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## Rabuka's republic

In February 1994, only 18 months after the first post-coup elections of 1992, Fiji went to the polls again. The snap election was called after the defeat of the government's budget in November 1993. Sitiveni Rabuka's opponents on the government benches hoped to use the election to oust him from office. They had miscalculated. Rabuka and his party, the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT), returned to power with 32 of the 37 seats reserved for ethnic Fijians under the 1990 constitution. A coalition government was formed with the General Voters Party (GVP), which won four of the five seats allocated to that community. On the Indo-Fijian side, the National Federation Party (NFP) increased its representation from 14 to 20 seats, while the Fiji Labour Party won the remaining seven.

His mandate seemingly secure and his personal popularity high, Rabuka was unanimously re-elected head of his party and reclaimed the prime minister's office.

In the previous chapter, we saw why, not having an outright majority of seats in parliament, the SVT was forced to seek the support of other parties. It managed to secure the support of Labour after Rabuka agreed to undertake a review of the constitution, resolve the land problem posed by the imminent expiry of leases under the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act, and re-examine the anti-labour legislation and the value-added tax enacted by the interim administration that had governed Fiji from 1987 to 1992. However, once ensconced, Rabuka reneged on the

spirit of the agreement. The Labour Party could not continue to support a leader who procrastinated on his promises to them, nor could it withdraw its support without appearing petulant. With its plea for dialogue ignored, Labour abandoned Rabuka in June 1993 and its members walked out of parliament. By then the party's fortunes were floundering; its milestone decision to back Rabuka had become a millstone.

At the other end of the spectrum, Rabuka had to contend with the demands of Fijian nationalists, who held five seats. The Fijian nationalists had also supported him against Kamikamica. They wanted the government to honour its campaign commitment to 'realise the aims of the coup'; that is, to achieve the ideal of Fijian paramountcy. On a number of occasions, fringe elements of the movement took to the streets and threatened Rabuka with political reprisals, scorning his efforts to promote multiracialism. The nationalists could not be ignored, since they commanded substantial support in Viti Levu.

In May 1993, a group led by Sakiasi Butadroka and Ratu Osea Gavidi of the Fijian Nationalist United Front launched the Viti Levu Council of Chiefs, demanding recognition of the fourth confederacy, the Yasayasa Vaka Ra, and the rotation of the presidency among all four. They also demanded that the all non-native land be converted to native titles and landowners' interests be given priority in the exploitation of resources on their land (*Fiji Times*, 22 May 1993). The formation of the Viti Levu Council was the latest of many vain efforts by western Fijians to gain a voice commensurate with their numbers and contribution to the national economy. Like many previous efforts this too died a quiet, unmourned death.

Labour and the Fijian nationalists were not Rabuka's only problems. He had powerful dissident elements within his own party and in the Fijian establishment generally, who had never accepted him as a legitimate leader. The circumstances that brought him to power weighed against him. He was not forgiven for defeating the paramount chief of the Burebasaga confederacy, Adi Lala Mara, for the presidency of the SVT. Nor, especially, was he forgiven for his startling public criticism of Ratu Mara, calling him a *baka* (banyan) tree under which nothing grew—'a ruthless politician who has been allowed to get away with a lot', a man who had the temerity to criticise a constitution that had made him vice-

president (*Pacific Islands Monthly*, August 1990; *Daily Post*, 11 December 1990). Nor, again, was Rabuka's expressed preference for basing social status on achievement rather than birth well received among chiefly Fijians.

For his part, Mara ridiculed Rabuka as an angry, simpleminded colonel. Mara said that Rabuka's rival, Kamikamica, 'will make a good prime minister' (*The Weekender*, 23 July 1993). Mara was also critical of Rabuka's stewardship of the SVT, blaming him indirectly for poor relations with the Great Council of Chiefs (*Islands Business*, February 1994). The tension between the two men was not surprising; they were similar in temperament: authoritarian, autocratic, emotional and convinced of their role as saviours of their people. Mara was also conscious of his chiefly role and responsibilities and seemed inclined to regard Rabuka as an upstart commoner. The pro-Mara faction of the SVT not only refused to join Rabuka's cabinet but also became vocal critics. Among them were Mara's son, Finau, and Kamikamica, who had refused the offer of a position in Rabuka's cabinet several times. In the Senate, Adi Finau Tabakauoro, a minister in Mara's interim administration, championed the anti-Rabuka cause.

Rabuka's own conduct did not help his image or performance. His itinerant thoughts on sensitive subjects, and his tendency to think aloud on important policy matters bewildered his colleagues and left him open to public ridicule. His inexperience was apparent. According to critics, Rabuka did not behave in a manner befitting the dignity of the country's highest elected official. One Fijian observer articulated a widely held view that

Rabuka is sometimes unpredictable, tends to be highly emotionally inclined and apparently tries to please everyone. Despite his most valiant efforts, the result of this is more often than not he winds up contradicting himself or his cabinet (*Islands Business*, June 1993).

Rabuka came across as a simple man with a decent heart who was locked in a military mind-set of command and obedience, albeit qualified by impulsiveness, and, at times, capriciousness. His openness, accessibility and eagerness to please, as well as his inability to discipline dissidents, contributed to his parliamentary downfall as much as the machinations of his opponents.

On winning office in 1992, the government faced two immediate tasks. One was to consolidate its position among the *tankei*, particularly among its potentially explosive nationalist fringe. The other was to improve the country's coup-scarred image internationally. The latter was relatively easy. Rabuka made state visits to Australia and New Zealand and represented Fiji at the South Pacific Forum in Honiara. Everywhere he maintained the appropriately low profile befitting a new leader. The visits were successful in restoring full diplomatic and defence links with Australia and New Zealand, and in reassuring friends in the region. Fiji was still out of the Commonwealth, although rejoining was a long-term goal of the Great Council of Chiefs. Older Fijians also wished to re-establish direct links with the British monarchy, but that was unlikely in the absence of a widely acceptable constitution.

Locally, Rabuka's performance was not as smooth. His power base within the SVT caucus and in the provinces was insecure. To consolidate it, he tried to co-opt potential opponents who had lost in the elections. Many were rewarded with seats in the Senate, diplomatic jobs or positions with statutory bodies. In cabinet and other appointments, Rabuka worked on the principle of provincial balance. Each province had to be represented in the cabinet and in the higher echelons of government. Indeed, when some members were demoted or dismissed for poor performance, they attacked the prime minister. Viliame Saulekaleka, dismissed assistant minister from Lau, Mara's province, accused Rabuka of being anti-Lauan (*Daily Post*, 30 October 1993). Ilai Kuli, mercurial sacked minister of posts and telecommunications, treated his dismissal as a betrayal of the people of Naitasiri. Bua threatened to block the opening of the F\$10 million Nabouwalu Hospital if its representative in the cabinet, Koresi Matatolu, was removed (*Fiji Times*, 28 May 1993). Rabuka may have had his mandate, but he had to work with a team whose political loyalties were divided—and who had their own mandates.

In his first few months in office, Rabuka promulgated a number of pro-Fijian policies. The government announced that it would continue to support the special Fijian Education Unit established in the Ministry of Education to monitor the progress of students. The ministry also created special educational media centres in Fijian schools to improve the teaching of science. On the economic front, while continuing its

privatisation policies, the government proposed measures to propel more Fijians into the commercial sector, where they were conspicuous by their absence. These included a small business agency to advise and train Fijians, providing loans to provincial councils to increase their shares in Fijian Holdings Limited, giving that investment company priority in buying shares from privatised government enterprises, and proposing income-tax exemption for Fijian-owned businesses for up to twenty years (*Fiji Times*, 27 August 1993). The government also set aside a fund worth F\$2 million to provide interest-free loans payable over thirty years to certain *mataqali* to buy back freehold land (*Fiji Times*, 25 February 1993). Late in 1993, it announced the transfer of the administration of all Crown Schedule A and B lands from the Department of Lands to the Native Land Trust Board. Eventually, these lands would revert to native title.

Many of the government's pro-Fijian initiatives were cautiously supported by Indo-Fijian members of parliament, though Labour leader Mahendra Chaudhry asked the government to examine the fundamental reasons why Fijians were not succeeding in certain fields. 'There must be something wrong within the system itself that with all these resources, the results are not forthcoming' (*Islands Business*, August 1993). At the same time, they pointed out the blatant discrimination against their community in the public sector. The principle of balance had been ignored, said Chaudhry. Of 9,597 civil servants in 1992, 5,897 or 61.4 per cent were ethnic Fijians and only 3,186 or 33.2 per cent Indo-Fijians. On the boards of statutory organisations, the paucity of Indo-Fijians was glaring. For instance, there was not a single Indo-Fijian on the board of the Reserve Bank of Fiji, the Fiji Broadcasting Commission, or, incredibly, the Fiji Sugar Corporation. Opposition leader Jai Ram Reddy pleaded with the government for fairness and equity, but the government had no political incentive to address concerns of the non-Fijians. Consequently, Indo-Fijian disenchantment grew. Rabuka was indifferent.

No one felt more betrayed than the Fiji Labour Party, whose support had made Rabuka prime minister. The conditions for that support were not observed by the government. The 10 per cent value-added tax on most goods and services was retained as part of the government's progressive tax-reform package. The labour-reform legislation, whose ultimate intention was to cripple trade unions, was unenforced though it

remained on the agenda. And though there was some talk, there was no action on the pressing issues surrounding the renewal of leases after the expiry of the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act. On his promise to initiate a review of the constitution, Rabuka retorted

[t]o review means to look at what has been done. It does not mean that we have committed ourselves to making any changes or abolitions (*Pacific Report*, 28 June 1993).

In fact, the government had committed itself to a review within five years but did not regard it as a matter of any urgency. Then, suddenly in December 1992, Rabuka mooted the idea of a government of national unity. Rabuka's proposal caught the country by surprise. The idea had a long history. Some form of coalition government was mentioned in the negotiations leading to independence, but nothing came of it. In 1977, the Alliance Party mooted the idea, only to withdraw it when the NFP criticised it as the party's effort to bolster its sagging image as a multiracial organisation. Rabuka's concept was equally vague and emotional (*Fiji Times*, 5 December 1992). In May 1993, Rabuka elaborated

[w]hat I and those who support my idea envisage is a style of government that brings the communities together, that enables all ethnic groups to cooperate jointly in the affairs of government and the work of legislature. I want the leaders of Fijian, Indian and general voters to define the middle ground, the political centre, where they can pool their wisdom and their abilities in the national interest. I want to see them united in pursuit of defined national objectives-objectives that serve the interests and welfare of us all, Fijians, Indians and general voters. In my vision of what I consider to be the ultimate good of the country, I see very clearly that it is in all our interest to develop a social and political partnership that transcends suspicion and distrust, that elevates us as a nation and gives us a combined sense of common destiny and purpose (*The Weekender*, 21 May 1993).

This statement was hailed as a major declaration by the government, though, in truth, it was much the same as what Rabuka had stated in 1990.

I would like to have a government of national reconstruction. First we look at what Fiji needs first. You won your seats on these policies, we won our seats on these policies. You have extreme left views. We have extreme right wing views. Let's forget about these extremities where they sort of merge. That's where we run Fiji for the next five years (*Pacific Islands Monthly*, August 1990).

Rabuka's national unity government would have eighteen cabinet members, twelve from the ruling all-Fijian SVT, two each from NFP and

Labour, and one each from the Nationalists and the GVP. In this respect, Rabuka's offer differed little from the Alliance Party's offer in 1977.

Rabuka's proposal received a mixed response. The SVT caucus complained of not being consulted. The Fijian nationalists supported the concept, but only on condition that their program for Fijian supremacy 'will still be maintained through the government of national unity' (*Fiji Times*, 11 December 1990). A faction of the Taukei Movement urged all Fijian members of parliament to 'completely reject and throw out of the window with precipitated [sic] haste the devilish concept of government of national unity' (*Fiji Times*, 22 December 1992). They postponed their protest marches only when Rabuka assured them that promoting national unity should never be misinterpreted or misconstrued by anyone to mean that he and his government were giving away the special position conferred on the Fijians and Rotumans, as the host communities in Fiji, under the 1990 constitution (*Fiji Times*, 19 February 1993).

Many in the opposition treated Rabuka's proposal cynically. Labour's Simone Durutalo argued that the unity proposal was nothing more than an attempt 'to repackage his 1987 image of an anti-Indian' (*Fiji Times*, 19 February 1993). NFP leader Reddy was sceptical but gave Rabuka the benefit of the doubt. Again, as in 1981, he raised probing questions. There had to be some consensus on the basic principles before the proposal could be discussed further. 'I am not going to nominate numbers', he said, but 'at the end of the day in a government of national unity, Indians should be fairly represented. We should have a figure that bears some resemblance to their numbers, contribution and work, and not just a token number' (*The Review*, March 1993).

In March 1993, the government did what it should have done in the first place: it presented a paper to the Great Council of Chiefs, adding that the proposal was not of 'paramount importance' (*Fiji Times*, 18 March 1993). In the Council many chiefs, including Mara, questioned the prospects for a government of national unity under the 1990 constitution. Mara's public doubts and his advice that the government 'should not overly make their intention known to others' (*The Weekender*, 28 May 1993) sealed the fate of the issue. The council decided on more grass-roots consultation and sent the proposal to the provincial councils. The chiefs' decision was puzzling. A *Fiji Times* editorial said,

[c]onsultation is a good thing. But somewhere along the line someone has got to be able to make the decision. In this case it is the Great Council of Chiefs. If it cannot deal with the issues that it has been entrusted to deal with, then it should reconsider its role. Why do the chiefs need to refer back to the people? The people have picked their representatives to the Council. The people should have discussed these things before the meeting (*Fiji Times*, 29 May 1993).

With these proposals languishing, Rabuka was forced to address the issue of constitutional review sooner than he had anticipated. As the first step, he set up a cabinet subcommittee to draft the terms of reference for an independent constitutional commission. Chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Filipe Bole, the committee was expanded to include four members of the opposition, including Jai Ram Reddy. After several meetings, the committee agreed on a broad set of guidelines. The review would take place before the 1997 general elections, which would be held under a new constitution. Moreover, the review would not be confined only to the electoral provisions of the 1990 constitution, 'but would be of a broad nature, covering the 1990 constitution as a whole', and it would also include a consideration of the system of government deemed most appropriate for Fiji. The aim would be to produce a autochthonous constitution that addressed the needs of the country. Finally, the constitution would reflect some basic principles 'that would serve as the foundation for the promotion and reinforcement of national unity in Fiji' (Reddy 1993).<sup>1</sup> The new constitution, Rabuka said,

...is to be an agreed statement of our national purpose, an agreed covenant binding all our different communities and citizens of Fiji to a solemn commitment to work for the peace, unity and progress of our country and to promote the welfare and interests of all its people.<sup>2</sup>

After intense private negotiations, the subcommittee prepared draft terms of reference. Bearing in mind the need to promote 'racial harmony and national unity and the economic and social advancement of all communities and bearing in mind internationally recognised principles and standards of individual and group rights', the commission would

...take into account that the Constitution shall guarantee full protection and promotion of the rights, interests and concerns of the indigenous Fijian and Rotuman people...Scrutinise and consider future constitutional needs of the people of Fiji, having full regard for the rights, interests and concerns of all ethnic groups of people in Fiji...Facilitate the widest possible debate throughout Fiji on the terms of the Constitution of Fiji and to inquire into and ascertain the variety of

views and opinions that may exist in Fiji as to how the provisions of the Fiji Constitution can be improved upon in the context of Fiji's needs as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society [and]...report fully on all the above matters and, in particular, to recommend constitutional arrangements likely to achieve the objectives of the Constitutional Review as set out above.

These terms caused controversy. Labour thought them too restrictive and called in its campaign literature for specific reference to the 'internationally recognised principles and standards of civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights as enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related covenants'. The interests of indigenous Fijians and Rotumans should be protected 'without sacrificing the rights, interests and concerns of all other people in Fiji'. The 1970 and not the 1990 constitution should form the basis for future constitutional review. The commission, the Labour Party said, should report within 12 months. Labour also argued that the terms of reference should have been drafted by a parliamentary committee, not by a lopsided cabinet subcommittee.<sup>3</sup> The government had, in fact, changed the sequence of the review process and authorised the cabinet subcommittee to draft the terms of reference for and appoint the independent commission. Labour was being effectively marginalised in a process it had helped initiate. The procedures for the review and Reddy's participation in it became an issue in the campaign among the Indo-Fijians.

Unfortunately for the government, many of its initiatives were overshadowed by scandals conveying the impression of disarray and discord. There was the strike in Fiji Posts and Telecommunications department in 1992 over the sacking of the chief executive, which led to the relegation of Telecommunications Minister Ilai Kuli. Fijian Holdings Limited was facing allegations of insider trading by leading members of its management board. Similar allegations surrounded the awarding of a tender to upgrade the Nadi International Airport to a company, Minsons Limited, in which Rabuka had shares. The Ports Authority was rocked by a report detailing uncovered excess expenditure on overseas trips by its board members, irregularities in sales of equipment, personal insurance discrepancies and misappropriation of funds. Questions were asked about the purchase of the prime minister's new residence (owned by the Ganilau family's Qeleni Holdings) for F\$650,000 when the government valuer had estimated its value at F\$465,000.

These incidents epitomised the general culture of corruption in public life that seemed to have 'reached alarming proportions', made even worse by 'the lack of action taken by the authorities on some of the more serious misappropriation cases involving hundreds of thousands of dollars' (*Fiji Times*, 21 August 1993). Politicians and civil servants demanded bribes openly; greasing the palm was becoming an accepted fact of life in contemporary Fiji. Jai Ram Reddy raised some of these issues in his budget speech in November 1993

[w]hen a quarter of a million dollars go missing from our police force; when exhibits seized by police from suspects go missing from police stations, when stolen goods exhibited in a court of law disappear; when frauds and dubious political hangers-on can get into key positions in important public sector organisations, then it is time for the people of this country to sit up and think about the rot and it is time for this House to do something for this state of affairs.<sup>4</sup>

But these allegations paled into insignificance beside the so-called Stephens affair. Anthony Stephens, adviser to the Fijian nationalists, a businessman with previous brushes with the law, was arrested in 1988 and detained for forty days in connection with the importation of pen pistols. Discharged, he sued the government for F\$30 million in damages, but agreed to settle for F\$10 million. Under the terms of a deed of settlement agreed on between him and the attorney general, Stephens was to be paid F\$980,000 cash in an out-of-court settlement. For the remaining amount, the government would pay off two mortgages under Stephens's name with the Home Finance Company and the National Bank of Fiji, settle claims with the ANZ Bank for a guarantee to Stephens's company, Economic Enterprises, dismiss a bankruptcy action against him, transfer the Soqulu Plantation in Taveuni, under mortgage control of the National Bank of Fiji, to Stephens, and settle all matters relating to three land titles owned by Stephens's family. According to Stephens and his associates, money from the settlement would be used to arrange a F\$200 million loan from a Kuwaiti source to further Fijian business interests.

Astonishingly, the attorney general signed the deed, which was exempt from income tax, land-sales tax and the value-added tax. As became clear later, Stephens's connections evidently reached the highest levels of government. But before the deed could be executed, it was exposed

in parliament by Jai Ram Reddy. The deed was merely an attempt to defraud the government, said Reddy. A public uproar greeted the revelations, and people wondered who else, besides the attorney general (Aptai Seru), was implicated. As a *Fiji Times* editorial said, 'the sorry mess suggests powerful forces, answerable to no one but themselves, are at work to undermine constituted authority...What remains to be seen now is government's commitment to honest and clean government. Will the Stephens's claims be properly investigated or swept under the carpet?' (*Fiji Times*, 26 October 1992). Faced with public pressure, the government agreed to a commission of review. Sir Ronald Kermode, retired Supreme Court justice, was appointed to head the inquiry.

In July 1993, Kermode presented a report that was damaging to anyone even tangentially involved (Parliamentary Paper 45/1993). Etuate Tavai, the nationalists' contact in the prime minister's office, 'was not a truthful witness' and had 'deliberately misled parliament'. Attorney General Seru was a weak man who had strayed from the path of rectitude under pressure. Most seriously, Kermode found Sitiveni Rabuka's conduct wanting. The prime minister had ignored advice from his legal officers and selectively opted for information that supported Stephens's claims; he had interfered in the attorney general's 'area of responsibility by sending him a minute which directed him to settle a claim that he must have known was outrageously high'; he 'had conspired with Stephens to obtain an overdraft from the National Bank of Fiji by false pretences or by fraud'; and he had deceived parliament. In a sentence that was widely quoted, Kermode wrote: 'in my opinion the prime minister's actions as regard the events leading up to the execution of the Deed were not only improper but *prima facie* illegal' (Parliamentary Paper 45/1993).

The opposition asked Rabuka to step aside until an independent inquiry cleared him of involvement. Rabuka refused to act at all on the grounds that Kermode had exceeded his terms of reference, but agreed reluctantly to a judicial review of the commission's findings when some of his backbenchers threatened rebellion. In fact, Ilai Kuli filed a no-confidence motion in Rabuka's government in September 1993, which he withdrew under pressure from the Methodist Church leader Manasa Lasaro. For its part, the Taukei Movement, or what was left of it, threatened to take to the streets in support of the beleaguered prime

minister, only to be told that those who planned to take the law into their own hands should 'prepare themselves to face the consequences of their actions' (*Fiji Times*, 27 November 1993). The judicial review was nominally begun but nothing ever came of it.

The Stephens affair provided the opportunity to topple Rabuka during the November 1993 budget session, when his Fijian opponents voted with the opposition Indo-Fijians. The substance and direction of the budget was consistent with the government's broad philosophy of economic development, which included deregulation of the economy and structural market and labour adjustments to increase Fiji's international competitiveness. The government proposed to reduce duties on most imported goods to 20 per cent (from 50 per cent in 1989); remove licence control on basic food items such as fish, rice and powdered milk, with butter and panel wood targeted for zero tariff in the near future; increase duty on alcoholic beverages, tobacco and fuel; and extend tax concessions to companies exporting 30 per cent of their products. The defence force would be returned to its pre-1987 levels over two to three years and the public sector pay package kept to 3 per cent of GNP. Government expenditure was expected to be F\$800 million and revenue to be about F\$644 million, providing for a net deficit of F\$105 million or 4.8 per cent of GDP. This was 'an unacceptable level' of government spending, Finance Minister Paul Manuelli said. 'We must start to control the size of the deficit, early, before it starts to control us' (Budget speech 1994).

For Jai Ram Reddy, that was the heart of the problem. 'The government has been strong on rhetoric but weak on action. There is a yawning gap between what this government says and what it does, raising serious questions both about its competence and ability to manage the nation's economy'.<sup>5</sup> He and others criticised the high level of expenditure and deficit, misguided expenditure priorities, and socially regressive aspects such as higher fiscal duties on basic consumer items and transportation goods. The overall picture of economic management was disturbing. Government expenditure had increased from F\$723.4 million in 1992 to F\$829.9 in 1993 revised estimates and was projected to increase to F\$847.2 million in 1994; the gross deficit had increased from F\$120.9 million in 1992 to a F\$184.5 million revised estimate in 1993 and was projected to

F\$150.2 million in 1994; net deficit after loan repayment had increased from F\$68.7 million in 1992 to F\$105.3 million in 1993 and was projected optimistically for F\$84.0 million in 1994. Government expenditure as a percentage of GDP had increased from 35.1 per cent in 1992 to 38 per cent in 1993 and was projected to increase to 36.9 per cent in 1994.

Reddy's criticism was not surprising; that of the government's own backbenchers was. Kamikamica led the charge. He did not question the broad direction of government economic policy, for he had, as interim finance minister, been author of many aspects of it. The government's direct involvement in economic activity should be steadily wound down. And he urged the government to do more to promote specifically Fijian projects in the educational and economic sectors (Parliament of Fiji, *Hansard*, 17 November 1993). The thrust of his criticism was that the government lacked financial discipline to implement correct policies. At least Kamikamica was consistent. Finau Mara acknowledged that the finance minister had 'very little choice in this budget', but he was instrumental in orchestrating the Fijian vote against it though he was away in Australia when the vote was taken. Cabinet minister Ratu Viliame Dreunimisimisi was 'not convinced that the budget should be abandoned' (Parliament of Fiji, *Hansard*, 29 November 1993), but six hours later he voted against it.

Emboldened by mild criticism, the government rejected the opposition's offer to help it revise the budget. Even the prime minister's confidential memorandum to his two deputy prime ministers and the minister of finance to decrease the deficit by F\$35 to F\$39 million, increase the police allocation by F\$2 million, and reduce the duty on basic food items was ignored. The government's complacency was misplaced. Knowing that the 27 Indo-Fijian members of parliament were going to vote against it, Rabuka's opponents saw their chance. When the budget came up for the second reading on 29 November, it was unexpectedly put to the vote. To the government's consternation, six Fijian members and one GVP member (David Pickering) joined the 27 Indo-Fijians in voting against it. Miscalculation and misplaced trust had cost the government dearly. Rabuka accepted part of the blame. 'I think my military officer mentality came into focus and led me to believe that once a directive is given, everybody would toe the line, which they did not' (*Fiji Times*, 3 December 1993).

The manner of the defeat was surprising. In normal parliamentary practice, the second reading is regarded as procedural. It is followed by the committee stage (in this case 30 November to 3 December), when the whole house would constitute itself a committee and scrutinise the proposed legislation. At this time, members of parliament can propose changes and amendments or seek explanation of particular parts. The substantive vote on a bill then takes place. But in this case, the budget bill was defeated before it reached the committee stage. It seems certain that the Fijian dissidents had not planned to use the budget to bring down the Rabuka government. Their plans materialised only as the debate proceeded and only when the position of the Indo-Fijian parties became clear. They thus seized the second reading of the budget 'as their best politically credible opportunity to bring down the government' (*The Review*, December 1993).

Rabuka questioned the dissidents' motives in his address to the Great Council of Chiefs on 15 December. There were some members of his party who voted against the Bill while wanting the government to make changes before it came up for the substantive vote. This would have been consistent with the decision of the parliamentary caucus meeting of the SVT. The government had been deprived of the opportunity to consider amendments at the third reading (committee stage). Perhaps, Rabuka told the chiefs, 'there might have been other considerations that lay behind their determination to vote against their own government' (Rabuka, Statement to the Great Council of Chiefs 1993). Indeed there were. As some Fijian dissidents told Manuelli, 'they were going to challenge the budget not because they were opposed to it, but because they wanted to change the leadership' (*The Review*, December 1993).

Before informing the SVT caucus, the dissident group had informed Mara of their intention so that 'he would have more time to prepare himself for the outcome of the voting' (*Fiji Times*, 8 December 1993). How the dissidents expected Mara to behave is unknown, but this is what the Fiji Labour Party wrote to Mara

It is quite evident to us that the defeat of the 1994 budget had other quite compelling reasons than the unacceptability of the budget itself. Over a period of the last few months, the credibility of the Rabuka Government has been brought [in]to serious question. The government has been rocked by one scandal after another... However

Prime Minister Rabuka seems to have cared very little, if at all, about these matters and has carried on in the fashion of business as usual. These incidents have seriously eroded the confidence of the opposition members and a number of government members of parliament in Prime Minister Rabuka. We feel Prime Minister Rabuka no longer enjoys the confidence of a majority of members of parliament and should therefore be asked to tender his resignation, following which Your Excellency should appoint a new prime minister who has majority support. The new prime minister should then appoint his cabinet and carry on the task of governing Fiji. We, Sir, would urge you to explore the above suggestion should it be constitutionally possible for you to do so.

Whatever the Fijian dissidents and the Labour Party proposed, the constitution gave the prime minister three options. Within three days of a crisis, he could advise the president to dissolve parliament and call for fresh general elections. Second, he could tender his and his government's resignation and allow the president to choose another (Fijian) member of parliament. Only if the prime minister failed to act within the stipulated three days could the president pursue his own initiative.

Rabuka acted expeditiously. At 7:30pm on the night on which the budget was defeated, he advised Mara to prorogue the parliament from 19 January and call for a general election within 30 days. Reddy, himself a lawyer, endorsed Rabuka's decision, which led Mara to say somewhat opportunistically, 'Mr Reddy saved my day'. The Fiji Labour Party used this comment in the election campaign to hitch Reddy to Rabuka, insinuating that Mara would have replaced Rabuka had it not been for Reddy's contrary advice. In truth, it was not Reddy but the constitution that saved Mara's day, for any other decision would not only have been unconstitutional, but would have implicated him even deeper in the machinations of the anti-Rabuka faction. That said, it was in Reddy's interest to go to the polls to capitalise on his party's strong showing in public opinion polls.

Eight major political parties contested the election, four of them Fijian. These included the SVT, the Fijian and Rotuman Nationalist United Front, Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua (STV), and the Fijian Association Party. Non-Fijian parties were the General Voters Party and the All Nationals Congress, and, in the Indo-Fijian community, the National Federation Party and the Fiji Labour Party. We will look briefly at the platforms of the various parties, though it is hard to say whether manifestos mattered much in voters' minds.

The SVT was the main Fijian political party, sponsored by the Great Council of Chiefs. Sitiveni Rabuka was its president and parliamentary leader. But although sponsored by the chiefs and intended to be an umbrella organisation for Fijians, the SVT was not supported by all, as was evident in the 1992 elections when it got only 66 per cent of all the Fijian votes and a substantially lower figure in important regions of Viti Levu. Others disliked Rabuka's leadership of the party and had not forgiven him for his 'flagrant flouting of tradition and chiefly protocol' in defeating Mara's wife, herself a high chief, for the post of party president (*Fiji Times*, 4 December 1993). There were problems, too, in the party's organisation. Theoretically the management board ran the party's affairs, but what was the role and responsibility of the 14 provinces that subscribed to its coffers? Should not the Great Council of Chiefs have been consulted over major policy decisions before the government embarked upon them? These issues were raised in the campaign. The SVT fielded candidates in all 37 Fijian constituencies.

Soon after the defeat of the budget, the SVT attempted to forge a coalition with other Fijian parties. It proposed not to contest seats already held by the nationalists 'if the favour was reciprocated' (*Fiji Times*, 6 December 1993). Butadroka did not respond. Similar negotiations with the All Nationals Congress also collapsed when the SVT refused to reconsider the Sunday prohibitions and the idea of the fourth confederacy. The SVT then decided to contest the elections alone on a platform that stated, among other things, that cabinet members would be chosen on merit, not on provincial affiliation; there would be a minister of national planning to coordinate developmental activities; shipping to the outer islands would be improved; the value-added tax would be reviewed; deregulation would be balanced against the interests of local manufacturers; there would be more effective support for law and order; efficiency in the public sector would be improved; and an SVT government would give priority to the promotion of national unity. Where the SVT's fortunes looked uncertain, such as in Rewa, Rabuka contradicted himself by promising that province a seat in his cabinet (*The Review*, March 1994). Elsewhere, he hinted that the country could explode if his party were not returned to power.

Rabuka reminded the Fijian electorate of his many pro-Fijian initiatives. He admitted that he had still a lot to learn, and he asked for forgiveness. His opponents had criticised his leadership; Rabuka said, ‘no leader could really be effective if from within the ranks of his or her team there were people who were not prepared to show their loyalty to the team leader and commitment to play their role as team members’ (Sitiveni Rabuka, Statement to the Bose Levu Vakaturaga).<sup>6</sup> Could such people be trusted to safeguard the future of the Fijian people? He may have erred, Rabuka said, but ‘what I have never been, and what I will never do, is to be disloyal to the Fijian and Rotuman communities, and to give away what I had personally sacrificed myself to achieve in 1987—and that is to secure and to safeguard the interests of the Fijian and Rotuman people’ (Rabuka, Statement to the Great Council of Chiefs 1993). He was astounded at the disloyalty of his colleagues who ‘almost handed over power of effective control of the national Government of Fiji to the other communities’. Fijian people were at the crossroads, and the only way forward for them was to remain united. Loyalty was a virtue that Rabuka emphasised over and over again. ‘We must be unremitting in our loyalty to each other, to our chiefs, to this highest of all Fijian councils, the Bose Levu Vakaturaga’. And Rabuka, the uncompromising Fijian nationalist, was the people’s saviour.

The SVT’s chief rival for Fijian votes was the Fijian Association, the vehicle for the dissident, anti-Rabuka Fijians, headed by Josefata Kamikamica and quietly supported by Ratu Mara. The idea of reviving the old Fijian Association as an alternative to Rabuka’s SVT had been mooted as early as January 1992, two years before the election, though nothing came of that initiative (*Daily Post*, 17 February 1992). The Association’s founding principles were a mixture of the pre-coup Alliance platform and that of the Mara-led interim administration (1988–92) in which Kamikamica was a key figure. The party would respect multiracialism but in the context of promoting and safeguarding indigenous Fijian interests, it would seek re-entry into the Commonwealth, and, following World Bank initiatives, it would pursue privatisation and corporatisation of profitable enterprises. In truth, the Fijian Association’s policies differed little from the SVT’s.

On the campaign trail, the Association had only one issue: Rabuka was an unworthy leader. Said Kamikamica, 'the SVT leader, over the last 18 months, has followed a path full of broken promises, contradictory statements, reversal of policy, and dishonourable behaviour. Fijian and national unity cannot be achieved through cheap political point scoring just for the sake of rallying together, or for any other selfish vested interest' (*Fiji Times*, 21 January 1994). He pointed to Rabuka's involvement in the Stephens affair, his close association with Butadroka's brand of nationalism, and his administrative inexperience. 'Another five years of this style of leadership and it will be very difficult for the country because the network of interests that feed upon each other in a situation like that will be very difficult to break' (*The Review*, February 1994). It was thus in the national interest to stop Rabuka now. The Fijian Association was not disobedient toward the Great Council of Chiefs, as the SVT alleged. It pointed to a number of high chiefs among its party leaders, including Ratu Apenisa Cakobau (son of the late Vunivalu of Bau), Ratu Wili Maivalili of Cakaudrove, and Ratu Aca Silatolu from Rewa. Moreover, it attempted to promote itself as the true servant of the Great Council of Chiefs. If elected to government, the party would work hard to reestablish the chiefs' links to the British monarch. Rabuka appealed to another tradition in Fijian society. 'The sooner we realise we are out and out, the better it will be for us rather than crying over spilt milk. We are a proud race. We won't go crawling back to the British and the Commonwealth' (*The Review*, February 1994). In this stance, Rabuka echoed the sentiments of ordinary Fijians.

The third Fijian party in the election was Sakiasi Butadroka's newly renamed Fijian and Rotuman Nationalist United Front. Butadroka's fortunes had fallen on hard times. Once an Alliance Party assistant minister dismissed for his anti-Indian remarks—that Fiji's Indian population should be repatriated to India—Butadroka had launched his Fijian Nationalist Party in 1975 and was elected to parliament on his extremist platform on several occasions. He had formed a coalition, the Fijian Nationalist United Front, with Ratu Osea Gavidi's Soqosoqo ni Taukei ni Vanua (STV), but that coalition collapsed weeks before the 1994 election and contested the elections separately. Butadroka

championed his causes in his own inimitable style. He opposed any review of the constitution until non-Fijians unconditionally accepted the principle of Fijian political supremacy. Butadroka had been one of the founders of the Viti Levu Council of Chiefs, but his reputation for integrity had been tarnished by the Stephens affair and his base weakened by the desertion of his former coalition partner. Ratu Osea Gavidu had fallen on hard times, too, his STV a pale shadow of its 1980s counterpart, the Western United Front. Gavidu's platform was identical to Butadroka's, except for the higher frequency with which Gavidu invoked God's name. He was an advocate of western Fijian interests and co-founder of the Viti Levu Council of Chiefs.

Apisai Tora's All Nationals Congress, launched in 1992, was a Fijian-based party with a multiracial philosophy. A few key issues characterised the All Nationals Congress platform. One was its repeated view that the Great Council of Chiefs should not endorse any one Fijian party, but should stay above the electoral fray. Unless the disengagement was effected, said Tora, the traditional usefulness of the Great Council of Chiefs would be destroyed

[t]heir reason for existence will be questioned in an increasingly hostile manner. Their survival will for the first time be a matter of serious conjecture. We foresee that their decline will gather such momentum that they will be unlikely to survive as an institution beyond the next ten years (*Fiji Times*, 11 January 1993).

Tora was also a strong, longtime advocate of greater restructuring of power within Fijian society to give western Fijians more voice in national affairs. He made 'no secret of his desire to end the political dominance of eastern Fijians' (*Islands Business*, October 1991). He was one of the principal architects of the fourth confederacy platform. Before the elections, Tora had explored cooperation with the SVT, but the talks collapsed when the SVT refused to accept his demand for, among other things, recognition of the fourth confederacy. His multiracial proclamations, coming from a founding member of the Taukei Movement, did not ring true.

These divisions caused much anguish among ordinary Fijians. They were puzzled. How could a constitution that entrenched their political supremacy have produced so much division and bitterness among their leaders? One answer was obvious. The removal of the threat of Indo-

Fijian dominance had opened up space to debate issues relating to the structure and processes of power within Fijian society that had remained hidden from the public arena. The absence of the once unifying leaders such as Ganilau, Cakobau and Mara encouraged democratic debate among Fijians. Rabuka was no Mara. He lacked Mara's mana and knowledge of the mantras of national politics. Moreover, he was a commoner.

Nonetheless, the extent and significance of the division and discordance should be kept in perspective. In the end, although the Fijian parties may have differed about the formula for the distribution of power and resources among the *tankei*, they agreed that Fijians must always retain political control. Kamikamica and Tora espoused multiracialism, but only on terms acceptable to the *tankei*. They advocated (token) Indo-Fijian participation in government; none wanted a full partnership.

The Fijians, however, were not the only ones who were politically divided. There was internal friction among the category of general electors, which included all non-Fijians and non-Indo-Fijians, though it was not publicly aired. The General Voters Party had done well as SVT's coalition partner, securing two senior cabinet positions. However, its parliamentary leader, David Pickering, a known Mara supporter and a Rabuka critic, had refused to join Rabuka's cabinet in 1992. He was a vocal critic of Rabuka's 'inconsistent statements and indeterminate stance' (*The Review*, August 1993). Not surprisingly, Pickering left the GVP to stand, and win, as an All Nationals Congress candidate in the 1994 elections, defeating his former party by 893 votes to 554. The real cause of friction seems to have been the extent of the party's support for Rabuka. Many general electors were pro-Fijian but not necessarily pro-Rabuka. A faction of the GVP wanted greater independence, while the party leaders, whatever their personal misgivings about Rabuka's character and consistency, supported him. In the end, despite internal differences, the GVP won four of the five general seats and returned once again as the SVT's coalition partner.

Among Indo-Fijians, the divisions were deeper and more public, with both the National Federation and the Fiji Labour parties running fierce campaigns to claim the leadership of a drifting, disillusioned Indo-Fijian community. Several issues divided the two parties. One was disagreement over participating in the 1992 elections. The NFP decided to fight the

elections under protest, arguing that boycotting it would be futile. The Indo-Fijian community's future lay in dialogue and discussion with Fijian leaders, and parliament would provide the forum. Labour favoured boycott. How could it participate in an election under a constitution that it had roundly condemned as racist, authoritarian, undemocratic and feudalistic? To do so would accord legitimacy to that flawed document and undermine the party's credibility internationally. International pressure was the only way to change the constitution. However, a few weeks before the election, the party revoked its decision and took part in the elections.

Another issue was Labour's decision to support Sitiveni Rabuka in his bid to become prime minister; the NFP had backed his rival, Josefata Kamikamica. Labour explained its action as a strategic move. When Rabuka, once in power, disavowed the spirit of the agreement and disclaimed any urgency to address issues Labour had raised, Labour's credibility in the Indo-Fijian community was severely tested. To salvage its reputation, Labour walked out of parliament in June 1993 only to return in September, using the terms of reference for the review of the constitution as a pretext. The NFP exploited Labour's misfortunes. Chaudhry, it said, had committed the 'third coup' by supporting Rabuka in 1992, its agreement with him 'neither politically feasible nor legally enforceable' (*Fiji Times*, 15 December 1993). Labour had practised 'flip-flop' politics. Labour countered that the 'problem with the NFP [is that] it never struggled in its lifetime and buckles under pressure' (*The Weekender*, 4 February 1994). For the NFP, the main issue was credibility and integrity. It portrayed itself as a party following a steady course on an even keel. Its trump card was its leader, Jai Ram Reddy. A seasoned politician, Reddy had, especially since the 1992 election, emerged as a responsible, statesmanlike figure. A national poll gave him an astounding 80 per cent approval. His moderate yet insistent stance on important issues and his performance in parliament worked to the party's advantage. Fijian leaders, including Mara and Rabuka, spoke approvingly of him. But that, to his opponents, was the real problem. Conciliation and compromise to what end, they asked. Reddy's moderation they saw as weakness and timidity, reminiscent of the acquiescent politics of the Indian Alliance. They sought to discredit his political record by blaming

him for the years of divisive and factional infighting in the National Federation Party. For the NFP, Chaudhry epitomised 'inconsistency, unreliability and unpredictability both in substance and style' (National Federation Party campaign material).

Personalities aside, there were some fundamental differences in approach and political philosophy that remained submerged in the campaign. One important difference between Reddy and Chaudhry lay in their approaches to the pace of political change. Gradualism was Reddy's preferred course of action; the favourite words in his political vocabulary being conciliation, consensus, dialogue and moderation. Expeditious change was Chaudhry's path; sacrifice, struggle, boycott and agitation the key words in his lexicon. When asked how long Indo-Fijians might have to wait for political equality, Reddy replied: 'I don't think time is important in politics; it is what you do' (*Islands Business*, January 1991). Indo-Fijians had suffered a great deal, but 'life goes on because of hope, that somehow, some day things will turn around and everybody will realise that we are all God's children and we're all meant to live and let live' (*Islands Business*, January 1991). Reddy's philosophical, even fatalistic, approach acknowledged the limited options available to his people.

Chaudhry was an intrepid, indefatigable fighter who entered national politics through the trade union movement; he was the long-serving general secretary of the Fiji Public Service Association. He was temperamentally different from Reddy. To him, power conceded nothing without a struggle and time did count for a lot in politics and in the life of a community. Change must come and, for Chaudhry, the sooner the better. 'We have to do something about this [racial constitution]', he said, 'because if we live under this constitution for the next 5–10 years, then they [Indo-Fijians] will end up as coolies' (*Islands Business*, March 1991). The same urgency—recklessness in the opinion of his detractors— informed his approach to the land issue. 'I don't believe in transferring the problems of our generation to the next generation', he said. 'We should try and resolve this issue. If it is not possible to have long term leases...then we better start talking about compensation. And Indians will have to accept the reality that they must move away from the land and find a livelihood elsewhere' (*The Review*, August 1991). This militant

Chaudhry was an anathema to his opponents, but, in an ironic way, he appealed to the dominant radical tradition in Indo-Fijian politics that had long been the province of the NFP.

The NFP seemed to have accepted the realities of communal politics and proposed to work within its framework. Jai Ram Reddy said in parliament in July 1992,

[l]et us each be in our separate compartments if you like. Let communal solidarity prevail and I do not begrudge Fijian leaders for wanting to see that their community remains united. That is a very natural desire. Let the general electors be united. Let the Indians be united; let everybody be united, but from our respective positions of unity let us accept that we must co-exist and work together and work with each other. That is a more realistic approach (Parliament of Fiji, *Hansard*, 24 July 1992).

Labour's position differed. Although only a pale shadow of its 1987 form, denuded of its multiracial base, its leading Fijian lights having deserted the party, Labour still seemed to subscribe to the philosophy of multiracial politics, as opposed to communally compartmentalised politics of the type entrenched by the 1992 constitution. To that end the party fielded general elector and Fijian candidates. It was a token gesture, and the Fiji Labour Party's non-Indo-Fijian candidates polled miserably; but it still represented an act of protest against the racial constitution, whereas the NFP contested only Indo-Fijian seats.

In sum, the 1994 campaign was a curiously quiet, uneventful affair, with the ethnic groups locked into racially segregated compartments, debating issues of particular concern to their respective communities. There were few large rallies and virtually no campaigning through the media. Most people seemed uninterested and disenchanted. This parochial, tunnel-vision that rewarded ethnic chauvinism and communalism rather than multiracialism was one of the more deleterious effects of the 1990 constitution.

Polling occurred from 18 to 27 February. The SVT got 146,901 votes or 64 per cent of Fijian votes, a decline of 7 per cent from its 1992 figures. Its nearest rival was the Fijian Association with 34,994 votes or 15 per cent. The Fijian Association won all three Lau seats and the two in Naitasiri. Butadroka's Nationalists polled poorly, too, capturing only 14,396 votes (6 per cent), compared with its 1992 share of 10 per cent of all the Fijian votes. The All Nationals Congress, which had won 24,719

votes (10 per cent) in 1992, won only 18,259 (8 per cent) of Fijian votes. Gavid's STV also recorded a loss, from 9,308 (4 per cent) votes to 6,417 (3 per cent) in 1994. Labour, which fielded just a few Fijian candidates, got only 555 Fijian votes in 1994. Independents did poorly, except the SVT-allied Ratu Jo Nacola from Ra, who won his seat comfortably.

The nationalists' agenda was appropriated by the SVT. Butadroka claimed with some justice that his trademark pro-Fijian policies had been hijacked by the party in power. Butadroka's running mate in the 1992 elections, Ratu Mosese Tuisawau, stood as an independent. But Butadroka had also lost ground and respect in his constituency with his antics in parliament (he was expelled for his virulent criticism of Mara's administration), his strident and now curiously antiquarian anti-Indianism, and his involvement in the Stephens affair. Gavid's STV lost ground for similar reasons. His political integrity was in tatters over the Stephens affair, and his pro-western Fijian agenda was silently incorporated into the SVT's program. Tora's loss, and especially his loss of ground since 1992, was a surprise. Tora's sudden conversion to multiracialism was unconvincing, and the SVT fought hard to regain its strength in the west.

The real surprise among Fijians was the poor showing of the Fijian Association, except in Naitasiri (because of Kuli's rapport with his grass-roots supporters, the indifference of Tui Waimaro, Adi Pateresio Vonokula notwithstanding) and Lau. Among those who succumbed to the Fijian Association in Lau was the SVT's Filipe Bole. His support for Rabuka, despite Ratu Mara's well-known disregard for the man, cost him his seat. Mara was the paramount chief of the region. As president, Mara maintained outward neutrality, but as one Fijian observer put it, 'neither the acting chairman [Tevita Loga, Mara's traditional herald] nor Finau Mara [eldest son and a Fijian Association candidate], nor others would have dared move without prior consultation with Mara in his capacity as paramount chief' (*Islands Business*, February 1994). Why did the Fijian Association fail in its birthplace, Tailevu? Traditional politics probably played a part. The SVT lineup included Adi Samanunu Talakuli, the eldest daughter of the late Vunivalu of Bau (Ratu Sir George Cakobau), and Ratu William Toganivalu. The Fijian Association's lineup of chiefs lacked stature and authority. Some Fijians also suggested that

Kamikamica was damaged by Mara's endorsement. They believed that Mara harboured dynastic ambitions and supported Kamikamica, or anyone else, only until his son, Finau, was ready to assume the leadership. Others suggested that Tailevu was a traditionally conservative constituency, whose people found it hard to vote against a party sponsored by the chiefs. The SVT's allegation that Kamikamica had engaged in a 'calculated act of political sabotage' in his 'continuing remorseless and unbending ambition for political power in Fiji' (*The Weekender*, 2 February 1994) seemed to have stuck.

All this says little about the SVT's strengths, which were considerable. It fielded better, or, at least, better-known candidates, and, as the party in government, used the politics of patronage to its great advantage. There was no doubt that the SVT's trump card was Sitiveni Rabuka, who was returned by his electorate with one of the highest votes among Fijian constituencies. Many ordinary Fijians responded to him as one of their own—a man who had sacrificed much to promote their interests. They ultimately forgave him his lapses of judgment and inconsistencies. They saw him as a man who had suffered from disloyalty, bad advice from colleagues and intrigue from powerful forces outside government. Rabuka asked for a second chance, and the electorate responded.

Among Indo-Fijians, the total number of registered voters was 159,480. The NFP won twenty of the twenty-seven Indo-Fijian seats and captured 65,220 votes (55.5 per cent). The Fiji Labour Party got 51,252 votes (43.6 per cent). In the 1992 elections, the NFP had captured 50 per cent of the votes to Labour's 48 per cent. The NFP made a clean sweep of all the Vanua Levu seats and the urban seats. It also made gains in the sugar belt of western Viti Levu, to some extent because of the mill strike in September 1993 by the Sugar and General Workers' Union, which angered farmers. Other farmers turned to the NFP because they were suspicious of a compulsory insurance scheme proposed by the Labour-allied National Farmers' Union. However, Labour managed to retain its core support there. Part of Labour's problem was of its own making, but the NFP increased its support on the strength of its own performance, especially that of its leader. Many Indo-Fijians responded to his quiet tenacity.

The election returned both the NFP and the SVT with mandates. The Indo-Fijians had not renounced Chaudhry's style of agitational politics; they merely suspended it for the time being in favour of Reddy's more accommodationist approach. In that sense, Reddy's mandate was conditional; if his approach failed to produce timely results, the Indo-Fijians would return to Labour. A similar dilemma confronted Rabuka. The SVT leader told his campaign audience that he would never compromise on his goals to realise the aims of the coup. At the same time, he promised to promote national unity through the politics of inclusion. His task was made all the more difficult; members of his own party were aiming to depose him at any opportunity. Rabuka may have taken his revenge, but would he have the last laugh?

## Notes

- 1 Typescript in the author's possession.
- 2 This quote is from a file of unpublished constitutional review papers owned by the author.
- 3 From Labour Party campaign literature in the author's possession.
- 4 From a copy of Reddy's budget speech in the author's possession.
- 5 Reddy's Budget Reply (typescript in the author's possession).
- 6 Typescript in the author's possession.