

# Tok Blong SPPF

A Quarterly of News and Views on the Pacific Islands

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Photo: David Stanley

Tourists off the cruise ship "Fairstar" purchasing handicrafts on Aneityum Island, Vanuatu

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# About this journal...

**TOK BLONG SPPF** is pidgin, a language used in many parts of the Pacific. An equivalent expression in English might be "news from SPPF".

**TOK BLONG SPPF** is published four times per year in English by the South Pacific Peoples Foundation of Canada. SPPF gratefully acknowledges financial support for the publication from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

SPPF's major aim is to promote awareness of development, social justice, environment, health and other issues of importance to the peoples of the South Pacific. Through this journal, SPPF hopes to provide Canadians and others 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

### Successful Conference Draws International Participation

Over 60 participants from 8 countries flocked to Vancouver Island for SPPF's annual Pacific Networking Conference (May 7-9). While most participants were Canadian, the South Pacific was well represented. Six indigenous islanders and five other South Pacific residents were in attendance. This year's conference, "Surviving in the Economic Jungle", looked at the impact of the economic "new world order" on Pacific peoples. The "globalisation" of Pacific economies, structural adjustment programmes, free trade and industrialisation policies, and the impact of these developments in the Pacific were discussed by excellent resource people. Other sessions looked at the Bougainville situation and at independence issues in Tahiti-Polynesia. Resource people included Kushma Ram of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Remuna Tufariua of Tavini-Huiraatira (Tahiti), Jean Eparo of Melanesian Solidarity (PNG), Nicholas Faraclos of the University of PNG and John Dahmasing Salong of Vanuatu. A conference report can be obtained from SPPF.



Photo: Stuart Wulff

Kushma Ram, accompanied by Vas Gunaratna of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, visits a garment factory in Vancouver

Several islanders spent additional time in Canada. Remuna Tufariua returned to Saskatchewan after the conference to continue a speaking tour. His Saskatchewan visit was hosted by the Interchurch Uranium Committee. Kushma Ram spent an additional two weeks in British Columbia as a guest of SPPF. Kushma works on a "Women, Employment and Economic Rights" project at the Fiji Women's Rights Movement. We were able to arrange a number of worthwhile meetings with women's and labour organisations for her. Jean Eparo and John Salong spent several weeks in Canada as guests of CUSO.

SPPF would not have been able to provide such a conference or host Kushma's visit without the support of many other organisations and people. The co-sponsorship of the conference by CUSO and the Action Canada Network was greatly appreciated. CUSO also funded the travel of several South Pacific participants and co-organised the conference. The United Church of Canada, the Canadian Auto Workers, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (Local 2440), Inter Pares, Oxfam-Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency provided other financial support. Many volunteers helped out as resource people and facilitators, with organising and transportation, and with billeting of visitors. To everyone who made it possible, we thank you.

For the past 2 years, SPPF and the Sierra Club of Western Canada have co-sponsored the Indonesia-Canada Rese postage and harch Project. This project has examined the Canadian presence in Indonesia, particularly West Papua/Irian Jaya, and the impact of this presence on the indigenous Papuan people and environment. With the end of funding, the project is drawing to a conclusion as a separate entity. The project staff, Catherine Sparks and Hewitt Roberts, are bound for PNG where they will be working with community groups in the highlands. We thank them for their prodigious efforts and wish them well in their new endeavours. (We won't bid them farewell, as we expect to keep in touch and carry occasional musings from them here in *Tok Blong*.) The project leaves several important legacies. A video (NTSC format) on the impact of Western and Canadian development on the Papuan people and local environment has been produced and is available for sale from SPPF (\$40 postage and handling included). A book is nearing completion and a rich database of information has been left with us. SPPF will also continue to address West Papuan issues in our education and advocacy activities.

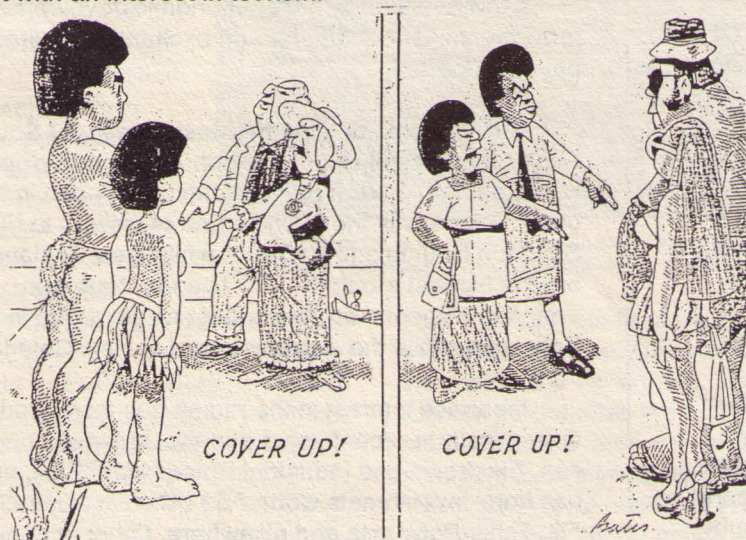
Stuart Wulff for SPPF



## In This Issue...

### Tourism - The Pacific Way?

Tourism is already a US\$3 trillion global industry and is predicted to be the world's largest export industry by the year 2000. Tourism looms particularly large in the future of island micro-states with limited resource bases. In the Pacific, many people see tourism as the wave of the future. Others point to a range of problems that have accompanied traditional tourism and either urge rejection or the adoption of new forms of "appropriate" or "eco" tourism. This issue of Tok Blong examines some of the possibilities and pitfalls of tourism for the Pacific. We begin with a guest editorial by John Dahmasing Salong, a ni-Vanuatu community development activist with an interest in tourism.



### Tourism and Sustainability

by John Dahmasing Salong

As the world gets smaller and smaller, there are fewer and fewer exotic places to retreat to. Even Tahiti or Hawaii have become as common as San Francisco or New York. But travel writers continue to search for the 'exotic'. It was interesting to read in a Canadian newspaper, *The Vancouver Sun* (April 3, 1993) that they have found their stone age man on Tanna Island in Vanuatu.

Stone age man, palm trees, white sands, crystal clear turquoise waters and hula girls are images conjured up in many peoples' minds whenever South Pacific is mentioned. These images are in compliance with the mainstream tourism marketing establishments which are integral to the national development plans for some South Pacific countries. The 1992 world exposition in Seville was used by some Pacific Island states to inculcate and perpetuate these simplistic and romantic images of the South Pacific in the minds of the expo visitors.

Some governments set large numbers of foreign tourists as their goal, a manifestation of "development". It is usually argued that more tourists mean stronger economies and therefore a better livelihood for the citizens. With such arguments, the government of Vanuatu can justify bringing in the cruise ship, CLUB MED II, with thousands of tourists every Friday into Port Vila, a town of only sixteen thousand people, without a social, environmental, cultural or even economic impact analysis.

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**Cover Photo:** Tourists off the cruise ship, Fairstar, purchasing handicrafts on the island of Aneityum in Vanuatu. The tour organisers failed to warn their passengers that this type of attire was considered utterly scandalous by the Seventh Day Adventist villagers. (Photo by David Stanley)



Legitimate counter arguments to "Tourism = Development" are based on facts including the foreign ownership and control of tourist facilities, open economies that perpetuate trade deficits, and especially the negative impacts of tourism on fragile social, cultural and environmental systems.

In spite of these counter-arguments, leaders in Vanuatu still aspire to have tourists come into the country, knowing that no island can continue to be an island unto itself. With jets flying overhead, ships steaming across the horizon and news of "big men" over the airwaves, even Chief Tofor Rengrengmal (guardian of Ambrymese Custom and Culture) of Fanla Village, North Ambrym Island, Vanuatu, is now eager to accept tourists. In a setting like North Ambrym, where there is very limited infrastructure, it is very difficult to talk about any kind of industry without mentioning tourism. It is no longer possible to ignore the growing needs of the village people specifically in the area of better health care and education. These and other basic needs are forcing the people of North Ambrym who have been subsistence farmers and fisherpeople to be drawn more and more into the world of the "global marketplace" dictated by the "invisible hand".

Growing aspirations can mislead people into destroying the very basic strengths that maintain their integrity. Such a basic strength in the North Ambrym community is the ability to feed and house the population. This ability has been developed over many years in a relationship with the ecosystem. Without the subsistence lifestyle, the ecosystem will be destroyed, the culture will be destroyed and the people will die.

Without sacrificing the subsistence base, it is imperative that appropriate methods be used to inject some cash into the local economy on an annual basis. With the market driven pressure for more tourism into the South Pacific, an alternative tourism trade has to be developed.

It is important that any tourism trade will have to be seen by everyone as an opportunity to SHARE. Guests to North Ambrym have to be open-minded, willing to learn from local people and to share their experiences. Guests have to be willing to treat the local people as equals and not as their servants. Everyone will have to deal with the fact that some things cannot be bought and sold. The only tourism appropriate for the people of North Ambrym is a tourism industry that brings some cash into the local economy and continues to leave the power in the hands of the guardians of the land. North Ambrym would welcome tourists who do not expect to have everyone dance to their tunes and who are always aware that there has to be mutual respect in all relationships and especially so when one is a tourist.

# Tourism in the Pacific

by David Stanley

Tourism is now the second largest industry in the world (after oil); by the year 2000, it will be the biggest. Each year over 20 million first world tourists visit third-world countries, transferring an estimated US\$25 billion from North to South. In the islands, tourism is one of the few avenues open for economic development, providing much needed foreign exchange required to pay for imports.

Australia provides the greatest number of South Pacific tourists, followed by North America, Europe, New Zealand, other Pacific islands and Japan in that order. Australia is the main source of visitors to Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, while New Zealanders are the biggest group in Cook Islands, Niue and Tonga. Europeans are the largest single group in Tahiti-Polynesia, while the Japanese lead in New Caledonia.

Japanese interest in the region has increased dramatically in recent years and the Japanese corporation, Electronic and Industrial Enterprises (EIE), now has hotel investments worth A\$3 billion in Australia, Fiji, Tahiti-Polynesia and elsewhere. Other Japanese companies, such as the Tokyu Corporation and Kitano Construction, own top hotels in Vanuatu, Western Samoa, and the Solomon Islands. Japan's domestic economy is saturated and, with US\$1 trillion available for overseas investment, the South Pacific is a logical area for expansion.

To date most attention has focused on luxury resorts and all-inclusive tours - the exotic rather than the authentic. Transnational corporations promote travel only to areas where they have sizable investments. On several islands, foreign companies have gained such a death grip over the industry that they can shut off the flow of visitors overnight by simply cancelling tours, bookings and flights.

To encourage hotel construction, local governments must commit themselves to crippling tax concessions and large infrastructure investments for the benefit of foreign companies. The cost of airports, roads, communications networks, power lines and sewers can exceed the profits from tourism. Only about 40% of the net earnings from transnational tourism actually stays in the host country. The rest is "leaked" in repatriated profits, salaries for expatriates, commissions, imported goods, food, fuel, etc. Top management positions usually go to expatriates, with



local residents offered only a few low-paying service jobs.

Mass tourism plays a role in undermining the social fabric by establishing enclaves of affluence which in turn create local dissatisfaction and desires impossible to satisfy. Tourism spreads foreign values and often sets a bad example. Traditional ways of making a living are disrupted as agricultural land is converted to resort and recreational use. Major beauty spots are purchased, commercialised and rendered inaccessible to the locals. Access to the ocean can be blocked by wall-to-wall

hotels. Resort sewage causes lagoon pollution, while the reefs are blasted to provide passes for tourist craft and stripped of corals or shells by visitors. Locally scarce water supplies are diverted to hotels and food prices soar.

Although tourism is often seen as a way of experiencing other cultures, it can undermine those same cultures. Traditional dances and ceremonies are shortened or changed to fit into tourist schedules; mock celebrations are held out of season and context and their significance is lost. Cheap mass-produced handicrafts are made to satisfy the expectations of visitors; thus, the New Guinea-style masks of Fiji and the mock-Hawaiian tiki of Tonga. Authenticity is sacrificed for immediate profits.

The role of the South Pacific as a "primitive paradise" can even impede necessary improvements to local life. In the name of preserving the traditional culture, islands have been converted into walk-in zoos: Tanna Island in Vanuatu is a good example of terminal exotification.

Packaged holidays create the illusion of adventure while avoiding all



Gîte San Gabriel, a Kanak-operated beach resort at Yaté on New Caledonia's Grande Terre; here visitors dispense with some Western-style comforts to get closer to the people and the land

Photo: David Stanley

risks and individualized variables. On many tours, the only islanders seen are maids and bartenders. This elitist tourism perpetuates the colonial master-servant relationship as condescending foreigners instill a feeling of inferiority in local residents and workers. Many island governments are publicly on record as favouring development based on local resources and island technology, yet inexplicably this concept is rarely applied to tourism.

"Eco-tourism" is a new concept in the South Pacific, with scuba diving its most widespread manifestation and adventure tours by ocean kayak, chartered yacht, bicycle or foot increasing in number. This presents both a danger and an opportunity. Income from visitors wishing to experience nature gives local residents and governments an economic incentive for preserving the environment, although tourism can quickly degrade that environment through littering, the collection of coral and shells, and encouraging the development of tourist facilities in natural areas.

Perhaps the strongest argument in favour of the creation of national parks and reserves in the South Pacific is the ability of such parks to

attract visitors from industrialised countries while at the same time creating a framework for preserving nature. The South Pacific Regional Environment Program has made parks development a high priority.

What seems needed everywhere is a softer, people-oriented tourism, more directly beneficial to the islanders themselves. By patronising smaller, family-operated, locally-owned businesses, visitors not only get to meet the inhabitants on a person-to-person basis, but also contribute to local development. Guest house tourism offers excellent employment opportunities for island women as proprietors and it's exactly what most visitors want. Independent travellers may spend less per day than packaged consumer tourists, but they invariably stay longer and learn to appreciate and respect the cultures of the places they visit. Appropriate tourism requires little investment, there's less disruption and full control remains with the people themselves. The luxury hotels are monotonously uniform around the world - the South Pacific is the place for something different.



# "Tourist Trap"

by Patricia Tummons

**Patricia Tummons is editor of *Environment Hawaii*, a newsletter.**

"Who will save tourism?" asks the headline on the cover of a recent business monthly in Hawaii. The magazine isn't the only one raising the question. Tourism, Hawaii's economic mainstay for three decades, has been in a slump. While everyone acknowledges it is essential to diversify the economy, the drop in visitors has the state in a panic. From the highest levels of state government to the T-shirt vendors on Waikiki, people are scrambling to get the tourists back.

But another question has to be asked: ***Should tourism be saved?*** Even in a bad year the state entertains more than six million tourists or six visitors for every man, woman and child who calls Hawaii home.

More and more people are questioning the wisdom of Hawaii's extreme reliance on tourism, which generated about 60 percent of the state's gross domestic product. It provides jobs, to be sure, but jobs are low-paying, require few skills and offer limited opportunities for advancement.

Tourism's downside has been frequently depicted in national publications-although closer to home the subject is taboo. The industry consumes the state's resources at a frequent pace. Native Hawaiian

traditions are demeaned as they are popularized for tourist consumption. Native Hawaiian water claims are undercut as resort developers win approvals for water use. Residential roads decay while tourist-related construction continues.

High land values, brought about by resort development, have forced many residents to sell their property because they can't afford the taxes. Housing costs have skyrocketed as a result of outside investment. Median housing prices on Oahu hover around \$350,000, forcing many of Hawaii's young people who aspire to a middle-class standard of living to move to the mainland-a major upheaval when you are in the middle of the Pacific.

What makes this even worse is that the beneficiaries of Hawaiian tourism are foreigners. Two thirds of Hawaii's hotel rooms are owned by foreign companies, most of them Japanese; on Maui, 81% of the rooms are foreign-owned.

Many of these rooms sit empty, with occupancy rates as low as 40%. While there's general acknowledgement that resort development had exceeded market forecasts, resort owners now argue that since the state allowed them to build, it must allow them to fill their rooms-by building more and bigger airports, roads, sewer plants and waterworks.

The state government pays lip service to economic diversification, but it seems to be yielding to the

desires of the tourist industry even as the number of visitors drops off. Slow growth in the state budget has led to cuts of as much as 25% in some agencies, but not a nickel has been shaved from the \$22 million in state funds to promote tourism. While programs for health care, social services and environmental protection are hard hit, up to \$70 million was found to lengthen the Maui runway to accommodate direct overseas flights.

The idea, of course, is that a revived tourist industry will prime the pump. But three decades of experience have given the lie to this notion. Hawaii's natural resources and scenery open up unparalleled opportunities for scientific research and evolutionary biology, volcanology, astronomy and marine sciences. More, Hawaii can be an economic laboratory as well, with innovative approaches to agricultural and aquaculture restoring a measure of self-sufficiency to a state that has become heavily dependent on imports. (Everything from bananas to flowers is flown in. Fish from Iceland is often less expensive than local catch.)

The state must bring an end to the era of prostituting its precious natural resources and cultural patrimony. Finding a more respectable economic base is absolutely essential to the dignity and well-being of the people living here.

[Reprinted with permission of the author from *The New York Times* OP-ED, Sept 4/92]



Graphic: Contours, Mar/93



# Tourism's Negative Impact on Native Hawaiians

by Rev. Kaleo Patterson

*Rev. Patterson is both a member of the Hawaii Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism and the Board of Directors of the North America Coordinating Centre for Responsible Tourism. This is an abridged version of a presentation made by Rev. Patterson to a March 1992 international tourism fair in Berlin.*

The most pressing human rights issues in Hawaii today are those that are integrally connected to the impact of tourism on Native Hawaiians.

I am pastor of a small rural church on the island of Kauai. I am very close to those who work in the tourism industry, in particular the Hawaiians who struggle day in and day out with the unescapable reality of a dominant and greed driven industry. I have counselled the prostitute, the desk clerk, the maid and the bartender. I have been involved in hundreds of reburials of ancient Hawaiian grave sites because of a new resort development or existing resort renovations. I have witnessed the desecration of our sacred places, cried over the senseless pollution of our reefs and rivers. I have held picket signs in protest, given testimony at public hearings, even chased an obstinate tourist into the sanctuary of a local restaurant in an attempt to vent my anger in confrontation. I have seen the oppression and exploitation of an out of control global industry that has no understanding of limits or concern for the host people of a land.

Most of all, I know and feel the suffering in the Hawaiian communities because I live in one. My parish is not isolated from the ravaging impact of tourism. As you drive into our community, you will see the flower and lei stands, roadside gift shops and fast food stops that are all

very meagre but hopeful attempts to gain economic prosperity. Also, I am a Native Hawaiian. My brothers have worked in the restaurants, have been lifeguards at the beach; my sisters have danced the hula and one has worked for the developer of a major resort. For the last three years, I have been involved with the Hawaii Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism advocating responsible tourism in Hawaii. It is with this background that I am able to say with some certainty that the majority of Hawaiians long for a better way of life, one that is filled with the simple respect and dignity that today's tourism industry can never come close to offering.

## Minimal Economic Benefit for Hawaiians

Most Hawaiians will bear witness that tourism, as a foreigner dominated enterprise, is the plague which an already oppressed people must endure with very few other economic options or alternatives in life. Many end up choosing the lesser options even if it means unemployment or criminal activity. It is no accident that Hawaiians are the poorest of all people in Hawaii, capturing the highest percentage of unemployment and welfare recipients. It is also not an accident that as a population group Native Hawaiians dominate the prison populations.

Tourism is wholly concerned with self-preservation as an industry and not with the well-being of the community. In March of 1991, during the dramatic decline of visitors to Hawaii due to the Gulf War, the Hawaii State Legislature readily allocated as an emergency measure 6 million dollars to be used by the Hawaii Visitors Bureau for television commercials on the mainland USA. During the same period, hundreds of hotel employees were laid off in one of the largest layoffs in recent years. The striking thing is that no emergency measures

to assist the unemployed were introduced or even considered.

While the few local elites and transnational corporations are the primary beneficiaries of a dominant tourism industry, Native Hawaiians continue to be the poorest, sickest and least educated of all people in Hawaii. When one looks at the social and economic indicators of well-being, the conclusion is clear. Tourism has not benefited the host Native Hawaiian people and it probably never will. To understand this, one must understand that Hawaii today is at the mercy of transnational interests. Foreign investment related to tourism went from 70.8 million dollars in 1981 to over a billion and a half in 1986. The increase is enough to make anyone's head spin and confirms the vulnerability of Hawaii and Hawaii's people. Japanese investment in leading the pack has plunked down over 3 billion dollars for hotels alone in a time period of eighteen years ending in 1989. The Australians are far behind in second place with 117 million. Today, almost every major hotel is owned by foreign investors and almost every hotel on the drawing board is being funded by foreign investment. The rapid and phenomenal increase of foreign investment is the clearest indication that any consideration of the short and long term negative impact of tourism is of no consequence to those involved in the industry.

It was greedy business interests that caused the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Nation in 1893 and this became the capstone of oppression for a people who welcomed the foreigner. A hundred years later, the greed continues and Native Hawaiians remain victims of an exploitation whose guise is an industry called tourism. A basic human right is the ability of a people to be self-



governing, self-determining and self-sufficient. This right was taken away from Hawaiians when the nation was overthrown. Tourism in many respects perpetuates the oppression.

In its current form, tourism has evolved to a point where it is of minimal economic consequence to Hawaiians. In fact, given the very nature in which tourism is involved in cultural invasion and environmental exploitation, the Hawaiian - by culture, values and tradition - cannot support or sustain tourism unless it is made to be more respectful of people and land. Tourism does not provide a viable economic alternative to Hawaiians in its present structure and nature. This is a difficult situation because tourism as a dominant industry stifles economic diversification and weakens existing agricultural and technological development. Tourism in Hawaii makes it too costly and impractical to engage in economic diversification. Statistics show a correlation between the increase in tourism and a dramatic decrease in previously primary industries such as agriculture and federal spending. Visitor expenditures in 1980 made up 24% of the Gross State Product. In 1988, this figure had increased to 43%.

Hotel rooms have increased dramatically and the projections are even more astonishing:

- 1985 - 65,000 rooms
- 1990 - 76,500 "
- 2010 - 132,000 "

When considering the strain on community infrastructure and negative impact upon the environment, the projected visitor figures for the future are mind boggling:

- 1989 - 5.75 million/year
- 2010 - 11.50 million/year

In the 1991 State Functional Plan published by the State Department of Business and Economic Development and the Office of Tourism, the following statement is telling: "The visitor industry is viewed as the primary growth engine for the foreseeable future.... other industries such as diversified agriculture, aquaculture and other technology

oriented industries may grow, but barring major reversals in the fortunes of the visitor industry, no significant challenges are anticipated...."

Hawaii, it seems, is headed toward a non-diversified economic future that will be totally dependent upon an already insecure and over-developed visitor industry. Tourism therefore, will continue to be a major obstacle in the movement of Hawaiians towards self-governance and self-determination. More poverty and the continuation of the negative impact upon Native Hawaiians will be the inevitable outcome of the future of tourism in Hawaii.

### Cultural Invasion

The second major impact of tourism on Native Hawaiians must be understood as an invasion of all that is sacred to a people.

*today your words are empty  
sucking dry the brown dust  
left by earth and sky  
patches politely parched  
with no water flowing  
from the mountaintop  
scars burn on my soft skin  
you've cut a piece of me away  
leaving my bandaged heart  
to endure the pain  
of your tying me to yourself*

Dr. Konai Helu-Thaman

Dr. Konai Helu-Thaman, a Tongan university instructor, was one of several speakers addressing the negative impact of tourism on indigenous peoples at Interpretation International's Third Global Congress held in Honolulu in November 1991. In expressing the grief tourism has caused indigenous people in the Pacific, she stated:

*"Tourism continues to be the major contributor to a process of cultural invasion....Such an invasion has left its marks on most island environments....(and those marks can symbolize) the erosion and ultimate death of indigenous island cultures and their value systems."*

An examination of the marketing and promotion of Hawaii in the world markets will reveal the obvious packaging of an "Aloha for Sale" ap-

proach that has been referred to as "hula" marketing. Hula marketing is the marketing of a people and culture for the express purpose of exploitative economic benefit. In hula marketing, the Hawaiian culture is romanticized to appeal to the exotic fantasies of world travellers. The popular images such as smiling flower adorned girls and hula dancers, or exotic moonlit feasts with natives serving hand and foot, are typical. This kind of marketing and promotion perpetuates racist and sexist stereotypes that are culturally inappropriate and demeaning.

When the primary means of promotion is dependent upon a culture and people, and the perception that "all is well in paradise" is put forward while in fact "all is not well", then the issue becomes one of cultural prostitution. It becomes the selling of an artificial cultural image that has complete disregard for the truth, at the expense and pain of Native Hawaiians who are struggling to survive. From printed brochure to life in the fast lane, tourism promotes the development and practice of an entertainment and visitor oriented culture. The follow-through with marketing and promotion is part and parcel of the "plastic tikis, Kodak hula, and concrete waterfalls".

That the visitor industry would be so blatant in promoting Hawaii via cultural images and ideas, and not support to any greater degree the perpetuation of authentic and living Hawaiian culture and language in the local communities, is another expression of cultural prostitution. An example on the local political scene is the unchastised governmental support of the Hawaii Visitors Bureau to the tune of several millions of dollars every year. Compare this with the lack of direct funding to support programming to perpetuate the culture or the recovery of the language of Native Hawaiians and one can only conclude that tourism is a one way street.

Tourism development in Hawaii most often takes place at the expense of a people's cultural and historical symbols and land based

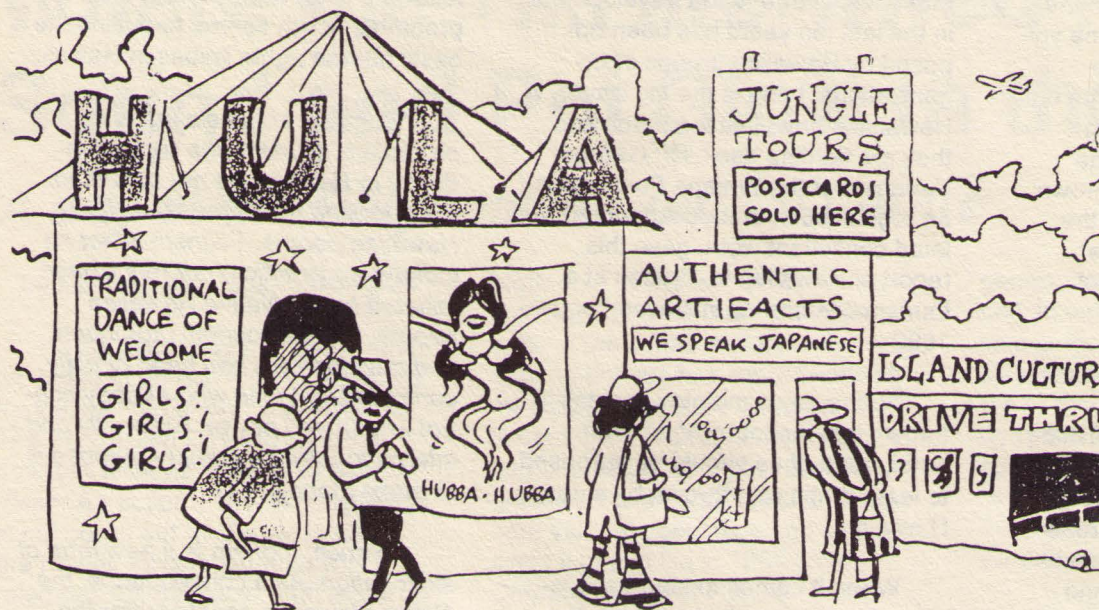


## Destruction of the Land Base and Environment

The third major impact of tourism on Native Hawaiians must be understood in the context of environmental exploitation. The character of indigenous Pacific cultures in relationship to the land is one based on a high level of environmental awareness and ecological conservatism. The relationship of people to land, and people to sea, is spiritual and religious. Land is the base around which a culture evolves. When tourism takes away the land, takes away access to the fishing grounds or the

right to gather food or medicine, the Hawaiian loses a primary means of livelihood, and more important, meaning in life.

On the island of Hawaii, a massive geothermal development project is doing just that. The development underway envisions a questionable plan to supply the enormous amounts of energy required for projected resort developments. The plan also hopes to test a new underwater cable that will go from the island of Hawaii to Oahu. The environmental risks are many. Not only is there a threat to the rainforest and the ocean, but toxic fumes threaten the community's health. Community members have already reported health problems from the toxic fumes. This project has met with fierce opposition by community groups such as the Pele Defense Fund and the Rainforest Action Group. In a related issue a couple of years ago, the proposed private site owned by the Campbell estate was rendered useless when lava flowed from an eruption of the volcano, Kilauea. To remedy the situation, the State government released 25,000 acres of Hawaiian Homelands to be used in exchange with other private lands. The 25,000 acres of Hawaiian Homelands consists of one of the



Graphic: Contours, Sep/92

resources. Tourism development has played a major role in the destruction of ancient Hawaiian burial grounds, significant archaeological historic sites and sacred places. Almost every major resort development has been built on some culturally significant site. Community opposition is usually based in these cultural issues. The usually insensitive approach and manner of development leaves the local community to conclude that there is no respect or concern for the culture and identity of Hawaiian people.

Last year on the island of Kauai at a development site called Keonaloa, a well known ancient Hawaiian burial ground was excavated to make way for a condominium resort project. Of the total 22 acres of burial grounds, community opposition led to mitigation that resulted in the setting aside of a one acre parcel to be used to relocate all excavated burials. The one acre parcel has been incorporated into the planned resort and will be used as a marketing feature of the development. Recently, when hundreds of bones were returned to Kauai from the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., they were interned at this one acre site in the middle of the resort development.

On Maui, at a place called Honokahua, a developer's excavations unearthed over 1100 intact burial bundles, while local community groups protested in anger. It was only after mass demonstrations and strong community support that the developer was stopped and asked to discontinue the project.

What more blatant evidence of cultural invasion than the desecration and destruction of the very sacred burial places of a people?

Last year, for the first time, a statewide Burials Council was formed to facilitate the many questions and concerns of ancient burials. The impact of tourism development upon these sites is a primary concern.

Other cultural and historic sites, hundreds in number, have been bulldozed to make way for hotel and golf course development. Many others have been turned into tourist attractions and are desecrated in their use and misuse. These include heiau or ancient temples, house sites, fishing shrines, ceremonial platforms and agricultural sites.



to make way for the exploratory drilling that needs to take place. In the cultural arena, Hawaiians on the volcano took the developer to the Supreme Court claiming that the drilling desecrates the religious significance of the volcano and the goddess Pele. The suit was thrown out of court, on the basis that the Hawaiian religion was not "site" specific and the volcano did not qualify as a specific site.

Crowded beaches and commercial tour boating does much to threaten shoreline or coastal fishing through noise or chemical pollution. The state has begun to identify beach parks and nearshore areas that are exceeding capacity use because of significant resident and visitor numbers. User conflicts between residents and visitors are becoming a problem and are expected to escalate as tourism and ocean recreation industries continue to grow.

There have been occasions when Hawaiian families and communities who have lived for generations in a valley or along a river are forced to leave because of a proposed golf course or hotel. Recently this happened to families in Hana, Maui, a farming community in Maunawili and Waianae on Oahu. It has been a common pattern that displaced Hawaiians on every island have found their way to remote beaches only to be forcibly evicted after a few years. The Hawaiians are truly a people forcibly removed from the land generation after generation. In the community that I am from, this past summer over nineteen families were evicted to restore a beach park for visitor and community use.

More and more, tourism is taking away land from the Hawaiian who is tied to the land by culture, tradition and lifestyle. As Hawaiians struggle to regain a foothold on the land, tourism remains a major obstacle.

There is a growing frustration. This expresses itself in the very visible opposition to resort or related development and the increasing amount of land being openly oc-

cupied by indignant Hawaiians. Almost every large resort development in the last ten years has been opposed by Hawaiian groups or organizations. Land is the big issue. Hawaiians have lost too much and they are fighting back. Dr. George Kanahele of the Waiaha Foundation, an organization that does tourism related consultant work, gave this report of Hawaiian frustration at a tourism conference in November 1992:

"If one day a molotov cocktail is thrown into the lobby of a resort hotel, none of us should be surprised to learn that it was thrown by a native Hawaiian."

When it comes to land base issues, tourism has been cold to the Hawaiian movement for self-governance and nationhood. Today in Hawaii, we are seeing unprecedented political support for the rights of Native Hawaiians to self-governance. This past summer, over forty major Hawaiian organizations formed a united coalition to begin the serious work of restoring the Hawaiian nation. It is an action that is being supported by the federal government through a grant of 1.2 million dollars over the next three years. In political circles, state and congressional politicians are busy drafting legislation to address the rights of Native Hawaiians to self-governance and self-determination. Recently, a Civil Rights Commission report titled "Broken Promises" loudly underscored the political injustices that have plagued the history of Hawaiians and called upon the United States to make right those wrongs.

### Conclusion

The emerging awareness of the impact of tourism on Native Hawaiians captured local and international attention when, in August 1989, an international conference on tourism sponsored by local, national and international church groups and organizations took place in Hawaii. That conference looked at the negative impact of tourism on Native Hawaiians. The results were published in what came to be called

the Hawaii Declaration of 1989. The following is an excerpt from the preamble which serves to outline the basic human rights issues in Hawaii:

*"Contrary to the claims of its promoters, tourism, the biggest industry in Hawaii, has not benefited the poor and the oppressed Native Hawaiian people. Tourism is not an indigenous practice; nor has it been initiated by the Native Hawaiian people. Rather, tourism promotion and development has been directly controlled by those who already control wealth and power, nationally and internationally. Its primary purpose is to make money.*

*As such, tourism is a new form of exploitation. As a consequence, the Native Hawaiian people suffer the most; their culture has been increasingly threatened, their beaches and even their sacred sites have been taken over or intruded upon in order to build tourist resorts and related developments.*

*Furthermore, tourism brings and expands upon the evil of an economy which perpetuates the poverty of Native Hawaiian people and which leads to sexual and domestic violence and substance abuse among Native Hawaiian people. In addition, sexism and racism are closely interlinked with tourism. In short, tourism, as it exists today, is detrimental to the life, well-being and spiritual health of Native Hawaiian people. If not checked and transformed, it will bring grave harm, not only to the Native Hawaiian people, but also to all people living in Hawaii.*

*The plight of Native Hawaiian people is but one example of the destructive impact that tourism is having on indigenous people in communities around the world. All is not well in "paradise".*

*Indeed a state of emergency exists in regard to the survival, the well-being and the status of the Native Hawaiian on the one hand and the near extinction of the precious and fragile environment on the other."*



# Where the Tiki are Wired for Sound and Poi Glow in the Dark

## *A day at the Polynesian Cultural Centre*

by Norman and Ngaire Douglas

Its publicity is by no means bashful, but in hype-rich Hawaii no facility for tourists can afford to be bashful. The Polynesian Cultural Centre announces itself as "Hawaii's Favorite Visitor Attraction". This forthrightness is not borne out by the statistics of the Hawaii Visitors Bureau, which relegates the centre to sixth place on its list of Hawaii's top attractions, drawing fewer than half the number of visitors who go to the Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbour and seven times fewer than the top draw-card, the National Cemetery of the Pacific. No doubt the promoters of the centre would find a way of explaining this; being favourite doesn't necessarily mean being first. Nor is its appeal as being universal as its organizer might like to believe. A poll conducted among local readers by *Honolulu Magazine* found that the centre was the "runner up worst visitor attraction", second only to Waikiki in awfulness. For all that, an impressive 850,185 people visited the centre last year, almost 98,000 more than its next nearest rival to which the centre bears at least a passing resemblance, the Honolulu Zoo.

The Polynesian Cultural Centre was established in 1963 by The Church of Latter-day Saints--that much is inarguable at least. According to its brochures the centre is a "non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the culture heritage of Polynesia while providing educational opportunities for students at the adjoining Brigham Young University -Hawaii". At a current price of \$USA42 for the standard visit package (dearer ones are available), there is clearly a lot of money out there waiting to be collected by non-profit organizations. For the

Mormons, as the Latter-day Saints are more widely known, the existence of the centre and its revenue earning powers has almost certainly meant the difference between continuous growth and possible stagnation of their university in Hawaii. It enabled it to enlarge considerably in both student population and status since it began life in 1955 as the Church College of Hawaii.

Laie, the location of the centre, is on the north shore of the island of Oahu, about 65 kilometres from Waikiki. Its distance from Hawaii's major fleshpot doesn't seem to worry its daily average of more than 2700 visitors (dutifully it is closed on Sunday, when most of Hawaii's other attractions are at their busiest). The location, if relatively remote in local terms, is doctrinally appropriate: in accordance with Mormon precepts Laie was chosen as a "gathering place" for the Polynesians faithful as long ago as 1865 when the church, acquired almost 2500 hectares of plantation land and thereby gave to a hitherto erratic mission an appearance of permanence.

The building of a Mormon temple at Laie in 1919 - the first such edifice in the Pacific Islands - further consolidated the church's presence. It acted as an almost irresistible draw to increasing numbers of Polynesian Mormons from Samoa, Tonga and Hawaii itself, who had been convinced by their American missionaries that the true purpose of the devout was to "gather together". According to Mormon academic Max Stanton, the germ of the idea for a cultural centre was the formation of a dance troupe consisting of students from the college at Laie which made twice weekly appearances in Honolulu in order to raise money, since there were few income-

generating opportunities at Laie itself. In only a couple of years the size of the performance group had swelled to 75 and the logistics of the trip to the capital had become unwieldy to the extent of justifying an arrangement which obliged the audience to come to the performers rather than the reverse. Thus the Polynesian Cultural Centre.

The centre occupies just over 18 hectares and for its purposes divided Polynesia into seven areas each represented by a village. They are Tonga, Samoa, Tahiti, Old Hawaii (presumably in its pre-melting pot condition), Aotearoa (New Zealand without the *pakeha*), the Marquesas - the size of which seems interestingly at odds with both the size of the population of those islands and the survival of their culture - and Fiji.

**Revelation:** the still-vexed question of whether Fiji is properly part of Polynesia, Melanesia or a little of each was resolved by the Mormons as far back as the 1950s, after attempts to proselytise only to Polynesians in Fiji proved diplomatically difficult. The matter was eventually decided by a revelation from the president and the prophet of the church, which decreed the Fijians to be Polynesians and therefore not of the "Negroid blood" previously thought. The concept of Polynesia at the centre will be soon further enhanced by the planned addition of an Easter Island village. Melanesia and Micronesia do not get a look in, for reasons not entirely to do with the name of the centre. Nor for that matter do other significant parts of Polynesia - the Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Tokelau and Niue. Whether this absence merely reflects space considerations or whether the Mormons feel these countries are lacking in





Photo: Norman Douglas

Performance time at the Polynesian Cultural Center

marketable cultural identity is difficult to say.

Other parts of the centre are devoted to such essential cultural concerns as eating - there is a restaurant and a luau area as well as a snack bar, a large gift shop, with a thankful minimum of trashy souvenirs, and a first-aid station in case patrons are overcome either by the excitement of the cultural encounters or the food. An IMAX cinema screens four times daily an idealised account of the migration of the Polynesians, making up in overpowering size (the screen is seven stories high) anything it may lack in historical credibility. There is an additional charge for visitors who want to take in the epic migration and eat at the luau. In accordance with Mormon beliefs, the centre forbids alcohol within its grounds, in addition to swim wear. But in an interesting concession to public demand smoking, generally frowned upon by the church, is allowed in designated areas.

The largest building on the site is a theatre seating 3000 plus and the

venue for a nightly extravaganza entitled *This is Polynesia*, which the centre's publicity self-effacingly describes as "the ultimate Polynesian entertainment experience, performed beneath an exploding volcano and cascading waterfall". The centre, having drawn part of its original inspiration as much from Disneyland as from the Pacific, has according to some observers become the inspiration for other tourist "people parks". They include the Cultural Centre of Fiji at Deuba and the Cook Islands Cultural Village in Rarotonga, which by mere coincidence is also run by Mormons, though not by the church. The complex is described on the centre's programme as "the islands as you always hoped they would be", which may say more than is actually intended.

For most visitors a day at the centre begins with something called the *Pageant of the Long Canoes* (every hour on the hour from one till four PM), in which a number of not particularly long double-hulls of uniform size and shape float in turn past the audience, each propelled by a boatman and containing six to eight

dancers representing their cultural group. In the background a *ki'i* or *tiki* of simulated lava rock containing speakers in its mouth and eyes magnifies the sound of the electronically-amplified accompanists. In the performance we watched, pageantry readily became farce, as the precariously-positioned boatman was rocked off his perch and into the water, first by the Samoans, who seemed to apply great determination to the stunt, and later, since it drew the right response from the crowd, by the Tongans and the Aotearoans also. It can't really be said that all the boatmen enjoyed the fun; at least two seemed to be making desperate attempts to stay aboard. One unfortunate was encouraged to fall off twice.

Ethnicity at the centre seems to be flexible, as we discovered several times during the afternoon. Here the flexibility was demonstrated by some dancers of indeterminate authenticity: a male dancer with the Fijians appeared shortly after as a Tahitian boatman and later as a Maori. The Tongan contingent also included - with a quick change of costume - a



identifiable Fijian on Fiji's canoe moments before, and the blue raffia skirts on the husky Tongan men seemed slightly over the top. At least a couple of the ethnically versatile males never looked like anything other than the American missionaries that they probably were.

In the Samoan village, one of the most popular locations, where the construction of the houses is of a quality only rarely to be found these days in Samoa itself - though that is true of most construction at the center - a blase looking young Samoan was explaining the intricacies of a number of traditional practices with a line of patter that suggested hours of careful rehearsal. "That's how we do it," he announced, after producing fire by rubbing two sticks together. "But when it rains we don't eat like this. We just go down to McDonald's." The audience, McDonald's devotees all, broke up. In the background another young Samoan practised his juggling and waited for his cue. A peacock, a bird of some rarity in Polynesia, strolled through the Samoan grounds. Comments on the center in a guest book in a Samoan fale ranged from a Canadian's exuberant "Yahoo!" to a despairing "very expensive" by a visitor from Hamburg.

**"Sacrifice":** Outside the Aotearoa meeting house a middle-aged woman in a Maori flax skirt sat grading student test papers. A moment later she picked up a ukulele and joined the performers inside in what was, to be kind, some very lack-lustre singing. Nearby about 20 visitors were being lectured to on Maori custom by a young man wearing loafers and an aloha shirt and carrying a Hawaiian state flag. "We're having a human sacrifice at 5:30," he said, "and we need a volunteer". Restrained laughter.

At the entrance to the Fijian village, Seta (from Suva, he said, but originally from the Lau Islands) was posing for pictures dressed as a warrior and was greeting visitors in the traditional fashion: "Bula vinaka! And have a nice day." In the vale levu - great construction again - a young

man with a New Zealand accent took considerable pleasure in describing Fijian practices of war and sacrifice in much detail and spoke repeatedly about "chiefs going into battle". "Do they still eat you?" asked a very fat man wearing a Hilo Hattie shirt. "Only if they like you sir," the young man assured him. His counterpart in another Fijian hut was an Indian girl wearing a muu-muu. "What part of Fiji are you from?" we asked, with the confidence born of years of travel in the Pacific. "I've never been to Fiji," she said, "I'm from Singapore."

Later, at the Marquesan compound, Rani, from Singapore, demonstrated Polynesian weaving to a group of elderly Americans, while a Japanese speaking Caucasian described Marquesan culture to a group of 60 or so Japanese. A well-built, heavily made up young man with an imitation Marquesan facial tattoo posed for pictures, mostly with the Japanese. Perhaps because of the esoteric quality of the Marquesan exhibit - even within an overall Polynesian context - there seemed to be more people here just staring.

**Predictable audience participation:** The Tongans seemed conspicuously absent from the Tongan enclosure and what we saw of the Tahitians consisted mostly of the predictable hip-twitching - a quick routine by the performers followed by the inevitable audience participation. At the mission house exhibit an American girl was demurely sewing an elaborate Hawaiian-style patchwork quilt. Minutes earlier we had seen her vigorously thumping a Tahitian drum in company with several other percussionists.

The all-you-can-eat buffet at the Gateway restaurant was big on quantity but bland in taste and there was an enthusiastic and well-received band concert beforehand. The Mormons always have good bands with shiny new instruments, as anyone who has seen a high-school parade in Tonga or Samoa will know. But the highlight of the day - it said so in the programme - was still to come. This was the evening show, *This is*

*Polynesia*; "the show", said the brochure, "that outshines them all".

It was nothing if not shiny. The spectacle began with on-stage fountains spurting something that looked like the pink lemonade served up at dinner. It went into an overture entitled *I sing of Polynesia*, a bombastic affair which sounded like something Rogers and Hammerstein might have written if they had been lacking in talent. After that one felt it was bound to get better and it did, with performances by Maori, Tongan, Hawaiian, Fijian, and Tahitian contingents in that order. Most of it was familiar stuff. But there is always an infectious quality about reasonably well performed islands dances, even if the Mormon vision of the Maori people seems to be entirely of women who twirl the poi incessantly and men who stick out their tongues a lot.

**Samoan fire routines:** The second half of the bill was taken up entirely by the Samoans with no fewer than 10 items, including at least two routines involving fire, in one of which it seemed as though the front row of the audience might be incinerated at any time. Why are the Samoans so fond of flame throwing? Their last offering had not one but several youths twirling fire sticks at various parts of the stage to choruses of "oohs" from the audience as the spotlights caught them strategically. After that, the final on-stage appearance of the entire cast was something of an anti-climax.

All this had a stronger element of vaudeville than cultural tradition about it, but for us the evening's real highlight had happened earlier during the Maori segment. At a critical point in the poi twirling, the stage lights were turned off to reveal that the poi glowed in the dark. "Gawd!" said the fat man in the Hilo Hattie shirt, now sitting behind us. "The Maori women have got luminous balls." It somehow seemed to sum up the day.

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# Promoting the "Coral Route" in Canada

Last November, just at the onset of the Canadian winter, Air New Zealand hosted Pacific Islanders from Fiji, Western Samoa, Vanuatu, the Cook Islands, Tahiti and the Kingdom of Tonga in Canada to promote its "Coral Route". SPPF attended the promo evening and caught up the next day with Dominic Fonoti of Western Samoa and the Cook Islands contingent made up of Dianna Clarke from the Cook Islands Tourism Authority, Jeannine Tuavera, Miss Cook Islands for 91-92, Taina White, with the Ministry of Cultural Development and a runner up in international and national dance contests, and Apiti Nicholas, a number one entertainer and lead drummer in the Cook Islands.

Dominic Fonoti started as a dancer with Aggie Grey's Hotel 23 years ago and is now Aggie's Entertainment Manager. He loves his work and Aggie's. He says he's been there so long it's like family. Dominic has been promoting tourism for Western Samoa since 1983. He hinted that he feels like a "one man band" as he's often the sole Western Samoan doing the promoting. This time his trip was sponsored by Aggie's and Air NZ. He said that Western Samoa was devastated by cyclones over the past 2 years and that neither the Government nor the Western Samoa Visitors Association have funds to promote tourism outside the country.

The Government of the Cook Islands plays a large part in promoting tourism in the Cooks said Dianna Clarke, the Sales Development Officer for the Cook Islands Tourism Authority. She described the annual February Cultural Week as a celebration of Cook Island traditions for Cook Islanders as well as a prime attraction for tourists. The Cultural Week is a joint event of the Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Cultural Development, whose work is to see that Cook Island traditions remain vibrant and alive. The week-long happening features performing arts and arts and crafts. People from the outer islands come to Rarotonga to take

part in the festival, and, as well as a big exchange of dance and song, 'ume kai' - the traditional feast - is a popular thing to join in on. Formerly the Cultural Week took place all over Rarotonga but 1992 saw it move to the new National Cultural Centre built for the South Pacific Festival of the Arts.

Taina White, as well as working for the Ministry of Cultural Development, is a champion dancer who has her own dance troupe. She said that the Tourist Authority organizes a major dance competition on Rarotonga every May. It attracts Cook Islanders from the outer islands as well as from overseas. Last year, dancers came from Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland and Wellington to participate in the international section. The numbers of local dancers taking part in the national section are so great that elimination heats are run off. The top 3 from each heat go into the finals.

When it comes to entertaining, Apiti Nicholas has it over Dominic by 9 years. In 1961 she went to Tahiti with a Rarotongan group and stayed. Four years later she headed home and has been in the business ever since. After 30 years of entertaining, she said she's thinking of retiring - "quitting and going fishing", her favourite pastime. Apiti says she loves all kinds of music and all kinds of audiences - "as long as they clap and don't throw anything on me! I always clap for performers because I know it's a hard job. People think it's easy, but it's not."

Turning to the business of tourism, Dianna said that tourists come all year long to the Cooks,



Jeannine Tuavera, Dominic Fonoti, Apiti Nicholas, Taina White and Dianna Clarke in Victoria

Photo: Margaret Argue

about 50,000 in '92 with more expected in '93. She said the Tourism Authority is looking for gradual increases in numbers - no big spurts. The present number of 700 hotel rooms in the Cooks with occupancy around 85% will be boosted to 900 by the June opening of the new Sheraton complex. All the hotels have some or all local ownership with the Rarotongan being fully owned by the Government. Most of the smaller complexes are owner-operated.

Dominic said about 250 people, of a total population of 170,000, are employed in the industry in Samoa. Aggie's has 340 rooms and the Kitano Tusitala, the other large hotel in Apia, presently has 97 rooms but will expand in late 1993. It is 100% Japanese owned. Landing rights for JAL are being sought. Because of the cyclones and the consequent setback to tourism, Dominic feels it's a "good time for the Japanese to come in and liven up the place".

Finally, SPPF noted that Dominic didn't mention his tattooing on show night. He replied, "Well, I would have but we were limited to 9-10 minutes each. That's the thing about promotions you know - just a little bit and come to Samoa to see the rest!"



# Taking Tourism to the Bush

by Sean Weaver

*Sean Weaver is a research biologist doing his doctorate at University of Canterbury, Wellington. He is attached to the Fiji government's National Environment Management Project.*

The Fiji tourism industry has placed almost all its eggs into the same basket of clichés -- white sand, bright sun, blue sea and a fruit cocktail sipped to the distant sound of drums beating in a token of traditionalism. Indeed, many travellers who currently venture to Fiji do so with the specific intention of relaxing beneath the rustling sway of palm trees on a beach somewhere. In the past there may have been ample justification for the dominance of this form of tourism in Fiji, but in recent times Fiji's principal market (Australia) has been indicating a growing boredom with what it is presently offering. Other countries in the Pacific are also growing rapidly as competitors in the tourism game, selling more of the same. Fiji needs to market something unique.

Another Fiji does exist, however, where waterfalls plunge from precipices through warm, teeming rainforest that shrieks with a commotion of bird song. And to add delight to the mystic of these magnificent forests is the fact that no danger is concealed by the damp green curtain of the Fijian jungle. Unlike other island groups to the west, Fiji supports no crocodiles, malaria, or leaches, and yet its land masses surpass those to the east in size, biological diversity, and forest cover.

Fiji, however, is by no means exempt from the unfortunate phenomenon of tropical deforestation and accordingly its remaining rainforests call out for protection. These unique, complex, and spectacular ecosystems are no less vulnerable to the onslaught of the timber trade than any other. However, many of Fiji's rainforests still lie quietly undisturbed by the dismal clamour of machinery and chain-saws and await

appreciation by those who might venture to experience them.

The Fiji Government recognizes the need for greater protection of its surviving rainforests, but is having difficulty in pinpointing solutions to the wide ranging need for income, whilst sustaining the fabric of these ecosystems. There is a compelling need to provide for the needs of tribal owners of these resources if they are to allow their forests to remain. Trees, once cut down, can usually fetch a good price, and because of this Fiji's forest heritage is so often squeezed through a mill. But there are alternatives. Listen to this.

It was mid-morning as I sat in the clear warm stream water if the Busa River near the constant muffled roar of a waterfall. Above me a hanging forest quivered in the gentle breeze that wafted up from Viti Levu's Coral Coast not far from the Naviti Resort. It was a quiet time to contemplate after being shown through the ruins

of an ancient temple site, built by people of the mysterious Nanga religion that once reigned in these parts well before the first Europeans set eyes on these islands. A hot spring empties itself into the Busa river a short way upstream from the temple ruins. Waikatakata, or "hot water" as its translation reveals, provides a new twist in the story of development in Fiji.

The newly established Waikatakata Forest Park with its archaeological treasures is an experiment in Land-owner-operated, nature-based tourism. Cham-

pioned by the Native Lands Trust Board and the Forestry Department, Waikatakata, if successful, could help pave the way for the much needed diversification in Fiji's tourism industry. Many other well kept secrets in Fiji are slowly being revealed as the tourism industry begins to cherish these jewels of Fijian heritage. This move into nature tourism will broaden the meaning of forestry, as conservation of rainforests will become a commercial activity.

Fiji possesses countless examples of potential nature tourism localities. On Viti Levu, near Nadi, the Mt Evans Range leaps to over 1200 metres and dominates the inland horizon with high forests tossing waterfalls from its steep volcanic flanks. A humble nature tourism venture had been quietly operating in this area where tourists are taken by villagers to witness these majestic

(Continued on page 18)



Photo: Sean Weaver

Hiking in Wainivodo creek a few hours away from Suva. Flanked by the Korobasabasaga and Medrausucu ranges, this rain forest is a haven for adventurers.



# Tourism Development Vis-a-Vis Dependency

by John Phillip Mooney

*John Mooney is a regional land use planner and CUSO cooperant, working for the Government of Vanuatu since December 1990.*

The Government of Vanuatu has high hopes for tourism industry development as the newest panacea for this small nation's social and economic woes. Vanuatu's outstanding cultural and environmental attributes give ample testimony to tour promoters' boasts that visitors will experience the "untouched paradise". Islands that comprise this South Pacific archipelago can offer the adventurous visitor a full-tilt anthropological experience in remote villages, world-class scuba diving, the comforts and anxieties of luxury resorts and casinos, or for the sun-bunnies among us - pristine coral reefs and sand beaches that are as common as coconuts. The manner in which these assets can be used to realize socio-economic benefits for the indigenous people of this region, given the pitfalls of conventional tourism development, is a concern of industry development strategists. If prudent in its approach to industry development, Vanuatu has an opportunity to reduce the level of dependency that is reflected in virtually all other economic sectors.

A gobbledygook of economic indicators provides one perspective on the outlook for industry development. Tourism accounted for 8% of Vanuatu's GNP in 1989<sup>1</sup> and had a 54% share of merchandise export earnings. Earnings increased from US\$1.2 million in 1987 to US\$3.3 million in 1991, better than those from the conventional export commodities (copra, cocoa, beef and timber). During 1991, 39,784 visitors used airline package tours and 37,023 arrived as part of cruise ship tours, representing an all time high in visitor arrivals. Occupancy in the capital region of Port Vila is currently running at better than 64%, but in the northern and southern regions, tourism is still in the incubator.

However, there is another perspective - the lessons from Port Vila's experience indicate that, although on the upswing, benefits to local people are minimal. More than 95% of services and facilities are owned by foreigners; jobs for locals offer low wages that perpetuate the low income, low equity spiral with which the country is afflicted. Cruise ship operators have the upper hand in this arena with limited spending leaking from these floating resorts, yet having access and use of resources at random. Tour operators are astute, paying the least but getting the most.

A review of the obstacles facing Vanuatu 13 years after political 'independens' provides an interesting insight into the dependency versus self-reliance conundrum. UNDP Human Development Report 1992 statistics indicate that 37.4% of Vanuatu's 1990 GNP was derived from official development assistance. Although by world standards Vanuatu is small, with a population of 140,000 and a national budget of approximately US\$8.9 million, effective administration of adequate education and health services remains an elusive objective. Post-colonial Vanuatu has yet to achieve economic independence; the commercial/industrial sectors are dominated by expatriate investors who, although not allowed by law to own 'kastom' land, control the majority of land in the urban 'marketplace' through lease tenure. Although jobs are provided, wages are low. As a tax haven for investors, the conventional sources of domestic revenue that support improvements in education and health services are not available. These short comings are critical to the 'dependency' scenario - low productivity, low incomes and low levels of living being mutually reinforcing phenomena<sup>2</sup>. The subsequent ennui - low motivation, poor attitudes and low self-esteem - has to be acknowledged in any development programming aimed at dependency reduction. To ignore these symptoms perpetuates the classical economic cost-benefit

orientation which is a disadvantage to social development when applied inappropriately. There is a growing awareness in local and central agencies that self-reliance is the most formidable tool in reducing the level of dependency, but little evidence of policy and commitment towards achieving that goal. Effective policy requires a strategy with a bias towards sustainable initiatives that minimize revenue syphoning and realize increased revenue sharing. This ultimately means ni-Vanuatu owned and operated business. In the face of limited funds for investment, limited experience, little or no networking and unsecured markets, a call for a 'new approach' is easier said than done.

To that end, on the island of Espiritu Santo, Luganville Municipal Council (LMC), representing the second largest urban area in Vanuatu, has adopted a comprehensive strategy for social and economic development programming. Programming is basically an extension and diversification of the traditional market place where garden produce is sold primarily for local consumption. The Santo Market is one of the few remaining pieces of land within the Town's commercial district that ni-Vanuatu control and a popular community meeting place. The methodology calls for an inward-outward looking strategy for industry development that will co-ordinate structural change and provide technical and financial support to urban and rural based individuals or groups. Support is provided in the form of organizational development, project co-ordination, resource commitment and an effective marketing strategy.

Diversification of this important economic centre is being coordinated by LMC under the Waterfront Development Program. Expansion is taking place in five phases (1990-1995) and includes the sale of agricultural produce, restaurant facilities, handicraft retail outlets, a Women's Affairs Centre, construction



of a cultural centre and museum, and introduction of tourism facilities. Although this development is relatively small-scale, the process is complicated by the multi-dimensional nature of its social and economic ambitions - social benefits in the form of training and experience share the billing with economic concerns. The focus is not toward overturning the existing structure, but rather gaining a piece of the action. Without an arena in which to participate, local prospects remain poor. LMC's aims are to provide an opportunity for indigenous people to learn the ropes at an economy of scale that is appropriate for sustaining exposure and participation. Traditional cultural preferences are towards steady-state economics if equitable, and local people are astute enough to know who benefits most from their labours.

With the multitude of aid donors in Vanuatu, it is not uncommon to hear the phrase 'project document' - "Got an idea, make a project document." This refers to the project description given to those who provide financial aid ranging from unit purchases of tools or equipment to major capital works projects. With the level of dependency as it is, financial assistance is *de riguer*. However, like many planning experiences, although it is offered with the best of intentions, financial assistance often realizes the worst of consequences. Relative to the dependency syndrome, an important feature of LMC's approach to financing these programmes has been to identify a self-reliance factor before preparing any project document. By introducing programmes at a scale that requires minimal outside financial assistance, LMC is entrenching self-reliance at an earlier stage of development - in a sense a form of esoteric import substitution. For instance, many projects following 'independents' required expensive materials imported from the donor countries and many included "technical expertise" that inflated costs. Aside from the odd short-term job during construction or spin-off to local producers (for the most part expatriates), little benefit trickled into ni-Vanuatu pockets. The disadvantage is not exclusively economic; for lo-



Photo: John Mooney

Vanuatu dancers - putting their foot forward in tourism development

cals the structure becomes, 'the one the French built', 'the British one', 'the Australian one', 'the Canadian one', etc., rarely 'haus blong mifala'. Self-esteem and cultural pride are essential elements to improved attitudes and motivation. If the basic objectives of planning are to be realized, policy makers must be educated to the fact that development is both a physical reality and a state of mind<sup>3</sup>.

A programme which has harnessed the support and interest of the private and public sector is LMC's Tourism Development Program. In July of 1992, the Municipal Council organized the Santo Tourism Industry Development Association (STIDA) to co-ordinate tourism related activities within the region. The first order of business was to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Tourism Office (NTO). The relevance of this document is in establishing a critical, and previously missing link, between the national and local players. Of equal importance is the decentralization of control and authority of the industry that the region will gain. With the agreement signed, and support of the national agency, STIDA has taken a seat at the negotiating table, become an active player by preparing a work plan and strategy that reflects local preferences.

STIDA'S initial strategy is to focus on the problems posed by ineffective tour coordination, particularly arrangements with cruise ship promoters, and develop a marketing strategy for the region. Santo has experienced ship visits to the region, but these tours have provided minimal benefits. For example, a ship with as many as 1400 persons will visit Santo, but avoid the principal port of call at Luganville. The ship's operators prefer mooring at the exquisite Champagne Beach on the island's east coast and running visitors ashore in a motor launch to lounge on the beach for the day, purchase a few trinkets, drink from a coconut, etc. A financial arrangement was made with the 'kastom' owners of the beach, but since 1991 no funds have been remitted - a good deal for the promoter, but of questionable benefit to the region.

The functions of STIDA are modelled on Vanuatu's National Tourism Office Act which, if applied properly, addresses many pertinent dependency issues. For example, "...endeavour to preserve and stimulate pride in the cultural heritage of Vanuatu...prevent developments, whether or not economic benefits may be gained, that have a harmful effect on the social and cultural life of the people...encourage the greatest possible ni-Vanuatu participation in



the industry." NTO has been ineffective in addressing these broad social objectives because of the nature of tourism in the capital region and the subsequent disadvantages administrators face. The Board of Directors are influenced by cost-benefit economics having a financial bias, a strong lobby by expatriate investors who own most of the facilities, and frontline exposure to central government bureaucracy. The advantage a regional association has over its national counterpart is in administering a smaller scale of economy and having a work plan that integrates socio-economic concerns.

To that end, LMC's Waterfront Development Program, in combination with STIDA and the National Tourism Office, will pursue a more equitable arrangement with the tour operators. The strategy proposes a pattern of tourism events scheduling which highlights traditional cultural heritage in the form of arts, music, theatre and lifestyle exhibition. Authorities will petition the ship operators to participate in the annual cultural festivals that will be held over a period of five days. Santo hosts an annual 'Independens Day' celebration and experience has shown that the cost of preparing a schedule of events for 5000 persons, in combination with maintenance requirements, is substantial. Events will require 2-3 ships to dock at Luganville at scattered intervals over that period and pay an entry visa fee.

NTO and Tour Vanuatu, the country's national tour coordinator, have been reluctant to confront tour promoters on the issue because of a fear that they would reroute to other destinations. Tiro Fanua, Lord Mayor of Luganville Municipality, reflects the tenor of local legislators' views in saying "Who cares? They come at their own time, and they don't pay when they do! What do we lose?" The advantage Council hopes to gain by playing hardball at this stage of tourism development is in becoming an active partner in establishing the future of the industry. LMC's programme will provide a venue for greater regional participation, promote institutional development

and training, and stimulate pride in what Vanuatu's cultural heritage has to offer. It is estimated that 250-300 local people will be employed as performers during these events, and approximately 30% of gross revenues will be distributed throughout the region. In addition, the retail outlets and service facilities constructed by LMC will offer 70 additional opportunities for local entrepreneurs to participate.

Until consistency and frequency of scheduling is achieved, the programme cannot lay claim to industry development. However, it is hoped that by the end of 1993 tour ship promoters will be encouraged, if necessary with some arm-twisting from the central government, to participate in this programming. At that time, it is estimated that over 300 people will have supplemented their incomes at the equivalent of six months wages commonly earned in the area.

Local authorities have a renewed confidence in their ability to manage regional affairs and are taking steps towards harnessing the co-operation of other regions. It is hoped that these labours are rewarded via agreement with tour operators on the scheduling of increased visits to the area to coincide with the proposed events. There are indications this will happen; scheduled visits for January 1993 will equal the total number of visits for all of 1992. During the writing of this article, a cruise ship with 300 passengers visited this small town and were given a preview of what will become the mainstay of local tourist entertainment. Dancers from Mota Lava, Vanua Lava and musicians from Pentecost Island culminated morning and afternoon performances with a lively send-off at the wharf that saw Santo's most recent visitors whistling, cheering and, perhaps most comforting to local people, throwing money in appreciation.

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3. Todaro. *ibid*.

## Taking Tourism to the Bush

(continued from page 15)

falls. Further north, a concoction of attractions awaits potential tourists with the forest reserves around Nadarivatu, the Mr Tomaniivi Nature Reserve surrounding Fiji's highest peak, the magnificent Fiji kauri forest in the Wabu creek catchment, Sigatoka Trail, and the Monasavu Lake. To the south, near Suva, the forest-clad Namosi Peaks pierce the sky and the nearby Sovi Basin sinks into the landscape with its edges held high by a crowning range of mountains.

On Vanua Levu the forested ridge back of the Tunuloa Peninsula overlooks Natewa Bay to the north and Taveuni island to the south. The Waisali Amenity Reserve goes unnoticed beside the highway on the crest of the main Vanua Levu axial mountains. The Vunivia Catchment near Udu Point has a wide range of lowland forest types, extensive everglades of mangrove swamp and a vast reef system off shore.

The "Garden Island" of Taveuni rises steeply from beneath the ocean carrying with it the wettest forests in Fiji that are rinsed with more than 10m of rain a year. It is drained by enormous waterfalls that in places plunge directly into the sea. On its eastern fringe the people of Bouma have taken to showing their rainforest, rivers and falling water to tourists as means of gathering an income. Like Waikatakata, Bouma has received much attention and assistance from the New Zealand Government for the construction of nature trails and tourist facilities.

But of course the test is in the tasting and the ability of nature-based tourism to live up to the commercial expectations of its advocates is still to be demonstrated. Indeed the survival of many natural forest areas in this Pacific Island landscape could well depend on the attention they receive from international travellers. Otherwise tribal landowners will have no choice but to use logging as the only tangible means of gaining an income from their magnificent forests. [Used with permission of the author. Originally appeared in *Pacific Islands Monthly*, Dec 1991]



# The Impacts of Tourism in Small-Scale Societies: An Illustration on Yap

by Mark Mansperger

*Mark Mansberger recently completed a PhD in Cultural Anthropology. His dissertation research focused on the impacts of tourism on cultural minorities and small-scale societies.*

In the 1960s, with improvements in air transportation, tourism began to expand in Micronesia (Dunlap 1985). By the 1970s, tourism was well established, not only in Micronesia, but in many other areas of the Pacific. This was the period described as the international tourism boom (Roville 1988); the world has had an increasing tourism industry since that time. One of the numerous consequences of the rapid expansion of world travel is increased contacts between tourists and the peoples of small-scale societies (Mansperger 1992a). The fieldwork was part of a larger study (Mansperger 1992b) on this issue.

While on Yap, I lived in a rather traditional village on Map Island. The village is located approximately 20 kilometers north of the capital, Colonia, which is on the southern island of the four island cluster known collectively as Yap (see map). Staying in this type of temporary residence can be called "village tourism" and is practiced by many visitors who travel to Yap. Village tourism captures many of the benefits of tourism while incurring few of its costs. For about US\$10 a day, the family I resided with provided me with a small hut in which to sleep and three meals a day, plus of course an occasional "chew" of betel nut. This arrangement allowed my hosts to receive the profits of my visit and placed them in control of the tourism enterprise. Moreover, through the many conversations that the family and I had, there was a welcome exchange of cultural information, another benefit of tourism. Village tourism is a benevolent form of tourism which seems to be increasing on Yap.

Of the 2400 tourists who visited Yap in 1991, approximately 850 were scuba divers (Yap Office of Tourism 1991). Many of these divers stopped at Yap while on a diving circuit that tends to include Belau, Guam, and Chuuk (Truk). To accommodate and attract more divers, an international class diving hotel has recently opened in Colonia. The establishment, named the Manta Ray Bay Hotel after the huge manta rays divers come to see, is locally owned and employs approximately 60 Yapese. Many of the benefits of tourism on the island arise from diving. Two other hotels have recently opened to accommodate divers and other tourists. The diminutive car rental businesses and restaurants are also receiving more customers. Hence, tourism on Yap is achieving one of its potential benefits, creating new jobs and contributing to the process of economic development. As more tourists come to the island, they also bring in more foreign exchange. This is of utmost importance to the Yapese because they are facing a \$13.5 million budget cut in nine years when the Compact of Free Association that they have with the United States expires.

A potential problem with diving is that it can be damaging to the reef surrounding Yap which is such an integral part of the island ecosystem. Many Yapese still fish for subsistence and rely on the ocean for that and other purposes. However, at its current level, scuba diving on Yap poses little environmental risk.

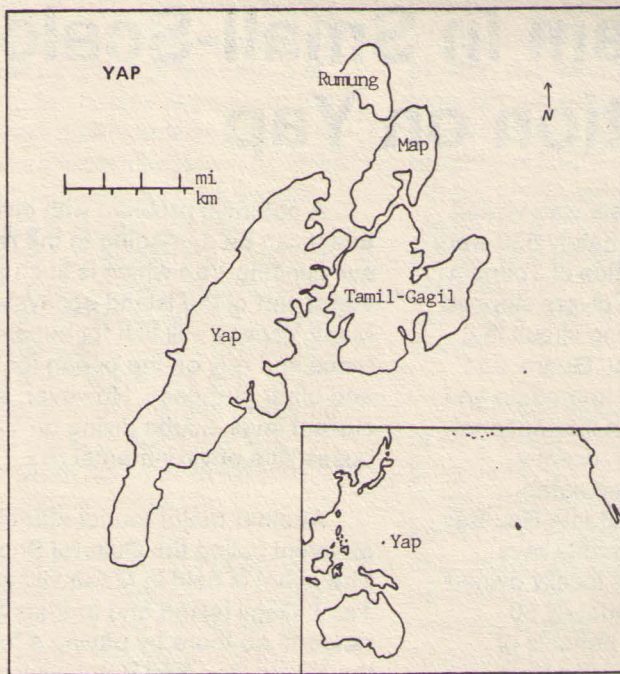
Another major tourist attraction is an event called the Cultural Show. The event is held in Maaq village on Tamil-Gagil Island and tourists arrange to go there by paying a fee at the Manta Ray Bay Hotel, which provides a small bus for transportation. When they arrive at the village, tourists visit a traditionally constructed men's house and are given an opportunity to talk with local residents. Native foods are then offered and the main feature of the show begins. This entails about 30 Yapese pre-adults performing several traditional dances, portraying the ancient odyssey of young men travelling to Belau to quarry stone money. This type of performance is common and often demanded when tourists visit small-scale societies. On occasion, performers are coerced into staging shows and receive little of the profits.



Young dancers preparing to perform at a Cultural Show

Photo: Mark Mansperger





Yap Island

Map: Mark Mansberger

I was glad to discover in Yap that this was not occurring. The young dancers seemed to enjoy performing and most of the profits were allocated into a scholarship fund for them.

The last major tourist attraction on Yap is Bechyal village, located on Map Island. Tourists travel to the village by taking taxis or going on hotel sponsored tours, for Bechyal is located approximately 22 kilometers north of Colonia where most tourists find lodging. A US\$2.50 entrance fee is paid to enter the village and tourists are given a guided tour of the traditional artifacts of Yapese culture. In the village are pieces of shell money, fish traps, a community and men's house, a sailing canoe and numerous pieces of the stone money for which the island is famous. Yap is sometimes called the "Island of Stone Money". With tourists wandering around and only a couple of families living within the vicinity of Bechyal, the village actually has the atmosphere of an open air museum. Handicrafts are also for sale and tourists can arrange for a performance of traditional dances and songs, if they are willing to pay the high price (\$US300/performance).

As a tourist attraction, Bechyal has numerous impacts on Yapese society. Many of these types of

toms may slow down the rate of cultural change and help the Yapese and others maintain their identity and sense of well-being in a transforming world. On the other hand, the marketing and selling of traditions can lead to the commercialisation of important institutions. Crafts and dances can become unauthentic relative to their original form and function; this may contribute to the erosion of indigenous systems of meaning which are so fundamentally a part of all cultures.

Social conflict and cultural disruptions have also emerged with the opening of Bechyal to tourists. The entrance fees to Bechyal are not being shared with other local land owners as custom dictates. This has created some bad feelings. Moreover, the lack of distribution of profits is symptomatic of the overall decline in sharing occurring on the island. One person said to me that money is making people stingy and thereby harming community spirit. The decline in sharing is more a consequence of the overall process of "modernisation" than it is a specific result of tourism, but in other areas where tourism occurs on a larger scale, the relationship between tourism and declines in social reciprocity are stronger.

impact are also present in other small-scale societies that tourists frequent. First, the presence of traditional architecture and handicrafts and the performance of native songs and dances can be seen positively as a type of cultural preservation. The continuation of these traditional cus-

The village where I resided lay on the path between Bechyal and the end of the road where tourists had to get out of their vehicles and begin the two kilometer walk to Bechyal. Having tourists walk through their villages is sometimes annoying to the Yapese because of the tourists' many violations of Yapese etiquette. It is the Yapese custom to walk in single file, not side by side, and when entering a strange village, as the tourists are doing as they pass through, to carry an object in one hand; open-handed strangers are perceived as a threat in their culture. Women in Yapese society are also supposed to keep their thighs covered and this is expected of tourists as well. Not surprisingly, most visitors violate these customs. Finally, the Yapese become offended by tourists who wander off the trails and intrude into their private living areas to take photographs.

The benefits that Yapese receive from tourism are more jobs and economic development, foreign exchange, cross-cultural contacts and perhaps some cultural preservation. The costs includes slight disruptions in reciprocity and village serenity, some social conflict and perhaps the beginning of commercialisation of some traditional institutions. For the most part, however, the benefits of tourism seem to greatly outweigh the costs and Yap could serve as a model of how to do tourism right.

The types of impacts that occur on Yap can usually be found in other countries where tourists visit in large numbers. Unfortunately, other tourism situations are frequently not as benign as on Yap. In many small-scale societies, there are higher costs and the detrimental impacts of tourism often exceed the benefits. These additional costs may include human displacement to make room for golf courses and other facilities, subsistence and kinship disruptions, environmental degradation, inflation, increasing inequality, erosion of traditions, crowding and crime such as prostitution. Tragically, local people sometimes have to incur these costs without receiving the tourism profits. This occurs because the powerful



international resort chains are able to dominate host economies and politics, consequently reducing local autonomy. Hence, the majority of tourism profits return to the United States, Japan and Europe, homes to most international tourists. Host societies are sometimes left with a higher state of dependency on the outside world than before the establishment of tourism enterprises.

I began to seek reasons for the relatively benevolent effects of tourism on Yap. The lack of abundant infrastructure such as good roads and dependable tap water, in addition to the recent development of tourist attractions have meant that international resorts have not yet focused on Yap. The absence of heavy investment by foreign resorts has helped to keep the scale of tourism rather small and allowed the benevolent situation to continue. The small scale of tourism also allows the Yapese to control the tourism situation and provide for the tourists' needs themselves. All tourist accommodations on the island are locally

owned. Local ownership is critical for keeping the profits on Yap and in other host countries.

Another contributing factor is the resistance of many Yapese to large-scale cultural change. The Yapese tend to be unwilling to risk sacrificing significant portions of their culture in order to bring in more tourist dollars. The largest obstacle to resorts on Yap is probably the indigenous land tenure system. Land ownership is what determines the wealth and status of many Yapese; therefore it is crucially important to them. This situation makes the Yapese very reluctant to relinquish control of their land to foreigners. Nearly all land on Yap is privately owned and most parcels are relatively small. Therefore, foreign hotel and golf course operators would need to get the cooperation of numerous residents before they could begin construction. This is impeding the development of large, damaging forms of tourism on the islands. My analysis of tourism in small-scale societies suggests that the preservation of indigenous land

tenure systems (where they are rather egalitarian) is one of the most important steps that can be taken to minimize the detrimental consequences of tourism.

Important lessons from the tourism situation on Yap can be applied to other societies. In order to moderate tourism's costs, it is important to prevent it from becoming too large for the host society, to maintain local control of the tourist infrastructure and to preserve the indigenous land tenure system.

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### Tourist arrivals in Tourism Council of the South Pacific countries, 1992.

Country	Australia	New Zealand	USA	Canada	United Kingdom	Germany	Other Europe	Japan	Other Asia	Pacific Islands	Other Countries	Total 1992	Total 1991
Cook Islands	5,691	16,600	5,969	3,747	-	-	13,702	-	496	3,631	173	50,009	39,984
Fiji	87,395	37,227	34,802	12,602	16,795	-	29,513	35,960	7,664	15,627	949	278,534	259,350
French Polynesia	6,364	5,036	37,553	3,277	3,886	8,472	33,718	14,783	-	3,385	7,145	123,619	120,938
Kiribati	384	102	448	-	88	-	-	123	-	1,079	313	2,537	2,100
Marshall Islands	226	178	3,052	98	170	92	148	632	840	1,316	45	6,797	6,741
New Caledonia	16,964	8,535	892	-	-	-	18,012	26,020	968	8,752	697	80,840	80,930
Niue	81	1,163	70	11	6	17	19	9	-	286	6	1,668	993
PNG	19,038	1,941	4,857	731	2,605	1,001	2,175	1,853	4,946	1,034	352	40,553	37,366
Solomon Islands	3,628	1,416	680	128	736	167	313	600	678	1,738	30	10,114	11,105
Tonga	2,992	4,746	3,689	374	875	1,546	1,355	704	655	2,043	74	19,053	22,007
Tuvalu	100	73	143	21	45	-	131	42	-	257	50	862	969
Vanuatu	23,767	6,441	1,119	224	556	242	1,340	844	628	7,020	472	42,653	39,548
Western Samoa	4,653	9,486	4,830	371	678	2,111	1,558	542	-	18,989	526	43,744	39,414
Total 1992	171,283	92,944	98,104	21,584	26,440	13,648	101,984	82,112	16,875	65,157	10,832	700,963	
Total 1991	166,351	86,535	92,063	24,437	24,904	12,420	94,005	71,802	16,042	58,789	12,097		661,445
Total Change 1991/92	2,932	6,409	6,041	(2,853)	1,536	1,228	7,979	10,310	833	6,638	(1,265)		
Percentage Change 1991/92	1.7	7.4	6.6	-11.7	6.2	9.9	8.5	14.4	5.2	10.8	-10.5		

Table: Islands Business Pacific, Jun/93



# The Choice of Development and the Development of Choices

by James Hewitt

*(James Hewitt is a pseudonym. Some place names have been changed to avoid endangering people who contributed to this work.)*

## Introduction

Irian Jaya is the western half of New Guinea, an island that is home to peoples of unparalleled cultural diversity. This island supports the largest remaining rainforest in Asia and the Pacific and is rich in natural resources. Irian Jaya, the easternmost province of Indonesia, is the target of resource extraction and industrial development. This plunder is driven by the thirst of the neo-colonial Indonesian regime for foreign exchange earnings. At current destruction rates, it is unknown how long this fragile ecosystem will survive.

A second currency earning scheme is the promotion of international tourism. While tourism and industrialisation both tend to have destructive impacts on indigenous communities and the environment, tourism is the least destructive of the two options. Considering that tourism and resource development are mutually exclusive (tourism and resource extraction compete for the same land-use and tourist destinations cannot neighbour clearcuts, oil rigs or open pit mines), the promotion of tourism in Irian Jaya rather than resource extraction could be a better option.

To understand the implications of development in Irian Jaya, it is necessary to discuss its recent history. On the eve of being granted independence by the Dutch, Irian Jaya was taken over by Indonesia in 1963 and has remained a province of the Javanese-led Indonesian state. Indonesian domination has been maintained by an extensive military presence. The annexation has been

supported by the international community, whose tacit approval has allowed it to share in the massive profits derived from 'development' projects in Irian Jaya. The indigenous peoples of Irian Jaya have suffered greatly. Opposition to annexation has been suppressed ruthlessly. Since the invasion, an estimated 100,000-150,000 Papuans of an original population of only 1 million have been killed.

## The Threat of Raw Resource Extraction

Since the takeover, Indonesia has worked in cooperation with transnational corporations to plunder the vast natural resources of Irian Jaya. Over 70% of Irian Jaya's 41.8 millions hectares of land has been allocated by the government for the extraction of forest, mineral and oil resources. The mine of the U.S. firm, Freeport McMoran, has levelled a sacred mountain to provide the company with over 30 million tonnes of copper. The International Nickel Company of Canada (INCO) plans to do the same in the eastern highlands of Irian Jaya. Consultation with indigenous populations and compensation for expropriation of their land is consistently neglected. When stating their objections to this process, indigenous people often face punishment including imprisonment.

Indonesia is servicing an international debt load of US\$75 billion and is an annual recipient of external aid of approximately US\$5 billion (1992 figures). Considering that lending agencies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund are promoting 'structural adjustment' programs for debtor economies, which dictate the dismantling of indigenous land tenure systems and the expansion of resource extraction, the future for the peoples and natural environments of Irian Jaya looks bleak.

## The Threat of Tourism

In addition to resource extraction, Indonesia has recently been attracted to Irian Jaya by the possibility of foreign exchange earnings via tourism. Appreciating the mutually exclusive nature of prominent and successful tourism and raw resource extraction, the development of tourism in Irian Jaya would appear to be a healthy alternative. This, however, may not be the case. If one reviews the experiences of other nations that have been 'developed' through tourism, the prospects for Irian Jaya might seem limited.

One does not have to look far to find examples of the deleterious effects of tourism in developing nations - Hawaii, Fiji, Tahiti-Polynesia, the Cook Islands, Thailand, even Indonesia. The creation of a tourist industry in such 'developing' nations has nurtured similar pernicious results and has generated limited domestic benefits. Investment is generally supplied by external interests, often Japanese or American, and thus is immune to local pressures and concerns. Labour is commonly imported and foreign exchange earnings are usually spent elsewhere on marketing and the provision of imported souvenirs, foods, and luxury items to satisfy the insatiable and lavish diet of the international tourist. Investment communities, airlines and large-scale tour operators often require 'favourable' land grants and tax-free status before considering their involvement in the implementation of a tourist industry. As a result, huge earnings are repatriated and the 'trickle-down' and foreign exchange impacts on indigenous peoples are minimal.

While indigenous communities have limited access to the benefits of a tourist industry in their homelands, they are not excluded from the deleterious side-effects. For indigenous peoples, land is life.



Whether fisher-folk, hunter-gatherers or swidden agriculturalists, it is the land that sustains the people. Most tourist resorts are built on land expropriated from indigenous people, usually without adequate or any compensation. Dislocated from land and livelihood, indigenous people live a marginalized, impoverished existence on the fringe of a first-world luxury tourist development.

Subsequently, indigenous peoples are forced to survive by performing the menial and degrading functions that traditionally support a tourist industry. Men and women, young and old, sell imported souvenirs for minimal wages or profit; or they are compelled to barter other goods - shells, stuffed birds and animals, cultural artifacts - often endemic, once sacred and now endangered, denuding their homelands, sacred places and vital concepts of conscience, morals and connectedness to their land. Women and girls are often driven to prostitution or are forced to work in near slavery conditions to manufacture the cheap souvenirs, garments or other consumer items that fuel a tourist industry.

### **Tourism and Irian Jaya**

In the last decade, Indonesia has done its best to attract the international tourist dollar to its shores. Bali is a classic example of this effort. For years tourists have travelled in droves to this island of beach resorts. While a huge percentage of the foreign exchange earnings has left Indonesia in the aforementioned manner, the sheer magnitude of travel in the region has provided the cash incentive for Indonesia to pursue the same tactic elsewhere in the country. 1991 was marked by the 'Visit Indonesia Year' tourism campaign. Now the campaign is "Go East Archipelago".

Not without attention is Irian Jaya. Irian Jaya's north coast is scattered with islands and beaches of postcard beauty. The central highlands are as magnificent and offer mountainous rainforest hiking accompanied by the mystique and timelessness of indigenous peoples who live

today as they did forty thousand years ago. On the south coast is the largest swamp on earth, within which live the Asmat people. Tourists are attracted by Asmat wood carving of world renown and by legends of head-hunting and tribal warfare.

In each of these regions, large-scale tourism has very real potential. Biak Island in the north, with its vast beaches and coral reefs, has already been integrated into a comprehensive tourism proposal. This master plan, conceived in Jakarta and the boardrooms of international tourist corporations, has proposed the intensification or implementation of massive tourist investment in the 'five Bs' of Indonesia: Bali, Borobodur, Batu, Butung and Biak.

The impacts of tourism on indigenous communities have been largely negative to date. With a tourist trade only in its infancy, Irian Jaya is already exhibiting many of the harmful effects of tourism.

### **Biak and the North Coast**

On Biak, off Irian Jaya's north coast, the fishing community of Semau has been forcibly relocated from its traditional coastal village to make way for construction of a Japanese-owned resort. Government 'compensation' involved the building of 'New Semau'. However, while Semau villagers have lived a coastal lifestyle for tens of thousands of years, New Semau was built inland, away from the ocean that is the source of Semau livelihood. As one villager noted, "Now, to feed my family, I am forced to walk hours each day to and from the ocean carrying my boat!"

Off Biak's southeast coast lie the

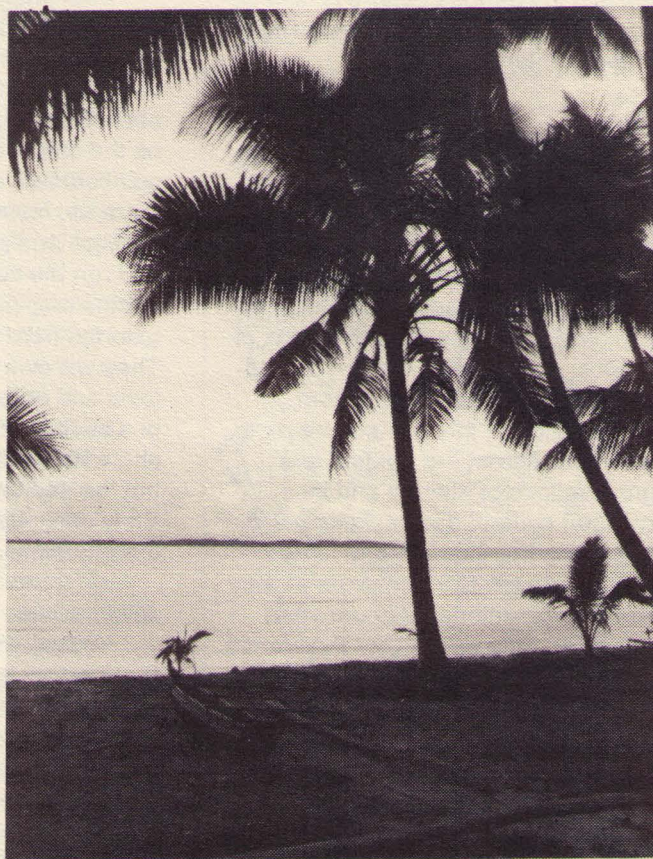
idyllic Padaidos Islands whose white sand beaches, palm trees and turquoise waters mean only money to the Indonesian government. However, for the people of the Padaidos, these islands are home. The government has plans for the development of casinos, golf courses and tourist resorts on the islands, but has yet to consult with the traditional land-owners.

The communities surrounding the Biak airport have been relocated to make way for an enlarged, Japanese-funded airstrip. None of the affected communities will see compensation. In Biak Town, local women are already being prostituted.

The magnificent Bird of Paradise and many species of sea turtle once abundant in the region are now endangered, but can regularly be found stuffed and ready for purchase in back-alley souvenir shops catering to the international tourist.

### **The Highlands**

In the highlands, the allure and growing popularity of trekking



**Biak Island - Foreign-owned resort complexes are slated to push villagers off this land**

Photo: James Hewitt



through awesome rainforest and mountain meadows to witness the tribal peoples living as they have for thousands of years is rapidly altering the land and people. The Dani people now pose with their mumified ancestors for loose change, seeming to have forgotten the sacred value in respectful stewardship.

Villagers leave their families and traditional ways, drifting to Wamena and other small urban towns in the hope of capturing some of the tourist dollar. Presently it is the men who are most affected as they attempt to fill a void in their existence which was imposed on them by church and state (missionaries and the Government of Indonesia) through the banning of fundamental aspects of their traditional men's culture, the most prominent of which was ritual warfare. Once detached from their traditional village and unable to eke out an existence in the unfamiliar surroundings of the modern towns, Dani men live a meaningless existence and are forced to sell their ancestral artifacts or beg for hand-outs. Marginalisation and commoditisation of the rich indigenous culture is now becoming prevalent in a growing region of the highlands.

### Asmat

In Irian Jaya's southern swamp, homeland of the Asmat people, the situation is similar. The combined impact of banning much of traditional Asmat ritualistic culture, the import by foreigners of money and tobacco (which cost money) and the influx of tourists (a source of money) is leading to marginalisation and commoditisation of this rich culture as well. The Asmat are subject to a growing loss of identity and increased cultural decay. People are becoming increasingly consumed with the desire to incorporate money into their traditional economy that has tidily done without for thousands of years. The attraction is now so compelling that they sell carvings or priceless artifacts of tremendous ancestral and spiritual significance to purchase cigarettes or clothing.

### The Effect of Transmigration

In Irian Jaya, there is another factor that marginalises indigenous communities from the decision-making, and potentially rewarding, aspects of tourism. Irian Jaya is presently subject to one of the largest social engineering projects ever undertaken in the world. The transmigration program is moving hundreds of thousands of Javanese and other Indonesians of Malay ethnicity from the crowded inner islands, primarily Java, to less populated outer islands such as Irian Jaya. One of the goals of the transmigration program is to make the indigenous Papuans (who are ethnically and culturally Melanesian) a minority in their own land. Another attribute of transmigration favourable to the goals of Indonesia is the fact that Javanese or Malay Indonesians have been a part of western-style monetary economy for centuries. Papuans have not. As a result, transmigrants hold not only all positions of authority and political control in Irian Jaya, they also dominate most of the economy. The tourist industry is no exception.

Transmigrants and other Indonesian immigrants are the labourers building the hotels, golf courses and other infrastructural necessities for the industry. They will be the ones staffing these hotels and golf courses, as well as the restaurants, banks and other tourist facilities and attractions. They own and run the souvenir shops and booths that sell the art and artifacts extorted from indigenous Papuans. They will own and operate the buses, taxis and other transportation needs of a successful tourist industry. In short, non-Papuan Indonesians control the economy now and will most likely continue to with the growth of the tourism industry.

### Alternatives

With all this said, it might seem that the local people can expect little from either the development of resource extraction industries or tourism in Irian Jaya. This however, for a number of reasons, does not have to be the case. The repressive Indonesian regime that is initiating the resource and tourist industries in

Irian Jaya is supported by our international community. Canada donates roughly \$50 million of aid to Indonesia annually and is the seventh largest contributor to Indonesia's debt portfolio. If the international community and individual nations so desired, we could collectively impose tremendous pressure on Indonesia - pressure for sound development alternatives for Irian Jaya and for just and humanitarian treatment of the peoples of the province.

The development of Irian Jaya, whether via resource extraction or tourism, is inevitable. The challenge facing the international community and the Papuan people is to ensure that this process is facilitated with the consent and involvement of the indigenous populations affected. To that end, in Indonesia and worldwide, there is already a network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supporting the efforts of indigenous Papuans. With increased support, NGOs can provide advocacy platforms to prevent the continued expropriation of indigenous lands and cultures. NGOs, with financial assistance, could provide low or no interest loans essential in enabling indigenous communities to participate in the development of their communities in a manner more suited to their needs and concerns. International support for community sustainability projects might also serve as a valuable compliment to development, providing indigenous people with alternatives to the new international economy which is rapidly engulfing them.

Indigenous communities worldwide have exhibited an amazing ability to reap the benefits of the land on which they are stewards without denuding their environment of its life supporting attributes. If we, the so called 'developed nations', allow the indigenous populations of Irian Jaya and elsewhere to integrate into a world economy at their speed and through their prescription, we would undoubtedly be provided with an alternate dimension of development far more sustainable and harmonious to the planet and its future generations.



# A Grotesque French Election in Polynesia

by Marie-Thérèse and Bengt Danielsson

The March election in French Polynesia proved once again how unfair colonial rule is for the islanders. It was the once-every-five-years "national" election for the French parliament during which residents of French Polynesia can elect only two of the 577 MPs. Consequently, these two representatives of the Polynesian people have always been unable during parliamentary sessions to achieve the adoption of their requests or reject decisions they deem unfavourable.

The only reform this time concerned the date of the local election, which in the past always occurred after the election had been held in France (so as to show Polynesians how to vote). As the first round of this election took place on March 13th in French Polynesia, one week earlier than in France, the first MP elected to the French National Assembly this time was the local candidate, Gaston Flosse. Flosse however, is more "metropolitan" than Polynesian; he is the son of a French businessman and for twenty years has been the leader of the local section of the French Gaulliste RPR Party.

His party boss, Jacques Chirac, who has not accepted President Mitterrand's nuclear moratorium and disarmament programme, immediately proclaimed that this election proved the majority of Polynesians are pro-French and pro-nuclear. The truth is that Flosse obtained the slight majority of 50.13% of votes in the small eastern constituency comprising the Marquesas and Tuamotu archipelagoes and eastern half of Tahiti, mainly because about half of the voters are "expat" French soldiers, sailors, nuclear technicians, government officials and businessmen.

But an unusually large number of Polynesians also voted for Flosse in the Marquesas and Tuamotu islands. Having been appointed prime

minister of the local government two years ago, he had since then often visited these remote islands on government vessels and airplanes to offer the inhabitants gifts and advantages. As the incumbent MP, Emile Vernaudon, did not have the means to begin his electoral campaign in this manner at such an early date, this is undoubtedly the main reason why he lost his five year old seat in the French parliament.

The total number of votes that Flosse obtained was nevertheless only 15,776. 15,692 Polynesians voted simultaneously for the five other candidates, who were in favour of independence and opposed to the resumption of nuclear testing at Moruroa. What made Chirac's statement even more inaccurate is that in the other, larger constituency comprising the western half of Tahiti and the Leeward and Austral islands, less than one fifth of the 41,369 votes were obtained on March 13 by the incumbent MP and former ally of Flosse, Alexandre Leontieff, who accepted the colonial system.

Even more revealing is that the most successful candidates were the mayor of Papeete, Jean Juventin (with 13,822 votes), who proposed a Cook Islands type of internal self-government, and the mayor of Faa'a (biggest town in Tahiti), Oscar Temaru, who is the most vigorous independence fighter in the colony. The other six candidates presented programs very similar to that of Temaru. The total number of pro-independence votes in this constituency was 19,765, which made the global number in French Polynesia voting for independence candidates as high as 35,457. Considering that the number of Polynesians in the two constituencies who abstained from voting was 37,644, it must be said that the 15,776 votes obtained by Flosse do not make him a representative of the majority of Polynesian people.

Since none of the candidates in the western constituency obtained a

majority of votes on March 13th, a second round was organized for March 27th. Independence fighter, Oscar Temaru, obtained 19,059 votes, 7,854 more than during the first round. However, as a greater number of French "expats" in Tahiti, Borabora and Raiatea voted for Jean Juventin, this slightly less radical candidate obtained 23,966 votes and defeated Temaru.

Oscar Temaru now insists there be no more elections of this type, but instead that a referendum about independence, supervised by the United Nations, should be organized in French Polynesia. Unfortunately, the chances are nil that the new French government will accept this demand. It has been formed by Chirac's and Giscard's right wing parties which, due to an unrepresentative procedure, now occupy 85% of the seats in Parliament although the votes they obtained were only 45% of the total number.

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### East Timorese Independence Leader Sentenced to Life Imprisonment

Xanana Gusmao, leader of East Timor's resistance movement, has been sentenced to life imprisonment by an Indonesian court. Gusmao was found guilty of rebellion, attempting to set up a separate state and illegal possession of firearms. Noting that Indonesia's occupation of East Timor remains illegal under international law, Gusmao challenged the right of an Indonesian court to try him. Amnesty International, AsiaWatch and others condemned the trial proceedings as unjust and prejudicial. After reading the first two pages of his defence statement, Gusmao was stopped by the court on the grounds that his testimony was irrelevant. An exception to the widespread international condemnation came from the Canadian government, with a government spokesperson commenting that "we are of the impression that the trial has been run fairly and openly". Following the verdict, Gusmao began a hunger strike.

[From: East Timor Action Network "Action Alert", May 26/93; East Timor Update #23, Jun 7/93]

### Bougainville: Papua New Guinea Consolidates Control

An April "Bougainville Leaders Forum" brought together chiefs and leaders from areas under PNG control. The leaders set up a Peace Negotiating Committee to open dialogue with chiefs and leaders in Central Bougainville. They also stated that secession was an impediment to any peace initiative, that North Solomons Province should be reinstated, that Bougainvilleans had been denied the right to benefit meaningfully from their natural resources, and that learning lessons from the crisis would enable the development of policies for the betterment of the people.

The PNG Defence Force launched further attacks in Central Bougainville and claimed that the Bougainville Revolutionary Army

controls only a few areas in the central mountains. The BRA has called for a cease-fire supervised by a United Nations peacekeeping force, a withdrawal of PNG troops as a condition of the cease-fire and negotiations to seek a peaceful resolution of the crisis. The BRA proposal was rejected by PNG officials.

Following further border incidents with the Solomon Islands, delegations from the two countries met to discuss how to improve relations. The delegations recommended to their governments that both countries have the right to exercise "hot pursuit" into each other's territory and that the governments should examine the possibility of redrawing the border between the two countries.

Concerns have been raised by Amnesty International and others about treatment of secessionist leaders captured by the PNGDF. It has been confirmed that Ken Savia, Minister of Health in the Bougainville Interim Government, was killed following his arrest by PNGDF soldiers in February. The PNG Government has refused to respond to allegations of torture raised by Amnesty International and questions in Parliament about the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Mr. Savia and others captured in recent months.

[From: PACNEWS, Apr 29/93; Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 8, May 3/93; Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 11, Jun 14/93]

### Former PNG Prime Minister Cleared of Charges

Rabbie Namaliu, Prime Minister of PNG until last year, has been acquitted on charges of bribery and misappropriation of public funds. Justice Warwick of the National Court dismissed all charges against Namaliu, citing a lack of evidence. Paul Pora, Finance Minister in the Namaliu Government, was also acquitted.

[From: Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 11, Jun 14/93]

### PNG Government Passes Internal Security Act

The PNG Government's new Internal Security Act, passed in early May, has prompted concern in some quarters. The Wingti Government says that the act is intended to counter terrorism and deal with "law and order problems" and situations like the Bougainville crisis. The legislation gives the government wide powers to restrict constitutional rights, banish people from the country and confiscate their property. [From: PNG Times, May 6/93; PAC-NEWS, May 20/93]

### Belau: Another Referendum and An Assassination Verdict

President Kuniwo Nakamura plans another referendum to ratify the Compact of Free Association with the United States. This will be the eighth vote on the Compact and the anti-nuclear provision of Belau's constitution. Previous referenda have not achieved the 75% majority needed to overturn the constitution and approve the Compact. With a referendum last November reducing the required vote to a simple majority, Nakamura expects ratification this time. However, a court appeal on the legality of the November referendum has been lodged. Nakamura has had discussions with U.S. officials regarding modifications to the Compact and had hoped to hold the vote in July, but further delays are possible.

John Ngiraked, a prominent Belauan politician, and his wife, Emerita Kerradel, have been found guilty of aiding and abetting the 1985 assassination of President Haruo Remeliik. Remeliik, Belau's first President, was shot a short time after winning his second term in office. Ngiraked served as a Cabinet minister in the subsequent administration of President Lazarus Salii. [From: Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 8, May 3/93; Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 7, Apr 12/93; Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 11, Jun 14/93]



### French Conservatives Triumph in March Election

Conservative parties scored a massive victory in the French election. Socialist President Mitterand named Edouard Balladur of the right-wing Rally for the Republic (RPR) as the new Prime Minister. RPR-affiliated candidates won all seats in Tahiti-Polynesia and New Caledonia (See page 26 for a report on the Tahiti-Polynesia election). A split in the pro-independence FLNKS about election participation and low voter turnout by Kanaks may have contributed to the victories by the RPR-affiliated Rally for Caledonia in the Republic (RPCR). Only in Wallis and Futuna was a pro-socialist candidate reelected. The conservative victory has raised concerns about a resumption of French nuclear testing in Polynesia. Conservative leaders have stated their support for an early resumption of tests.

[From: Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 6, Apr 5/93]

### Solomons Election May Unseat Mamaloni

Maneuvering continues as newly elected MPs try to form a Government in the wake of the May 26 Solomon Islands election. Outgoing Prime Minister Solomon Mamaloni claims that his Group for National Unity and Reconciliation controls 21 of the 47 seats. Six Opposition parties have formed the National Coalition Partners and claim to control 28 seats. A new prime minister is to be chosen on June 19. The Oppositions' effort to unseat Mamaloni will depend on their ability to agree on a leader from among their six parties.

[From: Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 11, Jun 14/93]

### Niue Election Brings New Premier, First Woman in Cabinet

Frank Lui is the new Premier of Niue following a February 27 election. In a parliamentary vote following the election, Lui outpolled incumbent Premier Young Vivian. Lui is a former

Cabinet minister. The new Government also has Niue's first woman Cabinet minister, Tauveve Jacobsen. [From: Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 4, Mar 8/93; Washington Pacific Report, Mar 15/93; Washington Pacific Report, Apr 15/93]

### Fiji: NFP Wins By-Election, Rabuka Marks His First Year

The National Federation Party won a May by-election for a vacant Indian seat in Fiji's House of Representatives, preserving the NFP's 14 to 13 edge in seats over the Fiji Labour Party and NFP leader Jai Ram Reddy's status as Opposition Leader.

Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka marked the end of his first year in power with a minor Cabinet reshuffle and televised address to the nation. Speaking about his Government's commitment to a constitutional review, Rabuka noted that the issue had been referred to the Fijian and Rotuman people by the Great Council of Chiefs as a first step. Rabuka emphasised his belief that it would be more productive to move slowly and seek the support of the two indigenous communities than to move hastily on the constitutional issue. [From: Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 10, May 31/93; Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 11, Jun 14/93]

### U.S. To Expand Missile Testing in the Marshall Islands

Despite other cutbacks in the United States' military budget, a major expansion of anti-missile testing is planned for the U.S. missile testing range on Kwajalein Atoll. An outgrowth of the earlier Strategic Defence Initiative ("Star Wars") program of the Reagan and Bush administrations, the new program will attempt to produce a deployable anti-missile shield against limited nuclear attacks. The new testing program will return Kwajalein to a level of activity not seen since the peak of U.S. testing in the early 1970s. U.S. expenditures related to Kwajalein already

inject over \$US25 million per year into the Marshall Islands.

[From: Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 10, May 31/93]

### Canadian Government Announces Pacific Fisheries Contract

The Canadian Government has disbanded its International Centre for Ocean Development (ICOD) as a result of a 1992 budget decision. ICOD, which had gained a positive reputation in the South Pacific for its support of fisheries and ocean management projects, ceased operations on March 31, 1993. In April, the Government announced that a consortium of Canadian companies (all from St. John's, Newfoundland) led by Canadian Ocean Resource Association, Inc. will assume responsibility for approximately \$CDN7 million worth of active South Pacific projects.

[From: Canadian International Development Agency communique, Apr 2/93]

### Tongan Politician/Publisher Loses Defamation Case

Akilisi Pohiva, pro-democracy politician and newspaper publisher, has lost a defamation case in the Supreme Court of Tonga. The Court ruled that a 1990 article in Pohiva's newspaper, Ko e Kele'a, had defamed the Hon. Fusitu'a, Speaker of the Tongan Parliament, and ordered Pohiva to pay damages of 8,000 pa'anga (\$US6,000). Pohiva, one of Tonga's nine commoner Members of Parliament, vowed to go on campaigning for democracy and publishing the newspaper despite the Supreme Court judgment and several other legal cases brought against him by the Government and another Tongan noble.

[From: PACNEWS, Apr 7/93; Pacific Report, Vol 6 No 6, Apr 5/93]



**Confronting the Margaret Mead Legacy: Scholarship, Empire, and the South Pacific**

Edited by Lenora Foerstel & Angela Gilliam. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1992. 298 pp. US\$34.95. Hard cover.

**Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further Toward an Anthropology of Liberation**

By F.V. Harrison. Washington: Association of Black Anthropologists & American Anthropological Association. 1991.

by Shaista Shameem

For a period of about three years, I was involved in a process of personal and professional struggle at the university where I teach. I am a member of a Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology which was hastily put together by an outgoing professor who had for many years happily taught both Sociology and Anthropology together (sometimes in the same class) without a thought as to future consequences. When I first joined the Department about eight years ago, I had not found this method of teaching at all unusual. After all, the University of the South Pacific, where I had received my first degree, had been full of anthropologists-turned sociologists and my research had always combined both sociological and anthropological epistemologies.

My New Zealand experience was somewhat unique. The professor had barely settled comfortably into his retirement when the department slowly and inexorably began to split into two separate sections-sociology and anthropology. Within two years, the two sides were, farcically, teaching the same subject matter under different prefixes without making any attempt to discuss the parameters of either knowledge base or to critically examine the overlap. Needless to say, there was much bitterness and tugs-of-war over students. Since I was the only non-New Zealander in the department and the only Pacific Islander on the staff of the university



Shaista Shameem

with personal experience of white academic research in the Pacific, (not to mention a keenness to express this mostly negative experience) I came in for a fair share of the 'stoning'. This episode, and the enactment of various 'legislations' regarding who was or was not an 'anthropologist', was the most direct experience of racism I have had in New Zealand.

It is indeed refreshing therefore to read of similar first-hand experience of other academics/researchers of colour in the books edited by Foerstel/Gilliam and Harrison. Both Confronting the Margaret Mead Legacy and Decolonizing Anthropology are essential reading for anyone who has had the odd and inexplicable feeling about some item of research, or some anthropological conference paper which purports to understand the Pacific and its people. Prior to my experiences at my university, I had wrongly assumed that most academic research, particularly in the Pacific where so much damage had already been done by various colonising agents, would have by now become sensitized to the politics of research and therefore would automatically question and critique as a legitimate academic exercise the structural demarcations inherent in the relationship between the researcher and the researched, the 'subject' and the 'other'. This was obviously a rather ridiculous assumption on my part.

Edward Said's 'Orientalism' functions in our area of the world as 'The Pacific Way'.

Most contributors to these two books make the accusation that anthropology has had a colonial connection from its inception and that contemporary anthropologists, even in their most radical visages, cannot seem to purge this colonial heritage from their work no matter how often or how loudly they protest the labelling. This viewpoint is echoed from different angles in article after article and the evidence of the abuse of anthropology is certainly damaging enough to put any serious student off the subject altogether!

Anthropological fallout is not merely confined to the works of those who lived and worked in the era when racism referred solely to anti-semitism. Throughout the entire spectrum of contemporary anthropology, there is an underlying assumption of the existence of the unique, the exception, the 'other' which anthropology tries to describe. Margaret Mead was not the only culprit it seems, yet she appears to have copped the most devastating accusations if only after her death. Many of the more virulent attacks of Mead might even be a camouflage for business as usual in most anthropological circles - certainly in my department only last week I heard one or two anthropologists talk of "moving more into the Pacific".

These books present an astonishing range of self-reflexive articles. In an important preface in the Foerstel and Gilliam text, Peter Worsley makes a plea for a combination of advocacy and research, in fact a less 'objective' anthropology: ".....most western anthropologists believe they are able to scrutinize world cultures more objectively than their non-European counterparts. This belief distorts the accuracy of their observations" (p.xx). In another interesting article, renowned anthropologist, Eleanor Leacock, expresses this sceptical view of the anthropological buzz surrounding the Mead-Freedman controversy: "(It) certainly has its bizarre aspects. Just



how many papers can outsiders write about the culture of one small nation? One can indeed take a cynical view of the entire affair and see the creation of an attention-attracting issue as simply serving the demands of the academic market place" (p.3). The debate referred to by Leacock was issue-related anthropology at its best and enabled many 'real stories' to be published and well-funded symposia to be organised!

Despite the slight digs by some contributors at their own self-interest in the matter, this book is a very serious examination of the nature and social construction of anthropological research. Lenora Foerstel had herself worked closely with Mead on Manus and her account of one particular research incident is illuminating: "Mead convened a village meeting to prepare the villagers for this new type of testing, which would require that each male and female be photographed in the nude. Again, the villagers were told that an examination of their physical types would enhance human knowledge" (p.65).

The arrogance with which such researchers arranged and rearranged men and women, and the insensitiveness displayed toward their personal privacy in the name of "enhancing human knowledge" will hopefully never be repeated in anthropological work yet vestiges remain even today. About two years ago, again in my department, an anthropologist now 'moving into' Melanesia exhibited large photographs of Melanesian men in loin cloths. The photographs hung in the department for months, yet no one thought to ask that they be contextualised. Any criticism on my part would have been seen as interference in the research of a colleague. I can still remember how I cringed every time I walked past those semi-nude black men on show in a largely white and Polynesian context.

Contributors to most books place much significance on the theme of political and social responsibility of an anthropologist. Mead's work for

the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), the parent of the Central Intelligence Agency, is referred to in terms of ethics. Glenn Alcalay reports more specifically on cases of collaborations between anthropology and the US spy mechanism to enable the US to obtain strategic political and economic advantages in the Pacific; part of this strategy included the subduing of Micronesians in order to test bombs or other military hardware. Thus it appears that it is not only the dubious roots of anthropology that one must critique, but its contemporary machinations as well. Alcalay reveals that the United States Information Agency (USIA) recently entered into contract with several American and Pacific anthropologists to supply personal and/or political information about leaders and their political and social leanings, in an effort to combat the popularity of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific movement in the island states (p. 197). This knowledge permits one to question the possible motives behind such research.

Perhaps it is not surprising that anthropologists are still able to run riot, even though most other researchers need to get permission these days before arriving in a country to do research. Anthropologists tend to escape state scrutiny, possibly because much of their research can be carried out from the 'participant-observer' perspective. A Melanesian expert in my department recently went to Papua New Guinea without a permit. When I asked him if he had cheated, he replied that his research had been perfectly ethical - no one had said that he could not 'observe' and write notes, so that's what he did.

I have often wondered why anthropologists do not carry out research in their own communities, among their own political and social groupings. Deborah D'Amico-Samuels, in 'Undoing Fieldwork: Personal, Political, Theoretical and Methodological Implications', offers one explanation: There is a challenge in separating the 'field' from the rest of anthropologists' lives "the

field still functions as an ideological concept which erects false boundaries of time and space and obscures real differences of colour, class, gender and nationality in cross-cultural research" (Harrison: p.68). This method may well be appropriate in traditional anthropological settings, but is however in direct contravention of the feminist principle of personal is political, and is probably a reason for my own dislike of anthropological research as a study of the temporal and spatial 'other'.

One of the more challenging papers comes from Simone Durutalo of Fiji, who points out that anthropological underscoring of the notion of the Pacific as 'primitive', 'unspoilt' and 'exotic' tends to undermine the determination of the Pacific Island intellectual to help transform the political processes of a geographical area which suffers poverty and marginality in geo-political terms. Furthermore this inherent exotification of the subjects of research prevents serious attention (deliberately orchestrated perhaps) being paid to nuclearisation and continuing colonisation of the Pacific.

Durutalo explores another interesting point, which incidently could be viewed as a criticism of a number of Island academics: "When intellectuals resign their traditional position of independent thought to support unquestioningly the 'national interest', they are accepting issues that are defined by others and thereby become mere instruments of national policy". This is indeed a valid criticism, although I would argue that Durutalo places too much emphasis on the role of the intellectual as a person somehow able to "extend the realism of the immediate...". My own experience is that intellectuals, particularly those located at universities, are as much products of society as anyone else and thereby make certain choices similar to other individuals. These may well be unpopular choices from the point of view of our 'left wing' or 'right wing' brethren, but who is to say what is a politically correct choice? Even within the left-wing, there is a range of views on politics and economics. A



clear example of this was the intellectual debate in Fiji over the issue of participation or non-participation in the national elections held under a racist constitution. Durutalo and his other colleagues in the Labour Party (a number of whom were also university lecturers) were bitterly divided over the issue of participation - both sides believing they were right and that they were upholding an ideal, in this case the ideal of democracy.

I myself have little patience with idealist world views as expressed in the debates over concepts such as 'democracy'. Intellectuals must be pragmatists also, i.e. people who acknowledge opinion and permit them to transform the ideal. In other words, the Pacific intellectual needs to have vision, a sad deficiency amongst many of us who occupy university positions. In fact, we refuse to acknowledge that intellectuals might reside at all levels in society, and that a street intellectual might have a more accurate view of the world one tries to understand and represent than armchair intellectuals like ourselves. I do believe that Durutalo himself occupies the positive side of the academic spectrum, but I think he assumes too readily that others, even of the same 'wing', do so as well.

Perhaps the most poignant piece in the Foerstel and Gilliam book is a 1985 speech by Susanna Ounei, 'For an Independent Kanaky'. In very personal and real terms, Ounei describes the indignity of colonisation: "None of the struggles about our people are in the books we read at school. So, it is necessary for me to write as many articles as I can in order to tell the reality of our people, because Kanak young people are taught that they are not worth anything. One of the history books I remember reading said that we Kanaks are the lowest of the black Melanesians, not like Polynesians, who are like whites" (p.165). This experience indicates that, in the anthropological literature, a 'colour' distinction was also constructed between peoples of the South Pacific and that such distinctions interface with contemporary political economy in the most insidious ways.

I wish to end with a quote from filmmaker/anthropologist/visionary extraordinaire, Trinh T. Minha:

*"I have wondered time and again about reading myself as I feel he reads me and my false encounter with the other in me whose non-being/being he claims to have captured, solidified, and pinned to a butterfly board. Like any common living thing, I fear and reprove classification and the death it entails, and I will not allow its clutches to lock down on me, although I realise that I can never lure myself into simply escaping it....What I resent most however is not his inheritance of a power he so often disclaims, disengaging himself from a system he carries with him, but his ear, eye, and pen, which record his language while pretending to speak through mine, on my behalf." (p.48)*

It seems the subject must have the courage to say no.

Fiji 1993

**Acknowledgement:** Thanks to Rosie Hyde who made a gift of Trinh T. Minha's seminal work, Women Native Other (Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1989), to me while I was on Vancouver Island, making it possible for me to write this review. Thanks also to SPPF and my friend, Stuart Wulff, who saw the potential 'praxis' in my work.

*(Shaista Shameem is a Fijian-born feminist academic and film-maker who works in New Zealand and Fiji. She teaches Sociology, Women's Studies and Social Anthropology.)*

#### 'Tiny Tonga' rolling at Rugby Cup

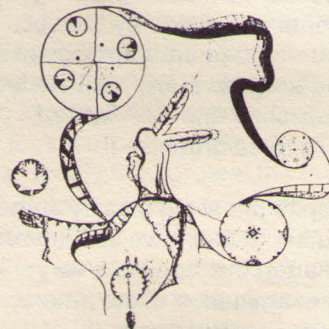
Tonga continued to be the surprise of the Rugby World Cup Sevens tournament held Apr 18/93, as the 19th seeded team rolled to 2 more victories to qualify for the quarter finals.

Tonga shut out Taiwan, amassing 52 points in a 14-minute match, and later finished its round robin play with a 31-7 rout of Italy. Also qualifying for the quarter finals were Fiji, NZ and Western Samoa.

[Victoria Times-Colonist, Apr 18/93]

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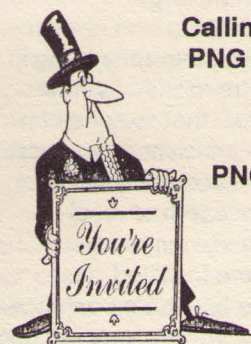


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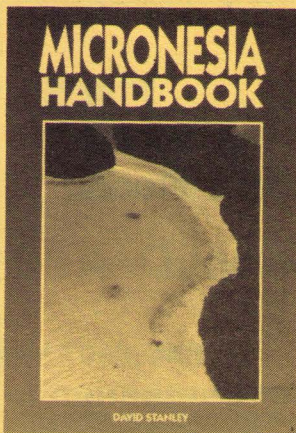
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**Micronesia Handbook**  
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Author: David Stanley  
Price: \$US11.95  
ISBN: 0-918373-80-8  
September 1992

In our opinion the finest tourism guide books on the Pacific Islands are those written by David Stanley for Moon Publications. Stanley, a Canadian currently based in The Netherlands, and SPPF have been keeping in touch since the early 80s when we literally ran into each other travelling in the Pacific.

Stanley's latest revisions of Moon's South Pacific series - the **Micronesia Handbook** and the **Tahiti-Polynesia Handbook** are now available. The strength of Stanley's books is their realism - "no sugar coated advice" is offered. As well as solid information for the traveller, Stanley makes comments on current political situations that other guide books may ignore - Stanley goes beneath the surface of the coral atolls, the beautiful sunsets, waving palms and island dances. This realism is a refreshing relief from the widely circulated advertising that floats around Canada, the U.S., Europe and Japan regarding the Pacific Islands. It also is a statement of respect for the Pacific Island peoples

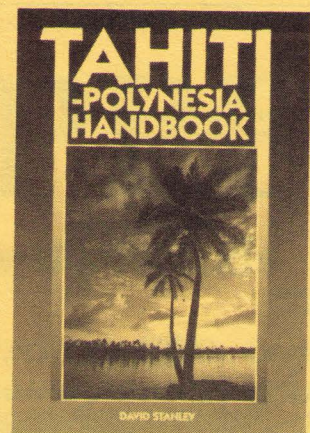
**Tahiti-Polynesia Handbook**  
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Author: David Stanley  
Price: \$US11.95  
ISBN: 0-918373-87-5  
November 1992

in that Stanley doesn't get stuck into the idea of the Pacific as paradise and the people who live there as somehow being representative of mythical dreams.

Just looking at the introduction sections of the Tables of Contents gives a good idea of the wealth of information inside - "The Land, Flora and Fauna, History, Government, Economy, The People, Accommodations and Food, Practicalities, Getting There and Around, Holidays and Events, Money and Measurements, Health, What to Take", etc. In addition, there are glossaries of terms special to the particular region/island and listings of commonly used phrases in the languages particular to the islands as well as maps, tables, charts, and time zones. Information covers all methods of travel, accommodations in all price ranges and what to see and what to miss.

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Photos courtesy of Moon Publications

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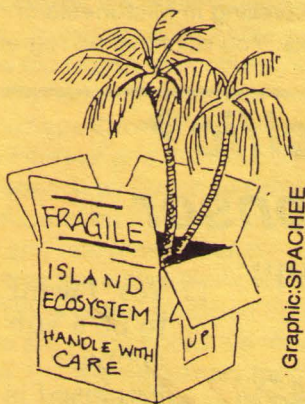
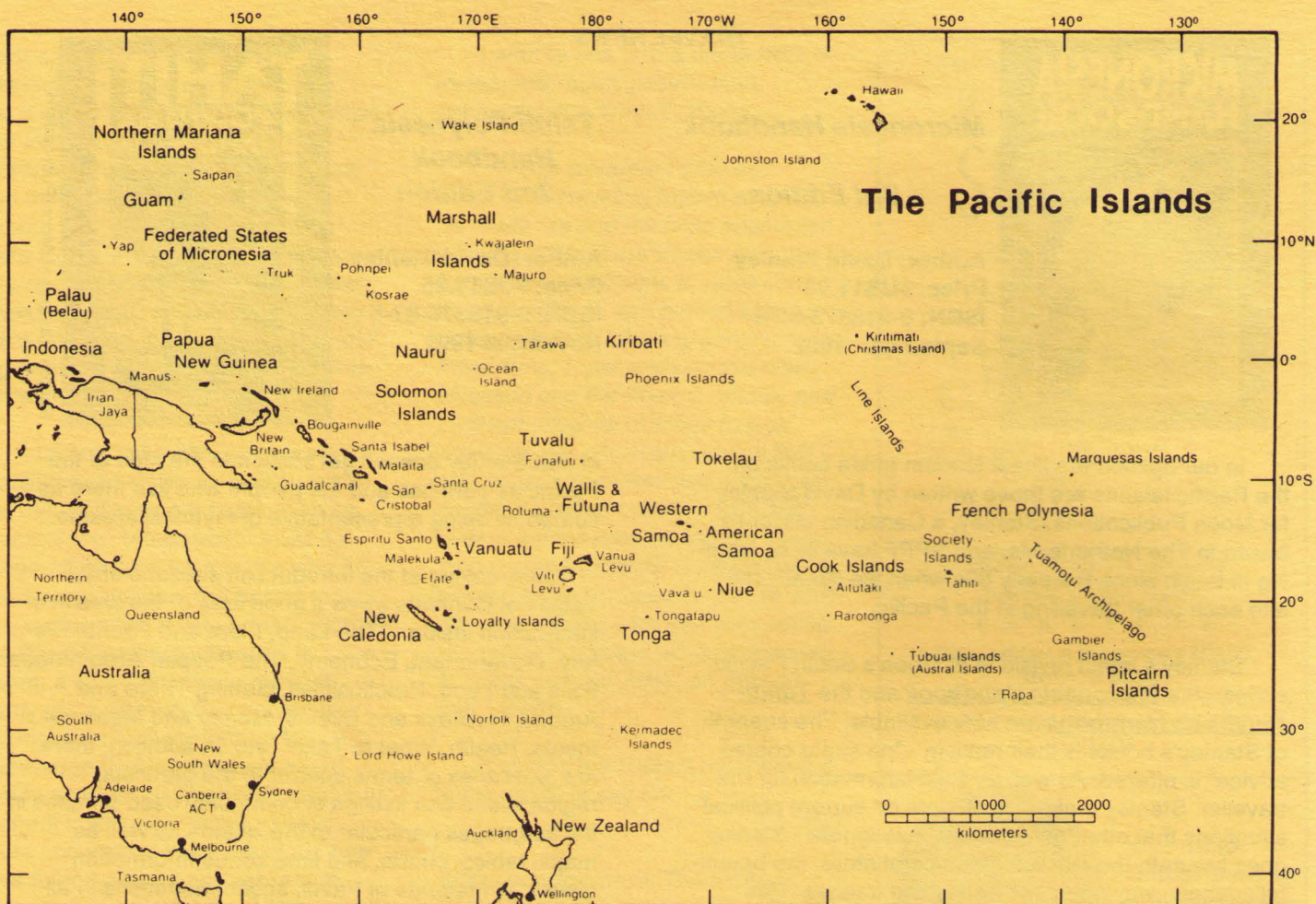
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### Recycling Cans in Niue

A Catholic priest on Niue has been able to develop a small export industry which is helping keep the island clean and tidy. Father Glover started the project two years ago, collecting drink cans, crushing them and sending them to New Zealand for reprocessing.

In the first year, Father Glover, by hand, crushed 210,000 cans collected by school children. Now a New Zealand

brewery has donated an hydraulic crusher which is operated by school children on a roster basis.

The South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) has also made a US\$2,000 grant to aid the scheme.

In addition to crushed cans being exported to New Zealand, empty bottles are now being collected and sent to a brewery in Western Samoa. The collection of the "empties" is well organised, with special bins being placed in villages and cans and bottles being collected every two weeks.

Father Glover said the can and bottle collection is not only producing money from garbage, it is making a real contribution to keeping Niue clean and tidy.

[Reprinted from *Vanuatu Weekly*, Jan 1/93]



**Know someone who would be interested in TOK BLONG SPPF? Send us his/her name, address and interest in the Pacific Islands and we will send a complimentary copy. Let us know if we can use your name as a reference.**

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