Communal Division and Constitutional Changes in Colonial Fiji, 1959-1970

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Abstract
This essay examines the role of communal division in changes to Fiji's constitution during the decade prior to Fiji becoming an independent state. Amicable relations between indigenous Fijians and Indians who migrated under indentured servitude began to crack in 1959 and broke open during political negotiations and the constitutional conference of the 1965. The subsequent election in 1966 solidified the political gains of fledgling parties and entrenched communal divides between the pro-Indian National Federation Party and the Alliance Party, theoretically race neutral, representing the interests of Fijians. By 1969 the political calculus of both the National Federation Party and the Alliance Party shifted in favor of a bid for independence. However, to convince London that Fiji was ready for self-governance, a demonstration of communal harmony had to occur.

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