

# Tok Blong Pasifik

A Quarterly of News and Views  
on the Pacific Islands

February 1994, #46

VICTORIA, B.C., CANADA



photo by Elaine Briere

## The Commonwealth in the Pacific

Featuring ...From Cook to the Commonwealth of Learning  
...Will Fiji Rejoin the Commonwealth?  
...Condominium Versus Melanesian Politics in Vanuatu  
...Challenges to a Feudal State: Tonga's Pro-Democracy Movement  
...Keeping Our Heads Above Water: The Effects of Climate Change on Tuvalu

## About this journal...

*Tok Blong Pasifik* is a phrase in Pidgin, a language used in some parts of the Pacific. An equivalent expression in English might be "news from the Pacific". *Tok Blong Pasifik* (formerly Tok Blong SPPF) is published quarterly 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 materials of interest. We reserve the right to edit material. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of SPPF or of CIDA.

For further information about *Tok Blong Pasifik* (ISSN: 0828-9670), membership in SPPF or other SPPF activities, contact: SPPF, 415-620 View St, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1J6, CANADA. Tel: 604/381-4131 Fax 604/388-5258 or 721-0409 sppf@web.apc.org Editor: Stuart Wulff Asst Editor: Margaret Argue

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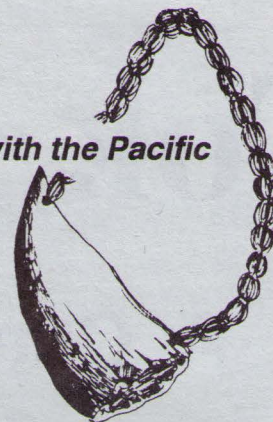
## SPPF Update

### Influencing Canada's Relationship with the Pacific

It is often difficult to discern Canadian Government policy vis a vis the Islands. They only rarely and superficially make an impression on a government, or for that matter a country, that is far more concerned about relations with the U.S., Europe, Asia, Latin America and even Africa. For most Canadians, the Pacific Islands conjure images of beaches and "hula dancing" but little else. There are exceptions: a few non-governmental organizations and churches, the occasional company doing business in the Islands, the more discerning of sailors and tourists who have travelled in the Pacific, but these are a small minority.

The "Pacific" has in recent years become of considerable interest for Canadian governments, businesses, universities and others. But this "Pacific" usually means the Asian Pacific Rim. The vast region in between North America, the Asian Rim and Australia is almost as much *terra incognita* for people here as it was in centuries past. Nor do the trends appear promising. The only Canadian Government office in the region outside Australia and New Zealand, the Canada Co-operation Office in Suva, has been closed. The well regarded Canadian International Centre for Ocean Development (ICOD) has been disbanded; active projects are being completed, but the shape of future programmes is unclear. Few expect that the level of support for ocean development and other programmes in the Pacific will remain at even the modest but helpful levels of recent years.

There may still be reason for hope. Some in government seem to recognize that the Pacific Islands share important interests with Canada, for example with regards to fisheries, global warming and nuclear non-proliferation. The Canadian Government has also



embarked upon a major review of Canada's foreign policy. This presents an opportunity to influence Canada's future relationship with the region. One should be realistic. The predominant voices and perspectives in the debate will be those focused on the traditional priorities in Canadian foreign policy. However, there may also be an opportunity to protect or even modestly enhance Canada's commitment to the region.

SPPF hopes to present a brief to the parliamentary committee conducting the foreign policy review. We would welcome input from others. Please send your suggestions to me as soon as possible. While the deadline for applying to present before the committee is March 31, people could also write shorter letters to present their views directly to the committee. Such letters should be sent to:

Ms. Clairette Bourque  
Clerk of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade  
House of Commons  
180 Wellington Street, Room 637  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

It's a busy time at SPPF, with several events and educational programmes in February and early March, preparations for our May conference and speakers' tour, many meetings and the usual responding to numerous inquiries for information and resources. The result is that once again this issue of *Tok Blong* will be late in getting to the printers. We hope to be back on schedule for the May issue. (I know you've head this before, but...)

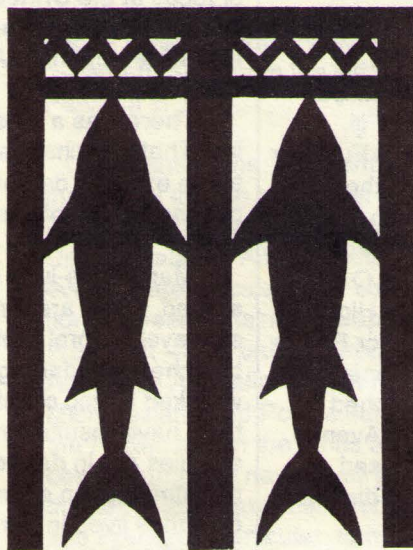
## In This Issue....

### Exploring the Pacific's "Commonwealth Community"

The choice of theme for this edition of *Tok Blong* was somewhat more eccentric than the norm for us. Usually, we choose themes based on broader issues that concern the people we work with in the Pacific, whether it be economic development, the environment, human rights, women, tourism or whatever. The Commonwealth as an institution or even a community of nations is not such a burning issue for most of us. However, 1994 is the year when SPPF's home town of Victoria will be hosting the Commonwealth Games. This upcoming event has prompted increased interest among the local public, schools, etc., in the countries which make up the Commonwealth.

We decided to produce this edition of *Tok Blong* to at least partially respond to this interest. At the same time, we've tried to fulfil our usual mandate and respond to the interests of our broader readership by selecting articles which reflect contemporary issues and developments in the countries which make up the Pacific Commonwealth, rather than producing another history and general overview of the Commonwealth nations.

The Commonwealth has its defenders and its critics. For defenders, it provides a range of services and benefits to its members, reflects a commonality of experience and interests, and allows smaller Commonwealth members particularly (including most Pacific members) to exercise at least some indirect influence in international affairs. For its critics, the Commonwealth is a resented carryover from the colonial era and/or an expensive institution with few virtues. Peter McMechan of the Commonwealth of Learning provides a sympathetic view of the Commonwealth



Fish designs used on decorative house posts from Malaita, Solomon Islands \*

in his article, "From Cook to the Commonwealth of Learning". In "Should Fiji Rejoin the Commonwealth?", Robert Keith-Reid takes a more critical stance, as well as reporting on one of the few genuine "Commonwealth issues" in the Pacific.

The other articles profile a current issue or development in the various Pacific Island members of the Commonwealth: the Pro-Democracy Movement in Tonga, global warming in Tuvalu, the political future of Tokelau, French-English political relations in Vanuatu and so on. In each case, aspects of the issue or development described have some resonance with situations in other Pacific Island nations or even further afield. Canadians reading about the lingering political problems created by the dual French and English colonial legacy imposed upon Vanuatu will perhaps experience a certain sense of déjà vu. Marshall Islanders, among others, are also confronting the challenge of global warming. Thus, each article provides a specific perspective on one Commonwealth nation, but also a broader view of issues which challenge many of us.

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\*Graphics credit: *Grass Roots Art of the Solomons: Images and Islands*, Eds. John and Sue Chick. Pacific Publications

## We Goofed!

In the mad rush to get our November issue completed, we made a number of errors which we'd like to correct.

The article on "Canada Fund Support for the Disabled" (page 9) mistakenly credited the Canada Fund administered out of the Canadian High Commission in Canberra, Australia, for funding of several projects in Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Western Samoa. The Canada Fund for these countries, plus Cook Islands and Tonga, is the responsibility of the Canadian High Commission in Wellington, New Zealand. Diane Goodwillie is the Canada Fund Co-ordinator and she can be contacted at P.O. Box 9233, Nadi Airport Post Office, Fiji. The Canberra High Commission is responsible for the Canada Fund for Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Hélène Anderson is the Co-ordinator and she can be reached at the Canadian High Commission, Commonwealth Avenue, Canberra, ACT 2600, Australia. The Canberra-based Canada Fund has also supported projects for the disabled with grants to:

- Cheshire Homes to build toilets in their new home in Port Moresby
- Callan Services for the Disabled in Wewak, PNG. Callan Services is an NGO providing training for teachers, nurses and community workers aimed at integrating disabled persons, particularly children, into schools and the mainstream of community life.
- Creative Self Help, an organisation providing self help for the disabled, for construction of a new centre in Madang, PNG. The centre will have an exercise area with an examination room and evaluation area for an occupational therapist. There will also be a workshop area for crafts and income generating activities.
- Disabled Persons Rehabilitation Association (Solomon Islands) to purchase copies of the book, Disabled Village Children, for participants at training workshops for people working with the disabled.
- Vanuatu Society for Disabled People (then known as Nakato Sosaeti) to repair their carpentry workshop.

We apologize to the Canadian High Commissions and Canada Fund Co-ordinators for the confusion.

Apologies are also due to the people of Kiribati for the "mosquito raider" caption with the picture of a dancer on page 11. It is a tradition to spray perfume (or deodorant), not mosquito repellent, and put powder on dancers to thank them for their performance and cool them off. The picture should have been labelled accordingly.

We forgot to credit the South Pacific Community Nutrition Project for the illustration on page 11 and incorrectly credited Linda Hill with the photos on pages 13-16. The photos on pages 14-16 were taken by a professional photographer for Linda and the photo on page 13 was taken by SPPF's own Stuart Wulff.

## Small Islands, Big Issues

Island "paradises" worldwide will soon be the centre of focus at the **United Nations Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** opening April 25 in Barbados.

There was a time when islands were self-sustaining. That has changed, as the small island states adapt to the external demands of the industrial age and to the consequences of internal population growth.

Many once-lush islands are being deforested and eroded, some are threatened with inundation by rising sea levels. Coral reefs once brimming with life are bleached and damaged. Natural disasters have wreaked havoc on island societies. Expanding populations have resulted in heavy outmigration. Fresh water supplies are in danger, destructive fishing practices threaten lagoon ecosystems. Island cultures, that for centuries lived in harmony with nature, today are struggling for viability.

The first call for this conference was at the Earth Summit in Brazil in 1992. The goal is to put together a strategy for sustainable development specific to small islands based on Agenda 21, the global action plan adopted at the Earth Summit.

The Barbados conference is to come up with actions at national, regional and international levels in a number of key areas:

- \* **climate change and sea-level rise**
- \* **human resource development**
- \* **natural disasters**
- \* **waste management**
- \* **coastal and marine resources**
- \* **freshwater resources**
- \* **land use**
- \* **energy**
- \* **tourism development**
- \* **biodiversity**
- \* **transport and communication**

While all these issues are to be addressed at the conference, the process leading up to it has not been without difficulties. As late as the March 1994 preparatory committee meeting, the programme of action was still being finalized, and the non-government organisations attending that meeting issued a statement voicing their growing concerns that the programme of action to be adopted in Barbados may end up as just another exercise in language and documentation.

The Barbados meeting will be an early test of the global partnership formed at the Earth Summit. If it works, there will be greater confidence that other global challenges can be successfully met.

# From Cook to the Commonwealth of Learning The Commonwealth in the Pacific

by Peter McMechan

*Peter McMechan is director of the Pacific Programme at The Commonwealth of Learning in Vancouver, Canada.*

When British forces defeated the French at Quebec in 1759, the battle was symbolic of the rivalry between their empires. But it contained another symbolism. James Cook was one of the marine surveyors who rigorously charted the St Laurence to enable the British to land and the Chevalier de Bougainville served in the French army. Over the next twenty years, these two men would make epic journeys through the unknown Pacific; they would lay to rest the centuries-old dream of a great southern continent, *Terra Australis Incognita*, and they would fix the position of all the major Pacific island groups on European maps.

Cook, in the course of three voyages (1768-79), charted the coasts of New Zealand, filled in the map of Australia by charting its eastern coast, confirmed the earlier (but essentially unreported) discovery of Torres Strait separating Australia and New Guinea, and beat the bounds of the Pacific from Hawaii to Easter Island to the pack ice of Antarctica. Bligh (of later Bounty fame) was with Cook when the southern Fijis were sighted and he later sailed through them, somewhat involuntarily, in an open boat, returning to chart them in more comfort. Cook also laid to rest the dream of a northwest passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific and George Vancouver was a member of the crew which visited Nootka Sound in 1768. Twelve years later, Vancouver would chart the coast of British Columbia. Cook's decade of meticulous work completed the European recording of the geography of the Pacific world which had

begun when Balboa first sighted the "Southern Sea" from the isthmus of Panama in 1513.

The end of the 18th century saw the abrupt ending of the first British Empire, with establishment of the United States of America and an even greater escalation of competition between Britain and Napoleonic France. It would unleash upon the Aboriginal Australians, Melanesians, Micronesians and Polynesians of the Pacific region the furies and forces of European naval rivalry and the commercial expansion of Britain and France in particular, tempered (or sometimes escalated) by waves of 19th century Christian missionaries intent upon "saving" the people Bougainville had identified as "noble savages".

For the eastern coast of Australia, the end of the 18th century would mean convict settlements in New South Wales. For the rest of Australia and New Zealand, the 19th century brought a wave of white settler migration (including Wakefield's planned colonies based upon theories developed when he was a young assistant to Lord Durham's mission to Upper and

Lower Canada). Some territories claimed by the French also received settlers, although in lower numbers. Foreign settlement in most of the other island groups (eventually claimed in one way or another by Britain, Germany, America and, after the Treaty of Versailles removed Germany, Australia and New Zealand) was a relatively minor consequence of commercial exploitation - and eventually colonial government. Only in Fiji was there a major influx of non-European settlers, indentured labour from India recruited for the sugar plantations established at the end of the nineteenth century.

Like Canada, Australia and New Zealand became "old" dominions of the second British Empire, essentially self-governing from the turn of the century and independent from 1931. Forty years later, Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Singapore crafted a declaration of principles by which a vastly expanded Commonwealth of independent nations would co-operate for their common good. In addition to Australia and New Zealand,



Participants at the Commonwealth of Learning regional university centre directors' workshop, Port Moresby, 1993. John Tayless, of British Columbia (second from right, front row) was the workshop coordinator. Participants represent ten Commonwealth countries and three major universities (USP, UPNG and the PNG University of Technology).

photo by Peter McMechan

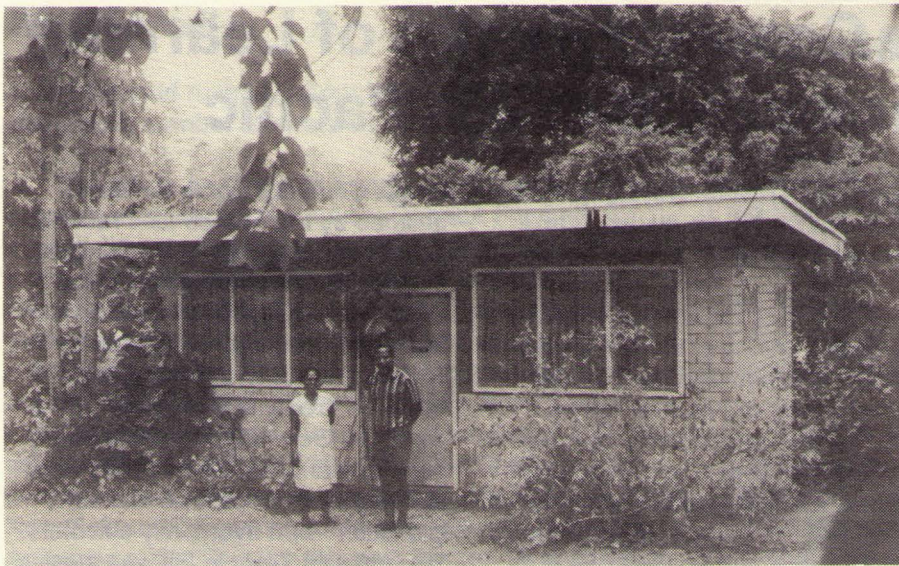


photo by Peter McMechan

The University of Papua New Guinea provincial centre on the island of Manus, built with support from the Commonwealth.

Western Samoa and Fiji had already achieved independent status in the Pacific. When Heads of Government met in Vancouver in 1989, Fiji was expelled from the association as a result of its 1987 military coups. By this time Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga and Kiribati had achieved full, independent membership, Nauru and Tuvalu had become associate states (taking full part in Commonwealth activities apart from Heads of Government meetings), and Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau held participatory rights through a status of free association with New Zealand.

Commonwealth nations are those which were once part of the (second) British Empire and they remain in communication because they continue to use English as a medium of official communication. In addition, their post-colonial government structures are based upon similar colonial experiences. The Pacific Commonwealth contains a scattered collection of small states with a long experience of "regional" approaches to problems, from health (through the work of the South Pacific Commission), through transportation (a shared airline for a period, a joint shipping line) to education (a regional university). But independence is jealously maintained and different types of associa-

tion are used for different national policies. From the early 1970s the Pacific Forum (which encompasses all independent Pacific states, including Australia and New Zealand) has been the major instrument for regional co-operation, with headquarters in Fiji and a Forum Fisheries Agency based in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Much the same pattern applies throughout the Commonwealth, which has a current membership of fifty independent states, over thirty of which have populations of less than a million people and nearly half of which are small island states. Since the establishment of its Secretariat in London in the 1960s, the Commonwealth has operated on three distinct levels. First, the Heads of Government meet every second year to discuss a variety of common issues. From time to time, political issues surface as common ground, but integrated political action is sought only rarely. Less well-known, but probably more important, Commonwealth ministers in different categories (eg. finance, women's affairs, education, law, health) also meet at different intervals to chart common goals, share concerns and develop common programmes where appropriate.

Perhaps more important still, the Secretariat maintains a group of

functional programmes common to all states. The programmes vary in size and perceived importance, but include economic, legal, social and human resource management activities which member states find useful to a greater or lesser degree. While relatively small in international terms, a Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation allows speedy assistance to member governments, either by providing expertise from another Commonwealth country or by various training activities. Some of the functional programmes receive separate inter-government funding for particular purposes; for example the Commonwealth Youth Programme trains youth workers in four regional centres in Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific.

A number of Commonwealth professional associations and non-governmental organisations are clustered under the stewardship of a Commonwealth Foundation providing, in diverse fields ranging from medicine to the teaching of science and mathematics, an English-language grouping which might meet on a regular basis or merely provide an additional forum as an adjunct to an international conference. The association might promulgate common standards of training and accreditation or merely keep its members in touch with a compatible international framework. In some cases a substantial journal is regularly produced, in some an occasional newsletter.

For over fifty years, the Commonwealth Club has also been an important aspect of international co-operation in higher education, through Commonwealth scholarships and an Association of Commonwealth Universities. Education is one of the massive developmental tasks of all newly-independent nations. It is particularly difficult in the Pacific (tiny islands and archipelago states) and in Papua New Guinea with its nineteen provinces and a staggering diversity of peoples and languages.

The University of the South Pacific was established in 1968 when only one of its founding partners had become independent (Western Samoa). From campuses in Suva, Fiji and Apia, Western Samoa, this Commonwealth university serves Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa and Marshall Islands (a former US territory which joined the university in 1993). Although the total population served by the university is only about 1.5 million, the oceanic area greatly exceeds the area of the United States. The island region's largest country, Papua New Guinea, has a population now exceeding 4 million. The national university system includes the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby, the University of Technology in Lae and the Goroka Teachers' College.

#### **The Commonwealth of Learning**

The Vancouver Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 1987 created a new agency, The Commonwealth of Learning. The mandate of the new agency was set out in a Memorandum of Understanding signed by all 50 Commonwealth states and the headquarters were established in Vancouver in 1989. The agency assists member states to develop alternative forms of education and training, particularly through the emerging congruence between the methods of distance education and a rapidly evolving communications potential that could revolutionise the ways in which learning is delivered.

In particular, COL has three goals: to promote the sharing of distance teaching materials and the development of new materials to meet particular educational needs; to assist distance teaching institutions in providing better services to students, improving support systems and facilitating the transfer of credit between Commonwealth institutions; and to strengthen institutional capacities by providing training, fostering communications, establishing an information base

and supporting collaboration in evaluation and research.

In the Pacific, the programme is primarily based on the major universities, but it also supports the growth of colleges of higher education. In the Solomon Islands, for example, COL has assisted in the development of a teleconference network linking outer islands to the major institutions on Guadalcanal; another network is under development in Kiribati. Work has also been undertaken in collaboration with government ministries, non-governmental organisations and other international agencies.

COL's training programme is an important aspect of the work. Projects have assisted the University of the South Pacific in training course development personnel, the Solomon Islands College for Higher Education in training users of its new teleconference system, the Tonga Community Development and Training Centre in establishing distance education structure, and the Papua New Guinea institutions in organising their own training programme through a national Association for Distance Education.

In 1991 (in Sydney) and again last year (in Port Moresby), all the USP centre directors who maintain the extensive regional teaching programme of the University of the South Pacific and their counterparts managing provincial centres of the University of Papua New Guinea assembled in a workshop to improve their skills as the front-line managers of educational delivery throughout the region. In

1993 the management workshop included a parallel workshop for provincial centre directors of PNG's extensive College of Distance Education, which provides an essential part of the nation's education system. Over 60 professionals attended the sessions and concluded the week by establishing a Pacific Islands Regional Association for Distance Education with COL support.

In the months following the 1759 Quebec campaign, Cook studied all the books on navigation that he could find in Halifax, where the fleet wintered. With only a Yorkshire village school education, he mastered mathematics in sufficient detail to enable him to spend the next eight years completing surveys of the St Lawrence, Nova Scotia and the Newfoundland coast that were to last for over 100 years. His acknowledged skills led to command of the 1768 Pacific expedition. His expertise was such that the Royal Society was to commend his work, the equivalent of at least an honours degree. In the island groups which he charted, the tradition continues. Thousands of islanders connect with the major universities of the region through distance education. The Commonwealth of Learning assists this process and provides links to other regions.



The library at the USP Vanuatu Centre in Port Vila. The Centre, built with funding from the New Zealand government, houses a Pacific Languages Unit and the Regional Pacific Law Unit.

photo by Peter McMechan

# Will Fiji Rejoin the Commonwealth?

by Robert Keith-Reid

*Robert Keith-Reid is publisher of the Suva-based magazine, Islands Business Pacific.*

Fiji won't batter on doors to be readmitted to the Commonwealth. Some veteran politicians, dripping with shiny insignia and carrying feudal titles bestowed in the name of Queen Elizabeth, their former sovereign and the Commonwealth's head, would like it to be. They yearn for the clubby atmosphere and prestige of Commonwealth meetings. Restoration of Commonwealth membership would, they feel, fix an international seal of approval to the restoration of their personal respectability. But prime minister Sitiveni Rabuka, whose 1987 army coup against a newly elected and Indian dominated government triggered the country's ejection from the Commonwealth, is indifferent. So, increasingly, are some of his ministers and senior public officials. Officially the Rabuka Government's present stance is, "We'll go back if we are invited. But we won't embarrass ourselves by pleading."

As one influential politician and public service figure put it, "Don't quote me by name, but we've found that we can easily do without the Commonwealth. We're making new friends in Asia, which is where our real interests lie, not in Europe or Africa."

Some Fijians are also indignant about the circumstances of their country's ejection from the Commonwealth. The 1987 coups were mild affairs compared with upsets in other Commonwealth countries. One protestor blew himself up with his own bomb and small numbers of people were briefly detained; some were beaten. Otherwise, most civil freedoms were restored comparatively quickly. Today, a controversial constitution, attacked by critics as being undemocratic and racist, nevertheless allows a degree of political and other freedoms unknown in many parts of the world. In Fiji, virtually the only right denied by the constitution to non-Fijian citizens is the right to be president or prime minister; everyone is free to express their opinions of that state of affairs. Fijians defensive of the constitution say that, compared with Fiji, the political and human rights of many Commonwealth countries are not merely deplorable, but hideously so. They mention Nigerian coups, the names of corrupt, brutal African Commonwealth prime ministers and presidents for life, massacres and torture in India, then ask why the Commonwealth in 1987 made such a show of pointing an accusing finger at their country.

On a trip to New Zealand last April, Rabuka was asked by journalists if his government would apply for restoration of Commonwealth membership. He said then that Fiji had no interest in rejoining.

But back in Fiji, replying to Opposition Leader Jai Ram Reddy, one of the politicians ousted from government and jailed briefly in 1987, Rabuka adjusted his stance. "Fiji will wait for an invitation into the Commonwealth

community rather than apply for readmission."

To apply would be to submit the country to scrutiny and appraisal by other Commonwealth members. Rabuka noted that the Commonwealth described itself as a voluntary association of sovereign states, "So if as a foreign state Fiji is equal in status to all member states of the Commonwealth, I see no logic or reason as to why Fiji should submit itself for examination and assessment by these other states. In fact, this opens the way for an existing Commonwealth country, applying its own criteria, to make an individual determination of the acceptability to it of our public institutions and domestic policies. Clearly this would be an unwarranted and unwelcome form of interference in the internal affairs of Fiji."

According to the foreign office, Malaysia, with which Fiji has growing political and economic links, is prepared to lobby for Fiji's return to the Commonwealth, as is Papua New Guinea and Singapore. The problem is India. Fiji wasn't formally expelled, nor did it resign. When the coup happened, several Commonwealth countries, notably India, displayed their antagonism. Others just shrugged since what was happening in Fiji was a far milder form of what they had experienced in their own countries more than once. But the complaining minority had their way; Fiji's Commonwealth membership, the club declared, had simply ceased. In Fiji, the departure caused no great lamentation except from the small Suva branch of the Commonwealth Association, the Fiji Amateur Sports Association, which regretted loss of access to the Commonwealth Games, and politicians used to the freeloading pleasures of the unending Commonwealth junket. What caused more distress was the severance of links with the British monarchy. Rabuka's decision to replace dominion status with a

## Fiji in Brief

**Capital:** Suva on the island of Viti Levu  
**Land Mass:** the two islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu make up 87% of the total land mass of 18,376 sq km  
**Population:** 726,000 (1990 estimate) of which 93% live on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, density 39.6 per sq km  
**History:** 1874 Deed of Cession made Fiji a British colony, first Indians arrived as indentured labour for British sugar cane plantations in 1879; gained independence in 1970.  
**Political status:** a republic, member of the United Nations, has contributed to UN Peace Keeping Forces.  
**Major economic activities:** garment industries (in tax free zones), sugar, gold mining, some forestry.





Fijian currency still displays a portrait of the British monarch Queen Elizabeth the Second, head of the Commonwealth of Nations.

republican government broke a direct Fijian link with Buckingham Palace dating from 1874, when some Fijian chiefs ceded their islands to Queen Victoria.

Fijian affections for the monarchy were exceptionally strong. Since the coup there has been talk in some Fijian traditionalist circles of an arrangement by which a link with Queen Elizabeth would somehow be restored. In meetings with the Queen, some Fijian chiefs, including former governor-general and president, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau, and former prime minister and current president, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, are believed to have raised the issue. But the informal word from the palace has been that nothing can happen until the Fijians equip themselves with a constitution broadly acceptable to the Indians who are 46% of the 758,000 population.

Amongst Fijians, the stronger sentiment is that any return to the Commonwealth would be to attain a reconciliation with the British monarch and somehow restore her to a formal place in Fijian society, rather than simply regaining whatever political and economic benefits the Commonwealth has to offer. Rabuka, who despite his treason as coup leader still retains the OBE handed out to him by Buckingham Palace, has said that "the only reason we would be interested in Fiji's readmission to the Commonwealth is the deep and

abiding feeling of loyalty and affection that we all have in Fiji for the British Crown. As I understand it, because Fiji is now a republic and Her Majesty the Queen is no longer our head of state, the only possible way we can re-establish a formal association with the British Crown is through our membership in the Commonwealth."

The government sees India as the primary obstacle to regaining Commonwealth membership. New Delhi has since 1987 been the loudest international critic of Fiji's constitution and says that it will continue to be so, and an impediment to the resumption of Commonwealth membership, until Fiji's Indian community says that reforms to the constitution are satisfactory to it.

The constitution imposed in 1990 by an army-supported interim government (replaced in 1992 by a government elected under the new constitution) guarantees Fijian political supremacy. Native Fijians have 37 of 70 House of Representatives seats and greatly outnumber non-Fijian members of the powerful appointed Senate. The offices of

president and prime minister are restricted to Fijians, as are several other key public service appointments. The constitution is weighted in favour of Fijians in other ways.

In recent months, the Rabuka Government has begun moves for constitutional reform. With the agreement of the two Indian opposition parties, the National Federation Party and the Fiji Labour Party, it is setting up an independent constitutional review commission. This will have a chairman

from outside Fiji. A parliamentary constitutional review committee will also be formed. Rabuka has declared that by the end of 1996 a new constitution broadly acceptable to all will be in place, ready for the next general election. Although the Fiji Labour Party, which appears to be losing support, is not satisfied with terms of reference for the reviews, remarks from the National Federation Party leader, Jai Ram Reddy, and other Indian leaders indicate that chances for a genuinely acceptable and lasting political deal between Fijians and Indians can be judged with optimism. The implementation of such an agreement would presumably end India's international campaign against Fiji, so opening the door for a return to the Commonwealth, if by then Fiji feels that the Commonwealth is an institution of any real worth.



Transportation on the lagoon - bamboo rafts and canoes.

photo by David Robie

# Cooks to Decide on Political Issues

by Makiuti Tongia

*Maki Tongia teaches Cook Island Studies at Victoria University of Wellington in Aotearoa/New Zealand. He is a former member of the steering committee for the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement.*

Cook Islands will hold its general election on March 24th of this year. It will be the eighth vote since assuming self-governing rule from New Zealand in 1965. Simultaneous with the election will be a public referendum on five issues:

1. Should the current term for parliament of five years be changed?
2. Should the national flag be changed?
3. Should the national anthem be changed?
4. Should the overseas constituency be abolished?
5. Should the country have a Maori name?

## Term of Parliament

The current term is five years and has been since 1978. Prior to that it was four years (since 1968) and before that it was three years (1965). The general feeling is that the five year term is too long and the three year one too short. A middle point of four years appears to be the favourite, though a strong faction is opting for a return to the three year term. My feeling is that voters will

## Cook Islands in brief

**Capital:** Avarua on the island of Rarotonga

**Land mass:** 237 sq km

**Population:** 18,600; 74.3 per sq km

**History:** Probably first settled by Marquesans and later by Tahitians and Samoans around 1250 AD. Became a British protectorate in 1888 and annexed by NZ in 1901.

**Political status:** Self-governing in free association with New Zealand; NZ remains responsible for defence and represents Cook Islands at the United Nations. Cook Islanders also hold NZ citizenship.

**Major economic activities:** In 1989 principal exports were pearl shell, clothing and footwear, agriculture and fishing products; some brewing; tourism.

vote for a change in the current term of parliament.

## National Flag

In 1965 the country had two flags - the Union Jack of Great Britain and the New Zealand flag - for historical reasons. The southern part of the Cook Islands was from 1888 to 1900 a British Protectorate, then called the Hervey Islands. It was a name given by Captain James Cook for his boss, Lord Hervey, in the 1770s, for the rediscovered islands of Manunae and Te-Au-o-Tu. In 1901, New Zealand annexed the Herveys and parts of what are now the northern group islands, renaming them Cook Islands after Captain Cook.

In 1974, eight years after self-governing rule, the country had its first flag with bottle-green background and a circle of 15 golden stars in the centre. This particular flag was later replaced by the current flag of a Union Jack in the top left hand corner on a sea-blue background with a circle of 15 white stars in the centre.

The controversy over the two flags' legitimacy is a political one. The first flag was accused of its dominant bottle-green colour being the political colour of the Cook Islands Party, then the government in 1974. The same criticism has been levelled at the current flag with its dominant sea-blue colour as the political colour of the Democratic

Party, which made the change when it became the government in 1978.

The current flag was the winning entry in the flag competition of 1974, but was overlooked in favour of the first national flag of

bottle-green colour. Some people object to the current flag's colonial legacy of the Union Jack in its top left hand corner and prefer the first flag because it has none of the colonial symbols on it. However, the concept of a flag itself is a colonial concept.

I think the referendum will vote yes to a change in the flag, which may well be a return to the green flag, retention of the current flag minus the Union Jack or a completely new flag.

## National Anthem

Like the story of the flag, the Cook Islands had two national anthems, the British and New Zealand ones. After 1983, the winning entry in the anthem competition, "Te Atua Mou", composed by the late High Chief Pa Tapaeru and her husband and former Prime Minister, Sir Tom Davis, became the first national anthem. The New Zealand anthem is no longer played, though the British anthem and flag are still part of the ceremonial scenery.

I think the referendum will vote yes to changing the national anthem to an "imene-tuki" or traditional religious hymn used by the Cook Islands Party prior to the current anthem. Its music notation predates Christianity and the lyrics are based on biblical verses intermixed with appropriate Maori chants.

## Overseas Constituency

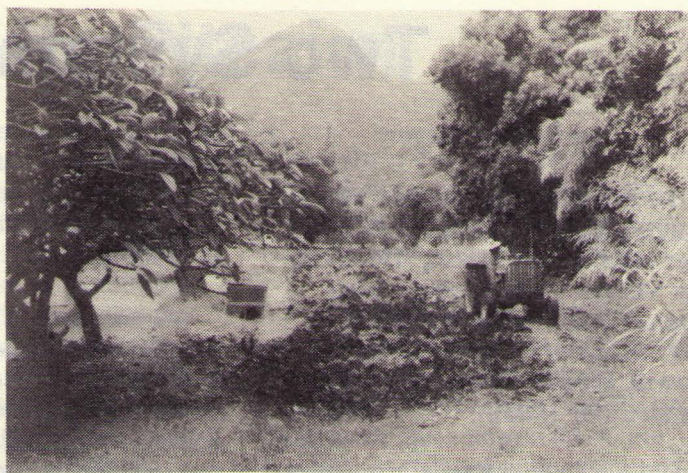
The Cook Islands is the only country in the world that represents its overseas people by a separate seat in Parliament. All other countries have citizens casting votes for the home constituency where they are enrolled. This seat was created in 1983 to represent the 35,000 Cook Islanders in New Zealand, 10,000 in Australia, less than five in Canada, more than twenty in the U.S.A. and others scattered throughout the world. More Cook Islanders live overseas than the

home population of 19,000. With the number of Cook Islanders outside the country more than doubling those within, they are represented by one seat in the 25 seat Parliament.

Ms. Fanaura Kingstone first won the seat for the Cook Islands Party. She campaigned on the policy of getting into Parliament to abolish the seat. But the 1983 election result was a hung Parliament. She lost the seat in the second election of 1983 to Laveta Arthur, now in his second term.

Not all overseas Cook Islanders are eligible to vote. Only those who left the Cook Islands within the three years prior to the election date or who have resided continuously for three months within the country prior to their application as a registered voter, are eligible. Exemptions are those undergoing a course of education or technical training overseas, but the course must originate from the Cook Islands for them to qualify to vote.

**Maori Name**  
Cook Islanders are a Maori people, culturally and linguistically related to the Maori of New Zealand, Maori of Rapanui (Easter Island), Maohi of French Polynesia and the Kanaka Maoli of Hawai'i. Social scientists have labelled us loosely as Polynesians.



Farmer plowing on Rarotonga

photo by Randall Garrison

No national name existed for the country in pre-contact times. The very scattered nature of the islands and lack of appropriate technology to maintain effective contact, and therefore control, between the islands made meaningless the category of a national name. The distance from north to south of the islands is over 1,000 kilometres

and from east to west is over 700 kilometres. In 1990 the Turnu Corero Conference of traditional oral historians proposed to government a Maori name for the country, Avaiki-Nui, which means "great homeland" or "fatherland". Like the previous issues, I conclude that it is likely that the public will vote for a change.

### **Hawaii Public Radio Offers Internships**



Hawaii Public Radio is offering **Pacific Island radio journalists** six new internship/on-the-job training opportunities. The project, jointly supported by the East-West Center's Pacific Islands Development Program, PACBROAD and PACNEWS, places successful candidates in Hawaii Public Radio's News Department for 3.5 months.

Participants will produce and present daily Pacific Island newscasts to Hawaii on the Hawaii Public Radio stations and provide stories from Hawaii and Micronesia to PACNEWS, the Pacific Island news service. Participants also attend lectures and seminars and participate in discussion groups organised by the East-West Center and the University of Hawaii's Center of Pacific Island Studies.

This unique program offers Pacific Island journalists the opportunity to expand their knowledge of contemporary Pacific events and issues, and expands and improves reporting of Pacific Island news in Hawaii, Pacific Basin countries and territories, and the U.S. mainland.

The Pacific Island News project is a two-year program that seeks to place eight candidates. The next intern period begins May 15, 1994. Complete information, including application forms, is available from Hawaii Public Radio, 738 Kaheka St, Honolulu, HI, USA 96814 (tel 808/955-8821 fax 808/942-5477).

\* Graphic by Nga Teariki from Mana, Vol 5, No 1

### **3rd Annual Dreamspeakers Festival Call for Submissions An International Aboriginal Cultural, Artistic and Film Festival**

**August 25-28, 1994  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada  
No entry fee**

**All entries must have First Nations participation as follows:**

- . A total First Nations production: producer, director and/or writer
- . A collaborative production: a First Nations and non-aboriginal joint production
- . A First Nations theme production: a non-aboriginal production with the subject matter focusing on First Nations issues/stories

**Deadline: May 31, 1994**

**Contact:** Sharon Shirt, Film Programmer, Dreamspeakers Festival, 9914 - 76th Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6E 1K7 Canada

# Two Systems of Justice

by Ulafala Aiavao

[This article is one section of the *Islands Business Pacific* (November 1993) cover report, "Death in the Village", which chronicled events that overtook a family in the village of Lona on Upolu Island, Western Samoa in late September 1993.]

Tuala Donald Kerslake moves easily between two judicial worlds. As Secretary for Justice, with a law degree from Canterbury University in New Zealand, he administers a Western-style court system in Apia. It is complete with lawyers, and magistrates and supreme courts, and lengthy procedures.

As the holder of a chiefly title (*tuala*) he also is involved with the council of chiefs in his village of Satapuala in Upolu. The council guides the affairs of the village and is quick to correct what it sees as disruption.

He said: "A person penalised by the council for theft, swearing or showing disrespect to a chief may be fined 10 sows. The present conversion rate for a sow in our village is about \$US10 (compared to the real market value of \$US100 plus), and sometimes a carton of tinned herrings can be substituted for a sow."

**Heavier fines, quicker action:**  
More serious matters involving

## Western Samoa in brief

**Capital:** Apia on the island of Upolu

**Land mass:** 2,831 sq km

**Population:** around 160,000; birth rate 31.0 per 1,000

**History:** Samoan civil wars in last half of 1800s, German colonial rule from 1889 to 1914, then taken over by NZ. Independence granted 1962.

**Political status:** Parliamentary system rooted in both Samoan and British models. Universal suffrage adopted in 1990, local government based on *matai* system.

**Major economic activities:** Agriculture and tourism. Agriculture provided 90% of export earnings. Some logging, on both Upolu and Savai'i islands, some manufacturing, tourism.

offenses such as rape, serious injury, or death, demand heavier fines and an immediate decision that does not wait until the monthly council meeting.

Fines are paid the same day by the clan acting together, rather than the offender alone - even with punishment there is the principle of collective responsibility. The council can refuse to accept what the family comes up with and they return later with more. In extreme cases, banishment of an offender or an entire clan is ordered.

During one incident resulting in the death of another villager, Tuala took part in a traditional apology or *ifoga*. This involves clan members covering themselves with fine mats and kneeling outside the family home of the victim until the apology is formally accepted. "It is a very humbling and humiliating experience, but I went because I saw it as my duty," he said.

The apology was eventually accepted, easing tension between the two families. The council received a fine of two cattle, five sows, and numerous cartons of tinned fish and cabin biscuits. Both youth were banished from the village - "if they return, their families are fined and possibly assaulted for challenging the authority of the village." Apart from the village council's penalty, both offenders were punished under the modern judicial system. They served several years in jail for manslaughter.

Councils have a geographic boundary and because the village is a unit, it can contain law and order within that area.

"Village law is more variable than the national system where penalties are written down. For example, (the maximum for) rape is seven years and murder is commuted to life in prison. Its strength is that it's a system in a small area so it is easier to police. Village penalties are speedier: the chiefs meet, penalty is made and the matter is settled that day. In the national system there are more procedures; you are questioned, arrested, charged, appear in court and plea. If you plead not guilty there are a series of adjournments, and legal fees, before your case is decided. That may take months or a year. "Personally, I see both systems continuing to co-exist for some time.

**Mitigation:** "It is common in the modern system for the family of a victim to ask that charges be withdrawn because the matter has been settled traditionally. These settlements based on *faa-Samoa* (the Samoan way) are also used in mitigation pleas during sentencing. Sometimes the victim will plead for the offender. Part of our survival has been our holding on to what we understand as customs and traditions, because that is what makes us Samoan.

"I don't think you can go against the village and still live there. I lived 17 years in New Zealand and came back with certain ideas, but change has to come gradually. If you disagree, you have to find ways within the system, at council meetings and by consensus." On the death at Lona village, Tuala said he believes it was an exception: "When all the facts are known, the heat taken away, I think somewhere along the line it got out of hand. I don't think a village fono would condone killing as a punishment. A step was missed."

[Reprinted from *Islands Business Pacific*, November 1993]

# A Sad Day for Pitcairn

by Tom Christian

*Tom Christian is the radio officer on Pitcairn Island.*

*"Cheers and good luck. This is Wellington Radio ZLW over and out."*

*"Thank you for your kind cooperation. This is Pitcairn Radio ZBP now clear and closing down. 'Bye'"*

This two way radio conversation at 0105 GMT, 30th September 1993 (4:35 pm 29th Pitcairn Time), ended the radio telephone link between Pitcairn and New Zealand, lying some 5300 km to the south west.

It was the 17th June 1985 when the radio telephone circuit started up and was officially declared open on 20th June by Lady Young, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in London, and Brian Young, Pitcairn's Island Magistrate at the time.

From the start, people were thrilled to be able to talk to family members and friends; some voices had not been heard for many years. For others it was hearing a pen friend's voice for the first time. Prior to this radio communication circuit, telegrams had been the only method of communication to and from Pitcairn. Radio telephone had been available from ship to shore on rare occasions, but generally Morse Code (C.W.) was the mode of communication.

## Pitcairn Islands in brief

**Land Mass:** 35.5 sq km, 4 islands in all (Ducie, Oueno and Henderson) are uninhabited, Pitcairn itself is 3 km long by 1.5 km wide and 4.35 sq km

**Population:** about 56, density 11.3 per sq km

**History:** The Bounty mutineers chose Pitcairn as their final landfall but were forcibly moved by the British to Norfolk Island in 1856, some returned several years later.

**Political status:** a British dependency administered by the British High Commission in NZ. Internal management is by a local Council elected by universal suffrage (since 1838) and chaired by the Island magistrate.

**Lifestyle:** subsistence, some income from sales of stamps and crafts to island visitors and overseas.

For several years we have had two daily schedules to send out weather reports and telegrams. This was originally via Rarotonga; then Suva, Fiji; and from June 1985 via Wellington, New Zealand. The station that was in daily contact with Pitcairn during the last 18 months of World War II continued for a few years, but gradually faded out because of the lack of a qualified operator on the island.

The radio telephone circuit operated at 10:30 am (1900 GMT) and 4:00 pm (0030 GMT) Sunday to Friday. At first an evening schedule was run on Sunday and Thursday nights at 8:30 pm (0500 GMT), but customers were few and it was very inconvenient in wet and stormy weather for operator and customer. This service phased itself out within six months.

It took a little while for some to get used to saying "over" when pausing for the other person to speak, as the system was a Simplex radio telephone circuit, where one person speaks at a time. There were occasions when radio reception was poor, but most times by changing channels, we were able to satisfy most customers with a reasonable circuit.

The radio link was from Pitcairn to Wellington and then by landline to Telecom International in Auckland, where calls were connected to

anywhere in New Zealand or the world. The telephone booth in the Public Hall at the Square was popular for a while, especially with the amplifier that could be switched on, enabling other family members to listen in. Later however, more customers

came up to the Radio Station at Taro Ground so that other family members could readily join in the conversation if they so wanted.

Calls to New Zealand were reasonable at NZ\$1.64 per minute; to Australia and some Pacific Islands \$2 per minute; to USA \$3 per minute; to Scandinavia \$4.30 per minute; all three minute minimums. People appreciated the circuit and did not complain about charges which were initially set by the New Zealand Authorities and our Administration in Auckland.

For the first six months in 1985, 354 outgoing calls and 173 were logged. Up until the circuit closed, 4845 calls were made, about 605 per year, while incoming calls totalled 2329, almost 291 per year.

On 20th April 1992 the Inmarsat Satellite Service was commissioned and Bill Haigh came from New Zealand to install the system. The latter is in operation 9 am to 9 pm (1730 GMT - 0530 GMT) daily. Calls can be made to any country. At present the charge is NZ\$15 per minute, except USA where it costs \$20.85 per minute. The service is convenient but expensive and, since the radio telephone circuit has closed, the telephone calls have not increased. The facsimile service is also convenient, but costs an average of NZ\$15 per page and to USA about \$30 per page.

Incoming calls are answered by the answering machine, but an operator is present 9 am - 9:30 am (1830-1900 GMT), noon - 12:15 pm (2030-2045 GMT), 4 pm - 4:15 pm (0030-0045 GMT) and 9 pm (0530 GMT) when the system is switched off because the main power supply shuts down at 10 pm.

Everyone finds the satellite system too expensive for social conversations, and what aggravates locals is that even if the phone or fax and



photo courtesy of Don Kamm

**Isolation is a fact of life for Pitcairners: panoramic view from on high**

receiving the call is engaged, one has to pay for satellite time printed out on the computer. If a fax is being sent and it doesn't even go through the machine, one is charged for the time of the connection.

In 1992, 190 fax messages were sent and 73 phone calls made, while the island received 282 fax messages and 95 phone calls - mostly on the Ansaphone. As well, 139 telex messages were sent and 151 received. This year we have so far sent 232 fax, 125 telex and made 33 phone calls. We have received 325 fax, 113 telex messages and 59 phone calls.

**And What of the Future?**

We are unable to send daily weather reports because it's not worth the cost to the Meteorological Department, so in the meantime reports are made up each month and mailed, mainly for record purposes. The Meteorological Department in New Zealand has just been installing modern transceivers in the Pararamu Weather Office and identical Transworld TW700 Transceivers on Raoul and Campbell Islands to enable the weather reports to be dialled direct to the New Zealand Weather

Office. It will also allow meteorological staff to make phone calls to their families

In speaking to them, they think there is a good possibility that the system could work for Pitcairn. Our Administration may have to purchase the same equipment at a cost of approximately NZ\$15,000 to make this possible, so it will be interesting to see what happens. Everyone on Pitcairn would like to be able to talk to their relatives once in a while at a price they can afford.

Meanwhile there is great interest in amateur radio operation. For many years I was the only "ham" operator, but today there are twelve licensed operators with more people showing interest. Whether the closing of the radio telephone service has anything to do with it I'm not sure, but one thing seems to be certain - people want to be able to keep

talking to friends in the outside world, and Pitcairn probably has the highest number of amateur radio operators per capita.

With the closure of the radio telephone service at Taro Ground, the staff still continues with weather observations and contacts are still made with ships. Since 1985 we contacted 908 ships and 389 of them stopped at Pitcairn - an average of 43 per year. Long distance radio contact with ships is on the decline as they, too, are using Inmarsat, but we hope their visits will continue, even if we only get two or three hours notice on VHF radio prior to arrivals. We enjoy their visits and any income received supplements the low income here. A person has to sell a lot of wood carvings, stamps or T shirts if one plans on making a "phone" call to that distant relative.

[Reprinted from *The Pitcairn Miscellany*, No.



# Challenges to a Feudal State: Tonga's Pro-Democracy Movement

adapted by SPPF from an interview with Epeli Hau'ofa

*Professor Hau'ofa is a member of the Sociology Department at the School of Social and Economic Development (SSED), University of the South Pacific, and acting head of SSED. He has written and lectured widely on his native Tonga and attended the Pro-Democracy Movement's 1992 Convention on the Tongan Constitution and Democracy. This article is adapted from an interview with him conducted by Simione Durutalo which appeared in the September 1993 volume of The Review, an SSED publication.*

Uniquely in the Pacific, Tonga did not go through a period of direct colonization. While it was a British protectorate and there was some external influence on its constitutional development, the traditional feudal system of Tonga has remained relatively intact to the present day. The Tongan Constitution stipulates that all land belongs to the King, with vast hereditary estates assigned to the 33 noble title holders who owe their positions to him. The Constitution sets few limits on the powers of the King, who directly appoints 12 members of Parliament (the prime minister, other ministers and governors). Another 9 members of Parliament are chosen by the 33 nobles.

## Tonga in brief

**Capital:** Nuku'alofa on the island of Tongatapu  
**Land mass:** 748 sq. km., 172 islands of which 37 are inhabited.  
**Population:** around 100,000, density 126.4 per square km. (1986)  
**History:** From the 10th century, Tonga has had a lineage of sacred chiefs. As a result of internal unrest, negotiated with the UK to become a British protectorate in 1900. Independence gained 1970.  
**Political status:** a monarchy with a centralized administration ruled by King Taufa Ahau Tupou IV.  
**Major economic activities:** Agriculture (bananas, coconuts, squash), tourism.

Thus 21 of the 30 members of Parliament represent the King and feudal aristocracy, while only 9 representatives are directly chosen by the people in elections.

In the last few years, there have been attempts by some of the people's representatives in Parliament to effect changes because the parliamentary system is stacked against the commoner people. Their representatives could not achieve much, such as selecting Cabinet Ministers or establishing how government funds have been used. The realisation by an increasing number of Tongans of the futility of getting things done within the present system has led to the emergence of a strong Pro-Democracy Movement. Pro-Democracy candidates won 6 of the 9 seats for people's representatives in the 1993 elections, most by large margins.

While these undemocratic practices have existed for a long time, the movement for democracy only emerged in the 1980s due to a number of factors. There has been a weakening of the aristocracy due to certain laws that have emerged from the Constitution. This has been paralleled by a gradual rise of the ordinary people of the country. By the mid-1980s, a shift of forces in Tonga from the aristocracy to the commoner class had occurred. A class

that had traditionally been powerless had gained, through achievement in education and other things, most of the economic and social power in society. It began to demand a share of institutional powers proportionate with its strength. Also by

the 1980s, due to an infusion of funds from abroad, not so much from aid but from remittances, Tonga was awash with money. There was more potential for mismanagement at the top. As things became blatant, people spoke out fearlessly because they knew they had the power.

All these things led to the 1992 Constitutional Convention, which was an attempt to educate the Tongan people about the idea of democracy and constitutional reform, and to get ideas as to how or where we are going to go from here. The Convention was held in the Basilica, which is quite indicative of the strength of the churches in the country. The participants were church leaders, some very well educated government officials, politicians and overseas Tongans and others who gave papers to provide people with background information. Government officials were invited, as were constitutional lawyers from overseas and other non-Tongans. But because of the government ban on foreigners participating in the Convention, it was mostly Tongans who attended.

As a result of the Convention, the direction now is clear, to amend the Constitution and establish a truly constitutional monarchy. The people of Tonga believe that they have a constitutional monarchy, but it is clear that Tonga is an absolute monarchy. For example, the monarch cannot be taken to court under any circumstances. The monarch is above the law and above the Constitution. Although the Constitution has been devised in such a way that the monarch operates through it, he is actually above it.

People have heard about democracy in other places and most Tongans have travelled overseas.

They know what is going on in these places, but many people were confused nonetheless about what democracy would mean in Tonga. However, the concept was explained quite simply by Futa Helu, the principal of 'Atenisi Institute. Democracy, he explained, is different from our current system, which operates such that the government and the King can do whatever they want. They are not accountable to the people and they get away with many things. Futa Helu explained that, in a democratic system, you choose your leaders and get them into Parliament and Cabinet. If they do wrong, you kick them out and you can punish them through the courts. Tongans know that Ministers have been impeached without any success. This idea that democracy is people choosing their own leaders, who are accountable to them, was well understood by those who attended the Convention.

The demand would be for something like the election of all members of Parliament by the people and for Ministers to be responsible to Parliament. There is a committee now to draw out these ideas and the Pro-Democracy Movement wants a referendum to be conducted by the government on whether people want constitutional reform. The Pro-Democracy Movement expects that there will be quite strong support for their calls for political and constitutional reforms.

While some, for example in Fiji, may charge that democracy of this sort is a "foreign flower" that would not be in line with traditional cultural values, I don't think that Tongans are as concerned with foreign elements in their traditions as are Samoan and Fijian nationalists. Many past changes in Tonga have foreign, non-Tongan roots but are now part of our culture and society. Because Tongan territory is small, its people had to move outside their country in order to develop. As they made their living from trading with other people, there have always been foreign influences in the development of Tongan culture and



photo by Margaret Argue

The Royal Palace of the King of Tonga, Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, in Nuku'alofa

society. So when Europeans came, foreign influences had long been part and parcel of our country's history. Myths show that important reforms, such as past developments in the Tongan political system, were brought in by influences from abroad.

Many of the churches in Tonga have thrown their weight behind the Pro-Democracy Movement. Churches have always preached the necessity of truthfulness, justice and morality in order to lead a full Christian life. The behaviour of government leaders has been such that it offends the Christian ideals that church leaders hold and preach. People in Tonga may be conservative in many ways, but rampant corruption offends church leaders. I would guess that this Christian sense of morality is the main thing that motivates the churches to support democracy in Tonga. We cannot say that whole churches or all leaders of the churches support democracy, only some leaders, perhaps the majority. In general, as far as the main churches are concerned, younger clergy are mainly with the movement while there is a split among the older generation.

Some people have said that the villagers and grassroots people are conservative and would not support the Pro-Democracy Movement.

Recent general elections have showed otherwise. People in villages voted solidly for the reform movement. The Tongan political system has not to date generated political parties. There has been talk that the King and nobles would like to organise a Christian-Democratic Party, in collaboration with some church leaders, to support the King's position and challenge the Pro-Democracy Movement. However, the aristocracy has not been able to organise such a chiefly-based party, as was done in Fiji. The desire for such a party, and the inability to create it, are both signs that the Tongan aristocracy has already lost credibility.

There is a link between economic and political developments. The chiefs in the past used to be managers of the economic activities of their people. The 1875 Constitution forbade the nobility from commanding labour and the produce of people. Even their control over land tenure is very weak. Although the land is divided into estates given to particular landholding nobles, once a piece of estate land allotted to an individual is registered, the chief has no say whatsoever on that piece of land; it goes automatically from father to eldest son. Chiefs cannot tell you what to do; people are independent to work on their registered land. The



economy has been free of the nobility since Emancipation Day in 1862. They only receive things through the leases on their estates. This is part of the strength of the people. Many people also receive remittances from relatives outside of Tonga. The fact is that most people are no longer dependent for anything on the chiefs and chiefs therefore cannot exert power on the people.

The nobility's last resort is at the apex of the state structure where they are appointed politically. Their resistance to democracy is because control of the Tongan state is their main source of livelihood and their last remaining source of power. They have no other effective mechanism of control over the people. The other factor is that before 1875 there were many chiefs in Tonga, just like in Fiji (with hundreds of ratus) and Samoa (with thousands of matais). But in Tonga the first King, Tupou I, reduced the number of land holding chiefs from more than 100 to around 30. This drastically reduced the size of the aristocracy and their proportion of the population. As the economy and government expanded, the nobility

had neither the numbers nor the training to take effective control, which went to commoners.

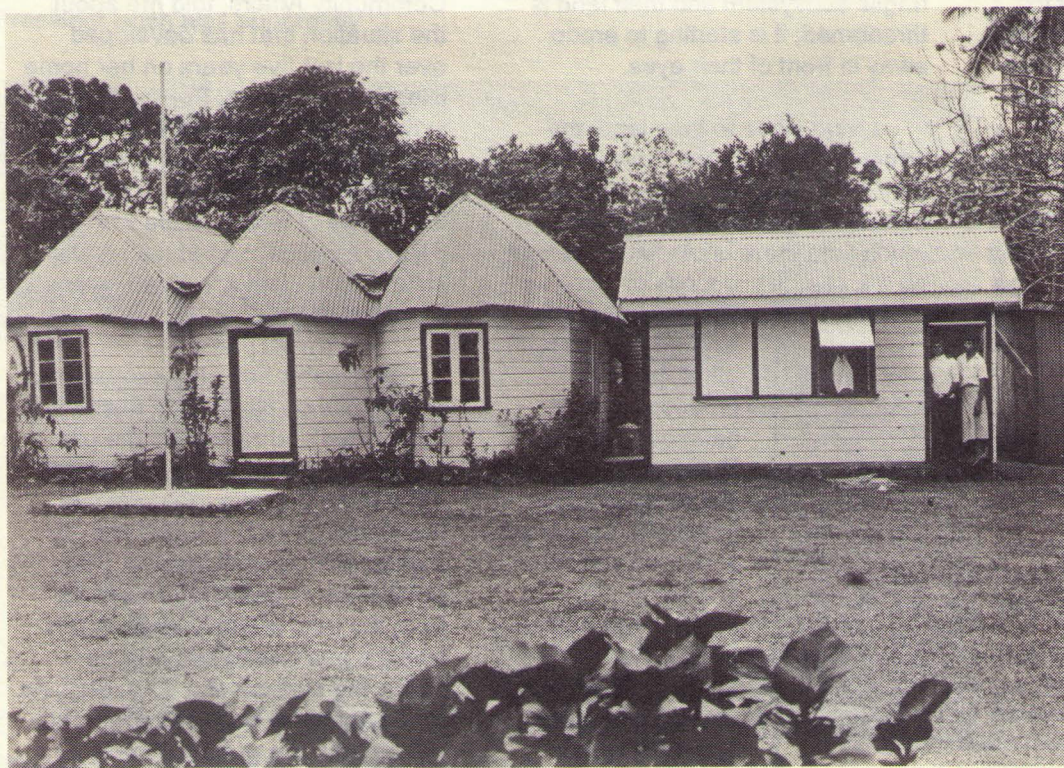
Tonga is the only non-democratic polity in the Pacific. However, the democracy that you have throughout the Pacific was imposed by colonial powers before they left. It was a democracy imposed from the top. It is one thing to have democratic political institutions imposed on societies; it is another thing altogether whether these societies have democratic cultures. Because Tonga was not directly colonized and it established a monarchical system in the last century, it has had undemocratic political institutions with token democratic features for show. Now you have the rise of a pro-democracy movement in Tonga. This is a grassroots movement that aims to introduce real democracy into the country. We have developed what I would call a democratic culture without a democratic political system. For example, we already have a very free press, a fairly well educated population, a well travelled population and freedom of speech. Everyone speaks their minds freely and you

have a society that is very individualistic because of the individualization of land tenure. All property is held and transmitted individually. The only thing left is to have the political system changed.

Most ordinary people in Tonga are left out of the formal Tongan political structure. They don't benefit all that much from the system and therefore have very little loyalty to it. It is the only place in the Pacific that has the vast majority of its population, virtually all women and most men, who are landless. This may be one of the reasons why an increasing number of people are going over to the pro-democratic side; they do not owe anything to the present system and they feel that it has treated them unjustly.

The commoners hold the strength of the country. They may not have a hold on the police or state power, but they hold everything else. Those of us who were at the Convention hope that change will come peacefully. Change will come and the government, the nobility, they all realize it. The aristocracy is not going to give up power easily, but it will in the end.

We must not forget that most of our people are still loyal to the monarchy and aristocracy because they have been part of our whole history and traditions, our identity. We are a single people; to maintain this, we must change things peacefully. In fact, people are saying that the aristocracy has an important role in society, not necessarily a political role but a cultural one. History teaches that a refusal to peacefully grant moderate demands leads to a more radical response. People are hoping that we do not get to that stage in Tonga.



In a village on Tongatapu

photo by Elaine Brière

# Keeping Our Heads Above Water

## The Effects of Climate Change on Tuvalu

by Luamanuvao Winnie Laban

*Winnie Laban is the coordinator of the South Pacific Consumer Protection Programme of the International Organization of Consumer Unions. She is based in Aotearoa/New Zealand.*

"Global warming and the greenhouse effect" were the only words I understood in the sermon, delivered in Tuvaluan, by the pastor in Funafuti. In New Zealand and other western countries, these concepts are of passing interest; in Tuvalu, Kiribati, the Tokelaus and other low lying coral atoll communities, they are the topics of everyday conversations and sermons. The effects of global warming may mean the loss of their homelands for these people of the Pacific.

Tuvalu consists of nine coral atolls with a total land area of 26 sq. km. at high tide. At no point is the land more than three metres above sea level. During a recent visit to Tuvalu, an invitation came from then Prime Minister, the Hon. Bikenibeu Paeniu, to visit Nukulaelae, one of the outer islands, and see the effects of climate change first hand. Nukulaelae is only accessible by boat, six hours from Funafuti, the capital of Tuvalu. Surf boats brought us ashore through the reef passage

into a tranquil, turquoise lagoon. The hospitality and generosity of the people was humbling as they shared their food, homes and alofa with us.

Coconut palms, pandanus and a few hardy plants are the only vegetation. The soil is poor but people cultivate pulaka, a form of taro grown in pits, kumara and a few other household vegetables. Fish is the major source of protein, but pigs, chickens and ducks are raised for cultural exchange and food. Toddy, the vitamin rich sap of the coconut palm, is collected and drunk daily. These traditional Polynesian foods are now supplemented by flour, rice, sugar and canned foods from the island's cooperative store. The 300 people on Nukulaelae live in harmony with their land, adapting what they require from western society, sustaining themselves and their land as their ancestors have for over a thousand years. They live in a fragile ecosystem and their land is threatened; it is starting to erode away in front of their eyes.

Living close to their land, the people of Nukulaelae know through their oral traditions which land belongs to which family and how much land there is. As with any land by the sea, the process of wave action erodes some land and creates other, but the processes are in balance over time. However, over the last ten years the people have noticed a marked increase in erosion. The balance has shifted, the land is being flooded. This has caused grave concern throughout Tuvalu and other

vulnerable Pacific Island nations and regional agencies have been approached for advice and practical assistance to reduce the erosion and stop the flooding.

The European Community has funded a seawall project on Nukulaelae. Concrete blocks are manufactured from coral sand and arranged along the coast in an attempt to stop erosion. The EC provides resources and local people the labour for this project. The long term effects of this work are yet to be evaluated, but it is addressing symptoms of the problem, not the cause. A sea wall can only hope to give temporary relief. If global warming continues, the seas will continue to rise and erode the land. The long term solution is with the industrialised countries whose actions are causing the problem.

Nukulaelae is not the only island affected. Mrs. Naama Latasi, the Minister of Education, Health and Community Affairs, told me about the situation that has developed over the last five years on her home island of Nanumea. For the first time in living memory and in oral tradition, salt water has been flooding ashore and killing coconut palms. A large area of land planted with prime palms, a critical part of the local subsistence economy, is now useless for plantations.

Salt water has also seeped into pulaka pits on Nanumea, destroying food crops and rendering the pits unfit for further cultivation. The pits have been dug into the coral and maintained by each family with immense and constant labour. The pulaka plants gain their moisture from the lens of fresh water that is found some one to two metres below the surface of a coral atoll. As food cannot be kept in the hot tropical climate, the pulaka pit acts as a growing storehouse of food. Pulaka

### Tuvalu in brief

**Capital:** Funafuti

**Land mass:** 26 sq km total over 9 atolls (Nanumea, Niutao, Nanumanga, Nui, Vaitupu, Nukulaelae, Funafuti, Niulakita)

**Population:** 8,229 in 1985.

**History:** Formerly the Ellice Islands. Population reduced from 20,000 to 3,000 by 1875 through slave traders and disease. Independence gained from Britain in 1978.

**Political status:** independent state with the British monarch as Head of State, member of South Pacific Forum and Commonwealth 'special' member.

**Lifestyle:** Subsistence agriculture and fishing, some copra production for export.

is the staple diet of the people; without it they will become dependent on imported foods. The ownership and cultivation of pulaka pits is an important part of family identity, cultural pride and survival. Encroachment of salt water into the pits threatens the future of the people of Tuvalu.

Political leaders in the Pacific have been attempting to bring their concerns to the attention of international leaders. The prime minister of Tuvalu presented papers to several international fora. His speeches highlight the effects of the industrialised nations' consumption of fossil fuels and destruction of rainforests upon the world's climate and subsequently upon small Pacific Island nations. Prime Minister Paeniu and other Pacific Island leaders have lobbied leaders of the industrialised nations to curb emissions of carbon dioxide and to ban CFC emissions, which contribute to ozone depletion. This has not been an easy task as the powerful lobby of transnational corporations has denied the connection between these emissions and climate change.

Pacific leaders raised these issues with President Bush in 1990. President Bush was apparently

unconvinced that global climatic change is taking place and commissioned the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) to spend about US\$ 1 billion a year to explore the causes and effects of climate change. It is sobering to note that US\$ 1 billion would fund the economy of Tuvalu for over a thousand years. But will Tuvalu exist in a thousand years? At the current rate of climate changes, the people of Tuvalu and other coral atoll communities in the Pacific may have to look for new homes within the next fifty years.

An ad-hoc alliance, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), has grown out of these concerns. AOSIS aims to ensure that the voices of small island states are heard in international fora and it is starting to have some success. In June 1992, a Convention on Climate Change was adopted by the UN Conference on Environment and Development. The new U.S. Administration has shown a public commitment to environmental principles. However, political rhetoric has done little to date to slow the rate of emissions of carbon dioxide. AOSIS has proposed the following six point Plan for the Environment to keep

the heads of small island states above water.

1. Immediate and significant cuts in emissions from industrialised countries of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere;
2. An approach based on the precautionary principle which mandates the global community to take action now, even in the face of some scientific uncertainty as to the rate and degree of global warming;
3. New and equitable funding mechanisms which recognise the need to compensate low-lying coastal and small, vulnerable island countries, some of whose very existence is placed at risk by the consequences of climate change;
4. The expeditious and equitable transfer of environmentally sound technologies;
5. Application of the "polluter pays" principle on compensation for the consequences of climate change;
6. Commitment to binding and meaningful energy conservation and efficiency requirements, and to the development of alternative energy sources.

This plan contains some important principles that link the causes and effects of climate change. But as the wider debate continues in international meetings, time is running out for the people of Nukulaelae. As we sailed away from Nukulaelae, I watched the island slip below the horizon and sadly reflected that, unless urgent action is taken to halt global warming, the people of Nukulaelae may one day sail away from their home and watch it sink below the surface of the sea.



photo courtesy of South Pacific Consumer Protection Programme

Seawall to prevent erosion on Nukulaelae Atoll, Tuvalu

# Tokelauns

by Antony Hooper

Only in the past generation have the 1,600 indigenous Polynesians of Tokelau had an opportunity to launch themselves on the waves of economic and political development washing across the Pacific. Into the late 1960s Tokelau was a place of thatched houses, sailing canoes, kerosene lanterns, and a subsistence economy based on coconuts and fish. A ship came once every three months; apart from that, only Morse code messages crackled through the isolation.

"Development" changed all that. The economy is now an aid-driven one, dominated by annual budget assistance from New Zealand of over NZ\$4million. Most Tokelauns are public employees. Their houses are built out of imported materials, and outboard-powered aluminum boats have almost replaced canoes. New ideas and constraints have battered the old social order of kinship and elder-based village politics. That old order has held, but only through radical accommodations.

The UN has guided much of the impetus for change. The atolls are, in UN jargon, a "non self-governing territory," and missions from the UN Committee on Colonialism have urged development so that people can choose realistically among independence, self-government, or complete integration with New Zealand.

## Tokelau in brief

**Capital:** administrative centres on each of the three atolls-Atafu, Fakaofu and Nukunonu

**Land Mass:** 1,012 hectares

**Population:** 1,690 in Tokelau and 2,316 in New Zealand (1986 census)

**History:** settled by Polynesians, under British colonial rule in 1877, under New Zealand since 1925

**Political status:** a non self governing island territory of New Zealand, which is responsible for external relations. Strong ties maintained with Western Samoa where the Office for Tokelau Affairs is located.

**Lifestyle:** subsistence agriculture and fishing, some export of copra, handicrafts, stamps and souvenir coins.



Women weaving baskets from coconut palm fronds

For readily apparent reasons, Tokelauns are being cautious about choosing their political status. The three atolls have a combined land area of less than five square miles. Moreover, although subsistence resources are adequate, there is little to sustain an export economy.

a complete end to colonialism by any specified date. Tragically, it also needs time to see whether the atolls can withstand a threat from any rise in sea level accompanying global warming.

[Reprinted from *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Fall 1993]

Tokelau's greatest need is time.

It needs time to develop modern political institutions on the basis of indigenous ideas rather than to be forced to succumb to pressures for

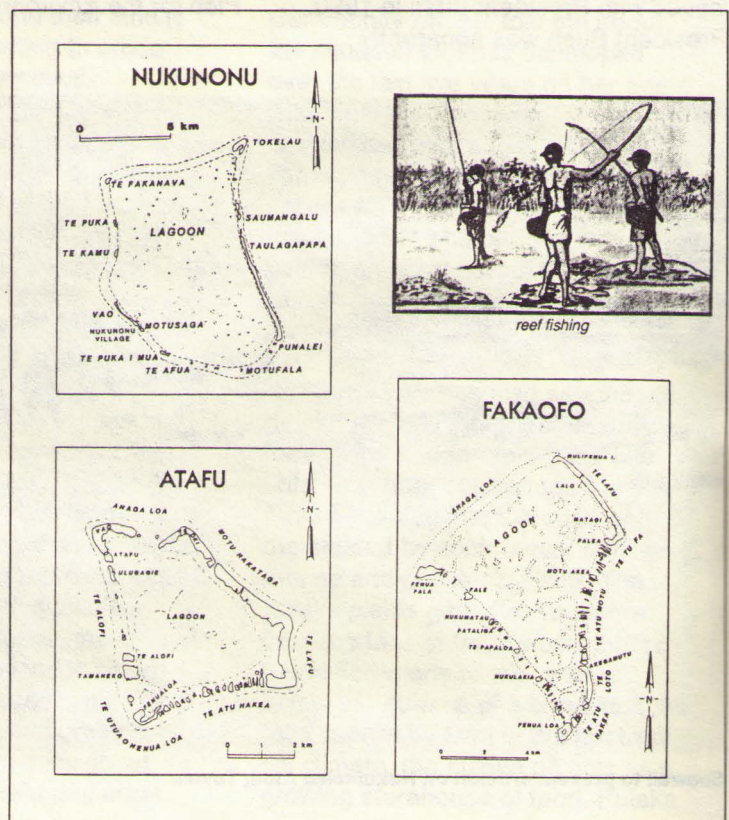


photo from South Pacific Festival of Arts Souvenir Programme 1980

maps and graphic from South Pacific Handbook, 5th Edition

# Theatre For Development Education

by Francis Iro

*Francis Iro works for the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) as the field officer responsible for coordinating the SEI! theatre team.*

Drama is performed at custom feasts and church festivals in Solomon Islands, but only to entertain and make people laugh. Solomon Islands, a nation of 75 languages and as many cultures scattered in dozens of islands and thousands of villages over half a million square miles of ocean, needs some kind of unifying force. We don't have TV and radio uses only English and Pijin, which more than half of the women do not understand. SIDT's use of mobile teams - 60 to 70 teams spread throughout the nation - allows us to bring necessary information in a face to face manner. *SEI!*, a vital part of SIDT, continues the same kind of outreach pattern using theatre.

*SEI!* theatre team was started in 1988 and has gone from strength to strength. Taking theatre into the village aims to: present important social issues in a lively and entertaining way; encourage villagers to confront problems and organise around an issue; help preserve customs and culture; create an educational resource to assist government and NGOs in their village extension work.

## Solomon Islands in brief

**Capital:** Honiara on the island of Guadalcanal

**Land mass:** 27,556 sq km

**Population:** 196,823; density 11.8 per sq km (mid 1990).

**History:** Gained independence in 1978 from Britain which governed the islands since 1898.

**Political status:** A constitutional monarchy with the British sovereign as Head of State (represented locally by a Governor General who must be a Solomon Islander), unicameral National Parliament with 38 elected members.

**Economic activities:** 90% subsistence agriculture and fishing, some forestry, mining, and tourism.

Since its inception, *SEI!* has proved a vital community resource, fulfilling an ever increasing demand for imaginative and new approaches to non-formal education and audience participation. It is able to communicate complex ideas in a simple and direct way. Solomon Islands is made up of many scattered islands and villages. *SEI!* has already covered 700-800 villages and there are only a few small islands that are yet to be visited. Despite the transport and other problems, the group has performed in each village with plays on logging, nutrition, immunisation, sanitation, population, resource management, child care, urban drift and bait fishing.

After the plays, or actions as we call them, there is always feedback from the audiences stating what they think about the actions. As a result, some of the provinces in Solomon Islands - like Temotu and Central - have declared that they don't want or need any big development like logging to enter their provinces.

With some 6,000 villages in Solomon Islands, *SEI!* would not be able to cover this vast area even over a period of years. So how does the work extend further into rural areas? After three years, *SEI!* started to organise training, especially with students at the rural training centres (RTC). When the students return to their villages, they will teach youth from other villages and

the process can go on. This is one way *SEI!* is able to reach out into rural areas. The members of the theatre team also show SIDT's mobile team members (MTMs) how to put on plays. MTMs are our village-based, grassroots way of reaching out to the nation's villages.

*SEI!* is also in demand to train other groups, like college students.

When *SEI!* is based in Honiara, NGO workshop organisers often ask the team to put on special plays. The team worked with Save the Children Fund to do an immunisation drama which will be filmed for viewing at rural clinics. The video will be cheaper and more often seen than a live visit from *SEI!*.

In May *SEI!* took part in a secondary school cultural festival at Gizo, Western Province. They also helped train primary school students to make plays. At the festival closing, the team joined with some primary school students to do new dramas. They were also interviewed by SIBC Radio Happy Lagoon. The same week, *SEI!* trained students at St. Dominic Rural Training Centre. The boys learned how to do logging and mining plays, to be shown at Western Province's environment week, and plays on how to keep the soil fertile.

In June *SEI!* was part of Honiara's celebration to mark World Environment Day. *SEI!* put on three plays - logging, population and mining. These really helped focus peoples' minds on the importance of being careful with our environment.

*SEI!* also trained a new health acting team at Kirakira, Makira Province. The group was taught how to do the immunisation and breastfeeding plays and made up a new one on sanitation. *SEI!* then went with the health team on their tour of Ugi Island - one of the scattered islands in Makira province - which was a great success.

## International Touring and Links

In 1989 two members of *SEI!*, Frances Iro and Patrick Kekea, and trainer Campbell Smith went for observation and training with theatre groups in Papua New Guinea. The group spent one week with the



**SEII performs in Honiara for World Environment Day**

photo courtesy of Campbell Smith

national theatre at Goroka and one and a half weeks with a community theatre in Madang (Drama for Development). Later the group went to Goroka and stayed with Raun Raun theatre. They also spent a few days with Duadua theatre in Lae.

The second tour for **SEII** members was in 1991. Two members of the group went to the Philippines to look at how the Philippines Educational Theatre Association (PETA) organized their network with NGOs in rural and urban areas. In April 1993, **SEII** was represented at the popular theatre festival in Sydney. Three members of **SEII** were sent - Francis Iro, Joseph Keba and former **SEII** member, Patrick Kekea.

One aim of the trips was to compare the lifestyle and standard of living in other countries. Another was to learn new skills and knowledge about theatre and to gain skills and knowledge to improve and teach our people in the urban areas which will improve the SIDT workforce in the field.

After those exposure trips, **SEII** started to establish a network with the theatre group from the



Philippines (PETA), PNG's Raun Isi and Wan Smolbag Theatre from Vanuatu. In this close link, the Melanesian groups have produced a video called "Em i Graun Blong Yumi" about the use of popular theatre for environmental education.

#### **Future Directions**

**SEII** is looking forward to its new three year programme (1994-96) that will focus on village intervention in malaria reduction as a preparation for people to control the spread of AIDS, as well as other new programmes. The work of **SEII** becomes a reality in physical, spiritual and social ways. **SEII** will extend its training programmes for rural youth, so they will know the importance of theatre and so that we can teach them to become teachers. The work will keep on going.

## **Video on Popular Theatre in Melanesia**

**Available for Sale or Loan from SPPF**

### **"Em i Graun Blong Yumi: Popular Theatre and the Melanesian Environment"**

Looks at the use of drama for environmental education in three countries: Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea

32 minute (English) and 59 minute (English or French) versions  
20 page **Teacher Guide** included (English only both versions)

**Purchase:** \$75.00 plus \$5.25 provincial sales tax (BC only) and \$5.25 GST (Canada only) plus shipping/handling charge of \$3.00 (Canada), \$4.75 (US) or \$9.00 (overseas)

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**Contact SPPF to book or purchase.**

\*graphic by Simon Swale

# Workshops Examine Women's Roles in Environmental Management

by Gayle Nelson

*Gayle Nelson has worked with women's programmes in Canada and Papua New Guinea. She is a member of the SPPF Board of Directors.*

In many Pacific Commonwealth countries, there are initiatives under way to explore the links that exist between women's issues and environmental issues. Awareness about these connections was raised through the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) process and the alternative agendas presented by women's groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This article looks at a small research project that took place at the village level in Papua New Guinea. The project formed the basis for my Masters thesis; while it was initiated with the joint support of a number of agencies, it was successful due to the interest and dedication of rural women themselves.

From February to June 1993, a small village (150 people) on the north coast of PNG was the site of a series of workshops on the topic of gender relations and environmental management. Eighteen women of Pepaur village worked with me to explore the connections between

their skills, knowledge and experience using the environment, and their participation in environmental decision-making processes.

The women identified four areas where they have key management responsibilities: in maintaining a stable household environment; health care provision and disease prevention; subsistence production; and cash crop production. These areas of responsibility became the topics of four workshops held at monthly intervals. A fifth workshop was held to network with women who work at the provincial level in areas that overlap between environmental and women's issues.

The workshops incorporated a number of different processes to explore issues. Large group discussions of main topic areas were followed by small group discussions on site-specific implications and variables that constrain or inhibit women's abilities to act effectively when they are faced with environmental problems. Many of the issues reflected how traditional divisions of labour make it difficult for women to access resources and services. Women are overworked and have little time or control of income. These realities constrain them from accessing information on what services are available to them. As well, it is generally unacceptable

for women to act without the permission of men. Women agreed in the workshops that men were not responsive to the urgency of women's needs because they were not responsible for the day to day work.

Some areas where women face

these problems are in ensuring a consistent, clean and easily accessible water supply, becoming overworked due to large family size, and having long walking distances to gardens. The repeated heavy work created by the tradition of annually rotating gardens to new forest areas is also very demanding on women's health and stamina. These rotation patterns are practiced even though the village is in an area of volcanic soil which could be managed for multi-year use.

Another technique the women used in the workshops was drama. Women created one role play per workshop. These role plays brought out some of the more subtle nuances of the local culture which define women's position in the society relative to men. Several dramas highlighted the fact that women are discouraged from speaking in public political forums and must develop covert strategies of influence within families, then hope that husbands or brothers will represent at least some of their concerns in public meetings.

Women also took ideas away from each workshop to discuss with their families. In many cases these discussions resulted in the initiation of family projects. These ranged from the building of composts for flower gardens around the home to planting fruit tree nurseries to experimenting with food gardens adjacent to household compounds.

At the end of each workshop, women discussed what key issues should be included in media reports to raise awareness among other women about women's responsibilities in environmental management. This was one way women worked to link with other women. Another technique was to organize a workshop with professional women from the provincial capital. The village women invited service

## Papua New Guinea in brief

**Capital:** Port Moresby

**Land mass:** 462,840 sq km

**Population:** 3.53 million (1990), density 7.7 per sq km

**History:** Colonial administrations of Germany, UK and Australia at different times; independent since 1985.

**Political status:** Sovereign independent state with the British monarch represented by a Governor General who is a citizen of PNG; member of the UN, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation organisation (1994).

**Economic activities:** Forestry, mining, natural gas and petroleum, agriculture, tourism; overseas aid mainly from Australia.



photo by Gayle Nelson

**Networking meeting on women's environmental issues in Pepaur village, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea**

providers and resource people to come and speak with them on several topics in a day long meeting. The topics and programmes that were discussed included: women's awareness raising meetings that are organized by an urban group at the request of village women; malaria prevention during pregnancy; women's health and issues of family planning; women's legal rights to child custody and for protection from violence; early childhood education programs that use local materials and which can be directed and controlled at the village level; women's leadership training; and services available to teach women the basics of small business concepts. The networking workshop, attended by all interested men and women in the village, was evaluated as an extremely informative and worthwhile event.

The workshops were supported by several agencies in Papua New Guinea, both government and non-government, indigenous and international. The national Women's Division supported a media campaign to publicize the activities of the group during the four and a half months while the workshops were being held. A national environmental NGO, the Melanesian Environment Foundation, provided input

and support and participated in an evaluative workshop on the workshop process and design. The series of workshops was developed into a project guide and was published and distributed jointly by a national NGO, the Business Enterprise Support Team, and an international NGO, CUSO, with funding from the Canadian High Commission. All of these activities were supported and publicized by the Women's Division of the national Department of Home Affairs and Youth.

### **Pacific Manuscripts Bureau**

The PMB was established within the Australian National University in 1968. Since then it has produced over 1600 reels of microfilm of official, business, religious and personal records located throughout the South Pacific, some of which were at great risk for climatic or other reasons. It has also filmed material of Pacific interest held in other parts of the world such as mission archives in Rome and whaling logs in Nantucket. Sets of the film are deposited in six member libraries in Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The Bureau has also described the records filmed and publicised their existence through a newsletter and a variety of published catalogues and indexes.

Any inquiries can be directed to the **Pacific Manuscripts Bureau**, ATTN: Adrian Cunningham, Acting Executive Officer, Room 7004, Coombs Building, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 2000, Australia. (tel 06/2492521; fax 06/2490198; email: a.cunningham @ coombs.anu.edu.au)



photo by Gayle Nelson

**Provincial resource people preparing discussion on women's health, work loads and environmental responsibilities at the Pepaur village workshop**



# Kiribati gets too much aid; must learn to say "no", says Opposition Leader

by Helen Fraser

Kiribati Member of Parliament Roniti Teiwaki, who is leader of the Opposition Maneaba Party, has been in Australia as a guest of the Government.

In Canberra, he held meetings with Pacific Island Affairs Minister Gordon Bilney, the Opposition spokesman on Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock and with Foreign Ministry and aid officials.

He described Australian aid to Kiribati at around \$A4 million as "rather generous" and questioned the country's ability to absorb this amount.

The focus of the aid program on infrastructure and causeway building was criticised, with Teiwaki saying "it is about time Australia invested more money in empowering i-Kiribati to paddle their own canoes in international waters".

Teiwaki said Australia would be better to fund education and training schemes so that i-Kiribati would have "the necessary skills to become workers in their own right, not economic refugees".

In a seminar at the Australian National University Teiwaki called for Australia to allow i-Kiribati to settle permanently in Australia. His vision was for some i-Kiribati to become migrants, given the population

growth rate at around 2.2% and the limited potential for employment and economic growth in the country.

He said his people could make a better living in Australia and called on the Australian Government to allow migration from Kiribati.

"It (migration) is nothing to be ashamed of. I would like to see Australia as the leader of the Pacific in the 21st century. If it doesn't take the lead the place will be very unstable," Teiwaki said, calling on Australia to review its immigration policies.

"It is a test case of Australia's commitment to the South Pacific. If Australia is willing to accept other ethnic groups to migrate but doesn't give the people next door (the same privilege) then Australia will regret it in the long run, not Kiribati," he said.

Teiwaki, who is the author of a book on marine resource management in Kiribati, was highly critical of the 1987 multilateral fisheries treaty between Pacific Island countries and the United States.

He said there was dissatisfaction on the part of some Island countries that they were not getting the best deal from the treaty, which he described as a political agreement, not an economic agreement.

"Why should Western Samoa, the Cook Islands or Niue get money from the treaty when they don't have the fish?" he asked.

Teiwaki said his feelings were especially shared by other Micronesian countries.

A multilateral fisheries treaty with Japan, which the Forum Fisheries Agency has been

seeking for several years, was not wanted by those nations with strong fisheries resources, he said, because these countries would fare better in negotiating by themselves or as a sub-regional group.

Kiribati was the recipient of "too much aid from too many sources", Teiwaki said, and did not have the experience or the ability to choose its donors well.

Kiribati receives \$A4million from Australia, \$2million from New Zealand and \$7million from the European Community as well as aid from Japan. "We don't know how to handle that kind of aid," Teiwaki said.

He said an example was the Chinese project to extend the airport runway: the Kiribati Government had not realised that "China would be dictating the project from beginning to end...and now we are saddled with it". He said the use of Chinese labour on the project had caused political and economic problems in Kiribati and that these could affect the Government's chances at the next elections, due in mid-1995.

"But the fault lies with the recipient countries," Teiwaki said. "We have to learn to say no."

Teiwaki was also critical of the Small Islands States Summit, which was formed two years ago and comprises Kiribati, Tuvalu, Niue, Nauru and the Cook Islands.

He said it was another example of meetings held in the region where "there are good ideas but they don't get implemented".

The Small Island States had been "over-accommodated" and their problems would be best dealt with by the Forum as a whole, Teiwaki said.

[Reprinted from *Pacific Report*, Vol 6 No 22, Nov 22/93]

## Kiribati in brief

**Capital:** Bairiki on Tarawa Atoll

**Land mass:** 861 sq km on 33 atolls spread over 3 million sq km of ocean

**Population:** 72,335 (1990); density 79.2 per sq km.

**History:** Formerly the Gilbert Islands; in 1856 the U.S. claimed 14 of the islands under the Guano Act; became a British Protectorate in 1882, and a colony in 1915; occupied by Japan 1941-44.

**Political status:** An independent republic since 1979; 41 member unicameral legislature.

**Economic situation:** Closure of the Banaba Phosphate mine in 1980 signalled an 85% export loss; revenue now based on agriculture, copra and aid.

# Nauru: The Phosphate Island

by Dr. Ludwig Keke

*Dr. Keke is a dental surgeon, Member of Parliament and Secretary of Health and Medical Services in the Nauru Government.*

Only 60 kilometres south of the equator in the middle of the Pacific, Nauru is a tiny island nation, six kilometres in length and four in width. The total land area is just over 21 square kilometres. Nauru is thought to be of volcanic origin, with corals built upwards from the volcanic platform to elevate the land-mass above sea level.

The coastal belt and the small area surrounding the inland Buada Lagoon are picturesque and fertile; some fruit and vegetable cultivation is possible. Beyond the coastal belt, the coral cliffs rise to heights up to 70 metres above sea level to form a vast plateau generally known as the "Topside". The Topside is the area where phosphate deposits are found, at one time covering nearly four-fifths of the country's total land area.

The population of Nauru is estimated at 9,300, with about 6,300 of these being indigenous Nauruans. Mostly of Micronesian features with some Polynesian descent, Nauruans belonged to twelve tribes but spoke one distinct language having no affiliation with any other

language. An 1878-88 inter-tribal war, frequent epidemics and the side effects of World War I decimated the population. Attempts to rebuild the population took place. On 26 October 1932, the population reached the magic figure of 1,500 for the first time. The day was celebrated by Nauruans as ANGAM DAY (meaning in Nauruan "reaching the threshold of home"). Since then, this day has been celebrated annually.

Nauru was incorporated into the German Empire in 1886. Australia occupied Nauru during World War I and wished to annex it after the war. However, pressure from other countries forced a compromise whereby Nauru was administered by Australia in the name of the British Empire. Nauru was occupied by Japanese forces during World War II. The Japanese deported some 1,200 Nauruans to Truk; the 737 survivors returned to Nauru in 1946. World War II left Nauru devastated with nearly one half of the population having perished, homes and properties demolished and the phosphate works in ruins. The population once again reached 1,500 in 1950 and a joyous ANGAM DAY was celebrated that year.

Nauru became a U.N. Trust Territory in 1947 with Australia as the Administering Authority and, together with Great Britain and New Zealand, forming the British Phosphate Commission (BPC) with exclusive right to exploit the phosphate. It has been reported that the Australian Administration of Nauru had just one objective - to ensure peaceful and sustained exploitation of the phosphate resources by BPC to the exclusive benefit of the three partner governments.

## Phosphate on Nauru

Nauru's main export and the source of its economic wealth is phosphate. Phosphate, treated and sold as superphosphate, is a powerful and natural agricultural fertilizer. Three theories have been postulated to explain the massive deposits of phosphate on Nauru. One theory was that, during periods of sub-mergence when the corals were building upwards, organic matter got entrapped amongst the limestone pinnacles and formed phosphate. Subsequently, due to changes in sea levels and tectonic uplifts, the island was raised above sea level. According to a second theory, the phosphate is of igneous origin. The third theory suggests that bird droppings formed guano over a long period of time. In the light of evidence of marine organic materials on the Topside, it would appear that the theory of marine origin has greater credibility.

In 1899 Albert Ellis, a New Zealander working with the J.L. Arundel Co., became fascinated by a piece of rock that was brought over from Nauru a year earlier; it had been used as a door-stop in the company's Sydney offices. Ellis tested the rock and found it to contain over 78% phosphate of lime. Thus began the scramble among European powers for control of the Nauruan treasure. The British Company (now the Pacific Phosphate Co.) bought off a 94 year German concession over Nauru in 1906. Mining began in 1907 and, apart from the war period of 1942-47, has continued virtually uninterrupted. The British Phosphate Commission (BPC) remained in control of mining until Independence, whilst Australia remained the Administering Authority. In all these arrangements for government and mining, the Nauruan community was never consulted.

### Nauru in brief

**Land mass:** 21 square kilometres

**Population:** 9,300 people belonging to 12 tribes: Deiboe, Eamwidara, Eamwidumwit, Eamwit, Eano, Emangum, Emea, Eaoru, Irutsi, Iruwa, Iwi and Ranibok.

**Political status:** a republic since 1968 with a unicameral parliament. Associate member of the Commonwealth, UN special membership, founding member of the South Pacific Forum, member of South Pacific Commission and ESCAP.

**Nauru** spearheaded the move of the Pacific nations at the London Dumping Convention to have toxic waste dumping in the Pacific banned.

## Independence

The former Nauru Local Government Council and Head Chief Hammer DeRoburt started pushing for Independence as early as 1959. The Independence negotiations dealt with three issues: political independence; control and future operation of the phosphate industry; and rehabilitation of the mined-out phosphate lands.

At one stage, Australia offered resettlement of Nauruans on an Australian island off the Queensland coast. The Nauruans insisted on maintaining their national and social identity, but Australia demanded total assimilation. The Nauruans refused.

Nauru became independent on 31 January 1968 with Hammer DeRoburt as its first president. On 1 July 1970, Nauru took over complete control of the phosphate industry from BPC, establishing, by an act of Parliament, the Nauru Phosphate Corporation. Nauru paid \$21 million for the assets of the phosphate industry as part of the Independence agreement. One-third of the Topside plateau had already been mined out.

Prior to Independence, Nauruans were treated as second class citizens and slaves by the Administering Authority. Segregation and discrimination were rampant and the Administering Authority did little to enhance the future well-being and prosperity of the Nauruan people. Only after Independence did the Nauru Government start to establish funds for the future of Nauruans. The Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust was created to invest Nauruan land-owners money for the future of Nauru and the financial security of the Nauruan people.

## Addressing the Ravages of Phosphate Mining

The Government of Nauru believes that the area mined under



Aerial photograph of Nauru showing Topside mining site on right hand side of the island

Australian Administration between 1920 and 1967 carries a responsibility that Australia is morally and legally obliged to finance the rehabilitation of lands ravaged by the mining. Nauru requested that Australia pay compensation for the mined-out lands prior to Independence, but Australia flatly refused. Nauru decided to take Australia to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. A Commission of Inquiry was set up and confirmed that Australia has a case to answer for. Even then Australia refused to collaborate.

When Nauru won the first round of the legal battle before the International Court of Justice, Australia begged that the case be settled out of court. After much negotiation, Nauru accepted an out-of-court settlement of A\$107 million. The major result is Australia's acceptance of its responsibility in the rehabilitation of the mined-out lands, to make the areas suitable for some form of resettlement and other useful purposes.

The objective of the rehabilitation programme is to remove or flatten the pinnacles left from mining, recontour the land and render it useable and again fit for habitation. With modern mining technology, it is hoped that the removal of the limestone pinnacles will also make

secondary mining of the phosphate feasible.

## Economic Independence and the Future

With the resources from phosphate mining, Nauru has accomplished something that the former tripartite governments never believed it could do, achieve political and economic independence. Nauru has graced many countries of the region and other metropolitan countries with its investment projects. It has a regional shipping line and its own airline. It boasts a Nauru Housing scheme and excellent social services never seen before, even in the time of the Australian Administration.

The future of Nauru lies in the wise extraction of its phosphate ore to last as many years as possible and the establishment of alternative industries. It also lies in the wise management of its investment portfolios, practical solutions to its population control and strategic planning of the rehabilitation programme of Topside for future use. Access to another island within the North and South Pacific region to supplement Nauru for its future needs in accommodation of its people and supply of much-needed resources would be a great advantage to Nauru and its future.

# 'Come home' offer to Niueans

by Helen Fraser

The new leader of Niue, Frank Lui, hopes to double the island's population by offering "come home" incentives to Niueans living in New Zealand. Lui, who became premier in March (1993), addressed meetings of Niueans in Auckland in early May to appeal to them to return to the isolated island. Niue has a population of 2000 but there are over 12,000 Niueans living in New Zealand.

The premier said Niue's infrastructure could sustain a population of 5000 with little change, but that was a 10-year target. He says he intends to increase the population by 500 during his three year term. Lui has aimed his plea to older Niueans living in New Zealand because he believes pending improvements in the superannuation payments they can receive on return to Niue will ease transition.

Since 1974, Niue has been self-governing but in "free association" with New Zealand. New Zealand looks after security and foreign affairs.

[Reprinted from *Pacific Islands Monthly*, June 1993]

## Niue in brief

**Capital:** Alofi

**Land mass:** 262.7 sq km

**Population:** 2,267 (1989)

**History:** Cook landed on Niue in 1774. In 1876 Niueans elected a king, was declared a British protectorate in 1900.

Annexed by NZ in 1901 as part of Cook Islands, granted separate administration in 1904.

**Political Status:** Self government in free association with New Zealand since 1974

**Economic activities:** Some exporting of fruit preparations, e.g. passion fruit and lime juices, tourism, air hooks to NZ, Cook Islands and Western Samoa



Alofi Market

photo: Niue Tourism Office

## PNG offers development assistance to Niue

Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Paias Wingti has presented Niue's Premier Frank Lui with a cheque for Kina 150,000 (approx \$A225,000) following a request to PNG for development assistance.

Lui said it was a very moving moment and that when he came into Government he had felt Niue "would need assistance from its brothers and sisters" in the region. He told

*Pacific Report* that he planned to use the money to support Niue's plans to encourage the repatriation of Niueans currently living in New Zealand. He said he preferred to see the grant not as a "handout" but rather as a way of kickstarting Niue's economic development.

[Reprinted from *Pacific Report*, Vol 6 No 16, Aug 23/93]



Avatele Bay: a popular spot for swimming

photo: Niue Tourism Office

## Condominium Versus Melanesian Politics in Vanuatu

*In an interview with Simon Swale of CUSO, Nikenike Vurobaravu provides his personal views on how "condominium" colonialism and traditional Melanesian ways influence contemporary politics in Vanuatu. Vurobaravu was recently appointed Deputy Secretary General (Programmes) of the South Pacific Forum Secretariat. He served previously as the first Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Vanuatu and later as roving ambassador for his country.*

[Vanuatu gained independence in 1980 after a colonial experience of joint "condominium" administration by the French and British. The condominium saw separate government systems, separate educational systems, etc. From 1980-92, the Vanuaaku Pati, under Prime Minister Walter Lini, formed the government. The 1992 election (see Tok Blong SPPE #38) saw Maxime Carlot Korman elected as prime minister of a coalition government formed by his Union of Moderate Parties and the National United Party, a breakaway faction of the Vanuaaku Pati loyal to Lini. Recent years have seen increasing instability in party politics and shifting political alliances.]

**Swale:** *How do you see what's been going on recently in Vanuatu politics?*

**Vurobaravu:** The influence of condominium politics is important, [though] I would be of the view that Vanuatu's contemporary politics are influenced by history as well as

condominium legacies, that condominium politics are by no means the only factor. Vanuatu is a Melanesian country with a diverse cultural base and a history of changing alliances. With independence, we are trying to create unity within that diversity. But obviously, when one talks about the current situation, one talks about a situation in flux. We had a situation recently of a minister being appointed one day and resigning the next. There have been many other cases of politicians crossing the floor. There was the recent case where a minister resigned and his friend resigned with him. The next day the friend said, "I want my friend's position in government." Several years ago we passed a law to stop people from crossing the floor, but it was thrown out in a court challenge as unconstitutional.

These are volatile developments. It's rooted in our history, rooted I dare say in our culture, but rooted also very importantly in the personalities of our leaders who grew up during the condominium period. If you've read Melanesian history and anthropology, you'll know we have a history of changing allegiances between clans. If somebody doesn't deliver, you go to the other. I think our present leaders perfected the art of playing one off against the other during the condominium years. During that time, Britain and France were world powers and had command of

resources. A chief would tell the French, "Look, I am a real francophone. Please build this road." If the request wasn't fulfilled, he would turn to the British and say, "I've asked the French but they wouldn't do it. Will you? I would become your very good friend."

So you see, a central factor from the beginning was a tendency to change allegiances, to seek personal benefits. People are quite candid. Ask "why did you go?" and the reply is "he could offer me a better term or better position in government or the church". I'm simplifying things of course, but it is a very important theme running in our stream. The experience of the condominium shaped and reinforced this tendency but was by no means the only factor.

**SS:** *What you're saying also applies in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. A short time ago a Solomon Islands member of parliament resigned and crossed the floor, expecting his resignation to cause the government's fall. When it didn't, he asked to return to the governing party. In Vanuatu, in addition to opportunities for brokering amongst clan groups and individual ni-Vanuatu, you have the additional brokering between two distinct colonial languages, two colonial approaches. Do these added divisions of the condominium years make for a unique situation?*

**NV:** Let me put it this way. There is probably a lot of banging dishes together. Events and political developments leading to independence differ. In Vanuatu, our independence wasn't handed to us on a plate. France resisted independence. Because of that, on the political level we had to be very organised. My own view is that politics in Vanuatu is coming back to a real Melanesian politics. The euphoria of independence has died down and now we are in the "development scene" with a return to changing alliances.

A Melanesian has to deliver in tangible terms. We inherited a lot of political institutions. Now those institutions are coming under tremendous pressure. The question is can

### Vanuatu in brief

**Capital:** Port Vila on Efate Island  
**Land mass:** 12,190 sq km spread over 80 islands  
**Population:** 142,630 (1989), density 11.7 per sq km  
**History:** Ruled jointly by France and Britain since 1906; gained independence in 1980.  
**Political status:** a republic, single-chamber Parliament with 46 members, member of United Nations; three official languages - Bislama, French and English.  
**Economic activities:** Agriculture, forestry, fishing; principal cash crop is coconut; beef exports; tourism; offshore financial centre and 'tax haven'.



photo by Stuart Wulff

View of Port Vila with new Parliament Building on the high ground.

they deliver. We're talking about very basic things: supplies, roads, increasing the earning capacity of people, getting people educated, access to health facilities. A lot of people said that the Vanuaaku Pati is a national organisation that is splintering. I think the split makes sense because the party was set up for the independence struggle. Today it does not deliver in terms of, let's be frank, finding the money to build roads, build water supply systems, or other things that it preached. Then you see a breaking up. Ni-Vanuatu now have expectations of those things. So this is part of the pressure, not only for the VP but for the government as well.

Why are we seeing ministers going back and forth? The public have got to realise the pressure put on politicians and their political organisations. If you stay in Opposition too long, you probably won't have access to the power which is the commodity to get things done. Of course, you don't have access to that important thing, funds. We talk in Vanuatu about the politics of development and what this means in terms of how individuals and leaders see things. They expect to be in power, they expect their party to be in power, and they expect their government to be stable.

**SS:** *So how does a leader deal with being in Opposition? I ask that question because I think it is true to say that, in traditional leadership terms, things are not regarded as win or lose. You did not have a situation like today where half the leaders have the power and half have none.*

**NV:** Pressure is being put on our Westminster model of government, that is that there should be a government, an opposition and rules to make it run smoothly based on other countries' experience. You hear people asking if democracy works. What they are perhaps really talking about is whether the Westminster model of government is suitable for Vanuatu. If you make an assessment on that basis, you will say that the Opposition is having a hard time. But in the Nagriamel, our traditional place of government, you sit down and talk all day until everybody is fed up and you probably find a consensus somewhere. I believe that politics now is all about development, providing for the needs of the people. This is why it is important to assess the Opposition in terms of whether it is effective in seeing that the needs of the people are provided. If you do it on a theoretical basis using the criteria of the Westminster model, you are talking about a very different issue.

Our leaders will have to come to terms with the role of the Opposition. When the Opposition was formed during the condominium time, we were oriented towards overthrowing the Anglo-French Condominium. There are still a lot of leaders from that condominium frame of reference. Now the leadership is in an important time of coming to terms with the new institutions. There is an important adaptation and learning process going on which will, I believe, make a difference.

**SS:** *I had the opportunity to meet the constitution writer for Papua New Guinea. He said there was not an option at independence as to what type of government would happen because the first leaders were the ones who had succeeded under the colonial process. They referred to the western system of government as the best in the world and that is what they would have for their country. Maybe when the situation becomes uncomfortable, one could go back to the past here in Melanesia, to the Nagriamel. How would that translate to something that could even be a model for greater democracy?*

**NV:** I think a different generation will take leadership and use their frame of reference to manage the affairs of state in a different way. What is important is education. Leaders coming along five or six years from now will have a very different frame of reference. They will not talk about the condominium or struggle for independence - they will probably have read about it, but will have no idea about it from experience. So their frame of reference will be the current issues and problems as they relate to development.

This leads to another important legacy from the condominium, the francophone-anglophone concept or issue. Perhaps in the future - I am trying to be a prophet here and I think I am going to be a bad one - the new leadership will not see themselves as francophone and

anglophone, but rather as ni-Vanuatu from Malo or ni-Vanuatu from the south. Again, it's a diversity when put in terms of development context, whether the anglophone is getting the good show or the francophone. We have to be very careful. At the government level, it's what profile you jump it up to, so to speak. The emphasis is to say that for the last 11 years one side of the "phones", franco or anglo, was not getting a good deal and one wants to try to even things up. But in the process you mishandle. It could very well become an important basis of identity in Vanuatu. This is where the legacies of the condominium come in.

The president was talking a couple of weeks ago up in Santo. He was pointing out the dangers of trying to emphasise too much the anglo and francophone concept as the basis for regarding yourself. So you can see that an awareness and concern already exists. Because we come from such a diverse socio-linguistic background and are trying to forge a country, the condominium legacy puts on an additional basis for diversity. It is not necessarily all negative. You can look at it from a diplomacy point. It's very advantageous to be able to speak two international languages. It all depends on how the present leaders manage. Here again our educational process is important. On this issue about francophone and anglophone education and who is getting all the resources, perceptions are, from my point of view, grossly exaggerated for political constituency reasons. With generational change, the frame of reference will not necessarily include the condominium experience and I hope the language issue will not be so exacerbated that we see ourselves as francophone or anglophone rather than as ni-Vanuatu.

**SS:** *How would a leader of today, someone in a senior ministerial post or the prime minister, see themselves first? As a person from their particular family, their*

***particular island, a francophone, an anglophone, a ni-Vanuatu?***

**NV:** It's a very pertinent question. For a lot of our leaders, their frame of reference is the condominium model. Most of them have a very nationalistic outlook. If you ask, they probably acknowledge for very practical purposes that they are French or English speaking. Some of them who had it very rough will say, "I am very francophone or very anglophone." Those are the experiences of the polarisation in politics that happened during the condominium era. The problem is that you have ultra nationalists and they are promoting the linguistic position now. I would hope that when somebody asks somebody going down the street, "What are you?", they will answer "I am a ni-Vanuatu" before they say "I'm from Malo", "I'm from Ambrym", "I'm francophone" or whatever. This is what we mean by trying to bring unity in diversity. If you look at it on a per capita basis, we probably have the biggest problem in the world, 140,000 people speaking 110 different languages and dialects. The condominium era just added two more dimensions.

**SS:** *Are the present leaders who were formed during the condominium experience feeling the pressure from the next generation or is it too early? Have they got people nipping at their heels telling them they are out of date or are they in touch with what has to change?*

**NV:** It depends on how we define generational change. Most of the leaders openly woo young people to come in and take

part. I think this is part of what one might call a rejuvenisation process, new ideas and people coming in, not because the old leaders are out of date. They have not always had immediate success, but there is this growing realisation that the political scenario is changing or has changed. It has moved from how does one survive in the struggle for independence to how does one grapple with issues of government.

There is a whole range of ramifications. Management is one issue. The leaders will want new people. Some of them have studied computer technology and engineering. These young people are needed. This is why I say that it is very important how the new people are shaped. If their frame of reference turns out to be an emphasis of the condominium era legacy, it would be sad. Standing together to get on with the business of nation building and development is important. I think it is inevitable that the new generation will come in and that their acceptance by existing leaders is growing. There are still problems, people feeling threatened in terms of decisions in public service or political parties. But that is part of the rejuvenisation process. It's happening already.

**SS:** *Will those people coming in ever be in a situation that Vanuatu had when it came to*



Marketplace in Port Vila

photo by Phil Esmonde

*independence, with a majority government? We have seen a proliferation of parties in Vanuatu and the announcement of another new party in Fiji. It now seems that the Melanesian approach will be a multi-party situation.*

**NV:** Exactly. Before independence there were only two sides; you were for independence or against it. But now it is the scenario of the cake; how big is your share? It is the question of fair distribution of resources that will inevitably determine the kind of political or organisational tendencies that we have. It is already happening. The Vanuaaku Pati, the political organisation set up for independence - and it was successful against the Anglo-French administration - has already broken up into NDP and NUP and now a third group. The pressures are being put on the political structures as to whether in fact they are delivering the goods.

There is a tendency towards a multi-party system. I think it is inevitable that our political leaders and parties will splinter and form smaller groups. They will find their own equilibrium in time depending on the situation, who is in power and who wants to get what. But in the whole process, management is very important. This will help contain what would seem to be an impossible flux in government. A lot of people would argue it is a waste of resources sending people to be trained overseas to go into politics when they come back. I don't agree. This was one of the areas that was neglected in the condominium. Most of our leaders have been trained as administrators in a very limited context. They had experience in a subordinate position with very little policy formulation role. We can be out of our depth when we are in a position where we have to take initiative. This is why training in management at all levels is important. Apart from managing the state machinery, the notion and savvy of management will help to stabilise politics.

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## SPPF NEWS UPDATES

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### **Rabuka Wins Fiji Election, Appoints Smaller Cabinet**

Sitiveni Rabuka confounded his critics by actually strengthening his hold on government through the February 18-25 elections. The governing Fijian Political Party (SVT) increased its seats from 30 to 31, while the SVT breakaway faction's new political party, the Fijian Association, managed to win only 5 seats despite predictions they could challenge the SVT for power. Fijian Association leader, Josefata Kamikamica, lost his seat. Rabuka appointed a Cabinet of just 11 other ministers versus 25 in his previous term. The other major election winner was the Indian supported National Federation Party. It increased its position from 14 to 20 seats while Labour dropped from 13 to 7. A big loser was extremist Fijian nationalist leader, Sakeasi Butadroka, whose party lost all of its seats, denying Butadroka a platform in the new Parliament.

[From: *Pacific Report*, 7:5, Mar 21/94, *Washington Pacific Report*, 12:11, Mar 1/94]

### **Fiji's Chiefs Appoint Mara as President**

Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara has been appointed by Fiji's Great Council of Chiefs to succeed Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau as president. Ganilau died of leukaemia in December. Mara, long time Fiji prime minister and leader of the interim government following Fiji's 1987 coups, was serving as vice president prior to this latest appointment.

[From: *Pacific Report*, 7:1, Jan 24/94]

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## SPPF NEWS UPDATES

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### **Palau: Women Launch Court Challenges to Compact Approval**

Two lawsuits have been filed with the Palau Supreme Court challenging the November 9 plebiscite which approved a Compact of Free Association with the U.S. by a simple majority rather than the 75% majority previously required. Both suits claim that the vote was unconstitutional due to a conflict between the Compact and nuclear free provisions of the Palau constitution, which requires a 75% majority to be amended. The suits also contend that the forcing of many votes on the Compact by the U.S. and Palauan governments comprises voter coercion. The plaintiffs in the two suits, Nancy Wong and Lucia Tabelual in one case and Isabella Sumang and Valentina Tmordrang in the other, have hired U.S. attorney, George Allen, to represent them. Allen successfully defended the rights of Marshall islands nuclear testing victims in earlier suits against the U.S. Government.

[From: *Pacific Daily News*, Jan 5/94; *Pacific Sunday News*, Jan 9/94; Nuclear Democracy Network press release, Feb 3/94]

### **Second Election Produces New Tuvalu Government**

Kamuta Latasi is the new prime minister of Tuvalu following a November election and subsequent parliamentary vote of 7 to 5 in his favour. He replaces Bikenibeu Paeniu. A September election and two parliamentary votes had seen parliament deadlocked with Paeniu and former PM Dr. Tomasi Puapua each receiving 6 votes, forcing a new election. The vote was seen as reflecting a desire for more attention to be paid to domestic matters. Paeniu had devoted considerable energy to an international campaign on global warming.

[From: *Pacific Magazine*, 19:2, Mar-Apr/94, *Pacific Report*, 6:18, Sep 27/94]



### U.N. Human Rights Commission Urges Action on Bougainville

The U.N. Commission on Human Rights discussed human rights violations in Bougainville during its 50th session. In a consensus resolution, the Commission noted reports of large numbers of human rights violations in Bougainville and "the need for the government of Papua New Guinea to prosecute those responsible for human rights violations on the island of Bougainville" and to "undertake a search for solutions with a view to implementing measures that would bring about a comprehensive political solution to the conflict". The resolution also called upon all parties to the conflict to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Commission requested that the U.N. Secretary-General appoint a special representative to investigate the human rights situation in Bougainville and explore ways to promote an end to armed conflict and facilitate a negotiated resolution to the conflict. [From: *Europe Pacific Solidarity Bulletin*, 2:2, Mar/94]

### Papua New Guinea Joins APEC, Shuffles Cabinet

PNG has become the only Pacific Island country admitted to the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation group of countries. PNG was admitted during the November APEC meeting in Seattle. Prime Minister Paias Wingti announced a Cabinet shuffle on January 10. The shuffle saw Deputy Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan move to Foreign Affairs and Trade from Finance and Planning. The new Minister for Finance and Planning is Masket langalio, while former Foreign Affairs Minister John Kaputin replaces langalio as Minister for Mining and Petroleum. Kaputin has often seemed at odds with the government vis a vis his international diplomacy on the Bougainville issue. [From: *Pacific Magazine*, 19:2, Mar-Apr/94, *Pacific Report*, 7:1, Jan 24/94]

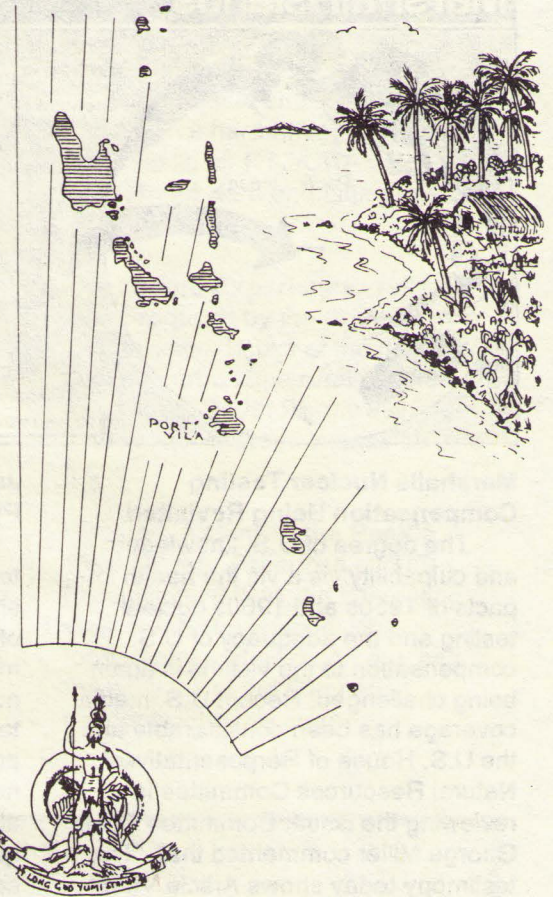
### Vanuatu: Commission of Inquiry Dismissed After Concluding that Finance Minister was Guilty of Lying, Other Improprieties

The Korman Government has dismissed Commissioner Clarence Marae and disbanded Vanuatu's first ever commission of inquiry. The Commission had been established by Prime Minister Carlot Korman to examine allegations of corruption in the sale of a building by the Vanuatu National Provident Fund. The Commission, concluding that Finance Minister Willie Jimmy had committed several improprieties related to the sale and had lied to the Commission, recommended that Jimmy be dismissed as a minister and that charges of perjury against him be considered. When Jimmy threatened to resign and jeopardize the Government's majority in Parliament, the Government responded by aborting the inquiry. Recent months have been marked by considerable political instability, including changes of party allegiance and party alliances, threatening the survival of the Korman Government. [From: *Pacific Report*, 7:1, Jan 24/94; *Washington Pacific Report*, 12:11, Mar 1/94]



National emblem of Papua New Guinea

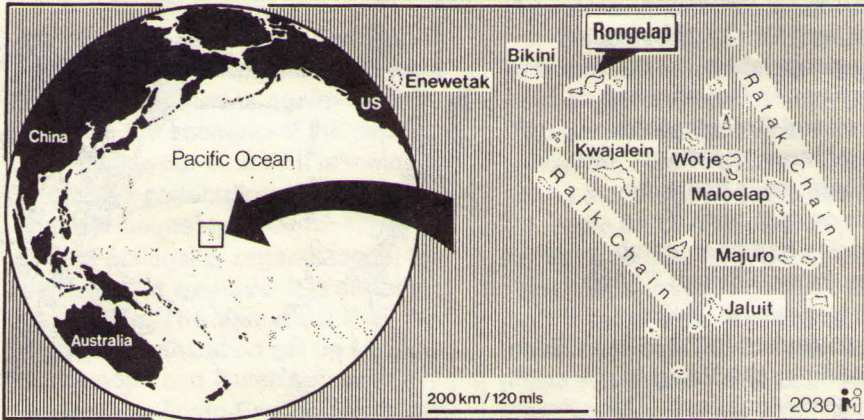
### VANUATU



### Vanuatu Strike Escalates

More than 1,000 public servants belonging to the Vanuatu Public Service Association have been on strike since November. The VPSA is seeking a 16% pay rise while the government has proclaimed a 5% raise, refusing to recognise the strike. The government has been sacking workers and filling their positions with non-union members. The strike entered a new phase in February with proclamation of a general strike by the Vanuatu Council of Trade Unions. The ICFTU and unions in other countries have written the Vanuatu Government urging a negotiated solution, but these initiatives have been rebuffed by the notoriously anti-union government. [From: *Pacific Report*, 7:1, Jan 24/94; *Washington Pacific Report*, 12:11, Mar 1/94; *Pacific Unionist*, No. 14, Mar/94]

## Marshall Islands



### Marshalls Nuclear Testing Compensation Being Revisited

The degree of U.S. knowledge and culpability vis a vis the health impacts of 1950s and 1960s nuclear testing and the adequacy of U.S. compensation to the victims is again being challenged. Recent U.S. media coverage has been considerable and the U.S. House of Representatives' Natural Resources Committee is reviewing the issue. Committee Chair George Miller commented that, "The testimony today shows Article VII (of the nuclear settlement) was wrong. They (the U.S. negotiators) knew it was wrong." The Marshalls government has indicated that it will submit a formal request to the U.S. to reopen the compensation issue.

[From: *Washington Pacific Report*, 12:11, Mar 1/94]

### Marshall Islands' Birth Rate Falls

The birth rate in the Marshall Islands has dropped 41% in five years, according to a report issued by the Ministry of Health and Environment. While the rate is still high at an estimated 30 births per 1,000 population, the rate is now similar to other developing countries rather than one of the world's highest. The Ministry identified teenage pregnancies as a continuing area of concern, noting that rates in this age group dropped by only 18%.

[From: *Pacific Report*, 7:1, Jan 24/94]

### Japan Back-Peddles on Nuclear Plans

Apparently reacting in part to international protests following Japan's shipment last year of several tonnes of plutonium, the Japanese government has decided to slow down its nuclear projects. The Japanese plan to construct a series of plutonium producing breeder reactors and nuclear waste re-processing centres, along with the plans to import large quantities of plutonium, has raised considerable concern in the Pacific region and globally. Suspicions exist over Japan's intentions regarding use of the plutonium for nuclear weapons, despite frequent Japanese denials. Concerns exist as well about the stockpiling of large amounts of plutonium and the dangers involved with shipping of plutonium. While the negative international reaction apparently influenced the government decision, increasing fears among Japanese utility companies about the potential for the nuclear projects to be a major financial fiasco were also influential. At this point, the government is insisting that the policy change reflects only a slowing down, not an abandonment, of their nuclear plans.

[From: *The Globe and Mail*, Feb 23/94]

### Australia Continues to Grapple with Native Title

The Australian Federal Parliament passed Native Title Bill 1993 on December 22. The legislation was a response to the so-called Mabo Decision, which rejected the long prevailing assumption in Australian legal and government practice of "terra nullius", i.e. that the Aboriginal and Indigenous Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia held no native title and that legal title to land only occurred with settlement by Europeans. The legislation followed extensive consultation with Aboriginal peoples, state governments, people and companies affected by native title, etc. While the legislation falls well short of granting full and unlimited title, it represents a significant advance over past practice. Opposition by supporters of aboriginal title to an earlier draft of the legislation resulted in over 100 amendments to the legislation prior to its passage. However, a number of state governments have been opposed to native title and the Western Australia government has already passed legislation that contradicts the federal legislation, extinguishes native title and provides only limited use rights for Aboriginal people.

[From: *Elimatta*, Summer-Autumn 1994; Australian Government release]

### Niue to Create Tax Haven, Launch Development Bank

The Government of Premier Frank Lui has initiated several moves in its plan to increase economic development and boost Niue's population from 2,300 to 5,300 over the next decade. The Niue Assembly has passed an act to create a new development bank and is considering legislation which aims to make Niue the Pacific's latest tax haven. New Zealand has been approached for several loans to assist with development projects.

[From: *Pacific Report*, 7:1, Jan 24/94]

## RESOURCES at SPPF

### Books

**Atoll Politics: The Republic of Kiribati.** Edited by Howard Van Trease. Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific. 1993. 392 pp. cloth. The second book about politics in Kiribati written primarily by I-Kiribati. Topics covered include: elections, population questions, fisheries, economics, health care, trade union issues. Maps, illustrations, appendices, bibliography.

**The Politics of Land in Vanuatu from Colony to Independence.** Howard Van Trease. Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific. 1987. 313 pp. Paper. Maps, bibliography. Part I: The Impact of Europe, Part II: Reaction and Part III: Towards Independence.

**Niue: A History of the Island.** IPS of University of the South Pacific and the Government of Niue. 1982. 152 pp. Paper. Illustrations.

**Exploiting the Tropical Rain Forest: An Account of Pulpwood Logging in Papua New Guinea.** D. Lamb. Volume 3 of Man and the Biosphere Series. UNESCO. Parthenon Publishing Group. 1990. 259 pp. Cloth. The book takes an in-depth look at the Gogol Valley, and the social and environmental consequences of the logging there. Illustrations, maps, appendices, bibliography.

**Solomon Islands: State of the Environment Report.** Tanya Leary. 1993. 70 pp. Paper.

**Kakala.** Konai Helu Thaman. 93 pp. 1993. Paper. Poetry. Konai Thaman is currently a Reader in Education and Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific.

### Videos

**Hell in the Pacific.** "A one hour documentary produced by Catma Films, with assistance from Minewatch and first screened by ITV's Channel 4 in November 1993. It uses historical and contemporary footage in a hard-hitting programme to lift the lid off RTZ/CRA's Bougainville, Mount Kare and Lihir projects." NTSC.

**The Mitiaro Experience.** 1991. 23 min. Produced by the South Pacific Commission. Looks at the disparity between urban and rural development in the South Pacific using Mitiaro Atoll in Cook Islands as a focus.

**Pitcairn: A Gem in the Pacific.** 1990. 70 min. Produced by TIBI Productions (USA). An interesting view of Pitcairn Islands, its topography and environment, and the daily life of the 56 or so residents who live there.

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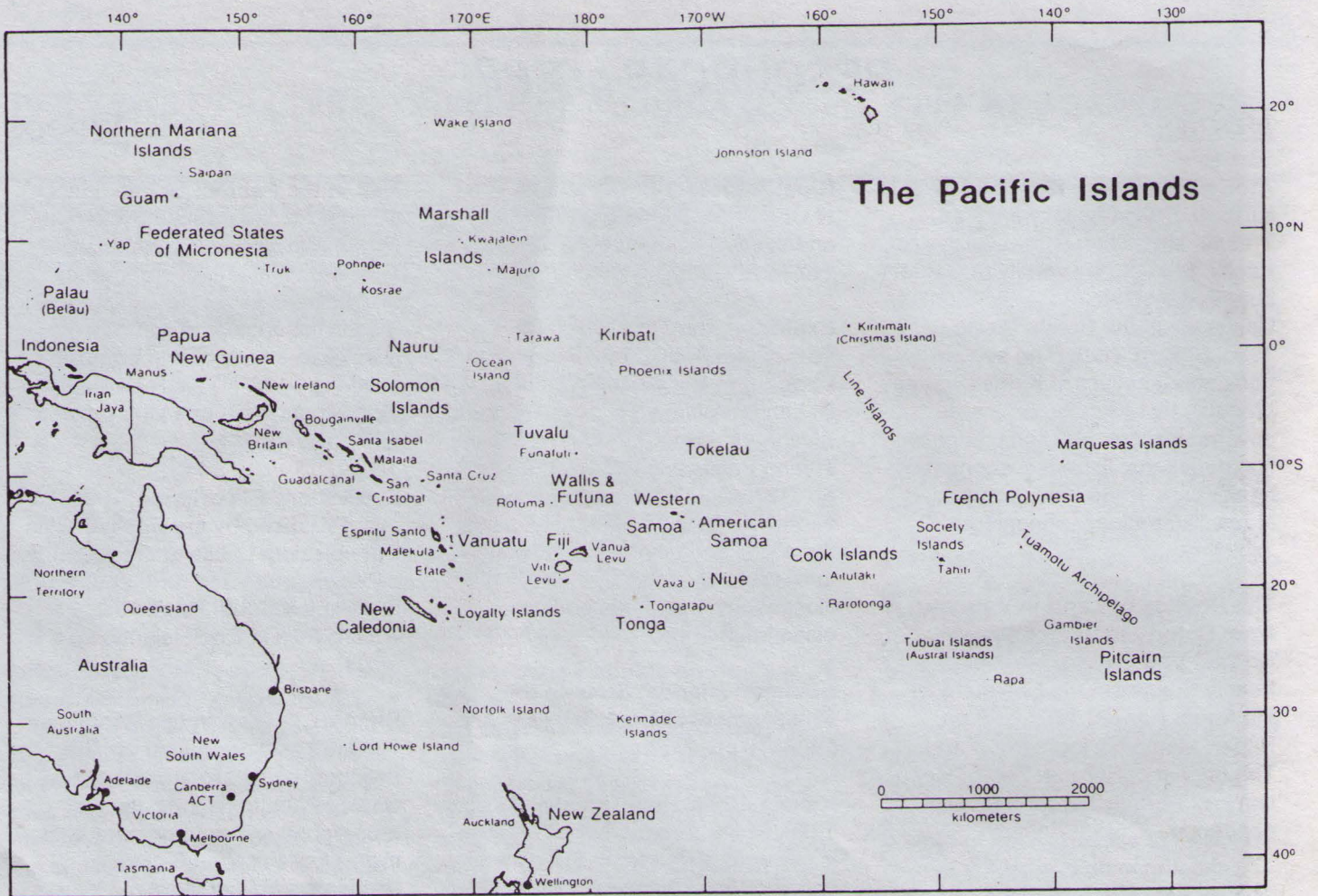
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