

Tok Blong SPPF

A Quarterley of News and Views on the Pacific Islands

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VICTORIA, B.C., CANADA



photo by Barbara Riley

Participants in the Kustom Bilong Mere Workshop in Lale, Ranongga Island, Solomon Islands

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TOK BLONG SPPF is pidgin, a language used in many parts of the Pacific. It might literally be translated as "this talk belongs to SPPF" or SPPF news. TOK BLONG SPPF is published four times per year in English by the South Pacific Peoples Foundation of Canada. Financial support for the publication of Tok Blong SPPF from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is gratefully acknowledged.

SPPF's major aim is to promote awareness of development, social justice, and other issues of importance to the peoples of the South Pacific. Through this journal SPPF hopes to provide Canadians with a window on the Pacific that will foster understanding and promote action in support of Islanders in their struggles for development.

We welcome readers' comments on the journal, as well as suggestions for articles, selections of clippings, or notices of development education materials of interest. We reserve the right to edit material. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of SPPF or of CIDA.

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SPPF update

The change in the seasons has brought a change in staff for SPPF. At the end of August we bid goodbye to Randall Garrison, our executive director for the past two years. Randy has taken a teaching position at Camosun College in Victoria, B.C., and his course duties, which straddle two departments, Political Science and Pacific Rim Studies, will see him juggling Canadian constitutional questions with events in the countries in the Rim. His experience in various hallways of the Canadian non government and government mosaic leaves SPPF with real pluses in many areas and we wish him well in his new position.

November 1 will be the starting date for our new director, Stuart Wulff. Stuart, formerly the executive director of the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation, is currently serving on the National Advisory Council for Development Education. He has already had the opportunity to meet with the Dutch Interchurch Co-ordination Committee for the Pacific and in February will be linking South Pacific nuclear testing to Saskatchewan in a series of public meetings sponsored by the Saskatoon Inter-Church Uranium Committee. As this issue of Tok Blong SPPF goes to press he will be driving westward leaving behind the vagaries of the coming Saskatchewan winter.

For the second time in the life of SPPF we find we must increase our minimum donation rates for TOK BLONG SPPF to cover our ever increasing costs. Our new donation structure will be a four-tiered one: students, individuals, not-for-profit organisations, and businesses with the minimums in each category being \$15, \$25, \$40 and \$100 respectively. To soften the blow for long time supporters we will continue to renew existing memberships at the old rates until February 1st.

On the national scene SPPF is serving on the steering committee for the Indonesia Canada Forum, a coalition of Canadian and Indonesian non government organisations working together on issues common to both countries. The Forum, still in its formative stages, is modelled on the very successful Philippines Canada Human Resources Development Program, and a representative from SPPF will be attending the joint steering committee meeting in Jakarta this November.

Speaking of Indonesia, a special addition to our resource centre arrived here a few days ago. We received a collection of slides taken in West Papua/Irian Jaya in early 1991. Included in the collection was one of a carving representing Fumeripitis, the Creator. Asmat legend has it that Fumeripitis built himself a feast house in the jungle. He was lonely and so one day decided to make carvings. He carved figures each with a head and a body with two arms and two legs. Some were male and some were female. He placed the figures inside the feast house. He was pleased with his work but he was still lonely and so began carving a drum. He cut down a tree and hollowed out a section of the log. One end of the log he covered with a lizard skin, anchoring it there with rattan and a mixture of his own blood and white lime. When it was ready, he beat the drum. Soon the figures around him began to move, jerkily at first. He beat the drum faster and faster and more easily. The figures gradually came to life and in this way the tribe was born. Today the people created by Fumeripitis are being forced to log their forest and suffer punishment if they do not meet their quotas.

Margaret Argue at SPPF



Fiji's Political Roller-coaster Ride

By Richard Naidu

Richard Naidu was official spokesman for deposed prime Minister Dr Timoci Bavadra after the 1987 military coup. The post-coup regime ejected him from Fiji and barred him from returning in early 1988. He now works as a lawyer in Auckland, New Zealand.

Four and a half years after Fiji's first military coup in May 1987, its people continue to be dragged on a political roller-coaster ride, with the added excitement of not knowing when their car will come off the rails altogether.

Every adventure, though, if it goes on too long, becomes tiresome and frustrating, and the prevailing attitude for many in Fiji today is a sense of resignation, even boredom. There is a widespread sense for many that they are living under a political system which is not concerned about what they think anyhow.

For those with an interest in Fiji politics, however, the roller-coaster ride gets dizzy by the day. Several political blocs have started jockeying for position for promised elections under the 1990 Fiji "constitution", scheduled for next year, which, if they go ahead (they have already been postponed three times), will almost certainly usher in a prolonged period of political instability.

The "constitution of the sovereign democratic republic of Fiji" was promulgated on 25 July 1990. As democratic constitutions go, it had an unusual birth. Circulated as a draft for a year, it faced opposition from almost every organised group outside the Fijian chiefly establishment and its retainers. These were the group who comprised the now defunct Alliance Party of the present 'interim' prime minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, whose administration was installed soon after Colonel (now Major-General) Rabuka's second September 1987 military coup. The criticism of the draft had not been unexpected - certainly not from Ratu Mara's regime, which, after making a few adjustments, went ahead and 'promulgated' it by decree anyhow.

The words "sovereign democratic republic" are themselves an exquisite irony. Fiji is probably the world's only republic whose constitution has expressly strengthened feudal rule rather than dispatched it altogether. The country's chiefs have been handed the presidency, control of the upper house of parliament and a constitutional shield from public criticism. If this is not sufficiently undemocratic, the lopsided electoral system, designed specifically to shut Indians and

urban Fijians out of effective political representation, should leave observers in no doubt.

The tired and rejected leadership which Rabuka's "revolution" returned to power is narrowly focused on staying there. It wheels and deals indiscriminately with international carpet baggers and tax-free zoners, leaving established overseas investors with a free hand to deal to the people and the environment as they wish. Fiji's sovereignty, too, is being lost as a result - all the more ironic for a regime which has touted indigenous rights as its hallmark.

These are not matters which have gone unnoticed by many of Fiji's people. Despite the sense of apathy, thousands have made their respective points, in strikes, boycotts and other protests. Industrial muscle, in particular, has been used to panic and isolate the regime.

Earlier in 1991, with tourism, the largest foreign exchange earner, in a periodic slump, cane farmers, whose crop is Fiji's other economic mainstay, staged a two-month harvest boycott to protest against low government payouts and the regime's ban on free elections to their representative council. This was in addition to a strike at another export earner, the Australian-owned Emperor Gold Mine, which is now in its seventh month - an astonishing feat for a union not yet two years old, facing off against an experienced union-buster with strong regime support.

The regime's reaction to these moves was to ban them by decree. No one took any notice and a compromise was finally worked out where the farmers went back to work in return for a measure of compensation and the rescinding of the decrees. The miners, however, were not satisfied with the regime's proposal for them, and defiantly stayed out.

But the regime's problems were not over. When it tried to introduce tougher industrial laws and a consumption tax, the unions announced a general strike for July 16 and went into massive preparation for it. The regime called off its legislation, and the tax; the unions called off the strike.

The solid pattern of industrial defiance, however, is taking time to translate into purely political gains. The late Dr Timoci Bavadra's NFP-Labour Coalition is locked in an internal debate about whether or not to participate in 1992's promised elections. The predominantly Indian NFP has said it will contest the

Indian seats simply to keep pro-regime stooges out. It promises to oppose the constitution from within Parliament. The Labour Party's collective leadership (a new leader has not been formally elected since the resignation and remarriage of Bavadra's widow, Adi Kuini) has not yet taken a position, and will do so closer to the election. While it has an obvious distaste for the constitution, it is well aware of the possible consequences of a boycott, including possible political oblivion. The party is continuing to take soundings among its supporters.

If things on the anti-regime side of the spectrum appear confused, they are no better at the other end. The chiefs' "Fijian Political Party" (FPP), the natural political beneficiary of the 1990 constitution, is lumbering into preparations, under attack from an increasingly diverse band of Fijian political opinion.

The FPP is a unique political animal, formed by the feudal guardians of the constitution. The chiefs see no contradiction in having their position entrenched in the political system and fighting elections at the same time, the equivalent of the Queen forming her own political party. But other political parties on the Fijian side do. The Fiji Conservative Party and the Christian Fijian Nationalist Party are blasting away at the FPP, alongside the Labour Party. So is the "All Nationals Congress" (or ANC) as it prefers to call itself, a grouping formed by the politically erratic Apisai Tora, a leader of the defeated Alliance government's 1987 stormtroopers, the Taukei Movement.

There is some suggestion that the ANC, which is based in the Western half of the main island, Viti Levu, is the FPP's stalking horse there, designed to be a spoiler for the Labour Party. Labour has always been strong in the West, Bavadra's birthplace. Tora, another Westerner, dismissed from the regime's cabinet for failing to toe the FPP line, has no history of principled political action, and could move at any time to any power bloc which invites him in.

It is the indigenous Fijian political agenda which holds the key, not only to the next election, but to Fiji's long-term political future. Traditionally, when the Fijian chiefly establishment has found its position under threat, it has appealed to racial and religious emotions to preserve its hold. In the past, most Fijians succumbed, whatever their misgivings, to the strong pressure exerted by the chiefly system and its control of the influential Methodist Church, to follow along. But the 1987 coups, aimed at preserving the chiefly establishment, have exposed the shallowness of its political leadership qualities in the modern world, and have only hastened its decline. The widespread loss of confidence in this system exposes Fiji to a political vacuum as one system disappears, leaving nothing of any lasting work to replace it.

Of all people to realise the damaging effect of the coup and events in its wake, coup leader Rabuka may appear to be the most surprising.

Rabuka has expressed his doubts about the constitution and the dual role it offers to the chiefs. He feels the chiefs belong in the structure outside the day to day machinations of politics and well away from the executive arm of government. If the



Sitiveni Rabuka

views he has expressed publicly since the coup are anything to go by, then Rabuka is doing an extended practical political science course, and learning something from it. Like most hands-on learning, however, it has proven to be extremely expensive for the rest of us.

Rabuka's increasing independent-mindedness reflects the ongoing collapse of the grouping forged to overthrow the Bavadra government. The Taukei Movement's leaders are now comfortably in cabinet positions, but their supporters have disappeared. The religious fundamentalists have either given in to the regime's pragmatists, joined other parties or disappeared into the church labyrinth, muttering betrayal. The power grabbers have restored themselves to the lifestyle to which they have become accustomed, with the added benefit of no democratic accountability, trusting to an electoral system they hope will rid themselves of it forever.

That leaves the Army and Rabuka, whose metamorphosis has been the most unexpected. They tend to be thought of as one and the same, but Rabuka's dangerously pro-democratic utterances have brought this question to a head for everyone - Rabuka included.

Rabuka's political mission has always been the advancement of indigenous Fijians (and if he advanced himself along the way, that was quite all right). He took unnecessary fright at the election of the Bavadra government, and had his disquiet fanned by others; but he had always wanted to make his mark, and was presented with the perfect opportunity in 1987.

Now the drama is over, his sense of mission remains unsatisfied. The regime has not met his expectations, simply returning to the "business as usual" attitude for which the voters threw it out. Rabuka does not want to be associated with this. For two years, he has been distancing himself from the regime at every



Timoci Bavandra

opportunity. He ordered the Army to provide support for last year's embarrassing nurses' strike; he has intervened to relocate Indian squatters evicted by the Housing Authority; he visited the striking miners and even spoke out in support of the farmers' boycott.

Emboldened by each successful attack, Rabuka finally called on the regime to resign, commenting

that, since he had put it into power, he had authority to remove it. The nation braced itself for a confrontation which never came. Perhaps Rabuka sounded his officers out for support for a third coup and did not get it. Throwing a bunch of commoners out of office was one thing - chiefs was another. The brief hesitation was all the regime needed and President Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau demanded a public apology from Rabuka. It followed.

Shortly after, Rabuka announced he was quitting the Army to become a deputy prime minister in the regime. Almost certainly he was forced out. Now, without a power base, he must cast new lines for support if he is to retain any influence over events at all.

Fiji is a small place, with an even smaller group of political movers and shakers. Time and time again, alliances which would have been unthinkable 12 months earlier have taken place and held. Politics is supposed to make for strange bedfellows, but some of Fiji's are stranger still. There should be no shortage of new relationships as the next elections come and go, but whether they will provide a formula for a stable political system is quite another matter.

Those who wish to see Fiji prosper must beware of the illusions of the quick fix, which hides even more problems behind it. The 1990 constitution is such an illusion, and the desperation of foreign governments to latch onto it as an article of faith, as "something better than nothing" is dangerous and destructive.

Fiji will be restored to real democracy when an acceptable political system is hammered out by consensus, after real dialogue between its increasingly diverse political forces. This is not a platitude. It is a reminder to those who wish to see Fiji, a pivotal nation in the South Pacific and a regional leader, survive its present difficulties and move forward as a nation, that the job is not yet over.

CANADIAN UNIVERSITY AND USP IMPLEMENT JOINT PROGRAMME IN MARINE POLLUTION

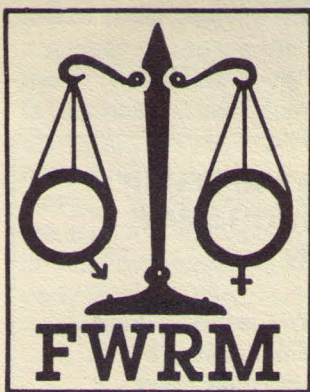
The University of Victoria's Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives (CAPI) is administering a joint programme in marine pollution assessment involving the University of Victoria (UVic) and the University of the South Pacific. The CIDA-funded programme will train USP students and government personnel in the South Pacific region in marine pollution assessment methods.

UVic's on-site Project Coordinator is stationed in Fiji. Faculty at UVic's Biology Department will develop short, focussed courses to train public servants in appraising and regulating development proposals. The first two courses will be delivered in December 1991: one, "Environmental Guidelines for Coastal and Marine Mining", at Honiara, Solomon Islands; and the other, "Environmental Guidelines for Fish Processing Plants", at Majuro, Marshall Islands. These courses will contribute to a new USP degree programme in Marine Pollution Studies.

UVic Biology Co-op students are also involved. During the five year programme eleven co-op students are expected to undertake work terms in Fiji. Three students, who began work terms in September, have placements in Fiji government offices. One student at the Ports Authority of Fiji is documenting pollution sources in harbours, another at the National Environment Management Project is compiling information on coral reefs, and the third at the Public Works Department is developing a computerized database for reporting water and sewage monitoring data.

At a recent government-sponsored seminar describing the National Environment Management Project, it became apparent that the issues of growing concern in Fiji were notably familiar to Canadians: sewage contamination; siting of garbage dumps; forestry and agricultural practices; mining impacts; air pollution and industrial contamination of receiving waters.

[From *Asia-Pacific News*, Vol. 4 No. 3, Sept 1991]



FIJI WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT STRIKES POLICIES FOR A SOCIETY BASED ON EQUALITY

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), after much consultation and consideration with women throughout Fiji, compiled the following statements concerning the various policies that need to be implemented to ensure a society based on equality - policies that would benefit all people in Fiji. The Movement is encouraging people to introduce these policies onto the agenda of their political party and will publicize the responses from the political parties through the women's networks. FWRM stresses that women in Fiji are not asking for anything other than equal rights - not supremacy, just equality.

(1) LAND - requisite changes in the area of land policy include:

- establishing the right of an indigenous Fijian woman to control land entitled to her, as well as the right of her children to inherit this land from her;
- re-establishing the right of the children of a Fijian woman married to a non-indigenous Fijian man to be registered under the **Vola ni Kawabulan**, which grants the right to land and to educational opportunities reserved for indigenous Fijians;
- introducing loan facilities to enable a woman to own land in her own name; at present a woman needs a guarantee from her husband or father in order to obtain a loan.

(2) HOUSING

Women heads of households now constitute 12.4 % of the total households in Fiji, although the incidences of such women is thought to be under-reported due to the stigma and shame involved in admitting desertion by the husbands. Only 4 of 10 of these women are employed compared to 9 of 10 men heads of households. **Lone women with families need to be given top priority in housing schemes.**

(3) SOCIAL ISSUES

Women head the households of the majority of destitute families in Fiji, according to Fijian welfare agencies. There is a drastic need for a change in Social Welfare policies to ensure that destitute families are provided for in a realistic manner; such changes include the following:

- setting up training, education, and specific employment opportunities for members of destitute families to enable them to improve their own lives;

- altering the system of maintenance payment, which at present is based on what the father can pay and not on the cost of raising children; Social Welfare records also show that less than one third of all maintenance payments are actually made, making obvious the need for Government to take over the responsibility of collecting maintenance payments;
- providing **Social Welfare officers** who deal with Welfare reports for Court cases with a high standard of training, to enable them to provide accurate and objective reports for the Judiciary;
- providing more money for **social welfare benefits**;
- establishing **centres for homeless children**, as well as a **counselling centre for juvenile offenders**; the increase of crime and violence - especially of gang rape - make obvious the need for re-education of our youth;
- establishing **half-way homes for the mentally ill**; at present patients who do not need constant care are released, but many have no family or place to go, and end up living on the street subject to constant harassment, violence and rape;
- establishing a **refuge for victims of domestic assault** in each major city, as well as related professional family counselling services.
- addressing the issues of **pornography and prostitutes**, with women involved in the research, decision making or law implementing required to find a workable solution.



(4) EDUCATION - to foster equality in the area of education:

- both **primary and secondary schooling should be free**; it is not uncommon now that when a family is unable to pay for all its children to attend school the female children stay home;
- the education department needs to shift its focus from the present system based on rote learning and examination - a system that perpetuates inequality and injustice - towards a program focussed on **literacy**, enabling children to better understand themselves, their community, and meet the challenges of life;
- boys and girls should have equal access to participation in all subjects areas; **apprenticeships** should be made available to youth of both sexes to encourage young women into non-traditional areas (and not exclude them as at present);
- women and men must have equal opportunities at the level of **tertiary education**, including equal access to scholarships;
- **adult education** should be provided, offering a variety of subjects that might foster an improvement of lifestyle;
- **sex education** should be compulsory in school from Form 1, and based on both up to date data and research, as well as on principles of equality of the sexes (aiming at alleviation of the increasing crime of rape).

(5) EMPLOYMENT - in this area discrimination is apparent in wages, sub-standard working environments, and unequal opportunity for women and for people with disabilities. To eradicate such discrimination the following issues need to be addressed:

- **equal opportunity and equal pay for equal work** - this concept needs to become a fundamental value in the sphere of employment; this includes recognizing women's work as being of the same value as men's work.
- **employment conditions** - existing legislation should be enforced, and new legislation introduced where necessary, to ensure safe and adequate working conditions in all areas of employment.
- **minimum wage** - a realistic and fair minimum wage guideline needs to be introduced and enforced.

- **maternity leave and childcare** - existing legislation on maternity leave must be enforced; childcare facilities for working mothers need to be established by employers or government.
- **trade unions** - a worker should have the right to join a trade union without loss of job; a trade union should have the right to negotiate and work with Government on behalf of its members.
- **sexual harassment** - legislation must be introduced that recognises sexual harassment in the work place as a crime, and that provides a supportive forum for the complaints of persons who are suffering sexual harassment.

(6) BUSINESS - in this area:

- **women** must receive equal access to credit facilities to enable them to participate in commercial development as equal partners with men
- **cooperative businesses and projects**, which benefit more people, need legislative support
- **value added tax** must not be introduced

(7) ENVIRONMENT

- **deforestation** - Logging is becoming an increasingly obvious means of income on the local and export market; it is essential that reforestation is practiced to ensure that future generations of Fijians do not suffer. Women are particularly affected in rural areas where collecting fuel for the fires is their responsibility.
- **environmental education** - needs to be provided and made suitable for use by all people in all communities in Fiji
- **environmental impact studies** - must be carried out for all developments with women involved in the decision making process.

(8) LAW REFORMS

Family law - requires drastic improvements, specifically:

- **maintenance** - (as discussed under Social Welfare)
- **divorce** - at present obtaining a divorce requires one partner to be at fault; requisite is a law allowing for "irreconcilable difference".
- **annulment** - should be possible after non-consummation of marriage.

- **separation** - the present five year separation period required to obtain a divorce should be shortened.
- **matrimonial property** - the real value of women's work in the home and raising of children must be legally recognised and this value reflected in the division of property.
- **domestic violence** - must be treated with the seriousness of any assault case; this will necessitate drastic change in Police procedures and legal judgements.

B) RAPE LAW - requisite reforms to the Rape Law include:

- broadening the definition of rape to cover all types of sexual assault;
- changing the title of the chapter of the penal code which covers rape from "Offences against Morality" to "Offences against Persons";
- introducing legislation to prevent questioning the victim on her past sexual experiences;
- remanding accused rapists while awaiting trial;
- ensuring that the word of the rape victim, under oath, is accepted by the court;
- eliminating the need for corroborated evidence;
- legalising abortion after rape;
- recognising rape within marriage as a crime.

C) CUSTOMARY LAW

- **The Bulubulu Ceremony** is subject to abuse of custom; for example, rapists are asking forgiveness under the Bulubulu, which is highly untraditional and inappropriate.
- **Racial Discrimination** is inevitable as only indigenous Fijians are protected under Customary Law.

D) LAW AND ORDER

- **Military Presence & Influence** in society should be reduced through cuts in personnel.
- **The Fiji Intelligence Agency** should be removed; it is a massive invasion of privacy which only encourages violence and dissatisfaction.

E) THE CITIZENSHIP RULE - discriminates drastically against women.

- **when a woman who is a Fijian citizen marries a non-Fijian citizen** her husband does not have the right to apply for citizenship, whereas the non-Fijian citizen wife of a Fijian male citizen is able to apply; the children of this couple are also affected. The law must be changed to grant all intending citizens the right

to apply for citizenship and each case to be treated on its merit.

- **Article 24 Chapter IV** states that a person born outside Fiji after 6 October 1987 shall become a citizen of Fiji at the date of his birth if at that date his father is a citizen of Fiji. Once again, this discriminates against women from Fiji whose children are born outside Fiji and do not have a father who is a Fijian citizen. The words "his father" should be replaced with "either parent".

(9) POLITICS - in the political sphere:

- **Women must have equal access to:**
 - (a) political positions & decisions, enabling them to participate directly in the formulation of Government policy;
 - (b) positions on public boards;
 - (c) control of foreign aid decisions.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)** must not be limited by Government restricting their ability to receive funding from overseas.

(10) RELIGION

All people must be free to practise whatever religion they wish; there must be no pressure placed on communities to convert.

(11) HEALTH - in the area of Health Care:

- **Free Health Care** needs to be established in the hospital system.
- **Financing** needs to focus on the medical sphere, rather than the administrative area, to raise the standard of hospital care.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the world it is becoming increasingly obvious that a society that does not encourage equality between men and women is a society with many problems. By implementing the above policies we would be ensuring the betterment of life for our children. By keeping half of our population under oppression we are breeding ill will and disharmony. Women are the people most often involved in bringing up the future generation and for this reason it is essential that they receive respect and recognition for the very real work they are involved in.

[Excerpted from "Policies Women in Fiji Would Like Implemented," Spring 1991]

RACE AND THE 1987 COUPS IN FIJI

Michael C. Howard. *Fiji: Race and Politics in an Island State.* Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 1991. 460 pages.

Stephanie Lawson. *The Failure of Democratic Politics in Fiji.* Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1991. 307 pages.

Robert Norton. *Race and Politics in Fiji, 2nd Edition.* St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1990. 212 pages.

The 1987 military coups brought world attention to Fiji, even if only briefly. Journalists were attracted by the contrast between the image held by the outside world of the Pacific as a peaceful paradise and the reality of military coups. Yet four years later as Fiji stumbles along with a crippled economy and without a stable government, journalistic interest has waned.

Similarly the coups challenged the traditional view among academics of Fiji as a peaceful, democratic society where colonialism had successfully implanted western democracy in an ethnically divided society. After years of agreement that Fiji was indeed a model of democracy in a developing country, the coups brought renewed interest in Fiji among academics. And if four years is a long time for journalists, it seems to be about right for academics to produce serious work to supplement the quick books by partisans on both sides.

Reading the "autobiography" of Rabuka, *No Other Way* and its counterpart by Robert Robertson and Akosita Tamanisau, *Fiji: Shattered Coups*, can provide a good introduction. The combination will provide both the flavour of the events and a lively chronology. Those who want to probe beyond the headlines can now consult three recent academic studies from three continents which attempt to explain why Fiji fell from democratic grace.

Sociologist Robert Norton's *Race and Politics in Fiji* is the second edition of a work first published in 1977, a work which was among those which contributed much to the image of Fiji as a model for other plural societies. Norton emphasises the relatively peaceful outcomes of social, cultural, and economic divisions in Fiji, which he describes as "perhaps greater than in any other plural society." For Norton Fiji is interesting in that social and political processes in Fiji encouraged accommodation and compromise rather than conflict.

Key among these forces that mitigated ethnic conflict in Fiji was the institutionalisation of conflict in what was in many respects a defacto apartheid system, complete with a system of communal voting. The land issue was neutralised by providing a system of constitutional guarantees of indigenous ownership combined with contractual agreements providing access to land for non-indigenous Fijians. Finally, Norton points to the role of chiefs in reducing conflict. In colonial Fiji the chiefs had dual functions as administrators within the colonial system and as traditional leaders. In independent Fiji the chiefs retained their traditional leadership roles and as well dominated government through the Alliance Party.

Norton describes independent Fiji as a "force field" of contradictory trends, strengthening the potential for interracial cooperation and, at the same time, deepening the sense of racial rivalry. For Norton the amazing fact about Fiji remains the capacity of Fijian society to minimize ethnic conflict. The coups have not caused Norton to revise his earlier views on Fiji. Instead, Norton marvels at the lack of overt violence that accompanied the collapse of democratic government in Fiji. In fact, he comments that "as coups and ethnic confrontations tend to go, Fiji's experience has been relatively mild."

Political scientist Stephanie Lawson's *The Failure of Democratic Politics in Fiji* is based on PhD thesis work begun before the 1987 coups. Lawson argues that while Fiji may have had the appearance of a democratic society, it lacked the essential foundations for successful democratic politics. Democracy requires everyone to accept that all segments of the population have a legitimate right to participate not just in choosing governments but in actually governing. In Fiji one side lacked this fundamental commitment. The chiefly establishment accepted the democratic system only so long as the Alliance party, which they controlled, retained power.

Lawson points to the importance of what she describes as "plural society syndrome" in Fiji, that "virtually all political activity is motivated and interpreted in terms of perceived racial or ethnic interests." Fiji had a two-party system based on race, but equally important was the fact that the chiefly class was able to use race to bolster its own position. For Lawson the claim that the 1987 coups were a result of a threat to indigenous rights or to indigenous Fijian interests is false. Labour Prime Minister Bavadra was not a puppet of Indo-Fijian forces, nor did his government pose any threat to indigenous rights. What the 1987 victory of the Labour

party did represent was an attack on the foundations of chiefly authority and control of the political system.

Michael Howard taught at the University of the South Pacific from 1982-87 and then became directly involved in working with the Bavadra government. His Fiji: Race and Politics in an Island State is the most comprehensive analysis of events surrounding the 1987 coups. Howard stresses that Fiji's political stability was always largely illusory. He notes that the Alliance Party, when unable to maintain its power solely by manipulating communal sentiments, often resorted to coercion or intimidation to maintain its dominant position.

Howard stresses the impacts on Fiji's political system of rapid social and economic change which virtually transformed Fiji in the 1980's. An increasingly urbanised and educated population placed new demands on the political system. The patronage system relied on by the Alliance Party was severely strained and proved unable to satisfy the demands of a new, younger generation of Fijians. Prime Minister Mara became increasingly autocratic and began to surround himself exclusively with flatterers and business associates.

Economic changes also brought the emergence of a strong, dynamic, and well-organised labour movement in Fiji, bound to be an important force in a nation which already had a relatively large proportion of its labour force in paid labour. The failure to incorporate the new labour movement into the existing party system led to rise of the Labour Party which sought to realign politics on a class rather than ethnic basis.

While acknowledging the fragility of democratic institutions throughout the Pacific, Howard argues that the specific reason for the collapse of democratic government in Fiji is to be found in the loss of power by traditional leaders. For Howard the victory of Labour-dominated Coalition in 1987 was less a threat to indigenous rights, than to chiefly privilege. Howard sees the 1987 coups clearly as a strike against popular democratic government by elements associated with Fiji's traditional oligarchy.

The view that the 1987 coups were aimed at the defense of indigenous rights will probably continue to dominate popular views of Fiji given problems of access to work like that of Lawson and Howard, however convincing their arguments. Howard's book weighs in at over 400 pages and Lawson's at over CAN\$95, creating the sinking feeling that perhaps reviewing these works is of practical use only for librarians. Hopefully these works will receive the attention they deserve as there is much to be gained from distinguishing a defense of indigenous rights from a defense of privilege wearing the cloak of indigenous rights.

Randall Garrison

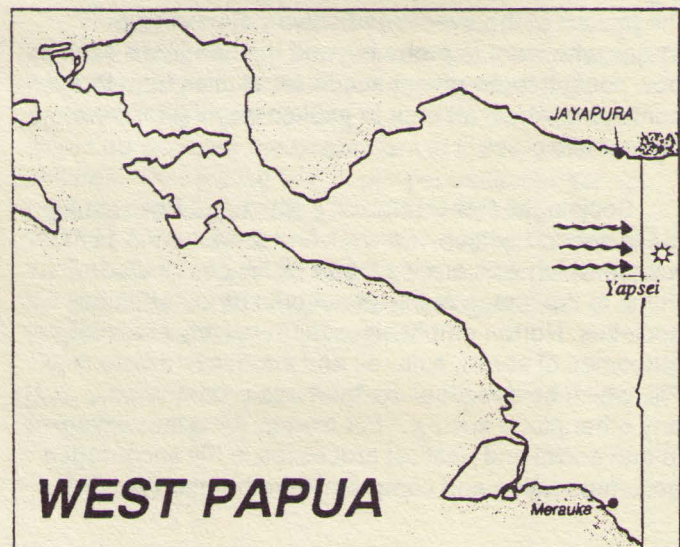
SPPF NEWS UPDATES

WEST PAPUA: Mecky Salosa, Former OPM Supporter, Dead

Mecky Salosa, an active OPM (Free Papua Movement) supporter, is dead. Salosa was arrested in PNG in December 1989 and forcibly deported to Indonesia in July 1990, despite the fact that no extradition treaty exists between PNG and Indonesia. His trial for subversion commenced January 8, 1991. On March 18 Salosa was sentenced to life imprisonment. According to Indonesian authorities Salosa escaped from Waena military prison, near Jayapura, on August 4; Salosa's body was found on the border between West Papua and PNG two weeks later where he had died due to lack of food and the "cruelty of nature." This explanation hardly seems plausible as Salosa was well accustomed to the demands of the bush having spent years there as an OPM guerilla. According to military informants in Jayapura, Salosa escaped on August 11. Major-General Abinowo, commander of the regional military command based in Jayapura, reportedly gave orders to military police to shoot Salosa on sight.

Papuan sources in Jayapura believe that Salosa's escape was arranged by the military to legitimise his execution. They point out the striking similarity between Salosa's death and the death of Arnold Ap, the West Papuan anthropologist who started the cultural revival movement known as Mambesak to counter Indonesian attempts to deny West Papuan identity and culture. Ap was imprisoned and following an alleged escape was shot by Indonesian troops on 26 April 1984. The West Papuan Peoples Front has called upon the UN Commission on Human Rights to conduct an investigation into the death of Mecky Salosa.

(From: Tapol Bulletin, No 107, October 1991, and Pacific News Bulletin, Vol 6 No 9, September 1991)



Explosive Political Situation in Tahiti During the Recent Nuclear Test Season

By Bengt Danielsson

As often has been the case in the past, the nuclear explosions which occurred at Moruroa during the months of June and July were accompanied by social and political explosions, culminating in a bloody street battle between French gendarmes and Polynesian freedom fighters.

The detonator of these new riots was again the pro-French **Tahoeraa Huiraatira** party leader Gaston Flosse, who after having lost his ruling power in December 1987, because of the so-called Black Friday riots, resulting in the looting and destruction of numerous business premises in central Papeete, was re-elected Premier in March this year. It was mainly thanks to the ballots cast for him by the French military personnel, government officials and civilian expats and the opportunistic support of the maverick leader of the small **Aia Api** party, Emile Vernaudon, that Flosse was finally able to form a shaky government, bound to run soon into serious troubles.

His first action was to employ a group of highly paid French auditors to examine the financial records of the previous Leontieff government, which he had constantly accused of mismanagement during his election campaign. According to the report produced by these experts, which was presented in the Territorial Assembly on June 6, there was a budget deficit of seven milliard Tahitian francs (\$AU87 million). The explanation advanced, however, was not any mismanagement but the huge public expenses caused by the numerous social problems, resulting from the enforced changes of the islanders' life-style during the past twenty-five years of French nuclear colonialism. In other words, this costly audit proved that the frequently made official claim that thanks to French subsidies and investments, the natives enjoy the highest standard of living in the whole Pacific region, is totally false.

Despairing of obtaining substantial aid from the French government, Gaston Flosse saw no other solution to this baffling problem than to impose a week later new taxes on such common consumer goods as petrol, beer and tobacco. The first ones to react were the taxi and truck owners and drivers, who on June 20 blocked the western entrance to Papeete. They were immediately supported by the dynamic mayor of the neighbouring town of Faaa, Oscar Temaru, who asked the battle-experienced members of his Polynesian Liberation Front to also plant banners on the barricades, demanding independence and condemning the explosion a few days earlier of nuclear bomb

number 173 at Moruroa. This mobilisation of huge crowds of fierce freedom fighters scared Flosse so much that he promised on June 26 to do away with the petrol tax, which persuaded the demonstrators to dismantle their barricades.

This minor concession was not enough, however, for the trade unions of Polynesian workers, which during the last years have become increasingly powerful and whose leaders now insisted that all the new taxes should be abolished. To their great surprise, they received no reply from Flosse, because he had just flown off to Paris in order to defend himself against court charges for corruption and embezzlement. The trade union leaders therefore decided on July 10 to erect new road barricades both at the western entrance to Papeete and on the harbour bridge, which obstructed the unloading of all cargo ships.

Obviously fearing that the hardy freedom fighters of the Polynesian Liberation Front would soon turn out again, the French High Commissioner immediately ordered the Gendarmerie troops to intervene and chase away the trade union demonstrators, which they did by using tear gas grenades. The latter reached however with such an unexpected determination and courage that in the ensuing scuffle not less than six gendarmes were hurt, half of them very seriously.

As often happens when violent incidents of this sort occur, a peace conference was immediately



Oscar Temaru, leader of Polynesia Liberation Front

photo by David Robie

organised by the leaders of the two major religious bodies; the pro-French Catholic mission and the independent, anti-nuclear Protestant church, to which 90% of the Polynesians belong. Their invitation was accepted by both the trade union leaders and the Tahoeraa Huiraaatira minister temporarily replacing Flosse as head of the local government, as well as by the Territorial Assembly speaker, Emile Vernaudon, and an agreement to abolish all the new taxes was rapidly reached and signed.

In spite of this blessed intervention, it is however far from certain that this deep-reaching conflict has been definitely solved. For not only Flosse, who returned from Paris on July 12, still charged but not yet sentenced, but also the gendarmes showed their disapproval of this "meek acceptance of the illegal acts of the unpunished rioters" by boycotting the national

Bastille Day celebration on July 14. Whereas the Polynesian freedom fighters found it perfectly justified and logical to participate in the celebration of the French revolutionaries, who in 1789 successfully fought against a despotic rule of the same sort that still exists in their islands.

They can therefore be expected to follow this historical antecedent and continue their revolt. Unless Flosse is found guilty, when the Parisian court convenes again on December 18, in which case he will have to abandon politics. Whereupon in all likelihood, the winner of the new territorial election will be a party leader who represents the Polynesian people, which Flosse does not, and which explains why he has sus-citated all this agitation and turmoil.

[Papehue, Tahiti, July 20, 1991]

RADIOACTIVITY NEAR FRENCH NUCLEAR TEST SITE

GREENPEACE RESPONDS TO NUCLEAR REPORT

GREENPEACE has been concerned for some time over the conflict between the dual roles of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). At the heart of this conflict is its role in promoting nuclear power while also having responsibility for safety and restricting the spread of nuclear weapons.

The IAEA's participation in a recent sampling study at Moruroa Atoll has again raised controversy over its role. GREENPEACE believes the IAEA - a United Nations agency - exerts undue and inappropriate pressure on the international community in defence of the nuclear industry.

On August 22, 1991 the French Embassy in New Zealand released two summaries of the results of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report on radioactivity at Moruroa in advance of the full report claiming that the results contradicted the GREENPEACE report. The IAEA study, conducted jointly with the French military and the US Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, was limited to three sampling stations 12 miles from the atoll in a simplistic attempt to replicate the forced and restricted conditions of Greenpeace's preliminary sampling in 1990. For France to pretend to replicate the forced and restricted conditions of Greenpeace's preliminary sampling, when the real focus for concerned study must be the lagoon and test site, is an insult to the intelligence of all those genuinely concerned to ascertain the environmental consequences of nuclear testing.

On August 27, the IAEA's own 12 page summary was made available to the press, which reported elevated quantities of Plutonium at one of the three sampling locations. GREENPEACE notes that the actual IAEA summary is more cautious and qualified than the initial French version, which ignored the implications of elevated levels of plutonium. This plutonium was found at location E2, which is close to the area where GREENPEACE had conducted its preliminary sampling in December 1990, chosen because tidal and current conditions at the time increased the probability of plankton flushed out from the lagoon itself. Locations E1 and E3 appear to have been randomly selected, and subject to currents and conditions equivalent to open ocean, thus minimizing the possibility of meaningful findings.

The call now is for the two laboratories who conducted the study under the auspices of the IAEA to now demand access to the Moruroa and Fangataufa test sites and lagoons for serious scientific investigation by independent scientists as well as their own teams to ascertain the source of these elevated levels of 'unknown' plutonium that are "additional to global fallout".

[From the files of GREENPEACE NEW ZEALAND, September 1991]

NOTE: IAEA-ILMR Report No.48 and the Briefing Document by GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL prepared for the General Conference of the IAEA, September 16-20, 1991, as well as a clipping file, are available from SPPF and any GREENPEACE office.

The Law of the SEA

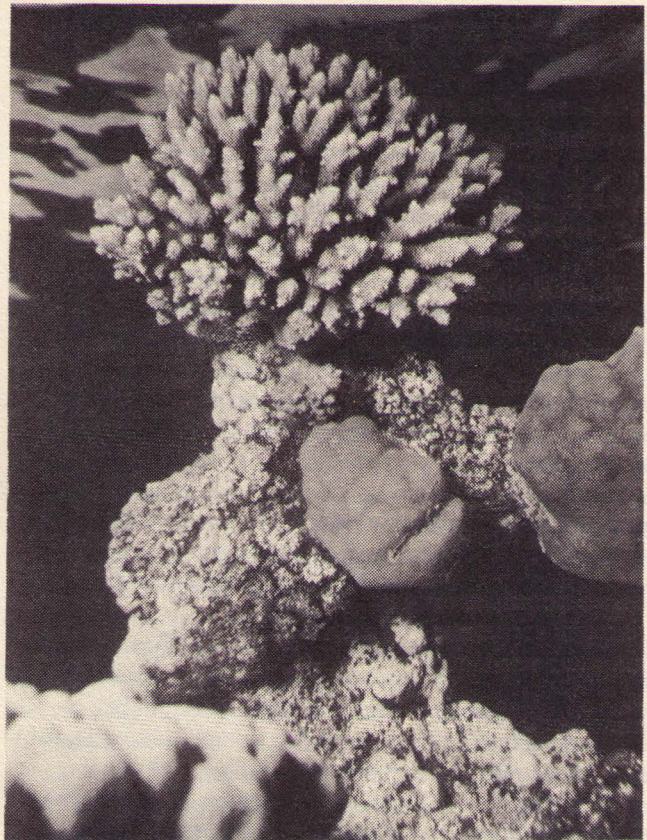
Until fairly recently, the world's oceans were widely perceived as vast expanses of saltwater whose few familiar resources were inexhaustible. Oceans played an important role in transportation, but otherwise occupied only a peripheral place in most national economies.

This view has changed as technological advances of the 20th century have exposed the enormous hidden wealth of the sea, and made it possible to exploit that wealth. Previously unknown resources, particularly the seabed's rich mineral deposits, have become the focus of considerable international attention - and dispute.

The seas are rich in oil and other minerals, including manganese, cobalt, copper, and nickel, and the means now exist to extract them. With this new ability to exploit the oceans' valuable resources, and in the absence of borders marking the sea, questions of ownership and access have arisen. Apart from mineral extraction, other issues have become increasingly important. Problems such as pollution and degradation of marine ecosystems cut across national boundaries and can only be solved through cooperative effort. Likewise, the growing abuse of the sea as a theater for military activities and as a dumping ground for debris and hazardous wastes is of concern to all.

Over-exploitation of the seas' living resources affects an increasing number of countries. Fish and other aquatic animals account for 17 percent of the animal protein in the human diet. Over 30 countries, including many developing countries in West Africa and Asia, get one-third of their animal protein from seafood.

The United Nations began addressing these issues beginning in 1958, at the first Law of the Sea Conference. The conference introduced the concept of common heritage - the idea that the sea belongs to all nations. In 1970 this was encoded in a Declaration of Principles which stated that "the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction...as well as the resources of the area, are the common heritage of mankind" and "shall not be subject to appropriation by any means by States or persons." The declaration also stipulated that this area "be open to use exclusively for peaceful purposes by all States...without discrimination."



The United Nations decided that since the "problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole," it would use what became known as the "package concept" in drafting an ocean regime. This approach meant that the convention would be comprehensive, dealing not only with legal and economic issues, but with all aspects of ocean space, including environmental control, scientific research, economic and commercial activities, technology, delimitation and the settlement of disputes. It would embody rights as well as obligations, and it would be more like a constitution than a law. The package concept also meant that the convention would have to be adopted as a whole; countries could not selectively adopt certain provisions and reject others.

After a long negotiating process, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was adopted and opened for signature in 1982 in Montego Bay, Jamaica. One hundred fifty-nine states and other entities signed the document. The convention needs ratification by 60 countries to come into force. As yet, only 47 countries have ratified UNCLOS.

The convention has 320 articles, contained in 17 parts, and nine annexes. Some key provisions are summarized below.

The Territorial Sea: All coastal states are allowed a territorial sea of up to 12 nautical miles beyond a baseline. Various methods are allowed for establishing baselines and for distinguishing between internal waters and territorial waters.

The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ): States may claim an EEZ of up to 200 nautical miles in which they have sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources. However, neighbouring land-locked and geographically disadvantaged states must be allowed access to resources in the EEZ which are not being exploited.

The Contiguous Zone: Within this zone, a coastal state may exercise the control necessary to prevent infringement of its custom, fiscal, immigration or sanitary laws and regulations within its territory or territorial sea. The zone may not extend beyond 24 nautical miles from the baseline.

The Right of Innocent Passage: Ships of all states, whether coastal or land-locked, enjoy the right of innocent passage through other states' territorial seas.

Right of Access of Land-Locked States To and From the Sea and Freedom of Transit: Land-locked states (those with no seacoast) have the right of access to and from the sea for the purpose of exercising the rights provided for in the convention, including those relating to the freedom of the high seas and the common heritage of humankind. They have freedom of transit through territorial waters by all means of transport.

Development of the Resources of the Sea: The convention stipulates that all activities in the sea shall be carried out in such a manner as to foster healthy development of the world economy and balanced growth for international trade and to promote

international cooperation for the overall development of all countries, especially developing states, with a view to ensuring orderly, safe and rational management of the resources of the sea.

Conservation and Management of the Living Resources of the High Seas: All states have the duty to ensure the conservation of the living resources of the sea, and to cooperate with other states in so doing.

The Continental Shelf: The convention outlines criteria under which states may claim national jurisdiction over the seabed and subsoil of the continental shelf.

Settlement of Disputes: States are obliged to settle their disputes peacefully using any of a number of methods provided for in the convention. This is compulsory and binding; if requested, a state must submit to a settlement procedure and is bound by the findings. The convention establishes an International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea as one means of dispute settlement.

The Common Heritage: The seabed and ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction outlined above are part of the "common heritage of mankind." The convention outlines principles and regulations for its use. The convention also provides for the establishment, upon ratification, of an International Seabed Authority (ISA) to administer the common heritage. It will be an international organization empowered to regulate all aspects of the seabed. This has become the most controversial part of the convention and the main stumbling block to its ratification.

Where UNCLOS Stands

Nearly all of UNCLOS's 47 ratifications have come from developing countries [Federated States of Micronesia acceded to the convention 29 April 1991 - ed]. Iceland is the only Western country to have ratified. The failure of industrialized countries to endorse UNCLOS is troubling for two reasons. Not only is it delaying acceptance of the convention and preventing it from becoming international law, but without the full cooperation of industrialized nations, the overall effectiveness of the convention is questionable. If it is not binding on industrialized countries, it will not be the universal law that it was intended to be.

The centre of dispute is Part XI and Annex III of the convention, the sections dealing with the seabed, ie., the common heritage, and the creation of the International Seabed Authority (ISA). Industrialized countries have expressed two main objections, which have to do with cost and control.

The convention requires countries with the capability of exploiting the mineral wealth of the seabed to make substantial financial contributions to the ISA. Many of those countries are unwilling to commit themselves to this long-term financial obligation. They further contend that ISA is likely to be a large, expensive and inefficient bureaucratic organization which they would have to pay for. Developing countries pushing for ratification counter that the ISA need not be an unwieldy bureaucracy - that it can be efficient, cost-effective, and its size appropriate to its tasks.

The second objection has to do with the regulatory functions of the ISA. While the convention grants special rights to "pioneer investor" states - those which would pursue substantial seabed mining activities - it also controls many aspects of those activities, such as the right to approve workplans, regulation over where each country could mine, the sharing of relevant technology, and the allocation of profits from mining

activities. A number of countries maintain that the profitability of mining would be undermined by these regulations. Further, the convention mandates that any technology used for mining be made available to the ISA at its request, under "fair and reasonable commercial terms and conditions." In principle the technology used to explore and exploit the seabed is to become a part of the common heritage. Industrialized countries are extremely reluctant to agree to the transfer of technology required by the convention.

Much of the dispute is actually more theoretical at this point than practical. Given the very high cost of seabed mining and the fact that there are other, more easily exploitable sources of the minerals in question (primarily manganese and nickel), it is unlikely that seabed mining will be economically viable in the foreseeable future.

Problems have also arisen in the interpretation of the right of innocent passage. Innocent passage is guaranteed by UNCLOS, but this has come into conflict with the desire to eliminate drug trafficking on the seas and to control the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes. UNCLOS does not allow for the boarding or seizure of vessels on the high seas, a right which many coastal countries would like to have in order to prevent illicit drugs or toxic wastes from entering their territories.

Differing interpretations of the right of innocent passage (along with political conflicts) led to a dispute in 1982 between the US and the USSR. Soviet authorities put their naval forces on combat readiness when two American naval vessels equipped with sensors and listening devices entered the Black Sea via the Turkish Straits. The Soviets maintained that the American action was provocative and a violation of their territorial rights, while the US maintained it was simply exercising its rights of innocent passage.

Since then the US and USSR have issued a joint interpretation of innocent passage which is in keeping with UNCLOS.

The US-USSR agreement is one of a number of indications that UNCLOS is providing the basis and the norm for international maritime law, even though it has not been ratified. Many states have adjusted their territorial claims to UNCLOS guidelines. Over 100 states have declared a territorial sea of 12 nautical miles. The most recent was Tanzania, which reduced its claim from 50 to 12 nautical miles. It was able to do this in part because the right to claim an EEZ will enable it to retain control of resources in a larger area. When the US extended its territorial sea from 3 to 12 nautical miles, it reaffirmed the right of innocent passage by all states.

Over 70 countries have claimed exclusive economic zones, in spite of some criticism that the 200 nautical mile EEZ permitted by UNCLOS would create a confusing maze of boundaries and territorial claims which could themselves become a source of conflict. Many countries have cooperated on establishing mutually acceptable boundaries. And the convention has provided the basis for settling conflicting claims. Australia and the Philippines recently worked out a dispute over Australia's use of the Philippines archipelagic sea lanes, in accordance with UNCLOS principles. Canada and France have worked out differences over fisheries and maritime boundary disputes. France and the UK have agreed on a boundary in the Strait of Dover, and Trinidad and Tobago have negotiated boundaries for marine and submarine areas with Venezuela.

Many countries have begun to harmonize domestic legislation with UNCLOS provisions. Others are using UNCLOS as a basis for cooperation on issues of resource management and environmental protection. The Netherlands is working with other North Sea states on an EEZ which among other things would help to protect the North Sea environment. A number of Latin American countries, including Brazil and Colombia, are developing coastal management programmes.

In spite of these encouraging signs, the danger that UNCLOS will remain in legal limbo is very real. Although the bulk of the convention is acceptable to most countries, the convention is designed to be taken as a whole package. This concept is central to the convention and to abandon it would, in the opinion of many countries, undermine the overall integrity of the convention and the balances it aims to strike between conflicting interests and between rights and obligations.

Without a resolution, countries not ratifying the convention may be tempted to draw on its rights without adhering to its corresponding obligations. And as long as countries refuse to ratify the convention, they are not bound by its provisions.

The package concept makes it difficult to change the provisions which are still unacceptable to many countries, in particular, the seabed provisions. It may be possible to amend the convention to make it more acceptable to industrialized countries, or to alter the regulatory function of the ISA to gain more support. But finding a solution has not been easy. While all the key parties have expressed readiness to negotiate, few have shown willingness to compromise.

It would be sad indeed if the differences cannot be worked out in the spirit of cooperation which UNCLOS was meant to foster.

[From *BION Newsletter*, No. 9, March 1991]

A CRITICAL LOOK AT EDUCATION

Education, especially post elementary education, in most countries of the South Pacific, is a privilege, not a right. Island governments do not have the funds to support the educational needs of their growing populations. Access is governed by spaces available, often allotted by region, and by the ability of families to pay school fees. Given that secondary schooling generally means leaving home to board in larger centres, a great financial burden is placed on families, the vast majority of which are living in village-based subsistence economies.

In the Pacific as elsewhere, education is being looked at with a critical eye by educators, parents and pupils alike. People are throwing out questions. "What is an education system? For whom? For what? Self-reliance? School or skill? Is it to know the world or to know your world?"

In 1989, the Cook Islands Ministerial Taskforce Review of National Education published a report, Polynesia Way, assessing Cook Islands education and offering proposals to bring about effective reform. At that time similar work was going on in French Polynesia and the Samoas, and Papua New Guinea has looked at the question of women and education (Wormald and Crossley, 1988). As well, Papua New Guinea is developing a new education system concentrating on skills rather than academic attainment and hopes to introduce it in the November 1992 budget [Islands Business, October 1991].

The May/June 1991 issue of LINK, the newsletter of the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) - a non government organisation celebrating its 10th anniversary this year - serves as a forum for what pupils, parents, teachers and educationalists think about education in their country. SIDT's Director, Abraham Baeania, opens the discussion.

What do people understand by education?

If you ask parents, with school children, plenty say they want their children to pass into secondary, pass into Form 6 and pass into college or university. But still you ask, what is all that education for? In the end it is for employment in the professions - training to be a doctor, an agriculturalist officer or teacher. It is usually paid employment where there are workers and one boss.

Plenty of children went to school last year, but out of 7,000 doing the Secondary School Entrance exam only 2,000 went into secondary education. Many young people have no hope of employment.

Then, others drop out at Form 3 and join the ranks of the primary school push outs just like the drop outs from Form 5 (1,200).

More children fail their education than pass. If the ultimate goal of education is employment, then is there any kind of education which can guarantee youths get employment?

We do not have to look back that far to see this kind of education. It is the kind our parents and ancestors graduated in.

This is non-formal education, where the teacher and pupil practise together. The pupil learns from the teacher how to build houses as they build houses, how to make canoes as they make a canoe, how to cook on a stone oven as they prepare food, as well as many other things.

Nowadays when we look at the education system that is failing us, why don't we think of having this non-formal system of education as an alternative?

Look at the costs of education and you will see the formal system needs things that come from the factory - blackboards, chalk, pens, paper. Everything has to be made and paid for. Also teachers must be paid their salaries. No wonder parents and children cannot afford education: it is an expensive process. And if it was not, the quality would be low.

If we want relevant education what could be better than the non-formal system? Teacher is the parent, the material are our resources and the classroom is our environment. Learning is practical.

This type of education is available for all. It does not have limited rooms like the secondary schools where 2,000 enter and another 5,000 fail to get through the door.

People in the Solomon Islands, where the majority of our people own the land, have the opportunity for using our resources and environment as the classroom, textbook and materials for education. Here the results of a child's learning are used. It is the house built, the canoe made or the food cooked.

If we say education is a long-term investment we are thinking of formal education. In the non-formal educational world you can realise some of your results today and hence gain greater long-term benefits.

SIDT realises the importance of these two parallel systems. One provides our scientists and agriculturalists and the other provides people with knowledge, skills and expertise for survival, especially for those people who live on the resources they own, like the land and sea.

Our constitution still respects our customary land ownership and so non-formal education can go hand-in-hand with the formal, by using skilled family people as teachers for the community.

For the last 10 years SIDT has been doing just that. We ask you to look at our history and understand the importance of non-formal education. Join us celebrating our 10th anniversary and help us to keep our non-formal development education programme going strong.

Who envies the educationalists? They are asked to meet our national goals, to produce the right kind of manpower, to provide equal educational opportunities for women, to boost literacy and to create the right cultural atmosphere. But they do not have enough trained managers, teachers, schools, material or money.

CHALLENGING THE CRISIS

The Central Bank report (1990) challenges our economic planners to find a way of letting formal education, "equip young people for informal productive activity and self-employment," at the same time as, "producing the number and quality of skilled personnel required."

"There is no more important problem in development issues, and the best minds of the country should be applied to it," says the report.

At the Ministry of Education, Mostyn Habu, the PS, is doing just that. But he receives little credit. "People say the system is wrong," says Mr. Habu, "what we are saying is that it is evolving."

"It is no longer valid to educate people to go back to the village," he says. "Education is a means to development. We need people to think, inquire, analyse, read, compare and make judgments. Then they can become the managers we need." But trying to make managers has created an exam system that more students fail than pass.

Parents complain today's schools are a failing machine for their children and their own dreams. Most of the 5,000 plus drop outs at Standard 6, Form 3 and 5 end a family's hopes of raising a child fit for a well-paid job.

'A net increase of 1,000 jobs is needed each year just to maintain the present ration of formal jobs to population. But this, even if it is achieved, comes nowhere near absorbing the output of the education system, which produces about 5,000 Standard 6 leavers, around 1,2300 Form 3 and Form 5 leavers and nearly 200 Form 6 and tertiary leavers each year.'

SOLOMON ISLANDS CENTRAL BANK REPORT 1990

Director of the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE), Rex Horoi, tries to see the problems from every side. He believes studying at the college should be a blend of learning to learn and learning for vocational skills. Horoi does not underestimate learning to survive through knowledge of farming, health, social skills and leadership. He claims these are vital in a community where society is based on a 'wantok' system.

"Solomon Islands cannot afford to let the population be dependent on employment," he warns, "because the number of jobs being created is really slow compared to the rate the country is turning out students."

There are two answers - in the short term build more schools which can soak up the push outs. For the long-term create more jobs.

"Even if we were given the money tomorrow to build 60 to 70 new secondary schools we couldn't do it because there are no teachers," explains Mr. Habu.

Central Bank suggests that with population growth around 3.5 per cent, an increase of 1,000 jobs is needed each year to maintain the same ration of jobs to people (less than a quarter of 15 to 54-year olds have paid work. Even if this is achieved it will not absorb the push outs.

Mostyn Habu argues that: "When resources are limited you have to be clear how you cut the cake." What he means is that the number of secondary schools with Form 5 facilities should be built up.

"Increase Form 5 leavers first, for the sake of stable development," he explains. Steps to do this include campaigning for about \$36 million from aid agencies. The package asks for no new schools, just extra facilities and classes.

The educational picture by the end of this century looks bleak. "We will not have enough secondary schools," says Mr. Habu, "and as the population will go up so the real number of drop outs will go up."

About 75-80 per cent of children have primary places now, but by the year 2000, less will enjoy a child's most basic right, the chance to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

Rex Horoi believes something else can be done. "The development of our country depends on its linguistic development in local languages, in Pisin and in English. All have specific roles in society, but you can learn English better if you are literate in your mother tongue first," he says.

As chairman of the National Literacy committee, due to make a survey of our linguistic abilities and literacy skills soon, Horoi hopes things will change, now that the Ministry of Education has said it is committed to producing a language and literacy policy once the results are out.

This could mean a complete re-think about the kind of education, especially the choice of language, we offer and which fails our young people.

Premier talks out about his fears for Malaitan students because there are not enough secondary schools

GIVE OUR STUDENTS A FAIR CHANCE

MALAITA NEEDS more secondary schools to give students a full education, claims Premier David Oeta. His worries are backed up by statistics that show about 75% of Malaita-based students drop out at Standard 6 level.

"Children have a right to a good education but our schools are holding them back," says David Oeta. "Only a quarter of our students are able to go on to secondary schools and this is a big problem for developing both the country and the province.

Malaita is well served by the 140 primary schools, "but," says the Premier, "this should mean we have five or six secondary schools."

There are three secondary schools in the province. Rokera, Aligegeo and the excellent Su'u. But as Su'u is a national school it also accepts students from other provinces, so Malaitan parents feel their children are losing out.

Girls in Malaita may not have the chance to reach the basic Standard 6 education. Many are kept at home by their parents who want a good bride price, not an educated daughter.

IS SHE WORTH HER SCHOOL FEE?

STRONG CUSTOM in Malaita has led to some parents refusing to educate their daughters.

"Girl students do not have such good chances for education," claims Malaita Premier David Oeta. "Some families treat girls as a means of getting wealth.

"They want their daughter to stay at home, as they feel if she goes to school she will be spoiled by outside influences and so will not marry. That means the parents will not get bride money.

"This is really old-fashioned thinking," he warns.

"Other parents think there is no need to educate girls because it costs them money, then when the girl marries the benefits will go to a different family. With sons they know that the boy must come back to work for their family," he explains.

The premier wants Malaitan girls to have a fair chance.

"Educated parents want their girls educated, even if traditional influences do not encourage this," says Mr Oeta.

"We have a big population, about 90,000 people. If the current birth rate stays at 3.5 per cent increase per year then by 2,000 there will be 150,000 plus people in Malaita, that is why we need more schools," explains Mr. Oeta.

The province hopes to open a new PROVINCIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL, Adaua in the north, next May and then upgrade it to NATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL level in about 10 years time. The province also wants to build another high school in the east and two vocational training colleges.

Another idea is to upgrade the Auki primary school to a secondary day school, like Honiara PROVINCIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL, to help cater for the station's increasing population.

"I just hope we can achieve our plans," says David Oeta, "but the problem is going to be money."

Education planners tend to agree that "formal education must equip young people for informal productive activity and self-employment." The problem is how to do that. Takwa Community project has found a way to help the young people who are pushed out of the school system and now hopes to create a model village.

HOPE AND WORK AT TAKWA

SCHOOL DROPOUTS in Lau, Malaita look forward to going to church - because that is where news about their community youth project is publicized.

The Takwa Community Youth Project, run by president Laurence Aldo since 1984, seems to go from strength to strength. At first the group, which has members in Takwa and New Kwaloai villages and the artificial islands of Surukiki, Taluabu, Takwaiasi, Ferasiofa, Lofoi bebe and Lafumasi, concentrated on marketing vegetables and fish. Now a permanent community meeting house is nearly complete and the president is investigating ways to fund a truck for the project.

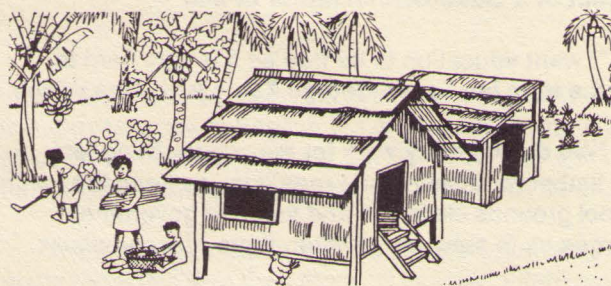
"Everyone is involved," says Laurence Aldo, "not just young boys and girls. You don't often see people making trouble here as the project keeps our youth busy. The older people really work with our sons and daughters, they set a good example and help the dropouts learn skills for every day living," he adds. Any problems are talked over by the 135 members at meetings.

This month, about 40 young members plan to raise more than \$2,000 during a two-week singing tour of Honiara. The money will be used to pay for a keyboard, guitars and an amplifier for the Takwa Community Youth Band, who hope to make a record soon.

The vegetable and reef fish projects also help community members learn to budget. "Every member has a passbook and is encouraged to put any extra money into their passbook," says Laurence Aldo. "If young people are not trained to save money and do not know how to budget, they will have problems when they are married and need money."

"For the dropouts the education we provide, showing and doing with the older people, is very good," he says, but adds, "of course education in school, which trains you for work in Honiara or the stations, is good too as we need people with education to keep our books." Once the project's house is finished, in September, a literacy project may also be started.

All too often projects fail when the key members leave, but at Takwa this may be avoided if Laurence Aldo's dream comes true. "In the future we want to bring people closer. The community must be tied together so that when we want to do something it is easy to talk about it and then to ahead and do it." His plan is to resettle Takwa Community Youth members in one village. "It'll be a free choice," he stresses, "resettlement is for those who would like to come."



Where should education's focus be? Early learning, building up the secondary schools or teacher training? Parents and educationalists speak out

PARENTS READY TO TALK ISSUES

PARENTS, teachers, educationalists and interested people will have a chance to raise their views on the school system writes Jennifer Aiwewe.

Within the next two months, Head of General Studies of the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE), John Roughan, is arranging a meeting for parents and teachers to discuss the school system.

The aim of the meeting is to get people to think about Roughan's article to transform education, "No Hicks Test - Until a Year in the Village" in Solomon Tok Tok (April 20, 1991).

"I want parents to talk about education in public," said Roughan. The meeting has support from many quarters, including a former permanent secretary. "It seems that the cut off point for 80% of school children is when they reach Standard 6," said John Roughan. "How can we solve this problem?" he asks, "let's get parents to think about the answer."

Each year at least 407 new jobs are created, yet there are more and more school leavers, often called school push outs.

Some suggest building more schools but there will still be no paid jobs. "In the 70s, there was no problem getting a job whether you reached Standard 6 or Form 3. Now it is a problem. This is the issue I want those parents who pay the school fee to talk about," said Roughan who has high hopes for the meeting.

Roughan believes education has to be geared to making wealth from our resources and not only to finding paid employment.

LET'S HAVE FREE SCHOOLS

PRIMARY SCHOOLING should be free. That is the verdict of a Guadalcanal father of six.

"I want education to be free as it is very hard to pay the term fee," says George Tatea from Tina village.

"We do voluntary work for the school, bring leaf and timber for building and repairing, we keep the school grounds clean too and then the government charges us to send our children there," he complains.

George pays \$150 a year to educate his three primary-school age children, but he says: "I often see small children at home because their parents cannot afford to send them to school."

He raises funds by selling garden produce in the market, cutting copra or fishing, but once his son was sent back because the school fee had not been paid.

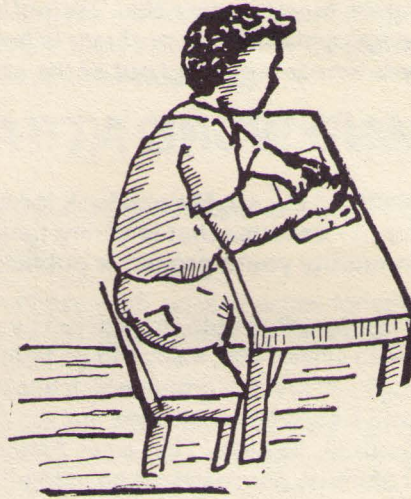
"I felt shame and sorrow," he says, "and it damaged the confidence of my boy too."

George did raise the money in the end because he believes "children must go to school because they are our leaders for tomorrow".

Finding Out Who Can Read and Write

The National Literacy Committee, with funding from UNESCO, is conducting a two part project: a national survey of literacy and languages and development of a programme of literacy awareness activities. Now five months into the programme, bibliographies for each language category are progressing well. Two posters have been printed and a number of items broadcasted on SIBC nationally and on Radio Temotu and Radio Happy Lagoon. Visits to each province have been made and discussions held with senior administrative and education officers in each. Where women's groups have representatives, they have been consulted. The Ministry of Education is committed to producing a language and literacy policy once the survey's results have been pulled together and analysed.

[From LINK, May/June 1991 and a Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (Honiara) communication, October 1991]



Ysabel has made the first steps to educate pre-school children but kindergarten teachers have a problem - the government has not set a syllabus.

STEP ONE: FIND OUT WHAT YOU NEED TO TEACH

PRIMARY SCHOOL teachers in Ysabel are helping villagers set up their own kindergartens.

"We've found kindy kids go on to find pre-class at primary school much easier," says Ben Rubaha, Ysabel's co-ordinator of courses for village people.

More than 15 workshops explaining the importance of pre-school education have been held. "The teachers really want to explain new ideas about education for children to the villagers," he says.

There are 43 registered kindy schools in the province, but Ben Rubaha would like to see more. "Kindys are where a child's education starts. To make education better on top it must be straightened out at the bottom," he says.

Rubaha's aim is to encourage parents to set up more kindys for four to six-year olds. Children can then be taught in local language for a couple of hours, three or four days a week, by a Form 3 leaver. "This is a good way to provide a child with a good educational base before learning English - another man's language."

Government and province contribute no money for kindys though some Area councils do. The rest is raised by parents. Expenses are kept low by using local toys like shells, sticks, coconuts and rocks. Teachers rarely receive a salary.

"But what we need is a syllabus," says Rubaha, "and workshops for teachers to make them more efficient." And that is a job he thinks the government should do.

WASWE? ENGLISH OR PIJIN IN CLASS?

Talking and thinking in English is the hardest lesson for school students to tackle in class. Even at Waimapura National Secondary School, Makira, one of the country's top schools, students are handicapped by lack of confidence in English.

Navie Collin Bentley, a SICHE graduate, trained to teach English as a Second Language, says: "Weakness in English is the biggest problem for students, especially communication during lessons."

Navie encourages her Form 2 students to speak freely and says they are now confident using English in front of Solomon Island teachers. The shyness starts when students must talk in front of native English speakers, usually expatriates, who often teach skills like business and science.

"They fear making mistakes when they speak," she explains, "even though they enjoy these classes."

To help overcome the problem, Navie spent some time asking students and staff to assess their lessons.

The verdict; Expatriate teachers talk English too fast. "Students can't cope with that," says Navie. This is frustrating for both teachers and pupils and has led to emphasis on learning with body language.

Education Permanent Secretary, Mostyn Habu, former SICHE director and one-time headmaster at both Kamaosi and Allardyce Schools, insists English is the language of learning.

"Pijin is good," says Mr. Habu, "but in the modern world English gives people a big advantage, it is the language of commerce."

"To read about anything interesting, like the Gulf War or the World Cup, you need English. If you cannot read English you are shut off from information," he says.

This is why English, most students' third language, continues to be the language of school education.

Headmaster at Allardyce Provincial Secondary School, Ysabel, Oswald Bako, is, like most head teachers, a firm believer in teaching in English not Pijin.

"English is not taught, it is caught," he says. "We recommend all students talk in English. His advice to new teachers is: "If students respond in Pijin you should help them say the same answer back in English."

Allardyce home economics teacher Rachel George is happy to teach in English but she adds; "Sometimes students are shy of speaking out because they think if they say something wrong all their friends will laugh."

Waimapura National Secondary School offers many more facilities than those at isolated Allardyce. At Waimapura there is a generator for easy evening study, a big library, computers, typewriters and both duplicating and photocopying machines, all in good order. But even with these advantages, lack of confidence in English spoils many students' ability to learn vital educational lessons at school.

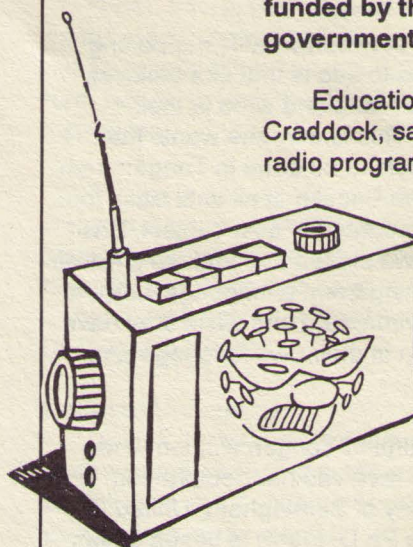
Modern learning: teachers polish up their skills by listening to the radio

RADIO LESSONS HELP TEACHERS

TEACHERS MAY benefit from a new radio programme on Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation, funded by the New Zealand government.

Educational broadcaster, Pat Craddock, said: "The idea of the radio programmes is to help teachers teach children better English."

This series of radio programmes for primary school teachers will show how to adopt lessons from teachers' basic resource, the reading book.



During the radio programmes teachers listen to model lessons with small groups of children. Lecturers from SICHE then give advice on how to improve classroom teaching.

'Ana Taufe'ulungaki's up-hill battle to save the Tongan language

by Pesi Fonua

Tongan linguist and education planner, Dr. 'Ana Taufe'ulungaki, is facing an up-hill battle in convincing people about the importance of maintaining Tongan as an active language. She feels that the Tongan language is being pushed aside in the quest for an English education system and that the Tongan culture is going to be the victim of this approach.

Surprisingly, she finds the most negative attitudes towards the use of the Tongan language in education among the 'upper classes' of society and among secondary school teachers. This combined with general apathy towards the language issue by most of the population makes 'Ana extremely frustrated and unhappy about the road Tongan education is taking into the future. Although both Tongan and English are taught, the way it is being done is wrong, she believes.

The only way to save the Tongan language from extinction, says 'Ana, is bilingualism, or the ability of Tongans to use both the Tongan and the English languages. This will also be the only way for Tongans to learn to speak good English, she said.

The main difference between what is happening now and what 'Ana wants to see is that she believes children must first learn to read and write in their mother tongue, Tongan. This is why she wants the teaching at primary schools to be done in Tongan from class one to three, with no English at all until class four when English would be taught only as a subject. Basically, 'Ana believes that we should not confuse children at this early age by teaching them a language which is foreign to their home environment and while they have not got a good foundation in their own language and culture.

'Ana is one of a handful of Tongan women who hold Ph.D. degrees. She received her doctorate in English from the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom, in 1988. 'Ana's Ph.D. thesis is based on language planning for a bilingual situation, and so it is with authority and without a doubt that she believes that equal bilingualism in both English and Tongan is the approach Tonga must adopt.

Heritage

"Language is what makes a person a complete being, it makes you what you are, it makes a Tongan a Tongan. If a Tongan does not know how to speak Tongan then I do not think he or she is a Tongan.

To speak in Tongan you have to think like a Tongan, and that is something that is installed in your sub-consciousness, it is your culture and heritage, and it is something which you can't express in any other language," explained 'Ana.

She has a sense of anxiety because in reality the Tongan language, although still widely spoken, is becoming less used as the medium of instruction at school, and it is rarely used as a language of communication by government, and in commerce.

Her up-hill battle for true bilingualism starts right from the top. For instance, 'Ana finds it odd that with her expertise and her position as the education planner she is neither a member of nor has she been invited even once to the meetings of Tonga's National Literacy Committee.

"The National Literacy Committee is responsible for planning the kind of language to be used at the primary school level, and it is made up of people who claim to know the Tongan culture.

"However, the committee has made one good move and that was to send Melenaite Taumoefolau away on a lexicography scholarship, on my recommendation."

'Ana said that the bilingualism concept was first made public by the Director of Education, Paul Bloomfield, in 1979, but it met with fierce negative reaction from people in high places. She said that there was an uproar over the idea, particularly from the so-called upper class of the society. These were people whom she thought should support the idea because the fundamental principal behind it is not only for the Tongan people to preserve their culture, but also for Tongans to be able to speak good English, academic English, a language that they can study and work with and not a language that they can only roughly speak.

Due to the mounting negative response to the proposed introduction of bilingualism to the schools, the Cabinet in 1979 passed a decision, stating that there would be no change to the status quo, regarding the language to be used at schools.

"It means that from class one to six, the medium of instruction remains as Tongan, while English is taught as a subject.

"At high school the medium of instruction is English and the Tongan language is taught as a subject until Form five. Tongan is not taught in Form six and seven because the examinations at this level are still being set from overseas."

Danger ahead

For an ordinary Tongan citizen the current arrangements sound reasonable enough, and there is an element of apathy about it, but as a linguist with a Ph.D. thesis on bilingualism, and as the education planner for Tonga, 'Ana sees danger ahead.

"Because the so-called high class of our society is leading the way in not wanting their children to speak Tongan, and if this attitude is not changed, the use of English as the medium of instruction at school will increase and eventually the Tongan language will become only a ceremonial language . . . There is also a plan to introduce English as a language of instruction, starting a class four.

"If we lose our language we lose our culture," said 'Ana who expressed her disbelief at the number of the elite who do not want their children to speak Tongan.

"They are enforcing their wishes on all of us, but after all their children are not schooled here, they send them to expensive private boarding schools overseas."

There are other reasons why 'Ana is not at all happy with the present set up.

"There are areas of incompetency: the attitude and motivation is wrong; we do not have qualified teachers to teach English at schools; there are no resource materials; and the administration is inefficient.

"The strategy at the moment will lead to failure and incompetence in both Tongan and English," 'Ana said.

"It has been proven that students must be competent first in their mother tongue, in this case Tongan, before they can speak properly a second language.

Identity complex

"No wonder there is so much confusion at the moment, because some Tongans are having an identity complex, particularly among the so-called upper class - they speak Tongan only in church, at a funeral, and in parliament, but privately they converse in English.

"I was once asked to comment on how unusual it is for the Tongan Parliament to be conducted in Tongan, and yet MPs are conversing in English once they are outside the parliament building. My answer to that was that the English language is the great equaliser, it enables the Cabinet ministers, the nobles and the commoners to converse at one level. This is something that cannot be done with the Tongan language, be-

cause of the three different languages that are used for the three different layers of our society. So, as you can see this is why I am finding it very, very interesting that the so-called pillars of our society are leading in not wanting their children to speak Tongan. I would have expected that attitude from the pro-democracy supporters, because to get rid of the Tongan language, would mean a one class society," she said.

"My main concern is that while it is not necessary to preserve our traditional political structure it is imperative to preserve our unique cultural values which have taken us thousands of years to develop. If we lose our language we lose our culture and we become just one of the subgroups of the English culture."

Attitudes

'Ana's plan for establishing a bilingual society involves a major change of attitudes.

"The most important factor is for the teachers and the society as a whole to have a positive attitude toward bilingualism, for us to accept that is what we want to have. Unfortunately, in a survey I carried out I discovered that the people with the least positive attitude toward the Tongan language were secondary school teachers. However, what I would like to see is that at primary schools from class one to class three, the language of instruction is Tongan. English as a subject should not be introduced until class four, and should continue until class six.

"Form one at High School will be like a transition period, where both English and Tongan are spoken, but Tongan is taught as a subject until form five. In form two up to form five English will be the medium of instruction.

"There is also an alternative, that starting in form two social science, history, health studies, and maths should be taught in Tongan. The only problem here is that teaching materials have to be translated into Tongan. However, it is most likely that all subjects will be taught in English.

National University

'Ana in pursuance of the survival of the Tongan language is optimistic that when a National University is established, the Tongan language could be introduced as a degree study course.

"The advantage of this bilingualism approach is that our children will have the advantages of the two worlds, but they can only have these advantages if they have attained equal bilingualism in both Tongan and English," she said.

[Matangi Tonga, March - April 1991]

CULTURE AND CONFIDENCE

By Barbara Riley

Barbara Riley, worked as a CUSO volunteer in the Solomon Islands from 1987 to August 1991. As the Cultural Affairs Advisor for Western Province, she, in her own words, has "been fortunate to develop and carry out a cultural preservation and education programme focussed on villagers" in Western Province. She found all her work immensely enjoyable with the 'Kastom Bilong Mere' workshops being the highlight of her four years work. What follows is an account of one of those workshops.

Dolores pressed the "play" button, then laughed in embarrassment and pride as she heard herself singing a traditional song in her own language, Varisi. Last year 250 women in Solomon Islands' Western Province shared Dolores's pleasure in hearing their recorded voices during eleven "Kastom Bilong Mere" workshops organised by the province's Cultural Affairs Office with the financial assistance of the Canada Fund.

These workshops differed from villagers' usual experience of cultural preservation. In the past, overseas researchers determined what was recorded and, by inference, what was of value; material so collected was seldom returned to the village. More recently, Pacific island states conscious of their unique traditions, have established their own cultural programmes. Western Province's Cultural Affairs Office, one example of a

programme which exists for the benefit of villagers, ensures that preservation and dissemination go hand-in-hand.

"Kastom Bilong Mere" (Women's Traditional Culture) involved women as full participants in a unique cultural programme:

- encouraging women to preserve their oral traditions;
- emphasizing women's knowledge and abilities and thereby bolstering their self-confidence;
- enabling women to examine social change as a precondition for thinking about their future.

These aims reflected those of the Cultural Affairs Office which encourage an appreciation of traditional culture as an affirmation of identity and pride.

"Kastom Bilong Mere" highlighted women, their knowledge and skills. Traditionally excluded from contact with outsiders or any public role, Solomon Islands women are still shy in front of men or "Europeans". Because the workshops were restricted to women, and because each one was conducted entirely in the local vernacular language, women were able to participate

fully and freely, By all reports the use of vernacular language was the most important factor in making the participants feel that the workshop belonged to them. Local language ensured the participation of the "olos", the elder women, whose knowledge of traditions made them the experts and teachers of the younger women.

Other features of the programme worked to break down shyness. Participants were paired off at the beginning and had to introduce their partners to the



photo by Barbara Riley

Listening to the olo story under the tree at Ghatere, Kolombangara, Kustom Bilong Mere Workshop, June 1990.



photo by Barbara Riley

Demonstrating a traditional children's game at the workshop in Kokeqolo, Roviana, March 1990

rest of us. At breaks we played games and did easy fitness exercises together. Women were invited to bring traditional objects and talk about them, and to demonstrate traditional skills. The high point of one workshop was a graphic demonstration of customary birthing with the assistance of a second women. The shrieks of laughter must have echoed across to the next village.

To discuss change the women divided into small groups and then reported back to each other: how was life different from when they were children? from when their mothers were young? Were these changes for the better or not? Most frequently mentioned was the lack of respect now shown - by the young for the old, by women and girls for men and boys, by villagers for the chief, and by the chief for his position and responsibility to lead the community.

Another significant change was a decrease in sharing. In the past people were willing to help - in the garden, with house building, with transportation. Now they are likely to demand payment. The women had no clear answer as to whether these were negative or positive changes. Seeing advantages and disadvantages on both sides made them realise the significance of conscious choice in determining a community's future.

The main part of the workshop - recording oral traditions - was completely in the hands of the participants. Once they had learned how to operate a cassette recorder - a hilarious exercise - each group was free to produce its own recordings. The women

chose traditional songs and stories, recollections of the Second World War, customary medicines, childbirth and marriage practices, games and feats, autobiography. They also decided whether the material was restricted or could be broadcast on the twice weekly Cultural Affairs programme.

The workshops also offered the opportunity for women to be active in front of the host community - by taking part in or organising daily church services, by performing traditional dances and games, and by singing and speech-making at the final feast and closing ceremony.

On the last morning the women evaluated the workshop.

As Solomon Islanders do not easily or openly offer criticism, the questions were simply, "What was good about the workshop?", "How can we make it better next time?". Most often praised were the opportunity to learn about the past from each other, the learning of new skills (operating a cassette recorder, signing one's name - a major accomplishment for some 'olos'), and the fellowship of meeting with women from different churches. Next time? Get more women involved!

Each participant was presented with a certificate at the closing ceremony - a mark of achievement and a time of recognition by the community. Tears and cries of "come back again", marked our separation, all of us enriched by the enthusiasm, learning and sharing.



photo by Barbara Riley

Demonstrating basket making from coconut leaves, Laie, Ranongga Island, July 1989.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Diro Convicted, Bougainville Peace Talks Postponed Again

On September 27, a special Leadership Tribunal found Deputy Prime Minister Ted Diro guilty on 81 counts of corruption and misconduct related to the Barnett Inquiry into corruption in the PNG timber industry. The same day the Governor General and close political ally of Diro, Sir Serei Eri, overruled the verdict which would have stripped Diro of his membership in Parliament and prohibited him from seeking re-election for three years. Eri reinstated Diro as an MP and a Minister, saying he wanted to avoid the social and political upheaval that Diro's dismissal would cause. PNG is now in the throes of a constitutional crisis as the legitimacy of Eri's veto is under review.

Peace talks between the PNG government and the Bougainville secessionists have fallen through for the fourth time. The talks, supposedly proposed for October 8, were called off when PNG refused the demand of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) that they be held in New Zealand. Prime Minister Namaliu accused the BRA of breaking a commitment to have the talks in PNG. A spokesperson for the Bougainville Interim Government, Mike Forster, stated that PNG, having agreed to work with the Commonwealth Secretariat in London as the facilitator for the talks as well as the organiser of a Multinational Supervisory Team, had not even contacted the Secretariat regarding the October 8 talks. Forster's opinion was that being invited to peace talks with no international observers was "a pretty obvious trap." The Red Cross has accused the PNG government of continuing to block the delivery of vitally needed medical supplies to Bougainville even after access had been granted.

(From: Pacific Report, Vol 4 No 20, 17 October 1991, and The Washington Pacific Report, Vol 10 No 1, 1 October 1991)

KANAKY/NEW CALEDONIA: the FLNKS Voice Concern

The FLNKS (Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front) petitioned the UN Committee on Decolonisation on August 9, presenting a relatively pessimistic assessment of the situation in the colony - a situation dominated by French denial of UN recommendations and principles despite recognition by the international community of the right of the Kanak people to self determination and independence.

The Monitoring Committee, which oversees progress on the implementation of the Matignon Accords, meets in Paris on October 17-18. The Accords were signed in 1988 by the French Government, the FLNKS, and the RPCR (Rally for Caledonie in the Republic) covering a ten year period leading to a referendum on independence in 1998. FLNKS President Paul Neaoutyine said his party would voice concern that the other parties to the Accords were not working to implement the reforms it outlined, especially the economic "rebalancing" needed to reduce the huge inequalities existing between the under-developed and largely Kanak regions of the country and the developed, largely European southern region.

(From Pacific News Bulletin, Vol 6 No 9, September 1991, and Pacific Report, Vol 4 No 20, 17 October 1991.)

VANUATU: Lini Sets Up His Own Political Party

After months of internal upheaval within the ruling Vanua'aku Pati (VP) former Prime Minister, Father Walter Lini, has set up his own political party, the National Union party (NUP). In parliament on September 6, six members of the opposition Tan Union joined 19 VP members in a vote of no confidence in the government of Lini, who had been leader of Vanuatu during its 11 years of independence. Donald Kalpokas, who had been unanimously elected to replace Lini as VP President at a special VP congress held on August 7 (Lini and his supporters boycotted the congress), was then elected to be Prime Minister in a 25-21 vote. Lini, having retained the support of 21 VP members, set up his own NUP to contest the upcoming general elections set for December 2.

The September 6 vote of no confidence followed months of erratic, non-consultative governance by Lini wherein he dismissed eight cabinet ministers and even more senior public servants who he felt were being disloyal to him. There is speculation that Lini's behavior is related to his having suffered a stroke in 1987 and a heart attack earlier this year, and not having made a full recovery. Despite this, as the December 2 election draws nearer, the NUP says it has succeeded in securing the support of 70% of former VP members, including the support of five churches.

(From: Pacific Report, Vol 4 No 20, 17 October 1991, and The Washington Pacific Report, Vol 9 No 24, 15 September 1991, and Pacific News Bulletin, Vol 6 No 9, September 1991.)

Appropriate Sawmill in North Solomons

By Tom Brown

Tom Brown, posted by Quaker Peace and Service, London, UK, served as a Technical Officer for the Nissan Development Corporation, Nissan Island, Papua New Guinea.

The Alaska sawmill is a cheaper alternative to the famous wokabaut somil. It is also more environmentally sound in areas like Nissan Island where the timber resource is limited. Between the two types of sawmills much of the reconstruction of houses, schools, aid posts, and the like, needed in North Solomons, could be accomplished by the people themselves.

When the Bougainville crisis forced the closure of the Bougainville Copper Ltd. (BCL) copper mine it meant the end of town life and back to their Nissan Island village of Tamamalit for the brothers Joe and Tony Poniat and their families.

Joe, formerly a maintenance foreman at the Panguna mine, had worked for BCL for close to twenty years. Joe says that working for BCL was all right, the pay was good and they had a good house.

"But I prefer being home in the village, although living in a bush materials house is not comfortable," Joe said.



photo by Sheldon Weeks

Joe Poniat and John Alto sawing a plank with the chainsaw and Alaska Mill Unit.

But Joe and Tony will not be living in bush materials houses for much longer. Together they have bought a chainsaw and Alaska mill and are busy sawing timber to build themselves permanent houses.

"It is too expensive to buy sawn timber from Rabaul and ship it out to Nissan. So we decided to put our money together to buy a chainsaw and Alaska mill," said Joe.

"When we finish sawing timber for our own houses, there are plenty of people who want us to cut timber for them too," the two brothers explained.

Joe is concerned that a lot of good trees are being wasted now. He says when new gardens are being cleared "trees just get burnt." He says with his new chainsaw and Alaska mill unit a lot of those trees can be sawn into good timber for making stronger and more comfortable houses.



photo by Sheldon Weeks

Tom and Lisa Brown and Thomas Jeffrey at Baill Village, Nissan Island, North Solomons Province, PNG.

JAPANESE MOVE INTO PACIFIC ISLAND TOURISM

This article was excerpted from the Bangkok Post, July 22, 1991.

Ten green-garlanded Fijian singers, five strumming guitars, serenade the tourists at the Regent Hotel each evening. The singers, naked to the waist, wear sulas, the Fijian wrap-round garment. Fijians serve drinks and free hors d'oeuvres - fish pieces and pizza. A familiar scene, with variations and different songs and singers at any tourist centre.

Fiji is diversifying its economy away from dependency on sugar. A study on tourism in Fiji shows that it accounts for about 15% of GDP, 25% of gross export earnings and employs 12% of the labour force. The study, compiled by Fijian government planner, Anita Nair, shows that the apparent foreign exchange earning can be deceptive. Nair found that only 45% of foreign exchange brought into Fiji in 1985 by tourism was retained. The rest "leaked."

A combination of factors - imports needed to meet tourist tastes, the costs of advertising and marketing Fiji abroad, and the high degree of foreign ownership - result in high profit and wage repatriation abroad. Moreover, not all foreign exchange comes through official channels. Nair estimated that between 12 and 16% was not registered.

In Fiji and the Pacific the tourism industry is moving into foreign control. The Fiji Regent, for example, lies next to the Sheraton. Both are 300 bed hotels in Denarau resort, near the international airport. Both belong to the Japanese company, EIE International, which also owns the resort. EIE - which stands for Electronic and Industrial Enterprises - is investing F\$300 million (US\$200 million) at Denarau as part of its tourism investment in the Pacific. At 680 acres, Denarau Island is bigger than Hawaii's Waikiki, which has 30,000 rooms. Some Fijians fear the resort could become a Japanese enclave. EIE manager in Fiji, Andrew Thomson, discounts that, saying: "We wouldn't cater to large group travel."

However, island governments are vulnerable to the vagaries of the international airline market. Airline service or routing changes can affect tourism dramatically. Tahiti is said to have lost 10,000 stopover visitors a year when one airline cancelled its three flights and another cut one flight.

This vulnerability is the reason governments want their own airlines; it is also the reason EIE wants a stake in these airlines. In Fiji, EIE bought 6% of Air

Pacific, the government-owned carrier. EIE also has a 10% interest in Air Tahiti and a 15% stake in Air Caledonie, and bought up three large hotels in Tahiti in 1989.

EIE owns resorts and hotels in Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, New Caledonia, and Hawaii, as well as financial services, travel, transport, and communications interests - all part of its strategy to build an integrated tourism business.

EIE began in electronics in 1948 and that remains its main business. However, the property development side, founded in 1977, now has over US\$7 billion in assets. Yet EIE has cash flow difficulties because of a decline in property values, high interest rates, and involvement in some projects which have fared less well. EIE's experience raises questions over the long-term viability of a new foreign exchange-earner that also relies so much on foreign capital and a fickle international market.

Dr. Steven Curry, director of research and post-graduate programmes at the DPPC, who has a special interest in tourism, points out that airlines, hotel chains, and tour operators can all affect a resort's or a country's fortunes. Hotel chains can switch preference from owning to managing hotels under a contract. Tour operators can have major impact as they have a virtual monopoly over information, allowing them to "package" this information even though individual tourists may not think they are on a package tour. Airline seats and hotel rooms are block booked and marketed individually to independent travellers worldwide. Curry also says governments, especially small ones, often spend more than they think on infrastructure and other services needed to attract tourists.

In looking at cost-benefits, it is easier to account for the cost of extra imports tourism requires, but harder to take proper account of how much foreign exchange leaks out because of the way tourist facilities are owned and managed.

[From Contours, Vol. 5 No. 3, September 1991]

VANUATU - THE NUTRITION FARE

By Thomas Kalotapau, ALO Vanuatu

The Nutrition Fare [House] was opened on 24 August 1990 in Port Vila next to Vila Central Hospital. This "House" is being set up by the Nutrition Section of the Ministry of Health.

A nutrition survey in 1983 revealed that 23% of children under 5 years in Vanuatu were under weight and in poor health. To combat this problem the Ministry adopted a policy to upgrade and normalise weights of children in this age group, through proper diet.

UNICEF agreed to fund a project of which the Nutrition Fare is one part. The Fare was established by several organisations: the Department of Agriculture, the Kiwanis Club of Vanuatu, and Mama blong Vanuatu (Mothers of Vanuatu). The DALH helped by supplying fruit trees and seedlings and setting up the home garden around the Fare.

Three people work at the Fare: a manager, a gardener, and a cook/demonstrator. However, the cook works very closely with the Ministry of Health Nutrition and Mother and Child Health (MCH) sections for advice on proper diets.

Activities of the Fare

The Fare gives advice on balancing diets from the three food groups, i.e., energy, health, and body-building. It assists mothers in Port Vila in the physical feeding of under-nourished children, especially babies before weaning. Mothers are taught to prepare balanced meals for their children. The food prepared in the Fare as a demonstration is shared with the children. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning, the demonstrator serves examples of balanced meals the mothers can prepare themselves at home. Home gardens, to provide the needed fresh foods, are actively encouraged.

When MCH visits are made around Efate, advice is given to mothers on feeding. Follow-up visits are then made, and if the under-weight children are not better, their mothers are asked to bring them to the Nutrition Fare. These outreach programmes started in 1990. Of course, interested mothers need not wait until their children are in danger to visit the Fare. General invitations are made through talks, demonstrations, and visits to the communities - church groups, National Council of Women's Groups, and youth groups.

Successes

Some of the suburbs of Port Vila have already joined the nutrition and home-garden programmes. Two places, namely Ifira and Sea-side Futuna, are

preparing to compete in the home-garden judging in 1991. The Fare and Nutrition Section staff will judge how well these home gardens were planned, planted, and grown. Prizes are being donated by UNICEF. They will include garden tools, packets of seeds, and other items to encourage further garden growth. The objective is to encourage home-gardening and improve nutrition in urban and suburban areas.

Many mothers have visited the Nutrition Fare. Most of them have made use of the advice given to them. Those children treated have shown progress. The demonstrations on the preparation of balanced diets have been well received and, more importantly, adopted by many mothers.

Future Plans

The future activities of the Nutrition Fare will be targeted mainly on community-based work in extension. The Santo Nutrition Fare in the northern part of Vanuatu has been in existence for some years now, but is not functioning very well. Plans are being discussed to renovate the Santo Fare and possibly to set up smaller centres in Lakatoro (Malekula) and Lenakel (Tanna). UNICEF is being asked for the funding.

The 24th of August, the date the Nutrition Fare opened, is being considered for a national holiday. It would be celebrated each year as Children's Day in Vanuatu.

Certainly the successes of the Nutrition Fare staff and the well-being of so many more children are well worth celebrating.

[From IRETA's South Pacific Agricultural News, March/April 1991]



Nutrition fare in Port Vila, Vanuatu

photo: Nutrition Section, Ministry of Health

NIUEAN WOMEN SPEAK ABOUT NUTRITION

By Cherie Tafatu, Acting ALO Niue

Nutrition, according to the dictionary, means nourishment or feeding. And why discuss nutrition and women together? When God created the world, women were designated to look after culinary affairs, and the men to be the gatherers of food. Humanity has since followed this pattern. To see what Niuean women actually know and believe about nutrition, I decided to ask them what nutrition is, and how they implement this in their homes. Some were working mothers and some were single.

Nutrition is . . .

Their basic understanding of nutrition was that it is "good food" and how they, as mothers (or mother figures), organise and prepare food for their families. Everyone that I talked to agreed that the three basic food types - Vitamins, Proteins, and Carbohydrates - should be included in most meals. They tried to include the vital requirements in their family's main meals; these are dinner during the week and lunch on Sundays. In some families, Sunday is the only day the family has a complete and balanced diet. This is the big meal served after the customary church service.

Most women, although well aware of healthy foods, often indulged their children with the modern processed foods, thus depriving them of less processed, local foods. Once the children acquired the sweet taste of the confectionaries, it became very hard to change their eating habits. However, all those whom I interviewed basically promote the need for healthy foods. One woman strongly opposed the consumption of processed foodstuffs and called it "garbage food."

Using Local Foods

In the past, women were quite reluctant to eat local foods such as pele (*Hibiscus manihot*), a newly introduced plant, for which ways of cooking were not very well known, and which was strangely frothy in nature. However, with increasing exposure to western information, women are now more aware and better educated in the field of nutrition. They no longer dislike local foods, just because they are unknown. They know the health and wellbeing of their families depend heavily on such locally available foods.

When asked if backyard gardens were useful, the answers were very positive. Most families have gardens for a fresh and constant supply of greens. They seem to like the pele, polofua nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*), luku fern (*Asplenium nidus*), and lu taro (*Alocasia esculenta*) because of easy maintenance. Head cabbages are labour intensive and involve pest and disease management, so families generally do not grow their own.

One of the most famous foods of the Niueans is their shellfish. It is usually the woman's role to collect ugakos, small clams (*Tridacna maxima*), and papahuas bivalves. Pregnant women often face intense cravings for shellfish. Even in this condition they clamber over steep and rough cliffs to reach the plateau where the delicious ugakos lie hidden in their coiled shells and the papahuas await the onslaught of the women's cruel tomahawks.

Food Preparation

Methods of preparation vary from electric stoves, to charcoal stoves, to open umus and barbecues. Foods are boiled, fried and steamed. The Niueans are well known for their aromatic and distinctive way of preparing food for the umu. Meat and fish are wrapped in banana leaves enhanced by the addition of pele, luku, and lu. These are almost always covered with coconut cream.

The women have been told repeatedly of the dangers of using too much coconut cream. To date, nutritional concerns have not won out. The women argue that the food is not attractive nor appealing to the taste buds if too little coconut cream is added - if their families will not eat the meal, then there is no nutrition.

Working mothers, in particular, were asked if the time factor during the week days posed a problem to their cooking. Most women wish that their husbands would help them with other chores. They would then be free to concentrate on the cooking, which often takes all afternoon. The lack of consideration by husbands can cause problems. For example, due to time constraints, the mother may not prepare a proper meal, but, instead, may serve tinned corn beef straight from the can to her whole family.

Improvements

Awareness in Niue has been improved recently in two ways. In 1989 the Agriculture Department was involved in a Health Outreach campaign. In 1990 there was a Food and Nutrition workshop. The basic aim of these efforts was to promote both healthy eating habits and the need for a controlled, balanced diet. Healthy cooking methods were also demonstrated. In addition the ALO prepares a weekly market report, broadcast on the local radio. By listing the foods available at the Alofi market that week, the ALO urges people to buy more local foods. One woman's remark is a fitting conclusion: "If a woman is truly concerned and loves her family she will find time and make an effort to gather the important ingredients necessary for the nourishment of her family." Most Niuean women agree. [From IRETA's *South Pacific Agriculture News*, March/April 1991]

RESOURCES

BOOKS

A Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Vanuatu. UNICEF/Government of Vanuatu. PMO, Port Vila, Vanuatu. June 1991. 97 pp. Designed to be a planning tool, this comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic situation of children and women in Vanuatu is the most complete and up-to-date source on these two groups. Its five divisions look at national context, situation of children (health, nutrition, education, and children in difficult situation), of women (social role and position, reproductive role, productive role, education, legal rights), factors affecting the situation of both groups, and future directions. Appendices, references, photographs.

Corporate Green and Human Need: Striving for Balance in Papua New Guinea. Colleen Murphy-Dunning and John Moriarty. Rainforest Action Network. 301 Broadway, Ste A, San Francisco, CA 94133, USA. 1991. 38 pp. An overview of resource exploitation, human development and environmental factors in Papua New Guinea. Chapters on logging, mining, oil extraction and development alternatives. Lists Papua New Guinea non government organisations. Maps, photographs, footnoted.

Development...a Green Issue: Environment and Development in South-East Asia and the Pacific. Russell Rollason, editor. Development Dossier No. 30. ACFOA, GPO Box 1562, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia. 1991. 55 pp. A selection of 9 articles looking at environmental problems in the region resulting from unsustainable development and the effect of natural resource exploitation and the demand for foreign exchange earnings on the lives of indigenous peoples. Bibliography and suggested further reading.

The Asia Pacific Defence & Security Database: an Introduction and General Guide. A Joint Project of the Pacific and Maritime Strategic Studies Group and Royal Roads Military College. UVic, Department of History, PO Box 3045, Victoria, BC, V8W 3P4 Canada. 1991. 46 pp. 6000 files related to military, strategic, political and economic issues, nations covered range from superpowers to small island states. Entries consist of periodical literature, working papers, unclassified reports from Canadian diplomatic posts in the region, unpublished papers, international conference proceedings, information bulletins and government reports. Updated regularly.

Melanesian Studies Newsletter and Accessions List. No 9. (1990, August 1991). Melanesian Studies Resource Centre and the Melanesian Archive, UCSD, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093, USA. An

annual publication, subscriptions available free of charge. Back issues for US\$10 per issue.

ISLA: A Journal of Micronesian Studies. University of Guam announces the formation of a multidisciplinary journal devoted to the publication of articles about the Micronesian region of the Pacific. It will be published twice a year. Price of a one-year subscription is \$US15 for individuals and \$US25 for libraries and institutions. Order from ISLA, Graduate School & Research, UOPG Station, Mangilao, Guam 96923.

Posters: Commercial fishes of the Federated States of Micronesia. Depict 95 fish species, in colour, fish names given in 6 languages. \$US10 the pair from the Science Department, Community College of Micronesia, PO Box 159, Pohnpei. FSM 96941

AUDIO VISUALS

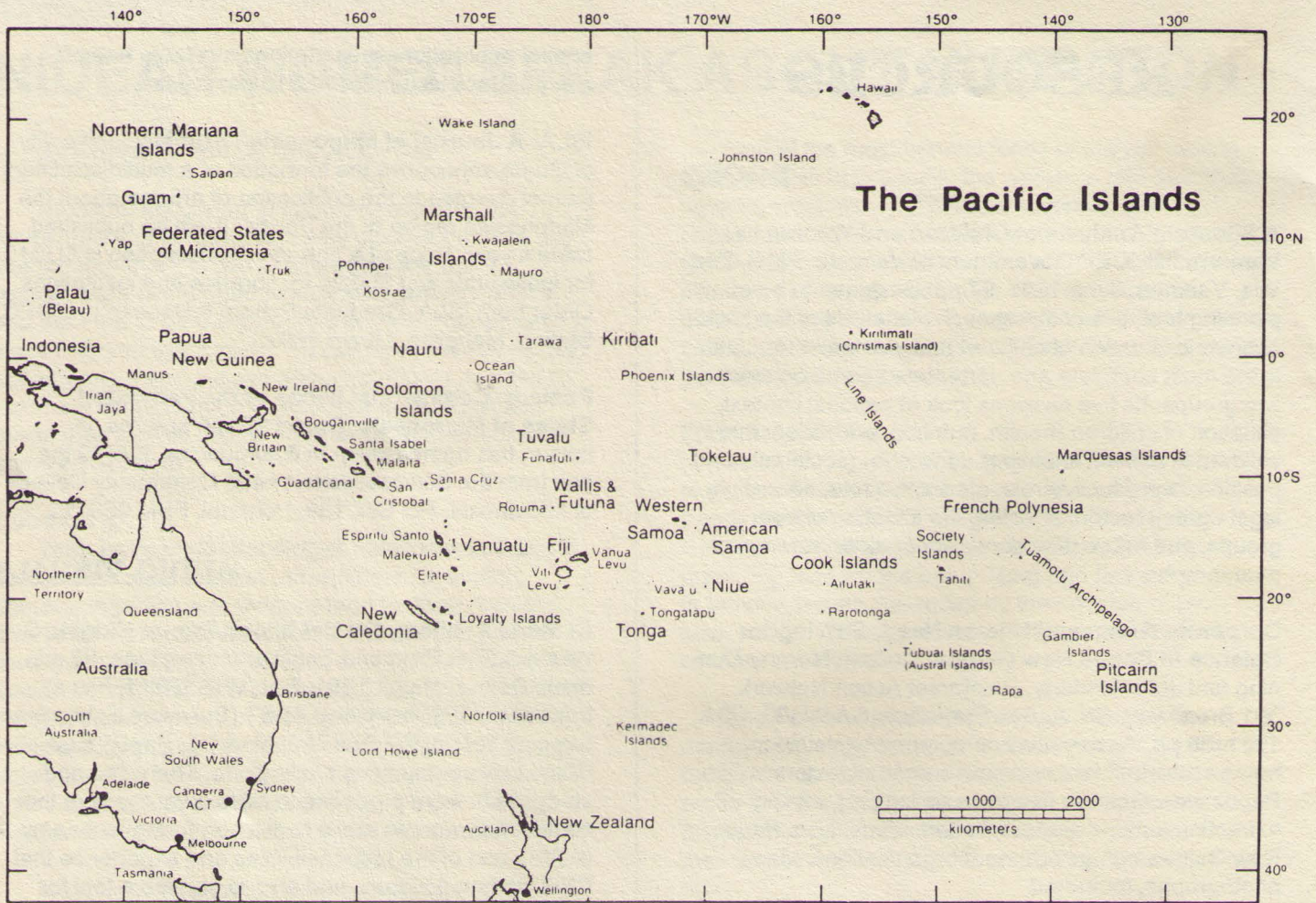
Oi Meri i Ki bilong Go Het bilong Papua Niugini. 2 versions (Tok Pisin and English) on one tape, 26 min each. Colour. March 1991. PAL/VHS (SPPF has a translated NTSC version). BEST (Business Enterprise Support Team), PO Box 726, Madang, Papua New Guinea. Accompanying study guide. The video and study guide were produced to raise awareness of the contribution women make to the non-formal economy of PNG and of the responsibilities and experience that PNG women possess, and also to provide a tool for promoting discussion of those issues with the aim of increasing PNG women's participation in planning and decision-making within the family and the community.

Sky of Fire, Seeds of Hope. 1991. 15 min. Colour. PAL/VHS or NTSC/VHS. Produced Paul Greco, Pacific Community Development. Follows on A Matter of Trust, this second video focuses on hope and positive change being pursued by Marshall islanders in their road to the future in the aftermath of colonisation, nuclear weapons testing and westernisation.

COMING EVENTS

PACIFIC NETWORKING CONFERENCE. April 10, 11 and 12, 1992. To be held on the West Coast. Annual meeting for Canadians, from activists to academics, concerned about the Pacific Islands. Information updates, workshops and annual NFIP meeting. **Contact:** SPPF, 415-620 View St., Victoria, B.C., V8W 1J6 CANADA, TEL 604/381-4131.

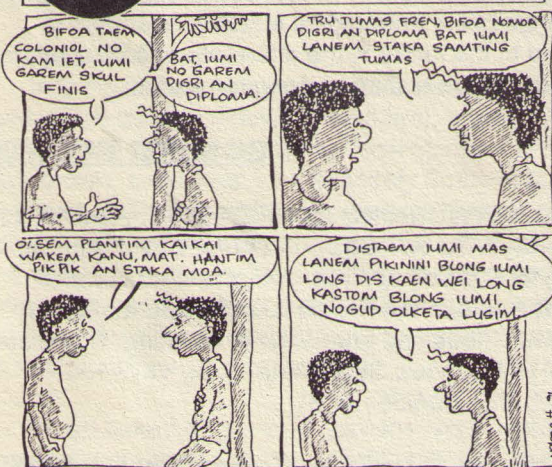
Pacific History Association Conference: Conflicts and Continuities in the Pacific. December 2-5, 1992. Call for papers. Contact the Pacific History Conference, Centre for Continuing Education, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand



May/June 1991

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