

message (NZH, 6 May 2004). All media reports described the march as a protest against the government's foreshore and seabed legislation. The media coverage was extensive, both locally and nationally. It also attracted significant international media attention.

The prime minister's constant criticisms of the Hikoi over the two weeks of its duration simply fueled the determination of the participants to deliver a clear and unequivocal message. As the numbers swelled, she referred to the participants as "haters and wreckers," telling the media she preferred the company of a sheep to that of iwi representatives leading the march. Yet even she was unable to ignore the Hikoi. Television cameras caught her watching from the window of her office as the marchers completely filled Parliament grounds (*Te Kaea*, 5 May 2004). Many participants could not get into the grounds and remained outside on the surrounding roads and pathways to listen to the speeches of Māori leaders, including Tariana Turia, which were broadcast from inside the grounds.

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## WALLIS AND FUTUNA

In a speech on 1 July 2003, Wallis and Futuna High Commissioner Christian Job officially announced that the institution of direct income taxation was being considered. This reform, which had been proposed by French Overseas Minister Brigitte Girardin during her visit to the territory in December 2002, would be undertaken slowly and deliberately. For indeed, Wallis

and Futuna's main problem lies in the deplorable state of its finances. On the one hand, tax revenue is essentially related to the taxation of imported products, because exports are nearly nonexistent. On the other hand, the territory has lived beyond its means for a long time, as generous but budget-consuming measures have gradually led to a chronic deficit in the local budget. Staff expenses have increased by a factor of 2.5 in ten years. Welfare has increased fivefold. Connected to this, although the airfare between Wallis and Futuna has an actual cost of 20,000 FCFP, passengers only pay 9,000 FCFP, thanks to a deficiency grant for the air service. To date, in addition to its direct spending, the French State contributes to balancing the local budget to the tune of 376 million FCFP.

All of this explains the implementation of a recovery plan that includes overhauling welfare schemes, revising the prices of domestic services, improving the tracking of expenses, retaining rather than systematically replacing government agents, and even considering changes to the tax system. With this aim, an additional clause to the development contract was signed on 23 July 2003 for 1.5 billion FCFP. The 2004 budget was carefully set up so as not to overestimate revenue or omit the slightest expense, including debts from previous years.

Wallisians and Futunians greatly regretted that when Jacques Chirac, president of the French Republic, visited New Caledonia on 23 July 2003, he did not stop in Wallis before flying on to French Polynesia. It was finally on 1 December 2003 that the special agreement between France,

New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna was signed in Paris. The agreement endorses the autonomy of French State services in Wallis and Futuna, and clarifies the support of France and New Caledonia for the economic development of the archipelago. A tripartite committee is to monitor this agreement.

In spite of signing the special agreement, it would seem that the archipelago of Wallis and Futuna actually remains closely linked to New Caledonia, both economically and demographically. The main problem between Wallis and Futuna and New Caledonia is the overseas territory debt owed by Wallis and Futuna to Caledonian administrations for airline, hospitals, and education facilities. This debt comes to nearly 3 billion FCFP, and France is considering a deficiency grant to discharge it. When the agreement was signed, Senator Robert Laufoaulu pointed out that the health agency's sizeable debt was the responsibility of the French State.

Epifano Tui, a councillor in the opposition, resigned from his term of office on 18 July 2003. Tui "wanted to attract the attention of the elected officials, who according to him, only have deliberative powers, but no responsibility as far as the executive is concerned" (*FM* 45). Because of the law on male/female parity, the second candidate on the slate, Salome Moeliku-Seo, was allowed to become the second woman in the current assembly.

Marie-Claude Tjibaou, an economic and social advisor in New Caledonia, traveled to Wallis as head of a delegation on 8 September 2003 in order to carry out a study on social

housing. On 15 September, Secretary of State for Transport Dominique Bussereau went to Wallis before visiting Futuna the next day. He agreed to help the territory find a new airplane for its domestic services. He also visited the site of the future fishing port of Halalo, the development of which will cost one billion FCFP.

Administratively, it seemed that High Commissioner Job was appointed to remind the public service of its duties. After the major postal services strike of February–April 2003, which ended inconclusively for the strikers, a strike by the staff of the Réseau France Outremer (RFO) in May–June 2004 also ended in a return to the status quo. Local RFO employees were calling for the dismissal of the agency’s Melanesian director; additional jobs; and an increase in their salaries to match the expatriate workers’ 2.05 percent “index” (the increase in wages for public servants working outside metropolitan France). However, they were already the highest paid workers in the territory, with a staff of seventy to run a service that could well operate with fewer people.

In July 2003, France carried out a general census of the territory’s population, an operation that allowed the state to reevaluate its financial contributions. Wallis has a population of 10,094, and Futuna 4,873, representing a total increase of 5.7 percent over the 1996 population of 14,166. In Futuna the increase was 5.1 percent and in Wallis 5.9 percent. Alofi is no longer considered uninhabited, as two permanent inhabitants have been registered there.

The public works department has ordered three drilling operations into

the water table from a Caledonian company (Forapac), with financing from the French State and the Fonds d’investissement pour le développement économique et social de l’outremer (FIDES), in order to secure the island’s water supply for the next fifteen years. In parallel fashion, the water and electricity company (EEWF) had drilling carried out on its Mata-Utu concession, in order to be able to cool its machines using less costly “untreated” water. As for infrastructure, a large part of west coast roads is being tarred: a twelve-kilometer section will provide access to homes and food-producing gardens. This state-financed work is being carried out in an ecological way, as the runoff is directed toward deep ditches from which it can infiltrate the water table, thus avoiding any dumping of muddy water into the lagoon.

On the judicial scene, in August 2003 the criminal court of Mata-Utu convicted Soane Uhila, the former president of the Territorial Assembly, for the misuse of public office and the misuse of company assets in the affair of the express ferry. This conviction was upheld by the Noumea Court of Appeal in May 2004. Uhila is now ineligible for public office for five years. In another case, a twenty-six-year-old employee of Général Import entered the shop during the night and stole 3 million FCFP from the till. This young man, who had been in debt, was arrested the very next morning. In the local context, where 90 percent of households owe money, he was sentenced to only four months’ imprisonment and allowed to serve his sentence in Wallis. This theft, much bigger than the usual burglaries, raised the issue of credit in a territory

where the whole population practices “le marquage,” that is, the deferred payment of purchases, and where great indebtedness is common.

A dispute between the SWAFEPF company and the customary owners of the land on which Futuna’s fuel depot sits led to the beginning of a fuel shortage on the island. In fact, after the company refused to hire a member of the family in question, in August this family prevented the docking of the oil tanker that usually supplies the island from Fiji every three weeks. In addition, damage was done to the site, including dismantling the fence and even some tank valves. Finally, on 26 August an army plane arrived from Noumea via Wallis with twelve members of the security police. The tanks were filled and the parties met to reach an understanding.

By and large, Wallis and Futuna society continues to live on the fringes of modern life and there is a clear-cut difference between national regulations and local practices. Because it comes under the auspices of the French State, all gambling—including bingo—is prohibited; yet, for families, villages, and clubs throughout the archipelago, bingo is one of the main forms of entertainment. Another contrast is found in the fact that the number of driver’s license holders remains low, while the number of accidents on the road is double the national average.

Emigration to France continues, by way of sports and the army. On 1 August 2003, John Babin, stationed in Alsace, became the first Wallisian captain of the French army. At the same time, the “40 cadres” program (modeled on New Caledonia’s “400

cadres” program for mid-career executive training) had just gotten underway, its first four beneficiaries having flown to Lyon or Noumea in August 2003. Senator Laufoaulu, a strong supporter of the project, reminded them as they were leaving that they were going to become the professional elite of the territory and that, like their elders, they would have to put the general interest before their own.

In the medical sector, the infectious disease brucellosis reappeared on pig farms at the beginning of 2004. Measures were taken to isolate and slaughter the infected animals, thus eradicating the epidemic. As the archipelago no longer has a veterinary doctor, the rural economy department regularly brings veterinarians over from New Caledonia. Their work deals essentially with pig breeding. It emerged that the cost of a family-run farm was higher than the revenue it produced. The 150-hectare pine forest of Malae was affected by a fungus; as a result the villagers chopped down and burnt the diseased trees.

Regarding cultural activities, on 26 July 2003, Leonella Tuulaki was selected Miss 2003, out of eleven candidates. Dance groups traveled to New Caledonia in May 2004 on the invitation of the International Council for Organising Folklore and Traditional Arts Festivals, presided over, on behalf of the Pacific, by Isai Pagatele, a Caledonian of Wallisian descent.

On the sporting scene, the delegation to the July 2003 South Pacific Games in Fiji brought home nine medals, including four silver medals: javelin, shot put, karate, and taekwondo. The drop in the number of medals compared to the Guam games

can be explained by the new regulations that require athletes to live in the territory they represent, thereby excluding Wallis and Futuna members from New Caledonia. Criticized for these results, the president of the Sports and Territorial Olympic Committee declared: "There isn't a competition for gossiping yet; but if that day came, you would win the gold medal" (*FM* 46).

In New Caledonia, the Saint-Louis affair started up again on 25 August 2003 when a judge, by judicial letter, instructed 270 gendarmes to besiege the Saint-Louis tribe at dawn in order to question those guilty of the 25 June extortion (see Angleviel 2004). Four Melanesians were arrested and eight weapons seized. Kanak customary leaders announced that because many youths considered this operation to be provocation, they would be uncontrollable. On 26 August, three roadblocks made from tires and wood were erected by the two sides facing each other: the Kanaks from the Saint-Louis tribe and the Wallisians-Futunians of Ave Maria. Five armored police vehicles were needed to clear these roadblocks.

This affair ended on 18 September 2003 with the departure from Ave Maria of the last thirty Caledonian families of Wallisian or Futunian descent. The houses were stripped bare and the roofs removed. Some of the departing residents set fire to their homes rather than abandon them to the Melanesians who until that time had been living on the other bank of the river. The Southern Province, led by the Rassemblement pour La Calédonie dans le République (RPCR), had ensured that everyone involved was

rehoused. On 16 September, Didier Leroux, president of the Alliance party, spoke of "ethnic cleansing." On 19 September, High Commissioner Job answered, "If those words have meaning, we have opposed what some call ethnic cleansing. Ethnic cleansing means one population killing another, and this is precisely what we have avoided, for months and months." In his address, New Caledonia High Commissioner Daniel Constantin pointed out that the Saint-Louis affair had caused three deaths, six serious injuries, and thirteen minor injuries; had involved 200 victims of extortion of various kinds; 19 cars and 18 houses had been shot at; one armored police vehicle had been set on fire; and 1,600 gunshots had been fired during the month.

It is to be noted that Laurent Vili was transferred at the beginning of August from the Noumea prison, Camp Est, to the Fresnes prison (Paris region), from which he was released in early September for medical reasons. Put on probation in Montpellier, he resumed his position on the rugby team. After one year of detention pending trial, he remains indicted for the murder of Jean Marie Goyetta.

The Rassemblement Démocratique Océanien (RDO) organized a big pre-electoral party for its tenth birthday on 14 February 2004. In April 2003, Tino Manuohalalo, former RDO vice president, had created the Mouvement des Citoyens Calédoniens (MCC). His first conference, on 26 February 2004, gathered 550 natives of Wallis and Futuna. This new community party wants to become partners with the RPCR in the context of the

Noumea Agreement and represent a “bridge” between the RPCR and the Front de Libération Nationale Kanak Socialiste (FLNKS).

The Wallisian and Futunian community of New Caledonia played an important part in the local elections of May 2004. On the one hand, it was represented in the Southern Province by three community slates, which obtained 1,140 votes (MCC), 749 (Union Océanienne), and 429 (Rassemblement Océanien dans la Calédonie). Because the required 5 percent of registered voters would be 3,600 votes, none of these slates had members elected. Nevertheless, as other Wallisians and Futunians were present on anti-separatist slates, Anne-Marie Siakinuu (Avenir Ensemble) and Ana Logologofolau (RPCR–UMP) were elected. Thanks to the appointment of some elected officials to the local government, Corinne Fuluhea (RPCR) recovered her position as provincial adviser. On the other hand, this community only comprises one community party in favor of independence: the RDO. A FLNKS member, this party had presented a common slate with the Palika (UNI). It gathered about 5 percent of Wallisian and Futunian votes, showing that a large majority of Polynesians wants New Caledonia to remain part of France. Angéla Manakofaiva (RDO) was elected in the

North province, on the UNI–FLNKS list. It must be pointed out that on 7 March 2004 the RDO president, Aloisio Sako, became president of the Wallisian community from the Hihifo district.

In the sports sector, Bertrand Vili, a Caledonian of Wallisian descent, beat New Caledonia’s record in the discus at the New Zealand championships. He won the gold medal for the discus and the shot put in the Espoir category at the championships of France in July 2003. In June 2004 Amete Luaki became the French champion of weightlifting in the 105 kg category.

After only a year of existence, the weekly *Fenua Magazine* ceased publication on 20 September 2003, after the advertising market proved inadequate; there is no longer any written press whatsoever in Wallis and Futuna. The disappearance of the weekly *Fenua Magazine* increases the territory’s media isolation.

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