



NATIONAL FEDERATION PARTY



Uniting Fiji



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NFP PRAYER

Almighty God we your children who are assembled here embracing as we do all the major religious faiths of this world, pray that we be granted the strength to work for the unity and welfare of all the people of this land irrespective of race or colour or creed and grant us the wisdom to treat and consider all matters that come before us without fear, prejudice or ill will towards any one. So that we may all join hands to promote thy honour and glory here in our land as in the world at large.

OUR VISION

One Country, One Nation
One People: A United,
Peaceful and Prosperous
Fiji.

THE NFP MISSION

- Peaceful and Prosperous Fiji based on Respect, Dignity and Harmony.
- Democratic principles, Basic Human Rights, Workers Rights and respect for cultural, religious & ethnic diversity
- Fair and impartial application of the rule of law, regardless of ethnicity, class and cultural diversity.
- Equitable Economic Development.
- Freedom from the shackles of poverty & sufferings.
- Universal access to basic Health care, Housing and Education.
- Good Governance through participatory decision –making process at all levels involving key stakeholders, N.G.O's and other development partners.
- Recognize special needs of Women, Youth, Elderly and other disadvantaged groups.
- Respect for different cultures, traditions and religions of Fijis diverse and dynamic multiracial societies.
- International and regional relationships and partnerships must be based on mutual respect in the interests of all the people of Fiji.



Forward

This publication commemorates the 45th year of existence of the National Federation Party as Fiji's oldest and longest-serving political party. The NFP was founded in 1963 and 45 years later in 2008 the party is ready to tackle challenges it faced in 1963 – to restore dignity, freedom and equality, and improving the livelihood of all the people of Fiji.



Since 1963, the NFP has seen the birth and demise of many political parties. But the NFP has stood the test of the most difficult times like the Rock of Gibraltar. This is why: -

Apart from the NFP, other political parties were founded after events. The Alliance Party led by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara was based on a three legged stool; Fijian Alliance; Indian Alliance & General Elector. The party decimated after the 1987 coups despite winning 24 seats and losing the 1987 general elections.

The Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei was founded after the 1987 coups to protect Fijian supremacy. The SVT, after losing the 1999 and 2001 general elections is non-existent, with only its leader Sitiveni Rabuka making public statements.

The Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) was formed after the May 2000 coup. Its members are basically stalwarts of SVT. The Party's future is uncertain after it was removed from government in December 2006. Likewise the Veitokani Lewenivanua Vakaristo Party (VLV) and Dr Tupeni Baba's New Labour Unity Party have disintegrated. VLV was created to change the 1997 Constitution while NLUP was a breakaway of the Fiji Labour Party. The National Alliance Party of Fiji is also dysfunctional.

The Fiji Labour Party, which has dominated the Indo-Fijian political landscape since 1999, is now in a precarious position. Already some of its founding members have either resigned or have been expelled. The FLP revolves around an individual – its leader. The party's future is dependant on the political fortunes of its leader.

Not the NFP. The NFP was founded to achieve milestones for the people of Fiji. And the NFP has NEVER FAILED to deliver what it promised to the people. And the NFP has always been led by leaders who were giants of their time in ability, understanding and perception of the problems facing Fiji. They always pit national interest above anything else. And above all, the NFP has never abandoned its principles.

Political parties will come and go but the NFP will remain because its achievements are permanent milestones. This publication records the struggles of the party and its leaders from 1963 to 2008.

God Bless NFP. And God Bless Fiji

Kamal Iyer

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION PARTY

The National Federation Party took root and grew out of the cane farmers' Associations which were formed particularly in the North Western Vitilevu in the thirties and forties, and which developed into politically conscious socio-economic organizations by the late fifties and early sixties as the British colonial rule began to give way to a more representative form of government in the country by that time.



NFP Leaders AD Patel, SM Koya & KC Ramrakha appearing before the Denning Commission, 1969.

By 1959 as the signing of a ten year contract began to draw near, responsible leaders like the **late Hon. A.D. Patel; Hon. James Madhavan; Hon. S.M. Koya and Swami Rudranandaji** began to float the idea amongst all farmers that in order to prevail against the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company (**CSR**), an all united front had to be shown and maintained. The idea of unity was well received by the different leaders who then pledged to set aside their long standing differences and work for the good of the farmers under a united body which they called the **Federation of Cane Farmers Association**.

The NFP has on record that this very idea was mooted by **Mr. Alparti Tataiya**, a cane grower of Ra Province at a farmers meeting in Rakiraki, which was attended among others by the late messers

A.D. Patel, J.V. Madhavan and S.M. Koya. But how far had Mr. Tataiyas suggestion influenced the leaders and to what extent was it instrumental in the eventual establishment of the party are matters which have never been determined in any certain way by the party's leaders or its erstwhile historians of later years.

Yet what is clearer is the term '**Federation**' became a catch word symbolizing Indian unity in the cane farming areas. And so, when the elections for the Legislative Council were to be held in 1963 the Federation of the Cane Growers was transformed into a **Citizens Federation** for the purpose of fighting the election. The name change was significant of the political party image now being gradually assumed by the Federation and of its newly acquired vision of attracting votes on a country wide basis rather than its hitherto narrow stance of representing the interests of the cane farming community only.

The first members of the NFP Parliamentary Party were:-

Hon. A.D. Patel	- Member for South/ West Vitilevu.
Hon. S.M. Koya.	- Member for North / West Vitilevu.
Hon. J.V. Madhavan.	- Member for Vanualevu/ Lau/ Rotuma.
Hon. C.A. Shah.	- Nominated Member.

The 1964 saw steps being taken by the party to organize itself on more sound footing. Its meeting in Ba got people like **Mr. R.D. Patel and Mr. M.T. Khan**, both lawyers, working on a draft constitution of the party and arranging for the establishment of its branches. In due course, the Federation Party opened up its branches in Nadi, Lautoka, Ba, Tavua, Rakiraki and Sigatoka. Early in April, 1965 a branch was formed at Suva at a meeting in Century Theatre at Marks Street, Suva.

There was a smear campaign against the party and Mr. Patel such tactics failed as members of the party did not deter the large turnout of Patel admirers from among the educated class. At meeting in Suva, Mr. Madho S. Tikaram was elected the Branch's first President. Mr. (now Hon. Justice) Davendra Pathik was elected as the first Secretary of the Suva Branch.

On 25th April, 1965 the Party held its first properly organized National Convention at Lautoka which was attended by more than 500 people. At this Convention The party's draft constitution was adopted. The Convention also gave mandate to the four Legislative Council Members of the Party who were going to attend the Con-

stitutional Conference in London soon afterwards, to make all representations and submissions on behalf of the Party as they best thought fit.

After the Lautoka Convention the party's branches were organized in Navua, Savusavu, Labasa, Rewa, Tailevu and Tavuani. And before the year ended Mr. Patel held two **camp seminars**, the first at Mr. Shankar Singh's property in Taunovu, Navua and the other one at Tavua which was organized by Mr. M. T. Khan. These seminars were highly successful in exhorting members to the ideals of the Party.

Writing about the earliest developments of the Federation Party in his 1973 Ph. D. thesis entitled: 'The Development of Political Parties in Fiji' **Mr. M. Alley** had this to say at page 175 :-

"The rise of the Federation Party was jarring one to many since it's uncomfortable, often abrasive style seemed to herald changes that appeared unpalatable and unavoidable. If a system was to emerge in Fiji, who, if not the Federation Party, was best equipped to exploit the political opportunities it might offer? Attempts to win that opportunity, like their frustration and denial, are closely interwoven with the Federation Party's earliest developments."

How right Mr. Alley was in suggesting that given the system of equal representation the Federation Party would have swept the polls in 1966. as it turned out the 1966 general elections saw the Federation Party winning all nine Indian Communal seats, polling 43,075 votes or 62.25 % of the total of 66,009 ballots counted with 2,807 or 4.08% of the ballots being invalidated. As against this impressive score the Alliance polled 10, 391 votes or 15.74 % only.

At the conclusion of the 1966 Legislative Council Elections, the following NFP candidates were elected to the Legislative Council:-

Hon. A.D. Patel	- South-West Indian Communal.
Hon. S. M. Koya	- North- West Indian Communal.
Hon. R.D. Patel	- North- Central Indian Communal.
Hon. C. A Shah	- Ra/ Tavua Indian Communal.
Hon. M.T. Khan.	- South- Central Indian Communal.
Hon. I.J. Narayan	- Suva- City Indian Communal.
Hon. K.C. Ramrakha.	- Tailevu/ Rewa Indian Communal.
Hon. R. J. Singh.	- Northern/ Eastern Indian Communal.
Hon. J.V. Madhavan.	- Vanualevu- North/ West Indian Communal.

Hon. A.D. Patel was elected the Parliamentary Leader of the NFP thus assuming the position of the Leader of the Opposition while **Hon. S.M. Koya** was elected as the Deputy Leader. **Hon. James Madhavan** was also elected as the Deputy Speaker of the Council at its first sitting.

THE STRUGGLE FOR FIJI'S INDEPENDENCE AND EQUAL RIGHTS FOR THE PEOPLE

Soon after the newly elected Legislative Council met, Hon. A.D. Patel re-iterated the demands of the NFP for Common Roll and Full independence. His vision for a free and independent Fiji is reflected in his following remarks: -

"The winds of political change are blowing all over the Colonial Territories and Fiji cannot hope to remain unaffected. Independence will surely come to Fiji, if not today, tomorrow or in two or four or ten years time – whether we wanted Independence or not," A D Patel stated in early 1960's.



Chirag Ali Shah
Founding Member



Ujargar Singh
Won the 1968 By-election



Gurdial Singh
Pioneer member - Suva

But how did Independence come about? Was it given to us by the British on a silver platter? Did Fiji beg for freedom? Were the Colonial rulers literally driven out of Fiji through violence and force? Or was it achieved through perseverance, negotiation and sacrifice?

It is a well known fact that our indigenous Fijian community and their leaders strongly opposed the concept of Independence in the early 1960's. This wasn't surprising because of the strong links between the British Crown and the chiefly system. But the winds of change were already blowing over the Pacific. Western Samoa became independent in 1962, followed by the Cook Islands in 1965 and it was only a matter of time before Fiji embraced independence as well.

- The first visible signs of independence came in 1964 with the introduction of the Membership system in the Legislative Council, which was also a step towards multiracialism. A D Patel welcomed this move and urged the leaders to inculcate a sense of compatriotism amongst the people.

Towards the end of 1964, the Colonial Government announced that a Constitutional conference would be held in London to decide in the next step in Fiji's move towards independence. This gave A D Patel the idea to convince the legislators to introduce the Common Roll system, meaning one person, one vote. This was strongly opposed by the Fijian leadership who at the time saw this concept as a threat because the Indo-Fijian population was greater than theirs.

- ***The common roll voting system has been to date an integral feature of the municipal in Fiji where ratepayers and respective of race, colour,***

The three principle players of the conference was held at the Marlborough House August 9, 1965, were Sir John Falvey (representing European Members), Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara (representing Fijian Members) and A D Patel (representing Indian members).

Both Sir John and Ratu Mara in their opening statements at the conference were quite content with the then present arrangement and gave lukewarm support for total independence without political freedom, no country spiritually free. He also spoke about future generations by saying: -



RD PATEL
Speaker (1972-75)

tem has been to date an integral feature of the municipal (town & city council) elections where citizens vote for a candidate irrespective of race, colour, or creed).

Constitutional conference that in London between July 26 and August 9, 1965, involving European Members, Fijian Members and A D Patel.

opening statements at the conference present arrangement and gave lukewarm support for total independence without political freedom, no country spiritually free. He also spoke about future generations by saying: -

“We have to resist the temptation of driving the boat on the hallow waters because of the fear it will rock heavily if we steered it on the right course.”

The conference recommended the formation of a Public Service Commission, Judicial Legal Services Commission, Police Services Commission and a Bill of Rights guarding against discrimination. Apart from this the Legislative Council was expanded to 36 Members – 14 Fijians, 12 Indians and 10 Europeans. Out of these, only 9 Members were to be elected on Common Roll (3 from each community)

However, the electoral arrangements were opposed by Patel who protested that it marginalized his community. By then Ratu Mara had become Chief Minister and A D Patel resigned as Member for Social Services and became the Leader of the Opposition.

On 1st September, 1967, A D Patel moved a motion in the Legislative Council calling for the British to convene another Constitutional conference to formulate a Constitution based on true democratic principles and one that would give Fiji independence. This motion provoked an intense debate and the NFP Members walked out of the Council.

The objective of Mr A D Patel and the NFP was to test their strength in by-elections to see if the Indian community supported them or the Alliance Party in the constitutional and independence objectives. The NFP boycott led to the Members losing their seats and eventually resulted in the by-elections. However, a sitting NFP Member, M T Khan changed his allegiance and joined the Alliance Party.

On the eve of the by-elections, a motion moved by NFP stalwarts Ratu Mosese Tuisawau and Ratu Julian Toganivalu, at the NFP Convention in June 1968 at Ba called for Fiji's independence and a fair constitution. These two issues formed the basis of the by-election campaign.

At the conclusion of the 1968 by- Elections, all the 9 NFP candidates were returned to the Legislative Council with increased majorities. The only new addition to Parliamentary party was **Hon. Ujagar Singh** who won the South- Central Indian communal seat previously held by Mr. M.T. Khan. At the end of the count for the by-elections, the NFP received 48,030 votes or 79.1% of the total votes counted. The Alliance Party got 12,756 votes or 20.9%

The results of the by- elections were a fresh mandate bequeathed to the NFP by the electorate to pursue their case and this was recognized during the conciliatory talks mediated and chaired by the late Ratu Sir Edward Cakobau which opened the doorway for negotiation upon the demands by the NFP. However, by then Mr A D Patel had died and was succeeded by Mr Siddiq Moidin Koya. The 1969 Constitutional Conference at Marlborough House in London, . United Kingdom was a direct result of this consensus building process.

The year 1968 saw important changes made in the party structure. In the previous three years more branches were added to the party- Tamavua, altogether. It was in this year that **Mr. the General Secretary of the Party with President. Ratu Julian Toganivalu** Secretary of the Party.

Ratu Julian Toganivalu and another **asikete Tuisawau** were prominent civil and because of the high regard they was believed that their entry would her- into hitherto dormant Fijian support. To “*Taukei Movement*” was launched in able aimed at developing small com- jians through the establishment of local for a public share subscription to Fijian



James Madhavan
Founder Member

In the midst of all these developments the party strengthened it's member- chinery for the battle that lay ahead. In **Party** led by trade unionist- Apisai Tora as the party was known till then. This new and strategic partnership led to the renaming of the party and since then the Party is known as the **National Federation Party**.

In 1969 after the Party's Convention in Nausori, much effort was made to help the cane farmers get a more favorable award in the Denning Arbitration. It was at this time while fighting for the farmers against the mighty colonial power and the millers that Mr. Patel died on 1st October 1969. His vacant seat was filled by **Mr C S Pillay**.

The nine Members of the Legislative Council attended the April, 1970 talks in London, UK. It was the 2nd Constitutional Conference. Along with the nine elected members, **Ratu Julian Toganivalu and Ratu Mosese Tuisawau** attended the 1970 talks as consultants. It was at this conference where the NFP made meaningful negotiations with the colonial government and the representatives of the other communities in Fiji upon the following issues:-

- That Fiji would become independent on **10th October, 1970** and remain a member of the British Commonwealth as a Dominion. The Governor- General will represent the crown.
- That the government elected in 1966 will continue in office until the completion of its tenure upon which a general election would be held to elect a new parliament as per the terms of the new constitution.
- **The 1970 Constitution** establishing a bi-cameral parliament (House of Representatives & Senate), entrenched provisions upon the native customary rights, an independent judiciary and all the necessary features of a democratic state.

The Legislative Council passed a motion to formalise Fiji's independence in June 1970. While speaking on the motion, Mr S M Koya, while reflecting on the Constitutional conference at Marlborough House said: -



London Conference, 1970

“Responsible ambassadors, emissaries and commissioners all paid tribute that this was the first time a country was going into independence without violence, a country who has given recognition to the problems that would have to be faced by the people as a whole and that both the leaders of the major political parties were playing active roles in getting independence. In other words, neither party was politicking, there was no political competition, this was not a party matter. The two parties decided to make this a national matter. I am glad and I am proud that I am playing this important role in the history of Fiji and that is, Sir, that we

are regarding ourselves as trustees not only for the people of Fiji who are living in the present time, but for posterity.”

The NFP and Mr. Koya agreed that to facilitate the smooth transition of the country to independence, Ratu Mara, who was then the Chief Minister, would become the first Prime Minister of after independence and Mr Koya, the then Opposition leader, would become Leader of the Opposition of an independent Fiji. It was also agreed that the first general elections under the 1970 Constitution would be held in 1972.

On 9th October, 1970, a day before Fiji's independence Ratu Mara said, *“Independence is a time for responsibility, dedication, sacrifice and honest hard work. We must remember to make tolerance and goodwill a continuing part of our lives. As from tomorrow (10th October) the people of Fiji would be responsible for their own destiny, making their own decisions, reaping the rewards of their successes and bearing the burden of their failures.”*

At 10am on 10th October 1970, the Prince of Wales, Prince Charles, handed over the Instruments of Independence to Ratu Mara at Suva's Albert Park, signifying the end of 96 years of Colonial rule. Immediately after this, our noble banner blue flag was hoisted and reached for the sky to the beat of our national anthem. It was a momentous day for Fiji. The dream, vision and struggle of A D Patel had paid off. The final chapter of a free nation started by A D Patel was sealed by his “lieutenant” and successor, S M Koya.

Mr Koya told the nation, *“It is my sincere belief that our people after the 10th October, 1970, will continue to display their tolerance, patience and understanding in dealing with all our future economic and political problems and that they will always recognise that the continuance of racial harmony in our society would be a must for our survival. I would urge in the national interest that we should exercise our intellectual muscles vigorously and play our proper part in making it possible for Fiji to grow in stature, that it continues to remain a multiracial and multi-colour community like the rainbow.”*

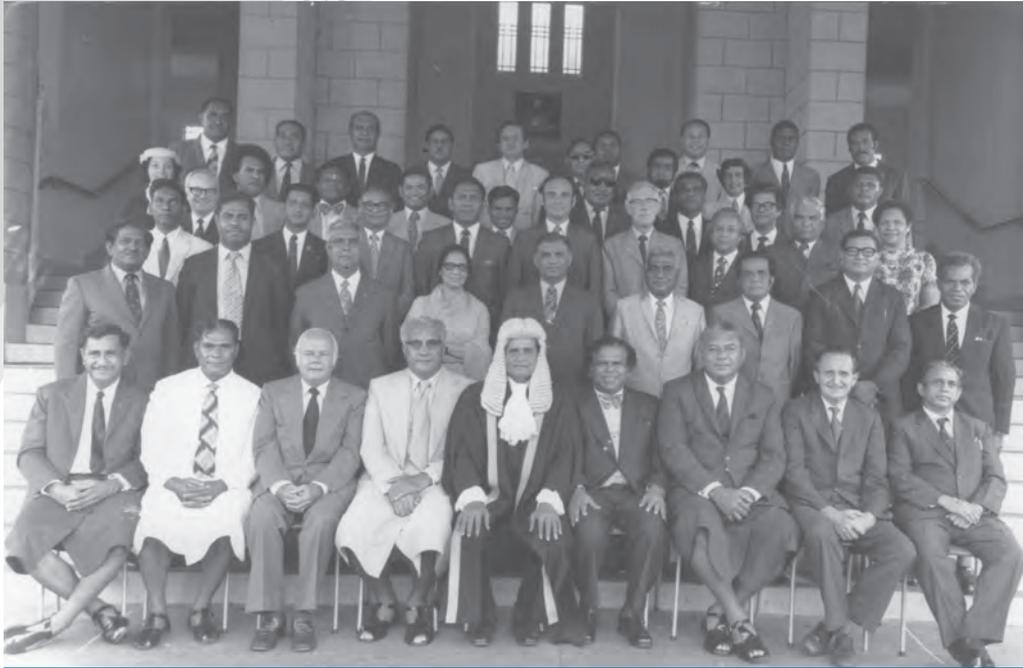
POST INDEPENDENCE (1970 – 1977)

The creation of the **Senate** under the 1970 Constitution brought about the appointment of the first lot of NFP Senators who were: -

Sen. Sarvan Singh, Sen. Mohammed Eqbal, Sen. Harish C. Sharma, Sen. Isikeli Nadalo, Sen. Ratu Moses Tuisawau & Ratu Glanville Lalabalavu.

The following NFP candidates were elected as the Members of the first House of the Representatives in May, 1972 representing the following constituencies:-

Hon. S.M. Koya (Lautoka Central Indian Communal); **Hon. H.M. Lodhia** (Nadi Indian Communal); **Hon. Harish C. Sharma** (Sigatoka Indian Communal); **Hon. Ujagar Singh** (Ba/Lautoka- Rural Indian Communal); **Hon. R.D. Patel** (Ba Indian Communal); **Hon. C.A. Shah** (Ra/ Tavua Indian Communal); **Hon. K.C. Ramrakha** (Nausori/ Levuka Indian Communal); **Hon. C.S. Pillay** (Nasinu/ Vunidawa Indian Communal); **Hon. I.J. Narayan** (Suva City Indian Communal); **Hon. V. Parmanandam** (Suva- West/ Navua Indian Communal); **Hon. J.V. Madhavan** (Macuata- East/ Savusavu Indian Communal); **Hon. R.J. Singh** (Bua/ Labasa Indian Communal), **Hon. Cpt. Atunaisa Maitoqa and Hon. Subramani Basawaiya** (Vanualevu-North/ West National); **Hon. Apisai Tora and Hon. K.K. Singh** (North-Western National); **Hon. Isikeli Nadalo and Hon. Anirudh Kuver** (South-Western National); **Hon. Edmund March** (Western General National)



House of the Representatives, 1972

The NFP won 19 of the 52 seats in the new Parliament while the other 33 were won by the Alliance Party. **Hon. S.M. Koya and Hon. J.V. Madhavan** were re-elected The Leader of the Opposition and The Deputy Leader of the Opposition respectively. **Hon. K.C. Ramrakha** became the Opposition Whip while **Hon. R.D. Patel** was elected the Speaker of the House.

Soon after the 1972 Elections the second lot of NFP Senators were nominated to the newly constituted House of Senate. Some of the notable Opposition nominees to the then House of Senate were : **Senator Kuar Battan Singh, Senator. Jai Ram Reddy, Senator. Ro Asela Logavatu & Senator. Ratu Mosese Tuisawau, Senator Shiu N. Kanhai and Senator Sarvan Singh.**

In the period 1972 to 1977 when the second General Elections were held, some notable changes took place within the NFP Parliamentary Party and also in the party Executive rank and file. Among those were:-

- The 1974 By- Election in the Macuata- East/ Savusavu Indian Communal Constituency necessitated by the sudden death of a long serving and founder Member- **Hon. James Madhavan. Hon. Sarvan Singh** won that seat for the NFP.
- The 1975 By- Election in the Ba Indian Communal Constituency which was held due to the resignation of the Speaker- **Hon. R.D. Patel** over the Sugar Industry Issues. **Hon. Surendra Prasad** was elected in that By- Election on the NFP ticket.
- **Hon. Senators Shiromaniam Madhavan & Colin Weaver** were nominated to the House of Senate.
- The position of the party leader and party president were separated through an amendment to the NFP Constitution at the party's 1976 National Convention. **Hon. S.M. Koya** retained the party leadership and **Hon. I.J. Narayan** became the 3rd National President of the party.
- **Senator. Ratu Mosese Tuisawau** resigned from the party to join the then newly established Fijian Nationalist Party led by Mr. Sakeasi Butadroka



Subramani Basawaiya
Spokesman on Finance

Under the leadership of S M Koya, the NFP continued its work in the national interest. The NFP negotiated for the Indian community, the religious festivals of Deepawali and Prophet Muhammad's Birthday to be declared National Public Holidays. Together with Ratu Mara, Mr Koya saw the admission of Fiji as a member of the United Nations. Both leaders, through dialogue and consensus building, negotiated preferential prices for Fiji sugar with the European Union.



Sarvan Singh
Served as Senator & MP

In 1976, the NFP negotiated Agricultural Landlord & Tenant Act (ALTA) that gave farmers 30 year agricultural leases. This

was a vast improvement from the 10-year leases under the Agricultural Landlord & Tenant Ordinance of 1966. Land rental was also fixed at 6 percent of Un-improved Capital Value of Land (UCV). Not a single cane grower or any other agricultural farmer and his/her family were displaced. All leases were renewed. For political critics to claim that the issue of ALTA divided the NFP because of Mr Koya's differing views is a lie. If this indeed were the case, the NFP would not have been able to fight the April 1977 general elections as a powerful and united force under Mr Koya's leadership, which the party won.

The NFP entered the 1977 April Election battle with the slogan "***It's time for Harvest***". That Election was a three way battle between the NFP, the Alliance Party and the Fijian Nationalist Party. Independent Candidates made the contest more colorful and interesting. The NFP retained a bulk of its sitting MP's inducting some fresh faces from the Senate and party hierarchy. The results of the April, 1977 Election brought the NFP on the verge of assuming the reins of governance of the country had it not been the intervention by the then Governor- General – **HE. Rt. Hon. Ratu Sir George Cakobau** using his discretionary powers under the 1970 Constitution to impose the minority Alliance government against the wishes of the majority of the people of Fiji.

Many political theories and accusations and counter accusations including explanations by politicians, historians and anti NFP elements have been made since 1977. Little anyone realizes that **NFP was ready to form the government** and Mr. Koya even went to the Government House for the swearing in ceremony only to learn that the Governor- General had by then already tactfully helped in the installation of the minority Alliance Government.

It must be noted that the results of the April, 1977 Election put the NFP in the most difficult position. The NFP won only 26 of the 52 seats (50% of the seats) To win, a party needed 50% plus 1 (at least 27 seats), the fact that some people fail to embrace. The Alliance won 24 seats. Mr. Butadroka was the lone winner of the FNP and only one Independent Candidate- **Ratu Osea Gavid** was able to win. It took time to muster the support of the Independent Member who agreed at last to lent his support to the NFP. That made up the numbers the NFP was looking for to form the Government.

Being cheated of its right to governance, the NFP did not allow the matter to rest there but pursued the peoples case further as soon as parliament convened in May, 1977. The party moved a **Vote of No- Confidence in the Alliance Government** by way of an amendment motion and won the vote. This demonstrates that there was a majority government in existence within the parliament and there was no need for the Governor- General to solely rely upon the advice of the defeated Prime Minister to dissolve the Parliament and call snap elections.

These events ideologically divided the NFP into the **Dove and Flower** factions in 1977.

The NFP Members of the House of the Representatives elected at the conclusion of the April , 1977 General Elections were as follows:-

Hon. S.M. Koya (Lautoka Central Indian Communal); **Hon. J.R. Reddy** (Ba/ Lautoka- Rural Indian Communal); **Hon. K.N. Rao** (Ba Indian Communal); **Hon. C.A. Shah** (Ra/ Tavua Indian Communal); **Hon. H.M. Lodhia** (Nadi Indian Communal); **Hon. H.C. Sharma** (Sigatoka Indian Communal); **Hon. Chandar Pal Sharma** (Suva-

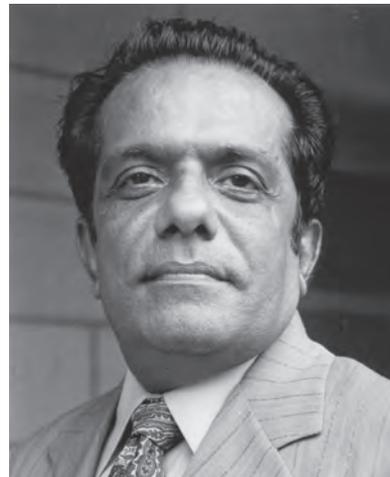
West/ Navua Indian Communal); **Hon. I.J. Narayan** (Suva-City Indian Communal); **Hon. C.S. Pillay** (Nasinu/ Vunidawa Indian Communal); **Hon. K.C. Ramrakha** (Nausori/ Levuka Indian Communal); **Hon. Subramani Basawaiya** (Bua/ Labasa Indian Communal); **Hon. Sarvan Singh** (Macuata- East/ Savusavu Indian Communal); **Hon. Cpt. Atunaisa Maitoga & Hon. Santa Singh** (Vanualevu- North/ West National); **Hon. Ro Asela Logavatu & Hon. S.N. Kanhai** (South- Eastern National); **Hon. Timoci G. Naco & Hon. Ramsami Gounder** (North- Eastern National); **Hon. Sakeo Tuwainikai & Hon. Surendra Prasad** (North- Central National); **Hon. Apisai Tora & Hon. K.K. Singh** (North- Western National); **Hon. Isikeli Nadalo & Hon. Anirudh Kuver** (South- Western National); **Hon. Boyan Crompton** (Northern General National) and **Hon. Edmund March** (Western General National)



Irene J Narayan
NFP President, 1976-79



Karam C Ramrakha
General Secretary, 1968-78



H M Lodhia
NFP Treasurer, 1976-86

During the September, 1977 snap elections the NFP divide gave the Alliance Party a big and much needed advantage. This resulted in 36 seats for the Alliance party, 12 for the NFP Flower faction and 3 seats for the NFP Dove faction. Ratu Osea Gavidi survived in that election again as an independent candidate.

Those elected under the NFP Flower faction ticket in September, 1977 were:-

Hon. J.R. Reddy (Lautoka Central Indian Communal); **Hon. H.M. Lodhia** (Nadi Indian Communal); **Hon. H.C. Sharma** (Sigatoka Indian Communal); **Hon. K.N. Rao** (Ba Indian Communal); **Hon. Navin Patel** (Ba/ Lautoka-Rural Indian communal); **Hon. I.J. Narayan** (Suva-City Indian Communal); **Hon. K.C. Ramrakha** (Nausori/ Levuka Indian Communal); **Hon. Santa Singh** (Bua/ Labasa Indian Communal); **Hon. Sarvan Singh** (Macuata-East/ Savusavu Indian Communal); **Hon. Ratu Jullian Toganivalu and Hon. Jairaj Singh** (North- Western National) and **Hon. Isikeli Nadalo** (South- Western Fijian National)

The three NFP Dove faction winners were:-

Hon. V. Parmanandam (Suva-West/ Navua Indian Communal); **Hon. Shiu N. Kanhai** (Nasinu/ Vunidawa Indian Communal) and **Hon. Ramsami Gounder** (Ra/ Tavua Indian Communal)]

A bitter leadership crisis took further toll on the party as some senior Flower faction MP's attempted to wrest the position of the Leader of the Opposition after the defeat of Mr. Koya. **Hon. Jai Ram Reddy** was elected as the Leader of the Opposition.

The death of Hon. Ratu Jullian Toganivalu in 1978 was a sad loss to the party. He was the organizing Secretary of the party for many years and in the fore front of the Taukei Movement launched by the party harness Fijian support. **Hon. Koresi Matatolu** was elected in place of Hon. Ratu J. Toganivalu under the NFP Flower faction ticket.

Again in 1978, another loss to the party was the sudden death of Hon. Sarvan Singh (the Member who is most notably remembered for his motion of June, 1977 calling for the lowering of the voting from 21 to 18 years in Fiji Elections). The party battered by division and the disheartening mood of the party membership could afford



House of the Representatives, September 1977

another round of battle as two factions giving the Alliance further room to invade into the amourary. The Labasa By- Election brought about the much needed reconciliation between the two factions and **Hon. Mohammed Sadiq** was elected as the compromise candidate of the NFP for the Macuata- East/ Savusavu Indian Communal Constituency.

The intervention of Mr. Sharda Nand to facilitate talks between Hon. J.R. Reddy and Mr. S.M. Koya reunited the Dove and flower faction forever. The reunion of the NFP factions boosted the morale of the party workers and brought about the much needed facelift it required to prepare for the 1982 General Elections. That change of heart closed one chapter that one hardly likes to discuss about and by which the party is still haunted and opened another chapter that nearly deseated the then Alliance Government .

The NFP fought the 1982 General Elections determined to dislodge the Alliance party. It's 82 Manifesto is still being regarded as the Electoral success Bible. Many political amateurs continue to borrow the verses from it suiting their personal and political agenda and need less to say that they are reaping the fruits of labour. The slate of the NFP Candidates was a mixture of the old and new MP's, Ex- Alliance men and some new faces from a wide cross section of the Fiji society. But the infamous Four Corners TV show did untold damage and the party was unnecessarily dragged into a dirty racial campaign by the Alliance Party. Towards the end of the campaign carnival, it was the person that mattered and not the issues as racist elements fanned the fire of race, hate etc...

Despite all that the Alliance then did to hoodwink the voters, it's love affair with the electorate was on the wane. Everyone knew that but no one except the NFP had the guts to say this. As such, the Alliance did all within it's means to discredit the NFP with wild allegations and false accusations. Later, many of those allegations were tested in Court of Law and NFP and Mr. S.M. Koya were compensated for that. But this took time and the election was held in the midst of all that thus ensuring a close Alliance win. 28 seats for the Alliance and 24 for the **NFP/ WUF Coalition**

The list of the Members of the House of the Representatives elected at the 1982 General elections were:-

Hon. J.R. Reddy (Lautoka Central Indian Communal); **Hon. S.M. Koya** (Ba/ Lautoka- Rural Indian Communal); **Hon. Navin Patel** (Ba Indian Communal); **Hon. Ramsami Gounder** (Ra/ Tavua Indian Communal); **Hon. H.M. Lodhia** (Nadi Indian Communal); **Hon. Anirudh Kuver** (Sigatoka Indian Communal); **Hon. V. Parmanandam** (Suva- Rural Indian Communal); **Hon. I.J. Narayan** (Suva-City Indian Communal); **Hon. Dr. Satendra P. Nandan** (Nasinu/ Vunidawa Indian Communal); **Hon. Sharda Nand** (Nausori/ Levuka Indian Communal); **Hon. Mohammed Sadiq** (Bua/ Labasa Indian Communal); **Hon. Subramani Basawaiya** (Macuata- East/ Savusavu Indian Communal); **Hon. Ratu S. Katonivere & Hon. Dr. Santa Singh** (Vanualevu- North/ West National); **Hon. Mohammed I. Khan** (North- Eastern Indian National); **Hon. Temo Sukanaivalu & Hon. Sir Vijay R.**

Singh (North- Central National); **Hon. K.L. Matatolu & Hon. Jairaj Singh** (North- Western National); **Hon. H.C. Sharma** (South- Western Indian National); **Hon. James V. Smith** (Northern General National) & **Hon. A. T. Jennings** (Western General National).

The two members of the Western United front were :- **Hon. Isikeli Nadalo** (South- Western Fijian National) & **Hon. Filimone Nalatu** (North- Eastern Fijian National)

During the period 1979 to 1986, several changes took place in the NFP Parliamentary party and also in the party executive rank and file. Some of the major ones are as follows:-

- **Hon. Ramsami Gounder** was elected the 4th party President at the 1979 National Convention while Hon. Jai Ram Reddy retained the party leadership as a compromise between the Dove and Flower factions of the party.
- **Hon. Jai Ram Reddy** was re-elected as the party leader after the 1982 elections. He resigned following a heated exchange with the then Speaker- **Hon. Tomasi Vakatora** in 1984. Hon. S.M. Koya was elected as the new party leader while Mr. Reddy was elected the 5th party President.
- **The Lautoka By- Election of 1984** is another unfortunate event in the party history where the party's official candidate- Dr. Balwant S. Rakka lost the seat to NFP- Youth Movement candidate- **Hon. Davendra Singh** who was not accepted by Hon. S.M. Koya in the Parliamentary party for his defiance.
- Hon. I.J. Narayan resigned as the deputy Leader of the party and she was replaced by Hon. K.L. Matatolu.
- **Hon. Sir Vijay R. Singh** resigned from the Parliament in 1985 following his appointment as the 1st Chief Executive of the Sugar Cane Growers Council. Subsequently, a By- Election was held in the North- Central National Constituency which was a three way contest- James S. Singh (NFP); **Uday B. Singh (Alliance)** and Mahendra P. Chaudhry (FLP). The division of votes between the NFP and FLP candidates cost the parties the seat and Hon. Uday B. Singh was elected on the Alliance ticket increasing the Government majority.
- Notable and out-spoken NFP members defected from the party causing more problems. **Hon. I.J. Narayan** who served the party for nearly two decades showed interest in the FLP but later formally joined the Alliance Party. **Hon. Dr. S.P. Nandan and Hon. Davendra Singh** joined the FLP and became the FLP's first parliamentary party with Dr. Nandan becoming their parliamentary leader.
- The NFP fully supported the motion by Alliance Member- **Hon. K.R. Latchan** upon exemption of Death Duty. It must be noted that certain members of the Alliance Party voted against the motion and without the NFP support the motion would have been defeated. As always, it was the country that mattered and came first and in the recognition of that the Party voted for the motion.
- The formation of the Fiji Labour party, the imposition of the wage freeze, the Teachers strike of 1984 and the internal and personal differences of senior party stalwarts turned the 1986 party national Convention at Navua into a showdown. The Annual general meeting was adjourned and members left puzzled.
- The Adjourned AGM of the NFP was held later in 1986 at Ba where **Senator. Dr. B.S. Rakka** was elected the 6th President of the Party. **Senator. H.S. Golian** was elected as the General Secretary, **Mr. Vinod Patel** was elected as party Treasurer and **Mr. Noor Dean** was elected as the organizing Secretary of the party. In the midst of all these dramatic events, **Hon. S.M. Koya** relinquished the party leadership and **Hon. H.C. Sharma** was elected as the new leader of the NFP. He inherited the position of the Leader of the Opposition.



Mr & Mrs Jai Ram Reddy with Swami Rudrananda, 1985

The 1986 National Convention of the party also gave the powers to Mr. Jai Ram Reddy to negotiate a deal or possible electoral co-operation or understanding with the President of the Fiji Labour Party. This eventually resulted in the formation of the **NFP/ Labour Coalition**. **Dr. Timoci Bavadra** was elected as the Leader of the Coalition and Hon. H.C. Sharma was elected as the deputy Coalition Leader. This paved the way forward for the parties to prepare to take on the Alliance Party in another round of battle at the looming 1987 General elections.

A small group of party members were not happy with the Coalition with FLP and floated the idea of a de-facto NFP. Very few of them survived the heat of the campaign to file their nomination as candidates. Those who did lost their deposit. This speaks of the volume of support for the Coalition and where the main stream NFP members support lay. A few years later, many of them re-joined the party while a few left to take up other occupations or join newly formed Indian political parties in the 90's.

The 1987 General election campaign was again a three way battle between the Coalition, the Alliance and the Nationalists. As usual, Independent candidates added color to the election campaign but little to make any difference. The WUF fielded some candidates but failed miserably to win any seats. The Alliance Party tried it's best to hoodwink the voters by using the tactics of fear and dumb-founded allegations against the Coalition. The Coalition successfully centred it's campaign upon issues and organized it's forces. It was a hard and long campaign which we are sure hardly anyone will forget more particularly those who were part of it.

At the end of the count in 1987, the results stood at 28 seats for the Coalition and 24 seats for the Alliance Party. The Coalition Leader- **Dr. Timoci Bavadra** was sworn in by the **Governor- General- HE- The Rt Hon. Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau** as the 2nd Prime Minister of Fiji. Immediately after this ceremony, Dr. Bavadra addressed the nation from the footsteps of the Government Buildings in Suva and announced the first batch of his Cabinet Ministers which included NFP members.

The Full list of the NFP/ Labour Coalition Members as elected at the 1987 General Elections are as follows:-

Hon. Noor Dean (Bua/ Labasa Indian Communal); **Hon. Krishna Datt** (Macuata-East/ Savusavu Indian Communal); **Hon. Dr. S.P. Nandan** (Suva- Rural Indian Communal); **Hon.H.M. Patel** (Suva- City Indian Communal); **Hon. James S. Singh** (Nasinu/ Vunidawa Indian Communal); **Hon. Mahendra C. Vinod** (Nausori/ Levuka Indian Communal); **Hon. Samresan Pillay** (Ra/ Tavua Indian Communal); **Hon. Dr. B.S. Rakka** (Ba Indian Communal); **Hon. Mahendra P. Chaudhry** (Ba/ Lautoka- Rural Indian Communal); **Hon. Vinubhai Patel** (Lautoka



Members of the Bavadra led NFP/Labour Coalition Government with Speaker Militoni Leweniqila, 1987

Central Indian Communal); **Hon. Rishi Shankar** (Nadi Indian Communal); **Hon. H.C. Sharma** (Sigatoka Indian Communal); **Hon. Ratu Filimone Ralogaibau & Hon. Govind Sami** (Vanualevu- North/ West National); **Hon. Dr. Tupeni Baba & Hon. Navin C. Maharaj** (Suva-City National); **Hon. Joeli Kalou & Hon. Fida Hussien** (South- Eastern National); **Hon. Ratu Joe Nacola & Hon. Mohammed A. Bhamji** (North- Eastern National); **Hon. T. Sukanaivalu & Hon. Navin Patel** (North- Central National); **Hon. Dr. Timoci Bavadra & Hon. Davendra Singh** (North-Western National); **Hon. Ratu Mosese Volavola & Hon. N.N. Reddy** (South- Western National); **Hon. Edmund March** (Northern General National) and **Hon. Christopher H. Work** (Western General National).



Dr Timoci Bavadra
Prime Minister, 1987



Adi Kuini Vuikaba
Coalition Leader, 1989-91



Temo Sukanaivalu
NFP Stalwart

The NFP/ Labour Coalition Government-

The Full list of the Bavadra led NFP/ Labour Coalition Government is given below for benefit of or readers:-

Hon. Dr. Timoci U. Bavadra-	Prime Minister; Minister for Fijian Affairs, Home Affairs and Public Service Commission.
Hon. Harish C. Sharma-	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Housing, Local Governemnt, Urban Affairs & Information.
Hon. Senator Jai Ram Reddy-	Attorney- General & Minister for Justice.
Hon. Mahendra P. Chaudhry-	Minister of Finance & Economic Planning.
Hon. Dr. Satendra P. Nanadan-	Minister for Health & Social- Welfare.
Hon. Dr. Tupeni Baba-	Minister for Education; Youths & Sports.
Hon. Mohammed A. Bhamji-	Minster for Communications; Transports & Works.
Hon. Krishna Datt-	Minister for Foreign Affairs & Civil- Aviation.
Hon. Joeli Kalou-	Minister for Labour, Industry & Immigration.
Hon. Navin C. Maharaj-	Minister for Tourism; Trade & Commerce.
Hon. Ratu Joe Nacola-	Minister for Agriculture; Fisheries & Forests.
Hon. Ratu Mosese Volavola-	Minister for Lands; Energy & Mineral Resources.
Hon. Temo Sukanaivalu-	Minister of State for Rural Development, Rehabilitation & Relief Supplies.
Hon. Christopher H. Work-	Minister of State for Co-operatives & Consumer Affairs.

The Battle After The Coups Of 1987-



Dr Balwant S Rakka
NFP President, 1986-98

On May 14th, 1987, Lt- Col. Sitiveni Rabuka The Third in Command of the Fiji Military Forces carried out a Coup deposing the month old Coalition government taking members of the Coalition government hostage at gun point. They remained in custody for the next six days as the coup makers negotiated a deal with the then Governor- General to take over the reins of governance.

The illegal abrogation of the 1970 Constitution, the tacit support of the chiefs and lack of international pressure coupled with traditional allegiance led to the formation of the illegitimate Council of Advisors to the Governor General in late May, 1987 that saw the release of the Coalition members. Soon after that, the Governor- General appointed a Constitution Review Committee under the chairmanship of the former controversial Attorney General- Sir. John Falvey. There were representatives from the Alliance Party, the legal fraternity and the Coalition. Mr.

Jai Ram led the NFP delegation under the Coalition leadership. After some tense negotiations, the committee's deliberations led to the signing of the famous Deuba Accord as a recipe for the establishment of a government of national unity of the Coalition and the Alliance party.

However, that was not to be as Lt-Col. Rabuka and his troops staged the second coup and seized power. After this second takeover, Fiji was declared a Republic and the Governor- General was appointed the President of Fiji. The forceful imposition of the military government did last long as the government lacked the art of governance and the country was forced on the brink of bankruptcy. The Military perhaps realized that and handed the reins of power back to the President of Fiji in December, 1987 that resulted in the recall of the basically Alliance Party to form the 1st interim government.

Attempts were made to reconvene dialogue and consultation modeled on the Falvey Committee but threats by corrupt and racist elements on the new negotiation table cut the talks short as NFP leader- Mr. Jai Ram Reddy made it clear to the coup leader and his supporters that they can only succeed over his dead body. A lot of allegations had been made in the last 10 – 15 years against Mr. Reddy but his detractors have miserably failed to acknowledge the immense contribution he has made to the political, legal and socio- economic life of this country spanning a period of over three decades. His most notable contribution to the country was of course the 1997 Contribution but it seems people have completely forgotten the period after 1987 when Mr. Reddy led Coalition team alongside with Dr. Timoci Bavadra.

While opportunist politicians fled overseas looking for greener pastures and some power hungry people got hold of the carrots dangled to them by the military and interim government, Mr. Reddy remained steadfast upholding and fighting for essence, principles and restoration of parliamentary democracy and social justice in Fiji. There was rumours that some people acting on behalf of the Coalition collected huge sums of donations to finance the struggle for democracy in Fiji and help the victims of the coups. Who collected those donations under what pretence is still not known to the Coalition. It is a well known fact that those sums of monies were collected by the same people who in the late 1980's collected thousands of dollars from the farmers of Fiji promising resettlement in Argentina or a certain overseas country.

Mr. Jai Ram Reddy traveled with Dr. Timoci Bavadra to New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, India and many countries to publicize the struggle for the restoration of democracy in Fiji. They successfully applied international pressure in Fiji and actively participated in talks facilitated by the Governor- General to resolve the crisis in the aftermath of the 1987 coups. It is pity that political armatures have failed to grasp the truth of our history and based on hearsay basis interpreted Mr. Reddy's absence from Fiji during the international campaign in such a way that he deserted the people of Fiji. If Mr. Reddy is a deserter, What about Dr. Bavadra who was away with him?

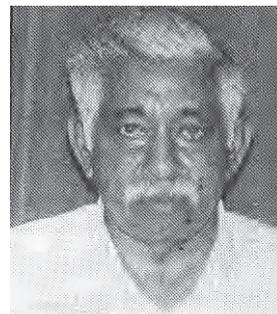


Vinod Patel
NFP Treasurer, 1986-2004



NFP Lautoka Branch

NFP leaders were among the first ones to be targeted by the military in the process of house search, arrests, intimidation, humiliation and torture. Members of the NFP, their families, friends and colleagues were subject to severe acts of brutality, harassment and discrimination. Our members and supporter were made to walk on the barbed wire, locked up in water tanks full of insects, made to work for the military personals deployed around the country, their crops and livestock were taken away at gun point, our businesses, schools, homes and offices were broken into and there were several cases where NFP members and supporters were ill-treated at the behest of our detractors who colluded with the oppressors for personal and political gains.



Ahmed Ali
General Secretary,
1991-92

Despite all these, the NFP leaders continued their struggle with total faith in Fiji. The NFP offered its full and unwavering support to its Coalition partner – be it the protest marches, harvest boycotts, legal battles, underground movements, organizing an effective network, raising funds, providing assistance to the disadvantaged or whatever challenges that came on the way. In this pursuit, Dr. Balwant Singh Rakka even abandoned his practice at Ba and his surgery became his office to launch the offensive against all any form of injustice meted out to the people by the oppressive Ratu Mara led interim regime.

Political memories are short. Some leaders, parties and politicians also suffer from memory lapse and some have developed a cunning and ungrateful habit of undermining historical facts. This has cost Fiji and Indians a lot in the recent past. How long can Fiji and Indians afford to be hoodwinked by such naïve and uneducated leaders is something only time will tell.

How can one forget the key role played by Mr. Reddy in saving certain unionists from going to jail after breaching the 1991 labour laws yet he and NFP are branded as an anti-worker party by the same group of people. How can one miss the significance of the patriotic speeches made by Mr. Jai Ram Reddy particularly the speech he made at Govind Park, Ba on the eve of Diwali in 1988 and yet we have power hungry politicians saying that Mr. Reddy was not on the scene after the 1987 coups. How can the history of the struggle after 1987 be complete without the mention of the work that was being done by the famous 'Chandaal Chaukri' of Ba in which nearly all the members of the NFP Ba Branch were involved risking their lives.

The Chandaal Chukri consisted of Master Ahmed Ali, Dr. B.S. Rakka, Mr. Vinod Patel, Master Praveen Prabhu, Ahmed Bhamji, Navin Patel, Sashi Patel, Mr. Ujagar Singh to name just a few of them. Mr. Vinod Patel, Mr. Shiu Nath Ratu Mosese Tuisawau amongst others were incarcerated after being severely tortured at gun point.

There was very active underground movement in the Rewa too which has always been hotbed of Indian struggle ever since the days of indenture. Some members of the group were severely beaten a few times and their works and movements were always under constant surveillance. Despite that, these brave warriors were always able to organize and achieve their targets on time. In the face of adversity, the Rewa Branch stood tall against the might of the Mara/ Rabuka regime. Some of the prominent leaders of that movement were Mr. Ram Sumeshwar Yadav; Dr. Ram K. Reddy, Mr. Sahadeo Prasad, Mr. Ram C. Sharma, Mr. Bhagwan Lal, Mr. Goukaran, Mr. Surendra Chand, Mr. Rajaram Chetty & Mr. Shiu Prasad Latchmi, Mr. Vinod kumar and Mr. Ram Deo, Master Wahid just to name a few.

In the Suva/ Nasinu corridor, Party loyalists and faithfuls in the person of Messers- Jagindra Singh, Ashok Balgovind, Jag Nadan, Gurmel Singh, Harnam S. Golian, Vidya Prasad, Fida Hussien, Dharendra Singh and numerous men, women and children who had Fiji at heart and were fighting for their rights. Navua, as usual remained politically quiet but there some very fearless activists such as Master Maguru, Shankar N. Singh, Mahadeo Laloo and Jhokan R. Narayan who were always present in party meetings and organizing the local units.

In Lautoka, there were activists like Mr. Jagannath Sami who at that time was the President of the Sugar Milling Staff Officers Association, Mr. Rama Bernard, Mr. Subba Naidu, Mr. Nagrathnam Naicker, Mr. Dharam Raj, Mr. Mohammed Yakub, Mr. Sharda Reddy, Mr. Yusuf Manu and Mr. Ayappa Reddy. Their determination and sense of duty and dedication maintained the morale of the community as they instilled courage and determination in them to fight for their rights amid constant threats and violence perpetrated by the coup makers and their supporters.

There were long standing NFP stalwarts like Messers Sharda Nand of Nadi, Subran Singh of Labasa, Niyamat Nabi & Atma Ram Sharma of Sigatoka, Narsamlu Sirdar & Krishna Sami Mudaliar of Rakiraki.



Gurmel Singh
NFP Stalwart

The NFP was effectively the beacon of hope for the Indian Community and their trust and faith in the party was not misplaced as events later vindicated NFP's uncompromising stand.

After the imposition of the 1990 Constitution, the interim Government began to prepare for the General Elections to return Fiji back to parliamentary democracy. The promulgation of the 1990 Constitution and the preparation for the elections was widely debated at the NFP/ Labour Convention.

The Coalition was divided upon two strategies or ideologies. The FLP strategy was a total boycott of the elections and seeking international pressure to force the review of the constitution. The NFP strategy was to participate in the elections and seek changes to the controversial parts of the constitution within the parliamentary framework through dialogue and consultation.

It was decided by the delegates present to allow the party leaders time to consult prominent political and social leaders as well as legal experts before taking any stand upon participation in the elections.

As such, numerous consultations were held by the party leaders locally and internationally. The overall feeling and view of most of the branches, experts and leaders consulted was to participate in the General Elections and seeks changes to the constitution through dialogue and consultation. The FLP was not satisfied with this consultation process and began to accuse the NFP of abandoning the Indian Community in its pursuit to enter Parliament. After a bitter debate at the August, **1991 National Convention of the Coalition**, the NFP and FLP parted ways. It was made clear at the Convention that the NFP would contest the elections and the FLP would boycott the polls.

The NFP began to prepare for the elections and announced its candidates in March, 1992. In the meantime, the FLP leaders discouraged voters not to register to vote as part of their boycott strategy. But the FLP leaders enrolled as voters themselves without letting the voters to know about that. Therefore, it was little surprise that the FLP decided in the 11th hour to contest the elections saying that the FLP was going to stop the NFP from entering Parliament because it said parliament was the last trap for Indians.

The 1992 General Election campaign deeply divided the Indian Community between the two sets of ideologies put forward by the NFP and FLP. The NFP slogan during the campaign was **'Each Vote for NFP is a Vote Against the 1990 Constitution'**. The results after the count was more painful as two senior NFP leaders- Dr. Balwant S. Rakka & Mr. Harish C. Sharma who were at the forefront of the struggle for Truth, Justice, Democracy & Dignity lost narrowly to FLP candidates. The FLP won 13 seats (all from the sugar cane belt) The NFP won 14 seats (one cane belt and 13 urban, peri-urban and rural seats around the country)

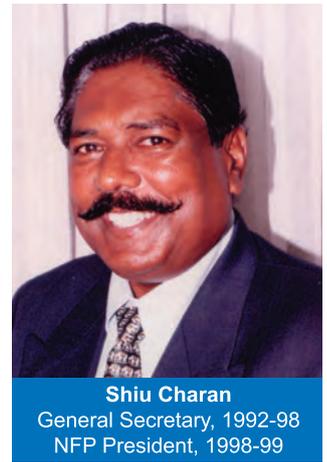
The reasons for such a close result are as follows:-

- Those two months prior to the General Elections in 1992, the NFP and the FLP joined forces to fight the March, 1992 Sugar Cane Growers Council Elections winning 32 of the 38 seats on the Council. Dr. B.S. Rakka who was the NFP president won in the Koronubu Sector with the highest number of votes. This co-operation between the parties led the voters to believe that a vote for either of the two parties would not make any difference.
- By the eve of the May, 1992 General Elections, voters in the cane belt areas had began to accept Mahendra Chaudhry as the next leader of the Cane Growers because of the success of his National Farmers Union in the SCGC polls and the two Harvest boycotts of 1990 and 1991 which had the full support of the NFP.



NFP Nasinu/Rewa Branch, 1992

- The use of NFU machinery, keeping the fire of the SCGC elections alive and using caste divisions of North- South, Hindu- Muslim and Gujarati, the FLP was able to make further inroads into the Indian Electorate. The FLP even did not spare Hon. A.D. Patel in its criticisms and used the 1977 election battle between Mr. S.M. Koya and Mr. J. R. Reddy to its full advantage. As if this was not enough, the FLP decried the country's independence saying it should not have been attained
- The FLP labeled the NFP as Businessmen and Lawyer party saying it was championing the cause of the elite class which swayed the voters away from the NFP. The emotional appeal by the FLP to the Indians created a smoke-screen. Then many of the Indian voters have not been able to free themselves from these beliefs and of late have begun to regard the FLP as their saviour. An examination of the FLP campaigns since then against the NFP has always been based upon similar lines thus brain-washing the gullible and achieving nothing apart from creating more chaos in Fiji generally and misery for its voters specifically.



Shiu Charan
General Secretary, 1992-98
NFP President, 1998-99

Those elected in the 1992 General Elections under the NFP ticket Parliament were :-

Hon. J.R. Reddy (Lautoka- Rural); **Hon. N.S. Arjun** (Nasinu- North/ Nausori); **Hon. Shiu Charan** (Lami/ Kadavu/ Naitasiri- South); **Hon. H. S. Golian** (Nasinu- East/ Rewa- East); **Hon. S.C. Gulabdass** (Cakaudrove); **Hon. A. A. Hussien** (Lautoka City-Central); **Hon. S.A. Khaiyum** (Colo-i- Suva/ Nasinu- South); **Hon. D.S. Naidu** (Nadi- Urban); **Hon. H.M. Patel** (Suva City- Central); **Hon. V.S. Patel** (Ba- Urban); **Hon. J.R. Raman** (Suva City- Suburban); **Hon. Maan Singh** (Navosa/ Serua/ Namosi/ Rewa- West/ Naitasiri- West); **Hon. R.P. Singh** (Bua) & **Hon. R.S. Yadav** (Tailevu/ Ra- East/ Lau/ Lomaiviti/ Rotuma)

The following changes took place within the party rank and file and the parliamentary party from 1992 to 1993:-

- Following the Elections of 1992, Hon. Jai Ram Reddy was elected as the party leader and subsequently the Leader of the Opposition. Hon. Narendra Singh Arjun was elected as the deputy leader and Hon. James R. Raman was elected as the Opposition Whip.
- At the 1992 Annual National Convention of the party, Dr. B. S. Rakha was retained as the Party President and Mr. H.C. Sharma as Senior Vice President. **Hon. Shiu Charan** was elected as General secretary of the party and Mr. Azmat Ali Khan as the Organizing Secretary. Hon. Vinod Patel retained the position of the Treasurer.



Aptar Singh
Won the historic Nausori
By-election, 1993

- The untimely death of **Hon. Ram S. Yadav** in November, 1992 forced the party to fight the historic Nausori By- Election in May, 1993. At the time of the By- Election, the NFP and FLP had 13 seats each and the 14th seat was to decide which leader would take up the position of the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Indian Community in Fiji. It is note worthy that the FLP colluded with the **Fijian Nationalist United Front** led by Hon. Sakeasi Butadroka to wrest the position of the Leader of the Opposition from Hon. J.R. Reddy but the then President of Fiji HE. The Rt Hon. Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau rejected the FLP/ FNUF call and retained Mr. Reddy as the Leader earlier in the life of the 1992-1993 parliament. **Hon. Aptar Singh** won the Nausori By- Election with 2589 votes to Labour's Ram Chand who managed to secure 1390 votes only and Hon. J.R. Reddy carried on as the Leader of the Opposition.

- **Mr. Dijendra P. Singh** (a party stalwart of Ba) was endorsed as the party candidate for the Ba- Rural/ Mogodro Constituency By- Election which was scheduled to be held in December, 1993. This seat was left vacant after the death of an FLP Member- Hon. Dr. K.S. Naidu. This by- election was never held as Parliament was dissolved and Fiji headed for a snap election following the defeat of the SVT / GVP Coalition Governments 2nd Budget on the floor of the lower house.

During that period (1992-93) the NFP achieved the following despite its limited membership in the House of the Representatives:-

1. The Establishment of a **Cabinet Sub- Committee** to facilitate dialogue and consultation upon the Review of the 1990 Constitution.
2. Exposed the **\$10m Anthony Stephans Deal** with Governemnt resulting into the Kermode Commission of Inquiry.
3. Being a party to the **Prime Ministers Relief Supplies Committee** and making meaning contributions resulting into the historic distribution of relief supplies to the victims of Cyclone Kina and the Flood in it's aftermath.
4. Actively participating in the formulation of the **Terms of Reference for the Commission of Inquiry to Review the 1990 Constitution**.
5. Calling for Division upon the **1994 Appropriation Bill** that resulted in the defeat of the uncaring 2nd Budget of the SVT/ GVP Coalition Government.
6. Established the **Fiji Cane Growers Association** to serve the cane-farmers of Fiji with honesty and integrity with the objective of depoliticalizing the Sugar Industry.
7. Neutralized the Ultra Nationalist Fijian elements and groups through its moderate approach upon sensitive national issues.

After the defeat of the 1st Rabuka Government, Fiji had to face another General Election. The 1994 snap elections returned the **SVT/GVP Coalition Government** back to power. The NFP increased it's parliamentary membership from 14 to 20 leaving 7 seats to the FLP . The newly formed **Fijian Association Party** managed to win 5 seats and the **All Nationals Congress** bagged one seat.

All the 14 sitting NFP Members of Parliament were re-elected. The six new Members elected on the NFP ticket in 1994 were:-

Hon. H.C. Sharma (Malomalalo- North/ Nadi- Rural); **Hon. M.A. Khalil** (Cuvu/ Malomalalo- South/ Sigatoka- Urban); **Hon. Dharendra Kumar** (Ra- Central); **Hon. Shree Ramlu** (Labasa- Cen tral); **Hon. Parmod Chand** (Macuata- East) & **Hon. C.J. Singh** (Macuata- West)

The NFP Parliamentary caucus re-elected **Hon. J.R. Reddy** as the party leader and he was later appointed by the President as the Leader of the Opposition. **Hon. H.C. Sharma** was elected as the new deputy leader and **Hon. J.R. Raman** retained the position of the Opposition Whip. **Mr. Diwakar Prasad** was nominated by the



party for position of the Deputy of the House and he was elected unopposed to the position at the first sitting of the new House.

The party went through further developments in the year 1994. A Womens Wing and Youth Movement of the NFP was established in April, 1994 at Lautoka. The Annual National Covention of the party held in June at Suva was addressed by **Justice Marcus Einfield** (A Federal High Court Judge of Australia) Almost all the party Executives retained their position at this Convention. The new entrants were to the Executive Committee were Mr. Diwarkar Prasad and **Mr. Jagannath Sami**.

During the period 1994 to 1999, the following changes took place within the party rank and file and in the parliamentary party:-

- **Hon. Munsami Chinkannu** was elected to Parliament unopposed in late 1994 who replaced Hon. Shree Ramlu who passed away in June, 1994. This was only possible after an understanding between the NFP and FLP that no party would contest any seat left vacant by a member of another party. Time and history testifies who breached this pact when and how.
- The NFP hired constitutional experts to prepare its submission to the **Reeves Commission** that was working to review the 1990 Constitution. The party worked hard to raise funds for this exercise. Upon an invitation by the NFP and Mr. Reddy's inclusive approach The Fiji Labour Party joined in the process in the later stages. Apart from the input by the Party, we will always remain grateful to **Professor Yash Ghai** (world renowned constitutional lawyer) who compiled the 72 page submission and it's executive summary. Professor Y. Ghai even agreed to travel from Hong Kong despite his busy schedule to be here on time to present and explain certain features / proposals contained in the submission. Apart from Professor Ghai, Hon. J.R. Reddy also addressed the Reeves Commission on 24th and 25th of August , 1995.



Jagannath Sami
Organising Secretary, 1994

It is pleasing to note after the tabling of the Reeves Report in 1996 and the successful evolution of the 1997 Constitution that most of the proposals made by the **NFP/ FLP Submission** were adopted. However, the FLP as usual decried the Constitution Amendment Bill, 1997 and nearly rocked the boat.

- The NFP fully supported the FLP candidate- Gaffar Ahmed in the **Ba By- Election** in September, 1995. The Ba- East/ Tavua- Rural seat was left vacant after the death of the FLP member- Hon. Hardayal Singh. Mr. Ahmed was challenged in that By-election by one **Anil Chandra** of Ba who was the candidate of the newly formed **Janata Party**. The Janata Party posed a real danger for the FLP given it's support which was on the wane after the 1994 snap elections and the NFP came to the aid of the FLP. Hon. J.R. Reddy addressed several meetings that boosted the morale of the FLP in that By-election and finally led to the election of the FLP candidate to Parliament.
- **Hon. J.R. Reddy** made an historic address to the **Great Council of Chiefs** in June, 1997. He accepted the invitation of the then Prime Minister- Major General Sitiveni Rabuka and became the first Indo-Fijian

Historic vote for freedom

AT 3.31pm yesterday, history was made. That was the moment when the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dr Apenisa Kurisaqila, declared the motion to read the Constitution Amendment Bill for the third time carried.

With an echo of the chorus of "aye" still reverberating around the chamber, the Speaker calmly called for those against to say "no". He was answered by silence and told the House: "The ayes have it."

The outcome of the resultant division was never in doubt from that moment on. The formal vote confirmed the voices and the Bill was passed without dissent.

This vote changes the course of Fiji's destiny. From a Constitution based on race, we are now moving towards a set of guiding principles that will provide equal opportunity — and equal representation — for all, while guaranteeing solid recognition for the indigenous Fijians' historic relationship with and ownership of their land.

THE Fiji Times

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The effects will be profound and far-reaching.

The way is now clear for the Government — a multiracial government — to address the problems of ALTA and land leases for the benefit of all. It will be no easy task but without the passing of this Bill it could well have been an impossible one.

The end of this uncertainty will encourage a renaissance in the nation's economic and commercial life. Already, consumer confidence has begun to lift and yesterday's vote will propel it to full flight.

This means more — and better — employment, a

robust private sector and a secure investment environment, all of which we have lacked these past 10 years.

Our MPs also voted yesterday to put Fiji back on the world's roll of progressive democracies unscathed by the stain of racism. We very probably can — and should — be re-admitted to the Commonwealth. Aid and trade will both be easier to find.

And even though they are almost certainly unaware of it, our leaders have voted for a re-birth of the nation's cultural identity. Our writers, artists, musicians will all benefit from the sense of freedom without which artistic achievement can be stunted.

But the 1997 Constitution Amendment Act (assuming it survives the Senate) will be but a beginning. As Opposition Leader Jai Ram Reddy pointed out last night, more needs to be done to bring the different communities together.

Mr Reddy and Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka have shown what can be achieved through cooperation and mutual respect.

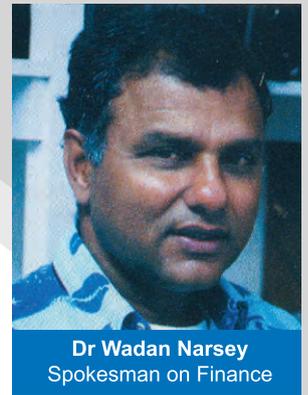
It is now up to everyone else to follow their lead.

Friday, July 4, 1997

Citizen of Fiji to address that august forum. After his address, Hon. J.R. Reddy was not only able to win the support of the chiefs for the new constitution but their hearts too. That address sealed a sad and dark chapter of the history of Fiji dominated by fear of dominance, suspicion, mistrust and communalism. It healed the wounds of 1987 and united all the people of Fiji as never before. No other Indo- Fijian leader was given such grand reception and respect by the GCC. It was by any account a defining moment in the history of Fiji and the NFP.

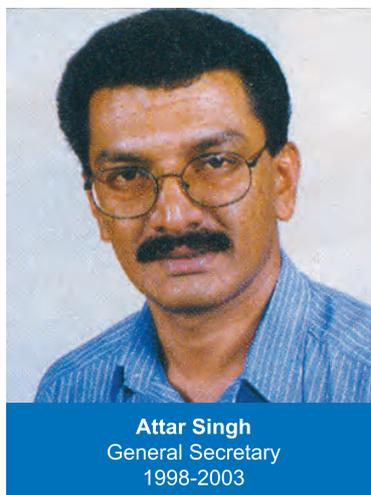
- *The NFP Members of the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee to review the 1990 Constitution were as follows:-*

Hon. J.R. Reddy; Hon. H.C. Sharma; Hon. N.S. Arjun; Hon. J.R. Raman; Hon. Raman P. Singh; Hon. Ali. A. Hussien; Hon. S.A. Khaiyum & Hon. Vinod S. Patel.



- The Successful passage of the **1997 Constitution Amendment Bill** in July, 1997 is most invaluable gift bequeathed by the party to the country. No historian can ignore or undermine this fact that it was the NFP strategy that succeeded and brought about the changes required in the letter of the law and the medium of approach to resolve political and communal conflicts.

It may be worthy to note that apart from the NFP and all those who thought likewise, many people never thought that the review of the 1990 Constitution would ever come about. The views expressed by a senior FLP Member- **Hon. Krishna Datt** at that time in 1994 clearly reflected these pessimistic sentiments when he said that a review of the 1990 Constitution is not possible in 30 years or even after three generations. He said this during his maiden address in 1994 but participated in the review process, praised the architects, helped crucified them in 1999 and of late has emerged as a major beneficiary of the review situation. What a journey in transition!

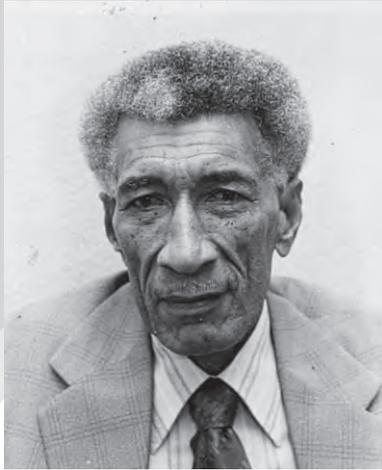


The NFP and Hon. J.R. Reddy role they have played in the evolution of the 1997 Constitution. The NFP set Fiji on the path of reconstruction, reconciliation and right-political and electoral setbacks, the numerous NFP stands and will always stand tall in the annals of history for all that it has done and given to Fiji and its entire people.

are acclaimed internationally for the evolution of the 1997 Constitution. The reconstruction, reconciliation and right-political and electoral setbacks, the tall in the annals of history for all that its entire people.

- **Hon. Dr. Wadan Narsey** was elected unopposed to Parliament on the NFP ticket in late 1997 from the Suva City- Central Indian Communal Constituency. He replaced Hon. H.M. Patel who passed away in early 1997. Since then, Hon. Dr. Narsey was the **Opposition spokesman on Finance and economic issues**. His Budget replies and contribution on these matters were received positively by major stakeholders like Government, Trade Union Movement and Employers.
- The **1998 Annual National Convention** of the NFP was held at Rakiraki in May, 1998. At this convention, the party was sad to farewell Dr. B. S. Rakka as it's National President after 12 years of service. He was replaced by **Hon. Shiu Charan** who served as the General Secretary of the party since 1992. Trade Unionist and party stalwart- **Mr. Attar Singh** was elected as the new General Secretary.
- The sudden death of Hon. Munsami Chinkannu necessitated a **By- Election in Labasa** in May, 1998. As agreed between the NFP and the FLP, no party was to contest the seat left vacant by a member of the other party. However, the FLP breached this and fielded Muthu Swamy as its candidate in the July, By-election. Whipping up fear, emotions and misconceptions, the FLP won the Labasa By-election.

at in 2008



NFP Parliamentarians (L-R) : Ratu Soso Katonivere (1982-86), Dr Santa Singh (1977-86) and Jai Raj Singh (1977-86)



Y P Reddy
Trustee & Former Chairman, NFP Management Board.

Fiji Times

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India backs Reddy

By MARGARET WISE

THE Indian government is standing by Opposition leader Jai Ram Reddy and Fiji's re-admission to the Commonwealth, a senior External Affairs Ministry official confirmed yesterday.

And the official said their government had received Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka's letter and was pleased with his assurances on the restoration of full relations between India and Fiji.

The official said that although India had yet to make an official announcement of its position on Fiji's Commonwealth membership, reports conveyed by Mr

Reddy were accurate.

"It is just a matter of two to three days before India makes its official position known and you should go by what Mr Reddy has reported to your government," the official said.

The statement by the Indian official follows reports that Fiji Labour Party leader Mahendra Chaudhry was in New Delhi to advise against support for Fiji's readmission.

Mr Chaudhry's stance has attracted growing criticism from within his party.

When the official was told that Mr Chaudhry had said from New Delhi that it would be preposterous for the Commonwealth to admit Fiji, the official said: "He didn't say anything like that. Mr Chaudhry has been going along with every-

thing from the beginning and I think he will go along too on this issue.

"The Indian government met Mr Chaudhry because we also wanted to hear his views but it now seems he is a lone voice of dissent."

Senior Labour party members met in Suva yesterday to discuss the party's leadership.

Although party president Jokapeci Korol said the meeting was called two weeks ago, a senior member who attended said talks centred around "revamping the party".

He refused to elaborate but it is understood that there was strong concern about Mr Chaudhry's trip.

The member denied there was a move to oust Mr Chaudhry from the leadership of the party.

Meanwhile the Indian official said their government was also pleased with the indication by Mr Rabuka that Government would deal with the resolution of land issue with the same approach of dialogue and consensus used in the review of the Constitution.

The official said that Mr Reddy had updated Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral on discussions relating to land issues when they met last week.

"We have received a very positive letter from Prime Minister Rabuka," the official said.

"He was also positive about the resolution of agricultural leases under ALTA. In fact Mr Reddy had already informed us about these developments," he said.

NFP 1998 - 2008

ENFORCEMENT OF THE 1997 CONSTITUTION

The 1997 Constitution became the supreme law of Fiji on 27th July 1998. The one year timeline given after the passage of the Constitution in July 1997 was to draw up and implement consequential legislation as provided for under the Constitution. A new beginning for Fiji was envisaged.



Sitting L-R: Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara (President) and Sir Paul Reeves (Chairman - FCRC).
Standing L-R: Tomasi Vakatora (Member FCRC), Jai Ram Reddy (Leader of the Opposition),
Sitiveni Rabuka (Prime Minister) and Dr Brij Lal (Member FCRC)

JPSC ON LAND

In the spirit of cooperation that resulted in the formulation of the 1997 Constitution, Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka and NFP & Leader of the Opposition Mr Jai Ram Reddy began work on formulating a framework to find an amicable solution to expiring of leases under the Agricultural Landlord & Tenant Act (ALTA).

On 6th March 1998, the House of Representatives unanimously approved the Terms of Reference for the JPSC on ALTA. Those who voted for the Terms of Reference included Fiji Labour Party and its parliamentary leader Mahendra Chaudhry who had tried to move illogical amendments to the motion to establish the JPSC, just like FLP's earlier stance on the Constitution Amendment Bill.

The JPSC on land established the platform for constructive dialogue. Contrary to criticism from the FLP, the talks were beginning to positively impact on both the landowning and tenant community. This was also helped by the fact that for the first time people were beginning to see genuine racial harmony after the passage of the Constitution Amendment Bill in 1997. So much so that in January 1998, Mr Reddy during a tour of the Northern Division, was accorded a full traditional Fijian ceremony of welcome by the people of Naseakula village when he went to meet the then Tui Labasa Ratu Tevita Qomate Ritova.

After the traditional welcome, Ratu Tevita assured Mr Reddy that all expiring land leases under his jurisdiction would be renewed. The Daily Post of 14th January 1998 quoted Ratu Tevita as saying, "The only way for Fiji to prosper is to have all races work side by side".

According to the Daily Post report, Ratu Tevita saw no problem for his land to be used by Indian tenants as has been done for the last 30 years. He indicated to the Indian tenants present at the meeting not to panic at statements made by political opportunists.

Trust is the key

PEOPLE in this country should learn to genuinely trust each other. It is the only way the multi-party government concept will work.

With trust, age-old inter-communal rivalry, deeply-entrenched as it may seem, can be weakened.

Trust starves the seed of suspicion and promotes peaceful co-existence among all citizens of the country.

Everything falls apart if that trust disintegrates, through greed for power and resources.

One of the resources is land. It is always a sensitive issue that should be treated with care — and trust among landowners and tenants.

Cabinet has set in motion a process to resolve the land issue. A Cabinet sub-committee has been named this week to co-ordinate government action on land-related issues including the resolution of the Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act.

In due course, the committee will be enlarged to include Opposition Leader Jai Ram Reddy and sugar industry administrators.

THE Fiji Times

EDITORIAL COMMENT

It is the most sensible way to tackle the problem — through dialogue, not confrontation. Dialogue has to be conducted in the same spirit the Constitution Amendment Bill was passed.

The Fijian, as majority landowner, thinks his interest is paramount. He treasures the right to determine the use of his own land and reap maximum benefit from it.

The tenant, mostly Indian farmers, wants security of tenure to invest and plan long-term for his family's future.

The two need each other. They have to live alongside each other and both benefit from that coexistence.

Above all, they need to trust each other. Only they can best resolve their problems together amicably. Not a third party.

When people start using land as a political pawn for their own agenda, it enrages the landowners and inflames the feeling of distrust and suspicion.

That is why Mahendra Chaudhry's private mission to India is so unpopular. He has tried to convince Indian leaders to consider land and other matters as a pre-requisite to supporting Fiji's bid to re-enter the Commonwealth.

Political leaders who attempt to destabilise the country through revolutionary means, and through overseas excursions seeking sanctions and external pressure to achieve a political objective have to be discouraged.

Most Indians, including some from his own Labour camp, are not too convinced about the sense and purpose of Mr Chaudhry's mission.

It has been totally counter-productive.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1997

Ratu Tevita was obviously referring to Mahendra Chaudhry and his antics after the passage of the Constitution Amendment Bill. In early September 1997, Chaudhry went to India to try and persuade the government of Indian Prime Minister I K Gujral not to support Fiji's re-entry into the Commonwealth after the country was expelled following the two coups of 1987. Chaudhry claimed the Constitution promoted racial discrimination and that the land issue had not been resolved in Fiji. This was a preposterous lie. The trip was also intended to discredit Mr Reddy who went to India almost at the same time to inform them that the Indo-Fijian community had achieved a just and fair Constitution.

The Fiji Times editorial of 10th September 1997 stated that Chaudhry's trip smacked of hypocrisy saying how could a person condemn something which he had agreed to only two months earlier. The Fiji Times was referring to Chaudhry's vote in favour of the Constitution Amendment Bill.

On 12th September 1997, The Fiji Times front page headline stated "India backs Reddy" and quoted an Indian government official as describing Chaudhry as a "lone voice of dissent". The Fiji Times editorial on the same issue stated that people of Fiji should learn to genuinely trust each other saying it was the only way the land issue could be resolved.

Mr Reddy and the NFP called for the land lease problems saying so one side, no one point of view can the wider interests of the people nation.

As 1998 drew to an end, the elephant and Mr Rabuka was beginning to begin to move away from its Trust Act (NLTA) as the legislation beginning to see the virtues of ALTA land in Fiji.



patience and perseverance in dealing with lutions could not be found overnight. "No prevail. Compromises will have to made in and the country", Mr Reddy stated to the

ment of trust being nurtured by Mr Reddy bear fruits. The Native Land Trust Board was stubborn position of sticking to Native Land governing all native land in the country and as the legislation governing all agricultural

In 1998 135 agricultural leases, most of them belonging to cane farmers expired. 101 of these leases were renewed. The rest of the tenants were resettled at Government developed land like Vakabalea, Navua. Today the land at Vakabalea which Chaudhry had written off saying it wasn't even suitable to cultivate dalo, is a flourishing vegetable area with farmers raking in cash money each week.

The term and life of the JPSC on ALTA expired upon dissolution of Parliament in March 1999, two months before Fiji went to the polls under the provisions of the 1997 Constitution. But before that Chaudhry and the Labour Party submitted to the JPSC that a solution to the land issue should be left to a "more representative government" after the elections. In the FLP submission to JPSC, Chaudhry demanded 75 year leases and fair compensation for developments on a lease holding and for the psychological trauma caused to tenant farmers and their families upon eviction. This proved to be a hollow statement after the 1999 elections.

THE 1999 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Parliament was dissolved in March 1999 as final preparations were being done to hold Fiji's first general elections under the provisions of the 1997 Constitution.

In the spirit of the Constitution, which envisages politics of cooperation and consensus, pre-election multiracial coalitions were formed. The NFP formed a coalition with Sitiveni Rabuka's Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei Party (SVT and David Pickering's United General Party (UGP). This coalition was formed in the spirit of the Constitution and success of Mr Reddy and Mr Rabuka in attaining this remarkable achievement.

On the other hand Mahendra Chaudhry's Fiji Labour Party formed a coalition with Adi Kuini Vuikaba Speed's Fijian Association Party (FAP) and Apisai Tora's Party of National Unity (PANU).

The NFP/SVT/UGP Coalition preached to the electorate the salient features of the Constitution saying it formed the foundation of true nationhood and would improve the people's daily lives. On the other hand, the FLP/FAP/PANU Coalition conducted a negative campaign against the Constitution saying it would not provide them with food and water. This Coalition claimed it was their manifesto which would alleviate their plight. The FLP manifesto promised a solution to the land lease problem, a minimum weekly wage of \$120.00 to workers \$150.00 a month allowance to elderly and the pensioners, massive assistance to the sugar industry etc.

The NFP/SVT/UGP Coalition had signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) under which ground rules for a Coalition Cabinet were established to prevent disagreements and also resolve differences if they arose. Under the MOA, the SVT Leader (Mr Rabuka) was to become Prime Minister and the NFP Leader (Mr Reddy) the Deputy Prime Minister if the Coalition won the elections.

During the campaign period, the FLP/ Labour stalwart Dr Tupeni Baba as Prime Minister in meetings, he was introduced as the PM

Under the 1997 Constitution, the elective Voting System (ALV). This required minded parties. Preferences were there – 23 Fijian Communal, 19 Indian Communal, 3 General Elector Communal and 25 Open



Narendra Reddy
NFP Stalwart

FAP/PANU Coalition portrayed La-Minister designate. In meetings after designate and was the main speaker.

tions had to be fought on the Alternating of preferences amongst like-fore allocated for the 71 Constituencies munal, 3 General Elector Communal, Constituencies.

The NFP fielded a highly capable line-up of 30 candidates for the 19 Indian Communal and 11 Open Constituencies. The candidates were professionals – lawyers like Mr Reddy, Mr Dharendra Kumar and Mr Dorsami Naidu, doctors like Dr Mridula Sainath and Dr Bijen Ram, trade unionists like Mr James Raman, Mr Attar Singh, Mr Diwan Shankar and Mr Jagannath Sami, school principals like Mrs Savitri Chauhan, social workers like Mrs Manjuwati Verma and Mr Narendra Reddy and academics like Dr Wadan Narsey and Dr Biman Prasad. This was and probably will be the most qualified group of professionals ever to fight a general elections under any party's banner in Fiji's history.

When the time came for allocation of preferences, the NFP gave its first preference in the 14 Open seats it did not contest to the SVT (13 first preferences) and UGP (1 first preference). The NFP gave its 2nd preference to the Fiji Labour Party in Indian Communal Constituencies.

But the FLP had other ideas.

For the May 1999 general elections, Mr Chaudhry as FLP Secretary-General and Registered Officer, made sure that the NFP and even SVT were ranked last in its list of preferences, below parties like the Nationalists and VLV (Christian Democratic Alliance). These parties promoted racial and religious intolerance were against the 1997 Constitution, wanted to bring back the Sunday Ban and campaigned for ALTA to be scrapped. In three constituencies the FLP gave VLV its first preference and in 19 other constituencies its second preference. When asked on Radio Navtarang talkback show four days before the start of the 1999 elections on why the NFP was ranked last, Chaudhry replied in Hindi that "NFP was the biggest enemy of FLP and it was only fair that enemies were treated with contempt".

The first elections under the 1997 Constitution changed the political landscape. The NFP failed to win a single

seat and secured 34 percent of Indo-Fijian votes. The SVT won 8 Fijian seats despite securing about 40% of Fijian votes. The UGP won two seats including the Suva Open Constituency.

The Labour Party won 37 seats, enough to form a government on its own. The FAP won 11 seats, PANU 4 seats, Ratu Epeli Ganilau's VLV won 3 seats, Independents 5 seats and Nationalists 1 seat. The FLP had the support of FAP, PANU, the VLV and two Independents.

Therefore the FLP led government had the support of 56 members in the House of Representatives: FLP – 37; FAP – 11; PANU- 4; VLV – 3 and Independents – 2. It therefore had a massive 81% majority while the Opposition had 15 Members.

Upon the conclusion of the elections, Mahendra Chaudhry was appointed as Fiji's first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister. This move initially dismayed other coalition partners as they expected Dr Tupeni Baba to become PM. When asked in his post-election press conference as to who should become the PM, Mr Jai Ram Reddy had said the leader of the coalition and the largest party in parliament was entitled to become PM. That leader was M P Chaudhry.

The FLP also denied the SVT its constitutional right to be in Cabinet as per Section 99 of the Constitution that stipulates that any party which has won 10% or more of seats in the 71 member Lower House is entitled to be invited to be part of Cabinet. The FLP claimed the SVT was imposing too many conditions that were unacceptable.

For the one year FLP led government took office, it was embroiled in controversies. Firstly, Rajendra Chaudhry, M P Chaudhry's son was appointed the PM's private secretary. Secondly, the PM's personal home was renovated using taxpayers' funds. There were countless other policy blunders. The only answer coming from government was "Everybody should shut up because we have the mandate". The social issues were not fulfilled, especially implementing a national minimum wage and giving \$150.00 per month to elderly Members. Above all, there were bitter in-fighting especially with FAP



Jagindra Singh
President, 1999-2004

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Most seriously, the FLP government had a running battle with the media. When the media started exposing FLP's betrayal of promises, the Chaudhry administration accused it of trying to bring down the government. The government also made two fatal mistakes, It tried to bulldoze its way to get the Land Use Commission approved and introduced two bills in early part of year 2000 to make changes to the Constitution which they described as "editorial changes".

The FLP reneged on its promise to give long term leases and proposed only 30 year tenure. But it proposed to increase land rental from 6% of Un-improved Capital Value of Land (UCV) to 10% of UCV. This was later adopted by Laisenia Qarase's government after 2001 elections. The FLP also introduced two bills in parliament to revert Crown Schedule A & B lands to native land despite a recommendation by the Burns Commission in 1960 that the land should remain in control of the Crown or State for use by the disadvantaged. The government of Ratu Mara had tried reverting these lands to native land but could not because the NFP strongly opposed it with very good reasons. Even Sitiveni Rabuka attempted to do the same in 1996 but agreed not to do so after strong arguments by Mr Jai Ram Reddy.

RE-JUVENATING NFP

As the hastily cobbled together coalition of warring factions in government under the leadership of M P Chaudhry made repeated mistakes, the NFP began to re-build itself. Mr Reddy stepped down as party leader and in November 1999 was appointed by the Judicial Legal Services Commission as President of the Fiji Court of Appeal. His exit from politics was dignified and graceful.

The NFP underwent changes to its hierarchy. Mr Jagindra Singh of Suva became President and Mr Attar Singh remained as general secretary. The party, despite being out of parliament never shirked its role as a competent critic offering solutions. But the party's suggestions were ignored. When racial tension began to mount in early 2000 soon after the FLP led government tried to amend the Constitution, the NFP urged radical elements

to resolve problems through dialogue
ing consequences for the nation. The
to prevail on all sides and for the rule
times.

The NFP's support base was gaining
tions held in October 1999, less than
Labour suffered humiliating defeats
NFP/SVT/NFP Coalition made a clean
history by winning all 20 seats. Simi-
Branch meetings were well attended.
in March 2000 recorded an attendance
2pm (a month before the coup) 193
ing. The NFP was well and truly on the
2000 coup put paid to that because of
coup.



Chandu Umaria
Lord Mayor of Suva 1999-2004

as confrontation would have devastat-
NFP repeatedly called for cooler heads
of law to be followed and upheld at all

momentum. During the municipal elec-
5 months after the general elections,
in Suva City, Ba and Nadi. In Suva, the
sweep for the first time in the Council's
lar results were recorded in Ba and Nadi.
For example the Tavua branch meeting
of 150 people. In Suva, on a Sunday at
people attended the Suva Branch meet-
path to regaining its lost glory. But the
the widening racial divide created by the

COUP OF MAY 2000

On Friday 19th May 2000, a group of indigenous Fijians marched in Suva City protesting against the government. The permit for the march was earlier rejected by government's Home Affairs Minister Jioji Uluinakauvadra but M P Chaudhry overturned the decision and allowed the march. That march proved fatal for government and later that morning CRW rebel soldiers carried out the coup led by George Speight.

Mr Chaudhry's government was deposed and he along with most of his Members of Parliament were held hostage for 56 days in Parliament by George Speight's group. The aftermath of the coup also showed that candidates (most were MPs) that Chaudhry gave first and second preferences to in 1999 were supporting the coup.

But Chaudhry's biggest enemy, the NFP and its general secretary Attar Singh were the strongest opposition against the coup describing it as treasonous; calling for the restoration of the FLP led government and the 1997 Constitution. His Members of Parliament who were released after only 48 hours in captivity plus those who were not held hostage in the first place were nowhere to be seen or heard.

It was Attar Singh and NFP who called Speight's actions treasonous, called for the restoration of Chaudhry's government, made oral and written submissions to the Police and Army to intervene and bring to an end the acts of terrorism and thuggery in Muaniwani, led the boycott of the Indo-Fijian Community of Asesela Ravuvu's Constitution Inquiry Committee and labeled as traitors the four Indo-Fijians who joined this Inquiry team.

When M P Chaudhry and others were released, a smear campaign was conducted against the NFP. Businessmen and former NFP politicians were accused of financing the coup. To date not a single shred of evidence has been produced by M P Chaudhry, police or military to implicate the NFP.



Sushil Ram
Assistant General Secretary



Praveen Bala
Longest Serving Mayor of Ba

The coup heaped untold suffering and misery on the ordinary people. The army abrogated the Constitution, declared martial law for 48 hours and President Ratu Mara was asked to step down and taken by the navy to his Lau home.

An interim civilian government was formed by the military headed by Laisenia Qarase – a banking executive of Fiji Development Bank and Merchant Finance, who was also a Senator in the deposed parliament. Mr Jai Ram Reddy resigned as President of Fiji Court of Appeal after abrogation of the Constitution. This was a principled decision.

2001 GENERAL ELECTIONS

A constitutional legal case was filed in the High Court of Fiji in the name of a Muaniweni farmer Chandrika Prasad challenging the abrogation of the Constitution. The High Court ruled that the abrogation was unlawful. This was upheld by the Fiji Court of Appeal in March 2001.

Instead of re-claiming his position as PM, M P Chaudhry asked President Ratu Josefa Iloilo to dissolve parliament saying an election would give fresh mandate to the people. Ratu Josefa duly did that and appointed a caretaker administration headed by

In the meantime the Soqosoqo Dua-with Qarase becoming its leader. Moderates Coalition was formed with eral Party and the New Labour Unity after he was denied leadership of

A comprehensive manifesto was campaign was launched at Saras- was appointed as party leader and Prasad stepped down from the post appointed as leader and Nadi lawyer



Dr Biman Prasad
NFP Stalwart

vata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) was formed The NFP also started preparations. A the Fijian Association Party, United Gen- Party (NLUP) formed by Dr Tupeni Baba the Labour Party.

printed and released publicly and the wati College, Nausori. Dr Biman Prasad Attar Singh as deputy leader. However, Dr for personal reasons and Mr Singh was Dorsami Naidu as deputy leader.

2001 ELECTION OUTCOME

The 2001 general elections were held between August 25th and September 1st . Laisenia Qarase's newly formed SDL Party won 31 seats, Chaudhry's Labour Party 27 seats, George Speight's Conservative Alliance Matanitu Vanua Party 6 seats (include Speight himself despite being in custody), two Independents from Rotuma (Marieta Rigamoto – Rotuma Communal) & the late Savenaca Draunidalo (Lau/Taveuni/Rotuma Open) and the Moderates Coalition 4 seats. This coalition was made up of NFP, Fijian Association, Tupeni Baba's New Labour Unity Party and the United General Party led by Mick Beddoes. The four seats of the Coalition were won by NLUP – 2, UGP – 1 and NFP-1.

George Shiu Raj won his Ra Open seat a month later while Prem Singh of NFP lost his Nadi Open Seat controversially in August 2001, giving SDL and FLP 32 and 28 seats respectively.

As usual, intense negotiations started between SDL & Moderates and FLP & Moderates to form the new government because no party won outright majority of 36 seats in the 71 Member Parliament.

What the people of Fiji don't know is the following: -

Around 5pm on Friday 7th September 2001 when all the results were declared, NFP leader Attar Singh received a call on his mobile at his Samabula home. That caller was Asha Lakhan, a former Fiji Times senior journalist. She said, "Attar, long time nah...Asha here". A surprised Attar Singh returned his pleasantries and Asha Lakhan replied, "Mahend maange baat kare". (Mahend wants to talk to you).

FLP leader Mahendra Chaudhry then came on line and said to Attar Singh, "Badhkah, kaise hai". (How are you). The term Badhkah was and is being commonly used by trade unionists who were or are associated with Chaudhry. After Attar Singh replied he was fine, Chaudhry said, Badhkah tum kaye nahi apan waalan kein laye kein aayejaao hamaar saathe". (Why don't you bring your group to me?). Attar Singh replied, "Kaun log kein" (Which people?).

Chaudhry replied, "Moderates kein". Attar Singh responded, "Badhkah, hamaar chaar aur tumaar 27 laye kein khaali 31 hoi". (My group of 4 Members plus your group of 27 Members will make it only 31). 36 is needed for majority. Chaudhry replied, "Gaji kuch kare hai". (Gaji is doing something). Gaji is the nickname of former FLP MP Pratap Chand.

Attar Singh asked Chaudhry, "Gaji konchi kare hai". (What is Gaji doing?). Chaudhry answered, "Gaji CAMV se baat kare hai". (Gaji is talking to CAMV). CAMV was George Speight's party. A shocked Attar Singh responded,

“Badhkah, kaise tum aur hum jaye kein Bhartiya samaaj kein batayega ke hum log ulong se sarkaar banyaa jon log tumhaar sarkaar kein bandook se hataayis, Suva jaraayis aur Muaniweni mein kisaan log kein sathaayis”. (How are you (Chaudhry) and I going to justify to the Indo-Fijian community that we have formed government with the support of those who removed your (Chaudhry’s) government at gunpoint, burnt Suva and terrorised farmers and their families in Muaniweni?). Chaudhry replied, “Woh sab chali badhkah”. (It will be all be fine and okay).

After telling Attar Singh that Pratap conversation ended. Sure enough, Chand called Singh on his mobile ing discussions with CAMV and that Chaudhry and Labour Party num- that he was not in a position to make Executive was meeting later that Coalition leaders would meet to dis- erates because FLP’s 27 Members, would have given him 37 or outright



Prem Singh
Leader of the Opposition 2001-2002

Chand would get in touch with him, the on the morning of Saturday 8th September, confirming that the Labour Party was hav- if the 4 Moderates said “Yes”, it would give bers to form government. Singh replied such a decision and that the NFP National day (Saturday), after which the Moderates cuss the issue. Chaudhry needed the Mod- CAMV’s 6 MPs and Moderates’ 4 MPs majority to form government.

The NFP National Executive met at hry and Laisenia Qarase’s invita- NFP that it could not join either the 10% threshold required to join a Multi-Party Government under the provisions of the Constitution. This decision was conveyed in writing to both Qarase and Chaudhry via a letter by Attar Singh.

Tamavua Primary School and both Chaud- tions were discussed. It was decided by SDL or FLP because it did not meet the provisions of the Constitution. This decision was conveyed in writing to both Qarase and Chaudhry via a letter by Attar Singh.

Laisenia Qarase went ahead to form government in coalition with the 6 CAMV MPs, 2 Independents and NLUP’s Kenneth Zinck. He disregarded Section 99 of the Constitution that required him to form government with FLP. The President appointed M P Chaudhry as Opposition leader but he declined the appointment saying he was part of government despite occupying opposition benches in parliament.

The President then appointed NFP’s Prem Singh, Member for Nadi Open Constituency as Opposition leader. He formed the opposition with Ofa Swann of NLUP and Mick Beddoes of UGP.

But the FLP did not rest. It mounted a High Court challenge against Mr Prem Singh saying votes or ticks below the line, which are illegal, should be counted as votes for the FLP candidate Krishna Prasad. Similar court challenges were filed in the Southern Division on behalf of FLP’s Joeli Kalou and Lavenia Padarath.

In February 2002, High Court judge Anthony Gates na Prasad, despite the Constitution and Electoral Act line votes. Mr Singh field an Appeal in the Fiji Court the matter to Supreme Court.



David S Pickering
NFP Candidate, 2001

ruled in favour of Krish- outlawing below the of Appeal and also took

The Supreme Court delivered its ruling in August 2002. it could not overturn the High Court’s ruling as under the Constitution, the determination of the Court of Dis- the High Court, is final. The Supreme Court, which is ruled that Justice Gates’ decision was wrong in law as line on the ballot paper are invalid. As a result Mr Singh member of Parliament and Opposition leader. Mr Mick Bed- Opposition leader. The legal challenges of Joeli Kalou of FLP were thrown out of High Court as a result of the

The Court ruled that the Section 73(7) of puted Returns, which is the highest Court in Fiji, votes or ticks below the had to resign as Mem- does was appointed as and Lavenia Padarath Supreme Court ruling.

NFP: 2002 – 2003

In October 2002, municipal elections were held in all towns and cities in Fiji. The SDL contested these elections for the first time. The NFP was the dominant party in Suva which resulted in Cr Chandu Umaria serving as Lord Mayor. He was named as Achiever of the Year by the Review Magazine for his work in uplifting the profile of Suva. Nadi and Ba also recorded massive victories. In Ba Cr Praveen Bala was elected mayor once again (currently he is serving his 11th consecutive as mayor).

On the national political front, the NFP witnessed the Talanoa dialogue between Qarase and Chaudhry. The talks were initiated by the Hawaii based East-West Centre and Dr Sitiveni Halapua acted as the mediator in an

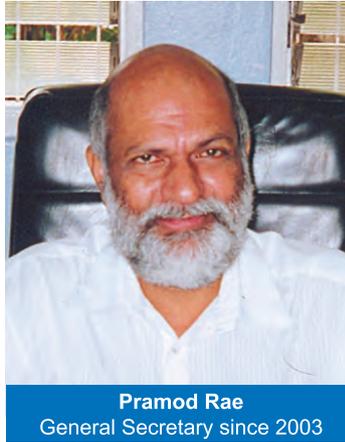
effort to resolve the multi-party Cabinet impasse.

But the talks were futile. The talks were known as Talanoa Tamasha which cost \$5000,000. In July 2003, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of FLP and stated that the Labour Party was entitled to be in Cabinet. Qarase responded by offering insignificant positions in Cabinet to FLP. Instead of negotiating a settlement the FLP staged a merry-go-around of High Courts and Boycotts. The plight of the people was being ignored. In November 2004, Chaudhry announced in Parliament that the FLP was ready to form the official opposition. He was appointed Opposition Leader.

2004-2006

Over the period 2004 – 2006, the following changes and activities took place within the NFP rank and file:

- ▶ Mr. Dorsami Naidu was elected Party National President on May 31st, 2004 at Ba. He was replaced by Mr. Raman Pratap Singh on 31st July, 2005. Both Mr. Naidu and Mr. Singh were NFP parliamentarians from 1992 to 1999 and are practicing lawyers.
- ▶ All the existing district branches – Labasa, Ba, Tavua, Lautoka, Nadi, Suva, Nasinu and Rewa were organized whereas new branches were established in Nadroga, Navua, Laucala and Rakiraki where previous branches were in dormant state.
- ▶ Mr. Attar Singh led the NFP into the 2006 general elections.



Pramod Rae
General Secretary since 2003

- ▶ Mr. Pramod Rae continued as the General Secretary of the Party since 2003 whereas Mr. Chandu Lodhia was elected the National Treasurer of the Party in 2004 replacing Mr. Vinod Patel who was the Treasurer of NFP from 1986 to 2004. Mr. Lodhia was replaced in 2005 by Mr. Ashok Balgovind.

- ▶ The immediate past President in 2004- Mr. Jagindra Singh was appointed the Chairman of the Management Board of the Party and Mr. Vinod became the Deputy Chairman of the Board.
- ▶ At the Local Government level, Cr. Chandu Umaria was deseated as two NFP Councillors- Mahendra Singh & Vinod Lal defected from the Party to FLP and colluded with the SDL Councillors that saw the election of Ratu Peni Volavola as the mayor and Vinod Lal as deputy mayor of the council.

- ▶ In Ba and Nadi, the NFP kept reigning as the Mayor of Ba for NFP produced mayors such as Cr. Cr. Timoci Koroiqica.

The 2006 general elections were held Party contested all the Indian Commune General Communal and 20 Open count and standard was the best as from the other parties whether the As the polling period neared, reports NFP was returning to parliament at



Dorsami Naidu
President, 2004-05

However, the twist to the scenario happened on the last day of the campaign when Labour Leader Mahendra Chaudhry wined up his campaign by way of televised address telling the Indian voters that the Commander of the Fiji Military Forces was with him and no one should fear in voting the FLP back into government. He went a step further and appealed to the Indian voters that this was the last chance of Indians to come into power. He said 'It's now or never'. This racial and emotional appeal by Chaudhry was clearly reflected in the electoral behavior of Indians as they went into the polling booths.

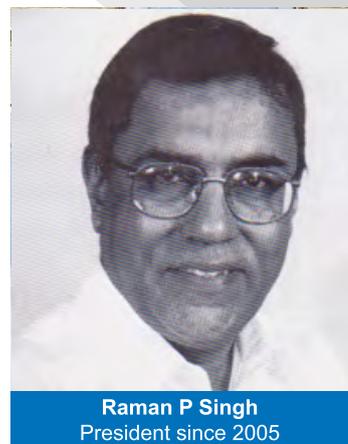
In almost all the polling stations Indian voters took time to vote because they were faced with the choice between realist ideology presented to them by the NFP and pie in the sky promises and racial and emotional ap-

peal by the FLP. In the end, racism and populism prevailed as the FLP won all 19 Indian Communal seats with increased majorities and increased its tally of seats from 28 to 33 with the aid of the NFP preferences.

As speculated, the final outcome of the elections was decided yet again on the NFP preferences. The NFP preferences were shared in such a way that if the NFP does not win, it will make both the extremist parties- the FLP and SDL stronger to force them to form and work in a multi party government which actually happened after the elections. Neither the SDL nor FLP received higher preferences from NFP in most of the open seats as the NFP wanted to form a third front giving the voters a wider and viable choice with moderate parties. Unfortunately some moderate parties played right into the hands of the SDL and FLP destroying their own parties.

The intents of sharing the NFP preferences in 2006 were as follows:

- ▶ To keep the Indian seats safe with the Indian parties.
- ▶ To ensure more women and youth enter parliament.
- ▶ To encourage parties to work in the spirit of the 1997 Constitution.
- ▶ To attain maximum electoral gain.
- ▶ To give the voters a viable and wider choice in the contest.



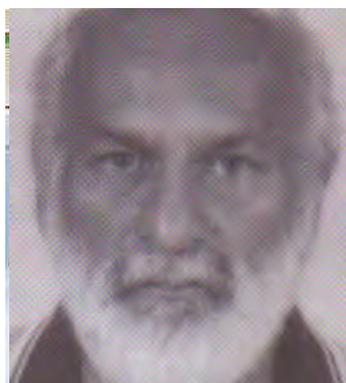
ly,

Soon after the registration of the preferences, the NFP came under attack from the SDL and FLP because both the parties wanted to take the NFP for a ride as they did in 1999 and 2001. Even the National Alliance Party of Fiji did spare us. It shows the importance of the NFP in Fiji politics. We had the same people and parties running to us for the preferences who were telling the voters that the NFP was finished.

Soon after the conclusion of the 2006 elections, the following events took place that in a way prepared the recipe for the 2006 military coup:

- ▶ Commodore Bainimarama called a media conference at the RFMF Barracks at Nabua and urged two independents and UPP to support the FLP to form the government while counting for the Laucala Open Constituency was still in the preliminary stages.
- ▶ Laisenia Qarase was sworn in the Prime Minister and invited the FLP to join the Multi- Party Government. Meanwhile the FLP caucus met and to Chaudhry's displeasure, members decided to join the multi- party government that saw the first genuine multi- party government coming into office as per the provisions of the 1997 Constitution.

▶ SDL, which till 2006 disowned the not a signatory to it made a U- turn and told the FLP that the as per the Korolevu declaration accepted and pressured Qarase to establish and operate the Multi-Party Government. The Korolevu declaration also made a ground rules must be established government.



Korolevu Declaration saying it was multi- party government should work tion. The FLP which till 2006 ac-

Party Government as per the complete U-turn and said that new for the operation of the multi- party

▶ The FLP and its Ministers in the convince the SDL to withdraw the and formulate a caring budget; force in the interest of the nation, the FLP ministers voted against their own budget. But use of black mail tactics saved ministers from being sacked as towards the end of his rule, Qarase and SDL were becoming more matured and inclusive in their approach. The NFP made comprehensive submissions on these Bills.

multi- party government fail to controversial pieces of legislation 2007. Instead of working as a united

- ▶ Commodore Bainimarama threatened Qarase at a school gathering in Serua and Qarase takes the

matter up with the Supreme Court of Fiji to upon the role of the military. The FLP did not utter a word to quell down the tension between the army and the government until the budget debate when Chaudhry threatened Qarase to take heed of the military. It was the second time when the FLP openly supported the military to carry out the coup against the Qarase Government. The first was in January, 2006 by the FLP President- Jokapeci Koroi.

The NFP Management Board met in November, 2006 to discuss the National budget and the stand off between the army and the government. It was decided that the NFP will act responsibly and would side with any of the parties to the dispute. Since then, the augurs well for the nation. NFP has maintained its position that

The stand off between the military and ing the period leading to the coup, the manner via correspondence, media re- to put Fiji first. All that fell on deaf ears as ernance citing reasons that they have

Soon after the 2006 military coup, the Council of Chiefs, the Commonwealth of Leaders Forum and the European Union ing the problems in Fiji via legal and in- a lot of support and respect both herein of the military junta which took principal threatened them to quell the voice of opposition.



Jag Natan
NFP Stalwart

the government had cost Fiji a lot. Dur- NFP played its role in a responsible lease and calls to the parties involved the military seized the control of gov- continued to change.

NFP made submissions to the Great Nations, the United Nations, the Pacific suggesting ways and means of resolv- clusive way. This has earned the Party Fiji and aboard as well as the wrath leaders of the Party into the camp and

The NFP has been forthright in its call to return Fiji to Parliamentary democracy, put sound measures in place to rebuild the national economy and strategic sectors, restore the pay cut of the workers of this country, stop interfering with the independence of the judiciary, not to violate group and individual rights, respect the customs and traditions of all the races of people in Fiji and provide. In doing so, the Party has championed the causes of all the people of Fiji.

The induction of the FLP and Alliance members and leaders into the interim regime and many statutory boards confirmed the speculation that the last coup was FLP and Alliance Coup. The military at the behest of these failed politicians victimized and sacrificed many of the distinguished civil servants, hard working board members, learned members of the judiciary, NFP members and supporters from the SCGC and government boards and notable chiefs from their traditional positions of power.

In the aftermath struggle of the 2006 mil- tee decided to meet on July 29th, 2007 developments and re map its strategies The NFP Ba Branch applied for a permit did not approve the permit saying that to national security. However, the Fiji La- the same weekend in Suva. This practice of the interim regime clearly shows that it is click working to suppress any opposi-

The D.O.- Ba also advised the NFP that security forces will break that meeting. It in a military state. This is not a new ex- the same nature of treatment after the ence is that at that time the FLP was with of parliamentary democracy and social justice whereas this time round the FLP is seen to contributing heavily to the carnage of democracy in Fiji.



Priscilla Singh
Vice President since 2005

itary coup, the NFP Working Commit- at Ba to discuss the National Political to work in the then political climate. to that effect but the District Officer, Ba the planned NFP meeting was a threat bour Party was allowed to meet over of political discrimination on the part does not practice what it preaches and tion to it.

it should not attempt to meet or the demonstrates that we are indeed living perience to the Party as it meted out 1987 military coups. The only differ- the NFP struggling for the restoration

The NFP Working Committee finally met on Saturday; 2nd February, 2008 at Ba Sangam High School, Vara- doli, Ba where after a lengthy discussion and wide consultation with the NFP stalwarts, branches, officials and members, the following motion was unanimously approved:

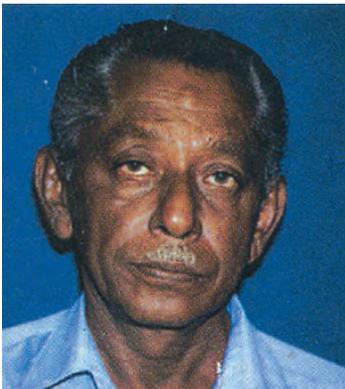
Boycott of the Charter Process

'That this NFP Working Committee Meeting hereby resolves to reject the charter process as an unnecessary, unlawful and unconstitutional exercise undertaken by the Bainimarama led interim regime at the expense of Fiji's tax payers diverting the attention of the people of Fiji and the international community from Fiji's real problems.'

A day later, the General Secretary of the Party- Mr. Pramod Rae announced via a media release that the NFP had rejected the charter process. This decision by the Party was taken in good faith by the general public and since then the NFP has been able to successfully campaign against the charter process that has earned the Party, the respect, support and attention of the local and international community.

With Fiji and its future at stake, the NFP is once again faced with the task to bail out Fiji from its current doldrums. Being longest serving thus the wisest party in the country, the NFP is ready to offer solutions and work for the good of all the people of Fiji.

The NFP will re-build the lives of all Fiji citizens. The party's founding principles are unshakeable. The party is made of strong willed individuals with a never say die attitude. The NFP is more than ready to lead the struggle for dignity and equality of all the citizens.



Ram Lajendra
Vice President since 2004



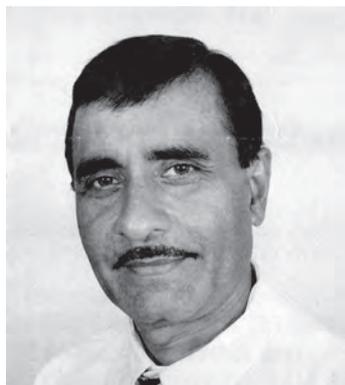
Keshwan Nadan
NFP Stalwart



Mohammed Rafiq
Organiser Northern Division



Sundresan Goundar
NFP Stalwart



Dharendra Singh
President - NFP Navua Branch



Dalip Kumar
NFP Stalwart

Ambalal Dahyabhai Patel (A D PATEL)
Founder Leader/President
National Federation Party
(1963 – 1969)



AD Patel with Vijay Lakshmi-
elder sister of Jawahar Lal Nehru

“Our prosperity largely depends upon purposeful and tireless endeavour on the part of all. It is hard intelligent work accompanied by thrift, which makes individuals as well as nations prosperous. Let us not forget that our destiny is in our own hands. Let us bend to the task and direct our energies in the channels which will make Fiji a prosperous, strong and peaceful nation of free, happy and prosperous men and women”. – A D Patel, Message to the Nation, New Year 1969.

These prophetic words of A D Patel were relevant, are relevant and will remain true for a very long time in the future. There seems to be little doubt amongst the minds of historians and those who were closely associated with A D Patel about the impact this noble and learned leader made on the destiny of this country. He gave new life to the beloved islands known as Fiji, the effects of which have become a permanent fixture in the annals of history of our independent nation.

Ambalal Dahyabhai Patel was born on 13th March 1905 in the Indian State of Gujarat. He came from a community that was politically powerful, socially prestigious and one that was at the forefront of Indian politics in that country's struggle for independence from Great Britain.

It was only natural for his parents to send him to England for further education to enable him to graduate as a **lawyer** and return to India to join the struggle for independence. But A D Patel's quest and zeal for independence of all Indians, either citizens or migrants from the sub-continent, resulted in a change of plans for him. Instead he chose to come to Fiji and fight the injustices heaped on the Indian community here by the Colonial Administration.

A D Patel **arrived in Fiji in from England** on 11th October, 1928. By then, Fiji had been a British Colony for 54 years, having been ceded to Great Britain on 10th October, 1874. A D Patel was persuaded by a lawyer and a close associate of **Mahatma Gandhi, Henry Polak** to go to Fiji and take up the struggles of the Indian people.

No doubt critics of A D Patel were and are many who claim that A D Patel had nothing to lose by coming to Fiji as his sole motive “was to exploit Indians in these islands to make money”.

But these arm-chair critics forget and some even today deliberately do so, that A D Patel not only championed the rights of the Indians, the downtrodden and the poor, he also was a generous person who provided free legal services and made his talents available to whoever required them to enhance their livelihood.

A perfect example of this is the fact that A D Patel voluntarily became the manager of **Sangam Schools** in Fiji after the establishment of the first Sangam School by **the late Sadhu Kuppuswamy** in 1930. The major reason that he gladly accepted this offer was because Patel saw Sangam Schools were promoting **multiracialism**, which is the cornerstone for a stable, united and harmonious Fiji.

Suffice it to say, that the life and work of A D Patel is extremely well documented in a publication titled “**A D Patel – A Vision For Change**”. Its author, internationally respected scholar and Australian National University academic, Fiji born **Dr Brij Vilash Lal**, also served as one of the three Commissioners on the Constitution Review Commission, whose report led to the formulation of the 1997 Constitution for Fiji. Mr Patel's role as NFP's founding leader and his struggles against the Colonial Government and **Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR)** are documented in the history pages of this publication.

A D Patel first entered the **Legislative Council** in 1944 by defeating Pundit B D Lakshman in the Western Constituency. He served for three years until 1947. He failed to get re-elected in 1947 and subsequently lost three more elections. He was **re-elected** in 1963 from the Western Constituency and served as a Member of the Legislative Council until his death on 1st October 1969.

Member for Social Services

When the Membership system was introduced in 1964, Mr Patel was made the Member for Social Services meaning that he had joined the Colonial Government.

The introduction of the Membership System in Fiji's political was a giant leap towards multiracialism, genuine representation of all communities in the Legislative Council, all which finally contributed towards Fiji's Independence in 1970.

A D Patel wholeheartedly welcomed the system saying it would give all Members the opportunity to contribute towards formulation and implementation of government decisions and policies. He said: -

“This is a scheme which is worth trying out, and I have every hope that it will succeed. At least, I think that it gives us an opportunity to come closer together, each racial group on the Un-official side as well as the Government members on the Official side”.

“I think it is the duty of everybody in this Council to actively and positively work to bring people of all races and all denominations in this Colony together. Under this system, a start will be made from this House itself”.

“I believe that it is of the utmost importance that we all should feel and inculcate amongst the people and circulate amongst them what I call a sense of compatriotism. We should all feel that we are all nationals of one country, whatever our race, colour, creed, or sect, and I consider the inauguration of the Member System is a step in that direction”.

That vision of A D Patel is the only forward for Fiji. These words of wisdom are captured in the spirit of the 1997 Constitution, which does away with politics of race and promotes politics of tolerance, understanding, mutual co-existence and racial harmony.

The Multi-Party Cabinet, which is a requirement under the 1997 Constitution, also provides the opportunity for Members of Parliament to work together, which A D Patel promoted throughout his political career.

There were critics who claimed A D Patel had joined government purely for financial gain and demanded that he resign. Patel made it clear in the Legislative Council in November 1964 that he had accepted government's invitation purely for the task of honestly serving the nation. A D Patel said: -

“I have accepted this responsibility... I will consider the interests of this country, the interest of the community and the interest of the coming generation and if those interests need my services, I shall give it unstintingly and willingly”.

“The question of resignation is only for my conscience to decide. The day my conscience tells me that I am of no use to my country by occupying this seat on the Government, I will vacate it without any hesitation”.

“It is easy to be ranting politician. It is difficult to be a statesman in a Government to steer the ship clear of all rocks. A statesman has got to look at the next generation. A politician usually looks to the next election. I have repeated before this House that if it ever comes to choose between sacrificing my community, and the interests of the country, and sacrificing myself, I would rather sacrifice myself”.

A D Patel believed in providing sound and sensible leadership. He was never going to preach and practice politics of expediency, which has been the hallmark of some recent politicians, and who put their personal interest before that of the nation, resulting in tragic consequences.

Establishment of FNPF

As Member for Social Services, A D Patel moved a motion in March 1965 that led to the establishment of the Fiji National Provident Fund. Once again, there were critics who like some politicians nowadays, criticized the issue saying it was against ordinary workers. But A D Patel stood his ground and clearly stated that FNPF or social security was very important for the workers as it was the only saving for them once they retired.

A D Patel pointed out that unlike many other countries, Fiji did not have social security provisions for the workers. He said governments in the past, that is before 1965, deferred the implementation of this scheme because of opposition from employers. But he said Fiji could not defer the introduction of the scheme any longer.

A D Patel emphasised, “ **We owe it to the large and growing body of wage-earning workers and their families and children to initiate action which will give them some hope of security in their old age and in times of social difficulty**”.

“**For many years I have been deeply conscious of the need to ease the burden of old age in Fiji. The provision of adequate security for workers and their families during the sunset (retirement) of the breadwinner’s life is a matter of special concern to me**”.

“**I have seen enough of the poverty, the heart-burn and the worry which can afflict old age in Fiji for me to press the urgency of the need for the introduction of a scheme for cushioning the hardship which old age and insecurity can bring**”.

“**It is my conviction (belief) that a national provident fund scheme is a vital part of Government social welfare policy. In doing so, we shall achieve two objectives; on the one hand a measure of social security for wage-earning employees throughout Fiji, and on the other hand further funds for local investment and the economic development of Fiji**”.

At that time A D Patel proposed that both the employee and the employer equally contribute 5 percent towards the Fund. He also suggested that sugar cane and copra farmers be also part of the scheme. Patel stated that the scheme would raise the standard of living of workers because it was compulsory for the employers to also make a contribution equalling the workers’ contribution. He said this compulsory saving scheme was designed to benefit the workers.

This motion by A D Patel finally led to the tabling of the **FNPF Bill** by none other than Patel himself in the Legislative Council on 27th May 1966 and four days later on 31st May 1966, the Council passed that the **Fiji National Provident Fund** be established to cater for the welfare of the workers of this country.

A D Patel’s vision to establish the Fiji National Provident Fund is currently extremely rewarding for the ordinary workers of this country. Workers can withdraw funds from the FNPF for a variety of reasons such as to build their house, educational assistance for their children, medical assistance, investing in businesses and even funds when they lose employment through unusual circumstances.

Most importantly, FNPF pays the largest interest rate on the accumulated funds of the workers. The lowest ever interest rate has been 6 percent and this has varied between 6 and almost 9 percent. Commercial banks pay an average interest of less than 2 percent per year.

London Constitutional Conference: Legislative Council Motion – December 1965

Historians and political commentators have dwelt extensively on the issue of a conference held in Britain to discuss constitutional reforms for Fiji as the nation geared towards independence. This is commonly known as the London Constitutional Conference.

The deliberations of the conference were published as a document known as the White Paper by the British Government and the Colonial government in Fiji wanted the Legislative Council to adopt this White Paper so that it formed the basis for Fiji’s political future.

The motion was opposed by A D Patel, who by now was the leader of the **Federation Party** (later to become the National Federation Party), which he founded in 1963. The Party’s platform was to ensure that all Fiji citizens, irrespective of their race, religion, sex, colour or creed, enjoyed dignity, equality and respect.

The motion also acted as a catalyst for Patel’s resignation from government as Member for Social Services. He then assumed the role as **Leader of the Opposition**. Patel’s opposition to the motion and the recommendations contained in the **White Paper** was the method of election to the Legislature. He argued that the only way all communities in Fiji could be integrated into nation was through **Common Roll Voting**, that is one man, one vote.

This was vigorously opposed by the rest of the Members of the Council who feared domination by a certain group, in this the Indian community because of their increasing population. Ironically, the Common Roll has always, and is the basis for elections for our Town and City Councils.

Nevertheless, the voting system under the 1997 Constitution is being widely seen as the best method for racial integration. The Alternative Voting System compels political parties to form coalitions before elections or enter into cooperative arrangements after the elections.

It also compels parties to exchange preferences and agree on common platforms as the basis for governance. The 25 Open Seats are designed for voters from all communities to choose a representative who may not be from their own community.

Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (ALTO) – July 1966

The Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (ALTO) was the first legislation that provided security of tenure to sugarcane farmers and other agricultural tenants, as well as reasonable rental returns for the landlords, be it the indigenous landowners through the Native Land Trust Board, the Crown (later known as State lands), or Freehold landlords.

Land was, is, and will always be a sensitive issue in Fiji. But until 1999, our leaders of the two major races had the capacity to resolve this issue in an amicable manner. ALTO was the first legislation that guaranteed farmers and other agricultural tenants a secure lease.

It had mechanisms for security of tenure, fair rent and compensation. ALTO guaranteed minimum leases of ten years and maximum leases. And in cases where leases already existed, these were automatically extended by ten years to make them 20 years.

During the debate on the ALTO Bill A D Patel said: -

“... We are by this Bill providing an immediate relief and remedy which may last for twenty years and within those twenty years this country, I hope, will make great advances in economic development which will result in relieving the existing pressure on the land and increasing the prosperity in the country, which will result in the increasing number of tenants of all races...”

A D Patel said the Bill was largely the result of a compromise that satisfied the interest of both the landowning and tenant communities.

In 1976, ALTA replaced ALTO as legislation governing the use of agricultural land in Fiji. Under ALTA, the minimum tenure of leases was 30 years, meaning no agricultural lease should be of less than 30 years. Leases that existed were automatically extended by another twenty years to comply with the minimum 30-year tenure stipulated by ALTA.

It is most unfortunate that in recent years our leaders have tended to politicise the land issue, thus increasing fear and suspicion amongst both the landowning and tenant communities. Our current leaders need to realise that compromises will have to be made wider interests of the people and the country if the land issue is to be successfully resolved.

Establishment of the University of the South Pacific – March 1967

As early as 1956, A D Patel was strongly advocating for the establishment of a university in Fiji. **“We need university education in Fiji and most seriously think about starting post secondary education in Fiji. In the future we hope to see a university college in Fiji and ultimately a fully fledged university”**, Patel said.

A D Patel's vision for a **University in Fiji** finally came to fruition in March 1967 when government introduced a Motion in the Legislative Council to set up a Regional University in Fiji, to be known as University of the South Pacific.

Along with this Motion, a Bill was introduced to establish a University Council tasked with formulating courses and other academic needs for tertiary students. A D Patel, in his capacity as Leader of the Opposition fully supported the establishment of the USP and during the debate on the Bill to establish an Interim Council for USP,

moved several amendments to the Bill to ensure that academic standards were not compromised and remained of the highest order.

Today, the USP is the largest tertiary institution in the South Pacific and has gained international recognition. More importantly, students of all races in Fiji are able to achieve academic excellence and qualifications to enhance their careers.

Debate on the 1969 Budget- December 1968

As Leader of the Opposition, A D Patel once again re-iterated his case for constitutional reform and independence for Fiji while speaking during the debate on the 1969 Budget in the Legislature

He talked about the need for political stability, which he said was needed for investment and economic growth in Fiji. He said, "What I understand by political stability is where there is peace and order, where there is security of person and property and where there is rule of law".

A D Patel said Fiji had enough of colonialism for the last 90 years and it was time for the nation to move forward. He said: -

"As it is happening all over the world, and as it has happened in history, you cannot block the progress of a people (people of Fiji) indefinitely. Everything changes, things will have to change in this country and it will be the people who have vision, who have the imagination to see that in the modern world only those can survive who have the ability to modernise. Those who have not will find that history is merciless and it cannot help them".

Motion to Renovate Bau Island

Also during December 1968 A D Patel moved a motion for government to start renovations on the chiefly Island of Bau to preserve its **historic relics and monuments**. He emphasised that every country including Fiji should cherish its history and it was time government took steps to preserve the landmarks on the island.

A D Patel asked for the preservation and protection of places and buildings associated with the former Vunivalu and King of Fiji Ratu Seru Cakobau and his ancestors.

The motion received the unanimous support of government including Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara who was the then Chief Minister. He said it indicated the willingness of all the people to maintain historical landmarks of the Fijian people. Ratu Sir Kamisese also described A D Patel's motion as one that augured well for the future of the country as it **"was a sign of understanding between the races and sympathy and respect for one another"**.

The birth of Lord Denning Contract for sugarcane farmers

Perhaps, the last great act of A D Patel before his untimely death in October 1969 was pressure on the Colonial government to institute an independent inquiry into the affairs of the sugar industry with a view to giving better financial returns to the cane farmers.

A D Patel dwelt at length on this issue during the debate on His Excellency the Governor's speech signalling the start of the 1969 Legislature year. He spoke about extortion of farmers by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, the exorbitant penalties charged for burnt cane and the low returns farmers received from the sale of sugar as their share of proceeds.

He said sugar was a **bi-partisan industry** and it should be the common duty and responsibility of all parties and stakeholders to give adequate protection to the farmers.

A D Patel's initiatives gave birth to the Lord Denning inquiry. Lord Denning was an eminent judge. Lord Denning had the opportunity to hear Patel's submissions before his death and in fact, he admitted that it was Patel's powerful case that convinced him to change the sharing of proceeds formula in favour of the farmers. For the

last 36 years farmers have been receiving **70 percent of proceeds** from the sale of sugar ad for this, they have to thank the late A D Patel and the late **Swami Rudranandaji**.

It is also worth mentioning that following Patel's death the role played by the late Siddiq Koya, who carried on the case for the farmers left behind by Patel, as well his efforts in securing Fiji's independence and the 1970 Constitution are indeed commendable.

A D Patel died on **1st October 1969** at his home in Nadi, a few hours after writing a speech about Mahatma Gandhi, which he was supposed to deliver in Suva the next day.

The Indian community virtually came to a standstill upon hearing of this tragic news. Businesses and schools closed. Thousands of people of all races converged into Nadi to pay Mr Patel their last respects. Several thousand people attended his funeral.

His funeral cortege, draped in the red and green flag of the NFP, was taken from Nadi town to Wailoaloa crematorium. His pall bearers were Fijians. A close friend of Mr Patel and Hindu priest, **Bhaskaran Iyer**, led the prayers and the final rites were performed by eldest son, **Atul**.

Dr Brij Lal writes, ***"Patel had died as he would have wished, in harness and in the course of duty."***

Whatever people may think or feel about A D Patel, there can hardly be any doubt his importance in the history of Fiji. Today we do not hear many critical voices about A D Patel and if we do, they come from comparatively narrow and un-important people or sectors.

Most importantly, A D Patel preached that the future for Fiji lay in the ability of all its people to live peacefully and in harmony with each other.

There are many lessons to be learnt from the life of A D Patel. It is therefore important that each one of us play our part in shaping the destiny of our developing nation so that we are able to permanently achieve A D Patel's vision for lasting national peace, progress and harmony.

"Of all the lawyers who appeared before me, A.D. Patel was outstanding; intellectually the most brilliant, as a character the most honorable, and as an advocate the most persuasive. Quick in mind, fluent in speech, he stood out above all. He even outshone Mr. Brennan (now the Chief Justice of Australia). It was his persuasive advocacy that led me to my report which was in favour of the growers and against the millers". - Lord Denning



"There were deep political differences between me and Mr. Patel but he had personal qualities deserving of utmost respect- his sincerity, his dedication and his devotion to the causes in which he believed. Patel was an eloquent and forceful speaker skilled in parliamentary procedures and set a standard of dignity and courtesy worthy of the highest parliamentary traditions. - Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara

London Conference 1965

NFP HISTORICAL PUBLICATION |

Speech by Hon. A.D. Patel in the Legislative Council on July 12th, 1946.

It was only much later that the rift between the Fijians and Indians came about. It was a marvellously orchestrated scheme for which the Indians did not have much of an answer. That the colonists had a psychological hold on the Fijian mind was apparent: after all, they had brought Christianity, trade, wealth and other benefits of Western civilisation in their wake.

Preying on the fears of the unwise, the colonists drove a wedge between two people who had been, so far, living in peaceful co-habitation. In the mid-1940s, a cry against Indian domination rose, mostly from the Legislative Council. The apparent growth of the Indian population was taken as a sign of worse to come. Despite the many assurances that the fears were baseless, a momentum had been set and a rift created.

AD Patel, as a member of the Legislative Council, spoke at length of the insidious move from among the ranks of the colonists. Here is the full text of that speech.

Hon AD Patel (Indian Member for the North-Western Division): Sir, in this debate I am labouring under three disadvantages. First I have not got the genius of rushing in where angels fear to tread. Second, being a poor benighted heathen, I have not got the heart to hate any human being, whatever race they belong to, and thirdly, I cannot talk Irish. When I read this motion I thought that the words "non-Fijian inhabitants" meant really "non-Fijian inhabitants" and I thought that it was really a sportsman-like act on the part of the honourable mover of the motion (being one of the non-Fijian inhabitants of the colony) to move this motion in the interests of the Fijians, but my eyes were opened when the Hon Member interpreted these words as meaning 'Indians' and levelling his whole quantum of criticism against that particular community.

This motion has, to my mind, three implications. One implication is that for some reason or another

the government of this colony has either forgotten or overlooked the terms of the Deed of Cession and there is an urgent need for a reminder. Another implication is that the time has come when we have got to look to the Deed of Cession in order to safeguard Fijian interests: and the



AD PATEL: *Our hearts are clean.*

third implication is that, on account of the natural increase of the non-Fijian inhabitants of this colony, it has been found necessary to again reiterate and emphasise the terms of the Deed of Cession. I was wondering all the time when Hon Members supporting the motion spoke on this point as to what particular terms of the Deed of Cession they wished to emphasise. I have been sitting here all day, but I am sorry to say that I have not so far heard which one, or how many of them, they want to be emphasised. The Preamble shows the intention as to why the leaders of the Fijian community ceded this colony to the British. There was a desire on their part to secure the promotion of civilisation and Christianity, and of increasing trade and industry within these islands. The second desire was that there should be order and good government established in this colony. Prompted by these two desires the ancestors of my honourable Fijian colleagues placed the sovereignty of these islands into British hands, and this sovereignty was tendered, as the preamble says, unconditionally. We might go back into the history of over 70 years of British rule in this colony and examine whether these desires of the Fijian people have been

fulfilled. Nobody in this Council has alleged that Christianity was not promoted or has not been promoted or is being in any way driven out of this colony. Nobody says that the Government and the non-Fijian inhabitants of this colony have tried to drive civilisation out of this country and reduce the people of this colony to an abject state of barbarity. Nor can anyone say that vigorous steps have not been taken right throughout and are not being taken now for the promotion of trade and industry. I am glad to say that nobody in this Council ever questioned that order and good government was not established in this colony and is not prevailing even now. So as far as the desires of the people who ceded this country to the British are concerned those desires are scrupulously fulfilled.

Now going into the covenants of this Deed: As regards the first covenant, it merely hands over the sovereignty and possession of these islands to Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors.

As regards the second covenant, it gives the full and unlimited powers to the British Government or to Queen Victoria and her heirs and her successors - if I may follow the language of the Deed - that the form and constitution of government, the means of the maintenance thereof and the laws and regulations to be administered within the said

islands, shall be such as Her Majesty shall prescribe and determine. Nobody can so far say that there has been any departure on the part of the Government or on the part of the non-Fijian inhabitants from covenant two of this Deed.

Let us come to covenant three. That only provides for a temporary and provisional government pending the establishment of the British administration in Fiji. That is a dead letter now; it has been already fulfilled and finished.

Then we come to the fourth covenant. That provides for the vesting of all surplus lands of the colony into the British Crown. That has been already fulfilled. Those lands that were not already alienated to Europeans and others in this colony and those lands which were not actually in possession or occupation of the native owners of

those lands which were not of any use to them were under the covenant vested in the British Crown. Has there been any reason to complain on that ground?

Let us come to covenant five. That gives the Crown the power to take and acquire, on payment of

compensation, any land from the owners if required for public purposes. Surely the natural increase of the population has not affected that covenant in any way. I have not heard any complaints so far either from the Hon Fijian Members or from the

The promise was made to Indians soon after that Deed, that they will be treated as the citizens of this colony, that they will be allowed the opportunity of settling here and becoming citizens and they will get the same rights as any other inhabitant of this colony.



Legislative Council in session

honourable mover or the honourable seconder of this motion, or from the Unofficial Members on this score.

I come to covenant six. That merely transfers the public buildings, stores, articles and all that into British Crown. That is already fulfilled and done. It is a matter of the past.

Covenant seven. Under this the Crown gives three promises. Promise No.1: 'The rights and interests of the said Tui Viti and other high chiefs, the ceding parties hereto, shall be recognised so far as is consistent with British sovereignty, and colonial form of government.' It has not been suggested in this Council that this promise has not been fulfilled. We come to the second promise: 'That all questions of financial liabilities and engagements shall be scrutinised, and dealt with upon principles of justice and sound public policy.'

That is a matter of the past. It has not been alleged in this Council that this promise has not been kept. The third promise: 'That all claims to titles of land, by whomsoever preferred, and all claims to pensions or allowances, whether on the part of the said Tui Viti and other high chiefs or of the persons now holding office under them or any of them, shall in due course be fully investigated and equitably adjusted.' They have already been fully investigated and equitably adjusted; that promise has already been fulfilled.

So what in God's name is left in this Deed of Cession that the honourable mover of this motion wants to be specially emphasised under this motion? He may throw dust in the eyes of others but I refuse to be blinded by any emotion or feeling, or allow my reason to be carried away by prejudice. That is the Deed of Cession that has been the subject of all this mud-slinging and hot air in this Council.

I am glad to have received this opportunity of hearing what members of other communities think about us. It always does us good and discarding all those harsh and insulting remarks made for what they are worth, I am highly gratified that there was nothing seriously wrong with my people in this colony. When the opponents have got to resort to such criticism that we are a bad lot because though we had a shortage of women we did not mix with

the Fijians and assimilate with them, or that because we are paying high rents and more money to the Fijians, the Fijians in those areas have become more immoral, or that because we have increased in numbers and have been prolific we have become a menace to Fijian interests - if this is the worst that our adversaries can say about us, thank God we have acquitted ourselves well in this colony.

I would remind the Hon Members here that this Deed of Cession was executed in the year 1874. The promise was made to Indians soon after that Deed, that they will be treated as the citizens of this colony, that they will be allowed the opportunity of settling here and becoming citizens and they will get the same rights as any other inhabitant of this colony; and these promises were made, mark you, when all the signatories of the Deed were alive, and if anybody knew what they intended when they

handed over this colony to the British for government, certainly King Cakobau and his chiefs who executed this Deed must have known; and can any Hon Members here tell me or show me that any of these chiefs or King Cakobau protested or alleged at

the time when they were bringing Indians to this colony that they were breaking the covenants of this Deed, or were committing a breach of faith with those who handed over this colony into their hands.

Well, Sir, it was well understood and well appreciated then that we were coming here to play our part in turning this country into a paradise. Indians came here under that promise. They worked here for those people who gobbled up half a million acres of freehold land from the Fijian owners and we came and undertook to work under a system which, thank God, saved the Fijian race from the infamy of coming under - my community worked under that semi-servile state. As a matter of fact, if anything, the coming of my people to this country gave the Fijians their honour, their prestige, nay indeed their very soul. Otherwise I have no hesitation in saying that the Fijians of this colony would have met with the same fate that some other indigenous races in parts of Africa met. I would ask my honourable colleagues to consider that aspect of it before they condemn my people.

They fear on the score that we are increasing in numbers. Well, they may think to themselves how

**So even politically we
have not been in any way
your opponents or your
adversaries.**

was it that their numbers were depleted in this colony: Indians certainly did not bring the measles and as my honourable friend, the Indian Member for the Southern Division, pointed out, if the Fijians had looked upon the cow as their mother, as we do, and always thought of her milk more than her meat, the mortality rate in their community would not have been so high. Is that the fault of the Indians? Just consider one more point. In this colony the Fijians are lucky enough to have child welfare activities going on amongst them for a number of years. There have been Fijian midwives and nurses already trained and working in their villages and doing splendid work while we, on the other hand, have to expose our women folk in the settlements to the quackery of untrained midwives and nurses, and place the lives of the mothers and children into their incompetent hands; and still because of our keen care of our children if we increase in numbers can you lay the blame at our door?

I would ask the Hon Fijian Members also to consider this: socially we have not lived in this country as if we were a garrison in an alien country. We have lived with you and mixed with you, hobnobbed with you all the time. We have never looked upon the Fijians as our inferiors because they are Fijians. In the time of difficulty or stress they have always gone to an Indian and they always found assistance from him. I was highly gratified to hear

**As our previous Governor
mentioned in this Council,
"In God's eyes
all men are equal"**

in this Council that all sides at least concede one thing - that they all had Indian friends. Well, I only beg of my opponents that they reciprocate that friendship. Socially we have not done you any harm.

Now let us consider the economic aspect. We developed this colony and as the Hon Commissioner of Labour pointed out, our people are the very sinews of the economic life of the colony. Not only have we been paying higher and higher rents into your own hands but we are producing the wealth of this colony, and directly or indirectly all the races share in it and benefit by it and the Fijians are no exception, and let me point out that the money that they make from the Indians is mostly spent in European or Chinese concerns. Can they blame us for that?

Let me go a step further, politically. We had penal labour laws in this colony, we did not have any provision for trade union laws in this colony, we did not have any laws regarding compensation to workmen; as far as the brown men of the colony were concerned life and limbs of the Indians and Fijians had no value at all. Who fought for them? Those of my honourable colleagues who claim to be the trustees of the Fijian race or we who have been made out, or an attempt has been made to make us out to be the menace of the Fijian race? We have fought that common battle. Who has been fighting the obnoxious and odious racial discrimination that



Ratu Seru Cakobau
who ceded Fiji to Britain



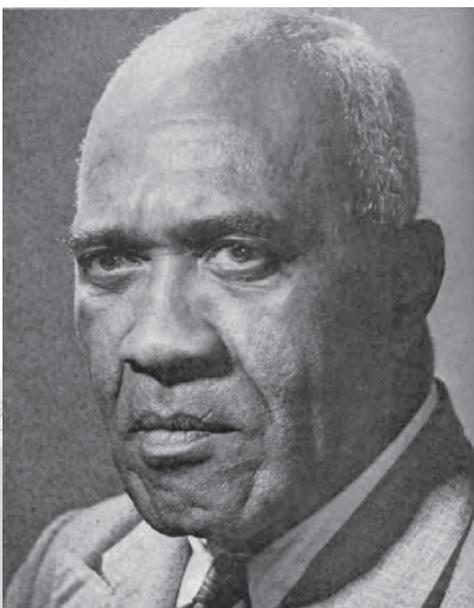
The commemorative plaque at Levuka

prevails in Government Service? Have my honourable colleagues who have taken upon themselves the white man's burden of being their trustees, have they taken up the cudgels for the Fijians or is it the Indians? And who have been predominantly fighting for the political rights not only of the Indians but the Fijians as well? I again say "The Indians". So even politically we have not been in any way your opponents or your adversaries. A promise was given to the Indians when they came to this colony that land would be available to them and, as was pointed out by one of the honourable speakers, the Hon Acting Secretary for Fijian Affairs went to India, persuaded Indians and brought a shipload of them to this colony to settle down here. Have my Fijian colleagues ever heard in this colony or outside that since we were promised land we should be given freehold land? We have elected to be satisfied with occupying the position of the tenant of the Fijian in this colony and all that we have been asking for is security of tenure. Indians have never stated that we must take away the lands from the Fijians. We ourselves have advocated the principle that the interests of the Fijians must always remain paramount in this colony, that where those interests come into conflict with our interests, we readily agree to make our interests subservient to theirs. Thank goodness our hands are clean, they are not stained with the blood of any race. Thank God our hearts are clean, we have worked hard and earned our bread by the sweat of the brow and from that bread we have

always been ready and willing through our frugality to pass a portion to anyone else who cared to accept our hospitality or ask for our help! I would remind the Hon Members of this Council that those who try to cry the Indians down may remember that in their hour of stress, although their own fellow compatriots were not prepared to help them, some Indian friend from some corner or another has readily and willingly come forward to help and has not accepted anything, not even thanks, into the bargain, and when such criticism comes one naturally feels like screaming out "Et tu, Brute!"

My honourable colleague the European Member for the Eastern Division wanted some sort of declaration from us that could allay the fears and suspicions of the Fijian community. Well, the assurance I am prepared to give on behalf of my people to our Fijian neighbours in this colony is that we have all these years lived in this country, as sugar in milk, and we shall always live just the same as we have done in the past. It has never been our desire to dominate over anybody, but let it be remembered that we will not tolerate any domination from others as well.

As our previous Governor mentioned in this Council, 'In God's eyes all men are equal.' We sincerely believe in it: we shall live up to that maxim and we shall make every endeavour to make others live up to it too. It is the only assurance that I can give, and I hope that you will accept it with the same sincerity with which it is being given this evening.



Ratu Josefa Vanayaliyali Sukuna



Pundit Vishnu Deo

LEADERS WHO WORK WITH A D PATEL IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL



Hon. Siddiq Moidin Koya **Leader of the National Federation Party**

Leader of the Opposition
(1969- 77 / 1984- 86)
President of N.F.P (1969- 76)

‘There was something about Siddiq Moidin Koya that announced his association with the big, boisterous province of Ba, his feisty independence, his indomitable spirit, his fearlessness, his big- heartedness, his chest thumping oratorical belligerence that inspired his supporters and intimidated opponents, his instinctive understanding of the hopes and fears of the Indian cane farming community, his tenacity, persistence and amazing energy and resourcefulness. ‘Never give up’ was his motto, a colleague recalls ‘and he lived that creed with a passion bordering on fanaticism’. A self made farmer’s son, a muslim by faith, a lawyer by profession, a leader of the Indian community, Koya was one of the most turbulent, unforgettable figures of the 20th century Fiji Politics.” - Prof. Brij V. Lal; 20th Century Fiji Book, 2000.

Mr. S.M. Koya was born in Vatulaulau, Ba on February 29th, 1924 and had his primary education at the Ba Methodist Primary School. Later he joined the Offices of S. B. Patel and Tulsi Ram Sharma as a law clerk.

He studied law at the University of Auckland and obtained his Bachelor of Laws Degree in 1951 with distinction in Constitutional Law, Equity Company Law, Law of Evidence and Law of Procedure.

Mr. Koya was admitted to the Bar of the Supreme Court of Tasmania in March, 1952 and was the first non- European ever to be admitted to the Supreme Court of Australia. He returned to Fiji in March, 1954 and married Amina Dean in November 1958. By September, 1954 Mr. Koya was admitted as a Barrister & Solicitor to the Supreme Court of Fiji and commenced his practice of Koya & Company in Lautoka.

It was during the Sugar cane strike of 1943 when Mr. Koya made his first public appearance with the leaders of the Fiji Kisan Sangh but he later joined forces with Messers A.D. Patel and Swami Rudranand to champion the cause of the Indian cane farmers against the atrocities of the CSR Company.

Mr. S.M. Koya was one of founders of the National Federation Party. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Cane Growers Federation and the Citizens Federation (the parent bodies of the NFP) and he made immense contribution towards developing an effective network for the Party.

The year 1963 saw Mr. S.M. Koya entering the Legislative Council of Fiji for the first time after winning the West- Central Indian Communal Seat. He was elected the Deputy Speaker of the Council. Mr. Koya participated in the 1965 London Constitutional Conference along with Mr. A.D. Patel, Mr. Chirag A. Shah and Mr. James Madhavan.

At that Conference, he articulated the views of the NFP and was a pioneer of Fiji’s transition towards independence. In 1966, Mr. Koya was re-elected to the Legislative Council from the West- Central Indian Communal Constituency and was elected as Deputy Leader of the NFP. He played a crucial role in the formulation of ALTO legislation.

Mr. Koya succeeded Mr. A.D. Patel as the Leader of the NFP upon the latter’s death in 1969. He had been Patel’s second in command throughout the 1960’s having come to public attention for his role as a Counsel for Federation of Cane Growers before the inquiry chaired by Sir Malcolm Trustrum Eve. His dedication and mastery of facts, and his thundering oratory made him an idol among the cane growers throughout Fiji.

Mr. Koya also appeared before the Denning Arbitration in 1969 with Mr. Patel. He knew the sugar industry better than anyone. He came from a farming background. NFP’s base was in the cane belt and farmers formed his natural constituency. He represented their concerns and interests as few others could do.

His effort along that of Mr. Patel and the NFP did not go in vain as it was during his tenure as the leader of the farmers and Indians that the mill ownership changed hands from the CSR to SPSM to finally the FSC giving the farmers their much needed dignity, rights and share of the proceeds that they rightfully deserved. Their struggle of two or more decades finally paid off.

At the time of succeeding Mr. Patel as the Leader of the NFP, he also inherited the Presidency of the Party and he successfully led the NFP delegation to the 1970 Constitutional Conference in London. At that meeting, Mr. Koya negotiated Fiji's Independence, the 1970 Constitution and Fiji's peaceful transition from a Crown Colony to Dominion status.

This led to the birth of a new nation – Fiji. This was his greatest achievement and legacy to future generations. Therefore, it is no mean tribute when one refers to him as the co- author of the 1970 constitution and one of the founding fathers of the nation.

After the 1972 General Elections, Hon. S.M. Koya was re-elected as the Leader of the Opposition. He successfully negotiated the Diwali and Prophet Muhammed's Birthday public holidays and the takeover of the control of the sugar industry by the FSC. His next major achievement was the negotiation of the preferential price for Fiji Sugar along with Ratu Mara that boosted the quality of life and standard of living of the cane farmers and over the years helped the Fiji economy to prosper.

By the time of the first 1977 General Elections, he emerged as the main contender for the Office of the Prime Minister.

For Mr. Koya and the NFP, the moment of truth and triumph came in independent Fiji's second general elections in April, 1977 when the NFP won 26 of the 52 seats in the House of the Representatives to Alliance's 24. Ratu Mara resigned from office but the NFP was not so lucky as it had won only 50% of the seats and needed at least 1 more seat to form the government.

While negotiations with the independent member- Ratu Osea Gavidi took time, the then Governor- General used his discretionary powers and appointed Ratu Mara back to the office thus installing the minority Alliance government.

But the defeat of the Alliance motion of confidence itself on the floor of the House demonstrated that there was a majority government in waiting with an alternative Prime Minister in the person of Mr. S.M. Koya. It still leaves readers of political history puzzled as to why the Governor General did not give the NFP and Mr. Koya a chance to form the government.

Was Koya cheated of the top office? What was involved- politics or religion? Why did the Governor- General re-instate Ratu Mara? Should the Governor –General, have tested the wish of Parliament in the matter instead of dissolving the Parliament himself? Was the Governor- General following the precedent set by his Australian counterpart at that time? Was the NFP really divided over Koya's leadership or was there a calculated move by the opponents of Mr. Koya and the NFP to discredit Koya and divide the NFP for political gain?

These are the questions that continue to haunt Fiji's political history and politicians and of late these are the questions with which the detractors of the NFP have haunted the party to hoodwink the voters. It is said that the truth triumphs. If this is true- then at one time or another- somewhere down the line someone may have to answer the above questions and truth will come out. Or perhaps Fiji has moved so far that these questions do not have any relevance to our body politic in Fiji anymore.

However, Mr. Koya, the patriot and loyal party man, fully co-operated with Mr. Jai Ram Reddy and reunited the NFP. He was re-elected to Parliament in 1982 and played a key role in the events that followed the 82 elections particularly the Commission of Inquiry into the elections and the restructure of the sugar industry. The establishment of the Sugar Cane Growers Council saw him getting elected as the Chairman of the Council in 1985, a position in which he served until 1992 when he was defeated by the Mahendra Chaudhry led NFU.

He assumed party leadership once again. And once more he was inducted as the Leader of the Opposition in 1984 when Mr. Reddy resigned after a heated exchange with then Speaker. After realizing that it was time to hand over the reins of the party to the next generation, he relinquished the leadership of the party to Mr. Harish Sharma in 1986. He was opposed to the idea of the Coalition with Fiji Labour Party from day one.

Prior to the 1992 general elections, he openly supported the NFP's approach to review the 1990 constitution and signed the nomination of Mr. Jai Ram Reddy for the Lautoka Rural Indian Communal Constituency. He made it clear in his interview with the *Fiji Times* that his views were completely **against** the Fiji Labour Party.

Politics aside, Mr. Koya was a **devout Muslim** and a long time **Speaker** of the Fiji Muslim League. He was a family man and upheld high moral values.

When Mr. Koya passed away on April 14, 1993, many rich tributes were paid to the great statesman. One such tribute paid by a **colleague** of many years both in the legal and political sphere, Jai Ram Reddy which is published elsewhere in this publication, it sums up the life of Mr Koya and gives an insight, a deep understanding about the person that he was. The fact that his funeral on 17th April 1993 at Lautoka was attended by thousands of people of all walks of life such as diplomats, religious and political leaders and many others including foreign dignitaries is testimony of S M Koya's importance in Fiji's history.

Former Prime Minister **Sitiveni Rabuka** said history students in future would proclaim that any study of the political metamorphosis of this land would have to have Mr Koya as a prominent feature in it. Former Vice-President the late Ratu Sir Josaia Tavaiqia said the people of Fiji have much to be thankful for Mr Koya's contribution to this nation.

He said, ***"In him we saw faith, humility, kindness and sacrifice. And from his faithfulness, kindness and sacrifice, the people prospered. This was one servant of God who utilized his talents for the prosperity of Fiji. Forever may his name remain in the annals of the history of our nation."***

One of Mr Koya's last activities that he conducted in his law office was photocopying a saying and pasting it on the office wall. His integrity, wisdom and foresight are reflected in this: -

Watch your thoughts;
They become words;
They become actions;
Watch your actions;
They become habits;
Watch your habits;
They become character;
Watch your character;
They become your destiny.

"I am a son of the soil of Fiji. I was born here. I will die for this country and I want to be buried here."

Siddiq Moidin Koya

February 29th 1924 – April 17, 1993.



SM Koya being sworn in as the
Leader of the Opposition by
Speaker Tomasi Vakatora, 1984

**Life & Works of
Hon. Pt. Harish Chandra Sharma
Leader of the Opposition/ NFP (1986)
Deputy Leader- NFP/ Labour Coalition
(1986- 1992)
Deputy Leader of the Opposition
(1994- 99)**



Hon. Pt. Harish Chandra was born in 1932 at **Sawani, Nausori**. He had his primary and secondary education in the Nausori district. After leaving school, he worked briefly for a Printing company before joining the colonial civil service in the Audit department. He resigned from the service to study law at the University of Tasmania at Hobart and graduated as a **lawyer** joining the law firm of Patel and Sharma in Nadi of which he became the owner in the later years. He retired after 40 years of successful practice as a lawyer.

Mr. Sharma joined the NFP **Nadi Branch** and was elected an **town councillor** between 1967 and 1970. Upon the creation of the House of Senate under the 1970 constitution, he was one of the pioneer opposition nominees to the House of **Senate** in 1970 from which he resigned to successfully contest the Sigatoka Indian Communal Constituency under the NFP banner in the **1972 general elections**. He was re-elected from the same constituency in the April and September, 1977 elections. Mr. Sharma also served as the **Deputy Speaker** of the House of the Representatives from 1977 to 1982. In the 1982 elections, Mr. Sharma won the South- Western Indian National Seat defeating the sitting Alliance Member. In 1985, Mr. Sharma was elected the National President of the National Federation Party.

After the resignation of Mr. S.M. Koya as the **Leader of the Opposition** and Party Leader in 1986, Mr. Harish Sharma was elected to the position. When the NFP joined forces with the Fiji Labour Party in 1986, Mr. Sharma was elected as the **Deputy Leader** of the Coalition and after the historic election of the Coalition Government in 1987, he was inducted into the Cabinet as **Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Housing, Local- Government, Urban affairs and Information**. He was elected in 1987 from his former constituency of Sigatoka Indian Communal.

Mr. Sharma was the acting leader of the Coalition after the demise of Dr. Timoci Bavadra and he also led the Coalition after the departure of Adi Kuini Vuikaba Speed until 1992 when the NFP and FLP parted ways over their strategies to seek review of the 1990 constitution.

While leading the Coalition, Mr. Sharma was **arrested and tortured** by the military many times. He endured the pain and suffering inflicted to him, his family, friends and constituents with such a courage that is worth admiring. He never faltered from the path of truth and remained a pillar of strength boosting the morale of the victims of the coup to keep up the struggle for survival with sense of hope and dignity.

Falling victim to the FLP's devious campaign against the NFP in **1992**, Mr. Sharma lost by a margin of four votes in the Malomalo- North/ Nadi- Rural Indian communal Constituency and was elected as the senior Vice President of the Party in the same year at the Lautoka Convention. Mr. Sharma remained the Senior Vice President of the Party until 2002. He successfully contested the same seat in the 1994 snap elections and entered Parliament as the deputy leader of the Opposition.

His long years of expertise as a lawyer, social and religious leader and legislator were great asset to him and the party especially during the deliberations of the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee upon the review of the 1990 constitution and the successful evolution of the 1997 constitution where his contributions and arguments helped achieved a lot for Fiji and all it's people.

Mr. Sharma was an eloquent debator in the house contributing and influencing the outcome of many important legislations. He regularly moved motions upon important national and constituency issues and served with distinction as a member of numerous parliamentary select committees. A durable leader who served 22 years in the parliament is the longest serving NFP Parliamentarian. He was made the Officer of the Order of Fiji in 1995.

Apart from politics, Mr. Sharma is a devout family man and active social and religious worker. His knowledge and expertise about the Sanatan dharma and Hinduism saw him propagating about the Hindu religion and keeping the Sanatan Movement intact and ushering Shree Sanatan Dharma Pratinidhi Sabha in a new direction with the much needed reforms. He served as the National President of the Sabha for ten years before handing over to the next generation of leaders. He was made Life member of the Sabha and awarded the prestigious title of 'Sanatan Ratna'.

Mr. Harish Sharma was also a distinguished member of the Fiji Law Society for many years. He also served as the President of the Fiji Law Society in 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Sharma is no mean orator and poet. His English and Hindi speeches, debate addresses and poems left the audience spell bound and his opponents awestruck looking for a reply. He is a learned scholar of the Hindu scriptures and was an active social worker having served numerous organizations around the country working for the welfare of the disadvantaged groups and taking remedial actions upon pressing social and cultural issues.

Aged 74, Mr. Sharma is living in retirement in Australia from where he regularly contributes in the media and by way of messages and advice upon religious, social and cultural issues.



NFP Nadi Branch, 1998

Life & Works of Dr. Balwant Singh Rakka President of N.F.P (1986- 98)

Dr. Balwant Singh Rakka was born in 1941 in Ba, Fiji where he had his primary and secondary education. He graduated in Medicine from India and began his practice at Ba, Fiji.



Dr. Balwant Singh Rakka assumed the Presidency of the NFP when the Party was facing a critical situation in the lead up to the 1987 general elections. He was elected to the position at the 1986 National Convention in Ba. He worked tirelessly in reviving the Party network throughout Fiji and gave his full and unwavering support in the negotiations that led to the formation of the NFP/ Labour Coalition in the same year. He himself was a Coalition candidate in the 1987 General Elections for the Ba Central Indian Communal Constituency which he won in a landslide victory.

He did not become a Minister in the Bavadra Government because he wanted to work and consolidate the Party that he always said was larger than everybody. He remained a backbencher in 1987. Such opportunities hardly open to people who have been in politics for sometime particularly in the opposition most of the time but it's sacrifice by one such politician demonstrates that Dr. Rakka lived up with the motto 'Service before Self'. And he served the party and the Indian community faithfully through trying and testing times withstanding the oppressions of the military regime.

He was part of the NFP/ Labour Coalition team deposed and arrested in the May 14th, 1987 first coup and kept under detention for six days in Suva. He was treated unkindly by the coup makers for his upright stand upon numerous important issues and for the role he played in the success of the Coalition.

Dr. Rakka led the NFP and the Indian Community during the darkest days following the 1987 military coups. It was Dr. Rakka who inspired the young and old to have confidence in the country and was able to organize opposition to the injustices meted out by the interim Government against the Indian Community. It was Dr. Rakka who was the vice of opposition to the imposition of the 1990 Constitution. Dr. Rakka continued to voice his criticism against the 1990 constitution until it was changed in 1997. It was Dr. Rakka who stood fearlessly against injustice and always held his head high for the cause of democracy and people's rights in Fiji. While Dr. Rakka was very critical of all those who were involved in the military coups of 1987, but he was always able to forgive them.

Dr. Rakka never faltered in his fight for justice, equality and fairness for all, irrespective of race, colour or creed. Dr. Rakka was a caring, dedicated and loving father, friend and a trusted but fearless politician. Dr. Rakka lived like a lion, he roared like a lion and died like a lion.

Going down the memory lane, one would find that Dr. Rakka was always a Party man who had been with the NFP since its inception. He was a outstanding stalwart of the NFP Ba Branch for many years before assuming the Presidency of the Party in 1986 and he served in that position for the next 12 years retiring from active politics due to ill-health in 1998. His Presidency saw the NFP emerging as a major political force and key player in shaping the destiny of Fiji.

Prior to his elevation to the Presidency of the Party, Dr. Rakka was a Senator (Leader of the Opposition's Nominee) in the House of Senate from 1983 to 1987, a Member of Parliament in 1987, A Sugar Cane Growers Councillor between 1992 and 1995 and the pioneer President of Fiji Cane Growers Association from 1992 to 1994. He won the Koronubu Sector in Ba in the 1992 SCGC elections with the highest number of votes.

Fate was not so kind to him during the 1992 and 1994 general elections when he lost narrowly to Fiji Labour Party candidates falling victim to the smokescreen created by his opponents that misled the voters. He took those losses gracefully and continued to work for the welfare of his constituents and the Indian Community consistently. He virtually stopped his practice after the events of 1987 and his surgery became the nerve centre of the Movement for Democracy in Fiji. His office in Ba was thriving with political activities at the height of the 1987 crisis that led to the establishment of the famous underground movement 'The Chandaal Chaukri'. He

was indeed a man of crisis as a colleague put it at his funeral. His thoughts, words and actions reflected that and they always consistent

Dr. Rakka was fully aware of the economic and security risks he was exposing himself and his family to but 'the Lion' that he was elevated himself from these material things and sacrificed all he could including his health to fight for the restoration of democracy in Fiji. In the darkest of the day's knitted in our history, Dr. Rakka was the guiding light house that kept the morale of the Party high and quest in all of us to keep working and moving ahead as a party, as community and as a country. He led us through turbulent times with an extra ordinary zeal.

His passing away on Monday, 23rd August, 1999 was a big blow to the NFP and a sad loss to the Indian Community. He is sadly missed not only by the NFP and it's supporters but by all those people who found comfort in Dr. Rakka's' inspiring statements during those dark days when democracy remained under serious threat in our country.



Jagannath Sami campaigning in the sugar belt



Governer General Rt Sir Penaia Ganilau takes a walk with deposed PM Dr Timoci Bavadra



Life & Works of
Hon. Justice Jai Ram Reddy
Leader of the Opposition/ N.F.P.
(1977- 84/ 1992- 99)

“I have always believed in the goodness of men, women and children who make a family, a neighbourhood, a society, a nation. But this goodness does not come of itself. It has to be taught, it has to be nurtured, it has to be practiced, and above all it must be given the opportunity to develop and mature to heights which can serve as examples emulated by all right thinking and sensible citizens. I hope that a day will dawn on this nation when people of this country will be judged not for the colour of the skin, or by the race to which they belong, the province from which they hail, but by the quality of their character. I will be a great day if it came to pass”.

Jai Ram Reddy - 1995

Hon. Justice Jai Ram Reddy was arguably the most significant Indian Leader since Independence until he resigned from politics to become the President of the Fiji Court of Appeal in March, 2000.

Born on 12 May, 1937, at Tuvu, Lautoka, he qualified as a lawyer in New Zealand and began practice in the firm of Hon. A. D. Patel in 1961, from which he resigned to become a Crown Counsel in 1966, rising to the position of Principal Legal Officer. In 1970, he joined as a partner in the law firm of Stuart Reddy & Company, which soon became one of the largest and most respected in the country, with Mr. Reddy himself emerging as the most brilliant criminal lawyer as well as the finest orator of his generation.

He was appointed to the Senate in 1972, from which he resigned in 1977 to contest the general election. In the second election of that year, he became the Leader of the National Federation Party and Leader of the Opposition. Over the next several years, he worked hard to unite the NFP and establish effective network for the party.

He was the acknowledged architect of the NFP/ Labour Coalition in 1986, which a year later brought about the first change of government since independence. He was appointed to the Senate by the Prime Minister- Dr. Timoci Bavadra and inducted into the Cabinet as Attorney – General and Minister for Justice. Arsonists targeted his law firm and home at Lautoka before the Coups because extremist Fijian elements regarded him as the person responsible for the defeat of the Alliance Party led by Ratu Mara.

This was expressed by the slogans of the Taukei Movement “Bavadra- the boat, Reddy- the captain” As a result, he became the most hated Indian leader at that time and that is why he was personally targeted.

After the 1987 coups, Mr. Reddy traveled around the world with Coalition leader – Dr. Bavadra canvassing support for the restoration of parliamentary democracy and social justice in Fiji. Back at home, he served faithfully on the Falvey Committee that was set up to resolve the 1987 Constitutional crisis.



The Struggle after 1987 Coup
A NFP Meeting at the Gimit Centre, Lautoka

He was a forthright advisor of the NFP/ Labour Coalition and contributed in numerous ways to the struggle in Fiji after the two coups of 1987, for which he was arrested and treated unkindly many times.

A faithful advocate for his Indo- Fijian Constituency, he led the NFP in the 1992 general elections and was returned once again as the Leader of the Opposition. In Parliament, his primary objective was to review the racially

weighted 1990 constitution which relegated Indian to third class citizenship in the country of their birth and its entrenched provisions were designed to permanently confine Indians to political wilderness.

It is remarkable that how he managed to negotiate a new constitution that is acclaimed internationally with those who deposed him and the Coalition in 1987. Working closely with Prime Minister- Major General Sitiveni Rabuka in a surprisingly fruitful and effective partnership, he helped set up an independent review Commission, whose report provided the basis of a new constitution passed in July 1997 .

This achievement was made without compromising political ideals nor national and Indian community's interests.

While negotiations were on-going, Mr. Reddy did not spare Rabuka and SVT and carried out his role as the Leader of the Opposition most effectively. He exposed corruptions and scams, led the defeat of the 1994 budget in November, 1993 that resulted in the fall of Rabuka government and snap elections of February 1994.

He introduced motions in parliament which resulted in sacking SVT Ministers who either were exposed or supported Mr. Reddy and voted against their very own government on issues of critical national importance. Yet this did not derail the review process.

His speech to the Great Council of Chiefs Meeting on June 6, 1997 was a defining moment in the history of Fiji. He managed not only to win the support of the chiefs for the new constitution but also put an end to a dark and sad chapter in the history of Fiji and lay down foundation for genuine reconciliation. He epitomized statesmanship in working to bridge the racial divide and build a new political consensus in Fiji.

Unfortunately, Mr. Reddy was defeated in the 1999 general elections, his politics of moderation, bridge building and multiracialism falling victim to the ravages of ethnic politics, but his political legacy was a constitution that returned Fiji to a more stable, just and democratic society.

His political career over, he was appointed to the bench. Law, he had always said, was his love, real passion. His professional life had come full circle from defence attorney to crown prosecutor to judge of the Fiji Court of Appeal and then a judge of the United Nations International Criminal Court for Rwanda, where he is currently based. Mr. Reddy was the longest serving Leader of the Opposition. He was a visionary leader, a mesmeric orator and committed to the welfare of all the people of Fiji.

Political commentator and University of the South Pacific academic Dr Steven Ratuva states, "Jai Ram Reddy was, and still is, the only Indo-Fijian leader capable of assuming the heights of multi-ethnic statesmanship. He was the only Indo-Fijian leader ever trusted by the Fijians. He was genuine and humble and indigenous Fijian leaders saw these virtues clearly and related to them." (The Review 1/8/03)

Prominent lawyer and former spokesman for the late PM Dr Timoci Bavadra, Richard Naidu, while paying tribute to Mr Reddy following his appointment as a judge to the UN International Criminal Court for Rwanda says, "I commented to him after the 1999 election that history would treat him better than the voters did and I certainly hope that is true. Jai Ram Reddy, who survived the rough and tumble of Fiji politics for more than 20 years with his reputation for integrity intact, without succumbing to the compromises of politics in a coup-ridden country, surely ranks heads and shoulders above any politician of his generation." (The Review – 16/5/03)

"Leadership is about averting disaster, not creating the conditions in which it thrives. Creating an environment conducive to unity can be a slow process. There is no overnight solution. With genuine goodwill, united as a mighty collective force and a willingness to sacrifice personal gains in the national interest, we can succeed." – Jai Ram Reddy – 3rd May, 1996.

Towards A United Future

The Historic Speech by Leader of the Opposition
Hon. Jai Ram Reddy
to The Great Council of Chiefs
Suva, Friday, June 6, 1997.

Ni sa tiko saka na turaga na peresitedi, nai liuliu ni noda matanitu, na gone turaga na tui nayau, na sau ni vanua ko lau.

Ni sa tiko saka na turaga, nai liuliu ni Bose Levu Vakaturaga, nai talai ka Prime Minister ni noda vanua.

Ni sa tiko saka na turaga, kei na marama bale, lewe ni bose levu vakaturaga.

Ni sa tiko saka na turaga, kei na marama, lewe ni bose, ni veika vakaitaukei.

Ni sa tiko saka na turaga, kei na marama, lewe ni matabose e cake, ni seneti.

Today I come before you deeply moved by what this moment means - to you, to me, and to all the people of our motherland. In a time which future generations will remember as a defining moment for this country, the grandson of an Indentured Labourer answers the call of the Bose Levu Vakaturaga. And together we keep an appointment with history. Never before has an Indian been invited to address this august body. I am honoured and humbled to be the first and I am grateful for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you in person. I have made many speeches, in many places, and on many high occasions. But what I have to say this morning is for me the most important of them all. The very fact of my being here says more about the true spirit of this young nation than any words can express. Our presence, together, in this forum is symbolic of the emerging mood of great optimism that is abroad in the land. We come to put the final seal on a troubled era and to open a new chapter of hope. And with your indulgence I will try to do justice to the occasion.

"I come to speak of truth and of destiny".

I come before you to speak from my heart. I come to speak to you of history, and of the making of history. I come to speak of fear and of the end of fear. I come to speak of truth and of destiny.

Chiefs of Fiji, this Council and its members, together and individually, represent a great and binding power for this nation. Since time immemorial, your ancestors have provided leadership and guidance for the Fijians. In ancient days, the chiefs of these islands were called upon to nurture and protect a people and their culture.

Yet they were not always united in this task. There sit here today men and women whose forebears were sworn and bitter enemies. Fiji was divided, torn asunder by war and hatred. Yet out of the fires of conflict the warring chiefs of Fiji slowly forged a common identity - recognizing that failure to do so could lead to continuing death and destruction. Those who, with Ratu Seru Cakobau, ceded these islands to Queen Victoria did so in the belief that uniting to put an end to conflict would preserve their identity, and way of life. And so it did.

Since the creation of this High Council, The Bose Levu Vakaturaga has been the source of Fijian Unity. Through the turbulence of the last 100 years, successive generations of chiefs have passed down the wisdom of those who went before. You are the inheritors of this legacy.

Chiefs of Fiji, many of you descend directly from those far-seeing Leaders who joined Ratu Cakobau in the cession of Fiji. So, too, the strands of history that led from their momentous decision bring us to this day and this time. From the coming of Colonial Rule, through Giritmit, through world wars and depression... through profound social and technological change, Independence and coups, time and chance have brought together many threads which Ratu Cakobau and his fellow Leaders could never have imagined. But, I would humbly suggest that, just as they were called to bind together a divided people for the mutual good, so is this Great Council, assembled here today, called upon again.

You are called upon to be a foundation of unity for the islands your ancestors set upon the road to modern nationhood.

**"Fiji is our home. Fiji is our only home.
We.. have..no..other. We want no other".**

2008

Chiefs of Fiji, with the greatest respect and humility, I submit that you are chiefs, not just of Fijians, but of all the people of Fiji. I said I would speak to you of truth. Plainly and honestly, then, I say to you:

The Indians of Fiji, brought to these shores as labourers, did not come to conquer or colonize. We, their descendants, do not seek to usurp your ancient rights and responsibilities. We never have. We have no wish, no desire, to separate ourselves from you. Fiji is our home. Fiji is our only home. We... have...no...other. We want no other.

Our ancestors came to this land in search of a better life, in search of a future they dreamed of for their children and their children's children. Though they travelled to these Islands long, long after your ancestors, surely the dreams and hopes of those who landed from the Leonidas were not that different from those who came ashore after the epic earlier voyages from the west.

Let me reaffirm that we honour your place, and the place of your people, as the first inhabitants of Fiji. We recognize, and have always recognized, the unique and special role of this Council. We seek not domination, indeed we cannot dominate - we are not the majority ethnic group in this multi-cultural nation. You are. What we seek is partnership. We seek a country whose children of all races grow up with a deep understanding and respect for each other's cultures languages and traditions. We seek a country which encourages the best and the brightest - indeed, encourages all its people, of all races - to work together. We seek not to threaten your security, but to protect it. For in your security lies the basis for our own.

Chiefs of Fiji, I said I would speak to you of fear. This country has for too long lived with fear, and we have for too long let fear stand between us and what we can become. You and your people have been afraid for your identity, for your way of life. You have been afraid of being dispossessed in the land of your ancestors, of being swamped by migrant peoples. For our part, Fiji's Indians - and to some extent other communities - have been afraid of always being second-class citizens, condemned to perpetual insecurity in the place of our birth, doomed to be the eternal vulagi.

"By confronting our fears honestly and openly. we have let light into the dark corners of the national soul - and found hope".

At some points in our history, there may have been justification for the fears of both communities. Indeed, politicians of both groups have at various times, capitalized on those fears, maybe with the best of intentions, but often for their own ends.

The political system from the Independence period placed emphasis on communal solidarity. All too often, it seemed to be, sadly, the Fijians for the Fijians and the Indians for the Indians. In the struggle for votes, Fijian politicians found themselves aligned with Indians who were on the political fringes of their own community. Similarly, the Indians were associated with Fijian politicians removed from the mainstream of Fijian thought. There was intense rivalry, which, in turn, bred resentment. The Fijians felt the Indians were fragmenting their people. Indians felt the same. In a way, Elections became self-defeating. We had allowed fear to become our driving force - and there was fault on both sides. I think many of us who were involved see now that we were wrong. Yet, at the time, we seemed locked into this pointless cycle of inter-communal rivalry.

Chiefs of Fiji, I said, too, that I would speak of an end to fear. I reach out to you today then and I seek your blessings for a better way, a way without the fear that has for so long cast its shadow over us.

For the last several months, a multi-racial, multi-party parliamentary committee has been on a quest for a new direction in our national politics. This Committee, as you know, comprises representatives of the main political parties, speaking for the vast majority of the electorate.

I am so proud to tell you, that for the first time, all of these parties are speaking with one voice. We have attained what previously seemed unattainable. We have found a comprehensive middle ground. By confronting our fears honestly and openly, we have let light into the dark corners of the national soul - and found hope.

It is our belief that we have agreed on a constitutional formula which will encourage us - Fijians, Indians and everyone else - to stand together. We want to convert what has been a political culture of confrontation into a culture of co-operation. In a broadly based National Government, we can complement each other and concentrate, together, on the vital needs of a developing nation.

"We want to convert what has been a political culture of confrontation into a culture of co-operation"

Perhaps the most far-reaching and visionary change advocated is the requirement for the Leader of the parliamentary majority to have minority parties join in cabinet, in proportion to the numbers they have in the house. Unlike the traditional Westminster System of Confrontational Government, this model demands that major political parties work together. If we can succeed, we may well find ourselves serving as an example for other multicultural nations. And, like the Prime Minister and the other members of the Committee, I believe we can make it happen. There is a risk, but it is a risk worth taking. And I pledge to you my unwavering determination to do everything in my power to help it succeed.

Like the Chiefs of old, we must stand together, or we will surely fail.

I know that you have been closely observing Constitutional Developments. You have shared with us some of your concerns and I am sure these will come up during your meeting. It is not my place to report on the specifics. But I can assure you that issues you raised were given the most serious consideration by the entire Committee.

What I can say is this. I am convinced the indigenous interests you have a solemn obligation to protect are in no way weakened under the arrangements we are proposing. The protection of Fijian Interests is in fact strengthened. No laws relating to the Fijian people or their land can be amended without the consent of the Fijian people. In particular, this Council's nominees in the senate would effectively retain a veto option over such Legislation. The New Constitution also specifically directs the Parliament of Fiji to make provision for the application of customary Laws. These must have regard to customs, traditions, usages, values and aspirations of the Fijian and Rotuman people.

In a further indication of the unanimous support of all our communities for the special place of The Bose Levu Vakaturaga, the New Constitution leaves full authority for the appointment of the President and Vice-President of Fiji with this Council. Though the Reeves Report had suggested a different arrangement, the Committee felt authority should remain with the

"to some generations much is given: of other generations much is asked. This generation...has a rendezvous with destiny."

Chiefs. The Indian leadership fully supported this provision. We did so out of the respect we hold for this Council. We did so in the belief I spoke of earlier - that the Members of this Council are not just the Chiefs of Indigenous Fijians, but of all Fiji.

In all of our deliberations we have been conscious that it is not just the eyes of Fiji that have been upon us. The International Community, too, is intensely interested in the solutions we are finding. We should, therefore, all be proud that our consensus not only satisfies the aspirations of Fiji's people. It will also win the acclamation of the world.

This opens the way for us to once again take our rightful place in the Commonwealth. I know this is your wish. It is the wish of Fiji's Indians as well. Like you, we look to the crown as a noble and comforting symbol of unity. May the day soon come when Her Majesty can stand before you - indeed before us all - restored as Queen of Fiji. Chiefs of Fiji, You have done me great honour today and I shall never forget it. Neither will the Indians of Fiji. We have written a page of our history this morning. So it is fitting that I conclude by speaking of the making of history.

In one of his nation's darkest hours, that courageous and visionary American Leader, Franklin Roosevelt, said, and I quote:

"to some generations much is given; of other generations much is asked. This generation...has a rendezvous with destiny."

Much was asked of Ratu Cakobau's generation of Chiefs. Much is asked of this generation of Chiefs. Much is asked of us all.

Let us, therefore, gather our courage and set ourselves, united, to the finishing of the Noble task to which our history, our heritage, and our beloved motherland now call us.

This generation must keep its rendezvous with destiny.

And then, to future generations, much will be given.

May almighty God Bless you, and all our people.

Defining moment for all

YESTERDAY'S meeting of the Great Council of Chiefs will be recognised by generations yet unborn as a defining moment in the history of this nation.

History was made when the Opposition Leader, Jai Ram Reddy, stood before the chiefs to deliver an address that was at once passionate and moving in its simplicity.

History was again made when the chiefs accepted the report of the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee on the Constitution, clearing the way for the prime minister's dream of a multiracial government to move towards reality.

As the grandson of an indentured labourer told the chiefs: "I have made many speeches in many places and on many occasions. But what I have to say this morning is for me the most important of them all."

Mr Reddy then made an eloquent plea for unity and the chiefs responded. The opposition leader was at pains to reassure all Fijians that the Indian community has no ambition to control the destiny of the nation. It does, however, seek to play a role in building a better future for all the people of this country.

THE Fiji Times

EDITORIAL COMMENT

He frankly acknowledged the errors of the past — his own and those of others — before pledging to work for a united Fiji. His address and many of the speeches in reply brought tears.

Now is the time, however, to put our tears firmly in the past. The Great Council of Chiefs has shown the nation the way to a better future and it is for all leaders now to take up the challenge.

There will be doubters. Already the hardline Fijian groups are rallying support.

They cannot be allowed, however, to derail the process set in motion by yesterday's meeting of the council. To protest is a right. To disrupt is a crime.

The dissidents have a right to march — peacefully — they have a right to burn papers. But the overwhelming majority of the community supports Mr Reddy and the Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, in their joint quest for unity. The chiefs gave them their blessings yesterday.

No minority — however aggrieved — should be able to halt or even hinder the people's own march to freedom. The chiefs have given the joint effort.

Of course, as Mr Reddy pointed out, there are other risks. The Westminster system prefers confrontational politics to the language of co-operation and the danger remains that ideological differences may yet separate the main political parties.

But if the partners can stay together long enough to give Fiji a constitution that all communities can live with, they will have done the nation a great service.

If they later become separated by ideology — and not by race — then democracy will have been well served.

THE PARTNERSHIP THAT WAS NOT TO BE



Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka with the Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Reddy after the passage of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 1997



NFP Parliamentary Caucus, 1998

NFP History

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NFP 1963- 2006

In the last 43 years, the National Federation Party has achieved many things for people of all walks of life in Fiji. Some of its major achievements are listed below:-

1. Establishment of the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF)
2. Proposing the idea of a local university that led to the establishment of the University of the South Pacific (USP)
3. Successfully and peacefully negotiating the independence of Fiji and the 1970 Constitution.
4. Brought about ALTO in 1966 and ALTA in 1976 in partnership with the landowners that provides mechanisms and basis for resolution of future land tenure problem in Fiji.
5. Played a key role in the sugar industry by negotiating the Denning Award, purchase of the CSR and SPSM and establishment of the FSC and in restructuring the sugar industry in 1984 allowing farmers to have greater say in the industry.
6. Negotiated Diwali and Prophet Muhammeds Birthday public holidays.
7. Establishment of the Reeves Commission to review the 1990 Constitution and the successful passage of the 1997 Constitution.
8. Establishment of the Housing Authority of Fiji.
9. Forging the first genuine political/ multiracial partnership with the SVT and VGP in 1999.

Conclusion

The National Federation Party was formed out of the political, social and economic concerns and problems of the people of Fiji in 1963. The Party organized the people of Fiji as a whole to attain full independence, lead the struggle for the cane farmers of Fiji for justice and dignity that saw the departure of the CSR Company from Fiji and the establishment of Fiji Sugar Corporation – giving the control of the Sugar Industry to the farmers, laid down an elaborate agenda for the socio-economic development of the country and most sincerely and notably called for and worked towards uniting all the people of Fiji as one nation.

In its 45 years of existence, the NFP has produced eminent leaders such as Hon. A.D. Patel, Hon. S.M. Koya, Hon. Jai Ram Reddy, Hon. Harish Sharma and Dr. Balwant Singh Rakka who have made immense and meaningful contributions towards the development of this country. The NFP has bequeathed Fiji with defining pieces of legislations pertaining to the rule of law, human rights, land tenure, sugar industry, industrial relations, social security, education, housing and national unity.

Despite being confined to the opposition benches throughout its tenure in Parliament (except for the five weeks when the Party was in Government in 1987 in Coalition with the Labour Party), the record set by the NFP remains unparalleled in terms of its contributions to debates, discussions, legislations, achievements and most importantly in terms of quality leadership.

In 1999, the NFP was made a victim of the 'pie in the sky' promises and emotional racial appeal orchestrated by its detractors. Since then, Fiji has suffered miserably from racial polarization that has generated mass migration and discrimination. Sadly, political leadership in Fiji since 1999 has been surviving and thriving by promoting racial polarization.



NFP Organisers;
Bala Dass
General Secretary
of FCGA
(Western)
& Bimal Prasad
(Central)
Editor of the
Publication



Coups are not the answer to our problems. Instead, it's a recipe for further political and socio-economic catastrophe. The NFP was a victim of the 1987 coups. We have opposed all successive coups since then and our position remains unchanged. The Party has withstood the test of times to champion the cause of the rule of law and democracy, struggle against military and terrorist oppressions and voiced the plight of the disadvantaged and the victims of the 1987, 2000 and 2006 coups.

The NFP gave another gift to the people of Fiji in form of the 1997 Constitution which we believe is the genuine charter to resolve all our problems. The 1997 Constitution is by the people, for the people and of the people. The NFP is fully committed to unconditional dialogue and consensus building process to resolve the problems facing Fiji within the confines of the 1997 Constitution.

There is abundance of goodwill which our people have demonstrated time and again that we are a mature nation capable of resolving our problems in a civilized manner without being dictated by the force of arms or lured by prophets of doom.

Being the oldest political party in the country, the NFP has always maintained its founding principles and served the people of Fiji with consistency and integrity. This has earned the Party, the respect of all the communities in Fiji and the International community at large. This has also attracted the party a truly multiracial appeal and base.

Given the current impasse in Fiji, the NFP believes that with its experience, multiracial membership, sound policies, founding principles and more particularly its approach, the Party offers the people of Fiji a viable alternative to survive and move forward as united, prosperous and stable nation.

The NFP, as a political grouping of all the races of people in Fiji is needed more today than ever before. We appeal to all the people of Fiji to support us in our noble pursuit- to work together towards realizing the mission and vision of the founding fathers of this nation.

NFP- Serving Fiji with Consistency & Integrity

"It is easy to be a ranting politician. It is difficult to be a statesman in a Government to steer the ship clear of all rocks. A statesman has got to look at the next generation. A politician usually looks to the next election. I have repeated before that if it ever comes to choosing between sacrificing my community, and the interests of the country, and sacrificing myself, I would rather sacrifice myself." -A D Patel - 1964

"Change is a fact of life. We must all be willing to accept change when it comes. The NFP was born out of the struggle for dignity and justice of the ordinary people, the farmers and the workers of Fiji. Throughout our struggles we have always worked to liberate people from bondage of racial compartmentalization and create one nation and one people". - Siddiq Koya - 1977

"We seek a country whose children of all races grow up with a deep understanding and respect for each other's cultures, languages and traditions. We seek a country which encourages the best and the brightest - indeed, encourages all its people, of all races - to work together." - Jai Ram Reddy -1997

***"Our prosperity largely depends upon purposeful and tireless endeavour on the part of all. It is hard intelligent work accompanied by thrift, which makes individuals as well as nations prosperous. Let us not forget that our destiny is in our own hands. Let us bend to the task and direct our energies in the channels which will make Fiji a prosperous, strong and peaceful nation of free, happy and prosperous men and women".
- A. D. Patel 1969 -***



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