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ROOTS OF CONFLICT IN SOLOMON ISLANDS THOUGH MUCH IS TAKEN, MUCH ABIDES: LEGACIES OF TRADITION AND COLONIALISM

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For many outsiders, the accelerating failure of governments in western Melanesia in the last decade has been difficult to understand. At independence, though their resources ranged from the rich diversity in Papua New Guinea to the less abundant, but still substantial in Solomon Islands, it seemed that with goodwill and some temporary assistance from developed nations in the region their future would be assured. Yet since independence, overall Melanesian living standards and personal security have declined; and more and more aid is being requested from donors.

This essay seeks to answer the questions, "What went wrong in Solomon Islands? Why was the government overthrown in mid 2000? Why did civil war erupt mainly between Guadalcanal and Malaitan people?" The answers are to be found partly in recent regional and global factors that have impacted this state since independence, such as the Bougainville conflict, the fall in commodity prices in the 1980s, and the burgeoning of Neo-Classical economics in the West. More significant, however, are the deeper structures and patterns of the more distant past. This essay will first examine the nature of traditional Solomons' societies

and how these operated at the local level, the significance of local identity, and other enduring Melanesian values that continue to influence politics. The nature of Christianity and colonialism will next be considered because these have also left their mark, often changing the balance of population-resource ratios, encouraging greater mobility and raising expectations that have fostered dependence on global economic linkages. Regional expressions of social, economic and political ways and means emerged both before and after the Second World War, but these indigenous protest movements largely collapsed in the face of the colonial government's opposition.

This essay argues that independent governments have not fulfilled the aspirations they represented. Though Christianity in its various forms has become more naturalised, the political structures bequeathed by the British are foreign additions that have not sat well on the Melanesian foundation. Yet Solomon Islander politicians in the years since independence have done no more than tinker with them, because they have given such men a degree of personal power in the disposal of resources. The incongruities and failure of these structures to

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deliver good governance peaked in 2000, with conflict between the Guadalcanal and Malaitan militias. These incongruities remain still, in spite of some propping up of the semblance of government by interested outside nations and donor bodies.

TRADITIONAL SOLOMON ISLANDS SOCIETY

In order to understand the present Solomon Islands we need to look to the past and the nature of society and place. We may talk of Solomons Islands as having become an independent state in 1978, but all this is very recent, as is any sense of national identity. The very name of the archipelago was given by a foreigner, Mendaña in the sixteenth century. His blanket term however, did not reflect the inherent unity of its peoples. In Mendaña's eyes, the only thing the peoples seemed to have in common was their desire to have the hungry Spaniards move elsewhere.¹ As these Westerners began to realise almost 500 years ago, the archipelago has a variety of societies with cultural differences and many languages.

In pre-European Solomon Islands, as today, kinship was the cement of each society, binding the individual to the group. It was the basis for claims to use terrestrial and maritime resources for food production and other necessities. Most clans traced their claims through an apical ancestor who first cleared patches in the forest, cultivated and settled land or fished a reef. The labour expended to domesticate the wild bound people to place, creating a history and identity. Livelihood and affection evoked attachment to home places. Within these home places, however, there was often significant mobility. Many groups moved from site to site over some kilometres, motivated by population growth, quarrels, defence, natural disasters, and the search for accessible garden land. Trading and socialising parties flowed periodically between coastal and inland settlements. Beyond this localised movement, most Solomon Islanders were not highly mobile. Occasionally, women married across some distances, but rarely beyond their language group and affiliated clans. Expeditions of men often went from island to island to barter with their counterparts. Men also raided across large distances, all the more so after the introduction of European metal in the early nineteenth century when headhunters could perform decapitations more efficiently. Less commonly, conquerors moved into the

lands of defeated people. Often the claims of conquerors were consolidated through inter-marriage with them. These conquerors usually established lineages that produced candidates for leadership over generations.

Particularly in the western islands, there were hereditary chiefly families whose sons were most likely to succeed in the leadership stakes, but they had to demonstrate ability or they would be sidelined. Mostly, however, leaders were self-made men, who because of their entrepreneurial and organisational skills, attracted kin and others. These men were often warriors, perceived as having access to powerful spiritual forces through their ancestors. They were conduits for the distribution of wealth and prestige. Wealth, especially foodstuffs, was rarely held or stored for long. It was invested in social capital that underwrote the leader's term. When wealth and prestige dried up, followers would shift their support to a younger, more promising man. Be it the leader, chief or big man, he had influence over a few hundred people at the most, but his reputation often spread beyond affiliated hamlets. Though there were relatively large clusters of people who spoke one of the archipelago's 86 languages, it seems most societies were small-scale, probably reflecting the need to move hamlets to fresh gardening land and to avoid disease. Whatever the reasons, small groups and localised identity were characteristics of Solomons societies, just as attracting and distributing wealth were marks of a leader.

Thus it was rare that even a small island such as Santa Ana (Owa Raha), let alone larger islands, had any kind of paramount head. There was no class of leaders across the Melanesian islands, though a powerful big man or chief was likely to exhibit respect in dealing with his neighbouring counterparts in peacetime. The great chief Gorai of Alu, Shortlands, for example, had connections across the Bougainville Strait into the Bougainville plains where he could, because of chiefly alliances, assist white traders to collect copra in the late nineteenth century.

As with the plains of inland Buin, some settlements might be famed for the productivity of their soils. Others could be notable for the riches of their seas, the prowess of their warriors, the beauty and character of their women, or their people's skills at adding value to localised resources such as stone, shell, timber or fibre. Throughout the islands, there were villages that earned a degree of fame, but unless they had some long-term resource, this could blossom or

fade as the generations were born and died. Overall, there were dispersed foci of power in myriad leading people as well as places; there was no overarching central person or place dominating large areas and islands. Shifting clusters of significance, not hierarchies, characterised Solomons' political and social geography.²

Many Solomon Islanders knew much about the world of the European long before foreign warships began plying their seas in the 1870s-1880s. Following the transient whalers came a handful of resident traders, and labour ships looking for people to work on the plantations of Fiji, Queensland, Samoa, and on the farms and mines of New Caledonia. As early as the 1860s when cotton and coconut plantations were being established in the South Pacific, men and some women from practically every island in the Solomons went overseas as labourers. Many were taken against their will, especially in first contact situations. In a short time, however, local preference and alternative opportunities confined both the numbers 'blackbirded', as well as volunteers, to people mainly from Malaita, Guadalcanal, parts of Makira, and Santa Cruz. More than 50 per cent of the Solomons' total labour came from Malaita.³ Malaitans had little else to offer but their labour. Recruits sought metal goods, especially edged tools, firearms, cloth, and tobacco in return for their work. Brought to the islands, these new forms of wealth eased the labour required for subsistence while bringing the returnees significance as benefactors to their extended families. Some, as go-betweeners for labour vessels and recruits, like Kwaisulia of Ada Gege, Malaita, rose to prominence as big men until the labour trade ceased around 1911.

A reluctant Britain declared a Protectorate over the Solomons in 1893, to regulate the labour and arms trade and to appease the Australasian colonies that feared the ambitions of other imperial nations. When the colonial establishment appeared in 1896, it consisted of the Resident Commissioner, Charles Woodford, a Guadalcanal man, Sergeant William Buruku, five Fijian policemen, and a whaleboat to control an archipelago of an estimated 100,000 people. The British were few, but they were determined. By about 1900 with a handful of officers, a local militia, and later regular police, they gradually brought coastal areas and the smaller islands under control, disarming men and capturing known killers in the face of sporadic and localised resistance into the late 1920s. Colonial methods were harsh, but

no harsher than local sanctions.⁴ In 1927, three policemen, Funusua, Gena, and Veki were murdered at Verakona, in inland eastern Guadalcanal, partly because the unsupervised police exceeded their powers. The fact that these bush people had to pay male head tax from 1921 at Aola to a district officer who had never patrolled the region probably contributed to their resentment of the colonial administration. The courts found six of the accused guilty and hanged them.⁵ In the same year, 1927, a tax collecting patrol led by District Officer William Bell and Cadet K. C. Lillies was attacked. These two men and twelve Solomon Islanders died at the hands of Basiana and his Kwaio allies at Sinalagu, Malaita. Again, the government hanged six of the accused.⁶ By and large, this was the end of violent confrontations.

Other methods of resistance emerged in the 1930s. In the New Georgia Islands local leaders involved Methodist missionary, J. F. Goldie in a successful protest against the scale of taxation made onerous by the decline of copra prices during the Great Depression. In the central Solomons, the Melanesian Mission's priest, Richard Fallowes chaired meetings, mediating demands for recognition of Melanesian values, formal education, and greater economic participation. Because the 'chair and rule' or the Fallowes movement had supporters from most of the central islands, the government saw it as having political overtones, so it deported Fallowes, weakening the movement.⁷

Although the missions supported their followers they were also allies of the government.⁸ They provided a new ideology of peace that assisted the transition from local control to a more centralised system. As conditions became securer for outsiders and for Solomon Islanders around the islands, white planters as well as traders extended their operations. In doing this, government, missions, traders, and planters created new centres of influence and power in the eyes of the local people, at a time when the incoming tide of Western trade goods reduced the significance of many old centres, famed for their stone quarries and fashioning of weapons such as fibre shields.⁹ There were small government stations in each district, like Auki on Malaita and Aola on Guadalcanal. By the 1920s the administrative centre at Tulagi in the Florida Islands was the most substantial expatriate settlement. Other than the native hospital ward, the native counters at Burns Philps' and W. R. Carpenter's shops and the several Chinese trade stores open

to local people, the amenities of hotels, the clubs, the cricket ground, golf and tennis courts were for the Europeans. Before World War Two, even the offices of the government—the lands office, the government officers' and police quarters, the court house, the gaol, the post office, the customs office, and the wireless station—were as much the means to regulate Solomon Islanders as to improve their standard of living and security. Unlike the Europeans and even the Chinese, Islanders were under a nightly curfew at Tulagi. Though local women were permitted to visit Tulagi, none could reside there in the early years as the first Resident Commissioner considered that they caused trouble among the men.¹⁰ To Solomon Islanders, the colonial town was an interesting and even an amazing place, but it was not theirs.

Solomon Islanders were more at ease on the mission stations, which were centres of evangelisation, Western education, medical care and value-added local resources such as milled timber. These facilities were there for Solomon Islanders because of the Christian charity of expatriate workers and churches. Spirituality was part of the worldview of Solomon Islanders and many saw a connection between the new religious teaching and the opportunities the missions offered. Others, gutted by the government's 'pacification' policies that destroyed raiding as a means to spiritual power, accepted the missions to come to terms with the new dispensation. Christianity opened the path to the wider world, just as it opened paths between communities by facilitating the intermingling of people from different societies and the reconciliation of former enemies. The first Solomon Islander medical practitioners, government clerks and radio operators were products of pre-War mission schools, as were most teachers. The lives of Solomon Islanders were greatly enriched by the missions, although it was the government's establishment of colonial law and order that enabled things to flower.

The missions encouraged family life, as they understood it. Old customs that influenced family size came under scrutiny. Christianity forbade abortion and infanticide. Formerly, fear of raids and the need to be able to run with only one child-in-arms meant child-spacing for couples. Men usually slept apart from their wives who had just given birth and lived in the canoe or men's house until a baby had ceased to suckle—three to four years. Men's houses were also associated with raiding and old religious beliefs. With peace and evangelisation

these became redundant. Mission influence in Methodist areas reduced the infant's suckling period to one year, making conception more likely. Missionaries favoured nuclear family living under one roof, thus there was more acceptance of resumption of sexual contact and no need to limit the size of families, especially since introduced diseases had reduced numbers until the 1920s.¹¹

The coconut plantations of the 1900s-1920s were more contested places. Big companies like Lever's Pacific Plantations and Burns Philp's subsidiaries as well as smaller companies cleared and planted coastal stretches with Solomon Islander labour, mainly in the central and western islands. These plantations were workplaces for thousands of men for at least two years of their lives. Often conditions were harsh, especially until the 1920s when government labour inspectors began checking plantations regularly. The plantation, however, was a work place familiar to Solomon Islanders, who had undertaken decades of indenture overseas. It extended the men's knowledge of one another, the colonial workplace, and its systems, as well as inducting many into the rudiments of the cash economy. In their conflicts with management it provided a milieu for the emergence of regional and sometimes island-based solidarity among the men, most markedly for Malaitans who made up almost two-thirds of the workforce. But consensus was situational and, once back home, ancient divisions easily resurfaced. Although planters considered the Malaitans tough men to deal with, because they came from an island where life was rarely easy, that very toughness made them valued labourers. Other groups tended to tread lightly around Malaitans in numbers, though conflicts were not unusual because of Malaitan sensitivity to slights against their customs and mutual fear of sorcery. Just as the plantation sector dominated the pre-war economy, so too did the more numerous Malaitans dominate the Protectorate's work force, often in more ways than one.¹²

The advent of colonial control changed Solomon Islanders' lives. Formerly, warrior leaders guaranteed the prestige and safety of their community by subordinating enemy settlements and taking heads or captives. Within communities, many wrongs could be righted by compensation to injured parties. When compensation and restorative justice failed, or the alleged offender or the magnitude of the offence was outside the scope of allied clans, families or big men hired vengeance men, called *ramo* or *lamo* on Malaita, to carry out killings

to redress the imbalance. This talion law made for a sort of rough justice, but it did not foster security because the innocent and the weak, especially women, were often victims taken or offered to satisfy constant 'payback'. With the government in control, it was now its role to arrest, judge, punish, and protect. Many resented this and incoming regulations, but in time most acquiesced. Few would claim that peace and personal security were negative features of colonialism. In the process, warrior leaders and the paid assassins and rams lost power and prestige, though their fame lived on in story. Service as a government district headman or catechist provided new avenues to influence, but those who had lost most rarely were able to make the transition to such ideologically novel positions.¹³

Peace and participation in a widening world exacted another price. The colonial state needed revenue to finance its administration. Plantations could provide a revenue base, but this meant getting land on which to situate them. With increased security, traders often used links with local groups to purchase land for themselves or big companies. Resident Commissioner Woodford in 1900 believed large areas of seemingly unoccupied land, mainly in the west, should be opened up for development. What he had not considered was that headhunting and raiding had escalated from around the 1840s, as new weapons came into the country. This had driven depleted coastal populations inland to safe, hidden locations. Though by the 1920s over half of this 'waste land' had been re-claimed by Solomon Islanders via the Lands Commission, the government's allocation of the rest to companies like Lever's, who left large sections of the land idle, antagonised claimants. While in 1912 the government banned freehold sales to non-Solomon Islanders in favour of a lease system, the government's role in preventing the large-scale alienation of inhabited coastal lands is little acknowledged today. Its motives had been mixed—the desire to prevent land speculation being prominent. Even so, the outcome meant that 95 per cent of the land remained in customary ownership, a far higher percentage than in neighbouring New Hebrides, New Caledonia, or even the British colony of Fiji.¹⁴

POST WAR PLANNING

World War Two involved the Solomons when the Japanese invaded in 1942 as part of their intended advance to Australia. Allied forces fought the Japanese on the islands west of Makira and Malaita, resulting in great hardship for local people. About 5000 men, mainly Malaitans, worked in the Labour Corps and some as soldiers with the Allies. Individual Solomon Islanders displayed fortitude and intelligence in dealing with the Japanese. Former policeman Jacob Vouza from Aola survived Japanese torture and never divulged information about Allied positions. Guadalcanal men in the south coast carried out their own guerrilla operation near Veuru against a Japanese post, killing all the troops.¹⁵

The experience of war on an industrialised scale, though often traumatic, further enlarged the Solomon Islanders' perceptions, especially of the Americans, and the rest of the world. Coming in the wake of the stirrings of the Fallows movement, the political ideas of Americans raised hopes among some of their greater political and economic involvement post-war. Political movements on Guadalcanal and Malaita focussed on challenging the administration's political and cultural hegemony. In Guadalcanal's north-west, Mathew Belamatanga's movement adopted the tenets of the new United Nations Charter—the four freedoms; of religion and speech and from want and fear. He wanted political representation in government, codified customary law to rule on local issues, as well as economic development and improved formal education. The largest movement, however, was Maasina Rulu, based on Malaita. This not only appealed to some on other islands such as Makira and Santa Isabel, but also became increasingly militant in its demands for higher wages on plantations, respect for customs (*kastomu*), and island self-government. Most Malaitans refused their labour, which was needed for post-war reconstruction, and Malaitan leaders, as in Belamatanga's following, used intimidation against those who supported the administration. Elements even appealed to cultic dreams of 'cargo', though today many deny this aspect. Confrontations led to the imprisonment of leaders and eventually their release in 1952, on the understanding that the government would spend more time and money on Malaitan development.

Much was done in this direction, including the establishment and extension of local councils, an outcome of colonial policy rather than of indigenous demands. It was part of a wider agenda of development for Britain's possessions so that both its colonial people and their economies could become self-supporting.¹⁶ Like the Marshall Plan in Europe and US support of the Japanese recovery, 'aid'—so the development experts thought—would bring this to the Third World. It was an investment in economic development that would enable the people to attain their expanding aspirations.¹⁷

To start this process, the British administration designated Honiara on northern Guadalcanal as the new capital and purchased the lands of planting companies. The plans for a vastly expanded administration meant more public buildings and, in the aeroplane age, access to the wartime Henderson airfield. The Guadalcanal plains held more promise for agricultural experiments than the limited hills of Tulagi and adjacent islands in the Florida group.¹⁸

Honiara from the late 1940s grew to a township of about 5000 in the 1960s, but was still mainly an expatriate enclave. The population had trebled by independence in 1978, as increasing numbers of Solomon Islanders came to live there, even if only on a periodic basis.¹⁹ It was the first real town that most Solomon Islanders knew, with the predictable array of government offices, as well as a hospital, hotel, clubs, churches, banks, stores, warehouses, a market, a 'China Town', picture theatre, sports ground, schools, and an artificial harbour. An expanding road system followed the wartime template of the American bases, winding its way east and west and into the hills, where houses were being built for public servants and private business people. At Point Cruz, ships came and went as did international flights to Henderson field and, by 1963, inter-island flights.²⁰

The more Honiara had to offer, the less the administration decentralised, though district centres like Gizo and Auki were much larger than their pre-war antecedents. Once Maasinu Rulu dissipated, men flocked to Honiara from the 1950s to work on construction projects. The bulk of these came from Malaita. No longer was the plantation sector the sole employer of local people. The government in 1948 had discarded the indenture system that kept wages relatively low and made strikes illegal. The Great Depression of the 1930s, the wartime destruction of plantations and plants, along with

the abolition of indenture meant that many planters did not return to the islands. Post-war copra production was less from plantations and more from households, supplementing the subsistence economy.

As infrastructure was concentrated around Honiara, commercial development tended to gravitate there. Yet significant expansion in health, education, and basic communications facilities for the archipelago occurred before independence. The annual spending of the British government from the post-war period outran local revenues, so various grants supplemented this in the hope of setting the foundation for eventual financial viability. From the late 1940s the administration was seeking ways to development, conducting surveys of forests, land tenure, geology, soils, and overall land resources. The seas rich in tuna seemed promising, but establishing the industry would have meant heavy competition from the experts, the Americans and the Japanese, who before the mid 1980s dominated the oceans. In the mid 1970s the government reached an agreement with Taiyo, a Japanese company which built a cannery that, with the fishing, provided some employment and reasonable returns until the late 1980s. Oil palm grown on an industrial scale by the Commonwealth Development Corporation seemed a likely contributor to revenue and land for this was leased on north Guadalcanal. Planting began in the early 1970s and ten years later 5000 hectares were under palms. Plans for mining on Rennell and elsewhere in the 1970s collapsed in the face of local objections and predicted small loads. With increasing small holder copra and cocoa production it seemed that fishing, palm oil, and a mix of other primary industries could make the Solomons economically viable.

The colonial government belatedly tried decentralisation. In 1976, a land resources survey found 43 areas dispersed around the islands with better than average development potential, mainly for agriculture. These areas could attract basic infrastructure and perhaps rural training centres. Yet the keystone for this, and one both the colonial and independent governments failed to put in place, was the acquisition of the land for those who wished to develop it. Earlier government attempts to encourage group registration of land, by 'land settlement'—so plots could be leased to some of their number—had little success. Solomon Islanders were loath to relinquish control of land and when they did lease it out, there was often resentment that someone else was making

money out of 'their' land. Nowhere was this more evident than in the forestry sector.

The most promising potential income earner in terms of renewable resources was the forest. By 1978 four major companies were logging and paying royalties and taxes on their logs. Some, like Levers, did significant training among a local workforce lacking basic skills. As extraction proceeded, the Forestry Department was replanting much of this land. The colonial government had made it impossible for Solomon Islanders to alienate their rights to timber on customary land as well as to customary land itself—except to the government. The Forestry Department wanted land for replanting to guarantee a cycle of sustainable commercial log production, but it had obtained only about half of that needed before independence in 1978. The British believed the forest estate would be an enduring economic asset. Yet few Solomon Islanders found attractive the idea of either selling their land and the trees to the government for logging and reforestation or selling their timber rights to the government to on-sell to loggers. They wanted to do the deals themselves because they would retain control of their land and obtain, so they believed, a better return in royalties. When, on the eve of independence, the national house of assembly voted to approve direct dealing between local timber rights' holders on customary land and logging companies, no Solomon Islanders foresaw the potential for the exploitation of their resources.²¹

The colonial government had worked hard to safeguard the forest estate, but was tardy in providing education. The post-war emphasis had been on basic primary education and extending this as equitably as possible. As independence did not enter Britain's thinking until the 1960s there was little time to extend education further. Yet higher education was needed to train Solomon Islanders for government. Although teacher training was underway in Honiara in the early 1960s, true secondary schools had not opened until then and by independence numbered only six, including only one government school. Consequently in 1978 there were only a dozen or so University graduates.²² The expertise and productivity of the primary producer plus aid in the form of overseas expertise, it seemed, might buy enough time for a generation to receive the higher education essential to staff an effective government.

MENTALITIES OF DEPENDENCY

At independence it was possible that Solomons might manage to balance its books if commodity prices remained stable and the input of aid funds continued. But dependence on aid for about one third of the government's finances in 1978 followed 35 years of dependence on British grants. In terms of interaction with the outside world it had been almost 40 years since Solomons paid its way and financed all its own services, limited though they had been. Dig a little more deeply and it can be said that 'aid' started long before, back in the 1900s as missions transferred funds, plant, skilled labour, and expertise from Australia, New Zealand and Britain to subsidise not only the spiritual, but also the secular development of their followers.²³ Aid might kick-start development; it could just as easily fail and become the first resort to fix every problem. The dependency habit was going to be hard to break.

This also induced a habit of mind regarding government. Except when it came to any plans it had for their land, most Solomon Islanders grudgingly trusted the post-war British administration, but they also saw it more as a provider, rather than a facilitator. Post-war reconstruction coupled with a development agenda had resulted in a large public service doing much that was done elsewhere by private enterprise. By the mid 1970s, most Solomon Islanders were content to see the British stay longer, though a few university graduates called for independence. The British had hoped a more realistic assessment of the role of government might come with increased localisation of the public service in 1970. A counter productive effect was for these new public servants to seek parity with expatriates, a cost that would be beyond the pocket of any independent government. The colonial servants, though they may have had many cultural blind spots, were rarely dishonest. This produced expectations of similar behaviour from their successors.²⁴

Although political representation, structures based on the Westminster model, and elections had been phased in step by step from about 1960, Solomon Islanders tended to see these as novel, if not exotic institutions.²⁵ The British, having no alternatives and little imagination, introduced a political system that had taken hundreds of years to evolve (often through bloody conflict in the distant north) and hoped the transplant would not be rejected. With little formal education and literacy, Solomon Islanders

seemed content to not interrogate the process or the candidates closely. Their aspirations were uncomplicated. Most wanted some cash income from crops or local employment to supplement their subsistence living and, like most of us, schools, medical treatment, transport to friends and family, markets and services close at hand to provide a good life for their children. They wanted peace and security, which in the pre-European Solomons had been often tenuous, but by 1978 with a generation of peace and order since the war and Maasina Rulu, this seemed almost an established fact of life in the 'Happy Isles'. If the government provided all this or the means to it, it was good government.

CHALLENGES TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF INDEPENDENCE

In hindsight, the governments of independence were walking a tightrope because of their financial dependence on a limited range of primary exports. If they could control government spending, if markets for the range of Solomons' products remained fairly buoyant, and the terms of trade remained favourable, then the future seemed secure. Aid, wisely managed and directed, would help this. Regional aspirations, largely subsumed by British centralisation and the focus on independence, soon emerged, however many continued to believe that Honiara took a disproportionate share of resources. Any capital city has to be somewhere and the island it was on, Guadalcanal, became associated with a monopolisation of services and facilities. Many groups, whether on Vanikoro or even Vella Lavella, saw themselves as victims of 'distance decay'; they were far from the centre of things and their area/island was not given equal consideration by the central government in the allocation of services.²⁶

Yet this was the way some Guadalcanal people also saw themselves. The Weather Coast with its large population was distant in terms of markets, services, and communication; its geographical proximity not mirroring accessibility. Elsewhere too there was dissatisfaction. Periodically, for example in 1987, groups of northern Guadalcanal people complained to the Prime Minister about the increasing number of Malaitans on their lands. Yet no one had ever brought a court case against them because there were various legal purchase and informal leasing arrangements permitted by the local people.²⁷ But, like

migrants everywhere, when a man had found a job in Honiara, made a garden and, with a few relations, built himself a house he would send for his wife and children, then a brother might come and eventually a parent and cousins. As the links became a chain, numbers often grew beyond the agreement between the first settler and his vendor or landlord. The picture was even more complex because rights to land pass through Guadalcanal women, but a brother or uncle might allow a Malaitan a piece of matrilineal land. Over the years, however, as that one house became a hamlet and young, unemployed north Guadalcanal people needed garden land they often found their lands pock-marked by Malaitan settlements. Rather than blame their kinsmen, their displeasure fell upon the settlers. As is so often the case anywhere with a migrant group, once the settlers' numbers rose they became more confident in the expression of their cultural ways—ways that sometimes offended the Guadalcanal people.²⁸

One solution to erasing perceived disparities between Honiara and the rest of the Solomon Islands was provincial government. This seemed even more appealing when just before independence a group of politicians led a 'breakaway' movement in the Western District. Part of their agenda was possible unification with Bougainville with which there were ancient linkages across the Bougainville strait. With its black-skinned people like those of the western Solomons, Bougainville was admired for its productivity and its copper mine at Panguna. The central government managed to contain this movement until it created provincial governments in 1980 and this seemed to satisfy the western people. Provincial government added another tier of paid officials, yet there was no appreciable improvement to the overall economy, efficiency, or services and Honiara still held the purse strings.²⁹

Bougainville was to remain a focus in Solomons in the late 1980s, but for more portentous reasons. A protracted civil war there with the Papua New Guinea government broke out over the control of mining revenues. Though thousands of Bougainvilleans died, the war demonstrated that a central government, even with a well-equipped standing army, could be challenged by a relatively small number of armed men. Moreover, in offering succour to Bougainville refugees, the Solomons government opened the way for their residence in Honiara. Members of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) crossed the border as far as Guadalcanal in search of supplies

and wartime caches of weapons. Meanwhile Prime Minister Mamaloni imported high-powered weapons in case of conflict with Bougainvilleans. These Bougainvilleans were a source of irritation to the Papua New Guinea government, embarrassment to the Solomons' government, and interest to disaffected young Solomon Islanders on Honiara's periphery.³⁰

Solomons was changing and not for the better. The years brought falls not only in commodity prices, but also the standards of governance. With little public savings and high commodity spending, instead of living within a tight budget, governments continued to borrow and gradually the interest payments on loans increased. Aid, though well intended, before the early 1990s failed to encourage the government to live within its means. In retrospect, the donors needed to exercise the power of the purse more and 'political correctness' less. Yet aid donors, irrespective of their political agendas, seem to have thought that every big project would be the last, but dependency dragged on. Biting the bullet of realistic budgeting in the Pacific's 'welfare lake' of the late 1970s and 1980s did not appeal to its politicians. Instead of proactive policies on population to fit economic parameters, for example, the government acquiesced in the startling 3.5 per cent annual growth. In a desperate drive to continue to provide government services and to remain in power, politicians since the early 1980s increasingly have raided resources or permitted others to plunder them.

The loss of timber resources gathered momentum in the 1980s. Asia-based logging companies poured into the Solomons because logging was restricted by controls in South East Asia. The Asian way of doing business, smoothed by gifts and favours, fell within the cultural ambit of Solomons' societies. These loggers have many allies in Solomons. Rights to whole forests, including former government plantations, have been sold with little return to the public purse, but ample reward to a few individuals who facilitated the loggers. At the village level, the big man or the local spokesman able to read and sign papers conjured for their families and clans' dreams of the roads, schools, clinics, and employment that were supposed to come with logging; at the regional level, the chiefly educated son saw his prestige expanding as he collected director's fees to head a local paper company that was a front for a giant Malaysian company; at the provincial level, the premier had a house built by the loggers or a new truck and a wharf for the province;

at the national level, the politicians received thousands of dollars in 'gifts' and trips to Asia while they suborned public servants to sign licences for unsustainable logging. Often these public servants were harassed by rural relatives to expedite a license for loggers on their island. Out in the forest, public servants who tried to assess customs dues were plied with loggers' offers of transportation, hospitality, and gifts to turn a blind eye to the thousands of dollars of undeclared valuable furniture trees loaded on ships as ordinary timber.

By the late 1990s it would have been hard for them to say no; the standards of political morality were falling and corruption and self-serving among the so-called elite so obvious that none could miss it. The governments of Solomon Mamaloni encouraged this behaviour, undermined the timber control units of the Forestry Division, and allowed the issue of licenses to overseas loggers with local partnerships to obtain massive tax and duty exemptions and remissions, calculated in 1995 alone to have been worth \$24 million. But Mamaloni's governments had no patent on such behaviour. At the micro-level of the village and region, few loggers brought any permanent services as promised—these appeared and disappeared in direct proportion to the time it took loggers to complete their operations. Yet even when this was understood by some, individuals, just as the politicians did, could make much in a short time by assisting loggers' entry. There was always the hope among the rights' owners that 'their' loggers would deliver, that they and their place would prosper and be significant.

The decline in political morality on the national stage can be accounted for in part by the fact that intending politicians, with the help of loggers, could muster money to win support among their communities. Of course, the loggers expected favourable treatment later. An incumbent could have similar backers, but if not, had access to the government's Constituency Development fund established in the early 1990s to assist members with funding small local projects. This fund grew in size, but remained outside the auditors' range. By the mid 1990s it was a source of political sweeteners prior to national elections. With so many candidates trying for the prize of the high salaries and 'perks' of parliament, some were elected with less than 10 per cent of the vote. Solomons has spawned politicians by the hundreds; but has produced few, if any, real statesmen. So much for democracy. Solomon

Islanders seemed reluctant to question the candidate's platform so long as it was focussed on local needs, because they expected returns for their community once their man was in. Like many electors elsewhere, concerns beyond the local were not part of their purview. Effective political parties might have raised the sights of the people to national concerns. Although they existed in name, there have been no political parties of any substance or longevity. A shaky prime minister or a challenger to the incumbent simply offered key men a ministry along with the higher salary that extinguished any flicker of party loyalty. A more devious one would lay traps for potential opponents, such as access to easy money, and then use blackmail to win support. The people of Solomons have now seen their trust betrayed and are suspicious of politicians as supposed guardians of the state; but paradoxically they still elect them because they seem the only means of fulfilling needs through favours within their own electorates. Thus by putting such men in place the people are propping up a weak, rotting state.

To cover revenue loss from the decline in commodity prices as well as transfer pricing of logs, timber exported as undeclared species, and duty remissions, the desperate national government continued to issue logging licences in the 1990s, increasing the allowable cut to ten times the sustainable level. Borrowing overseas continued also and when this became too great for the lenders or for the Central Bank to countenance, the government raided provident funds and reserves. In this climate, aid became more and more a political tool. Some donor governments, such as Australia, tried to use it to contain resource over-exploitation in the mid and late 1990s.³¹ Since 1999, Taiwan, in order to hold Solomons' vote for its status as the Republic of China in the international arena, seems bent on underwriting any scheme, no matter how questionable to preserve a semblance of government.³²

Loss of revenue to government mirrored the loss of income sources for Solomon Islanders. Although in the 1980s the public service had grown too big for such a small country, the cuts encouraged by right wing economists of the World Bank and Australia and New Zealand promised long-term benefits, but social cost. There were few employment opportunities for young Solomon Islanders, especially those with little education, and opportunities further declined in the late 1990s. Population continued to grow faster than GDP.³³ This was a youthful

population with higher aspirations than its parents. In the towns it fed on images from the shabby video parlours that portrayed violence as a means to satisfy those aspirations.

IMPLOSION: 'ETHNIC TENSION' AND THE COUP

The immediate causes of the conflict of 1998-2001 are well known. Each year in the late 1990s the government and Honiara's public infrastructure teetered on the brink of collapse and bankruptcy, yet there always seemed some donor willing to carry the country for a bit longer or another forest or fishing right that could be sold off. When Solomon Mamaloni lost in the elections of August 1997, it seemed that the evil day could be postponed, perhaps cancelled. An experienced politician, Bart Ulufa'alu became prime minister. He faced a sick economy; its parlous condition made worse in 1997 by the Asian economic crisis, but at least this gave some respite to the frantic rate of logging. Falling in with the New Right economic policies of the World Bank and its supporters among aid donors, he began by implementing more vigorously than Mamaloni the reduction of the public service and privatisation of the government's interests. This alienated the unions and produced competitors for control of the assets. He supported the return of Australian aid to the Forestry Division and a Forest Act which would have not only reduced the logging quota to a more sustainable level, but also would have seen much more regulation of the industry. By 1998 there were signs that the decline in the economy was turning around. It seemed that Solomons was pulling back from the brink.³⁵

A small push saw it fall. The premier of Guadalcanal Province, E. Alebua, in mid 1998 demanded that the national government pay compensation for 25 Guadalcanal people who had been murdered by various Malaitans during the preceding 20 years. He went on to seek, among other things, the return of lands purchased, rented, or occupied by Malaitans and payment from the national government for using Guadalcanal lands for its capital. Andrew Nori states that his precipitate actions resulted from a claim for compensation by parents when two Malaitan girls were raped at a Guadalcanal provincial school in May 1998. The province did nothing, but the Prime Minister, the Malaitan Ulufa'alu, paid the compensation from

the national coffers and then deducted this from the grants due to Guadalcanal province.

Whatever the immediate cause, Alebua's call was heard as blanket authorisation to harass Malaitans. This escalated as Guadalcanal youths, calling themselves the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army pillaged, raped, and otherwise attacked Malaitans, leaving at least 28 dead by August 1999.³⁶ Andrew Nori claims that Alebua approved this militia and had dealings with their leaders soon after he made his demands. As Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka states, as early as 1996 some young Guadalcanal men had begun arming themselves from wartime caches on Guadalcanal.³⁷ Following ineffectual police action and failed mediation by local church and international figures, Malaitans marched on parliament in November 1999 to demand attention to their compensation claims for damages done by the Guadalcanal militia. Prime Minister Ulufa'alu denied that the national government owed compensation. Coming from a Malaitan, this unsympathetic stance inflamed other Malaitans. The Malaitan youth formed a militia, the Malaitan Eagle Force (MEF), and successfully raided a police armoury of high-powered weapons, attracting even more followers. In the fighting between the two sides, over 22,000 Malaitans were forced to return to their own island, losing property.³⁸ Malaitans were not the only ones displaced. People from other provinces fled and lost as much. Soon, many businesses, both local and expatriate, closed as owners left Honiara in fear for their safety. The disturbances, for example, forced the closure of Solomon Islands Plantations Ltd (formerly CDC), a major employer in the province and a significant revenue earner for the country.³⁹

During early 2000 tensions did not lessen though Ulufa'alu sought to stop the fighting by talks with various factions. Meanwhile, the MEF wanted compensation and plotted to overthrow the Ulufa'alu government. A coup took place on 5 June and Ulufa'alu was held against his will for some time. Former Malaitan parliamentarian and lawyer, Andrew Nori played a pivotal role, though he asserts he was not involved in instigating the plot. The running of the government then fell to the MEF in Honiara until an interim government under Manasseh Sogavare took over in late June, but the MEF along with others used their political cause as an excuse to plunder and rob. More local and expatriate people fled. The mining operation at Gold Ridge closed down. A hasty peace agreement brokered by Australia at Townsville

in October 2000 saw some lessening of tension, but little disarmament as agreed. The dozen or so 'peacekeepers' sent to Solomons by Australia and New Zealand were observers of the disarmament process, not enforcers. These governments held and hold the view that it was up to Solomon Islanders to organise their own people, not outsiders. Meanwhile, the deputy Prime Minister, Allen Kemakeza dispensed compensation willy-nilly, his family being recipients before he was dismissed from the post, but he seems to have exacerbated the situation as payments were not distributed fairly. Most of this compensation fund came from a bank loan of \$US 25 million from Taiwan.⁴⁰ How it is to be repaid is anyone's guess, but short-term solutions are no novelty to Solomons' governments.

A new government headed by Kemakeza in December 2001 has been no more effectual than its predecessor in enforcing law and the disarmament process. The government is less and less able to govern effectively and lacks the means to do so. The budget in March 2002 drawn up by Michael Maina, for example, appealed for 60 per cent of government funding to come from aid donors, double the proportion of their contribution in 1978. Donors, distrusting the politicians, work around them through NGOs to assist schools and hospitals.⁴¹ In Guadalcanal and other areas such as Gizo groups of armed youths focus less on the politics of 'ethnicity' and more on intimidating those who oppose them. The police are helpless or, more often, partial. The Malaitan-Guadalcanal conflict has unleashed the dogs of war and it will take a strong hand and tight collars to again restrain them.

TRACING THE ROOTS

The immediate events prior to the conflict and its course are reasonably clear though debate continues over details. Recent events can blur the deeper issues. This conflict between Malaitans and Guadalcanal groups, for example, has been called 'ethnic tension', but sometimes the 'ethnicity' of those involved is so uncertain that their interrogators have had to carry out language tests to see if the person can understand any Guadalcanal or Malaitan language. But, as Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka points out, this is the term that has gained currency in the overseas media.⁴² The jargon of the Balkans has been transposed to Melanesia. If it is hard to get beyond ethnicity, it is even more

difficult to discern the underlying roots of this terrible war because of the blinding immediacy of human loss, grief, anger, and consequent recriminations.

Identification with place and region is embedded in the Solomon Islanders' worldview, the source of contestation with other regions. Among the causes of the conflict lay the perceived disparities between the provinces and the capital, a centre that had grown fat on the wealth of other provinces. One Malaitan view is that there is intrinsic potential on their island, if only the central government had assisted with infrastructure and port development. This belief in Malaita's potential goes back to Maasina Rulu times and even beyond to the labour trade days.⁴³ Many Malaitans also believe that their greatest resource, their labour and enterprise—focussed by necessity outside of their home island—has contributed to the common good. And they did this by migration and mobility, following opportunity just as their ancestors were encouraged to in the labour trade and in the plantation era before World War Two. The big difference then was most were repatriated. When the British administration brought peace and security and the missions encouraged the mingling of their followers, they were reinforcing the mobility of both the old trading expeditions and the labour trade, as well as setting precedents that Solomon Islanders embraced, all the more so with better sea and air transportation in the 1960s. Many Solomon Islanders now see it as a constitutional right to move freely about their country, a view often contested by their reluctant hosts.⁴⁴

In regard to unequal distribution, the western Solomon Islands with their richer forests perceived their province as having subsidised the centre and the nation for over two decades. This attachment to regional significance is understandable in terms of residence and kinship, but also in patterns of wider identification that emerged as colonialism created both the necessity and opportunity for communality. On the micro level, however, there are regions and islands within each province that have a similar perception in relation to their provincial centre, as say is the case with Vanikoro and the town of Lata on Santa Cruz. On Guadalcanal this is a major issue because the area formerly the most densely populated, outside Honiara, was the isolated Weather Coast. Natural disasters and increased opportunities elsewhere since the 1970s have seen circular as well as virtually permanent migration to the north, but there was

competition with settlers from other areas, most commonly Malaitans for places to live and to work. Whether from south Guadalcanal or other islands, people continued to come to Honiara because of the chance of work and access to schools, clinics, and shops. And the more that came, the more the spending on urban services expanded. And the more the rural people saw themselves as missing out. Yet, when employment was relatively abundant on Guadalcanal and elsewhere resentment against migrants from other islands was muted. It has been government mismanagement at several levels that has reduced employment opportunities and aggravated tensions.

Nowhere was mismanagement clearer than in the use of the vast forest resource on customary land. Environmentalists and economists, including the directors of the Central Bank of Solomons, agree that the government has worked the forest resource at an unsustainable level. This was not helped by the fire sale of the forest estate plantations in 1995. Government attempts at reforestation had faltered in 1992. They died when the aid donors, including Britain, refused to continue to give millions of dollars when the Solomon Islands government neither allocated any of its logging revenue to reforestation nor followed forest policies of 'wise use'. This unsustainable extraction was bad enough, but the greatest fault dating back to the early 1980s has been the acceleration, first by neglect and then by policy and connivance, of the failure to collect the real fiscal worth of the resource for the national benefit. Transfer pricing by Asian companies afflicted the industry from the 1980s, but continued except for the hey-day of timber control, subsidised by Australian aid from about 1992-1994. The Mamaloni governments then expanded the duty remissions and tax exemptions introduced by the naïve Billy Hilly government of 1993-1994—in order to encourage local logging companies. A nice concept, but soon colonised by the Asian backers of local paper companies and opportunistic politicians, including Solomon Mamaloni, who had directorships on such companies.

Solomon Islands suffered too from the lack of educated personnel. This certainly made for inefficiency and poor decision-making. It also meant that the wider population was not critical of the processes of government, though certain NGOs, notably the SIDC have worked hard in the 1990s to educate people as to their duties and rights as electors. As development aid and Solomons' own funds produced a growing

cohort of tertiary graduates many found their way blocked and their expertise unheeded by older gatekeepers in power. Some struggled and still do to keep their country afloat, some found the lolly-scramble for cash from the troubles of 1999-2001 too tempting and snatched their handful, and others voted with their feet and remain working overseas, a huge loss to Solomons, but its greatest overseas asset.

Another cause of the events of 1999-2001 can be found in the reality of population figures. The population at independence was over 195,000, but continued growing at about 3.5 per cent yearly into the late 1980s, dropping off recently to 2.8 per cent. In 1986 population was about 283, 500; by 2000 it had reached 450,000, about five times the population counted in the first census of 1931.⁴⁵ Few thought of the cumulative impact of this, set in train by Christianity and peace as well as, after the War, improved public health and large-scale infant immunisation.⁴⁶ When they did, it pertained to sexual relations so was not a fit subject for public discussion in the Melanesian context until the 1990s when AIDS appeared.

This rapid population growth explains part of the failure of governments to provide health and education services for all. It also explains why local communities have turned to the loggers' promises to meet these increasing needs and to the gilded suasions of would-be politicians. These numbers also have put pressure on the land because under the shifting cultivation method more land lies fallow than is cultivated. To regain its fertility the soil needs 6-20 years to recover, depending on local conditions. Subsistence demands to feed this increasing population have decreased the length of this cycle in many areas, as has the use of land for cash crops. Commercial logging reduces the subsistence productivity of both the forest and diminishes soil fertility. Hence the need for people to move out of areas where there is not enough land to support their burgeoning numbers, such as on north Malaita.⁴⁷

Although it meant uneven development there was logic in the colonial government's concentrating so much of its agricultural efforts on north Guadalcanal because of the topography. It, however, meant the area became a magnet for people seeking work and the majority were Malaitans—first for the large rice growing projects of the 1960s and then the CDC oil palm project and small industries such as breweries and sawmills. Large-scale projects were more likely to encourage investors and to promise significant returns than small ones

scattered around the islands. The only other significant sustainable economic development (also originally funded by British aid to business in the form of CDC), Kolombangara Forest Products Ltd, logs and replants on a large scale on Kolombangara and has positive relationships with most land owners. Yet even this operation seeks more logs from 'outgrowers' on adjacent islands to expand its scale of operations. Simple economics of scale determine so much in Solomons and no government, provincial or central, can control this.

Siting of commercial enterprises has been dogged by land disputes. These began to plague the CDC and others on north Guadalcanal, making governments wary of trying to negotiate land transfers on any significant scale elsewhere. Government land in many places has reverted to the provinces for purposes such as high schools or to the original owners. Unpalatable though it is for many, the land tenure system based on subsistence and small scale societies does not fit the drive towards a more capitalist and individualised mode of production to raise GDP. It cannot cater for thousands of incoming workers and their families residing on other people's land. Yet Solomon Islanders wanted development, but, if long term, not on *their* clan's land. Where they have allowed it, they constantly try to increase rentals, making predictability impossible for investors. Hence the friction over land use on north Guadalcanal.

There is friction too between continuing to tread the old pathways to power and the demands of the global economy. What fitted the political economy of Solomons societies prior to 1896 sits askew the systems designed for the diffusion of wealth on a wider scope than to a mere handful of local people and transnational companies. Resources have been exploited recklessly and those who have contributed to this within Solomons have followed the old pattern of big man as nexus for economic and social-political activity. The few have benefited and there have been spin-offs for their families and clans, but much of this wealth has dissipated in spending in a society unused to storage and accumulation of wealth. Wage earners, the local entrepreneur creating wealth—rather than just channelling it—and the investor for the long-term want predictability, stability, equity, and the rule of law. Without these, life for the majority will be barely above subsistence, if that, as the emerging scenario in Solomons attests.

Part of the reason for clinging to the centrality of the big man is the failure of the transplanted political system based on the

Westminster model. Few Solomon Islanders own the national system as theirs. Introduced by the colonial ruler, it is seen still as a foreign superstructure, not a product of their efforts, so they lack both commitment to it and critique of it.⁴⁸ A government that could conjure up assets and services from compliant aid donors, at least until recently, always seemed to muddle through, so why would it reform itself? Before and after the war social movements such as the Fellowes movement and Maasina Rulu showed that Solomon Islanders sought their own wider political structures reflecting Melanesian values that yet remain unrealised.

There were other roots deep in the Melanesian soil that affected events in 1998. Compensation is an ancient element of Melanesian culture, but it is found in all cultures, for example, in the Western law of torts. It can clear the way for reconciliation, lessening bitterness. But when it comes to major offences, such as murder, the introduced law, rightly or wrongly, has become the prime tool for over eighty years for punishing perpetrators. This law is less dependent on the status or gender of the parties concerned, offers a more objective exposition of evidence and a predictable range of punishments. Yet when the introduced law seems not to solve the problem, when the complainants do not activate its processes say, because of little faith in the police, there is a tendency to return to the old way. Ezekiel Alebua did this when he demanded retrospective compensation for the murders of Guadalcanal people. Whatever his particular motives, once an elected Premier takes such a stance, moral permission and latitude are given to the people to resort to older sanctions. Compensation can get out of hand as people have seen with the arbitrary allotments by Kemakeza under the Sogavare government, creating more problems. In early 2002 in Western Province, the killing of two Malaitans allegedly by Bougainvilleans resulted in compensation for the Malaita families—not paid by Bougainville or Papua New Guinea, but by Western Province, because of fear of Malaitan reprisals. Some victims may have been compensated, but even more victims have been created and the guilty go free.⁴⁹

Moral permission too has been given by politicians and sometimes public servants who have pillaged the public coffers, siphoned off potential government revenue, or accepted 'gifts and favours' for their own use. These men do not inspire respect among the non-beneficiaries and among those who, during the

late colonial period, believed the administration was generally impartial and there to serve them as citizens. Misrule, it seemed, could pay. Yet dutiful public servants, and there were many, found their pay packets irregularly filled or non-existent when they were laid off, and provident funds eroded as the economy faltered.

In power, the corrupt still seemed to prosper, but prospering and prospects seemed out of reach for the youthful unemployed and less educated. To these, the least empowered on the urban fringe, there seemed few ways open to gaining a share of personal dignity. Rambo of video-land showed a way to power, just as the residual memory of the old *ramo* did, a way that seemed successful on Bougainville.

All that was needed was a cause or, more correctly, an excuse to focus on a target near at hand that personified all that seemed to have gone awry in their world and to validate their social worth. To the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army, it was the Malaitans and to the Malaita Eagle Force, it was the Guadalcanal people. In a downward spiral, once policing largely collapsed under calls for support from kinsmen in militias, fear of retribution for law enforcement has undone the fragile structure of the government's and the people's only enforcing institution. Payback and killing are creeping back into vogue. Blood ran, and runs still in the many hills and gullies of Honiara. And the stain is spreading throughout the isles.

AUTHOR NOTE

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- ⁴¹ Archives, Pacific Islands Report, 18 December 2001, 11, 15 March, 1, 4 April, 7, 27, 31 May 2002, <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport>; Commonwealth of Australia, *Australia's Overseas Aid Program 2002-03*, Canberra: AusAid, 2002.
- ⁴² Kabutaulaka, 2001, Beyond ethnicity: The political economy of the Guadalcanal crisis in Solomon Islands.
- ⁴³ Bennett, *Pacific Forest*, pp.38-40; Bennett, *Wealth*, pp.409-410.
- ⁴⁴ Alasia, 'Population Movement', p.119; Chapman, 'Population Movement', pp.77-95
- ⁴⁵ Solomon Islands government, *Report on the census of population 1986. Report 2B. Data analysis*. Honiara: Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance, 1989, pp.3-4.
- ⁴⁶ There were warnings, for example from Tony Hughes. See Alasia, 'Population Movement', p.119.
- ⁴⁷ Bennett, *Pacific Forest*, pp.140, 187, 229, 231, 256, 282, 287, 323-324, 327, 366, 377; Solomon Islands government, *Report on the census of population 1986*, pp.49-84
- ⁴⁸ The critique is developing. See, Nanau, 'Uniting the Fragments'.
- ⁴⁹ Archives, Pacific Islands Report, 26, 27, 28 February 2002, <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport>

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