Since independence and especially during the past two decades other international actors such as China, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and the European Union have discovered the Pacific Islands as a potential partner. Of interest to these big powers are the voting rights of the independent island states in the United Nations, their enormous combined Exclusive Economic Zone (30 million sq km) and the exploitable mineral and natural resources of just over half a million sq km of combined land area (Gupta and Yala 2000: 366). Furthermore, the region is interesting as a destination for upper and middle class tourists, and, last but not least, as a trade partner. The substantial amounts of aid given, usually for infrastructure development, education, health, or rural development, should not be confused with altruism: they are based on cool calculation, as there is always give and take involved. A classical example can be seen in Fiji, where the People’s Republic of China financed and built excellent new sport facilities for the host country of the South Pacific Games 2004. In exchange, Fiji granted China substantial fishing rights.

**PACIFIC ISLAND REALITIES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY**

As outlined above, WWII paved the way for an accelerated opening up of the Pacific Islands, which were previously a distant world of European and American colonies with little regional integration and basically untouched by modernization. In modes of production, the availability of technology, and capital — the driving forces for modernization processes — the Pacific Islands were certainly behind or late compared to other world regions. The huge distances between the islands and other countries were formerly a major hindrance to the flow of goods and people within the region, to the immediate ‘big brothers’ of Australia and New Zealand, and to other countries in the Pacific Rim and beyond. With the rapid expansion in transport and communication technologies, this was to change rapidly in the decades after the war. The following section provides an introduction and overview of Pacific realities at the beginning of the 21st century. More detail is provided in the detailed case studies that follow in Part II of this book.

**Economies**

One key factor to be looked at is the availability or non-availability of natural and human resources. While the bigger islands in Melanesia, especially Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and Fiji, are rich in exploitable natural resources of interest to the world market, the Micronesian and Polynesian islands and atolls are generally resource-poor with fragile environments exposed to recurring tropical storms and, more recently, to a rising sea level as a result of global warming. The backbone of the island economies in Micronesia and Polynesia used to be a widespread subsistence economy, fishing, and, where there was enough space, a plantation economy centred on the production of copra. In the first years after the war the big asset of all the islands was the 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surrounding them with plenty of tuna and other fish that remained basically untapped. Despite a favourable environment for the production of crops and fruits in the volcanic islands, the distances and lack of infrastructure, as well as the communally oriented social structures, posed a major hindrance to increases in production. Not much has changed as far as social structures are concerned. Nayacakalou (1978) provided valuable insights
into the nature of these problems in his book *Tradition and Change in the Fijian Village*. Based on case studies carried out in 1954 in three Fijian villages on the western and southeastern sides, and the interior of the main island Viti Levu, Nayacakalou's book describes, for example, the problems and limitations of banana marketing (factors that are also found in other islands such as Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Tahiti and the Cook Islands). The village Nakorosule in the interior eastern part of Viti Levu used to receive two orders for shipments of bananas to New Zealand. The people cut bananas as close as possible to packing time to prevent their premature ripening before transporting them. After cutting big heavy bunches they carried them on their shoulders to the river to be transported downstream by self-made *bilibili* (bamboo rafts) to the nearest packing station at Vunikawa, which involved a trip of at least three hours on the fragile rafts. The packing of the fruit into cases took place at the packing station, where the cases were sold to dealers who arranged for transport to the wharf at the capital Suva. It took the villagers a minimum of three days to complete all these operations: cutting, transporting, packing, selling and returning home. The income generated was usually spent immediately on food, kerosene, cigarettes, *kava*, clothing, and giving to relatives (Nayacakalou 1978: 89–90). While the motivating factors for work in the Western economies include direct wages, profit maximization, accumulation of wealth and the subsequent enhancement of one's social status, it is more difficult to detect the motivating factors for work in Fijian (and Pacific Island) economies. “The Fijian economy is characterized by the smallness of scale; production is direct; there is no large accumulation of wealth, no complex mechanism of exchange, and traditionally no money” (Nayacakalou 1978: 120). In sharp contrast to the Western world, incentives for work are clearly based on social rather than economic considerations.

Another potential resource and economic asset is the natural beauty of the environment with its mythical and ‘paradise’ image surviving from the time of the first explorers and was boosted again by returning soldiers who served in or passed through the Polynesian islands after the war. This resulted in the rise of tourism, which developed over the past 50 years into a huge industry and an important factor in the economies of Fiji, Samoa, French Polynesia and Tonga, with a great potential for future growth.

Plagued by a more hostile environment and raging malaria, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, with traditionally more reserved populations and an ever increasing crime rate in the urban areas, combined with political instability, have not seen such an expansion of tourism. On the other hand, these islands are blessed with natural resources that have attracted large scale foreign investment: Papua New Guinea has gold, copper, nickel, and a variety of other valuable minerals, timber, petroleum and natural gas. The Solomon Islands and Fiji have timber and minerals that have not yet been exploited. New Caledonia is known for having one of the biggest deposits of nickel on earth. The Micronesian island states covered in this book survive on a still widespread subsistence economy centred on fish, coconuts and foreign aid.

**Political Status**

Another key factor is to be seen in the political status of the different Pacific Islands, because this status determines their political relationships with the rest of the world. The political status of small island states such as Niue, the Cook Islands and Tokelau, which are associated with New Zealand, of New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna
as ‘overseas countries’ of France, and of the Micronesian islands and American Samoa, which are associated with or under a compact with the USA, provides the framework for substantial flows of capital in the form of aid and investments.

Aid from these nations not only sustains island governments and public social services (education, health care, and so on) but also provides government jobs (often the major form of employment in these islands) and a relatively high standard of living. In virtually all of these island societies, Western imports far exceed local exports in value; affiliated islands are dependent on aid to make up the difference, although remittances from relatives living abroad may also be an important supplement (Lockwood 2004: 16).

In recent decades the USA transferred US $918 per capita per year to the Marshall Islands to compensate for the huge damage to the environment and loss of human lives through atomic bomb testing in the 1950s, as well as a kind of rent for the use of Kwajalein Atoll for missile testing facilities. Substantial cuts have been made to the package given to the Marshall Islands, and the outlook for this nation is now bleak because the free handouts given in the past led to lethargy and prevented individual initiatives, as well as promoting the adoption of an unsustainable American way of life. The capital Majuro and other atolls are already heavily overcrowded (the Marshall Islands have one of the highest birth rates in the world) and face all sorts of social ills. The small atoll of Ebeye has an incredible density of 60,000 people per sq mile and is hopelessly congested. There is no functional system to deal with human waste and all sorts of rubbish spoil the once beautiful beaches and lagoons.

The general pattern in the relationship between France and its dependent overseas countries in the Pacific region is similar. The level of aid is high (US $1,448 per capita per year in French Polynesia and US $4,296 per capita per year in New Caledonia). Despite New Caledonia’s excellent infrastructure with electricity and drinking water available in remote villages, smooth roads, very good schools and an advanced health care system of European standard, the indigenous Kanaks would still prefer full independence from France but are already outnumbered by the caldoches (term for descendants of the first generation of settlers born in New Caledonia), Europeans and migrants from other Pacific Islands, especially Wallis and Futuna. Violent confrontations in the 1980s in New Caledonia and also in Tahiti in 1996 are reminders to France of the fragile nature of any political arrangements below the level of full independence. (For more details see Franco Zocca’s country case study on New Caledonia in Part II.)

Regional Integration

The Pacific Community (South Pacific Commission)

The South Pacific Commission (SPC) was established in 1947 by the regional colonial powers (USA, France, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand) with the aim of facilitating and improving regional and international co-operation. The political re-shaping of the region was inescapably linked to the process of decolonization and led to substantial changes regarding membership. In 1951, for example, Guam and the US Trust Territories became members. The Netherlands withdrew its membership in 1962 after Dutch New Guinea (West Papua) was transferred to Indonesia and named Irian Jaya. When Western Samoa gained independence in 1962 the membership criteria were changed to allow the new independent nations to join the SPC. Subsequently, Western Samoa became a full
member in 1965, followed by Nauru (1969), Fiji (1971), PNG (1975), the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu (1978), and Niue and the Cook Islands (1980). The United Kingdom, on the other hand, gave up its membership in 1996. The name was changed to Pacific Community in 1998, by which time, with its 26 members, it was a well established institution. The focus of activities is on the development needs of the members and includes the combating of agricultural diseases and mosquito borne diseases, and the provision of educational services and training programmes of different kinds (Fortune 2000b: 329). All these activities are financed through membership contributions and special grants, the latter mostly provided by the richer members and international aid agencies such as the Asian Development Bank or the World Bank. The coordinating and administrative centre, the Secretariat, is situated in Noumea, New Caledonia.

South Pacific Forum (SPF)

The South Pacific Forum was created because the growing number of independent states recognized that their ambitions would not be realized under the umbrella of the South Pacific Commission/Pacific Community. One example can be seen in the blunt refusal of France to even discuss environmental issues in connection with its nuclear testing programme.

Today the South Pacific Forum (SPF) is the most important regional association in the Pacific Islands. Although it was not set up on the basis of a foundation treaty (like, for example, the European Union, which is based on the treaties of Rome), the Forum acts like an intergovernmental organization, as since 1998 the 16 member country meetings have taken place at Head of State level. Since the mid 1970s the SPF has promoted and led the idea of regional integration with the vision for a single regional market, one currency and increased political co-operation that would allow the region to speak with one voice. From the viewpoint of the SPF, milestones reached have been the South Pacific Area Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (SPARTECA), which is a regional non-reciprocal trading arrangement between Australia and New Zealand and the SPF member states, and the signing of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty in 1985. Most of the many projects and programmes of the SPF are in the area of economic development, protection of the environment, and transport and communication. The administrative centre for the SPF is the Forum Secretariat, located in Suva, Fiji Islands. Under the direction of the SPF but set up as independent entities reporting to the SPF are other important specialized inter-governmental organizations developed over the past 25 years. Amongst them are the internationally renowned South Pacific Applied Geo-science Commission (SOPAC) and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), both involved in research and aiming for a greater control and protection of the extended marine zones.

The advocacy of the WTO and others that promote free trade and aim at the removal of all trade barriers has fallen on fertile ground in the Pacific Islands, as most Forum members signed the Pacific Islands Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) at a ceremony in Nauru in 2001 — an occasion that was praised as a landmark in the history of international cooperation in the region (www.forumsec.org/fj/tid/PACER-PICTA).

Under PICTA import tariffs and quotas for all merchandise trade between the Forum island countries will be removed over a period of ten years. The ultimate declared aim is the creation of a single market of approximately six million consumers with free trade in services
and the free flow of capital and labour. The creation of a single market is seen as the stepping stone towards full integration into the world economy. Australia and New Zealand, which are not members of PICTA, will provide financial and technical assistance designed to facilitate the implementation of PICTA under PACER that will pave the way for the future freeing of trade between Australia and New Zealand and any, or all, of the Pacific Islands. In a media release the Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG) — a newly established NGO aimed at dismantling the propaganda of half truths and misinformation by those who drive the agenda — criticized the fact that Pacific people had no say in the discussions on agree-ments with such far reaching consequences, as there were no public consultations or debates, not even within national parliaments. The focus of PANG's critique was the Social Impact Assessment Study of the agreement that was carried out for the Forum by Professors Forsyth and Plange (2001) of the University of the South Pacific, and which PANG described as “a shoddy piece of work, riddled with inaccuracies, misinformation and bias” (PANG 2002: Media Release). In this context the Social Impact Assessment "appears to be an attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of Pacific people" (PANG 2002: Media Release). Indeed, crucial issues of labour conditions, food security, land use and ownership, and how the agreements overall will affect the sovereignty of Pacific Island states are not fully explored in the assessment. However, three years later, the Forum Secretariat contracted the Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women (PACFAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) — two regional organizations — to provide national training in different parts of the Pacific for ‘stakeholders’ — which included governmental departments and non-state groups such as churches, trade unions, the private sector and NGOs — on the content and implications of the trade agreements (Kelsey 2005: 69). The agenda and impact of PACER is closely linked to the new Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) of the European Commission that intends to replace 30 years of one-way preferential trade and aid arrangements that had been provided by the European Union for the ACP countries under the Lome conventions. The framework for the re-arrangement of the Lome conventions are set out in the new Cotonou Agreement 2000 and means a radical transition with far-reaching implications for the Pacific Islands as, in the assessment of Jane Kelsey, Cotonou 2000 “ties some of the poorest countries in the world to a market–driven model of ‘Development’ that has manifestly failed them” (Kelsey 2005: 4).

Migration

In most of the ‘associated’ islands their status provides for citizenship rights in New Zealand, France or the USA, or at least enables islanders to move freely to these countries with access to jobs, health care or the educational systems. The independent states of Samoa, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Tonga, and Papua New Guinea do not enjoy these ‘privileges’. The standard of living in the islands with special relationships to one or the other of the western countries stated above is visibly higher than in the independent nations, with a much better infrastructure that provides sealed roads, access to water and electricity, a better health care system and advanced educational systems. A new development that began in the 1950s was when New Zealand, Australia and the USA — facing shortages of domestic semi- and unskilled labour — lifted their usually strict regulations, which led to a massive migration from some of the independent island states such as Samoa, Tonga
and, to a lesser extent, Fiji to New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii and the West Coast of the USA. Subsequently, enclaves of Samoans, Tongans, Fijians, and Cook Islanders sprang up in Auckland, Wellington, Sydney, Melbourne, Honolulu, San Francisco and Los Angeles, with the result that more Samoans are living today in Auckland than in the capital Apia and 52,000 Cook Islanders live permanently in New Zealand with only 19,000 remaining in the Cook Islands. There are approximately 365,000 Pacific Islanders living in the USA, 202,000 in New Zealand and 164,000 in Australia, most of them Samoans and Tongans. Migration has not only provided a safety valve for overpopulation in island nations such as Tonga and Samoa with rapidly growing populations and consequent land shortages but, more importantly, provides for a constant flow of remittances into the struggling economies of these nations (Macpherson 2004:165–181; Morton Lee 2004: 133–48).

**Perspectives for Cultural and Political Self-Determination**

In the context of celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the University of the South Pacific, a small book was published in 1993 in which the contributors wanted to encourage a wider debate of a 'new vision' for island people. The articles, written by a variety of well known and highly respected academics of the University, were responding in different ways to the key article, written by Tongan sociologist, novelist and philosopher Epeli Hau'ofa, who 'conceived' a vision he first presented to the public in lectures held at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and the East–West Center, Honolulu, before publication (Waddell, Naidu, Hau’ofa 1993). In the key article Hau’ofa attempted to redirect the common perception of the Pacific Islands as powerless, helpless and insignificant actors to one of their increasing more integration into the fast globalizing world. The reaction of colleagues to Hau’ofa’s vision is documented in the book and was basically fraternal, even if some of them questioned certain concepts, terms or the general outlook. Looking back 12 years later it seems that the vision in the book did not really spread or inspire others and, in retrospective, was basically an academic exercise with no practical outcome. In this context the following quotation from Randy Thaman's response sounds today like a self-fulfilling prophecy: "Theorising, procrastination and apathy in the face of clear signs of environmental, cultural and economic deterioration, can only lead to an entrenchment of hopelessness, pessimism and vulnerability, especially when one's world view and destiny are controlled by outsiders" (Thaman 1993: 39).

Unfortunately, at the beginning of the 21st century the Pacific Islands appear to fulfil Thaman’s prediction. Despite clear signs of environmental, cultural and economic deterioration those that exercise power seem either to remain in a state of apathy or to actively promote an agenda leading to a future that might be controlled by economic interests other than those of the majority of Pacific Islanders.

**Social Movements: Trade Unions**

As working conditions and remuneration for work cannot be separated from the political and economic context it is not a surprise that trade unions developed late in the Pacific Islands. In other parts of the world workers’ organizations were an important factor for political expression and have been instrumental in the formation of many political parties. Classic examples are the present labour parties of Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, the variety of social–democratic and socialist or communist parties in Western Europe, and of course their counterparts in the formerly socialist countries of Eastern Europe and the
former Soviet Union. Trade unions and related political parties usually emerged as a result of the struggle of exploited masses of either poor and powerless peasants or industrial workers against the ruling classes for better working and living conditions. This is in principle the same in the Pacific Islands, with the exception that exploitation and the resulting social problems were never a mass phenomenon and were restricted to certain areas such as the sugar plantations in Fiji or the mines in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Other powerful unions were formed around certain sectors such as public employees and services.

In the Pacific Islands trade unions fill a certain vacuum, since there exist almost no distinguishable political parties in the usual sense (with clear profiles and programmes based on mass membership). In the relatively short post-WWII history, especially after decolonization, most political parties have been short-lived alliances of interest groups, active only immediately before elections. Trade unions in the Pacific Islands were instrumental in democratic anti-colonial movements and regional social movements (e.g. the anti-nuclear movement). In the 1980s and 1990s some new parties with a social-democratic profile (in the classic western terms) appeared, the most famous being the Fiji Labour Party (FLP) founded in 1985 and led by the former leader of the powerful Fiji Trade Union Congress (FTUC), Mahendra Chaudhry. The Fiji Labour Party emerged as the strongest party in the elections in 1986 and formed the government that was cut short by two military coups. The Fiji Labour Party again emerged as the strongest party in the elections of 1999 and was toppled again on 14 May 2000 by a coup carried out by civilians with support from an elite unit within the army (see the Fiji country case study in Part II).

In an environment of increasingly globalized labour, working conditions are constantly eroded as employment patterns change rapidly. In most Pacific islands governments clearly side with the transnational corporations and local employers and have been pushing the neo-liberal agenda by providing the infrastructure of tax exemption zones and guaranteeing unrestricted transfer of profits overseas (Leckie 2000: 361). Unfortunately, in the world of neo-liberal economics there is no place for unions in the classical sense. It is quite common in the Pacific Islands for governments to declare strikes illegal by focusing more on procedures than on the cause of the problem. Fiji's Labour Minister Zinck in a recent labour dispute merely reminded the striking workers of the Public Works Department on the western side of Viti Levu — who claimed that they had not been paid for more than two years for overtime work — that a large number of people were without work and that by striking they risked losing their jobs.

**Problem Areas: Law and Order and Political Instability**

Despite the availability of valuable natural and mineral resources, the realities of life for the people of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands are more depressing than ever before. The weak governments of these countries and a bureaucratic apparatus that is thoroughly permeated with corruption, are no longer able to guarantee the personal safety of their citizens and visitors and to maintain law and order, one of the basic tasks of every government. In the Solomon Islands only the military-like intervention led by Australia successfully restored a degree of stability and law and order in a country that was in chaos. In Port Moresby and Lae (Papua New Guinea) locals and visitors do not dare to move outside their homes after dark, and lock themselves in. Robberies and rapes at gunpoint during the day are countless and there is no sign that the depressing situation is getting any better. The mushrooming of companies providing security services in the region speaks for itself.
In Fiji, five years after the last of the coups in which democratically elected governments had been toppled by the military (1987) and civilians (2000), many of those involved in the coups have not been and probably will never be prosecuted. Besides, not one of the deeply seated problems that led to the coups (such as provincial rivalries, land issues, corruption at all levels of the Public Service, tax collection, difficulties and poor relations between the different ethnic groups) have been solved. The losses suffered through the coup are hard to calculate. If the high rate of migration of usually well educated and trained Indo–Fijians continues, the coups might be seen as successful in the long run, as with a projected portion of 20 per cent of Indo-Fijians leaving by the year 2020 no Fijian taukei has to worry any more about being politically dominated by an Indian Prime Minister or an Indian political party. A worrying trend is also the ongoing high rate of migration of well trained nurses from Fiji who find employment in New Zealand or Australia, and, more recently, the silent or open encouragement of young people to join dubious companies for jobs in the Middle East or to serve as mercenaries (the term ‘security personnel’ is misleading as it detracts from the hard realities) in Iraq, where unemployed ex–soldiers risk their lives daily to secure infrastructure and act as body guards. The future will offer more of this kind of high risk employment and also increasingly, low paid jobs in New Zealand and Australia. This is a growing concern for some of the wiser leaders in villages that might be left only with women and children and the elderly. The long absence of official army personnel serving with the UN peace keeping programme in the Middle East has been causing many social problems for families as the divorce rate for this section of society is much higher than for the rest.

Tahiti and New Caledonia have now been given the status of ‘overseas countries’, but that has not diminished in the least the overwhelming structural dependency of these two island groups on France. Civil society groups and the Ma’o’hi Protestant Church support the claims for compensation of the victims of years of nuclear testing on Moruroa Atoll. The structural dependence of most Micronesian island states on the USA continues, as well as the (mis)use of atolls for military purposes — but now with a reduced package of aid/lease/compensation money.

The adoption of neo-liberal concepts

Most governments in the region have willingly and with no visible resistance adopted neo-liberal economic concepts and terminology such as, for instance, the magic terms ‘deregulation’ and ‘the users pay’. As in many other parts of the world the result of this adoption can be seen in the privatization of central public services. All this is sold to the public via expensive information campaigns through the media or in glossy brochures that of course do not state that the shareholders’ value comes first, and the majority of people — called ‘users’ — have to pay more. Rather, it is stated that in the end all sections of society, including the poor, will benefit, but there is no hard evidence in any country of the world that this actually happens. Theoretically, and if one takes the official propaganda seriously, all citizens can obtain shares and participate in this self–generating money making exercise that sometimes looks like a kind of legalized pyramid scheme; however, in practice, only a few are able to benefit because they have insider knowledge and the means to buy a large number of shares. Not surprisingly, most of them are those who helped to pave the way for the implementation of the neo-liberal agenda because they benefit from it. In this context
Hezel (1992:14) uses the term 'new elites', meaning individuals who have achieved prominence and wealth through government or business service. The members of these new elites, whatever their nationality, probably have more in common with each other than with their own countrymen. It is an over-used phrase but at the same time it is a fact that needs to be repeated again and again: the adoption and implementation of neo-liberal policies 'makes the rich richer and the poor poorer'. It is the same in the Pacific as elsewhere in the world, as the new elites exercise considerable control.

These new elites are usually the first to know of any investment opportunities, special low interest loans and other means of making a financial killing. Time and time again they are tempted to put personal profit above the welfare of the people they serve, just as they are tempted to seek or retain power for the sake of personal ambition (Hezel 1992:14).

**Disintegration of social structures**

The rapid transition from communal oriented societies to cash oriented societies has contributed to the constant decay of traditional social structures and patterns that for centuries had provided basic security and stability for everybody. Chiefly systems are crumbling everywhere. The ongoing trend of urbanization has further accelerated the decay of social structures in all Pacific Islands. Slum-like settlements have been mushrooming in Suva, Port Moresby, Port Vila, Honiara, Nuku'alofa, Apia, Majuro, Tarawa, Funafuti and Papeete over the past 10 to 20 years. Public services dealing with human waste, rubbish, water and electricity are hopelessly strained by the ever increasing demand. Poverty, including malnourishment, something Pacific Islanders never fail to proclaim as unknown in this part of the world, is spreading fast in the urban areas. In most Pacific Islands where statistics are regularly kept it is revealed that the percentage of the population living below the poverty line is increasing. The statistics related to the situation of youth provide another gloomy picture of the fast changing social conditions, as they point to an increase in most islands in the percentage of teenage mothers, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) and HIV/AIDS cases, child and suicide rates, and criminal offences committed by youth, often related to the consumption of alcohol and the smoking of marijuana (UNICEF 1998). The systematic destruction of the environment continues with the pollution of rivers and the ocean. No government seems able or willing to provide effective legislation for the prosecution of offenders. If logging and over-fishing continue at the current rate the Pacific Islands should prepare themselves for a future in which two of the major traditional resources (fish and forestry) have been exhausted. That some of the low lying atolls in the region are going to disappear is no longer seriously questioned. Rather, the question is whether it will take another 20, 50 or 70 years before it happens. The concluding remarks of Vijay Naidu in his contribution to the book *Tu Galala — Social Change in the Pacific*, (published in 1992), are still prophetic 13 years later:

We are learning that political independence has not necessarily rid us of the problems that we had before, and that, in many cases, our own political leaders are part of the problem. Strong Pacific people's movements, solidly grounded on principles of social justice and fairness, in which members can look to each other for guidance and support, will became increasingly relevant to the needs of the region's peoples. It is in such movements that alternative political leadership will need to be found — leadership that can be pro-Pacific, that is renewable and responsive, and which can lead to real progress in our region (Naidu 1992: 208).
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