at the centre of the crisis has also written an account – Philip Legorgus: *La Morale et l'action* (Paris, 1990). See also Henri Weill: 'Opération Victor' – *GIGN et Services Secrets dans le Pacifique* (Balma, Paris, 1990).
- ¹⁴ Vivid first hand testimony from Kanak villagers, detailing beatings and torture by French soldiers, is recorded in two special editions of the magazine *Bwenando*: "Gossanah – dossier COPIDEC, L'affaire d'Ouvea" (No.109/110, 30 August 1988 and No.111/112, 18 October 1988). Chanel Kapoeri, a municipal councillor in Ouvea, gives his testimony in *Le Mémorial Calédonien*, vol.9 (Noumea, 1995).
- ¹⁵ Francois Audigier: "L'affaire de la grotte d'Ouvea et l'élection présidentielle de 1988" in Jean-Marc Regnault (ed.) *François Mitterrand et les territoires français du Pacifique 1981-1988* (Les Indes Savantes, Paris, 2003).
- ¹⁶ A photo published at the time shows French troops standing beside Dianou on a stretcher, his knee bandaged, surrounded by the manacled Kanaks face down on the ground. See "Ouvea: la verité", *Paris Match*, 10 June 1988.
- ¹⁷ Some of the Kanak leader's writings are collated in Jean-Marie Tjibaou: *La présence kanak* (Editions Odile Jacob, Paris, 1996) and Jean Marie Tjibaou: *Cibau cibau – Kamo pa Kavaac* (ADCK, Noumea, 1998).
- ¹⁸ Tjibaou and *Union Calédonienne* are often referred to as "moderates", in contrast to FULK and other groups that opposed the Matignon Accords. But it was Tjibaou and UC Secretary General Eloi Machoro who planned the "muscular boycott" of the 1984 elections, and Machoro who first travelled to Libya to tweak the French nose, at a time when Colonel Gaddafi was public enemy number one in the Reagan administration's campaign against "international terrorism."
- ¹⁹ Another tribute to Wea can be seen in the poem "To Djubelly", by Fijian activist Claire Slatter in 'Atu Emberson-Bain (ed): *Sustainable development or malignant growth – perspectives of Pacific island women* (Marama, Suva, 1994).
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- ²⁴ For a nostalgic vision of the city, see *Noumea aux yeux des jeunes 1954* (Musée de la Ville de Noumea / Editions Grain de Sable, Noumea, 1996).
- ²⁵ Louise Michel: *Mémoires* (Editions Sulliver, Arles, 1998), originally published in 1886.
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- ²⁹ Gabi Monteapo, statement from Kanaky chat room at www.kanaky.org; September 2003.
- ³⁰ Pouvanaa's wartime journal is published in French and Tahitian – Bruno Saura: *Pouvanaa a Oopa – son journal des années de guerre* (Au Vent des Iles, Tahiti, 1997). A charismatic political leader, Pouvanaa was framed, imprisoned and exiled from Tahiti in the late 1950s, destroying the burgeoning independence movement as France prepared to establish it's nuclear testing program in French Polynesia. Jean-Marc Regnault: *Pouvanaa a Oopa – victime de la raison d'état* (Les Editions de Tahiti, Moorea, 2003).
- ³¹ The full text of the soldiers' petition is in Maurice Lenormand: *L'Evolution politique des autochtones de la Nouvelle Calédonie* (Société des Océanistes, Paris, 1954).
- ³² The history of Kanak, Tahitian and European New Caledonians during the Great War is documented in *Mémoires océaniques de la Grande Guerre 1914-18 – Chronique Calédonienne* (Musée de la Ville de Noumea, Noumea, 1999).
- ³³ Didier Leroux of the Avenir party, quoted in "New Caledonia's opposition alleges ethnic cleansing", *ABC Radio Australia News*, 19 September 2003.
- ³⁴ "Police intervene in Saint Louis" *Pacific Beat*, *Radio Australia*, 28 August 2003.
- ³⁵ "Renewed clashes in Saint Louis", *Pacific Beat*, *Radio Australia*, 3 July 2003.
- ³⁶ *Ibid*, 3 July 2003.
- ³⁷ As well as the major conservative parties and the National Front, Wallisians were courted by the *Rassemblement Démocratique Océanique* (RDO) led by Aloisio Sako as part of the UNI-FLNKS; *Union*

Océanienne (UO); *Rassemblement océanien dans la Calédonie* (ROC); and *Mouvement des Citoyens Calédoniens* (MCC) led by Tino Manuhoalalo, who resigned from the RDO and FLNKS after losing a ministerial post.

- ³⁸ Jean-Marie Tjibaou and Philippe Missote: *Kanaké - The Melanesian Way* (Les éditions du Pacifique, Tahiti, 1978). Twenty years after the festival, thirteen people testified to the significance of the event in "Il y a 20 ans...Melanesia 2000", *Mwâ Véeé*, No.10, September 1995. University of Hawai'i historian David Chappell has noted that Melanesia 2000 was criticised not only by Caldoche settlers but also by Kanak radicals at the time, who saw it as the folklorisation of Kanak culture, paid for by France. David Chappell: "Resurrecting the Foulards Rouges – How old is history?" in Brij Lal and Peter Hempenstall (eds): *Pacific Lives, Pacific Places – Bursting boundaries in Pacific history* (JPH, Canberra, 2001).
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- ⁴² Pierre Gope: *Ou est le droit?* (ADCK / Editions Grains de Sable, Noumea, 1997).
- ⁴³ Déwé Gorodé has published collections of short stories – *Utê Mûrûnûu* (1994) and *L'Agenda* (1996) – and several volumes of poetry: *Sous les cendres des conqués* (1985); *Par les temps qui courent* (1996), *Pierre noire* (1997) and *Dire le vrai* (1999). These have recently been translated into English – Peter Brown: *The Kanak Apple Season – selected short fiction of Déwé Gorodé* (Pandanus Books, Canberra, 2004) and Raylene Ramsay and Deborah Walker: *Sharing as custom provides – selected poems of Déwé Gorodé* (Pandanus Books, Canberra, 2005).
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