

# Tok Blong SPPF

April 1988 #23



Graphic from LINK #3, Oct/Nov 1987

## Logging the Solomon Islands

- Also . . . Media ownership in the Pacific*  
*. . . French move N-testing site*  
*. . . Palau (Belau) update: court case refiled*  
*. . . Peace in Melanesia - Can it last?*



# Letter to The Churches

It was a privilege and a trust for us to join the participants of the 5th Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Conference held in Manila, November 10-15, 1987.

We listened for hours to the laments of the Pacific peoples regarding:

- the nuclear testing and the increase in the number of hospitals to accommodate victims of radiation in French Polynesia;
- the plight of the indigenous peoples of the Great Turtle Island, the U.S., of the Aborigines of Australia, of the Maoris of Aotearoa, of the Alaskans and the Hawaiians who have become minorities in their respective countries;
- the determined struggle for independence of the Kanaka of New Caledonia, of the Tahitians of French Polynesia, of the people of West Papua and of the Timorese of East Timor;
- the alarming harassment and repression of Belauans who want to keep Belau nuclear-free and to oppose the Compact of Free Association;
- the military coups, racism and repression of human rights in Fiji;
- the bases issue in the Philippines, Hawaii, Australia, Japan, the Marshall Islands; and
- the plan of the Japanese government to dump nuclear wastes in the Pacific.

We have listened to people who have suffered long, and have lost relatives and members of their families.

We realise that the history of the churches in these islands has been so tied up to the colonial powers that came to the islands, as to make peoples and churches dependent on them—socially, economically and even politically. This traditional link hampers the church people in exercising their prophetic role in the pursuit of justice. We are convinced, however, that if the churches speak out on behalf of the peoples of the Pacific regarding these issues, it will make a lot of difference to their lives and to the action of those who are power-holders. They feel they are being betrayed by their Church.

In view of the above and of the preferential option for the poor and the oppressed, we feel that there is need for the local church groups to become more aware of the gravity of the problems facing the region, especially the deplorable situation of the indigenous peoples.

Having understood the urgent issues, we appeal that church people show more support to the aspirations of the people for a healthy and nuclear-free Pacific and for their right to self-determination, and accompany them in their legitimate struggle.

Our sisters and brothers have long waited for effective and adequate assistance from the churches.

Respectfully,

BISHOP PATELISO FINAU  
Episcopal Conference of the Pacific (CEPAC)

SR. MONICA YOKO NAKAMURA  
The Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace

SR. TERESITA AGUSTINES, ICM  
Peace Promotion and Monitoring Council (PPMC)

FR. DENNIS ROCHFORD  
Melanesian Council of Churches

BISHOP ANTONINO NEPOMUCENO, OMI  
Nuclear Free Philippines Coalition (NFPC)

SR. MA. AIDA VELASQUEX, OSB  
Secretariat for an Ecologically Sound Philippines

REV. TAKESHI KIMURA  
National Council of Churches of Japan (NCCJ)

## About this newsletter . . .

**TOK BLONG SPPF is pidgin english as used in many parts of the Pacific. It might literally be translated as "this talk belongs to SPPF" or, SPPF Newsletter. TOK BLONG SPPF is published four times per year by the South Pacific Peoples Foundation of Canada, 409-620 View St., Victoria, B.C., Canada V8W 1J6, and is available to donors of SPPF (minimum \$10 yr.). SPPF exists to raise critical issues in the South Pacific to a Canadian audience through a variety of public education methods, and to assist in getting relevant Canadian financial, technical and other assistance into the South Pacific to assist islanders in their self-development. Partial financial support for this newsletter from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is gratefully acknowledged. We welcome readers comments on items carried in this newsletter, as well as suggestions for articles and copies of Pacific news clippings, etc, which would be of use to our work. TOK BLONG SPPF is edited by Phil Esmonde.**



# BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS IN THE PACIFIC

By David Robie

**PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY** declared in a recent editorial: "Now, as never before, the Pacific needs a voice, a publication that can be relied upon to report on and analyse the news, views and personalities, intelligently and accurately and with insight and impartiality."

A magazine which has been a voice in the region for more than 50 years, **PIM** - as it is affectionately known- was partly giving itself a pat on the back for its editorial facelift. But it was also highlighting a struggle for influence in the region's news media.

For **PIM** is now part of the chain of newspapers and magazines in the Pacific swallowed up by Australian-born news media tycoon Rupert Murdoch as a result of his takeover of the Melbourne Herald and Weekly Times group last year.

Foreign owners are seizing control of the biggest and most influential newspapers in Pacific capitals at a time when independent Pacific voices are needed more than ever. Only a handful of independent publications exist - and they generally have tiny circulations.

The latest twist in the news media war is the attempt by rightwing French press baron Robert Hersant to expand his Pacific interests to English-language publications.

He is believed to be behind Papeete-based French interests which have made a bid for the partly New Zealand-owned **Fiji Sun** - the outspoken opponent of Brigadier Sitiveni Rabuka's regime. The **Sun** has

been closed since the second coup on September 25.

It is also understood the offer for the shut paper is linked to French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac's policy of influencing Pacific Island nations and eroding opposition to nuclear tests and support for the Kanaks.

Should such a takeover succeed, the paper could become a powerful instrument in support of French policies in the region. It could even undermine the traditional consensus of the South Pacific Forum.

"The implications of this move should not be underestimated by the governments of countries which have a natural sphere of influence in the region - like New Zealand and Australia," says John Richardson, former editor and co-publisher of **Islands Business** magazine.

Mr. Richardson, who was expelled by the Rabuka regime last year, is now a business journalist in Auckland.

"Newspapers carry far more weight in island nations because there is no television and little private radio," he said. "In the wrong hands, these newspapers could have a disastrous influence in the region."

Mr. Hersant, owner of the Paris daily **Le Figaro** and a string of right-wing publications in France, planned to launch a strident daily newspaper in New Caledonia in 1986 which would have campaigned against independence and supported Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme racist party, the National Front.



Alarmed by the prospect, the Chirac government blocked the move but encouraged Mr. Hersant to take over the ailing **Les Nouvelles Caledoniennes**, Noumea's only daily, early last year. The paper's new hardline editorial director, Henri Morny, purged any journalists regarded as sympathetic to the Kanak cause.

Two groups are interested in buying control of Newspapers of Fiji Ltd, owners of the 14-year old Sun. The company is more than 90 per cent owned by Auckland-based publisher Philip Harkness and interests associated with Sing Tao Ltd of Hong Kong, the fastest-growing newspaper group in the British colony.

Sing Tao's chairman is Chinese millionaire Sally Aw Sian. Her Chinese-language **Sing Tao** is published by satellite link-up in Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan and the United States, and plans are under way for a New Zealand edition.

Sing Tao and Mr. Harkness want to sell their interests in the Sun, which made its biggest profit last year in spite of two military coups and a dramatic slump in advertising revenue as Fiji's economy collapsed.

The publishers, who adopted a courageous editorial policy in defiance of harassment by the military regime, refused to publish the Sun again under conditions of virtual censorship.

Meanwhile, the rival, Murdoch-owned **Fiji Times**, which also closed after the second coup, went on sale again six weeks later after pledging not to publish any "politically sensitive" editorials, reports and letters.

The Sun's deputy publisher, Jim Carney, and a director, Miles Johnston, were detained by troops after the newspaper's closure. Mr. Carney, a New Zealander, was later deported.

The Hersant group has not had direct contact with Mr Harkness, but one of the negotiators is believed to be Hubert Chavelet, publisher of the now defunct right-wing Pacific news magazine **Trente Jours** (30 Days).

The former Noumea publisher is now linked with French publishing interests in Papeete where the public relations office of French Pacific Affairs Minister Gaston Flosse is based.

Another group interested in buying the Sun includes several news media and business personalities associated with the Alliance Party of caretaker Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara.

A new problem looming for the press in Fiji is the Singapore-style legislation reportedly drafted to license the nation's news media. Under the legislation, newspaper licences would be revoked if the government declared a paper "guilty of irresponsible reporting".

According to the weekly **Fiji Post**, regarded as an official mouthpiece for the Rabuka regime, the move is an attempt to prevent the news media inciting racial feelings and social tension in the lead-up to the next elections, possible next year.

But sources in Suva suggest the measure is designed to deprive deposed Prime Minister Dr. Timoci Bavadra and his Coalition access to the press.

Mr. Richardson says: "Already the Fiji Times seems to have buckled under the current regime, and under licensing they might as well abandon any hope of speaking freely."

"The developments are a danger for the press elsewhere in the region too - especially Western Samoa. In spite of political pressure from governments in varying forms, the Samoan press has always spoken out courageously and defiantly about corruption, mismanagement and political manipulation."

"Licensing in Fiji will add to government pressures on the small, vulnerable newspapers in the Pacific."

Sun editor Nemani Delaibatiki is the journalist who has most championed the freedom of the press in Fiji. While his reporters faced harassment and physical assaults by the military and extremist supporters of the coup, his newspaper remained defiant.



In 1986, while associate editor, he became the country's first journalist to be charged under the country's 66-year old Official Secrets Act for exposing a scandal over the military as a result of government documents leaked to him. He was acquitted.

Since the Murdoch group gained control of Pacific Publications Ltd, Sydney-based owners of Pacific Islands Monthly, the magazine has undergone a dramatic change of identity.

Though it now has a more modern, stylish layout with extensive use of colour, PIM has adopted a more conservative editorial approach and has dropped many of the leading Pacific writers associated with it over the past decade.

Its new editor, Larry Writer, has adopted an Australian perspective of superpower rivalry in the region. Most of the writers are Australian - many drafted from Murdoch's large newspaper stable - and few indigenous Pacific journalists are invited to contribute a local view.

Long-time columnists in Tahiti, Bengt and Marie-Therese Danielsson, authors of **Poisoned Reign**, have refused to write any longer for the magazine after what they say were attempts to censor their articles.

Helen Fraser, a specialist on New Caledonian affairs who had been acting editor for some months, is another casualty.

Pim's rival, Suva-based **Islands Business**, long the market leader and widely respected for its investigative reporting and topical cover stories, has lost its sting since the upheaval in Fiji.

It is threatened by the rejuvenated Pim even though it is regarded as having a more genuine Pacific perspective.

Murdoch's papers in the Pacific, the Herald and Weekly Times-owned **Papua New Guinea Post-Courier** and the **Fiji Times**, are the biggest and most profitable in the region.

In the case of the 30,000-circulation **Post-Courier**, Luke Sela, a former government information officer, was belatedly appointed editor in answer to growing complaints about the slow pace of localisation. However, it is believed that the main editorial direction of the paper comes from the sub editors - both the chief sub editor and his deputy are Australians.

The rival **Niugini Nius** (an English-language paper in spite of its pidgin title) has been ailing ever since it was launched in 1979.

However, Papua New Guinea businessman Dennis Buchanan - the biggest light-aircraft operator in the Pacific - recently took over the Nius with ambitious plans and the scene is now set for a vigorous fight with the Murdoch paper.

The most influential paper - possible in the region - is the independent weekly **Times of Papua New Guinea**, owned by Word Publishing, a company operated by the churches. But it is being squeezed in the news media struggle.

By David Robie (Reprinted from **THE DOMINION**, January 21, 1988)





# ANGER FOR DEVELOPMENT

## The Solomon Islands Development Trust at Work



Anger is a feeling that signals all is not well in our relations with another person, group or the world around us. It can be, however, the first step to change. When villagers' misgivings are not really listened to by the 'experts'; when the Big Man be he politician, bureaucrat or business person many times misses or arrives hours late for important village meetings; when the traditional protectors of village interests seem to be sitting on the other side of the fence; anger appears. For sure, anger does not necessarily lead to wise action but it can be the first step for people to change things.

Our Solomon Islands Development Trust Mobile Team Members are experiencing villagers' frustrations and anger at a system that keeps them in the dark. Leaders of tribes in the Gold Ridge area of Guadalcanal recently penned an open letter to the Ministry of Natural Resources complaining about the outside mining companies prospecting for gold that is tearing at the heart of their existence. A foreign logging company with a poor track record with village people opened up a new logging camp on Malaita and on the occasion is visited by four leading parliamentarians.

The need of development education then, rather than a passing fancy, has taken a dramatic turn. Villagers are now more and more called resource owners and with good reason. If the gold findings are only one quarter what the experts say they are (\$70M smuggled into Australia in 1986), then the resource owners need much more information, training, education and general awareness of what is happening to their world. When our Mobile Team Members

inform villagers of the vast mineral wealth of these islands, detail the number of overseas mining companies (at present 16) prospecting for gold and teach them how to understand and properly interpret the biased mining agreements that they are asked to sign, anger, frustration and hunger for more information is the order of the day. When asked "Should Solomon Islands Development Trust be involved with projects or development education?", villagers respond quickly; "DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION". It makes little sense, they say, to speak about \$240 chicken projects when foreigners with the active help of others are stealing resource owners blind.

Mobile Team Member-conducted workshops offer villagers more than a dry recital of facts, however. Basically they show a concern for the village way of life. Before true dialogue, not just mere talk-talk, can take place a common union between groups must already be in place; a common bond where both parties, the villager and Mobile Team Member, are seen as equal partners and where both are open to learning. Three things, I think, contribute to the making of this common union: Mobile Teams share ideas, they accent village values and they form friendships with the villagers. These three areas in turn create a social energy which flows from villagers and team members at the same time.

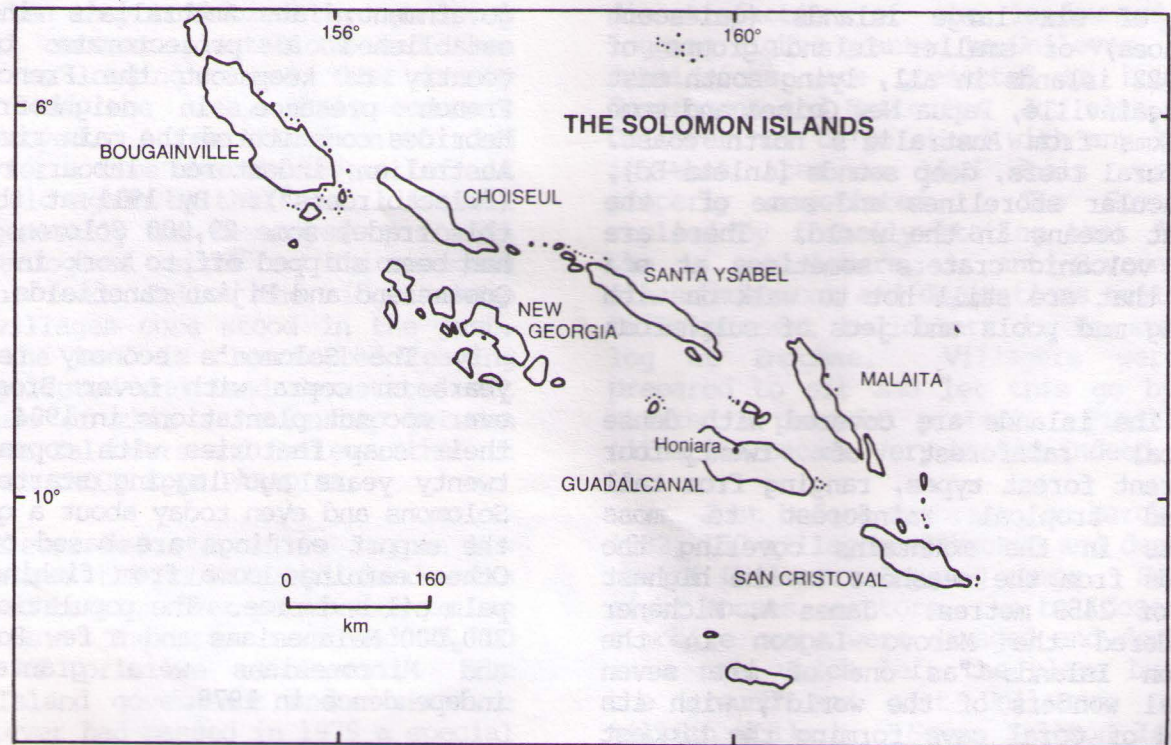
The fruit of these development education workshops continue to be both varied and creative. In a leadership workshop in Central Province, for example, men and women participants formed up their own mobile teams to tour neighboring villages to encourage other villagers to reflect on what areas of custom are non-



negotiable and what things could be changed. In North Malaita, for instance, Ailali village drew together 14 other villages to form a confederation to better address their mutual problems. This came about because of the work of the mobile teams. In yet another place, Ysabel Province, workshop participants are now demanding that each and every mining and prospecting request be much more closely studied. In the future individual villagers planning to get rich from communal resources will face strong village solidarity. In Lata, the capital of Temotu Province, nearby villagers were convinced by Mobile Team Member-disaster preparation workshops to re-think their priorities from vegetable marketing to the nutritional health of their children. Now marketing comes after family needs have been cared for.

A basic theme of Solomon Islands Development Trust's message to villagers is to become more self-reliant, more self-sufficient and more in control of their own lives. We in the organisation are moving in the same direction, slower than the villager, but at least on the same road. Part of our self-reliance comes from readers who are subscribing to our publications. Could you aid us in our efforts to reach out to villagers, to deepen their awareness and to empower them for a more just and equitable world?

**NOTE:** A subscription form for SOLOMON ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT TRUST publications is included in this issue. TO CONTACT SIDT: P.O. Box 147, Honiara, Solomon Islands.



From: The South Pacific - an introduction by Ron Crocombe

**PROVINCIAL LOGOS**





# TROUBLE IN PARADISE

© Paul and Suska Scobie

" I CONCEIVE THAT LAND BELONGS TO A VAST FAMILY OF WHICH MANY ARE DEAD, FEW ARE LIVING, AND COUNTLESS NUMBERS ARE STILL UNBORN. " C.K. Meek, "Land Law and Custom in the Colonies."

The Solomon Islands are a double chain of six large islands (quiescent volcanoes) or smaller island groups of some 922 islands in all, lying south east of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea and some 1550 kms from Australia's north coast. With coral reefs, deep sounds [inlets-Ed], spectacular shorelines and some of the deepest oceans in the world. There are large volcanic craters sometimes at sea level that are still hot to walk on with boiling mud pools and jets of sulphurous gas.

The islands are covered with dense tropical rainforest of twenty-four different forest types, ranging from tall lowland tropical rainforest to moss forests in the mountains covering the islands from the seashore to the highest peak of 2459 metres. James A. Michener considered the Marovo Lagoon in the Solomon Islands "as one of the seven natural wonders of the world", with its myriad of coral cays forming the biggest lagoon in the world.

Solomon Islanders rely on their natural resources for day to day existence and even today the islanders live largely a subsistence lifestyle far removed from our cash economy. The tropical rainforest has provided them with poles, leaf and vines to build houses, ancient beechlogs found only in old growth forests to make dugout canoes for fishing and transport, cyclical fruiting trees for food, and

leaves and herbs for medicines to cure ills.

Discovered so to speak by the Spaniards in 1568, the islands were not contacted again by Europeans for three hundred years till in 1893 the British government, at Australia's insistence, established a protectorate over the country to keep out the French. The French presence in neighbouring New Hebrides constituted the main rival to the Australian indentured labour recruiters ("blackbirders"). By 1911 at the end of this trade, some 29,000 Solomon Islanders had been shipped off to work in the North Queensland and Fijian canefields.

The Solomon's economy relied for years on copra with Lever Bros. taking over coconut plantations in 1904 to supply their soap factories with copra. About twenty years ago logging started in the Solomons and even today about a quarter of the export earnings are based on timber. Other earnings come from fishing, cocoa, palm oil and rice. The population of some 200,000 Melanesians and a few Polynesians and Micronesians were granted their independence in 1978.

Customary land has always been passed down from one generation to the next through the ages and has been the foundation of village life. Eighty per cent of the land here is legal customary land. Ownership and use of customary land is legally reserved to Solomon Islanders defined as people with at least two indigenous grandparents. Non-Solomon Islanders which includes Government or corporations may only use customary lands after a long process of investigation, adjudication, appeal and survey to establish who the customary owners are,



and if they wish to deal with the corporation. If the customary owners agree to a deal, then they become registered as the owners of perpetual estate in the land and dealings may go ahead through the land register. This process may take years.

It was Unilever who established the ground rules for logging in the Solomons. They exported whole logs which gave very little employment to local people, they did no reforestation or development on old logging sites and more often than not left them badly eroded and impossible for the Solomon Islanders to farm. There was very extensive and serious environmental damage and at the rate of logging there would have been major timber shortages by the 1990's. As well, there were incidents which left nasty tastes with locals like in 1977 when they bulldozed through local villagers' coconut plantations and then set up a logging camp. Over twenty families left the area, their economic base destroyed. A few stayed on to mind the site for a time when Unilevers left it and it would again be their own. As well logging generally has destroyed up to 60% of archaeological sites on Kolombangara since spur roads follow the ridges where ancient villages once stood in the past. Much of the land is clearfelled leaving streams polluted and land devastated. It was because of this relationship between the Solomon Islanders and Unilever that it ended up as TROUBLE IN PARADISE.

Unilever had started to log in New Georgia where the traditional landowners had refused to sign over permission to use their lands. The area concerned 75,000 hectares of pristine rainforest. The Solomon Island government under pressure from Unilever had passed in 1979 a special Act of Parliament investing a Statutory Authority to control this parcel of land so keenly sought by Unilever. In effect, it divorced the ownership of the trees from the land and meant that Unilever could continue to log lands where local landowners refused to sign it over. They were granted 15 years logging of the area which was the estimated life-span of the project.

Five tribal districts were made available, Lupa, Dekurana, Gerase, Rodana

and Koroga. Levers left the difficult and detailed land negotiations to the government and in the belief that the landowners in all five districts had agreed to the logging, went and outlayed millions of dollars in the early 80's. One of the villages where Levers spent money setting up was actually called "Paradise". It wasn't long before things went very sour, and Levers ended up in the middle of a bitter fight for the forest.

Local Fellowship Church leader, the Reverend Eto, and his people were angry over this violation. Reverend Eto sent for his son, Job Dudley Tausinga, who was at law school in Nuigini. He instructed him to return and help his people win back control of their forests. Job, a powerful and charismatic man, returned and started to prepare reports expressing the dissatisfaction of the landowners over logging rights granted to Unilever. These submissions were presented to both the Government and Unilever. Job also warned Unilever not to go ahead with any logging in that area as land deals were not properly negotiated. The Government replied by formally stating that "anyone who is anti-Levers, is anti-Government." All submissions and deputations failed and Unilever sent bulldozers in to start to log at Enoghae. Villagers were not prepared to sit and let this go by, and started a peaceful protest. Finally the situation became very heated indeed.

Just before daybreak, on March 27th, 1982, 150 villagers attacked and destroyed one of Unilevers logging camps. Seventy-eight houses, a store, two bulldozers and a mobile crane were damaged and destroyed in a raid which left the place burnt to the ground and cost Unilevers over a million dollars. Seven Solomon Islander men were arrested and convicted on riot charges, and sentenced to two years jail. Nevertheless, the resolve of the locals was not broken, and they continued to call for the expulsion of Unilever, and demanded the return of their forests.

Levers found itself without access to three of the five areas it had agreed to log, but they were still confident that the Government could negotiate a solution to the disputes. The land-owners too kept up their fight. It was at that stage that



Levers decided there wasn't much of a future and finally they ceased operations in the Solomons and auctioned off all their equipment for a fraction of its worth. Undoubtedly, Job Dudley and the community as a whole, had a great deal to do with Levers leaving the Solomons.

The Manager of Levers said: "In the end, it's a matter of power, who has it, and where. Job Dudley makes a decision and no-one questions it."

The Government's inability to stop Levers failing in the Solomons, led to questions about its weakness and lack of leadership. People from some quarters said, "Our economy is going down and down. To close off the biggest employer outside of the Government itself has got to have an effect on other investment in the Solomons." "It's frightening."

Logging in the Solomons in the late eighties is still a major issue with many conflicting opinions. New timber operators have moved in - in the wake of Unilevers and they go to new, isolated islands and attempt to repeat the story again and again.

On the other side are the Solomon Islanders, who are the wiser for what happened with Unilever and have passed legislation requiring new operators to log selectively and to provide some form of post logging development. There is no doubt that the Solomon Islands is still

being overlogged and that new and beautiful areas are being opened up all the time. It is still largely true too that the profits generated from logging are leaving the country.

There are however examples of working schemes where the Solomon Islanders are using soft, village-based and appropriate technology to lead themselves sensibly ahead toward an economically and environmentally sustainable future.

The courage of the Solomon Islanders involved in trying to curb the overcutting of their forests, is of world importance and many other communities both in the Solomon Islands itself and in other countries may well learn from the TROUBLE IN PARADISE.

The above is the storyline for a proposed film of the same name: "Trouble in Paradise". The film will be the story as it happened, and will include interviews with all the important people involved in the story. There will be some recreation of the burning down of the logging village. The Government of the Solomon Islands has given permission for filming, and the film maker, GAIA FILMS of Australia, are seeking finances to get this important story into film. Please, if you or your organization can help with the finances of this project, write to Jeni Kendall and Paul Tait, GAIA FILMS, RMB 116 Blue Knob Rd, NIMBIN N.S.W., 2480 Australia.



From: LINK



# Logging Banned

**The Malaita Provincial Government has imposed a ban on overseas logging companies starting any new projects.**

The ban (or moratorium) comes in response to fears that the timber resources of North Malaita are under threat.

Mr. David Totorea, Head of Planning Division for Malaita Province, estimates that 75% of forests in Central and North Malaita have now gone as a result of population pressure and logging operations. "If logging continues at the current rate", he said "commercial stocks will run out within 5 years. This would eventually force North Malaita to import timber for its own use."

Mr. Totorea explained that as forests are used up for commercial purposes, this also has a marked effect on the availability of materials for domestic use. "For example, lawyer canes do not grow back once the forests have gone" he said.



Mr. Totorea identified topsoil erosion as a major side effect of logging reported by landowners on North Malaita. After logging, rain and landslides take away valuable topsoil making it difficult to grow food. Where bulldozers have turned topsoil over, vegetables will not grow.

River pollution from logging is also a significant problem according to Mr. Totorea. Oil spilt from bulldozers and increased dirt in rivers has spoiled fishing in many areas.

The current ban is not the first of its kind. In 1982 Malaita Province imposed a moratorium on logging, yet the ban did not prevent Taisol from starting operations in Malaita. The National Government introduced a moratorium on new logging in 1983, but lifted the ban in 1986.

Mr. Totorea blamed pressure from landowners or politicians, and the ability of the National Government to override Provincial Government policies, for the failure of previous moratoriums.

FROM: LINK October/November 1987

"When I see what logging has done to my land it makes me unhappy. I wasn't fully aware of the bad effects of logging. I'm thinking about the future of my children, but it's hard because my land has been spoilt by logging."

"The new trees I've planted are about one year old now ... where there's been no bulldozing, trees are 10 feet high. Where the bulldozers have been, trees are only about 3 feet high. If I try to plant crops they don't grow well. This effect is the same for other landowners ... people are unhappy."

**Peter Chanel, landowner, North Malaita Province**



# Logging on Malaita

The following extracts are from an interview with the Premier of Malaita Province, Mr. Timothy Kauhiona. The interview provides some insight into the Provincial Assemblies decision to place a moratorium on foreign logging ventures.

**Q: Are you satisfied with the way logging companies deal with villagers and government in Malaita?**

**PREMIER:** At the moment we have two companies operating in Malaita..Taisol are operating in Fote and Kayuken recently started operations at West Kwaio.

The experience we have with the companies is that they are not actually following the agreements with the local landowners.

With the National Government there is a "standard agreement" as well as agreements between the landowners and the company. The companies have to abide by these decisions.

For example, they must avoid tambu places, pay royalties within set time limits, and pay compensation for damages. Landowners try to seek some assistance from the Province to ensure they receive their royalties and compensation payments.

I believe Kayuken has been going outside the agreement by exporting edible trees like nali nut, and arakoko used for canoes. Also we have reports that undersized logs have been exported - logs are also being left lying in the bush.

Because of these breaches I wrote a letter to Kayuken stating that they must put everything in order before any further negotiations; otherwise, there will be no further expansion of their operations.

**Q: What were relations like in the past with companies?**

**PREMIER:** We worked well together with the companies in the past, so we thought everything would go all right. We hoped they would provide us with good roads, maybe clinics, or help with school buildings, maintaining existing roads and bridges. So, we decided we must support these companies.

But, then they grab resources and money - when they see money they forget all their agreements.

The companies should understand that the outcome of logging should benefit both parties - the company and the landowner. The companies provide machines and labour, the landowners provide their resources. They should be working side by side. Yet in my view, the royalties landowners receive are too low.

On the world market, one cubic metre of timber costs almost \$100 (U.S.). From this, landowners are now only receiving \$US3.50 per cubic metre. I think it would be far better if landowners received \$US20 leaving \$US80 for the company - to cover labour costs, machinery costs and profit.

**Q: What is the procedure for checking whether companies have complied with any agreements?**

**PREMIER:** We rely on feedback from the village people because they witness the agreements when they sign them. When the agreements are not fulfilled, the villagers come and complain to us.

The National Forestry Division should also play its part by inspecting the area to make sure the companies follow the agreements - but at the moment Forestry Division is not doing these inspections.

**Q: Why is the Forestry Division unable to carry out its inspections?**



**PREMIER:** I'm not sure - that's their own problem. Perhaps it's because they are short of staff. In the Province we don't have our own forestry staff - otherwise we could provide inspectors. Forestry comes under the National Government - that makes it very hard for us.

**Q: Does logging already threaten future timber resources in Malaita?**

**PREMIER:** Yes ... we are now trying to look to our future demands for timber. Malaita is a small island and we are worried that our resources will soon run out.

So, we are trying to restrict logging operations and concentrate on local milling. The problem now is to find a market for the timber we mill ourselves. I have been advised that our trees are some of the best in the world.

We would rather encourage local people to become involved in logging. I am in favour of co-operative milling where landowners come together as shareholders - they can then sell their logs through their own milling operation and receive 100% benefit from the operation.

**Q: What other changes would you like to see to improve the timber industry in Malaita?**

**PREMIER:** I would like to see more reforestation projects started as many places have run out of forests now - especially on the northern side of the island where the population is higher.

**Postscript:** Malaita Province recently brought an action in the High Court to prevent Kayuken from operating under their existing licence. The Province claimed that the issue of land ownership in the area was not resolved. Leave to proceed with the action was not granted on technical grounds.

**FROM: LINK October/November 1987**



## Statement by Solomon Island Development Trust

JANUARY 1988

"It has become increasingly clear that the leading development issue of the day concerns the use, abuse and protection of our natural resources. Solomon Islanders are particularly blessed by significant amounts of natural resources; fish, trees, minerals and land. Villagers by far, are the resource owners but are more and more pressured to permit these resources to be exploited by outside concerns.

Unfortunately, many resource owners have been poorly and in some cases, wrongly informed about the value, usefulness and future need of these resources. They have been forced to make uninformed choices on how best to use these valuable resources. These faulty decisions have had severe consequences both for the living and for the next generation."



# Solomon Island Paradise — Lost?

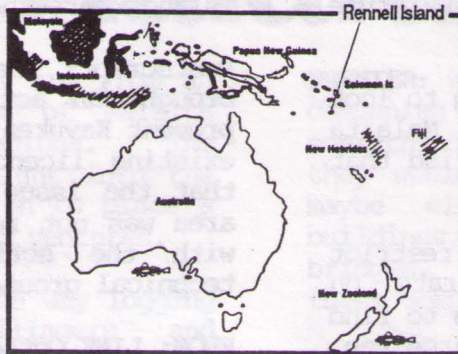
Rennell Island is situated about 160 km south of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Island Chain, with a total land area of about 267 square miles. Described as the world's finest upraised coral atoll, it is the most pristine tropical island of its size in the world. Rennell also contains the largest lake in the Pacific, with about 200 small islands dotted around the edges of this lake.

There are about 2,000 people living on this island most of whom engage in subsistence agriculture. Apart from these small gardens, the island is covered with pristine rainforest.

Rennell has been isolated for hundreds of years, and there is a high degree of endemism in the species present. Of approximately 50 species of birds on Rennell, 21 are unique species or subspecies (Danish and British biological expeditions 1951 and 1953). The island is unexplored botanically, but it is suggested that over 40% of the species do not occur elsewhere.

Currently Rennell is under threat of logging by a timber company, who are pressing landowners to sign a contract which will destroy their forests, their culture and their livelihood. But because it is a coral island with notoriously poor soils, a logging operation would permanently devastate the island and lead to disastrous ecological effects including the extinction of numbers of species of plants and animals, decreased rainfall, and a loss of topsoil. The forest is not a big one, and a logging operation would be only marginally viable even in straight-out dollar terms. It certainly would not produce much revenue for the local people or the central Government.

The third South Pacific National parks and Reserve Conference held in Apia in June and July 1985 recommended that priority should be given to establishing a protected area on Rennell Island. An IUCN report "Review of the Protected Areas System in Oceania" made the same recommendation.



The island has immense potential as a "nature tourist" and scientific destination, which could provide sustained and substantial income to the local people if properly developed and controlled. A commercial logging operation would greatly reduce its tourist potential and the future income prospects of the people of Rennell.

Rennell is a jewel of the Pacific, it must not be logged. Alternatives to provide income for the inhabitants must be developed. We ask your urgent help in writing to those people listed below in support of retaining Rennell's outstanding ecology.

*Write now to:*  
The Hon Ezekiel Alebua  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
P.O. Box G19  
Honiara, Solomon Islands

Hon John Tapaika, QBE  
Minister of Health and Medical Services  
P.O. Box G19  
Honiara, Solomon Islands

Foxwood Limited Logging Company  
P.O. Box 8  
Honiara, Solomon Islands

(John Tapaika originally approached Foxwood and Co. on behalf of the Rennelese Area Council. He favors logging because "We desperately need foreign exchange." Thus the selling of our much loved land and forests which we do with broken hearts for the future."). Another case for a debt for conservation swap?

## Civilized Girl

By Jully Sipolo©

Cheap perfume  
Six inch heels  
Skin-tight pants  
Civilized girl

Steel-wool hair  
Fuzzy and stiff  
Now soft as coconut husk  
Held by a dozen clips

Charcoal-black skin  
Painted red  
Bushy eye-brows  
Plucked and penciled

Who am I?  
Melanesian Caucasian or  
Half-caste?  
Make up your mind

Where am I going -  
Forward, backward, still?  
What do I call myself -  
Mrs Miss or Ms?

Why do I do this?  
Imitation  
What's wrong with it?  
Civilisation.

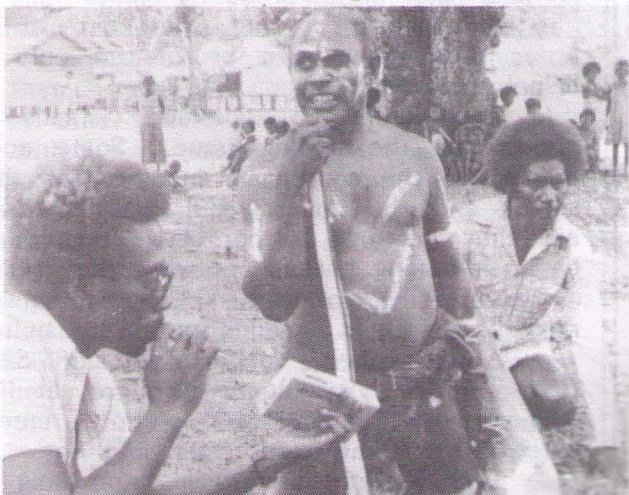


# BLENDING OLD AND NEW

by Valerie Harrison

Western Province, Solomon Islands has a new Office of Cultural and Historical Affairs. Through this office the province hopes to encourage a renewed interest in custom, culture, language, dance, music, art, song story and history. By establishing this office the province has made a commitment to its people to work towards a new respect for custom and history. To meet these commitments the office has been directed to fulfill the following objectives:

- respect and encourage the expression of all cultures, indigenous and foreign
- establish a provincial cultural centre
- find practical ways of using local languages in the schools
- record and protect tambu places and other archaeological sites
- where Area Councils approve, invite foreign researchers to study cultures, languages and archaeology, under conditions which require them to report their work in a form which is useful for the people of the area studied
- encourage and assist cultural performances and festivals
- encourage the teaching of traditional skills which are being lost - such as the construction of planked canoes



Cultural Officer Tapes a Story

- support the work of the Solomon Islands National archives in collecting, preserving and storing papers of historical interest.

It will be many years before some of these objectives are realized.

The province now has Archaeological and Historical Site protection legislation. A program is operating to train Western Province youths in the techniques of archaeology site survey. Once surveyed, the sites can be protected under the new legislation.

An active oral history program has Solomon Island youths participating in the preservation of their own language and custom stories as well as of traditional skills.

Traditional skills projects, such as the making of shell money, local cloth and war shields have been designed by a number of communities. Two larger communities have undertaken the construction of the larger reknown planked canoes of the area.

Outside aid has assisted with the establishing of a local resource archive with copies of manuscripts and photographs from a variety of overseas sources.

The response to the office and programs has been excellent, especially in the villages of Western Province, and also nationally and internationally. People are helpful, encouraging and generous with their time.

Within developing countries like the Solomon Islands, cultural programming is often considered a luxury. However, the Western Province experience seems to indicate that a healthy concern for people and their history promotes a healthy concern for tomorrow.

**VALERIE HARRISON** was a CUSO volunteer in the Solomon Islands from 1985-1987, and assisted with Western Province's Office of Cultural and Historical Affairs.



# SEARCHING FOR GOLD

For the last 60 years or more geologists have been scratching the surface of the ground in search for gold but they could not find much

But when new theories and advanced methods of prospecting have been developed they start searching again and this time they can find gold almost everywhere.

On the island of Guadalcanal alluvial gold has been panned in small quantities from streams running down from Gold Ridge before World War 11.

In 1568 Mendana claimed to have found gold from the same streams below Gold Ridge.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has issued Special Prospecting Licenses to 15 mining companies while another 84 applications are awaiting for consideration.

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources only one mining company was issued with a Special Mining License.

Very recently, the Ministry has offered SIDT MTMs a chance to visit Gold Ridge to see for themselves that Cyprus mining company is only prospecting and not mining.

Cyprus began prospecting at Gold Ridge towards the end of March 1983 and its SPL expires at the end of July 1988.

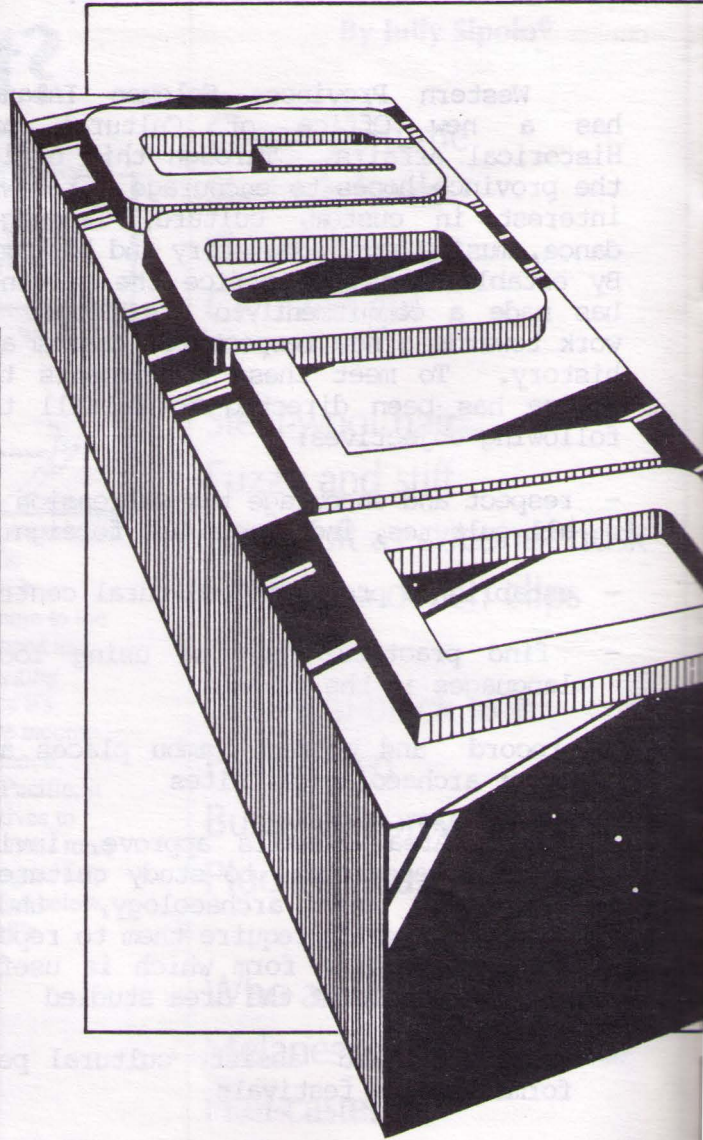
Two drills are now in operation collecting samples of rocks and soil each day and the company has already spent about \$6,000,000 and if their finds prove that there is enough gold underneath the company will spend \$20,000,000 more. So far the drills have reached a depth of 600 metres below the surface.

Three (3) areas have been found to have concentrations of gold and other spots marked for drilling are next to the house of the villagers on Gold Ridge.

The method of mining to get the gold from underneath the ground will be determined by the depth but it is quite possible that underground mining method will be used.

Mr Danitofea explained that the underground method is not quite the same as open ground mining method because underground method uses special excavating equipment to get the gold out from underground.

He explained that the Solomon Islands government is encouraging mining companies to carry out more explorations and prospecting throughout the country. He said the aim is to search for more resources in order to develop the economic growth of Solomon Islands.



The main exports of Solomon Islands today are timber, fish, copra, cocoa, palm oil and other minor products.

Mr Danitofea said that out of 300 areas that have been prospected only one is being mined.

Landowners in Solomon Islands are divided on the mining issue. Some accept mining as the source of income, for themselves and the country but just how much are they getting? Others have turned their back on mining because of what they termed as 'devastation' of natural environment and the soil that man depends on for his living.

A few days earlier, one of SIDT's field officer visited the villages at Gold Ridge but villagers were at a meeting with the company except one man.

The village man was expressing his concern about the future of his people at Gold Ridge if mining is to go ahead.




# IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

Before Cyprus was issued with a Special Prospecting License in 1983 landowners at Gold Ridge have been depending on gold for their living. They searched for gold from the streams nearby and on Gold Ridge areas and sold them for cash to buy food.

Now, the same people are not allowed to dig anywhere near the ridge or within a distance of 100 metres from the streams below Gold Ridge.

The company has also requested the government for police officers to guard the area.

Already the villagers at Gold Ridge have been warned that they could be asked at any time to move out from the area.



One of the streams from which villagers used for drinking and cooking has now been polluted. Instead the company has fixed a water supply from another stream but according to the villagers the water supply was not flowing regularly.

Recently at Gold Ridge an argument occurred among the villagers and a hose-pipe that carries water to another village on the same ridge was cut off.

Landowners want to review the prospecting agreement.

According to them the first agreement allowed them to continue digging for gold but recently some men were taken to Honiara to sign a second agreement which now stops them from digging gold.

The villagers who signed the second agreement said they did not know what they were signing because no-one explained it to them.

In other development, a mining company which was issued with a Special Prospecting License for Isabel went to Taosese village in North Isabel and asked the villagers to sign a prospecting agreement.

The representatives of the mining company went on a helicopter and when they landed not many people were in the village including the owner of the land.

The mining officials asked those who were there to sign but they refused because they were not the landowners but they were told that anyone at all can sign and so the chief and another person signed the agreement form.

SIDT MTMs from Isabel reported that it was the final day of the workshop they held at Taosese that the landowner asked the villagers who signed the agreement. This happened after the MTMs sung the Kolobangara song.

The chief and the other person who signed the agreement were not the landowners.

The landowner is now seeking ways to suspend that agreement because he did not sign it with the company. The landowners want proper arrangement and they must sign the agreement before they can allow their land for prospecting.

Sources have claimed that a lot of gold has been taken out from the Solomons either through proper channels or smuggling but the Ministry of Natural Resources has disputed this by saying that the claim has no evidence to prove that gold has been smuggled out of the country apart from the amount officially recorded each year.

An overseas report claims that the amount of gold from Solomon Islands sold in Australia per year is about 90 kilograms

The 'Weekend Australia' also published an article on June 27-28, 1987 that Zanex in Solomon Islands produces about 1,000 ounces of gold per month

Solomon Star on December 4, 1987 published an article which quoted the Australian Minister representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Gareth Evans, as saying that the Ministry of Natural Resources in Solomon Islands has said that there was no evidence of large-gold smuggling, but he said, smuggling gold to Australia has happened.

According to the article the question of smuggling gold to Australia was raised by Senator Sanders with the Minister of Natural Resources, Sir Peter Kenilorea following the claim that about \$72 million worth of gold had been smuggled into Australia from Solomon Islands.

Up to now the Ministry of Natural Resources has been claiming that there was no evidence to prove that large amount of gold has been smuggled into Australia.

It was estimated that by the year 2,000 the islands in the South Pacific including Australia and New Zealand could be producing a total of about 190 tons of gold in a year.

From: LINK #4, Feb/Mar 1988







(l to r): Don Dunstan, Frances Deklin and Dorothy Tekwei at the University of PNG.

## PEACE IN MELANESIA — CAN IT LAST?

*John Scott-Murphy, Executive Director of the H V Evatt Foundation, participated in a Human Rights Delegation to Melanesia with former South Australian Premier Don Dunstan in October. The Delegation's findings should cause a reassessment of the government's actions in the Pacific and the basis of its policies. John Scott-Murphy reports.*

The most important impression that lingers from Melanesia is that the Fiji Coup may not be an isolated event. The ingredients: poverty, uneven development, government corruption and cultural traditions disintegrating under western values, added to economic exploitation and declining terms of trade, can be found in all the other Melanesian countries. Scapegoats, like the Indian population in Fiji, can be found in other parts of the region. And heavy doses of protestant Christianity are commonly mixed with ancient habits and customs. The result is an unstable combination and the symptoms are there if we bother to look.

Melanesia stretches from Irian Jaya to Fiji in a broad band of islands that happen to occupy Australia's most strategic military region. The Melanesian people live under foreign rule in Irian Jaya (Indonesia), Torres Strait Islands (Aust), and New Caledonia (France). They have independent governments in Papua New Guinea (since 1975), Solomon Islands (since 1978), Vanuatu (since 1979) and Fiji (since 1970). The region's human rights record is best known for the 10,000 refugees on the PNG side on the Irian Jaya border and two military coups in Fiji with subsequent racial discrimination and Apartheid style administration. In New Caledonia the remnants of the French Empire,

allied with French military global strategies, keep the indigenous Melanesians in a state of increasingly bitter discontent.

The Evatt Foundation was refused entry to New Caledonia and Fiji, even though its intentions were to investigate social, economic and cultural rights rather than civil and political rights, which are blatantly abused in those two countries.

It was able to visit Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu where it contacted a broad range of individuals and organisations. Being a non government group there was no official contact at government level. There were, however, many discussions with parliamentarians both in government and opposition as well as with development workers, trade unions, womens organisations and refugees.

Refusal of entry is a new phenomenon in the Pacific. It is not only indicative of a need to cover up abuses of basic human rights. It shows the contempt with which those values are held by people in authority. And this runs right through the Melanesian region, it is not merely the prerogative of the French or of individual militarists like Rabuka. The PNG Dept of Foreign Affairs tried to ban the delegation from entering the refugee camps. Appointments with leading political figures in Vanuatu were almost impossible to get. Most governments are heavily influenced by the example of the old colonial regimes and have merely replaced them. Policies, on development for example, are little different in the 'independent' countries to the colonial ones.

There is a staggering level of corruption in government throughout the region. Allegations were rife in every country, often involving huge sums of

money. In the Solomons it was alleged that around \$70 million worth of gold had been smuggled out of the country. With a population the size of a typical local government area in Sydney that is an enormous drain on the balance of payments.

It is as if the methods and manners of the old colonial masters live in the new officials and bureaucrats. The delegation found the distance between ordinary people and their 'elected' governments to be immense. Not just in physical access (and with 85% of people living in isolated villages that is an important issue) but in level of education and culture. Western trained bureaucrats are not necessarily the right people for development let alone respect for basic human rights.

Social, Economic and Cultural Rights have been recognised by the United Nations effectively since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. It was not until the early '60s, however, that the Covenant covering those rights was adopted. Australia, being a strong supporter of human rights issues in the UN, has done little to assist public understanding of their implications in all the years they have been in force. They continue to form an effective part in our Foreign Policy.

It was to these issues that the Evatt Foundation's delegation and the conference of November 14-15 addressed itself. Social, Economic and Cultural Rights form the basis of the problems being experienced in Melanesia. Violent responses, in Irian Jaya, Fiji and New Caledonia have made the headlines but the fundamentals remain. A different sort of violence is endemic in Papua New Guinea, with gangs of unemployed young men terrorising urban areas and some rural villages as well. Women are victims of domestic violence on a significant level as well as bearing the brunt of cultural change and economic responsibilities in the family. Yet they have no effective representation at any level of government throughout the region.

With these levels of human rights abuse it should not come as a surprise that military intervention occurred in Fiji. Being the only country with an effective army (excepting France and Indonesia who hold authority at the point of a gun out of habit) it was almost inevitable that the reactionary nationalism that holds sway among many Melanesians should find its vent there. The point is that this is only the beginning of troubled waters in the region.

The Evatt Foundation's Human Rights Delegation will be producing a major report on its findings. Together with the conference papers which address many of the related issues of development, foreign intervention, Australian foreign policy and some progressive alternatives to it, it will be available from the Foundation's office early in 1988. Phone (02) 2514084 for details.



# MARASIN MERIS TRAINED PNG Project Update

SPPF, with support from CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), has sent \$8250 to support the Marasin Meri project in the East Sepik area of Papua New Guinea. Following are excerpts from reports we have received on the project.

The Marasin Meri project is an ongoing project that started in 1982 and its objectives have remained as follows:

- 1) to promote the overall awareness of the importance of the villagers in their own health care.
- 2) To encourage villagers to seek their own solutions to their own health problems.
- 3) To promote the health of women and children.
- 4) To give women the knowledge to allow them to help themselves to health and incidentally improve their standing in the village.

Since 1982 the Marasin Meri project has achieved these objectives in varying degrees due to the erratic nature of support and funding. Overall, however, there is no doubt that these objectives are achievable and have been achieved in some villages.

The involvement of SPPF has come at the beginning of a renewed effort in the Marasin Meri project following a ten month lull caused by lack of funding and transport. The vehicle that was donated by the Rotarians of Wewak, East Sepik and Essendon, Australia has been the catalyst in this new effort and we hope to keep the vehicle, and therefore the project,

running as long as possible.

Since the renewed effort which started in October, there has already been an impact regarding objectives in the village. This is shown by the data we collect from the Marasin Meris which indicates that following their introduction into the communities more and more people come for help and at the same time health has improved. In visiting villages I have found a definitely increased awareness in health care and a supportive and enthusiastic attitude in the communities as a whole. There have been some minor problems in some villages but these problems were caused by clan or land disputes which did not directly involve the Marasin Meris but did effect community support and therefore their effectiveness.

On the more positive side, in many other villages the Marasin Meris have joined into the Village Development Committees (VDC) and in this way have assumed a very important role in village decision making. For the East Sepik this is an incredible step forward in the women's status in the village. Traditionally, women have absolutely no standing in any decisions and this is how the majority of villages function. Only through extensive work with the project village VDCs has the Marasin Meri's role been established. Even now in many villages the VDC members have problems with accepting the Marasin Meri as a member. In some villages where the Marasin Meri is relatively new and her role is still developing the Marasin Meri is present at VDC meetings but otherwise uninvolved. In other villages where the Marasin Meris have been established



longer, say three to six years, I have seen Marasin Meris speaking out in VDC meetings and in one village, actually being one of the most outspoken members. For the Sepik this is a major accomplishment. Therefore, our work with the VDCs is also essential to the Marasin Meri project. Our visits to project villages involve seeing the Marasin Meri and often calling together a VDC meeting to make sure she's involved and to also try to make the men accept her input.

In mid-October 1987, with SPPF project funds, we held a two week long Marasin Meri training course and refresher training course for five new Marasin Meris and eighteen others. The two weeks were a complete success due to the training supplied by the Maprik Hospital staff and the cooperation of the Maprik Women's Association.. We received the SPPF donation and were able to use it to purchase twenty marasin boxes which would otherwise have been unaffordable. We have also used a portion of it to keep our vehicle running.

For the future we hope to increase the number of marasin meris to 100 by the year 1990 but at the moment we have no plans for immediate expansion. Because the Marasin Meri is a volunteer and the number of truly dedicated women is variable, recruitment is slow. Working as a village Marasin Meri has very little tangible rewards and therefore the women must work out of the desire to help others and find satisfaction as a reward. In the Sepik where women's work is truly never done this is a lot to ask. It is no wonder that after six years and many ups and downs there are only 23 Marasin Meris. In my opinion this is still an incredible achievement.

The future for the Marasin Meris and the women and people of the East Sepik is bright yet the knowledge of underlying instability throws a shadow over everything we accomplish. The ultimate hope is that eventually the government will see the value of the project and possible support the project completely. At this time, due to the budget cuts (14% lower than last year in the provincial health department) this does not seem probable in 1988.

From a report by Phillip J. Hyun, Maprik Primary Health Care Project Representative.



**Marasin Meris learn to  
build toilets (above)  
and to prepare  
nutritional food (below)  
as part of their health  
training**





The people in the villages I visited in Wosera are poor and sick - every one of them. In almost four years of work in Melanesia I have never seen conditions to such an extent. The villages are built within sago swamps where water is dirty; mosquitos and malaria rampant and economic activity both formal and informal stagnant.

I am impressed with the support that the Maprik Primary Health Team is giving the Marasin Meris during team visits to villages.

Some SPPF funds were used to service the Health Team vehicle. This was money well spent. The vehicle serves as the single most important element of support for the project. Without this the project would fail. During visits to the project villages (and I am told that each of the 23 Marasin Meri sites are visited on a monthly basis), a great deal of on the job training goes on. This includes review of the medicine used as well as a review of a sickness schedule that meris complete as they treat each and every person.

Of the five villages I toured, two surprised me. The best work carried out by the Marasin Meri program is in a village called Wapindumaka. Here almost all of the four project objectives are being carried out though in dire conditions. I saw a nutrition garden planted; toilets being worked on and a bush fence completed to hold a fund raising dance for the women's work. Many men in the village even support the women in their work.

The second village, Jipko, was without doubt the poorest. Efforts to organise a VDC were slow as was the construction of the Marasin Meri aid post. I saw little community life in the village and very poor people.

From a report by Kevin Bowman, country representative for the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific.

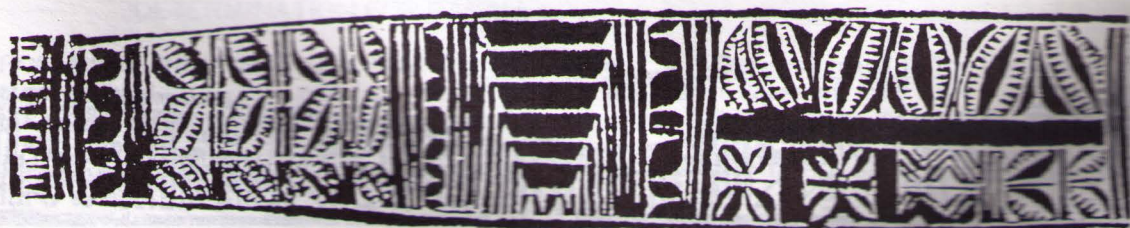


I wanted to go to this area because I had heard about the Marasin Meri project which is basically a primary health care program set up by the province to support first aid and health care at the village level. I did not spend enough time there to gather other than the most superficial of information, but what I did learn has left me with lasting impressions.

The program has has been well planned with sound principles of development. Briefly - women (usually a member of a Village Women's Committee, itself organised through District Womens' Councils) - and recently some men, are selected by the village to train in basic Primary Health Care. The training takes place in Maprik and Wewak. Back in the village a 'clinic' is built by the community.

We visited about 7 villages, one or two quite well organised and one or two where nothing has yet got off the ground. There are 23 villages with Marasin Meris in them. About half are functioning well. Where the committees were most organised was directly related to the good health of the people. In one or two villages I visited, everyone in them was seriously malnourished or clearly sick from other diseases. Very little took place in these villages. The cycle of illness and lethargy leading to a disintegration of the social fabric was obviously at work.

From a report by Raymond Clark, Pacific Regional Director, CUSO.





# Palau Action Update

"Despite much public relations and efforts to sell the Compact, we clearly understand that the implementation of the Compact gives the United States the right to conduct military operations on as much as one-third of our land--forever. We see that the Compact says military rights may end in fifty years if mutually agreed. This means, we understand, that if the United States wishes to continue its control of our land, it need only say so and this will go on forever. This is unacceptable." From the Palauan women's testimony before the Sen. Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Jan. 28, 1988.

## Lawsuit Re-opened in Palau

On March 31st, Palauan women filed a motion to re-open their lawsuit and it was granted several days later by Judge Robert Hefner. The suit challenges the questionable amendment process which set aside voting requirements in the nuclear-free Constitution and allowed for approval of the Compact of Free Association in August of 1987. If the suit is successful it will mean the Compact is not constitutionally approved.

The Compact, designed to replace the U.N. Trusteeship, is an agreement which gives the U.S. extensive military rights in Palau in exchange for about \$1 billion in aid over 50 years.

The twenty-two women who filed the motion, were plaintiffs in the same suit in August 1987. They were forced to withdraw it as a result of intimidation and violence and the murder of Mr. Bedor Bins, father of their lawyer, Roman Bedor.

In spite of the continuing danger, the women are spearheading this new initiative. Now that the suit is re-opened there will be a motion to expand the suit and add additional plaintiffs. (which total 117 people.) In a letter to President Salii, the women have raised the question of safety for all the plaintiffs and requested 24 hour police protection.

The Palau government has filed a motion to dismiss the case and a hearing on dismissal will be held in Belau April 21. However, with the strong evidence on the unconstitutionality of the amendment, dismissal is unlikely.

**SUGGESTED ACTION:** Donations to the legal defense fund can be made to: Roman Bedor, P.O. Box 58, Koror, Palau 96940 or to Sarita Rios, Center for Constitutional Rights, 666 Broadway, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10012.

## U.S. Congress Split on Compact

With the lawsuit refiled, action in Congress over the Compact should come to a halt. In the last few weeks, the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee has led efforts to hold back on Compact approval.

According to Chairman, Morris Udall, they "conceptually support" the bill but have concerns about whether the Compact has been constitutionally approved and about "serious allegations of potential criminal wrong doing" on the part of "senior Palauan officials."





## Congress, continued

Udall and Ron deLugo, Chair of the House Subcommittee on Insular and International Affairs, plan to take an investigative trip to Belau in mid-April. The two congressmen also introduced a House Resolution March 23 outlining agreements in the Compact they cannot approve so far. These agreements include law enforcement, economic assistance programs and the five year economic plan for Palau. According to deLugo, they want to insure that... "serious allegations of improper acts are independently investigated and, if warranted, prosecuted; and second, provide the assistance Palau needs--an in some cases has requested--for effective law enforcement." (Congressional Record 3/23/88).

Although the GAO (General Accounting Office) investigative findings have not been published, information has been released that bribes paid to Palauan officials over the IPSECO power plant amount to at least \$1 million. President Salii and his brother Carlos Salii are named as two recipients of bribes from the company which built the \$32 million power plant.

In contrast to the House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate approved the Compact in late March, reportedly with only three members present at the time of the approval. Although the approved Compact legislation stipulates the Compact must meet the Palauan Constitutional requirements if there is a legal challenge, the Senate resolution avoids the serious economic and management problems that should be resolved under U.S. Trusteeship obligations. In the House, Solarz's Subcom. on Asian and Pacific Affairs approved the Compact bill, but Rep. Fascell, Chair of the full Foreign Affairs Committee has indicated the committee will take the lead from Udall and hold off acting on the bill until several issues are resolved.

### SUGGESTED CONGRESSIONAL ACTION:

Write Rep. Morris Udall and Rep. Ron deLugo, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs; Dante Fascell and Stephen Solarz of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to:

- REQUEST THAT CONGRESS NOT TAKE ANY ACTION ON THE COMPACT UNLESS THE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE IS RESOLVED
- PROTECT THE CIVIL RIGHTS AND SAFETY OF THE PLAINTIFFS IN THE LAWSUIT
- FOLLOW-UP ON ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION AND MISMANAGEMENT
- THE HOUSE INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR THEIR ACTIONS

### ADDRESSES:

U.S. Senate, Washington D.C. 20510 and U.S. House of Representatives, Washington D.C. 20515

## United Nations to Meet on Trust Territories

The Subcommittee on Small Territories, part of the Special Committee of 24 will be meeting April 18 through May 13. The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, including Palau, will be on their agenda. The Special Committee of 24, which deals with decolonization, issued a report in 1987 that was critical of the military provisions for Belau in the Compact.

May 9 - June 3 the Trusteeship Council will hold their annual meeting on the Trust Territories.

### SUGGESTED U.N. ACTION:

Send messages to the Special Committee of 24 and the Trusteeship Council, U.N. New York, NY 10017. URGE:

- NO ACTION ON PALAU UNLESS THE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE IS RESOLVED
- THE COMMITTEES TO MEASURE THE COMPACT AGAINST U.N. STANDARDS FOR FREE ASSOCIATION AND DECOLONIZATION
- THE U.N. TO GUARANTEE SUPPORT FOR FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PALAU.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Send for The U.N. and Self-Determination in the Pacific, a paper which outlines U.N. structure and includes strategies, additional dates of 1988 U.N. meetings, etc. From Susan Quass, The United Methodist Office for the U.N. 777 U.N. Plaza, NY 10017.

(Thanks to Susan Quass and "The Nuclear Sovereignty Project" for information and action suggestions.)



# STATEMENT FROM THE PEOPLE OF WEST PAPUA

We, the people of West Papua, have been suffering for the last 25 years under the military repression and occupation by the government of Indonesia.

We, the people of West Papua, have never been able to execute our self-determination.

In 1961, the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia signed an agreement under the auspices of the UN in New York. This agreement was reached after heavy pressure from western nations, including the USA, on both governments. In this agreement the signatories recognised our right to self determination and agreed that in 1969 our people would get the opportunity to express their wish, whether to remain with Indonesia or to cut their ties with Indonesia. (Articles 18, 19 and 20 of the New York Agreement between the Netherlands and Indonesia, 15th August 1962).

But the government of Indonesia intimidated our people and manipulated the Act of Free Choice in 1969 despite the presence of a UN representative. Instead of an act of free choice the Indonesian government appointed 1,025 persons, who were pressured and consequently voted in favour to remain with Indonesia.

To support her policy of continued presence in our country the government of Indonesia has taken the following measures:

- militarization
- transmigration of many Javanese and other people from the other islands to our country
- intimidation and severe violation of human rights

## Militarization

Immediately after the withdrawal of the Dutch in 1962 until today, the

military repression against our people continues. This has resulted in raids, house searches, which are followed by arrests, disappearance, violations and the rape of innocent people. (West Papua: The Obliteration of a People. TAPOL, London 1983)

Tens of thousands of our people were killed, disappeared and fled into the bush for the safety of their lives. Many thousands of others fled across the border into PNG because they feared for their lives. There are more than 12,000 West Papua refugees in camps in PNG now. (Report of the International Commission of Justice, ICJ, 1984).

## Transmigration

Since 1965 Indonesia has practiced an official trans-migration programme to remove and resettle tens of thousands of Javanese and others from the crowded areas around Java, in our country. The military operations against our people have forced them to give up their possessions and land to the newcomers. The government appears to have been successful in its ambitious resettlement programme, because Western countries like the Netherlands and the USA through the World Bank are assisting with the financing of this programme. (Transmigrasi: Indonesia Resettlement Policy 1965. Mariel Otten. IWGIA Document 57.)

## Violation of Human Rights

The violation of basic human rights continues in our country. Executions, tortures, ill-treatment, killings and arrests without charge and without any consequent legal proceedings regularly take place.

The most shocking example was the death of Arnold Ap, a dynamic, young West Papuan anthropologist, who was loved by us because of his idealism and his



propagation, stimulation and safeguarding of our West Papuan Melanesian culture. He was arrested on November 30, 1983, imprisoned and tortured. In April 1984 he and his friend, Eduard Mofu, were badly tortured and killed by the Indonesian military men and were later found dead on the beach near Jayapura.

This is just one of the many examples of the many killings which are still taking place in our country. Amnesty International, Anti-Slavery Society, Tapol and others have received many reports about the human rights violation in our country.

#### OPM/FPM and the Resistance Movement

Our peoples resistance against Indonesia began immediately after our country was taken over in 1963. It began because we are against the whole situation. We do not recognise the Indonesian presence in our country, we will keep on fighting for our independence and freedom.

Our resistance movement is organized under the OPM, the Organise Papua Merdeka or the Free Papua Movement, FPM. The OPM/FPM has struggled for 25 years. We fight alone. That is why we ask you for international support and solidarity.

We ask for your recognition of our national resistance movement as the only true representative of our people.

The OPM/FPM is the voice of the Papuan people.

Thank you.

Fred Korwa  
For the West Papuan People

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Write Joe Clark, Minister of External Affairs, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Urge the Canadian government, as a member of the United Nations which silently witnessed Indonesian's takeover of this territory, to assist the people of West Papua by encouraging the United Nations to reopen the West Papua question and to hold a legitimate "Act of Free Choice" on self-determination. Ask Mr. Clark if increasing Canadian aid programs for West Papua (Irian Jaya to the Canadian government) assist the people of West Papua, or solidify and encourage Indonesian control of the territory and the resulting ethnocide and genocide of the West Papuan people. Send copies of your letter to John Turner, M.P. and Ed Broadbent, M.P. No postage necessary in Canada.

**Writing for the *New York City Tribune*, correspondent Peter Samuel says Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman William J. Crowe has told Congress that Palau (Belau) would probably be the principal replacement if American forces were expelled from the Philippines.**



# Canada urged to stop shelling

BY ROBERT MATAS  
The Globe and Mail

MARCH 12/88

Canada is risking Hawaii's goodwill toward thousands of Canadian tourists by refusing to stop bombarding one of its islands during naval gunnery exercises, a spokesman for the island's mayor says.

"Canada should show more understanding and sympathy to the people here when so many Canadians visit our islands and stay for months," Robert McCabe, spokesman for Maui Mayor Hannibal Tavares, said yesterday in an interview from Maui. "The people of Hawaii do not want the bombing to go on."

The controversy over use of the uninhabited island of Kahoolawe has placed Canada in the middle of a dispute between the U.S. Government and Hawaii, where city and state governments have been trying for more than a decade to stop the target practice.

Defence Minister Perrin Beatty said in a recent

letter to the mayor that Canada uses the island "at the invitation and with the full approval of the United States Government and the United States military."

Canada's naval capability would suffer if the opportunity were passed up, he said in the letter.

Mr. Beatty was not available for comment yesterday.

Major Norbert Cyr, a spokesman for the Department of National Defence, said yesterday the Government recently decided to proceed this spring with plans for shore bombardment of Kahoolawe.

He said Canada does not have a firing range and would have to take over an island — perhaps one of the Queen Charlotte Islands — if Kahoolawe were not used. He added that Canada's training ammunition is non-explosive and does not fragment.

During the 1970s, the island was designated an historic site with significant archeological, cultural and religious importance.

## MORE LETTERS NEEDED

HANNIBAL TAVARES  
Mayor  
TELEPHONE 244-7858



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793

February 18, 1988

WRITE NOW TO:  
PRIME MINISTER BRIAN  
MULRONEY.  
IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEND  
COPIES TO ED BROADBENT &  
JOHN TURNER. ALL AT HOUSE  
OF COMMONS,  
OTTAWA, ONTARIO K1A 0A6

Mr. Perrin Beatty  
Minister of National Defence  
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K2

Dear Mr. Beatty:

Thank you for your letter of January 7, 1988.

From its tone, it appears my appeal for Canada to voluntary decline participation in the bombing of our island of Kahoolawe during the upcoming RIMPAC exercise, has fallen on deaf ears.

I deeply regret not receiving assurances from you that would provide us with cause to hope that Canada will cease shelling the island, regardless of the invitation to do so by our military, and in spite of the 1980 Consent Decree.

If Canada is sincere about its stated desire to fully respect the island's historical, cultural, archaeological and spiritual integrity, then I believe it should show this sincerity by refraining from the 1988 shelling. Any decrease in the bombardment of the island would help.

Our County Council and our State Legislature have repeatedly called for the bombing to stop because of the detrimental impact of the shelling, not only on Kahoolawe, but on its neighboring islands of Maui and Lanai.

The Kahoolawe issue has long been a sore point between our people and their government, especially since there is growing awareness that use of the island as a bombing target no longer seems logical in this age of technology when so many other alternatives could be developed.

Please give us the consideration we are due.

Very truly yours,

*Hannibal Tavares*

HANNIBAL TAVARES  
Mayor, County of Maui

cc: Kahoolawe Ohana  
South Pacific Peoples Foundation of Canada

Monday, Dec. 14, 1987

HONOLULU ADVERTISER — Letters to the Editor

### Shells on Kahoolawe

On the central plain of Kahoolawe, master adzemakers once cut the hard, flat stones with great precision, creating the durable all-around hewing tools of old Hawaii. Their great worksite and temple of knowledge was at Puu Moiwi, one of only three such major areas now known in Hawaii — our proud and unique cultural heritage.

While visiting this site Nov. 6 — bringing to it *ho'okupu*, gifts to encourage growth, in the spirit of the Makahiki season — the eight of us, escorted by Navy personnel, were shocked and outraged to see the quarry littered with ordnance — unexploded and exploded bombs!

All were within a couple of hundred feet of the heiau. One was over four feet long!

It's bad enough, from an environmental and a spiritual perspective, that the bombing continues to cut unto huge portions of the island's gentle green skin and expose and tear at terrible wounds of hard red flesh.

But even from a Western "scientific" perspective, isn't it profoundly immoral, ignorant, and surely illegal to be destroying the physical culture of a living people?

RENDELL D. TONG



# Important Workshop on Pacific Inshore Fisheries Resources

Marine resources are of great economic importance to developing island states in the south-central Pacific Ocean. However for these small states, occupying vast ocean areas, assessment and management of marine resources, particularly inshore resources, is logistically difficult and extremely expensive.

In recognition of the need to improve communication of scientific information and expertise on marine resources to island states, the South Pacific Commission held a ten day workshop at its headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia. From March 14 to 26, 1988, forty specialists from 20 countries in the region met with over sixty experts in tropical fisheries stock assessment to discuss the current state of knowledge for inshore resources ranging from sharks to semi-precious corals.

All told, 25 categories of marine resource were reviewed. The specialists and experts presented an impressive array of scientific papers - 141 in total - and SPC printed copies of all papers for each participant. There were plenary sessions on traditional marine resource management concepts, stock assessment methodologies, habitat enhancement, the use of biotelemetry and remote satellite sensing, and extraplenary sessions on follow-up subjects chosen by the participants.

The workshop represented the first time that those in the region involved in managing marine resources met with such a wide range of marine resource experts. Participants were made aware of the strengths and weaknesses of different stock assessment and management approaches, and the variety of marine resources currently being managed in the region. The workshop set the stage for SPC and other regional agencies to further develop the resource management expertise of island states.

## Women and the Fiji Coups

By Vanessa Griffin

Fiji has undergone tremendous social, economic and political changes, since the coups in May and September. The coups have affected the lives of many people, and they have had particular effects on women.

### WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

Since the coups, there has been an increase in cases of rape. Many incidents have gone unreported, particularly when the courts and police were replaced by the military in responsibility for law and order. A group in Fiji compiling human rights violations for Amnesty International, listed cases of women being raped by soldiers, sometimes in front of their children or husbands.

Unchecked military powers, and the breakdown of judicial and police controls, resulted in women being more vulnerable to sexual abuse and violence.

### WOMEN AND THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

The Women's Crisis Centre, based in Suva, noticed an increase in the number of women seeking help, following the coup in May. The loss of family income caused by unemployment and the laying off of workers, added to economic burdens faced by women in poorer income families. Women came to the Centre suffering from stress related to problems of maintaining their families. Some women threatened to commit suicide as the problems of finding food, bus fares and school fees became too much for them. Maintenance payments also ceased as husbands were laid off work. Welfare agencies were unable to cope with the added number of people, particularly women, seeking help. Fear of racial attack was an added stress for Indian women, particularly those in the squatter settlements.

Unemployment increased following the coups. Many women domestic workers lost their jobs, or had to accept less money, as their employers themselves suffered pay cuts, or losses in business. These burdens were passed on to women—the most lowly paid employees—especially as domestic workers. Women in other lowly-paid areas of work such as the garment industry, also had to accept pay cuts or whatever work conditions the employers offered.

### WOMEN AND POLITICS

Many women have been involved in protesting the illegal removal of an elected government, and in urging a peaceful solution to Fiji's problems. Women were involved in the 'Back to Early May' movement, and the Women's Crisis Centre and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement organised a March of 'women and children for peace'. Since the coup, women have been a strong force in organising multi-racial peaceful responses to the political crisis.

*(Vanessa Griffin is a Fiji citizen, writer and women's activist. She is presently engaged in post-graduate studies at the University of Sydney.)*



# The killing continues

In November, 1987 the fifth Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Conference was held in Manila, the Philippines. Every three years delegates from indigenous nations bordering or in the Pacific Ocean gather to share information on aspects of nuclear testing on their lands and peoples by nuclear superpowers. This article was written by a delegate from the Haida Nation who attended the conference. □

For those people who think that France has a corner on the market for being cultured and civilized it is time to understand the true character of French colonialism. Since their invasion of the Pacific in the nineteenth century France has maintained a harsh hand over French Polynesia including Tahiti, Wallis and Futuna Island and New Caledonia. As well as conducting nuclear testing France has a policy of encouraging immigration to ensure that the indigenous pop-

ulations cannot win a majority in any referendums on independence. The recent referendum in Kanaky (New Caledonia) is a case in point. But before looking at that tense situation on the island nation lets first review the policy and impacts of the French military presence in the South Seas.

In 1962 despite strong objections from the Territorial Assembly France moved its test sites from Algeria, farther away from the French population and into the Moruroa Atoll. From 1966 to 1976

they conducted 41 nuclear atmospheric tests in spite of the Partial Testing Bans which prohibited such tests. Starting in 1975 all tests were conducted underground and as of December 1985 86 such tests have taken place. Although no information on the mortality rates are released it is believed that 80 people have been secretly flown to France suffering from radiation caused cancers and that at least 10 have died from radiation sickness. Today as a direct result of these tests Moruroa Atoll is sinking into the Ocean. It is rumored that because of the damaged structure of Moruroa Atoll, France will be moving its nuclear testing to Kerguelen in the Indian Ocean.

Due to agreements made with the French Polynesian Assembly France will not be held responsible for any environmental damage. This environmental damage includes the release of plutonium into the atmosphere in

1979, (resulting in a French ban on eating all types of fish from Moruroa), as well as the destruction of the Atoll itself.

**Kanaky (New Caledonia).** The French arrival on this large Melanesian Island was marked by the massacre of thousands of Kanaks. In seventy years the population of the indigenous Kanaks has dropped from 200,000 to 30,000. Kanaks were not allowed into towns until 1946 and the law permitted the police to kill any Kanak found in the capital city after 9 pm. As recently as 60 years ago a high chief was beheaded and his head sent to be displayed in a French Museum. However when the expanding nickel industry required labour to increase production for the military market, limited social reforms were granted to the Kanaks to allow them to work in the industry. In 1953, a decade before Indians got the vote in Canada, Kanaks were given this right. In the past President Mitterand made a pre-election promise to hold a referendum on Independence for the indigenous populations of the territories. And while the French government continually postponed the referendum date, they aggressively encouraged migration effectively insuring that the indigenous vote would be a minority vote.

On September 13, 1987, in spite of United Nations condemnation, France held a referendum vote

which was boycotted by the Kanak, 43% of the total population. The results of the vote, (no surprise to anyone) was overwhelming support by the immigrant population for maintaining ties with the French Republic. This vote now provides the French government with an excuse to continue its harsh treatment of the indigenous people. Military, paramilitary and police forces have dramatically risen and today there is a French soldier for every seven Kanak. Military bases are built as close to Kanak populations as possible. As in Canada, indigenous peoples are limited to small poor quality lands while the prime sites are held by a small minority of wealthy French nationals. These forces maintain their control through overt physical harassment. In 1984 seven adult Frenchmen ambushed and killed ten unarmed Kanaks. The magistrate acquitted them on the basis of self defense and the local French press portrayed the killers as heroes. An appeal was granted but the seven men still remain at large.

Louis Uragei, a spokesman for the Kanak delegation at the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific was asked if the Kanak had not foreseen the French use of the military as a means of maintaining control. He responded, "When one takes up a demand for Independence, no one has an idea of what might happen. During the process you begin to realize the reality and as the reality becomes more oppressive, you adapt." □

Yaku





France is moving its nuclear testing program from Moruroa to Fangataufa. It is known that Moruroa Atoll has sunk at least five feet from the French tests, and it is suspected that radiation is leaking as a result of continuing testing. Suspicions have been mounting that France will move its testing program to the Kurguelan Islands in the Indian Ocean because of Moruroa being so damaged. The move to Fangataufa—previously abandoned by the French because it was so contaminated—is surprising. Could the French be using the move as a cover to transfer equipment from Moruroa to the Kurguelans? One thing *is* clear: the French continue to radiate Polynesia against the wishes of the people of Tahiti/Polynesia and the Pacific.

THE AUSTRALIAN Wednesday March 30 1988

# Mururoa 'in danger of breaking up'

By Asia-Pacific editor BRUCE LOUDON and RICHARD LONG in Wellington

MURUROA Atoll, the setting for more than 100 Hiroshima-sized atomic explosions since 1975, may now be in danger of "breaking up", posing a danger of spilling nuclear radiation into the South Pacific.

Mururoa is only 17km by 12km in size, and is honeycombed by test tunnels already collapsing into each other, or threatening to do so.

A scientist at the University of Sydney estimates, on the basis of the number of tests admitted by the French since 1975, that, at best, test tunnels are no more than 300m apart.

The doomsday scenario is that the tunnels will all collapse into each other, causing an emission of radioactive nuclear waste that will, successively, affect sea life and then human life in much of the area.

This follows the disclosure in Paris that France is shifting the biggest part of its nuclear testing program from Mururoa to Fangataufa Atoll, 37km away.

The disclosure — made casually in an interview by the Commander-in-Chief of the French navy in the Pacific, Admiral Pierre Thireaut — was

not unexpected. It was forecast last year by prominent anti-nuclear campaigners.

Its implications are significant, and there seems little doubt that it will lend momentum to the campaign against French nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

The president of Scientists Against Nuclear Arms, Dr Bob Hunter, said: "If all these crack patterns link up with one another and also link up with the surrounding ocean, there is a definite possibility of a major radioactive leak, possibly within a year.

"Evidently, the French have been advised by their own engineers that it's too risky to proceed with testing at Mururoa."

A less alarming view is taken by Dr Andrew McEwan, head of the National Radiation Laboratory, part of the New Zealand Health Department. He said any leakage from isolated Mururoa was not enough to be a health hazard.

Dr McEwan said that over the years France had used up most of the positions on the atoll's rim before sinking the testing tunnels. Now boring was

taking place through the atoll lagoon, which was expensive and made it difficult to schedule tests. He thought this was the primary reason for the shift.

The first hint of what is causing concern at Mururoa was given last year by a biophysics professor at the Curie Institute of the University of Paris, Dr Abraham Behar. He said that from contacts within the French army and scientific community he believed Mururoa had been so damaged it would be impractical to conduct many more tests there.

## Spy's 'studies' arouse NZ suspicions — Page 5

French authorities have always insisted that there is no danger of leakage from Mururoa in fewer than 1000 years, and have said it could take as long as 10,000 years. In his interview, Admiral Thireaut maintained that there was "absolutely no problem of pollution of Mururoa", and no danger of radioactive material seeping from the atoll.

That is contested by those opposed to the French testing. Their views have gathered some weight following the switch to Fangataufa and the admission by Admiral Thireaut that this was being done because of concern that repeated underground blasts might eventually split the rock structure under Mururoa.

Some non-French nuclear experts predicted a few months ago that serious radioactivity would begin to leak from Mururoa's lagoon and into the South Pacific within 10 to 100 years.

A spokesman for the Greenpeace anti-nuclear group in Australia said: "Scientific studies have shown that the atoll (Mururoa) would split, and radioactive material would spill. We fear that what the French announcement means is that this is what has happened already."

Mururoa is pitted with tunnels caused by at least 87 underground blasts since 1975. Environmentalists say they have been warning for years that the atoll is sinking as a result of blasts deep in its basalt base. France has consistently poured scorn on such warnings.

One leading New Zealand expert, Dr Manfred Hochstein, director of Auckland University's Geothermal Institute, warned that even before the nuclear testing started, Mururoa was "leaky as a sieve".

Dr Hochstein and a geothermal scientist, Dr Michael O'Sullivan, produced a computer study of water movements within the atoll 10 years ago, and concluded that serious damage had already occurred. They argued that a big leakage of radioactive material into the South Pacific was inevitable in 10 to 100 years.

France maintains that its testing program is no threat to the region, but shies away from answering the suggestion that, if the program is so benign, it should move tests to off the Cote d'Azur.

Both Canberra and Wellington are seeking urgent scientific clarification of the French move. A spokesman for the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs has said that Admiral Thireaut's disclosure "vindicates the Government's concerns about the effects of French testing".



# PACIFIC STILL REGARDED AS NUCLEAR DUSTBIN

By Y. Shimizu (Nuke Info Tokyo)

At the end of the December '87 session, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate conferences named Yucca Mountain, Nevada, as the site of the first U.S. dump for highly radioactive nuclear waste. Another option will be the Marshall Islands in the Pacific. Marshalls President Amata Kabua has for years proposed storing U.S. nuclear wastes in either the Bikini or Enewetok lagoons. Both were used by the United States as nuclear bomb test sites in the 50's and are still heavily contaminated. Amata Kabua even presented the idea to Japanese officials as well.

Western Pacific Waste Repositories Inc. (WPWR) in Nevada made a contract in 1986 with a representative from the Marshall Islands to build repositories on Erikub Atoll for the disposal and storage of hazardous industrial wastes from the United States. It is not stated in the contract whether nuclear wastes are included or not, but it seems very likely.

Meanwhile the United States and Japan are putting all their efforts into an attempt to change the open-ended moratorium on nuclear waste dumping at sea, which was adopted at the London Dumping Convention (LDC) in 1985. One of the things they are doing is to prepare a report for this year's LDC, for which a group of experts are conducting various studies on the following subjects.

- 1) Wider political, legal, economical, and social aspects of nuclear waste dumping at sea;
- 2) Land-based options and the cost and risk associated with these options;
- 3) Whether it can be proved that radioactive wastes or other radio-active materials dumped at sea don't cause any harm to life or any significant damage to the marine environment.

The Seabed Working Group (SWG) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Nuclear Energy Agency, consisting of the United States, Japan, and other "nuclear" countries, are conducting research on the seabed emplacement of high level nuclear wastes. At present LDC prohibits the "disposal at sea" of high level nuclear wastes. However, the nuclear super-powers insist that seabed emplacement should not be covered by the LDC.

By the year 1990, the number of nuclear waste drums in Japan will reach a million. If ocean dumping is allowed, Japan will dump as much as 100,000 curies per year.

The amount of high level nuclear waste to be disposed of by the United States alone by the year 2000 could reach 10,000 cubic meters, or 40,000 torpedo-shape canisters. If the subseabed method of disposal is allowed, as many as a million canisters will be dumped.

The Pacific Islanders and their governments have been consistently trying to stop all these sea dumping plans proposed by the superpowers, in every possible way. Recently the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Conference in Manila has adopted a resolution opposing the dumping plans.

**NOTE:** Canada supports the moratorium on nuclear waste dumping in the oceans. It is not certain that Canada supports an outright ban. Concerned readers should write to Tom Mcmillan, Minister of the Environment, House of Commons, Ottawa K1A 0A6 with copies to Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, Minister of Foreign Affairs (same address).



# THE PACIFIC: SOCIETIES IN (RAPID) TRANSITION

By Desmon de Sousa, CSsR

The pace of change in Pacific societies was far more rapid (than those of Asia) because of their small size. Until 1970 only two Pacific countries, Western Samoa and Nauru, were independent. Within ten years, seven more countries - Fiji (1970), Tonga (1970), Papua New Guinea (1975), The Solomon Islands (1978), Tuvalu (1978), Kiribati (1979) and Vanuatu (1980) became independent. New Caledonia and French Polynesia are still French colonies.

In Asia, the newly independent countries which began as parliamentary democracies soon got caught in the geopolitics of the superpowers and became military or civilian dictatorships. The same is likely to happen to the newly independent counties of the Pacific. Only in May the first military coup took place in Fiji.

Although European influence reached the Pacific in the 16th-17th centuries, it was only about 100 years ago that these islands got colonized. Missionaries and colonizers reshaped local culture by imposing a Western form of Christianity and a Western economic-political system, a two pronged process which had impact on local culture and family life. This intrusion of Western religious values on the one hand and a Western money economy on the other, triggered the disruption of traditional cultural values. Later the educational and the political systems drew the islanders into Western-style democracy, geared to the needs of the elite - the colonizers up till independence and the local elite after independence.

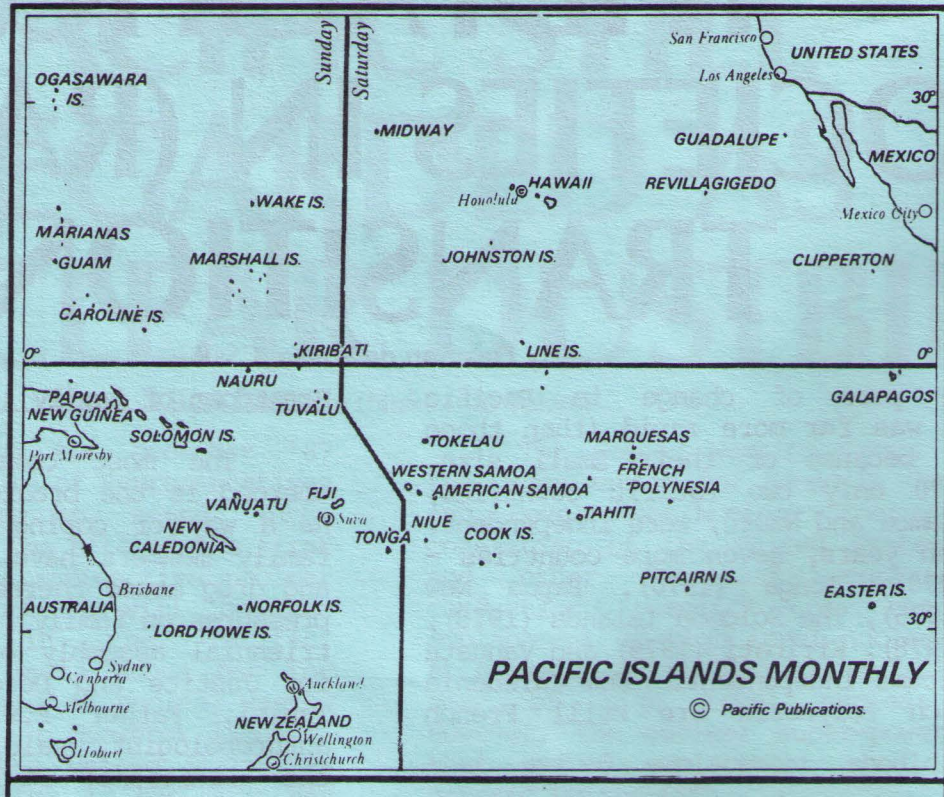
## Breakdown of family life

The most common issue that has emerged is the breakdown of family life. As a way of coping with the situation, family members have taken to alcoholism and drug abuse thereby causing increasing pressures on family relationships. At the triennial assembly of CEPAC's Commission for Justice and Development in Papeete, Tahiti, Father F.S. Hezel, a Jesuit anthropologist, said, "The breakdown of the traditional family, caused in good part by the spread of the cash economy and the alternatives this offers people, has meant greater freedom for family members; but it has also meant greater tensions and strains on personal relations. While it has afforded individuals new opportunity and removed some of the shackles of custom, it has also left them without the broad social network that served as a safety net in the past. The price of modernization has been high. Whether to accept such changes or to attempt to return to more traditional family structures is not a real option. The change in the form and function of the family is already well advanced. There is perhaps one important educational task that churches and other institutions can undertake, namely, to make the transition in family styles easier."

## Disintegrating local cultures

Another fairly constant issue raised is the disintegration of local cultures because of television, video, film and Western lifestyles brought back by those who have been abroad. Bishop Paul Mea, when speaking of "our desire to preserve our individual cultures" explains that culture is "the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, customs and any other capabilities and





USED WITH PERMISSION

habits acquired by a person as a member of society...Today Western technology and values are producing many changes in our communities. A monied elite must not so affect our social structure, that our cultural heritage is suffocated in favour of the materialistic preferences of the West."

Although the problem of disintegrating local cultures is serious, Fr. Hezel had some words of hope. Culture in the past was understood almost mechanistically, like the workings of a watch. If one spring goes out of order the whole mechanism disintegrates. Cultures today, he said, are seen much more organically, like the cells of a body that can get injured and wounded, but have the potential for healing and revitalization.

The breakdown in family life and the disintegration of local cultures because of the intrusion of Western values and money economy are two crucial interrelated issues. The revitalization of local culture and the renewal of family life are inseparable to any programme of genuine human development.

Excerpted from **CONTOURS (CONCERN FOR TOURISM)** December 1987

