

Tok Blong Pasifik

News and Views on the Pacific Islands

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Featuring

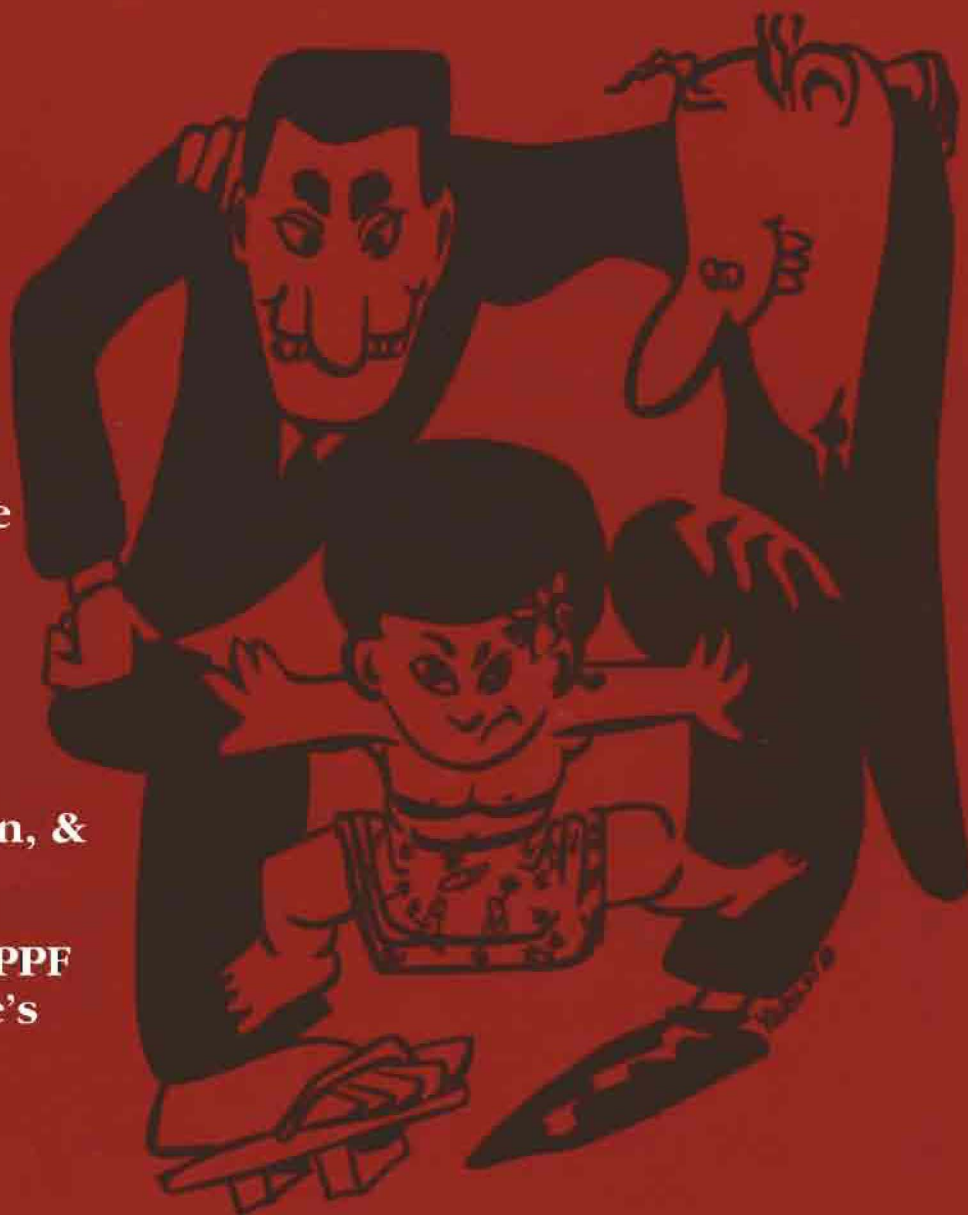
**The Impact of Asia
in the Pacific**

**Globalisation and the
Maori Experience**

**Reform or
Recolonisation?**

**Canning Culture:
Women, Globalisation, &
Community Control**

**Reports from 1997 SPPF
Conference & People's
Summit on APEC**



THE BIG SQUEEZE
The Islands in the New Asia-Pacific

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ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

Tok Blong Pasifik is a phrase in Pidgin, a language used in parts of the Pacific. A rough equivalent would be "News from the Pacific". **Tok Blong Pasifik** (ISSN: 1196-8206) is published by the South Pacific Peoples Foundation of Canada (SPPF). Our aim is to promote awareness of development, social justice, environment and other issues of importance to Pacific Islanders. Through the magazine, we hope to provide readers with a window on the Pacific that will foster understanding and promote support for Pacific Island peoples. SPPF gratefully acknowledges support for this publication from the Canadian International Development Agency.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

We welcome contributions to **Tok Blong Pasifik** and readers' comments. A priority is placed upon contributions from Pacific Islanders and others living in the Islands. As an issues focused magazine, **Tok Blong Pasifik** often includes material that is contentious. Views expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of SPPF or financial supporters of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit material.

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Tok Tok

Putting the 'P' in the 'A-P'

I can't count the times that Canadians have come up to me in recent years and remarked that this must be something of a 'golden age' for SPPF. They point to Canada's enthusiastic embrace of APEC (the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group of 'economies'), a proliferation of Asia-Pacific research, and the government's proclamation of 1997 as 'Canada's Year of Asia-Pacific'. Unfortunately, I have to disillusion these optimists. For the Canadian government, business and most of academia, 'Asia-Pacific' has but one meaning — Asia and the Pacific Rim. If they think of the Pacific at all, it is as the empty hole in the middle of the Pacific Rim donut on which all hope to feast. Far from embracing the Pacific, Canada has reduced its aid levels and still maintains no direct Canadian government presence in the Pacific, preferring to manage its Pacific relationships from Canberra, Wellington and Ottawa.

Nor is Canada unique. Only Papua New Guinea among the Pacific Island nations has been admitted to membership in the Asia-PACIFIC Economic Cooperation family. After complaints from the Pacific, the South Pacific Forum was given observer status within APEC. Yet as Pacific Island countries were shoved aside, crumbs brushed from the APEC table, Asian countries and transnational companies from around the Rim are increasingly major players throughout the Pacific. Globalisation and economic liberalisation have arrived with a vengeance and in most cases further disadvantage Pacific nations and peoples.

With Canada hosting APEC in 1997, SPPF decided to act. We undertook a programme of action leading up to the November APEC meetings in Vancouver. We began with a March round table on Canadian foreign policy

and APEC as it relates to Indigenous Peoples and rights. We explored participation in the People's Summit that would parallel the APEC governmental meetings. We soon discovered that most of the social justice, human rights, environment and other groups involved in the People's Summit were almost as blind to Pacific and Indigenous perspectives as were those in government, business and academia.

We shifted our annual Pacific Networking Conference from its usual May to November, immediately preceding the APEC events, and focused it on the theme of the Pacific's place within the new Asia-Pacific. "The Big Squeeze", as we headlined our conference, provided a useful springboard for our Pacific visitors as they carried on to participate in the People's Summit. Their well organised delegation and very articulate messengers conveyed a message that was new to most summit participants. For the first time, the Pacific was a significant presence in these annual APEC People's Summits.

Opinions remained divided on pros and cons of engagement with the APEC process. But there was little disagreement that the kind of globalisation and economic development promoted by APEC and similar fora has little to offer to the Pacific, Indigenous Peoples or most of the world's population.

This special issue of Tok Blong Pasifik focuses on "The Big Squeeze" theme and features contributions from Pacific Islanders attending our conference and the People's Summit, as well as relevant reports and declarations arising from the meetings. Read on....

Stuart Wulff for SPPF



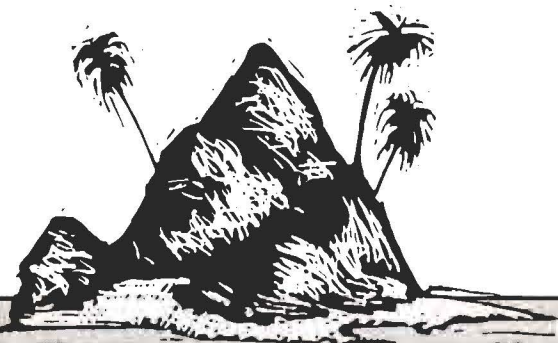
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Anglican Church of Canada, BC Teachers' Federation, Co-Development Canada, Gumboot Productions, Irish Cottage Bakery, John's Place Bakery, Mount Royal Bagels, Placer Dome Inc., Rent-a-Wreck - Terry Wallbridge, Saanich Indian School Board, Denise Sam, Sustainability Issues Forum, Thrifty Foods, Tsartlip First Nation and Chief Curtis Olsen, University of Victoria Native Students Union, United Church of Canada, Women in Need Society.



PACIFIC NEWS UPDATES

Regional

Asian Crisis Spreads into the Pacific

The Asian financial crisis has put pressure on Pacific currencies. In January, Fiji announced a 20% devaluation in its dollar which was losing competitiveness against plummeting Asian currencies. The Solomon Islands also devalued its dollar by 20% and PNG's kina dropped to record lows. Both countries have relied heavily for earnings on logging exports to Asia, which have almost ceased. [From: *Pacific Report*, Jan 31/98 & Feb 14/98]

El Niño Causes Widespread Drought

Many Pacific Island countries have been struggling with severe droughts due to El Niño, particularly PNG and West Papua (Irian Jaya). While massive food aid from several countries — including the largest emergency assistance operation ever undertaken by Australia — averted large numbers of deaths in PNG, West Papuans were less fortunate. Indonesian military operations and other actions prevented aid from reaching the most affected people, and many deaths from starvation were reported. In PNG, several mines closed temporarily due to drought conditions. Yearlong droughts in the Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia overwhelmed local resources, and both coun-

tries appealed for US assistance. President Clinton declared both states disaster areas and eligible for US disaster assistance. Fiji's sugar harvest was devastated and with over 30,000 households in severe need, the government proclaimed a state of emergency and extended financial aid to farmers.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Jan 31/98, Apr 27/98 & Jun 22/98, *EPS Bulletin*, Mar/Apr/98]

Aid to the Pacific Not Dropping

Fears that the Pacific would drop off the aid map when the Cold War ended have not been realised, according to Greg Fry of the Australian National University. He told a conference on regional security that aid to the region has actually increased. Japan doubled its aid between 1987 and 1995. US and European Union aid also increased. Other donors generally maintained the previous levels of assistance. Only the UK significantly reduced its aid. Total bilateral aid to the independent South Pacific increased from US\$424.6 million in 1987 to US\$502.6 million in 1995. [From: *Pacific Report*, Mar 14/98]

Melanesia

Bougainville Peace Makes Progress

The latest Bougainville peace process has proved more successful than previous efforts. The Burnham Army Camp Agreement

in New Zealand last October was followed by the Lincoln Agreement (after Lincoln University in New Zealand) in January, which committed the parties to implement a permanent ceasefire as of April 30. Terms included a disarmament process, phased withdrawal of the PNG Defence Force from Bougainville, its replacement by civil authority and policing, a reconciliation process, 1998 elections for a Bougainville Reconciliation Government, using negotiation rather than violence, and pledging respect for human rights and the rule of law. Despite a last minute hitch due to differences between the PNG government and rebel leaders, the ceasefire signing took place as scheduled on April 30. The Lincoln Agreement also committed the PNG government to seek UN support. The UN Security Council endorsed the peace process and authorized a five person team to monitor and promote the Bougainville peace process, despite US government objections to the cost of that small UN presence. Concern remains about the role of Francis Ona, who has remained outside the peace process. Statements from PNG Prime Minister Bill Skate that Bougainville's continued status in PNG was non-negotiable and he might not withdraw PNG troops have also kept relations between leaders on both sides tense. But despite the dickering, many reconciliation meetings and positive moves at the grassroots level indicate that the peace process has broad support among Bougainvilleans.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Jan 31/98 & Apr 27/98; *The National*, Jun 2/98; *Pacific Island Reports*, Apr 2/98; *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 1/98; *Pacific News Bulletin*, Jun/98; press releases; UN Security Council documents]

New Vanuatu Government

After March 6 elections in Vanuatu, the Vanuatu Party (VP) won the most seats (18 of 52) and leads a new Government, but must rely on the support of other parties. The VP formed a coalition Government with the National United Party of Fr. Walter Lini. VP leader Donald Kalpokas is the new prime minister, while Lini is deputy prime minister. The election followed a day of rioting in January in reaction to Ombudsman Marie Noelle Ferrieux' report detailing corruption and mismanagement in the running of the National Provident Fund. Kalpokas announced his Government will act to restore public confidence in governance by addressing issues of political corruption, and will fully implement a comprehensive economic reform programme backed by the Asian Development Bank.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Jan 31/98, Mar 28/98 & Apr 9/98]

Nickel Agreement in New Caledonia

The French government and two mining companies signed an agreement to exchange nickel deposits in February, which opens the way for a US\$1 billion nickel smelter project by the Kanak owned SMSP company and Canadian nickel company Falconbridge. The smelter and related developments are expected to create 2,800 jobs in the less developed North Province. There had been active resistance to deposit exchanges from the French Eramet/SLN mining conglomerate throughout the territory, and the FLNKS had withdrawn from talks on the future status of Kanaky/New Caledonia. The agreement opened the way for the talks to resume.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Feb 14/98]

Polynesia

Tuvalu Election & Budget Milestones

Following March general elections, Tuvalu Parliament reelected Prime Minister Bikenibeu Paeniu by a record high vote of 10 to 2. The election followed a 1998 budget which forecasts that Tuvalu will for the first time become a major contributor to its national development programme, which has relied on external donors. A projected revenue windfall includes a large distribution from the Tuvalu Trust Fund and proceeds from telecommunications licensing and the Investment Migration Scheme. [From: *Pacific Report*, Jan 31/98 & Apr 27/98]

IAEA Confirms Nuclear Test Contamination

The International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed that the area surrounding France's nuclear weapons testing facilities at Mururoa and Fangataufa will be contaminated for centuries. Several kilograms of plutonium are scattered in the lagoon sediment at the two atolls. Over a few thousand years, radioactive tritium is expected to migrate into the sea from atoll fissures produced by test explosions. Despite the contamination, the IAEA concludes that the sites pose no threat to anyone's health, a view disputed by some organisations.

[From: *Victoria Times Colonist*, Jun 28/98; *Fiji Daily Post*, Jun 3/98]

Micronesia

Marshalls to Proceed with New Nuclear Compensation Claim & Nuclear Waste Dump Study

The Marshall Islands government

has announced it will seek further compensation for US nuclear weapons testing damage in the 1940s and 50s. The US has already provided compensation under the Compact of Free Association which made the Marshalls self-governing. However, recently released US government documents show that fallout from the tests affected many more islands than previously acknowledged. The Compact allows the Marshalls to seek further compensation if new evidence indicates greater impact from the testing. US company Babcock & Wilcox Nuclear Environmental Services has dropped plans for a feasibility study on building a nuclear waste storage facility in the Marshall Islands. However, the Marshalls government has approved another company, Enviro-Safe Technologies, to conduct the feasibility study, along with a promise to give Enviro-Safe preference to construct and operate the facility. The government believes that Enviro-Safe will provide a "neutral feasibility study".

[From: *Washington Pacific Report*, Jan 1/98; *Pacific Report*, Jan 31/98; *Marshall Islands Journal*, Apr 8/98]

Nauru Seeks UN Membership

While most newly independent countries have rushed to join the United Nations, Nauru had until now remained aloof. However, President Kinza Clodumar announced that Nauru is applying for UN membership, citing the need to have a voice in the global forum on issues such as climate change.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Feb 14/98 & Jun 22/98]

Speaking up for the Pacific

1997 Pacific Networking Conference

by Karen Weggler

Under the theme of "The Big Squeeze — The Islands in the New Asia Pacific", 80 delegates from the Pacific Islands, Asia and the Americas gathered on November 14-16, 1997, for the 14th annual Pacific Networking Conference. Twelve nation states, 16 Indigenous nations, over 50 organisations and taro-roots activists were represented. The conference took place on the traditional territory of the Tsartlip First Nation, near Victoria on Vancouver Island.

The conference theme and timing were prompted by events that were unfolding across the water in the city of

the action was meant to contribute to economic growth around the rim, while the centre was for all intents seen as simply an economic vacuum. With economic globalisation already contributing to the further marginalisation of Pacific island nations and peoples, APEC is for the Pacific only more of the same frustrating story. Even for APEC member countries, the model of development being promoted by APEC deserves to be challenged.

It was also obvious that in this "big squeeze", little would be heard from the Pacific. By shifting the 1997 Pacific Networking Conference to November, focusing on



Cartoon: David Botten, David Suzuki Foundation Newsletter

Vancouver. Canada was about to host the annual meeting of heads of government of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation group of countries (APEC) and the Canadian government had proclaimed 1997 as Canada's Year of Asia-Pacific. Yet it was clear that both APEC and the government's interests were very much focused on the Pacific Rim. In what could be termed "donut development", all

the chosen theme and then sending a strong Pacific contingent to the People's Summit on APEC in Vancouver, SPPF intended that Pacific voices be heard clearly. This aim was certainly achieved within the Pacific Networking Conference and People's Summit, and as a result of the conference, a "Pacific Peoples' Declaration on APEC" was presented at the People's Summit (see back cover).

The conference provided an opportunity to share visions of equitable and sustainable development, social justice, human rights, resistance to “globalisation from above”, and strategies for local community control and a peoples’ “globalisation from below”. Weaving through the discussions of complex economic issues were the touchstones of practical experience and people’s stories. In this time of accelerated globalisation, when unsustainable practices of production and consumption threaten renewable resources and extinguish non-renewable ones, the telling of stories might not seem particularly urgent. Yet the sharing of such stories, invested with traditional language, knowledge and ways of being in the world, was exactly what animated many sessions.



Caroline Canafax and Alice Coppard sing a Raging Grannies song

The 1997 conference marked some new beginnings for SPPF. To make the conference more accessible, it was shifted from the traditional residential site at Cowichan Lake to a location close to Victoria. It was even more important to find a setting that symbolized the links being forged between Indigenous peoples of the North and South Pacific at the conference. The conference’s new home became the Indigenous run LAU’WELNEW Tribal School on the territory of the Tsartlip Nation.

The conference featured an unprecedented number of resource people representing 10 countries in the Pacific Islands. Most of the Pacific Island delegates subsequently participated in the People’s Summit in Vancouver.

Local and South Pacific traditions came together in the opening ceremonies. A Tsartlip elder provided an opening prayer. Lopeti Senituli and John Salong performed a kava ceremony, asking for welcome to the local Tsartlip territory. Lopeti is the director of the Fiji-based Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, co-sponsor of the conference, and John is the director of IDEAS, a small Vanuatu NGO devoted to promoting awareness of economic alternatives that are culturally appropriate and ecologically sustainable. The sharing of kava also symbolized the bond of good will and unity being forged among the conference participants.

One of the most memorable conference moments came when Chief Curtis Olsen of the Tsartlip Nation offered his ceremonial opening of the conference. He pointed out that this was the first time their nation was welcoming other peoples to this event on their land and said he was pleased such connections were being made. Chief Olsen spoke of the importance of traditional ways and language. He offered a prayer asking for a community strong enough to embrace both old and new in times when old ways seem unfashionable. He reflected on storytelling as a way of imparting knowledge to younger generations and how this knowledge could be lost if the stories were not heard.

The stories people told reflected how unsustainable development, globalisation, and free trade affect their ways of life. They articulated what APEC has conveniently omitted or attempted to silence. People. People and their life stories, social and cultural considerations. The success of APEC-style globalisation is measured in dollars and in its speed in achieving “international competitiveness”, unrestricted foreign investment, and the privatisation of public services and institutions — most notably health care and education. The APEC promise of limitless economic growth aspires to eliminate the need for participatory, people-centred development. Conference participants brought their awareness of and commitment to a reality far different from that which APEC wishes to promote.

The conference sessions focussed on issues critical to members of the Pacific Island region. Representatives from Vanuatu led a discussion promoting sustainable forestry, local control and benefits from logging and alternative forest use. Land rights and sovereignty issues were raised by representatives of Palau, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Papua New Guinea, local Indigenous nations including Haida Gwaii and the Tsartlip, and members of the University of Victoria’s Native Student Union. In keeping with Chief Olsen’s words, a people-centred approach to globalisation was a theme in many workshops. Alternatives to marginalisation and exploitation were explored through discussions on resistance and community control. Delegates identified ways in which diverse local cultures could be reaffirmed and strengthened.

As part of cultural affirmation, the role and importance of traditional language was raised by resource people and

Photo: Corazon Fabros

conference participants alike. This strong conference theme was also reflected in other activities. The Pacific Islanders were invited to visit a traditional language class at the Tribal School. Some of the students did not seem to mind the idea of having their language lie dormant until Elder John Elliott began telling stories. His stories made them aware how few Tsartlip people today speak the language and of how much would be lost if they didn't work to keep the language alive. The night of the traditional feast — provided by members of the Tsartlip Nation — those present heard songs sung in Maori by Makere Harawira. A unifying thread wound through the weekend's events — the stories and personal accounts related in languages that have been almost silenced, almost forgotten.

The high number of local donors and sponsors reflected community support for the social, environmental and human concerns and issues that dominated the conference and are conveniently absent from the APEC agenda.

Participants left the conference eager to share our experiences. We went to the People's Summit, to Pacific Island, First Nation, Canadian and American communities. Eventually we returned home to share the stories we had heard on our journeys. In doing so, we all had been reminded that, in our quest for new beginnings, we



Photo: Antonieta Pincheira

The LAU'WELNEW Tribal School

should not forget tradition, recovering and reclaiming ways that should not — cannot — be forgotten.

Karen Weggler was the coordinator for the 1997 Pacific Networking Conference and the SPPF/Pacific involvement in the People's Summit on APEC.



Conference Participants Urge Action on East Timor, West Papua and Aceh

Angry at events in Indonesia, participants at the Pacific Networking Conference urged the Canadian and Indonesian governments to take steps to end human rights abuses in Indonesia and respect the right of the peoples of East Timor, West Papua (Irian Jaya) and Aceh to self-determination. Conference participants had just received a briefing on the situations in Indonesia, East Timor and West Papua from George Aditjondro, a prominent Indonesian academic and human rights activist now living in exile in Australia. Another speaker, Andrea Needham, told of her actions to hamper British military exports to Indonesia. Andrea and three other women entered a UK military base and did \$3 million damage to a British military aircraft being sold to Indonesia. All four women won acquittal for their actions in court using the defence that their actions were intended to prevent a greater crime, the killing of innocent people in East Timor.

Participants were also disturbed by reports reaching the conference of another incident in East Timor on the first day of the conference, with Indonesian military forces firing on protesting students. In a signed petition, conference participants stated their outrage at the latest incident and noted that it was yet another consequence of the brutal occupation of East Timor by the Indonesian military and the continuing denial of the right of the

East Timorese people to self-determination. Participants also urged that: an independent investigation be held into the November 14 attack on students; Indonesia withdraw all troops from East Timor, West Papua and Aceh; and Indonesian government respect the right of all peoples, in particular those of East Timor, West Papua and Aceh, to independence.

Participants drafted and signed a letter to Prime Minister Chretien opposing the Canadian government's invitation of President Suharto to Canada for the APEC leaders' summit. The letter demanded that the Canadian government end all support for Canadian cooperation and corporate involvement with the Suharto regime until Indonesian troops have been withdrawn from East Timor, West Papua and Aceh and democracy has been restored in Indonesia, and demanded that the Canadian government support the rights of the East Timorese, West Papuan and Acehnese peoples to self-determination, including independence if they so choose.



Cartoon: Michael N. Yabgulanaas

Statement of the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus at the 1997 APEC Peoples' Summit

Kia koutou katoa kua tai mai nei, tena koutou. *In the Name of our Creator, of Mother Earth and in honour of all our ancestors met together here in British Columbia.*

We the Indigenous Peoples representing the regions of South, Central and North America, Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific Islands begin by acknowledging the considerable work in the arena of the rights of Indigenous Peoples over a long period of time preceding this caucus. We have gathered here at Vancouver to express our deep concerns over a wide range of issues that continue to impact on indigenous peoples.

1. The Indigenous Peoples represented at this caucus unequivocally oppose the APEC processes that are represented at the APEC Leaders' Conference here in Vancouver. We declare that the APEC agenda acts to further endanger and undermine Indigenous Peoples' power over their lands, their ancestral territories and natural resources. In this regard we vehemently oppose the agenda of the current APEC Leaders' meeting for fast-tracking the removal of tariffs for fisheries and forestry.

2. The Indigenous Peoples' caucus calls on the governments represented at the APEC Leaders' meeting to withdraw from negotiations regarding the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. The MAI seeks to create legislation which will over-ride international agreements in the arenas of Indigenous Peoples' rights, labour conventions, environmental agreements and regulations, and human rights issues, and which will license the plunder and pillage of resources in the name of open economies and trade liberalisation.

3. We call on the governments represented at the APEC Leaders' meeting to immediately adopt the Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples without further change or amendment inasmuch as it reflects the minimum standards for the protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights.

4. We also call on the governments of Canada, the United States, Chile, Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand to ratify the ILO Convention 169 regarding Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' rights in independent countries. The ratification of these two documents expresses the desires and aspirations of the Indigenous Peoples of the world and we seek the support of the APEC Peoples' Summit in requesting the ratification of these documents by the APEC governments.

5. The Indigenous Peoples' caucus at this Summit calls for the establishment of a permanent Indigenous Peoples' forum at the United Nations, to continue to support and protect Indigenous Peoples' rights to self-determination.

6. The caucus seeks support in efforts for the protection of Indigenous Peoples' cultural and intellectual knowledge and properties which are at this moment being plundered by transnational pharmaceutical and manufacturing companies as well as by genetic scientists.

7. The Indigenous Peoples' caucus deplores the devastating impact on the social, economic and cultural structures of Indigenous Peoples' by mega-projects involving, for example, clearcut logging and mining operations, the establishment of unsustainable fisheries practices and the planned construction of a huge highway in the La Costa area of Chile which will involve the massive dislocation of the Indigenous Mapuche people and the total disruption of their lives and livelihood.

8. We also deplore the amoral actions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which bankrupt Indigenous Peoples in the name of aid and development. These practices include attempts at land mobilisation in Papua New Guinea as a means of accessing Indigenous Peoples' lands, the imposition of aid monies in the Pacific which functions to create enormous indebtedness, and the continued occupation of Indigenous communities by military regimes in the name of industrial development.

9. The Indigenous Peoples' caucus deplores the co-optation of state-appointed Indigenous elites in efforts to gain the consent of Indigenous Peoples to practices which function to benefit the elite minority, to further marginalise the many, and which are in opposition to fundamental Indigenous cultural and spiritual values and practices.

10. The Indigenous Peoples' caucus is committed to the promotion and development of alternative global networks and strategies for sustainable and equitable development practices which are embedded in our shared Indigenous cultural values of collectivity and co-operativeness, of guardianship for the land, and of traditionally-based methods of husbandry. To that end we are attempting to network with other groups who are also committed to alternative trade and economic development strategies and alliances.

11. We of the Indigenous Peoples' caucus have determined the continuing existence of an Indigenous Peoples' Forum on a culturally-appropriate and self-determined basis at future APEC Peoples' Summits beginning with that in Malaysia in 1998.

12. The Indigenous Peoples' caucus honours and uplifts the efforts of our women and youth in renewing and preserving the holistic way of Indigenous Peoples' spiritual life. In particular we support and uphold the political and economic power of Indigenous women whose political voice is vital in these times.

Finally, we express our greetings and thanks to the Tsartlip First Nation, our gratitude to the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs for hosting us here in our meeting and our greetings and thanks to the organisers of this 1997 APEC Peoples' Summit. We note with regret, however, that it has been a significant struggle to have Indigenous Peoples given voice at this 1997 APEC Peoples' Summit.

Na reira, kia koutou katoa, tena koutou, tena ra koutou katoa.

Towards a Sustainable Asia-Pacific

Voices from Civil Society

by Dawn McLean

"Development is about expanding people's choices. Sustainable development is about us making the right choices today so that our children can have and enjoy the same range of choices and much more in the future."

This was the opening challenge by Lopeti Senituli, director of the Pacific Concerns Resources Centre in Fiji, at a day long forum (November 20) on sustainability during the 1997 People's Summit on APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation). Mr. Senituli co-chaired the Vancouver forum with Betty Plewes, CEO of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation.

About 275 people attended the Sustainability Issues Forum (SIF). Five simultaneous workshops attended by fishers, farmers, labour activists, academics, environmental groups, religious organizations and development NGOs from Asia, the Pacific, Europe, Latin America, Canada and the USA engaged in lively and in depth discussions on issues related to agriculture, aquaculture/fisheries, forests, mining and cities in the North and the South. The SIF was co-sponsored by the BC Council for International Cooperation, the Canadian Council for International Cooperation and the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

The loss of sovereignty by people and local communities over resources and the environment and the threat to the livelihoods of small scale producers were themes echoed by participants from the North and South in all five workshops. Stories and research findings strongly supported the need to build local economies and support democratic development.

Key ideas emerged from the discussions:

- People need to increase their knowledge and understanding of the impacts of globalisation and their knowledge of the changing global framework of which APEC is one mechanism.
- An over-arching value of justice must be pursued which puts people first in a people-centred development process and which meets basic needs such as water, education, health, clean air and security.

Some workshops crafted specific recommendations to be forwarded to the Canadian Government and APEC leaders. Not all participants felt this was a purpose of the SIF, but many did. Specific workshop recommendations can be found in the SIF final report posted on the internet [<http://www.bccic.bc.ca/bccicweb/>].

Common actions emerged from the five workshops including:

- Build the capacity to increase knowledge about the globalisation process;
- Increase the capacity for policy development on alternatives to macro-economic policies;
- Continue to work on concrete alternatives in home countries North and South to support policy advocacy;
- Increase the sharing of information and build international communications networks by using technology such as e-mail and the internet;
- Work towards opening up the dialogue of APEC to include voices from civil society.

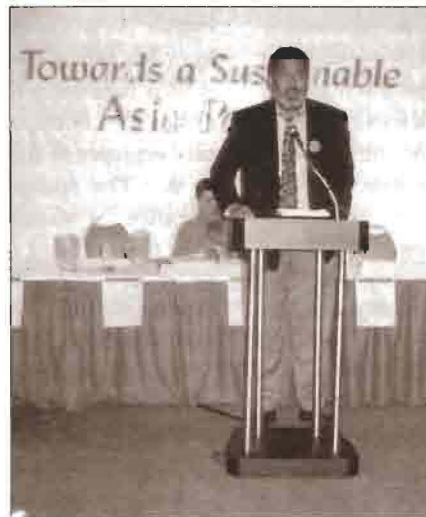
A delegation of 6 SIF participants lead by the co-chairs, Betty Plewes and Lopeti Senituli, met with the Canadian Minister of International Trade, Mr. Sergio Marchi, to present recommendations and concerns from the closing plenary of the SIF. Issues such as climate change, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) and the need for an on-going mechanism for dialogue between NGOs and government were raised with the minister. The Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) followed up with a written communique to Mr. Marchi's office.

At the closing plenary, participants agreed there was a need to begin working together now towards the next People's Summit on APEC in Malaysia in 1998. Many will continue to push for windows for NGOs to participate and influence the official APEC process. Forests activists are engaged now with their counterparts in Malaysia to further the work of the '97 workshop on forests. Pacific Islanders, who made valuable contributions to the SIF, particularly the mining and aquaculture/fisheries workshops, met participants from Malaysia in Vancouver to discuss the next APEC summit.

For SIF final document, visit BCCIC's web site:

<http://www.bccic.bc.ca/bccicweb/>

Dawn McLean was the coordinator of the Sustainability Issues Forum at the 1997 People's Summit on APEC. She was previously the executive director of BCCIC.



Lopeti Senituli speaks to forum participants

Photo: Dawn McLean



Shifting the Locus of Empire

Asia in the Pacific Today

by Lopeti Senituli

During the July 1997 meeting of foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed proposed a review of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Predictably, the proposal was received with horror from the US and European Union, with US Undersecretary of State Stuart Eizenstat stating, "Universal values don't have a time period. They are universal and transcendent."

[*Daily Post* (Fiji), July 30/97]

Dr. Mahathir's proposal is the latest salvo in the fiery discourse between nation states on the universality of human rights and environmental standards. Irrespective of which side of the discourse one is on, this discourse should never be left to nation states to dictate. Organisations of civil society must be actively involved.

Although the proposal was made by Malaysia and ASEAN, it has immediate and long term implications for the Pacific, one reason being that Malaysia this year became the tenth "dialogue partner" of the South Pacific Forum (joining other Asian dialogue partners China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan). In welcoming Malaysia, Secretary General Tabai stated that it was an important business partner of many Forum member countries. There are proposals to admit Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei in the near future. At the same time, Papua New Guinea has become an associate member of ASEAN and Fiji is in

line to join PNG in this status.

At the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, ASEAN members and island country members of the South Pacific Forum successfully opposed the attempt by industrialised countries to have the Conference agree to the setting of universal environmental standards, applicable to

every country irrespective of their state of economic development. Behind the opposition was the fear that the universality of environmental standards would be another 'conditionality' that Northern countries would place on the flow of investment capital and migration of manufacturing industries into Southern countries from the North.

During the UN World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the 'universality' of human rights was opposed by

Asian countries on the grounds that such rights do not accord with 'Asian values'.

The positions of Pacific Island countries reflected those of Asia.

This time, they were not so successful.

The Vienna Declaration, while recognizing the "significance of national and regional particularities", states that "it is the duty of States regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms".

Organisations of civil society in Asia and to a lesser extent the Pacific are playing a role in the rethinking of



human rights. A concrete outcome is the Asian Charter on Human Rights. From a Pacific perspective, the major loophole in the Asian Charter is that it does not include in any detail the universal right to self-determination, which is a part of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. These omissions are a reflection of contemporary thinking in state circles that there are no Indigenous Peoples in Asia and that there are no longer any colonies in Asia after Macao is returned to China.

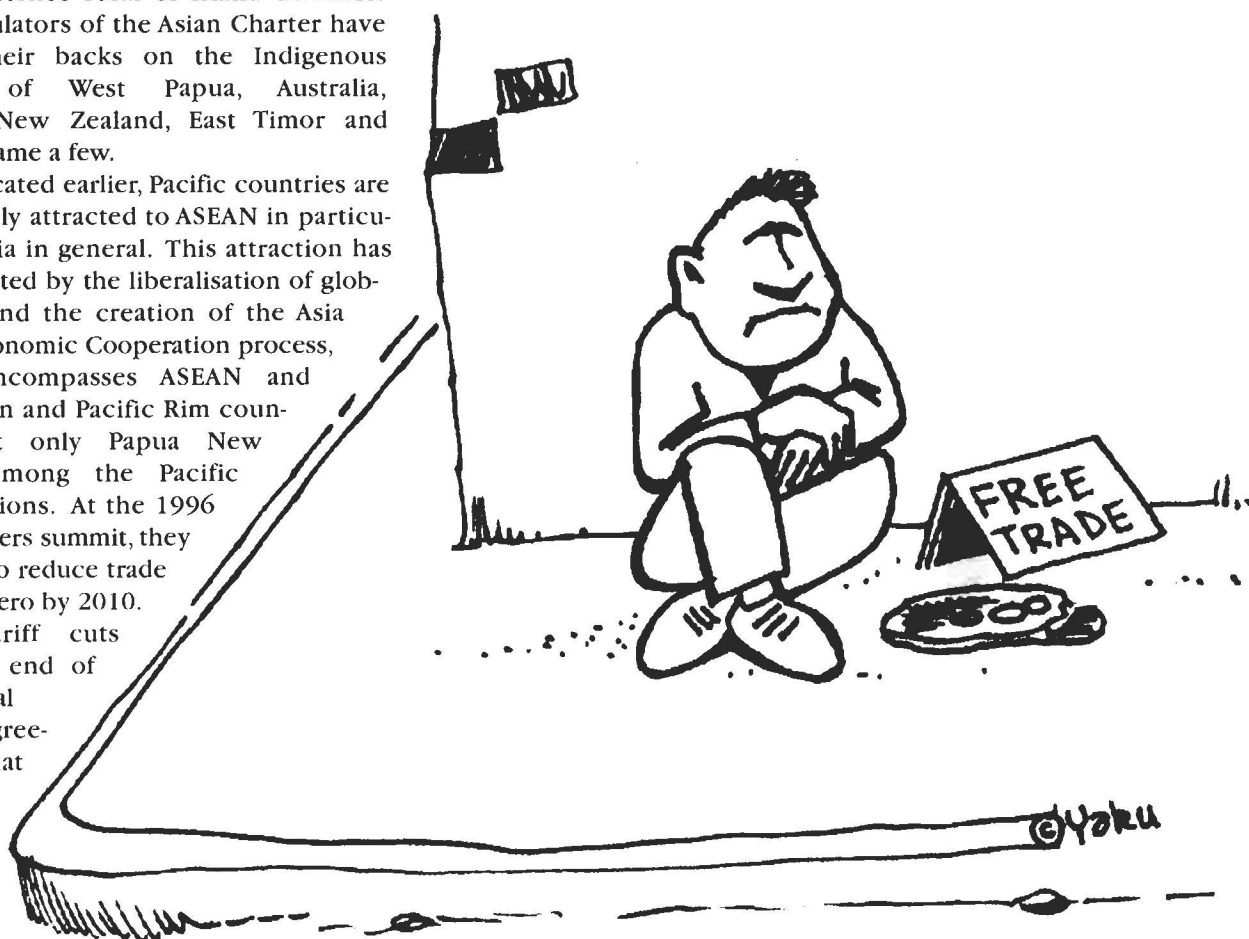
The universal right to self-determination should be viewed as the cornerstone of any democratic society and an integral component of people centred development. Self-determination is about the empowerment of people, especially those that are confined to the peripheries of the social, economic and political processes. These include women, Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities and subsistence rural or island dwellers. The formulators of the Asian Charter have turned their backs on the Indigenous Peoples of West Papua, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, East Timor and Tibet, to name a few.

As indicated earlier, Pacific countries are increasingly attracted to ASEAN in particular and Asia in general. This attraction has been boosted by the liberalisation of global trade and the creation of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation process, which encompasses ASEAN and other Asian and Pacific Rim countries, but only Papua New Guinea among the Pacific Island nations. At the 1996 APEC leaders summit, they resolved to reduce trade tariffs to zero by 2010. These tariff cuts spell the end of preferential trade agreements that have benefited Pacific Island countries.

The Pacific countries that potentially stand to gain the most from trade liberalisation and APEC are the Melanesian countries (PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji). Not only are they geographically close to Southeast Asia, but they contain 80% of the Pacific Islands' population and almost 90% of the Pacific Islands' land-based mineral resources, not to mention land area. Also standing to gain are the

Micronesian countries, whose main source of tourists are Japan and South Korea.

Notwithstanding the current financial crisis, Asia and ASEAN in particular are undergoing the second phase of industrialisation in the post-Second World War era. This phase has been driven by capital from Japan, the European Union, the US and Canada. The Pacific, especially Melanesian countries, is also receiving the attention of foreign capital, including that from the new generation of Asian tigers themselves, particularly Malaysia. This capital in-flow into the Pacific is primarily in search of mineral resources and tropical timbers. Perhaps the only export-oriented industry that is receiving attention from Asian countries is the garment industry as they take advantage of trade preferences that Pacific Island countries enjoy with Australia, New Zealand, the US and the European Union.



As in other regions, the exploitation of mineral and timber resources is fraught with corruption at all levels. The manipulation of resource owners and rural communities is the same in Asia and the Pacific.

In October 1997, Japan for the first time hosted a summit with leaders of the 16 Pacific Island countries of the South Pacific Forum. Although the summit had no formal agenda, Japan has various environmental, strategic and

economic interests that it wants the Pacific to support:

- Japan is seeking international support for a permanent seat in a restructured UN Security Council and the Pacific countries can swing the vote in favour of Japan.
- Despite Pacific concerns, Japan wants to continue the transshipment through the Pacific of spent nuclear fuel to France for reprocessing and in return receive plutonium and high level radioactive waste. Similarly Japan, together with South Korea and Taiwan, are interested in the Marshall Islands government's proposal to turn some of its islands into permanent nuclear waste dumps.
- Over the past twelve years, Japan has spent US\$100 million mapping the Pacific seabed and surveying its minerals. Having little mineral resources of its own, access to these substantial deposits in the next century is critical to the Japanese economy.
- Japan wants to continue having access to the Pacific Islands' tuna fishing grounds, which are the source of 50-60% of the world's annual tuna harvest.

During 1993 around 1300 fishing vessels were licensed to fish for tuna in the exclusive economic zones of Pacific Island nations, with most of these vessels from Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, the US, China and the Philippines. Pacific Island countries received US\$126 million that year from a resource that is worth US\$2 billion annually. This daylight robbery is particularly significant to non-Melanesian countries who have little or no land based resources. Japan has for several years wanted to be a full member of the Forum Fisheries Agency, but the Pacific countries have resisted.

The competition between China and Taiwan for the hearts and minds and votes of the Pacific is heating up after the return of Hong Kong to China. Quite a few Pacific nations privately support Taiwan's membership in the UN. Fiji recently felt China's wrath after announcing that it was opening a trade promotion office in Taipei. China withdrew the special import duty rates it allowed Fiji for its sugar. Tonga's king recently visited China and Taiwan, meeting with the presidents of both. Tonga established diplomatic relations with Taiwan 20 years ago and does not have diplomatic relations with China.

One of the most lucrative businesses that Pacific countries have embarked on in recent years is the sale of passports, primarily to Asia. Although the passport sales are used to attract Asian entrepreneurs, it seems that the majority of buyers are from the Asian under-world or are migrants whose ultimate destination is the US, Australia or New Zealand. In 1996 the US government forced the Marshall Islands to stop its passport sales because buyers are using their visa-free entry arrangement to enter the US.

The end of the Cold War has seen a shift of emphasis from territorial security to human security. Human security addresses people's concerns for security in their

daily lives. It includes the enhancement of the environment; economic equality; the empowerment of traditionally oppressed or marginalised peoples like women, Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities; and the institutionalization of political democracy. Despite the high growth rate in ASEAN countries, inequality in income distribution exists within societies and between them. High economic growth has not translated into human security for the whole population.

A UNICEF study of the Pacific Islands in 1993 showed that 50 Pacific children die per day from causes which are easily preventable through low cost means. Around 1100 Pacific Island women die each year from pregnancy related conditions. More than 1.4 million Pacific adults can neither read nor write. Pockets of deprivation and poverty are becoming more visible in an increasing number of Pacific Island countries. These are what constitute the real threat to human security and are not amenable to military intervention. If not addressed in a cooperative and constructive manner, they may well deteriorate into traditional modes of military violence thereby threatening the state, its government and society as a whole.

The downsizing of the US military presence in Asia and the Pacific has not seen the dismantling of national security legislations that were designed during the Cold War era. These legislations are being reinforced by massive increases in the military budgets of all ASEAN and Asian countries. In the Pacific ten years ago, only Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Tonga had armies. Today Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands have the equivalent of a military corps. Notwithstanding the acceptance by most Asian and Pacific states of the new conception of human security, they still have not discarded the internal security acts that have been frequently used to silence and lock up those who dare to seek justice and equality.

From these examples of the interaction between Asia and the Pacific, one can discern a pattern of exploitation reminiscent of colonial times, with the Pacific still on the periphery while the locus of the empire has relocated from London, Washington and Paris to Tokyo, Seoul, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Canberra and Wellington. But if the nation states are democratic and governments are accountable to the people in Asia and the Pacific, then it is possible for civil society organisations to make the relationship more equitable and mutually beneficial. However, if the states are not democratic and governments are not accountable then we have a major war on our hands.

Lopeti Senituli is the director of the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, the Fiji based secretariat of the Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific Movement.



From a Politics of Place to a Politics of Space

Organising for Resistance and Community Control

by Richard N. Salvador

We have come to this Pacific Networking Conference from across the Pacific to celebrate an expanded definition of 'Pacific Peoples' that is inclusive of both the 'Rim' and the 'Basin', to address genuine 'Pacific concerns', and, in the words of the conference brochure, "to explore alternative approaches that are fairer to Pacific Islanders". This is a daunting task, especially when faced with the tangible consequences of globalisation. It is even more disheartening to consider the impact of this growing international integration of markets for goods, services and capital. Many Pacific nations are being compelled to integrate their economies to the global economy with promises of brighter economic futures. But when small, vulnerable communities are asked to remove all barriers to international trade, what will replace the little dignity that we have stubbornly refused to acquiesce through several centuries of foreign colonialisms that have permanently disfigured our communal selves?

Indeed, what is left when we have sold away the prospect of being the protagonists of our own destinies? I would argue that our unwillingness to let go of such a vital element of our sovereignty during colonialism is the foundation of our continued survival. It would seem ludicrous that we might simply let go NOW, only because our political leaders are so invested in maximising a short-term economic advantage. But beyond the immediate pressures being brought to bear on our political leaders, we are all being coerced to integrate ourselves with the globalised economy.

What is the nature of that which we confront? By the World Bank's own admission: "Globalisation is altering the world economic landscape in fundamental ways. It is driven by a widespread push toward the liberalisation of trade and capital markets, increasing internationalisation of corporate production and distribution strategies, and technological change that is rapidly dismantling barriers to the international tradability of goods and services and the mobility of capital."

The conclusions of European researchers at a recent conference on the future of the Lome Convention (an economic agreement since 1970 between the European Union and select African, Caribbean and Pacific countries) are that "the balance sheet of globalisation is mixed", that while only a few countries have benefited, "it has coincided with growing socio-economic inequities between and within countries and [actual] reversals in human development".

In his book, *The Corporate Planet: Ecology and Politics in the Age of Globalization*, Joshua Karliner describes how corporations have come to dominate the lives of peoples/communities across the planet, contributing massively to environmental destruction and impover-

ishing thousands of peoples, ultimately undermining democracy. He writes: "Transnational corporations — companies which operate in more than one country at a time — have become some of the most powerful economic and political entities in the world today. More corporations have more power than the nation-states across whose borders they operate." For instance:

- "The combined revenues of just General Motors and Ford — two of the largest automobile corporations in the world — exceed the combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for all of sub-Saharan Africa."
- "The combined sales of Mitsubishi, Mitsui, ITOCHI, Sumimoto, Marubeni, and Nissho Iwai, Japan's top six trading companies, are nearly equivalent to the combined GDP of all of South America."
- "Overall, 51 of the largest 100 economies in the world are corporations."
- "The revenues of the top 500 corporations in the U.S. equal 60% of the country's GDP."
- "Transnational corporations hold 90% of all technology and product patents worldwide."
- "Transnational corporations are involved in 70% of world trade. More than 30% of this trade is 'intra-firm'; in other words, it occurs between units of the same corporation."
- "While ever more global in reach, these corporations' homes bases are concentrated in the Northern industrialized countries, where 90% of all transnationals are based."

Is there a logic to the typical politics of economic globalisation? Karliner describes the extent of transnationals' powers and the extent to which they impact peoples and their communities:

- "...transnational corporations are moving to circumvent national governments. The borders and regulatory agencies of most governments are caving in to the New World Order of globalization, allowing corporations to assume an ever more stateless quality, leaving them less and less accountable to any governments anywhere."
- "These corporations, together with their host governments, are reorganizing world economic structures — and thus the balance of political power — through a series of intergovernmental trade and investment accords. These treaties serve as the frameworks within which globalization is evolving — allowing international corporate investment and trade to flourish across the Earth."

These international trade and investment agreements allow corporations to circumvent the power and authority of national governments and local communities,

endangering workers' rights, the environment and democratic political processes.

Dr. Jane Kelsey, Associate Professor of Law at the University of Auckland, has written extensively on the nature of the coming global economic order, more particularly on the shape of things to come within the Asia-Pacific. Her analyses of APEC provide useful descriptions of what we are up against and argue, beyond an exclusive focus on the politics of nation-statism, for an agenda of engagement that is global both in nature and scope. Her findings bode ill for the future of the Pacific Basin and Rim. I encourage you to familiarise yourselves with her writings, for they depict the shape of a new politics to come vis-a-vis APEC.

In her paper, "APEC: To Engage or Not To Engage?", Dr.

The fate of humanity, even the fate of the planet itself, cannot be left entirely to the transnational technocrats who demand that we sell bits and pieces of ourselves and the dignity of our communities so that they might more fully enjoy their leisure.

Kelsey states that the way APEC operates, NGO participation "realistically... is never going to happen" and wonders whether, in the absence of parity, there is any value to be gained from seeking such participation. The question is indeed a difficult one, as APEC promises no likelihood of ever being addressed by anyone outside of its informal structure and discourages initiatives aimed at such engagement. Even the South Pacific Forum, the regional grouping of Pacific Island nations, with the exception of Papua New Guinea, is not a member, but has observer status. Yet as a vehicle for effecting integration of Pacific Basin and Rim nations' economies into the global economy, thereby bringing to pass a fundamental transformation of the Pacific, it is a vital entity.

Twenty years ago, world money markets traded about \$10 billion per day; today these markets trade more than \$1.3 trillion every day, more than \$400 trillion per year. APEC's agenda of creating "unrestricted foreign investment(s)", "minimal controls on big business", "privatisation of state assets and services", "unlimited export of profits", etc., with their "serious non-economic flow-on effects" are likely to dramatically change the face of Pacific communities forever [Kelsey]. If APEC is successful in removing all impediments to the free flow of a portion of \$400 trillion or more per year, we will need to brace ourselves for the

biggest economic typhoon to ever hit the Pacific. Amidst such depressing conditions, what can be "fairer alternatives for Pacific Islanders" than inundation either by sea-level rise due to climate change or enormous amounts of global capital seeking to establish new dependencies.

Ending the Paralysis

Have you lost all hope? I hope not. A few days before I came to Canada, a colleague invited me to a video showing of the life and work of the powerful feminist writer Audre Lorde. I was struck by Lorde's words when she proclaims that we live in a world of intense contradictions, but that in spite of these we must continue to reach out. We must not allow ourselves to be so overwhelmed by our individual or local battles that we surrender every ounce of our strength and imagination which might be of benefit to other struggles elsewhere. Each of us might be fighting overwhelming battles wherever we are, but remember we have a war to win. The fate of humanity, even the fate of the planet itself, cannot be left entirely to the transnational technocrats who demand that we sell bits and pieces of ourselves and the dignity of our communities so that they might more fully enjoy their leisure.

There are countless groups of people organising themselves everywhere in order to educate themselves about the nature of the economic/political predicament we all face. These efforts should continue.

I would like to offer some comments on the nation of Belau. The basis of our decolonisation, our resistance to militarism and nuclearism may offer a modest version of the kind of resistance politics we are seeking to cultivate. I would like to optimistically believe, even at the risk of romanticising my own nation's decolonisation movement, that Belau is in one sense the quintessential example of the kind of nation that we would idealistically desire to see, as a contrast to the rampant militarism that continues unabated in a post-Cold War World.

Against the prominent backdrop of war and the ever-present legacies of war's devastation, and against the pronounced aspirations of the US Pentagon's plan to linger on in the Western Pacific, Belau sought to emerge as a nation. Americans didn't just say "no"; they said "hell no". And we said in so much roundabout words, "NO and to hell with you!" The ensuing struggle took the next fifteen years to resolve, assassinations of our leaders, bombings and state sponsored terrorism, and the final break-up of the mighty Soviet Union and de-legitimation of the Cold War (which dictated the nature of politics inside Belau). The circumstances surrounding Belau's emergence as a nation state came to symbolise for us the kind of resistance that must be sustained in the kind of work we must do.

The details of our decolonisation movement will be left for another opportunity to share, as we are intent on sharing relevant stories that empower us in terms of economic

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Globalisation and the Maori Experiment

by Maker

In recent decades the world has become a very much smaller place. The defeat of socialism by capitalism has resulted in the economies of nations becoming increasingly interdependent. The popular concept of nation states exercising sovereignty on behalf of the interests of the various groups residing within their borders is being heavily challenged. Throughout the world, government policies are increasingly determined by the needs of trade and economics. Indigenous Peoples, already subjected to colonialism, are experiencing new forms of colonialism. The colonising forces of the present age are what Graham Smith describes as the self-serving interests of a global elite whose economic interests are shaping the global economy and who are accountable to nobody other than themselves.

Aotearoa: The New Right Experiment

A small and isolated country whose population is less than 4 million and with an Indigenous population of 15%, Aotearoa/New Zealand is ideally placed to be the experimental model for pushing the limits of New Right-driven policies and practices. The restructuring program which this entailed has been given impetus by an elite group whose interests have driven the New Right political, economic and social agenda for Aotearoa for two decades.

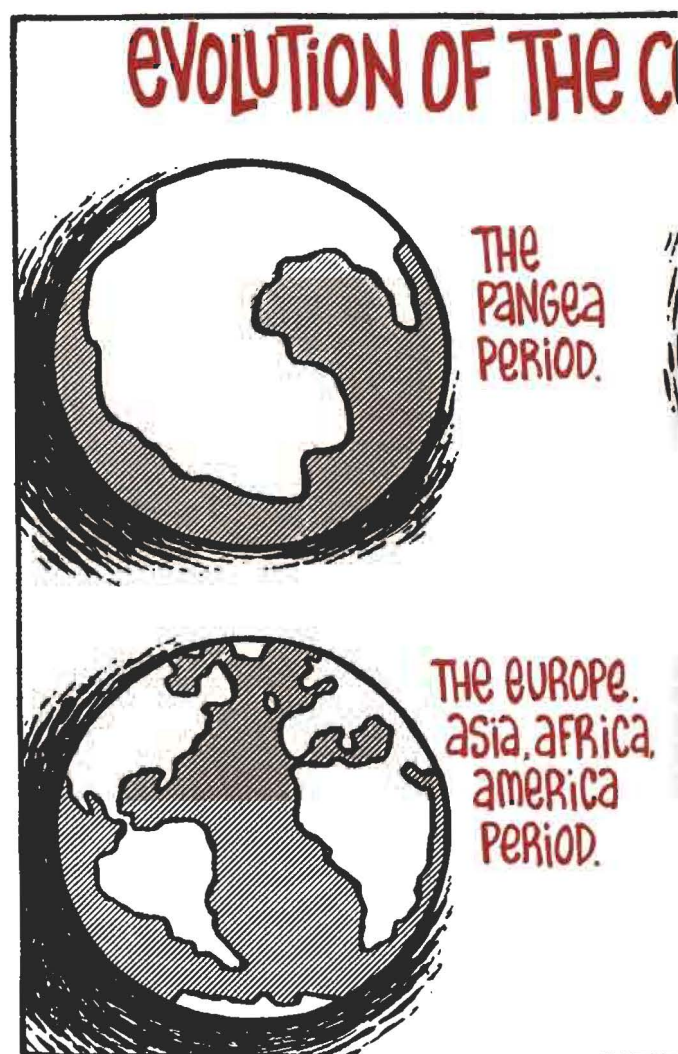
The embracing of New Right ideologies has seen Aotearoa develop what the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development regards as a model open, free market economy. One of the characteristics of the restructuring program has been a steady move towards a minimalist form of governance that increases the influence of power brokers and undermines democracy as we know it. Accompanying this shift in direction is the rhetoric of "freeing up the government from extraneous issues and responsibilities", such as broadcasting and the provision of education and health care, so that it can "get on with the job of governing, leaving business to run business enterprise".

What this represents is the separation of economics from social issues at the local level and the international level — as in APEC decision-making. Decision-making is based on economic gain without counting the cost in human terms. In Aotearoa this is reflected in current government policies for the privatisation of a range of services including health and education, the sale of state owned enterprises and recent attempts by the government to remove itself from its obligations under the human rights act. All of these policy directions are under-

pinned by the same agenda, making Aotearoa even more attractive to foreign investment by opening up these areas to private enterprise.

The Cost of New Right Economics

The last 13 or so years have been characterised by rapid reforms in the areas of health, education and social policy. They have also been characterised by record nega-



tive statistics in the areas of health, employment, income and housing. The 1990s has arguably been one of the most challenging and rapidly changing periods in Aotearoa since the end of the Great Depression. The human cost has been enormous, including:

Experience in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Harawira

- the unnecessary and premature death of a Maori man refused dialysis on the basis of economic rationalisation;
- the lingering painful death of a 21 year old Maori who was refused proper examination of his extreme head pain for two months due to an assumption that he was a street kid looking for easy drugs;

hung himself;

- the suicide of 232 Aucklanders so far this year — the majority of them aged 14-24 — many of them Maori or Pacific Islander. The suicide rate for young Maori is probably among the highest of any Indigenous Peoples in the world.

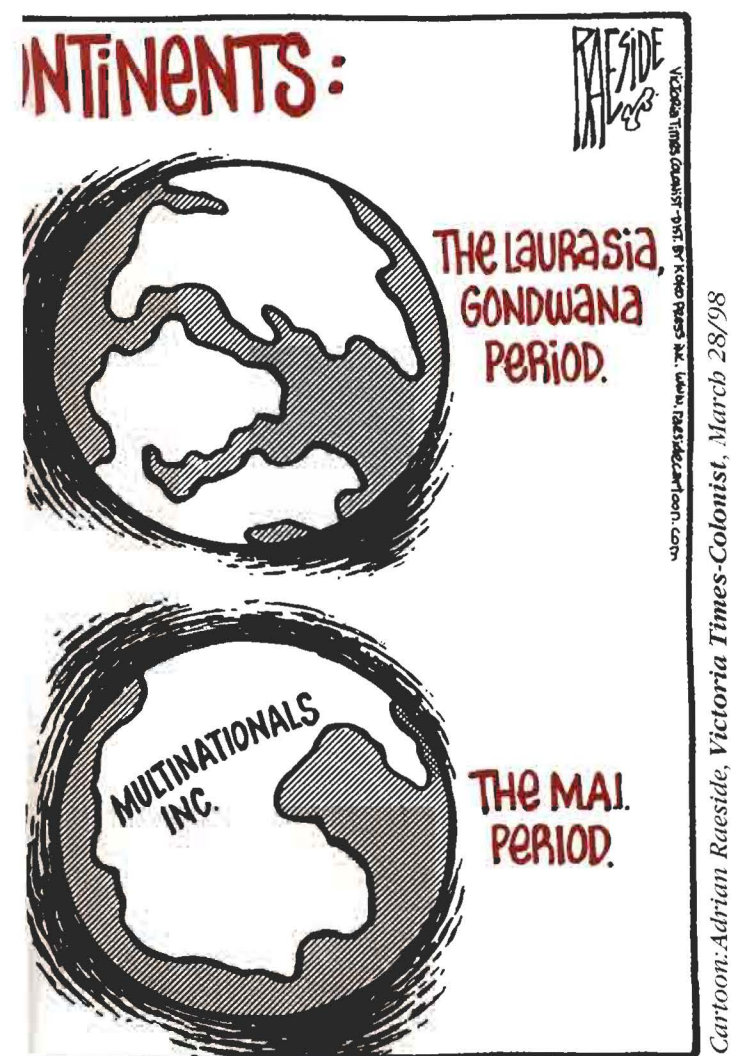
The 1996 election campaign saw a ray of hope in the form of a new political party. Promises to halt the sale of state-owned assets, cease privatisation of health and education, restrict the sale of land to foreign investors and limit the number of immigrants were prominent in their election campaign. Election day saw record numbers of Maori flock to the polls to register their support. The formation of a coalition government whose members included a record number of Maori — 15 out of a total 120 — brought rejoicing to Maori who believed that their needs and aspirations had a chance to be addressed for the first time since colonialism. The Coalition Government Agreement signed in December '96 was generally regarded as a reasonable compromise between the right-wing aspirations of the National Party and what was seen as the centre-left direction of the other party.

In the months since the Coalition Agreement, the commitment of both parties to maintaining Coalition unity has been tested. As the cracks in the Agreement widen, what is becoming more apparent is the ease with which ideologically driven policies, defining human beings in terms of economic units rather than social beings with human needs, are being inserted into the everyday affairs of government.

Recent months have been characterised by such drastic changes in the social, educational and health fields that 'ordinary citizens' have taken to the streets in protest. For the first time in decades, resistance has moved beyond academics and those who are commonly labelled as activists and radicals. What has been highlighted is an unbreachable gap between New Right values of individualism, competition for goods and services and the survival of the strongest, and Indigenous Peoples' values of community, cooperation and *whanaungatanga*.

International economic agreements

Since the 1980s the government of Aotearoa has participated in a series of international economic and trade agreements whose aim is to enhance the ability of business interests to make profits by greatly improving access to overseas markets. The fundamental agenda for these agreements is the removal of all potential barriers to free



- the suicide in prison of a 15 year old Pacific Island boy who was sentenced to an adult prison for a period of years — because there is no money for youth prisons or rehabilitation programs — and subsequently abused by a prison guard before he

trade and foreign investment or ownership. These barriers include domestic legislation of any kind that might be a hindrance to foreign interests. The mythology supporting this agenda argues that in opening up to overseas investors, benefits in the form of employment and expanded trade opportunities will accrue.

High on the agenda at present is the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). It has been argued that the MAI is simply an extension of current trade arrangements such as the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). However, there are significant and alarming differences. Designed to benefit overseas investors, the MAI hugely advantages them in a number of ways. Other than reservations which under the conditions of the MAI are only temporary and must ultimately be removed, there are essentially no conditions placed on overseas governments or enterprises as investors.

Recent claims by Donald Johnston of the OECD that the MAI will enshrine protections for Indigenous Peoples' rights and resources are a significant misrepresentation of the truth. Moreover they can be interpreted as a blatant attempt to gain the consent of Indigenous Peoples to an agreement that will in fact marginalise their rights even further.

Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights

Another critical issue for Maori that intersects with the MAI and other globalisation agendas is that of cultural and intellectual property rights. There are numerous areas in which the cultural and intellectual knowledge of Indigenous Peoples is being commodified by multinational interests. In Aotearoa, areas in which the commodification of Maori cultural and intellectual knowledge is occurring include education and the storing of Maori knowledge held by Television NZ. With the pending sale of this state-owned enterprise, property rights over this valuable resource of Maori intellectual and cultural prop-

erty will be vested in the new owner(s) who are free to trade it in whatever way they like.

Crown refusal to guarantee confidentiality of evidence in recent hearings for a significant claim over native flora and fauna, traditional knowledge and intellectual property, has lent credence to the suspicion that the Crown has a vested interest in not protecting Maori intellectual and cultural property rights. This claim by six Maori tribes represents a significant challenge to the demands of transnational corporations to plunder Indigenous knowledge throughout the world in the search for profits.

Co-optation and Resistance

One of the tensions that Maori are currently confronting is the co-optation of a significant group of Maori business people and elites by New Right ideologies which are at fundamental variance with Maori traditionally held values. The division between those Maori elites who have bought into the hegemonies of competitiveness and capital gain, and those referred to as 'culturalists', adds to the struggles in which many Maori are engaged. An example of this occurs in the area of tribal development where many of the current practices are in direct opposition to the deep cultural values and philosophies that underpin Maori social and spiritual life.

Maori Resistance Politics

Frustrated with policies whose reality is far from the rhetoric, Maori have begun to develop a form of resistance politics which challenges New Right ideologically driven power relations. One of the most critical resistance strategies for Maori is the development of alternative methodologies which are embedded in the fundamentals of traditional cultural values. An important aspect of this involves looking towards and sharing with other Indigenous Peoples in our search for ideas and solutions, for alternative strategies and methodologies for development.

While globalisation may be the inevitable next stage of social organisation, there is no inevitability about either the form that it is currently taking or the interests that are driving it. What may be inevitable is that the solution for the future well-being of this planet Earth lies in the global co-ordination of alternatively-minded peoples and communities joining together to develop alternative strategies based on social justice and traditional values of caring, sharing and true equality.

Makere Harawira is Maori and teaches Sociology of Education at the University of Auckland. She is working on a PhD, researching the impact of globalisation on the Maori, and is active in the movement in Aotearoa against free trade and market liberalisation.



Cartoon: Adrian Raeside, *Victoria Times-Colonist*, June 1/98

Reform or Recolonisation?

Vanuatu's "Comprehensive Reform Programme" under the microscope

by John Dahmasing Salong

The Republic of Vanuatu, formerly the joint British and French colony of the New Hebrides, became politically independent on July 30, 1980. The Vanuatu Constitution adopted in October 1979 was not only an important step toward independence, but also an attempt to provide a climate for correcting the history of human rights exploitation by the British and French colonial masters. The spirit of Vanuatu's Constitution recognises the internationally declared human rights and balances these rights with pro-active obligations that favour the Indigenous Melanesians known as ni-Vanuatu. For example, while there are provisions for freedom of speech and movement, there are also provisions which can be interpreted to equate the ruling of the paramount chiefs with rulings of the supreme court of Vanuatu. This balancing act by the Vanuatu Constitution reflects the then prominent analysis that the rights of the people had been abrogated by colonial instruments and Vanuatu's independence would begin the process of correcting historical injustices.

The commitment to Indigenous rights and correcting historical colonial woes was short-lived in Vanuatu. In 1981, the Land Reform Regulation — an "affirmative action" legislation for Indigenous Melanesians — legalized the expropriation of formerly alienated lands and returned the lands to the "customary land owners". By 1985, however, the ideological commitment to Indigenous rights was already wavering. While Vanuatu continued to advocate in the United Nations for the decolonisation of Indigenous Peoples, on the national front a political rift within the then ruling Vanuaaku Pati was seriously undermining the commitment to Indigenous rights. The struggle for the presidency of the Vanuaaku Pati between Fr. Walter Haydi Lini and Barak Tame Sope facilitated the process of sacrificing ideological commitment for pragmatic consolidation of power. One such measure was the aligning of socialist leaning politicians with well known anti-independence capitalists. Consequently, 1985 was the year in which commitment to Melanesian Indigenous rights began to wane and the process of recolonisation began.

By February 12, 1997, the then Prime Minister, Rialuth Serge Vohor, was convinced that Vanuatu had arrived at a crossroads. In a statement to the nation, he highlighted that Vanuatu's rate of economic growth was lower than the population growth rate. The PM stated that, based on the need for sustainable economic growth, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) had been signed with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to provide a loan and technical advisors for the



Graphic: Michael N'Yabgulaana

John Salong

development and implementation of a "Comprehensive Reform Programme" (CRP). By June 1997, the blueprint for economic and public sector reforms had been drawn up. A year later, the legislative requirements for the ADB loan to implement the CRP were being debated in Parliament at a speed uncharacteristic of the usual prolonged ni-Vanuatu processes.

This accelerated process leads one to question whether the CRP is a home grown product. Other indicators also challenge the government's propaganda that "the CRP was developed by the ni-Vanuatu for Vanuatu". The indicators include:

- a national liquidity crisis publicly manifested in March 1998 by the Reserve Bank governor's announcement of the devaluation of Vanuatu's currency, the vatu;
- the engagement of 40 foreign advisors by the Vanuatu government since the signing of the MOU with the ADB to facilitate legislative and policy development and implementation.

It has been argued that the Vanuatu government was in a financial crisis and had no option but to accept the ADB agenda of CRP. The government propaganda, however, claims that the CRP blueprint was endorsed by the "National Summit" as attested to by the signatures endorsing the "Port Vila Accord."

The National Summit was a two day meeting of government representatives and civil society members in Port Vila in June 1997. The seminar participants received



Photo: Stuart Wolff

*CRP = colonisation with the legislators in Port Vila?
Vanuatu's National Parliament*

copies of the CRP document as they registered for the meeting. No time was given to study the document before the meeting. Reports from designated *rapporteurs* of the public reform committees were received, but very limited time was provided for discussion. No provisions were made to amend the recommendations. While detailed recommendations for the public sector reforms were presented, no details of the economic reforms were received and, after two days, the Port Vila Accord was signed by all participants. The author signed the Port Vila Accord as a participant in the assembly, but not as endorsement of the CRP blueprint. The wording of the Port Vila Accord did not include provisions calling for approval of the content of the CRP documents. Moreover, as a representative of the Malampa provincial government council, the author felt there had not been sufficient consultation with the communities in Malampa province to warrant any endorsement of documents on behalf of the people of Malampa.

In May 1997 at the Malampa provincial government council meeting in Lakaotro, one of CRP's architects was asked whether he could guarantee that the CRP would benefit the ni-Vanuatu. John Standingford, an economist and ADB/IMF consultant, responded, "There is no question that the first beneficiaries of CRP will be Asians and Caucasians. The ni-Vanuatu must have faith that they will be secondary beneficiaries." This response did nothing to quell the suggestion that the CRP is a colonial instrument to perpetuate the system of extracting net value of labor and resources to foreign capitalists.

The sandalwood trade, "black birding", land grabs by plantation owners and the copra trade are sufficient historical examples of the net expropriation of value from the Indigenous Peoples of Vanuatu to foreign capitalists. The economic reforms under the CRP will facilitate more of the same disguised as "private sector led development".

The main goal of the CRP's economic component is to "remove all barriers to trade and attract foreign

investment". While this makes good rhetoric, effectively there will be subsidisation for foreign investors while local entrepreneurs and resource owners will be disadvantaged. For example, in the area of tourism development, any foreign investor who can invest in a 25-room resort would have the following support services:

- access to a one-stop foreign investment shop where all permits, licenses and immigration services are provided, paid for by the government;
- access to land through sub-leasing arrangements from a Native Land Trust Board (NTLB) which will lease land from the "custom owners" with guarantees that, if any complications in sub-lease arrangements were to be faced, the foreign investor would be compensated by the NTLB;
- access to a special soft loan facility;
- exemption from import duty requirements for all capital imports related to the resort development and a ten year tax holiday from the current 10% government tax on hotels and restaurants;
- Vanuatu's tax haven benefits with no corporate taxes, no income taxes, no estate duties, no capital gains tax, no withholding taxes and no tax treaties or double taxation agreements with any other country.

Local resource owners would not qualify for the above services because they do not have enough financial capital to invest in resorts larger than 25 rooms. While they own tourism resources such as land and coastal areas earmarked as "tourism precincts", these resources are not sufficient to underwrite access to the soft loan facilities that will be provided.

Suffice it to say that the CRP blueprint is a standard structural adjustment programme document shrouded in deceptive tricks which create the appearance of consensus decision-making. CRP is simply a clever use of words and process by agents of the ADB to recolonise the people, lands and resources of Vanuatu. The CRP should be known as the Complete Recolonisation Program. As illustrated with the tourism example, the CRP aims to subsidize foreign investors' access to resources that were protected after the independence of Vanuatu.

Effectively, the CRP will create a "laissez-faire" environment equivalent to the climate prevalent in Vanuatu prior to its independence. After the CRP economic reforms, foreign investors will enjoy the same rights and protections that were available for French and British subjects when they traded in sandalwood, indentured laborers, land and copra. The only difference will be that the legislators will no longer be in London or Paris but in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

John Salong is from Vanuatu and coordinates a local NGO known as IDEAS, Industrial Development and Economic Alternatives for SANMA.



Export Processing Zones in the Philippines

by Corazon Fabros

An export processing zone (EPZ) or free trade zone (FTZ) is a physically fenced-in area, usually called an industrial estate, developed by a host country government to make conditions — physical, economic, social and political — suitable for the smooth operation of manufacturing concerns within the zone. It is designed to promote export expansion through the attraction of foreign investment and features preferential treatment like tax exemptions, guarantees of foreign exchange allocation and loan financing. It operates as a country within a country. Its rules at times do not conform with the laws and decrees of the host country, eg. with respect to tax benefits.

The majority of the companies operating in EPZs in the Philippines are transnational corporation subsidiaries like Mattel Philippines, Bataan International Garments, Texas Instruments, etc. In many instances foreign equity is 100%, especially when Japanese and American companies are involved.

Foreigners who set up business in the Philippines were once among the country's colonisers. Foreign corporations have been in the Philippines since colonial times, but it was during the American regime that the presence of foreign corporations became significant. Initially, it involved investment in raw material extraction and agribusiness ventures, with production intended for the export market. After the war, an import substitution programme encouraged local production of previously imported commodities, facilitating the entry of foreign investments in manufacturing. The import substitution programme was a failure as only a portion of manufactured goods was distributed locally, while the bulk was still exported. By 1965 almost half of the Philippines' total foreign investments were in manufacturing.

In 1968 the first export processing zone was set up in Bataan to promote export manufacturing and foreign investment. Among other things, it is where parts of TMX watches and Barbie dolls are assembled. By 1970 capital flows to developing countries shifted remarkably, from equity financing to loan financing. During that period, deposed President Marcos embarked on an industrialisation programme financed mostly by foreign loans. US investments constitute the biggest bloc of direct foreign equity investment (56.8%), though they have slowed down to an annual average growth of 25%, while Japanese investments grew by 36%. For every peso earned by US companies in the Philippines, 84 centavos went back to the US.

Many Third World governments, the Philippines included, came up with incentives and liberal policies to attract foreign investors. These policies included cheaper labour, ease in remitting profits overseas, tax holidays and more access to the host country's natural resources, among

other enticements. The range of practices in these EPZs to get foreign investments has grown sophisticated. Now we see the establishment of technoparks, industrial parks and special economic zones such as the former US military facilities like Clark and Subic.

EPZs and the Electronics Industry

As a case in point, EPZs in the Philippines are hosts to electronics transnationals. It should not be difficult to see why. Imports are not restricted and tax holidays were granted. Perhaps the EPZ's biggest attraction is that they are strike-free zones. For companies which want to take advantage of cheap labour, the EPZs are ideal sites for their factories. Our biggest exports to the world are no longer agricultural products but electronic goods like integrated circuits, microprocessors, radios and other gadgets.

There has been a surge in investments in electronics (See Table 1). For July 1996 alone, foreign earnings from electronics reached \$632 million. While the country's average export growth remains at a slow 6.3%, electronics exports increased by 24.8% between July 1995 and July 1996 (See Table 2).

It may seem like the Philippines is developing as its export production shifts towards manufactured industrial products. However, the local electronics industry is still dominated by assembly phase production. Only the most labour intensive aspect of production was done before re-exporting the assembled material to other countries. We are not electronics manufacturers, but rather assemblers of imported electronic components for re-export. Because of its enclave status, the industry also failed to establish a healthy linkage with the rest of the economy

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF ELECTRONICS EXPORTS
1991-1995 (EXPORTS IN BILLION DOLLARS)

YEAR	TOTAL EXPORTS	ELECTRONICS EXPORTS	% SHARE
1991	8.84	2.24	25.33
1992	9.82	2.73	27.78
1993	11.37	3.50	30.93
1994	13.43	4.90	36.31
1995	16.00	7.37	46.06

Source: BOI, Electronics Industry Situationer 29 Feb 1996

not located within the EPZs. As a result, electronic firms in the country are more integrated vertically with their parent companies located mostly in industrialized countries than with the local economy.

The Global Context

Electronics production is the most globalised industry in the world. However this dispersal is far from equal. The most labour intensive production is concentrated in underdeveloped countries where labour is cheapest. The research intensive aspect remains with the foreign parent company and the strengthening of intellectual property rights through the World Trade Organization will make it harder for underdeveloped countries to develop an independent electronics industry. The international standardization of electronic devices is also an efficient measure to keep underdeveloped countries from entering the global competition.

Negative Effect on Workers

It is also clear that EPZs did not result in better working conditions and higher wages for workers. In order to attract foreign investors, the government has to ensure a cheap and docile labour force. Repressive labour policies inside technoparks are the order of the day. Strikes and unions are not allowed. Working hours are almost always extended, with many cases of two shifts for a 24 hour work period. Since production is highly sensitive to the world market, layoffs are common. Workers have no security of tenure and social benefits are not provided.

The health of workers in the electronics industry is constantly threatened as their work involves handling toxic chemicals, fumes and automated devices, exposing them to numerous problems from respiratory illness to disabling injuries.

Environmental Problems

The disposal of toxic wastes and other high-tech wastes will pose a big problem for our country, with inadequate environmental laws oftentimes not implemented. Given the already critical level of the country's freshwater sources, the agricultural sector will be affected tremendously. Indiscriminate dumping of hazardous wastes into our waters and on land are also rampant.

Exploitation of Women

Women provide a large chunk of the workers in the EPZs. It is not uncommon to hear cases of sexual harassment and rape, both within and outside the factories. There is also an unwritten policy to hire only unmarried women within a certain age bracket. Because jobs are so scarce, there are many instances where women are forced to give in to sexual advances by male supervisors in order to keep their jobs. This is often referred to as the 'lie down or layoff' situation.

Educational Restructuring

The school system is being restructured to meet the needs of foreign capital, with more polytechnic colleges to increase engineering graduates and vocational courses to prepare students to work in the factories. The curriculum has been geared towards practical applications and away from pure research. These steps are being promoted and sub-

sidised by the government with the help of overseas development assistance.

New Faces, Same Plan

The Aquino Administration, which many hoped would liberate the country from the fatal economic policies of her predecessor, pursued the same development path. The Ramos administration has pursued development through the establishment of industrial zones and technoparks, essentially EPZs by another name. The industrial park is a specialized zone equipped with all the facilities and infrastructure for electronics, chemical automotive and other high-tech production. Almost all efforts aimed at the electronics industry are concentrated in these estates.

In the past, the government had a direct hand at supervising and managing EPZs. Today, many industrial parks are managed and owned by the private sector. For 1996 alone, about 10 billion pesos in investments have been poured into electronic and semiconductor projects by eight big companies.

Corazon Fabros is a lawyer and secretary general of the Nuclear Free Philippines Coalition. She is the legal counsel for the Development Action for Women Network and is working on issues related to women migrant workers.

TABLE 2
PHILIPPINES TOP FIVE EXPORTS FOR JULY 1996 & JULY 1995
(Value in \$ million)

	July 1996	July 1995	Growth (%)
1. Electronics & Components	632.12	506.29	24.85
Microcircuits	120.29	92.91	29.47
Semi-conductor	332.87	270.86	22.89
others	178.96	142.52	25.57
2. Articles of Apparel			
Clothing Accessories	221.81	268.13	-17.28
3. Sugar	54.23	8.74	520.48
4. Other products			
	50.46	35.65	41.54
5. Coconut Oil	45.21	49.08	-7.89
Total	1,693.69	1,592.69	6.34

Source: National Statistics Office



The Meaning of Sustainability in Oceania

by Rev. Philemon Akao

Oceania is one way of saying we're the sea, we're the land, we're the human community that has existed in this region from time immemorial. We are a people of diverse groupings, with different cultural backgrounds, but with one common solidarity — for Oceania to be whole.

Sustainability or sustainable development. It is as if we're at the rescuing edge of a cliff. We're there because we witnessed the death of the first victim. The need to address the issue is so real, but we don't have the best possible and strongest language to speak.

Sustainability is the language that my people have spoken from time immemorial. It is a language the continents and islands once spoke. To many of us in the South, sustainability today is the distorted language, used by the mighty, of globalisation and trade liberalisation. The mighty — the Asians and the rich North — have been trying through globalisation to call on the insignificant economic resources of the Pacific Island states to conserve and preserve in the name of sustainability. To the amazement of Pacific peoples, they talk about sustainability for the sake of commodities, but fail to see sustainability for the sake of life. The term is being misused. If sustainable development means legitimising current economic approaches of unlimited growth and expanded consumption for the world's rich, then don't talk about it.

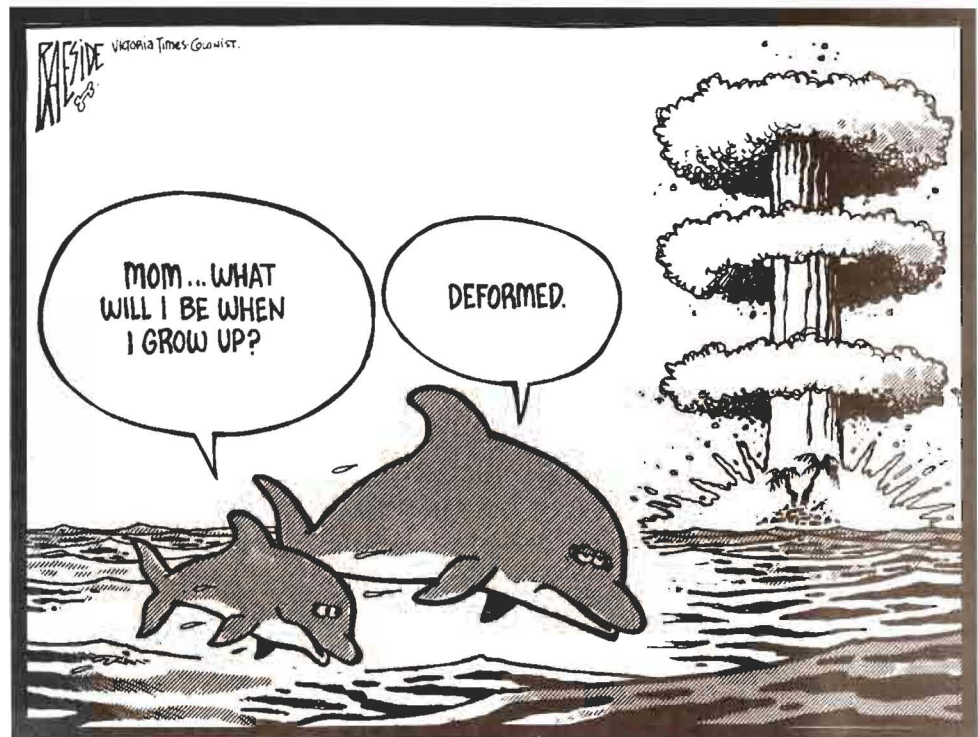
To talk about such sustainability development in Oceania's context is to challenge the very dynamics of our human existence, and especially the earth's biodiversity of which we're part and parcel. When outsiders talk about people's sustainable use of the land, they imply humans are the masters of exploitation. This is contrary to our understanding. Humans don't own the land. The land owns us. We are not planters, therefore we can never reap. Instead we are nurtured. Some communi-

ties of tropical forest dwellers continue to live a nomadic life on the land, with a sense of awe and adoration of the abundance of life that surrounds them.

Our sovereign rights are being denied because foreign companies are operating in our countries and self-serving governments are being bribed by these corporations. Locals earning only US\$150 a month are entranced by the promise of thousands of dollars if they consent for their lands to be logged. It is a rape in broad daylight. Doesn't this represent a new colonisation? Sustainable harvesting can never be done by the hands of the agents of globalisation and trade liberalisation because they care nothing for the land and the people.

Sustainability must acknowledge first and foremost the Indigenous people and their communities. We recognise sustainability as an enterprise we native people handle better than anyone. We call upon people and organizations of good will to demonstrate a moral courage and political will to confront the excess of globalisation.

Philemon Akao is a minister of the Church of Melanesia in the Solomon Islands and is a lecturer on environmental issues at Bishop Patteson Theological College.



Cartoon: Adrian Ruesside, Victoria Times-Colonist

Canning culture?

Women, Globalisation and the Industrial Tuna Fishery

by 'Atu Emberson-Bain

A sea of white uniforms and heavy boots; hundreds of heads bent and hands moving deftly; piles of cooked fish taking the conveyor belt ride; the hypnotic pounding of machinery; sweat spilling out of overactive pores; noses tightening to shut out the stench of rotten fish until the siren wails at Fiji's show case export tuna cannery.

In the single wooden room of her union's operating quarters, Vere [The names of the women in this story have been changed] quietly weeps as she recalls the pain of her recent dismissal and anticipates the struggle that lies ahead. A single mother of three children, she already knows what hardship and loneliness are about. But the privations of the past pale into relative insignificance as she contemplates a far grimmer future without the job she has had for 13 years, processing skip jack and albacore tuna for the consumer markets of Europe and North America.

Vere is not alone in her predicament. She is one of around 90 women dismissed in recent months by the indigenous management of the Fiji-based tuna cannery, Pacific Fishing Company Ltd. Better known as PAFCO, the company enjoys a monopoly in the export of canned tuna out of Fiji and since 1987 has been 98 per cent state-owned. Today there are few reminders of the former Japanese management. In the quaint port-town of Levuka on the tiny island of Ovalau — home to a modest fishing industry since the 1960s — the trappings of foreign influence are more evocative of early trade and settlement from the mid-19th century.

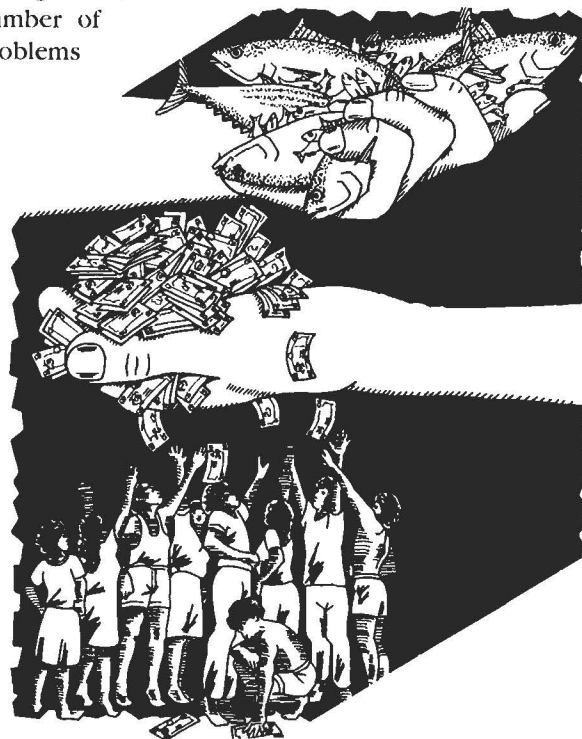
The distinctiveness of the tuna town lies in the intimate and uneasy mix of traditional subsistence lifestyles with wage employment in a global market factory; hundreds of village women are transported into town by truck each morning and returned to their homes in the evening. The mothers come accompanied by their school age children who part with them at the factory gates. For pre-schoolers, a switch in traditional gender roles has put dependent and domesticated husbands in charge — at least in theory. It is a cultural revolution that has delivered its fair share of domestic tensions and social upheavals.

Struggling to survive one of its worst financial crises, PAFCO's days appear numbered, at least as a state corporation. Despite a heavy injection of Australian aid five years ago, a complete or partial sell-out to foreign (Canadian or Australian) interests are now serious options. A sequence of recent closures — officially attributed to fish shortages — have been a prelude to pleas for a \$5 million bailout by the government. The finger is pointed at low worker productivity to explain a five-year

run of low output and embarrassing deficits.

Alongside the misplaced Western stereotypes of palm tree paradise and carefree natives, the magnificent bounty of the Pacific offers North American and Asian fishing nations an irresistible opportunity for economic plunder. As other fishing grounds dry up or find their stocks under pressure, the Pacific is home to the richest tuna resource in the world. It supplies as much as 60% of the world's canned tuna. For Pacific Island countries, exploiting their fisheries resources is attractive, especially when alternative revenue earners are either too few or, as in the case of mining and logging, increasingly controversial. Pressure from international agencies like the World Bank to invest in development that will deliver higher levels of growth makes fisheries a logical choice. So does the extraordinarily lucrative sashimi market in Japan.

Pirating potential on the Pacific's high seas has been curbed in recent years. While the island states may still symbolise David in an ocean of rapacious Goliaths, their sling shots have scored some strategic hits. One of the most dramatic was the campaign to end driftnet fishing. Besides the ban on transshipment at sea (which facilitated under-reporting of catches and eroded the benefits derived from port servicing of vessels), there have been sustained efforts to improve the surveillance of foreign fishing vessels. Yet a number of problems



Graphic: Link, Solomon Islands Development Trust, Aug/Sept 1987



Women workers on the PAFCO production line

remain. In spite of owning this rich resource, the region still retains a paltry 4-6% of the value of reported tuna catches. Bait fisheries in countries like Fiji provide returns to local communities of just F\$10 (C\$8.15) per boat per night. At the end of the day, an overwhelming portion of the material benefits from the tuna industry are still enjoyed by foreign interests.

As globalisation swells to tidal wave proportions, the trickle of benefits to domestic economies of the Pacific could become even smaller, particularly if a more open door policy for foreign investors is encouraged, a more 'enabling' environment for the private sector is cultivated, and Pacific governments divest their fishing investments in favour of joint ventures or outright privatisation. If such trends continue, the risks of economic losses from age-old practices like transfer pricing will grow.

On the environmental side, there is no longer a complacency about infinitely renewable tuna stocks and the price that will be paid if the appetite for quick returns and maximum dollars reaches gluttonous proportions — witness the dramatic and devastating collapse of Canada's East Coast cod fishery. One feature of PAFCO and its Solomon Islands counterpart, Solomon Taiyo, suggests a welcome responsiveness to the environmentalist lobby. The pole and line fishery is common to both. While producing superior quality fish, this 'country cousin' of pelagic fisheries runs a poor race against its purse seiner rival which can catch close to 10 times more fish. But it is relatively fish-friendly because its by-catch (including dolphins) is minimal. This has proved a convenient market spinner for Fiji, helping to secure a niche in North America amongst environmentally conscious consumers.

But pole and line technology is problematic in another way, its need for bait fish. The fishery brings the traditional subsistence economy, with its priority for food security, and market driven development into a head-on collision. Indigenous resource owners have long complained about the damaging effects of bait fishing on their traditional fishing grounds. While Fiji's Fisheries Department insists

that there is no proven connection between dwindling food stocks and the night-time 'invasion' of the pole and line boats, local villagers remain sceptical. According to one village chief on Ovalau: "It is at night that the *daniva* [sardines, a seasonal staple] go back to the deeper water to sleep. But when they are sleeping, the nets come and catch them. Now when morning comes for them to come in near the shore and when the women search for food, there is none."

At one level, the depletion of inshore stocks threatens to place a heavier burden on Ovalau's coastal communities, especially women, to feed their families, creating a greater dependence on expensive and less nutritious imported food, including canned fish from Thailand! At another level, encroachment upon traditional fishing grounds dishonours the ancestral gods. For Pacific Islanders, their spiritual affinity with the sea makes resource plunder and environmental spoilation a deeply felt offence against custom.

Women's fisheries and the subsistence livelihoods of Pacific communities are being dealt another blow by current development trends, especially the obsession with growth and export driven industries. The establishment of more canneries within the region offers to enhance the value-added benefits of the tuna industry, to boost domestic earnings and to create jobs. It is a seductive package for a growing number of Pacific states like Papua New Guinea, especially when there is the added incentive of concessional entry into foreign markets — at least until this source of protectionism is phased out along with the rest. All three of the region's operational tuna canneries currently enjoy duty free entry — onto the American market for Pago Pago and into the European Union for Fiji and the Solomon Islands. It is one of only a few areas where they enjoy any competitive advantage over Asian tuna processors. In spite of its financial problems, PAFCO has earned Fiji over F\$200 (C\$163) million in foreign exchange since 1987.

But the cannery predilection is disturbing given what is already known (or not known since secrecy is typical) about the conditions of production line work in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and American Samoa. As elsewhere in the world, women are the backbone of production work, selected for their dexterity, endurance and docility. Indulgent labour reserves (in the case of Pago Pago, migrants from Western Samoa and Tonga) and patriarchal cultures help to create the right mix for cheap and dependent workers. For smaller canneries like PAFCO, the concern to contain labour costs is exacerbated by the need to produce a product that will not be laughed out of the market by much lower cost producers like Thailand. The net result is that conditions are poor, scant regard is paid to workplace health and safety standards, and unionism has an uncomfortable ride. The hourly wage for production line workers is F\$1.65 (C\$1.35) for women, 12 cents short of the minimum rate for men. Take home pay after

deductions have been made can bring down gross weekly earnings of around F\$65-\$70 to as little as F\$5-10.

Low disposable incomes have forced PAFCO women to take on hefty bank loans to meet basic needs like food, transport and children's school fees. A system of unsecured personal loans provides a flourishing trade for the Australian owned Westpac bank, which enjoys a monopoly in the town and is PAFCO's paymaster. For the women, a generous credit line (loans of around F\$3,000 are standard) has been a saviour on many occasions. But the immediate benefit is overshadowed by the punishing repayment schedules (involving deductions at source by Westpac), high interest rates (averaging 16%) and the psychological burden of feeling trapped in perpetual debt.

The excessive heat, long hours of standing and smell of rotten fish are also common complaints of PAFCO workers. Marica is a mother of two and was the only earner in her household until an arthritic condition forced her to rest at home. She sees the poor facilities as directly responsible for her health problems: "I work at the section that packs fish into tins... The conditions have brought us a lot of sickness that we have not seen before like asthma, pain in our joints and the bottoms of our feet feel numb. At one time we had a meeting and begged management to give us some seats while we work... The Japanese used to keep the seaside of our section open using only wire fencing. This way the area was ventilated. But when the takeover happened, the whole area was blocked and that's when we started to get sick."

Taina agrees: "Most of the sickness is because of the heat inside. On one side the heat is coming from the butcher section, where they cook the fish, and on the other side the heat is coming from the retorts where they cook the canned fish. When they open up the retorts, we women really feel it and it's worse for the pregnant ones. There's another big problem in PAFCO, the fish meal plant. In the Japanese time, the plant was in Draiba village, but now they've got it right inside the factory. When the fish is left over for say a day or two, you get that bad smell and the whole town gets the smell. But that's just the tip of it. We're getting the really bad smell. It's very concentrated inside."

Like the layoffs, these substandard conditions offer one of the many twists of irony in post-coup Fiji. They expose the yawning gulf between the posturing of the state and the reality of people's lives, underscoring the myth of Indigenous 'protectionism' that has been used so effectively to legitimise the military overthrow of a pro-labour government in 1987. The coups have helped to consolidate the Indigenous character of PAFCO — its board, management and ownership — as well as to bring the spirit of Christianity into worker/management relations. The favours stop, however, when it comes to the production line. Indeed, for the hundreds of Indigenous Fijian women who ultimately deliver all those cans for export, the rhetoric of Indigenous rights seems pretty hollow.

The last few years have witnessed a souring of relations between workers and management at PAFCO, punctuated by a bitter strike in 1993 that forced an unpopular manager to take unscheduled leave and saw 12 strikers prosecuted. The cultural sensitivity of PAFCO management has given way to the imperatives of the market. In the past, efforts were made to accommodate the family and community responsibilities of working mothers. Today, women are no longer given leave to care for a sick child and risk dismissal if they do not show for work. Discipline is more stringent with talking bans imposed on the line, toilet visits discouraged and wage deductions imposed for late arrivals in the morning (one minute late incurs a penalty of a half-hour pay cut, 15 minutes a one hour cut, and anyone clocking in after 8.00 AM is sent home).

According to the architect of the new system, Acting Permanent Secretary for Fisheries, Peniasi Kunatuba: "Overseas canneries are stricter than ours about clocking in and out. But with our communal system, this would be a bit too drastic. We just need a few rules to give workers a sense of belonging, that will instill in them a sense of responsibility. They need to realise that the company's here for them and they are here for the company. If attitudes improve, efficiency and profits will improve, and we'll cope with the increasing competition."

The 'sense of belonging' is heightened by a fundamentalist fervour that permeates the shop floor. New 'Christian' ethics demonstrate the 'family way' of doing business. They have introduced prayer meetings, charismatic religious broadcasts during lunch hour and a ban on adultery under threat of dismissal. The legal implications of such an invasion of sexual privacy appear to hold little water. According to Kunatuba: "I felt it [adultery] was totally against the



"For the hundreds of Indigenous Fijian women who ultimately deliver all those cans for export, the rhetoric of Indigenous rights seems pretty hollow."

original concept that government set up [for] PAFCO — to solidify the family base, to solidify the communal structure.”

As the scramble for survival has become more desperate, PAFCO experimented with other strategies to improve the sense of ‘belonging’ amongst workers. Workers are classified according to the average number of kilos of fish they clean a day, with the best (A grade) workers getting through 400-700 kilos. Esiteri, an old hand, describes how the new productivity system works: “Now they say we have to get at least 300 kilos of fish cleaned at the end of each day. When they add everything up at the end of the week, if you haven’t got the 300 kg a day, you are laid off.” Many of the layoff victims were workers who failed to process the minimum 300 kilos.

The labour system appears to be taking a draconian turn. Contrary to convention, the productivity targets are applied without corresponding wage bonuses — the stick without the carrot so to speak — and they have eliminated the need for overtime on the line. This deprives countless women of a crucial means of boosting their weekly pay packets. Pressures to raise output are reaching intolerable levels and may well affect the health of workers in the long term. They also result in wastage and poorly cleaned fish. Esiteri adds: “What’s worse is that now if the conveyor belt doesn’t bring the fish quickly, the women run to skin their own fish. They hardly go to the toilet because they’re worried about getting their target. Some don’t stop for their tea break and they cut their lunch short so they can go back to the line.”

For senior government fisheries officers and some observers in the private sector, the new regime is a welcome step towards greater efficiency and competitiveness. Graham Southwick, a high flyer in Fiji’s export fisheries, puts it bluntly: “PAFCO lost its focus a long time ago.... You can’t be both a profitable operation and a social welfare set up... When the cupboard is bare, the cupboard is bare. You can’t keep spending money you don’t have... You’ve got to get back to basic rules, make profits.”

But the new ‘moral and market’ order throws up yet another irony in a society that places a cultural premium on non-acquisitive values like redistribution, sharing and reciprocity. Echoing the sentiments of most long service workers, Taina notes the nostalgia that is felt about the good old Japanese days when parties were held to celebrate the completion of a big job, talking and joking were allowed on the line, and bosses put in regular stints working alongside the women. “If the Japanese saw there was a profit, they would share it out, not in money but as entertainment. But not this management. They don’t give entertainment. They just entertain themselves.”

The recent wave of layoffs and the possibility of further contractions shoot right to the heart of family and village well-being because of the dependence on cannery jobs and the heavy debt loads carried by workers. But as Pacific Island states move into the fast lane of global-fashioned ‘development’, there will probably be many more

casualties like Vere. Whatever the current shifts in thinking and policy by the World Bank, this trend-setting institution has done a fine hatchet job on the long-held view that the Pacific Island state has a legitimate role to play in guiding economic activity and a moral responsibility to deliver equitable development. To talk nowadays of an economic role that extends beyond creating an enabling climate for investors, the private sector and the market, risks outright ridicule. But there is an interesting paradox. Deregulation of the labour market — part of the new market religion — involves a level of state intervention and regulation (of organised labour) reminiscent of colonial days. PAFCO is no exception.

Not surprisingly, union solidarity hangs by a fine thread. Its women members are bewildered at the strong arm tactics of an employer who is supposedly ‘one of them’ and who urges them to have a greater sense of belonging to their PAFCO ‘family’. Union officials are similarly disoriented by the merciless tide of worker dismissals and the untiring efforts of management to undermine the collective bargaining process.

A heavy silence follows Vere’s story and, in true Pacific style, the men like the women allow their eyes to fill with tears. But while cultural mores are indulgent of such emotional openness, they are less permissive when it comes to words and actions, certainly anything that is confrontational or openly critical of authority. Add to this reserve the whip of labour deregulation with all the controls it places over workers in the name of the ‘free’ market, and it is small wonder that the workers shed tears.

The nervous but impassioned voice of a young man breaks the silence and challenges the assembled sympathisers: “I am employed by the company in the steamer section. I am only 19 years but I can see the problems that are in this company. After two years of working for PAFCO it hurts me deeply when I watch the women working, standing from early morning to 5 o’clock in the afternoon peeling and cleaning fish. There is all that heat and the stale air, and they have to stand very close together. And their wages are very bad. I watch them everyday, especially the older women, and I wonder why they’re still working. It shows how hard it is to make a living on Ovalau. But to be treated in this way, I really can’t agree with the company. That is why I supported the women and walked off with them when they were sent out.”

It is an inspiring testimony to how gender, generational and other cultural barriers can be transcended. In this tightly-knit island community, the seeds of a collective struggle may yet come to flower.

Atu Emberson-Bain is a Fijian freelance researcher, writer and filmmaker. An earlier version of this article appeared in the June 1997 edition of the New Internationalist.



LICDAT — Critical Literacy in Action

Arlene Wells interviewed Ngege Sasa and Catherine Ngege following their participation in SPPF's Pacific Networking Conference and the People's Summit on APEC. Ngege and Catherine founded the Lou Island Community Development and Awareness Team (LICDAT), in Papua New Guinea.

ARLENE: Can you describe your community and how the idea for LICDAT came about?

NGENGE: Rei Village is the biggest on Lou Island (Manus Province, PNG), with 200-300 people. We garden and fish for food and sell peanuts to get money for kerosene, soap, and school fees. When I took a critical literacy course in Port Moresby in 1991, I started questioning what education and development were. The Europeans called us undeveloped and primitive. I ...found out I'm not primitive, uneducated, or poor. I'm a rich guy. I have my land, house and food. I decided I was wasting my time working for someone else in town. I should go back home and be my own boss. I felt good about myself for the first time since I was a kid. I knew all my brothers and sisters back at home were feeling the same as I had, so I wanted to help them understand what I'd learned.

CATHERINE: In the village school, children are made to believe that life in town is where to find money and work; they're not reinforced that village life is good. But only the top 2% get to grade 11. Most people who don't get through the school system can't get work in town. They return to the village unhappy, feeling like failures. Ngege had a new point of view; he wanted to help other young people to believe in themselves.

ARLENE: What are the issues that face your community?

NGENGE: The main issue is self-esteem. The Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church and the government have broken us into four groups: Good Samaritans — older men; Welfare — married women; Youth — young adults under 30; and Pathfinders — the small ones. In traditional times, everyone worked as one. Now the groups don't cooperate. The youth say the old people don't have brains because they didn't go to school. People fight about what group they belong to. Some 30 to 45 year olds are unmarried or their marriages broke up; they don't have a group and want to join the youth. But they don't fit.

ARLENE: How did you get LICDAT started? What has the group accomplished?

CATHERINE: In September 1996 we held a meeting open to anyone that wanted to come. We had a good turnout. We asked, "Is it a good idea to run a course like Ngege took? How should we proceed?" They said, "Yes, we want to do it. Let's have weekly meetings." We used a critical literacy manual we'd helped develop, which presented 20 environmental, social justice and education issues. The sessions were very interactive. We addressed issues like traditional custom, which the SDA church has forbidden people to practice. Some people got nervous and dropped out, but a group of nine committed people finished the course and formed the LICDAT Secretariat. The initial response of the community was mixed. Some said, "Great, I want to learn something new." Others said, "Hey what's this? This is another church." We got labelled as a cult.

NGENGE: But now people are starting to respect us because they see change. We don't have a dump, so people were just throwing waste into the forest and the sea. We talked to the Shell manager, who donated five drums for recycling bins. A fellow takes cans to town for recycling, and we burn the paper garbage. Most of those involved in LICDAT are youth, but some are older. One man is 38 and has 6 kids. The youngest is 23. Some of the boys in our group were real trouble-makers in the community. They stole, fought, beat their wives, and spoiled old people's things.

CATHERINE: It's not that they're all saints now. It's a process, but they're all trying. When we started the waste management program, people said, "That's yucky work and these people are doing it; good on them."

ARLENE: Catherine, what were your challenges as a Canadian woman married to a Papua New Guinean man in helping establish LICDAT?

CATHERINE: My biggest challenge was learning not to talk too much. As an outsider, I really can't say this is wrong and that's wrong. They'll say, "Who are you and get the hell out of our community." I've learned a lot about shutting up and letting the people identify problems. I don't believe in imposing outside values. For example, there the woman's place is in the kitchen. The men fish and the women cook the fish and they're proud of that. If I held onto my upbringing, I would have said that's wrong, but I have a new appreciation for a woman that does her work well. In the case of violence, men who are stronger are hurting women.

That causes problems, unhappiness and families breaking up. But women cooking does not cause problems.

ARLENE: How involved are women in LICDAT?

NGENGE: When we started our course, some young women attended, but dropped out because husbands and boyfriends didn't want them to come.

CATHERINE: Poilep is the only other woman in the secretariat. She stuck with it, though she had a lot of people telling her not to. Involving women is a slow process.

ARLENE: What were the challenges you had to face coming back, Ngenge?

NGENGE: I used to be a strong church man like my father. Now I attend church-run community activities, but I don't go to church. That's the biggest problem. My father, brothers and sisters say I'm a backslider. LICDAT is trying to protect the culture. I want to run programs with the church. If the church can relax some of their rules around custom, we can work together to strengthen the community.

CATHERINE: The other secretariat members say what LICDAT does is in line with Jesus' teaching. They try to build bridges with the church elders.

ARLENE: How has globalisation affected your community? What will you take back from the conference and Peoples Summit?

CATHERINE: We made some contacts we'll work with to oppose a planned large scale gold mine in Manus that would pollute the ocean. The World Bank wants to do a land mobilization program for mining and logging in PNG, but the land is still controlled by the people and that's a special thing. LICDAT says land is life; we can't give it up. If people were aware, they wouldn't register their land. Rei Village has no poverty, hunger or homelessness, whereas North America has millions of homeless and poor.

NGENGE: If people on my island register their land, they can get a loan from the bank. We are telling our community that we shouldn't go the way of the developed world. At the People's Summit, I met people that had no land, jobs or money. We are lucky to have our land and culture. That's what I'll take back.

ARLENE: What are your goals for LICDAT?

CATHERINE: We're operating on a volunteer basis. To really work strongly we need money, especially for

petrol to run our boats from village to village. One immediate goal is to buy a lawn mower for our village maintenance project. We want to run three awareness and training workshops in Manus Province on land mobilisation and mining. We want the secretariat to take a cultural awareness trip to a traditional yam festival. To do all that, we need an annual budget of \$25,000. As a long term goal, I hope we can establish a local language school. People need to learn in their own language. Language, land and culture go together.

SPPF is accepting donations in support of LICDAT and can provide tax receipts for donations. Send cheques made out to South Pacific Peoples Foundation and note that it is a LICDAT donation.



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globalisation. We need to develop a politics of action that transcends the distinguishing features of our nations, as transnational corporations employ these features to divide and conquer our communities. The objectives of such a politics should be those that reaffirm, as well as reestablish, our right to survival against these colonial-like efforts to consolidate massive economic and political power.

In Bob Aldridge's and Ched Myers's book, *Resisting the Serpent: Palau's Struggle for Self-Determination*, they note that: "The 'fruits of progress', from the perspective of the underside of history, has been this: countless once-flourishing native cultures have been either eradicated, 'assimilated', or decimated and pushed onto reserves. In the totalist systems of modernity there seems to be no place — other than museums — for Indigenous minorities who refuse to cooperate with the grand western project of progress. If there is a kind of 'primal sin' of modern capitalist development, then it is the violence, deception and theft perpetrated during the 'age of discovery'. It is the legacy that attests to the truth of Walter Benjamin's dictum: 'There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism.'"

The script is suspiciously still the same, to reiterate once more the intensification of a system that unduly benefits a multitude of metropole locations, at the expense of smaller nations.

For us, the women of Belau took the lead, sensing the erosion of their matrilineal leadership roles in society. They organised, educated themselves about the stakes inherent in the proposed militarisation pact with the US, and took to the streets to demand principled negotiations with the US government. The neocolonial establishment, dominated by men, proved useless in standing firm on behalf of principles that would assure our survival as a nuclear free island. The women sent spokespersons to the US Congress and the United Nations. Ultimately, while we were compelled to accept what amounted to a non-choice, we look back at the enormity of the struggle and marvel at how we did it. We held to the promise of a nuclear free island to the very end, even until the collapse of the Soviet Union whose existence had shaped the very contradictions being played out politically in Belau.

The kind of struggle and constant vigilance demanded as a price to thwart the designs of unfettered global capital may be similar to what Belau had to experience before achieving closure, a precarious peace that may just as

soon disintegrate.

In 1992 in Rio, the world gathered to consider the impact such unrestrained global commerce was inflicting on humanity and its planetary land base. Two years after the 'Earth Summit', the small island nations of the world met in Barbados to reaffirm that what we all proclaimed in Rio would continue to inspire our programmes of ecological restitution and sustainable development that catered to the basic NEEDS, not wants, of human beings. But "these commitments," as the NGOs proclaimed, "were not only about the basic need and right to eat, they were about the loftier human endeavour — justice, equity, acknowledgment, redress and partnership." Lofty indeed! What has taken place in just five years that we are gathered again to seek that perhaps just a semblance of this "lofty human

endeavour" be given due respect?

There is no doubt even the staunch proponents of globalisation are increasingly questioning the way the myriad processes of globalisation are leaving countless communities and workplaces in economic ruin. It is extremely important that we work to expose the weak links in the chain of arguments that globalisation proponents use to legitimize

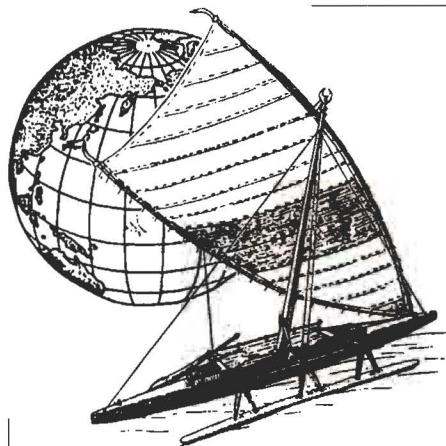
transnational control of local economic systems.

As Candido Grzybowski of the Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis writes: "There is no worse slavery than to be deprived of our ability to think, create and dare in freedom. There is no greater domination than an imposed way of thinking that cannot be challenged. Nothing is more tragic than to be limited by visions, desires and justifications presented to us as inevitable. Globalisation is more than a process in human history; it seems to be and to act as a prison for hearts and minds, thoughts and movements... We must rebel against this way of thinking."

There are endless reasons to be optimistic about the nature of our task. While it may seem that we no longer possess the power to act on our own behalf, we still do and we must respond, not merely react. There are endless opportunities for collaboration, even as we are made aware of the limitations — in whatever form — that are placed on our ability to collaborate and conspire to bring about a world liberated from forces that disempower peoples and communities in the process of enriching a select few.

Richard Salvador is a PhD candidate in political science at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.





SPPF in action

Traditional Medicine Project Receives Funding

SPPF has confirmed funding for a three year organisational and programme development project supporting WAINIMATE, a women's traditional medicine organisation in Fiji. The project will support the further development of WAINIMATE and its work in Fiji, as well as some outreach activities to other parts of the Pacific. WAINIMATE has already been assisting the development of traditional medicine organisations in several other Pacific Island countries and this support role will continue over the next three years.

While a fairly new NGO, WAINIMATE is no stranger to SPPF. It is one of the founding members of Ecowoman, another Fiji based women's project being supported by SPPF. SPPF sees WAINIMATE and its work as an approach that promotes primary health care, women's empowerment and environmental sustainability. We are very pleased to have the opportunity to increase our support to WAINIMATE. The Anglican Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency are providing financial support to the project.

The project's primary goal is to enable women linked with WAINIMATE to contribute more effectively to the primary health care needs of themselves, their families and

their communities through increasing their ability to preserve and use traditional medicines. Related goals include the conserving of medicinal plants and the forests/environments where they exist and increasing women's leadership roles in addressing local health and environmental issues. The project will fund the costs of a coordinator and part time programmer at WAINIMATE, a regular newsletter, various publications about traditional cures, a photo display, a range of village and national workshops, and a other public education and advocacy activities. The project will also support two special issues of *Tok Blong Pasifik* on traditional knowledge and traditional medicine. The project will include at least one visit to Canada by WAINIMATE representatives.

For further information about WAINIMATE or to subscribe to their newsletter, contact:

WAINIMATE

Private Mail Bag

Suva, Fiji

Fax: 679-301594

Email: S97008016@student.usp.ac.fj

[SPPF also has limited amounts of information available in our office.]

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Pacific Peoples' Declaration on APEC

Eighty delegates from the Pacific Islands, Asia and the Americas gathered together at the 14th annual Pacific Networking Conference, which took place at the LAU, WELNEW Tribal School in Saanich, British Columbia, Canada, November 14-16, 1997. Twelve nation states, sixteen First Nations and over fifty organisations were represented, including Indigenous Peoples, taro-roots activists, human rights activists, environmentalists, members of local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), educators, professionals, academics and others.

The conference participants wish to express their warm appreciation for the welcome and hospitality provided to them by the Tsartlip First Nation during the course of the conference.

We, the participants of the 14th annual Pacific Networking Conference, reject the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) process for regional trade liberalisation and other similar mechanisms for economic globalisation. These processes put corporate profits as the overriding priority, while marginalizing or even neglecting people's needs and the environment.

We note with concern that the development debates focused around APEC and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) have been dominated by a narrow range of voices, primarily those from corporate bodies and governments, while the voices of the people that need to be heard are restricted to the periphery. We call for a widening of the debate on globalisation to involve the people who are already being disadvantaged by the undemocratic processes being pursued in establishing these trade and investment agreements and treaties.

We reaffirm the work of the United Nations as they develop international agreements that protect the rights of peoples and the environment, such as the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and the UN Convention on Biodiversity. We oppose the tendency of governments to adopt trade and investment agreements that seriously undermine these important social and environmental commitments.

We support the following principles:

- to promote and fully guarantee respect for the rights of peoples, especially the rights of Indigenous Peoples;*
- to promote and fully guarantee the rights of women, youth, and children;*
- to ensure the preservation, protection and sustainable use of our environment; and*
- to support global structures that promote sustainable and equitable human development as embedded in our cultural values.*

APEC is not viable for Pacific Peoples. APEC is a process which increases corporate control of people's lives, resulting in massive dislocation of peoples, especially women and children. The health of our communities, land, water, and other resources is seriously compromised. As an example, the Pacific Teal will sail from France to Japan via the Tasman Sea, and Solomon Islands and Federated States of Micronesia waters in late 1997 or early 1998. Pacific Teal will carry plutonium and high level radioactive waste which could severely threaten our environment.

We assert our support for the struggles for self-determination by the peoples of East Timor, West Papua, Kanaky, French-occupied Polynesia, Rapa Nui, Aotearoa, the Aboriginal Peoples of Australia and the Torres Strait Islands, and Hawai'i.

We want to promote alternative trading networks based on our own traditional values and principles. As an example, the production of eco-timber for an environmentally conscious and expanding market in Europe is providing a solid alternative to thousands of resource- and land-owning communities throughout the Pacific. In one case, whereas a 20 foot log would have fetched forty dollars from a Malaysian logging company, it is now fetching four hundred dollars when marketed as eco-timber. The profits available to the resource- and land-owning communities have therefore increased by 900 percent.

Pacific Islanders, many of whom still own their lands and resources, are in a position to promote alternative systems of trade. Pacific peoples are choosing models of sustainable development that can remind communities in other parts of the world that there are viable alternatives to APEC.

[This statement was adopted at the end of SPPF's 1997 Pacific Networking Conference and presented to the 1997 People's Summit on APEC.]