

Tok Blong SPPF

October 1987 #21



Dress-shop, Fiji

E. Briere

Photo by Elaine Briere

Indian Dress Shop - Fiji. The two coups in Fiji could change this scene, as Indo-Fijians look to other countries, seeing no future in Fiji. More on Fiji, page 15.

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In Memoriam

We would like to express our deep condolences to Roman Bedor and Bernie Keldermans upon the murder of their father in Belau on the evening of September 7, 1987. The murder of Mr. Bedor, who was watching over his son's law office because of concern with increasing firebomb threats, comes after two months of mounting violence in Belau. All indications are that Roman Bedor, the leading lawyer in attempts to uphold the Belauan constitution, was the gunman's target. The murder came on the eve of a lawsuit challenging the legality of two referenda on August 4 and 21 which rammed through the Compact of Free Association between Belau and the United States.

Late word out of Belau is that Roman Bedor, who toured Canada under SPPF and Project Ploughshares auspices in 1985, is willing to die for the principles of sovereignty and a nuclear free Belau. It is assumed that further legal challenges will be forthcoming.

A synopsis of recent events is

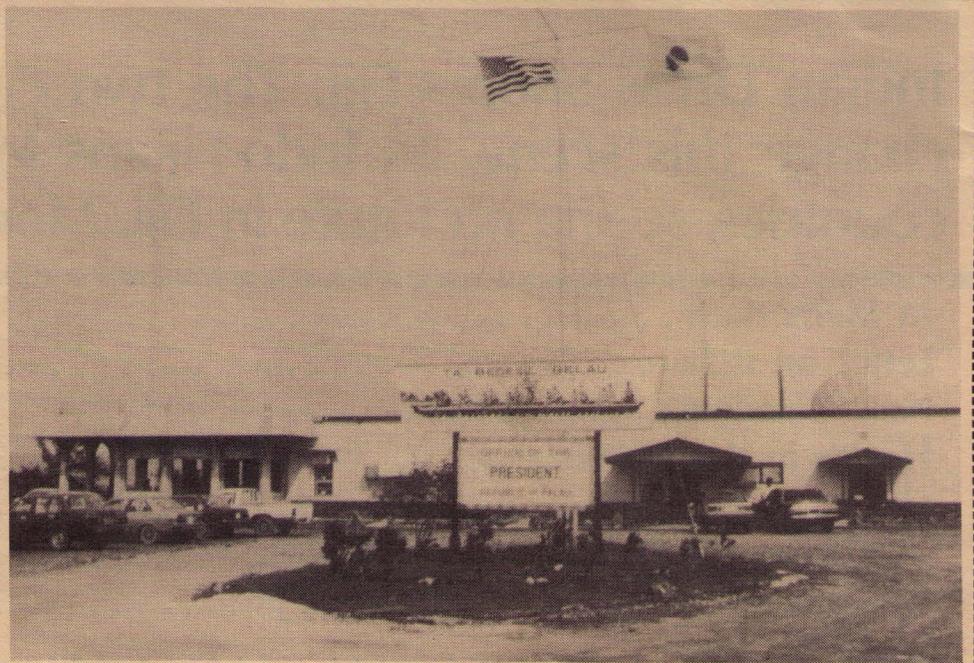
contained in a letter from the American Friends Service Committee (Portland) printed in this issue. Portland is home to the largest Belauan community in the U.S.

What can you do? Write the Security Council (Room S-3250, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017, USA) with copies to the Special Committee of 24 (Room S-3341) expressing your feelings on the history of the "democratic" process in Belau (where it has taken 10 votes in 8 years, plus murder and violence, to get the people to vote the "right" way).

Also write to Joe Clark (House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6) urging he write the U.S. State Department concerning U.S. involvement in Belau. Ask what sort of "Trusteeship" the U.S. is exercising and allowing where men are murdered to prevent citizens from taking constitutional issues to court.

[NOTE: In writing to the U.N., use Palau, not Belau, as the U.N. does not use the indigenous name for the country.]

**Violence
escalates
due to
President's
policies—
see next
page**



AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION
PORTLAND AREA PROGRAM OFFICE

2249 East Burnside Street
Portland, Oregon 97214-1678

Belau Chronology



September 11, 1987

Senator Mark O. Hatfield
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Senator Hatfield:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you about recent tragic events and underlying issues in the Republic of Palau, still a U.S. Trust Territory. American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization involved with peace and social justice issues, has been concerned about developments in Palau for some time. We urge that you, along with other members of Congress reevaluate the United States policy toward Palau and that no Congressional action be taken on the Compact of Free Association between the U.S. and Palau, unless all the legal issues concerning the agreement and Palau's Constitution are resolved.

Since June 30, when the Compact was defeated for a fifth time, the island nation has been in a state of chaos and violence directed at leaders in opposition to portions of the treaty. As you may be aware, much of the controversy is about sections in the Compact that would give the U.S. unlimited use of Palauan land for military purposes and port access to nuclear-capable ships in exchange for millions in aid over 50 years. These provisions are in conflict with Palau's Constitution and the Compact has been turned down by Palauan voters five times. However, U. S. representatives, including members of the House Interior Subcommittee on Insular and International Affairs, have repeatedly stated the U.S. will not consider a renegotiation, leaving Palau in a "take it or leave it" position. The Palau Administration has been in the role of enforcing this stand.

On September 6 the crisis reached tragic proportions when the father of two opposition leaders, Mr. Bedor, was shot to death by armed men who sped past his son's law office. In another incident, the home of a woman elder, one of the plaintiffs in a lawsuit challenging the approval of the Compact, was firebombed.

These events are the culmination of months of increasing pressure for approval of the agreement. Due process has been replaced by economic coercion, intimidation and a questionably legal referendum to amend the Constitution of Palau. Details, as we know them, are as follows:

Following the 5th defeat of the Compact on June 30th, Palau's President Salii laid off 900 government employees and tied their re-employment to passage of the agreement. The President cited a budget shortage of \$2 million dollars as cause for the furlough. Since this layoff there has been:

1. Mob violence: Hundreds of "furloughed workers" have camped out at the Palau Congress buildings demanding a new Compact vote and an amendment to their Constitution. Death threats have been made against opponents including Santos Olikong, Speaker of the Palau House. The home of Benheim Sakuma, one of the pro-Constitution

leaders, was firebombed to the ground. The Palau Administration has reportedly not acted to maintain order, and pro-Constitutionalists have alleged that these activities are being supported, if not directed, by the Palau Administration.

2. Questionable referenda: The Palau Congress passed enabling legislation for Constitutional change and a re-vote on the Compact. However, as Santos Olikong testified at a U.S. House Interior Subcommittee (Insular and International Affairs) in July, he voted for the legislation "...only because he feared for his life." Although the constitutionally-required 75% of the Palau House and Senate did not approve the referenda, two votes were held in August. Opponents were not given access to the media and the August 4 vote on the Constitution was not overseen by a U.N. visiting mission. According to reports, both the measure amending the nuclear-ban in the Constitution and the one on the Compact were approved by a small turnout of voters.

3. Legal challenges threatened: Two separate lawsuits have been filed challenging the legality of the Constitutional amendment process. The first suit was withdrawn in a confusing and questionable set of circumstances, and a similar suit was subsequently filed by Palauan women elders. Plaintiffs in both suits report having been verbally threatened, and the home of Gabriella Ngirmang, a plaintiff in the second suit, was fire-bombed. Her grandchildren were in the home at the time. Chief Justice Mamoru Nakamura resigned from hearing the case, citing threats to himself and his family. He was replaced by Judge Robert Hefner, Chief Justice, Commonwealth Trial Court in the Mariana Is. After the second case was withdrawn, Judge Hefner indicated in a memo that the withdrawal appeared to be under duress, and that the plaintiffs may "vacate" the dismissal if they choose.

4. Restricted communication: Citing economic reasons, President Salii has limited phone access to approximately nine hours a day and many phone calls appear to be monitored and cut-off in mid-call.

5. Assassination: The murder of the father of Roman Bedor and Bernie Keldermans has climaxed the last two violent months. Roman Bedor had been legal council in the first suit on the Constitutional amendment and received many death threats himself. Keldermans was one of the plaintiffs in the second suit. Although the killers have not been apprehended, the motive appears to be political.

In short, the current repression has curtailed open opposition to the Compact and undermined judicial review. The suddenness of a budget "crisis" and lay-offs of 40-50% of Palau's salaried workers, after chronic budget shortfalls, can be interpreted as no less than coercion of Palauans to approve the Compact, which the President claims will solve their economic problems.

Since there appear to serious budget questions, we urge appropriate Congressional committees to investigate fiscal management in the Palau Administration and to do an audit of Palau's finances before the Compact is reconsidered.

Regarding the legal challenges to the Constitutional amendment, it is likely that the suit will be refiled in spite of intimidation. The U.S. Congressional Research Service has given the opinion that Palau's Constitution cannot be amended until an election year (1988), and this undoubtedly will be one of the issues brought in the potential lawsuit. We urge Congress to withhold any action on the Compact unless these legal issues are resolved. (Please see enclosed document 1.)

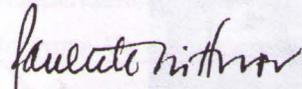
In addition we ask that U.N. Trusteeship mandate be honored. It states under Article 6 that the administering authority shall "...promote the development of the inhabitants of the trust territory toward self-government or independence"...according to "...the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned..." To this end we urge the committees to investigate the intimidation and censorship of those in opposition to the Compact.

It has been claimed by some officials in the U.S. and Palau that a small minority of people in Palau are blocking the Compact at the expense of the majority. This claim ignores the overwhelming 92% support for Palau's Constitution when it was first approved in 1979. In addition, 30-35% of Palauans have consistently voted against the Compact in six referendums. This opposition has its roots in the traditional leadership and in women's groups, whose responsibility, in this matrilineal society, is to preserve their land for future generations. Political leaders, primarily in the House of Delegates, have also opposed portions of the Compact as described in a 1986 document enclosed. (Please see enclosed document 2.)

Even if the Compact is approved as it stands, the underlying issues regarding opposition to the Compact will undoubtedly remain. While the nuclear issues are important, we understand that the issue of eminent domain is paramount. Palauans have pointed out to us that their Constitution is titled "Uchetemel a Llach" which which they translate literally as the "law of the land." As interpreted in the 1986 decision, Gibbons vs. Salii, the Compact provision which allows the U.S. to "establish and use defense sites in Palau" is in conflict with Palau's Constitutional restriction on taking or using property for the "benefit of a foreign entity." The ruling judges warned that if the Compact is implemented and land claimed for military use, it may create a "constitutional crisis" in Palau. (Please see enclosed document 3.) Most Palauans still support the land use restrictions in their Constitution.

In conclusion, we urge the Congress to re-evaluate the U.S. policy of not renegotiating the Compact. The conflict over this agreement has torn this small country apart and has already had tragic consequences. As Santos Olikong testified to the Interior Subcommittee, "Only real communication will diffuse the present crisis. And only real talking--replacing threats, violence and economic coercion--can preserve democratic processes."

Sincerely,



Paulette Wittwer
Peace and Justice Program Director

cc: Senator Bob Packwood
Representative Les AuCoin
Representative Bob Smith
Representative Ron Wyden
Representative Peter DeFazio
Representative Denny Smith
Representative Ron DeLugo
Representative Stephen Solarz
Representative Morris Udall

Charade In New Caledonia

As expected, the French pushed through a referendum vote on the future status of New Caledonia on September 13, 1987, despite condemnation of such a vote by all members of the South Pacific Forum (the regional grouping of independent governments) and the United Naitons.

France effectively assured the vote would go in their favour by allowing anyone who had been in the colony more than 3 years a vote.

The Kanaks successfully boycotted the referendum. While over 98 percent voted in favour of "staying part of France", turnout was only 58 percent, indicative of the 42 percent of voters who are Kanaks who stayed away.

The Kanaks continue to maintain a policy of non-violence, but it is difficult to project for how long. While New Caledonia will become a main political issue in French Presidential elections next year, it also could creep higher on the U.N. agenda.



PHOTO BY INGRID KIRCHER

Kanaks: with 43 percent of the population they have little power and few opportunities.

New Caledonian Referendum: a demonstration of the obvious

Donna Winslow
Universite de Montreal

The September 13th referendum in New Caledonia has demonstrated the obvious and, in the end, it has resolved nothing.

The referendum has shown that a vast majority of the Territory's white settlers and recent immigrants, who feel dependent on France for their socio-economic and political privileges, want French presence - and money - to remain in New Caledonia: ¹ while a significant majority of the Territory's native Kanak population wishes to be in control of and independent in their own country.

New Caledonians have been aware of these issues for quite some time. The world community became cognizant of them in November 1984 when the F.L.N.K.S. (National Kanak Socialist Liberation Front) boycotted the Territorial elections, set up their own provisional government, demanded freedom from French rule and a "Kanak Socialist Independence".

Nothing Ventured and Nothing Gained

If the referendum has proved nothing then why did France bother having one? She certainly did go to a lot of trouble: 7,000 military and police were stationed in the Territory (which has a total population of 145,368); financial commitments were made (France has promised 137.5 million francs for 1988 alone in addition to a considerable sum already pledged for economic recovery); the electorate was established to include every adult resident in the Territory for more than three years (this effectively made the Kanaks a minority i.e. 42% of the voters); and, the referendum was worded in a very

particular way.

Voters were asked to choose between Independence and the French Republic. ² There was no suggestion of a transition to Independence or, as the previous French socialist government had planned, a relationship of 'sovereignty association' with France. One had the feeling that if Independence were chosen France would be gone from the Territory, lock stock and barrel, the next day - a grim prospect for a country whose economy has been steadily declining since the collapse of the nickel boom in 1974.

What then does France stand to gain? It would seem that this whole exercise is an effort to legitimize French presence in the Pacific. France maintains that her presence in the region is necessary in order to keep the Soviets and the Lybians out. The Western powers have been concerned with security in the region ever since 1985 when Kiribati signed a fishing agreement with the Soviet Union. They were absolutely alarmed when Vanuatu recently opened the way for diplomatic relations with Lybia and negotiated an extensive fishing agreement with the Soviet Union which also offered access to port and airport facilities.

Although the Kanaks are asking for a "socialist" Independence their brand of socialism is more of a Melanesian than a Soviet type, which means capitalist development with an emphasis on Kanak tradition and appropriate technology, small business etc. and a more equitable distribution of resources. ³ Jean Marie TJIBAOU, President of the provisional government, believes that Independence needs to be rooted in local community

development. *"Now our forms of mobilisation have changed. Our representatives are now in place - an administration, a political bureau, offices - in each Region. We've established a priority list of projects suggested by the tribes and have begun feasibility studies on them. From these studies we've been able to establish tentative budgets for the small as well as the large projects (roads, harbours, etc.). All this in spite of the fact that the local treasury is dragging its feet in supplying promised funds. Many of my recent trips overseas have combined 'politics' and 'business' in that I have begun soliciting funds for our regional development projects".*

Up until now the Kanaks have showed no signs of establishing relations with the Soviet Union, as a matter of fact the Independence leaders have been talking to such countries as Taiwan, the United States, and of course her Pacific neighbours such as Australia and New Zealand.

The Kanaks have had some contact with Lybia, however this has been sporadic and limited mainly to the actions of one small faction of the F.L.N.K.S. The great majority of the F.L.N.K.S. disapproves of these actions and in July 1987 the provisional government's minister of foreign affairs, Yann Celéné UREGEL, was suspended from his duties because of his contacts with Lybia. The Kanaks have made it very clear that they intend to follow a Ghandhian-style strategy of peaceful demonstration and non-cooperation. For example, on August 22nd 1987 the Kanaks did not fight back when French riot police charged a peaceful group of Kanak demonstrators.

Rather than resort to violence, the Kanaks have chosen to internationalize their situation by taking their case to the South Pacific Forum, N.A.M., and the United Nations. The South Pacific Forum countries were instrumental in the reinscription of New Caledonia on the list of non self-governing territories at

the United Nations. Through the concerted effort of the Forum missions at the U.N. and in spite of fierce opposition from France, the U.N. General Assembly voted to support "the inalienable rights of the the peoples of New Caledonia to self-determination and independence".

France has chosen to ignore the United Nations and the Forum. She has been particularly virulent in her condemnation of Australia's support of the Kanaks. The French Prime Minister Jacques CHIRAC has been even so bold as to suggest that Australia's behaviour can be explained by the fact that *"hypocrisy is an Anglo-Saxon characteristic"*. France has also cut back on diplomatic relations with Australia, whose only crime seems to be that she disagrees with current French colonial policy in the Pacific. Being the largest and most wealthy Pacific mission at the United Nations Australia certainly played a leading role in lobbying the General Assembly, however the other Pacific delegates were also lobbying: Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, they all worked together to make the vote a success. After the vote, Jean Marie TJIBAOU, said *"to see the Pacific Island Nations working together in such a manner is a reward in itself"*.

The communist threat seems to be as much of a mirage in the Pacific as it is in New Caledonia. Kiribati did not renew the Soviet fishing contract and Vanuatu's arrangements with Moscow and Tripoli seem to be on hold. Nevertheless, the 'Red Menace' has sparked a flurry of diplomatic and economic activity in the region. In addition to Australian and New Zealand aid, ⁴ the United States has been pushing for increased participation by Western powers in the insular Pacific. Both Tokyo and Ottawa have responded. Japan's foreign minister has promised that *"Japan will provide as much assistance as necessary to make the area more prosperous"* and Canada will be doubling her mission administered

funds to the Pacific in 1988 in addition to giving several million dollars in aid to the regional development organizations.

The French Menace

What then, is the menace to the region that France's presence in New Caledonia can ward off? Many observers would say that the real menace to peace and security in the region is France herself, particularly her colonial policies and her nuclear testing program. And this is where we come to the crux of the matter. It is not what France stands to gain by her continued presence in New Caledonia, it is what she stands to lose if the Territory accedes to Independence.

The big fear is the "domino effect". If New Caledonia goes, French Polynesia is next and French Polynesia is a much bigger piece of the Pacific pie. In addition to the wealth of ocean and mineral resources found in French Polynesia's 200 mile zone, France has an extensive military installation and a nuclear testing site in the islands. One cannot underestimate the importance of this testing site to France. The bombing of the "Rainbow Warrior" showed the world what extent France was willing to go to protect her nuclear interests in the Pacific.

France is committed to a nuclear defense policy in Europe which is dependent on continued testing of nuclear warheads in the Pacific until at least the year 2,000.⁵ France also makes considerable profits from her nuclear industry.⁶ She cannot afford anything which might destabilize her nuclear presence in the Pacific. Even President Mitterand, who seems sympathetic to the Kanaks, supports the testing in Mururoa Atoll which makes one wonder how much support the Kanaks, who have a nuclear free and independent Pacific policy, can actually expect from him. Perhaps the politics of the upcoming presidential elections in France will influence New Caledonia's future. One is left wondering if the future of the Territory be decided in the Metropole or be determined on the ground by the Kanaks themselves.

In the final analysis, the Referendum has resolved nothing. France is still committed to continued presence in New Caledonia and the Pacific. The Kanaks are still committed to achieving

Independence. The only thing the Referendum has done is further embitter the relationships between the ethnic communities in New Caledonia and assure France that, for the time being, the tricolore will continue to fly over the Territory.

Notes

1 For example, between 1969 and 1974 25,000 immigrants - 1/4 of the population of the time - entered the Territory. Among the major immigrant groups in New Caledonia are pieds noirs from Algeria, white 'refugees' from Vanuatu, and Pacific Islanders from Wallis and Futuna (there are more Wallisians and Futunans in New Caledonia than there are in Wallis and Futuna). These immigrant groups are staunch supporters of France and totally opposed to Independence.

2 Voters had a choice between two statements: 1) Je veux que la Nouvelle-Calédonie accède à l'indépendance, or 2) Je veux que la Nouvelle-Calédonie demeure au sein de la République.

3 While agriculture supports 38% of the population in New Caledonia it represents only 3% of the GDP. 4% of the Europeans work in agriculture as opposed to 60% of the Kanaks, yet 2/3 of the arable land is in the hands of 1,000 French settlers with over half being controlled by a small elite (4.5%) of land owners. Few Kanaks are employed in the private sector. Among wage earners they remain the least numerous group and are predominantly unskilled labourers. They form less than 1% of the employer class and their global economic power is estimated to be 10% of that of other ethnic groups.

4 Australia gives approx. \$50 million and New Zealand approx. \$39 million to the region annually in aid.

5 Hydrogen and neutron bombs are also being tested on Mururoa atoll.

6 The French now have access to a new American market because of a recent accord signed between the French companies Cogema, Framatone, and Pechiney, and the American company Babcock & Wilcox.

Pacific Slide Shows Available

SPPF has three slide shows for sale. Produced in 1985 and 1986 and updated, they are:

New Caledonia: Toward Kanak Independence?

80 slides with script. \$100 (includes postage and handling)

Looks at the historic background to the current situation in New Caledonia and brings it to the present impasse. (This slide show was used by the Kanak representative to the World YWCA Conference this past August.)

Vanuatu: Our Land

75 slides with script. \$100 (includes postage and handling)

Looks at Vanuatu's history and independence, and addresses some of the new challenges for the young country.

Pacific Islands: Home or Last Frontier?

160 slides with script. \$175 (includes postage and handling)

A comprehensive yet broad-ranging look at the Pacific Islands (culture, lifestyles, economic base, development issues) and the outside incursions (military, political and economic).

For further information, or to order, contact SPPF.

Pacific Issues Fact Sheets Available

SPPF has just produced 4 fact sheets on issues of **Tourism, Health, Population, and Fisheries** in the Pacific Islands. Each gives a regional overview, pointing out the major developments faced by island countries. One of the fact sheets is reproduced in this issue of **Tok Blong SPPF**.

Individual costs are \$.75 (except Fisheries which is \$1.00). Bulk rates: 11-30 (.60; Fisheries .80); 31-99 (.50; Fisheries .70); 100 or more (.40; Fisheries .60).

Contact SPPF to purchase.

The United Nations Development Programme in Papua New Guinea

Three Case Studies

By Ross Stevens

Since the late 1970s, aid flows to the Pacific Island nations have increased rapidly. What are the consequences of greater levels of aid on Pacific communities, and what are the political, economic and strategic motivations behind it? The Pacific Aid Research Project documents trends in aid flows, monitors the involvement of aid donors, analyses the practice of particular agencies and evaluates the impact of aid programmes and projects.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA: THREE CASE STUDIES is the second in a series, the first published in 1984 was **UNDP IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC** (which excluded Papua New Guinea.)

Cost: \$ NZ 16 per copy. Overseas: surface-add 10 %, airmail-add 40 %. Order from **NEW ZEALAND COALITION FOR TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT**, PO Box 11 345, Wellington, New Zealand.

Health in the Pacific Islands

An SPPF Fact Sheet

Health and proper nutrition are primary concerns for Pacific Islanders. While increased urbanization and "westernization" have brought improved health care to many, they have also, inadvertently, caused some health-related problems.

The quality of health care varies widely in the Pacific. Much of the region lacks adequate health facilities and trained personnel. There is also a serious lack of medical and pharmaceutical supplies. These problems, coupled with fast growing populations and dependency on imported food stuffs, have sometimes had disastrous effects on the peoples of the Pacific Islands.

DISEASES IN THE ISLANDS

Communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and pneumonia, and infectious diseases like malaria, measles, and intestinal ailments are the major illnesses in the Pacific. These diseases are aggravated by poor nutrition and inadequate immunization programs. Most of them are preventable given proper communication, sanitation and health care facilities. The distribution of ailments throughout the region reflects the lack of these health facilities and support systems.

Communicable diseases are a growing problem in the high population-density areas of Micronesia and the less developed areas of Melanesia. While malaria is not a problem in Polynesia or Micronesia, it is a major problem in parts of the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, all in Melanesia.

Intestinal and diarrhoeal diseases are significant throughout the whole of the island region, but are more prevalent in atoll countries (for example, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands) where adequate water supplies and sanitation facilities are limited. In fact, diarrhoeal diseases are the number one cause of infant mortality in Micronesia, and rank highly in Melanesia and Western Samoa.

Respiratory diseases, such as influenza, tuberculosis and pneumonia, and eye diseases, such as conjunctivitis and trachoma, are common in Melanesia and some of the atoll countries. Many of these diseases are caused by the practice of using open indoor fires for cooking and warmth.

Sexually transmitted diseases are increasingly common in all urbanized areas of the Pacific Islands and are difficult to control. Incidences of syphilis and gonorrhoea have reached alarming proportions in places like Fiji, Guam, and other highly urbanized centres. The threat of AIDS is a source of increasing concern to island health officials. It is feared that an outbreak of AIDS could wipe out tiny, isolated and susceptible island communities.

Other serious infectious diseases such as hepatitis, cholera and dengue fever pose smaller problems to island health. However, there are periodic flare-ups of these illnesses in areas where water supplies are inadequate, or, in the case of dengue fever, where mosquito breeding is rampant.

As elsewhere, in the Pacific Islands it is the children and old people who are most at risk from disease. Infants and young children are especially susceptible to diarrhoeal disorders because of lower natural immunities and poor diet, the presence of which varies from island to island.

CIGUATERA FISH POISONING

Ciguatera poisoning is a widespread concern and also a major problem in French Polynesia, New Caledonia and some smaller island nations (e.g. Tuvalu and Kiribati). It is caused by the ingestion of a marine toxin, *Gambierdiscus toxicus*, present in off-shore plankton which are eaten by reef fishes and then ingested by humans. The toxin, while doing no apparent harm to the fish, may be mortal to humans. In addition to the usual symptoms of food poisoning (vomiting, cramps and diarrhoea) the victim may also experience tingling of the mouth, a feeling of "pins and needles", and a curious sensation reversal of hot and cold. The poison can be fatal and is usually severely debilitating. How it works and how it can be counteracted are poorly understood. However, it is known that the plankton responsible flourish on dead or damaged reefs.

DEGENERATIVE DISEASES

Non-communicative degenerative diseases such as cancer, heart disease and other cardio and cerebro-vascular diseases are on the rise in the Pacific Islands. In the ur-

12 ban areas, these have taken over from infectious diseases as the major cause of death.

Increasing stresses due to population pressures, unemployment and inadequate housing coupled with a more sedentary life style, a decrease in consumption of traditional, high-fibre foods such as fruit and nuts and increased consumption of low-nutrient, imported foods have led to an upsurge in these degenerative maladies. High sugar diets have led to a dramatically increased incidence of diabetes, obesity and gout. As a result of poor diet, dental decay is also rapidly becoming a large health problem throughout most of Polynesia and Micronesia.

Cancer is now the number two cause of death in Tonga, with obesity and associated heart disease being number one. Cardio-vascular disease is also number one in Fiji and Western Samoa. In Fiji, diabetes has increased ten times over what it was traditionally and a 1980 study showed that 40 percent of adult Fijian males, 80 percent of adult Fijian females and 20 percent of adult Indo-Fijians were obese. Places like American Samoa, the Cook Islands and Guam claim diabetes, heart disease and cancer as their main causes of mortality.

In the highly-urbanized areas, social and economic pressures also contribute to the high incidences of hypertension and stroke.

NUTRITION-RELATED PROBLEMS IN PACIFIC ISLANDS

A 1987 United Nations report states that Pacific Islanders display some of the world's most rapidly-increasing rates of malnutrition. The study notes that the switch from traditional food (which is still in good supply) to western food is to blame. For instance, since 1970 the per capita consumption of taro root and yams, historically island food staples, has fallen over 8 percent while the consumption of sugar, rice and other low-nutrient foods such as white flour are up over 6 percent. The places cited in the report are: Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Western Samoa, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Niue and Palau.

Children are the most affected by these trends. In Fiji, a 1980 study found that 7.9 percent of Fijian children and 24 percent of Indian children were undernourished; and a 1982 study showed 23 percent of children under five suffering from protein deficiency. In the Marshall Islands in 1985, 30 percent of all children were undernourished. The trend toward increased malnutrition is continuing.

The fault lies not with uncaring or unloving parents, but rather with inadequate education, a lack of information pertaining to nutrient intake requirements and, in some instances, the economics of foodstuffs which favour low-nutrient diets. Effective awareness programs are lacking in many countries in the Pacific and well-trained personnel and communication systems are also in short supply.

Causes of Poor Infant Nutrition

- 1) Diarrhoea from poor sanitation,
 - 2) Introduction of bottle feeding,
 - 3) Lack of adequate substitutes for breast milk,
 - 4) Introduction of "empty calorie" foods such as sugar, soft drinks, flour products, white rice, etc.,
 - 5) Lack of knowledge of growth and development and its relation to food intake,
 - 6) Lack of supervision of the child's food intake once the child can walk and is away from its mother for periods of time.
-

Protein and iron deficiencies have been attributed—at least in young children and infants—to a decline in breast-feeding. It is generally true that infants who are breast-fed during their first year of life are healthier than children who are not. There have been awareness campaigns recently in some areas of Micronesia and Polynesia to promote breast-feeding, especially for the first year of life. The programs have met with some success there, as well as in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Also, children in rural areas, where traditional diets are still adhered to, do not suffer generally from the same degree of malnutrition and gastro-intestinal disorders as urban children do.

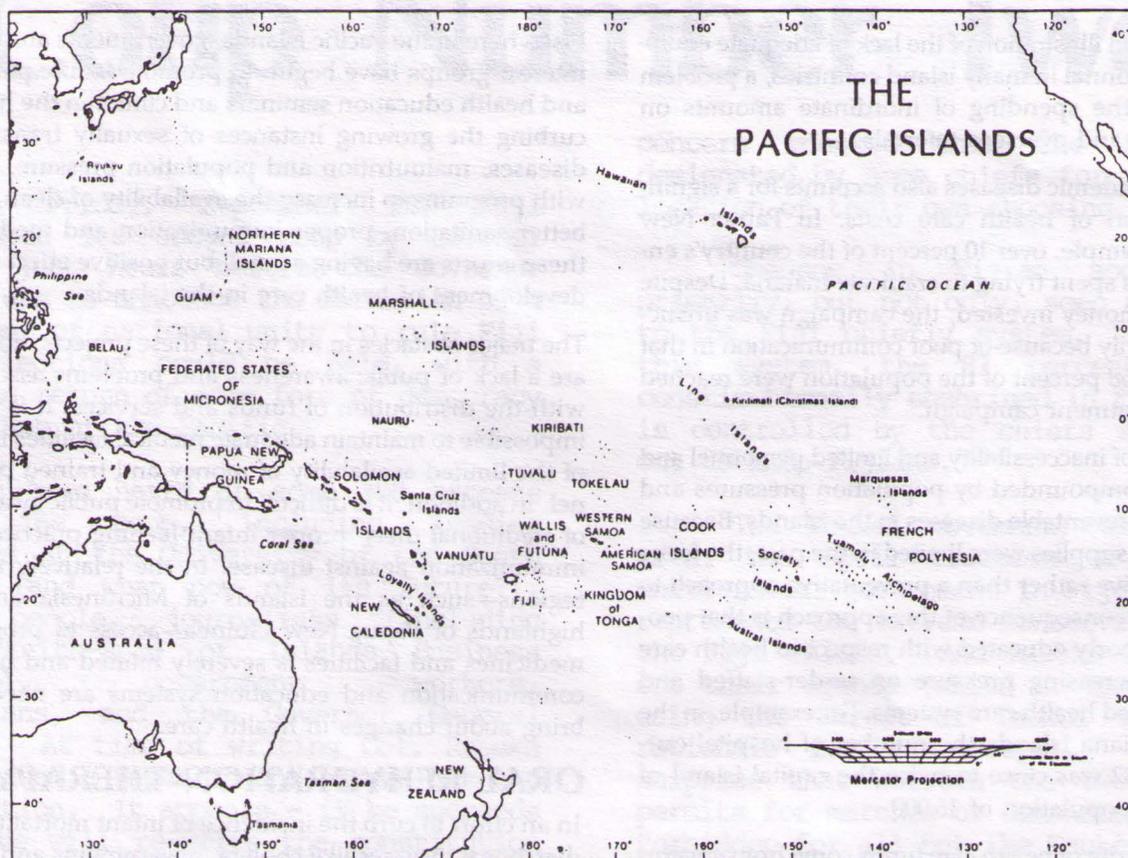
Nutritional problems also extend to the adults in the Pacific Islands. Obesity and its related maladies like heart disease and 'wet' malnutrition, where the body receives plenty of food but not enough nutrients, are responsible for most premature deaths, i.e. before age 55.

HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS AND FACILITIES IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Although many countries appear to have adequate care in terms of health services and personnel, an analysis of population numbers and the distribution of care shows otherwise. There are shortages of well-trained people in most areas. For instance, in the Solomon Islands the doctor to patient ratio is 1/6500, in Vanuatu 1/4300 and in Fiji 1/2200. The Canadian ratio in 1984 was 1/506.

Many hospitals in outlying island areas are poorly equipped to handle even simple emergencies while seriously ill patients must be evacuated to central hospitals for treatment. This problem is compounded by a lack of adequate transportation between islands. Airstrips are not always present and evacuation by boat, because of distance, time and inclement weather, is often fatal for critically ill patients.

The availability of trained personnel in remoter areas of Pacific Island countries is another logistical problem. Most qualified doctors are concentrated in urban areas where there are adequate facilities and more paying patients to attract the doctors. The country of Tonga where 71 percent of the doctors are in one hospital in the capital Nuku'alofa illustrates this phenomenon. The rural areas with lower standard facilities are staffed mainly by dedicated, but under-supported, medical attendants.



These people receive some basic medical training and then are sent out with limited equipment and medicines to take responsibility for the sick and injured in their often remote areas. Sometimes these attendants are required to cope with serious situations that they are ill-equipped to handle, and are forced to decide whether or not to evacuate patients and by what method. Evacuation by plane is relatively simple; if by sea, it means locating a boat by radio telephone and determining whether or not the boat will arrive in time to be of help to the patient. The difficulties these medical attendants face are numerous, and the lack of funding and support they receive compounds their problems.

When we look at trained personnel we find that the doctors and registered nurses employed in Pacific Island hospitals are usually non-islanders. The lack of regional medical training facilities has been a major reason for this. Recently, new medical schools have opened and established ones have expanded. There are large, modern medical schools in Papua New Guinea (Port Moresby) and Fiji (Suva) and a public health laboratory recently opened in Tonga. These facilities are contributing significantly to the growing number of local people pursuing medical careers. In most places, though, qualified personnel are not locally born or trained. For instance, 100 percent of Tonga's medical personnel are trained in schools overseas. The government feels that overseas training of personnel is better than that available in the Pacific Islands.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF HEALTH CARE

Most island countries devote 11 to 15 percent of their annual budgets to health care. This translates into approximately \$U.S. 20-180 per capita, the average being about \$U.S. 75.

PER CAPITA COSTS OF HEALTH CARE IN SOME PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES (1983)

| COUNTRY | POPULATION | HEALTH BUDGET (\$US) | PER CAPITA (\$US) |
|-------------|------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Fiji | 650,000 | 22.4 million | \$ 34.46 |
| Guam | 110,000 | 4.0 million | \$ 36.50 |
| Kiribati | 59,000 | 3.5 million | \$ 58.00 |
| Nauru | 8,500 | 1.6 million | \$186.00 |
| Niue | 3,000 | 553,000 | \$184.00 |
| Solomon Is. | 220,000 | 4.0 million | \$ 18.00 |
| Tokelau | 1,580 | 178,000 | \$112.00 |

[The figures shown include all costs of health: care facilities, training, transportation, etc.]

The remoteness of some island groups as well as inadequate facilities of some national health systems increases the transportation component of national health budgets to almost prohibitive degrees. While Nauru has one of the highest per capita health budgets, almost one third of that budget goes toward the transportation of patients and their families to better facilities overseas. Nauru's budget

breakdown is an illustration of the lack of adequate equipment and personnel in many island countries, a problem which forces the spending of inordinate amounts on transportation and overseas referrals.

Coping with endemic diseases also accounts for a significant proportion of health care costs. In Papua New Guinea, for example, over 10 percent of the country's entire budget was spent trying to eradicate malaria. Despite the time and money invested, the campaign was unsuccessful, primarily because of poor communication in that country; only 58 percent of the population were reached during the treatment campaign.

The problems of inaccessibility and limited personnel and facilities are compounded by population pressures and the spread of preventable diseases in the islands. Because personnel and supplies were limited in the past, the focus was on a curative rather than a preventative approach to medicine. The consequence of this approach is that people who are poorly educated with respect to health care are putting increasing pressure on under-staffed and under-budgetted health care systems. For example, in the Northern Mariana Islands the number of hospital outpatients in 1982 was close to twice the capital island of Saipan's total population of 16,000.

While the majority of health care funds come from governments, international and private concerns are increasingly involved in providing funds for care in the region. Agencies such as the South Pacific Commission (SPC), UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Red Cross are examples of these.

HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Nutrition programs in the islands are a primary concern for local governments. With the help of international organizations, many general health and nutrition programs are being undertaken in the Pacific.

The South Pacific Commission (SPC), one of the two regional organizations, runs continuing programs in the fields of nutrition, dental care and medicine in the islands and has done so since 1947.

In the Marshall Islands, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the government's Health Education Council proclaimed April 1987 "Health Month" and began vigorous awareness campaigns on nutrition and preventative medicine in the islands. The project met with some significant success: early in 1987, the children of one island were found to be in a poor state nutritionally; but with the advent of the education program, the latest reports show that 80 percent of the previously malnourished children who were the subject of the study had gained weight. The changes were attributed to the growing number of "well-baby" clinics in the islands. These are clinics where mothers are taught the proper nutritional care of their infants and an emphasis is placed on preventative measures through adequate diet.

Elsewhere in the Pacific Islands, governments and public interest groups have begun to promote family planning and health education seminars and clinics in the hope of curbing the growing instances of sexually transmitted diseases, malnutrition and population pressure. Along with programs to increase the availability of clean water, better sanitation, proper immunization and medicines, these efforts are having a small but positive effect on the development of health care in the islands.

The major obstacles in the way of these projects, however, are a lack of public awareness and problems associated with the distribution of funds and services. It is nearly impossible to maintain adequate medical facilities in view of the limited availability of money and trained personnel. In addition, it is difficult to promote public awareness of traditional diets, proper infant feeding practices and immunization against disease. In the relatively remote regions—such as the islands of Micronesia and the highlands of Papua New Guinea—access to programs, medicines and facilities is severely limited and broader communication and education systems are needed to bring about changes in health care.

ORAL REHYDRATION THERAPY

In an effort to curb the incidence of infant mortality from diarrhoeal diseases like cholera, governments and health departments have begun a radical new treatment called ORT (Oral Rehydration Therapy). This program has met with significant success in areas such as Papua New Guinea and the atolls of Micronesia. ORT is a process whereby dehydration caused by severe diarrhoea is halted and reversed by introducing water containing electrolytes, sodium and glucose into the small intestine.

ORT is an inexpensive and effective way of combatting the largest killer of children in the Pacific Islands.

IN CONCLUSION

Health care challenges in the islands are increasing. At the same time, budgets are severely taxed by the great distances which make communication and travel difficult and expensive. And, while island governments struggle to expand the health care infrastructure throughout the region, increased "westernization", and the resultant shift in local diets, has brought on new and changing health problems. The health field is one area where development assistance from countries like Canada can be of enormous help.

A 39 page reading packet on this subject is also available for \$5.00. Please contact the South Pacific Peoples Foundation of Canada (SPPF) at 409-620 View St., Victoria, B.C. CANADA V8W 1J6.

This fact sheet has been produced by the South Pacific Peoples Foundation of Canada (SPPF) and compiled by Jay Gould with funding assistance from the Challenge '87 summer works program. Printing assistance provided by CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency). September 1987.

- Coup Number Two - "12

On Friday, September 26, Fiji experienced its second coup by Colonel Rabuka, just hours before the Governor General was to announce the formation of a government of national unity to rule Fiji until elections could be held, with a resulting return of some form of democracy to this hub of the Pacific.

We have heard of some 300 arrests during the coup, including leading academics at the University of the South Pacific (and what now of its future?), church people, journalists (including Robert Keith-Read of Islands Business Magazine), government workers, politicians, and the Governor General himself. At time of writing Col. Rabuka has declared a Republic and thrown out the constitution. It appears - if he succeeds - that he will re-write the constitution and in effect disenfranchise the Indo-Fijian population.

Much of what is going on in Fiji appears to be a question of whether you win the football match by 8-1 or 75-1. Rabuka and his backers - the majority of the Great Council of Chiefs, it appears - want the 75-1 score. They want to ensure to the utmost that full control of Fiji will remain in Fijian hands for time immemorial.

However, neither this coup nor the first coup will address the underlying dynamic which brought the overthrown Bavadra government to power: the shifts in Fijian society brought about by its own development and the influx of outside forces (such as U.S. military assistance, for example). For the past two years at least, the Fiji chiefly system, a system under which Fijians take guidance from their chiefs as to whom to vote for, etc., and under which most Fijians have remained, in their villages with their subsistence plots, has come under increasing question by Fijians themselves, especially the young. Many no longer stay in the village, but rather go to Suva to find work. Thus unemployment has become a growing problem. As well, with development, pressures mount for better social services (health, transportation, etc.). While Fiji received aid programs,

concern mounted that the funds were designated by some chiefs for purposes or location of their own choosing.

Changes in Fijian society were primarily, but not only, seen as a threat to the Fiji chiefly system. As part of this system, the 83 percent of land **constitutionally enshrined** in Fijian hands is controlled by the chiefs who rent it out to Indo-Fijians.

The Taukei movement, which formed after the April election of the first multi-racial government in Fiji's history, represents the extreme conservatives among the Fiji chiefs. And Rabuka is carrying out their agenda (while at the same time using the threat of Taukei violence as rationale for his coups). It is no surprise that between the two coups all permits for marches or demonstrations were forbidden for all but the Taukei.

Racial animosities and tensions of course do exist in Fiji. For the most part, however, they have been accommodated. The Taukei have stirred up hatred between the races and used it as pretense to retain power. As someone put it: "It is the chiefs against the little people."

It would be a mistake to see Indo-Fijians as a homogeneous group; as it would be a mistake to see Fijians as homogeneous on these issues. There are business and religious splits in the Indian community, and rank and geographic splits in the Fijian community.

However, it seems that to date the majority of Fijians have supported the coups. Most, we are told, are unfamiliar with the current constitution and its Fijian safeguards for land and culture. Their ignorance has been used by others.

These two coups will in the short run continue the harassments, arrests, civil rights abuses, violence and racism which they have stimulated. In the long run they will intensify and accelerate the very internal-Fijian issues which led to them in the first place.

For those of us who have friends in Fiji or who have visited there, it is a sad time.

World YWCA and the Pacific

The following Pacific related resolutions were passed at the World YWCA meeting held August 25-September 5, 1987 in Arizona, U.S.A.

RE: MILITARIZATION AND INDEPENDENCE

The Pacific Regional Meeting in the 1987 World Council expressed its deep concern at the intensification of nuclear testing, build up of nuclear weapons sites, storage and dumping of nuclear wastes and its effects on Pacific Peoples.

We recognize that the increasing military presence of nuclear powers poses not only a direct threat to peace within the region but also violates the rights of Pacific Peoples to Self Determination and Independence.

We are deeply concerned at the urgent situation that the Pacific finds itself in today.

We therefore RESOLVE:

1. That this World Council Meeting, Arizona, USA, 1987, urges national and local associations to recognize and support the efforts of the Pacific Nations to establish a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Zone.

2. That national and local associations be urged to emphasize to their respective governments, YWCA membership and wider community, the critical situation of Indigenous Peoples Struggles for Independence and Self Determination.

3. That national associations urge their governments to support their governments to support the U.N. Special Committee on Decolonization (U.N.G.A. 41/41A) to which the Status of the Kanak People of Kanaky (New Caledonia) was reinstated in 1987.

4. That national and local associations actively support our efforts to stop

Nuclear weapons testing, the build up of Nuclear weapons and sites, and the storage and dumping of Nuclear wastes in the Pacific region.

RE: STATUS OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Whereas some of the corollary results of industrialization, colonization and imperialism have been the genocide, usurpation of land and the deculturation of indigenous people (whether in the minority or majority within their own countries)...and

Whereas the impact of land loss, forced removal and the dissolution of family life has had destructive effects upon indigenous women, children and men ...and

Whereas the inhabitants of each region of the globe bear responsibility for the current plight of indigenous people ...and

Whereas oppressed indigenous people are struggling to reclaim/preserve their lands and culture...and

Whereas Christendom has at times been used as a tool of colonisation which is a root cause of people becoming a minority within their own countries.

Therefore, be it resolved that the World YWCA as an organization with a Christian purpose, has a responsibility to work with indigenous women in redressing the unjust situation that they find themselves in.

[To our knowledge Pacific representation included women from Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and Fiji. It is our understanding that the Fiji delegation was stopped by the Fiji military as it left Fiji, and some documents were taken from its possession. The Solomon Islands delegation was also harassed as it passed through Fiji in transit. - Editor]

Mere 'N Save Fo Developmen

Text and Photo by Diane Goldwillie

3 women from Bellona, Solomon Islands prepare their tools for traditional tattooing. As part of the Solomon Islands Women's Tecnology Fair (held in Honiara in 1986) called 'Mere 'N Save Fo Developmen'. Women were encouraged to demonstrate their traditional as well as introduced technologies. These women from the remote islands of Bellona decided to show how they did traditional tattooing. The woman in the centre has many body tatoos on her arms, legs and chest. They carved 4 small pin points in the big bones of a bird so that it looked like a small rake. The implement was dipped in a solution of oil and traditional dye, then placed against a pattern marked on the skin and tapped by a small hammer. While the tapping continued a group of women sat around singing traditional songs to distract from pain and calm the person receiving the tatoos.



Mere 'N Save received a large grant from the Canadian High Commission in Canberra to facilitate Papua New Guineans to attend and a video to be made on the fair. Six tent like structures were constructed in central Honiara. Each day had a theme: Agriculture, Health, Food, Energy and Environment, Home and Business, and Peace. Demonstrations and displays were conducted in the tents. Practical demonstrations included making a cement sink, water tank, wood burning stove, charcoal copra drier, making fruit juices and drying fish or fruit. Visits were made to agriculture research stations, to model terraced gardens and some small businesses in the Honiara area. Over 6000 came to the fair and by far the largest benefit was the praise given by men for the women's efforts to organize such a successful event. In the Solomon Islands, men praising women is almost unheard of.

18 Vanuatu Responds to Canada

MISSION DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE VANUATU
AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES



MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

411 WEST 148TH STREET
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TEL. (212) 926-5762

22 June 1987

Mr. Phil Esmonde
Editor
Tok Blong SPPF
407-620 View Street
Victoria, B.C
Canada, V8W 1J6D

Dear Mr. Esmonde,

With reference to the letter from H.G. Parady, Director, Asia Pacific South, Relations Division, of Canada's Department of External Affairs, dated March 4, 1987 and printed in your April issue, there are a few facts we would like to set forth.

At the outset we wish to make it clear that we have no quarrel with the manner in which Canada cast its vote on United Nations Resolution 41/41A, on the question of New Caledonia. It is not our policy to question any nation for a position it adopts in exercise of its sovereign rights as a voting member of the United Nations. All of us have reasons for voting as we do. We respect the opinions of all, even when those opinions happen to differ with our own on a specific matter. Furthermore, we happen to enjoy particularly good relations with Canada and have a great deal of respect for its views and its objectivity.

However, we do not agree with the somewhat surprising statement in Mr. Parady's letter that, "The decision by the South Pacific Forum to bring resolution 41/41A forward was based less on actual evidence of French plans to frustrate self determination in New Caledonia than on a general sense of unease at the direction of the policy of the new French Government". The Forum's decision was, in fact based on concrete evidence that the current French Government was retreating from commitments made to New

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Caledonia's colonised people by the previous French Government. The President of France has expressed a similar view on more than one occasion.

Furthermore, it is not at all accurate to state, as Mr. Pardy did, that the Forum originally decided to wait until after the 1987 French referendum to seek a U.N. resolution on the subject of New Caledonia. It is also not accurate to state, as he did, that the Committee of Twenty-four had undertaken to place New Caledonia on its agenda for 1987, and that therefore no action was required by the U.N. General Assembly. The Committee is subsidiary to the General Assembly and makes recommendations to the Assembly. Given France's then stated intention to proceed with a referendum prior to the 42nd U.N. General Assembly, resolution 41/41A was necessary to prevent the world body from being presented with a "fait accompli" by the time it could act on a 1987 recommendation from the Committee. The overwhelming majority of the members of the United Nations understood this point very well.

The decision to seek the inscription of New Caledonia on the U.N. list of non-self governing territories was a collective decision of the 13 members of the South Pacific Forum. It is simply not true to state that, "... Vanuatu chose to push an UNGA resolution forward in 1986, and the rest of the U.N. members of the Forum decided to lend their support, even if the effort was seen by some Forum members as premature." This assertion by Mr. Pardy is not only surprising but also somewhat puzzling. Perhaps he misunderstood, or there may have been an inadvertant failure of communication on our part or on the part of one of our colleagues in the Forum.

Naturally, we would have preferred to have had Canada, which is a close and highly regarded friend, join us in supporting resolution 41/41A. However, it never occurred to us to question or criticize Canada's position nor will we do so now.

We prefer to look to the future. In doing so we hope that, on the question of New Caledonia, our colleagues in the Canadian

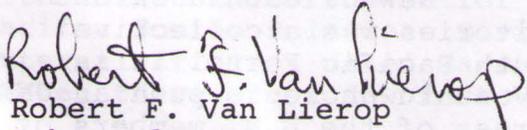
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delegation will this year be instructed by their Government to support what we, and a majority of the countries of the world, believe to be reasonable, moderate, and consistent with the U.N. principles and practices on decolonisation. In any event, we will continue to respect Canada's right to make its own judgements, based upon its own values and interests. We merely wish for your readers to have all the facts before them, and that the record accurately reflect our own beliefs and our own actions.

Sincerely yours,


Robert F. Van Lierop
Ambassador

cc: H.E. Mr. Stephen Lewis
Mr. H. G. Pardy

EDITORIAL NOTE: U.N. Resolution 41/41A reinscribed New Caledonia on the list of non-self governing colonies. As such it puts added international pressure on France to assist New Caledonia toward self-determination, and requires France to annually report on its progress in this regard. France has ignored the resolution. Canada abstained at the U.N. on this resolution. The letter referred to by Ambassador Van Lierop is a letter from External Affairs explaining Canada's reasons for abstaining. Readers wishing a copy could write SPPF if they have not seen it in our April issue.

Kanak Popular Schools

French pollution of the Pacific does not come only from nuclear tests. It also comes from an education system which pollutes the minds of Pacific Islanders living under French colonial rule. The only ancestors black-skinned Kanaks in New Caledonia are taught about at school are Gauls with blonde hair and blue eyes. And in history and geography they learn about France and not the Pacific. But now things are changing. Kanak people are boycotting French schools and setting up their own Kanak popular schools (EPK).

In 1984 Kanak parents decided not to send their children to school. They felt that the schools were biased against them and organised a widespread stay-at-home as part of the boycott of all French institutions. In place of the colonial schools, they set up their own. Now, more than two years on, 200 volunteer teachers and 1200 pupils form the core of a completely separate education system.

Kanak people have little to lose and much to gain in their move away from French education. Very few Kanak youth leave school with anything to show for it. From 1967 to 1982, only 298 Kanaks passed the baccalaureat (the highest school qualification). By contrast, 3041 students from the smaller European community received their baccalaureat in the same period.

"By sending our children to the French state schools, we are perpetuating the colonial mentality," said EPK worker, Djubili Wea. "The independence of our own school system is vital for our future. It is necessary for our political and spiritual evolution that Kanak youngsters

be educated about Kanaky - our culture and our traditions, our sense of identity."

Today the schools are a vital part of the Kanak movement for independence from France. Simon Naaoutchoue, Education Minister in the FLNKS Provisional Government (which represents over 80 percent of the Kanak people), is responsible for the schools. He accuses the French school system of aiming "to imprison our children's minds; to make them think in a straight line to France and nowhere else."

EPK is quite different, Naaoutchoue explains. "First of all we teach the children their own culture and history until they know it very well. We will look at one thing, say the coconut tree, and we will study every aspect: from an artistic level to paint the coconut; then its history in Kanak tradition; the science of how it grows; the mathematics of selling the fruit, or producing baskets for sale. We start from the concrete, that a Kanak child knows, then move to the abstract. The same is true for everything we teach . . . it is based solidly in the Kanak reality and we can expand from there as much as we wish to."



Special Appeal

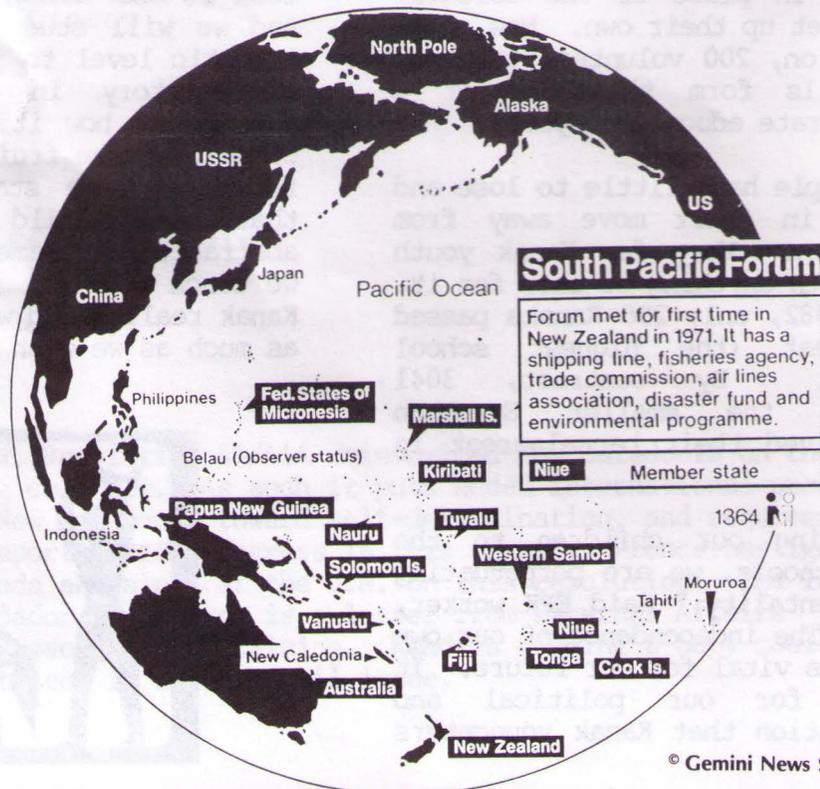
The Kanak popular schools run on a shoestring, surviving on the support of parents and local communities. They construct their own school buildings and classroom furniture. They buy their own pencils, rubbers, rulers and books. The parents also pay by having their family benefits cut by French authorities if they send their children to an EPK.



PHOTO BY INGRID KIRCHER

An Ecole Kanak Populaire on Lifou

CORSO, a New Zealand aid organization, is appealing for assistance for the Kanak popular schools, **SPPF** supports this initiative and is willing to collect funds in Canada for forwarding to CORSO. Any and all help is appreciated from you and organizations you belong to. Make cheques out to SPPF and forward to SPPF at 409-620 View Street, Victoria, B.C., V8W 1J6. Tax receipts issued.



Marasin Meri Donations Still Needed

SPPF needs to raise a further \$800 for the "Marasin Meri" project in the East Sepik region of Papua New Guinea. The project involves the training in a simple health care course for village women chosen through village women's clubs. These health volunteers are then provided with a simple medical kit and assist with small problems in their home village.

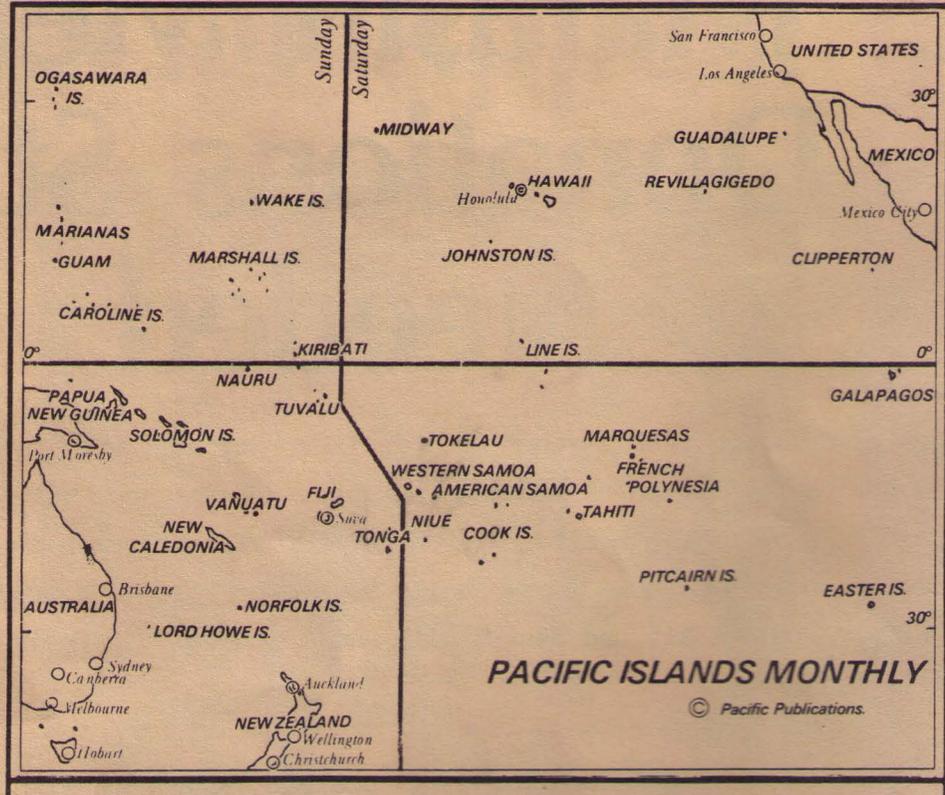
If you wish to make a donation (tax receipts issued) or wish more information please contact SPPF. Our thanks to those who sent in donations after the article in the previous Tok Blong SPPF.

NFIP Conference in Manila

The fifth international Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Conference will be held in Manila, Philippines from November 9-15, 1987. The Canadian delegation to the conference is Miles Richardson (President, Council of the Haida Nation); Georges Erasmus (National Chief, Assembly of First Nations); and Phil Esmonde (Executive Director, S.P.P.F.).

Previous international NFIP conferences were held in Fiji (1975), Pohnpei (1978), Hawaii (1980), and Vanuatu (1983).

The NFIP conference brings together delegates from the Pacific Islands and Rim to set the future overall direction for the grass roots movement which is centered in the Pacific Islands.



FROM:

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