



News and Views  
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# MAKING A *DIFFERENCE:* WOMEN & GLOBALIZATION



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Tok  
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Pasifik



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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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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

## THE NUCLEAR LEGACY

by Makere Harawira

Photo by: Alex Hauke



There are many extremes which characterise globalisation in the 21st century. One is the dichotomy between rich and poor and the increasingly vast numbers that make up the latter. Another is the extreme rapid-

ity by which change is occurring at every level of society. A great deal has changed since the articles comprising the bulk of the 1999 edition were written, a feature which is brought up to date by the four centre pages. One of the many changes within the Pacific has been the overthrow of the Chaudry government in Fiji that has culminated in the appointment of an interim military government. This situation makes Dr 'Atu Emberson-Bain's address in the Senate of Fiji all the more poignant. Presented on the occasion of the debate on the president's Address to Parliament in July 1999, her speech challenges notions of market-driven development and economic liberalism as bringing benefits to all. Abbreviated in this edition of *Tok Blong Pasifik*, her speech reflects hopes for a revised Fiji with vastly improved provision for health and education, and for the ultimate transformation of what she describes as the "sad and shameful fact of ethnic divisiveness", into a "rainbow nation" which is "at peace with itself and the world". It could be argued that these events have been underscored less by ethnic divisiveness than by the greed of global capitalism through which men were able to take advantage of already present divisions and maximise them to their own selfish advantage. Addressing the Commonwealth Ministers'

Action Group in New York on September 15th this year, Prime Minister Chaudry drew upon the principles of justice and democracy contained in the Commonwealth's Haare declaration. These principles might be seen as contrasting strongly to the economic underpinnings of the struggle regarding concessions and leases, a struggle that culminated in bloodshed and terror for thousands of innocent people in Fiji.

Until recently the link between globalisation and violence has been infrequently acknowledged by peace movements yet this association has a long history. Violence was a primary vehicle by which the first and second waves of colonisation occurred. Today militarism, nuclearism as well as police brutality are important coercive strategies for the assertion of the third wave of colonisation, manifested most overtly as political and economic globalisation. The decolonisation of the Third World has been replaced by recolonisation through structural adjustment and World Bank-initiated reform programmes. These programmes not only succeeded in reversing Third World-initiated strategies for economic autonomy, they have also resulted in social, economic and ecological devastation. In the Pacific where decolonisation has yet barely begun, in addition to structural adjustment programmes these latest forms of colonisation involve the plundering and pollution of already depleted resources, the piracy of indigenous biodiversity and human genes as Jean Christie emphasises, the ongoing dislocation of indigenous peoples through the activities of transnational mining interests, and the continuing genocide of indigenous peoples, women and children. The struggle between human rights and global capitalism has been notably demonstrated in the case of East Timor. The much-touted Australian-led intervention in East Timor is all the more ironical given the 25 year period of economically-based amnesia preceding it, a period which saw Australia and Canada deliberately ignore the genocide of thousands of East Timorese in favour of an agreement to exploit what were then thought to be the vast oil resources of the Timor Gap. The Dani people of West Papua also



experience ongoing blatant forms of genocide and social control, some of which Leslie Butt outlines in this edition. Articles by Leslie Vaine, Claire Slatter and Vaine Wichman highlight the fact that throughout the Pacific, structural adjustment has become a synonym for the exploitation and devastation of indigenous resources and lifestyles, for the disruption of traditional values and world views, and for development programmes which bring economic benefit to those in positions of power and poverty for the majority.

Recent reports by the United Nations as well as the World Bank note the devastating impact of globalisation on the majority of the world's peoples. The groundbreaking resolution passed on August 17th by the UN Sub-Commission for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights calls into question the impact of the WTO and focuses on the intrinsic danger to human rights inherent in the TRIPPS Agreement of the WTO. To date the official response of bodies such as the IMF, World Bank, the World Economic Forum and even the UNDP, has been to recommend policy adjustments by which all might share 'more equitably' in the benefits of globalisation. Globalisation itself, according to the voices of its proponents, is inevitable. But increasingly, other voices conveying different stories, other discourses, are being heard. These voices are becoming louder, more insistent, more determined by the day.

In the post-Seattle climate of increasing outrage at economic and trade policies which deny millions of farmers, indigenous peoples and traditional communities worldwide the right to their livelihoods and which plunder and commodify the basic elements of life itself, protest is no longer confined to those whom the media and politicians sideline as 'radicals', 'activists' and even 'terrorists'. The centre article by Vandana Shiva accentuates the fact that today protest in multiple forms has become a defining feature of what might be called 'globalisation from below'. Facilitated by the networking of ordinary, everyday peoples, of labourers and academics, of grandmothers and youth, a tidal wave of global opposition is successfully challenging the notion that globalisation is inevitable. Today it has become apparent that there is nothing inevitable about it. One consequence is that in many ways the battle lines have become more sharply defined. This is a battle in which all forms of human life are pitched against the rights of global capitalism to profit from every aspect of life. It is a battle for change in which, all over the world and certainly throughout the Pacific, women are in the fore-

front. Women everywhere are refusing to submit their lives and livelihoods and those of their families to the exigencies of a market-driven process, which brings in its wake social, economic and environmental destruction. As Josefa Francisco states, we are "rising above the whitewater and spreading our wings".

One of the tragedies of life is that those who are the most disadvantaged are also the most silenced and disempowered. And for thousands of years women have been in this position. Today, for many women, this is changing. In a million different ways millions upon million of women are rising and calling - Enough! From defending the integrity and availability of seeds to refusing to allow the privatisation and pollution of water, from the rice fields and plantations to the boardrooms and lecture theatres, Pacific women are working collectively to make a difference, to reconstruct alternative ways of doing and of being, to ensure that there IS sustainable life on this planet we call home. Yet for many thousands of women, any form of freedom to act is still denied them. The articles in this edition of *Tok Blong Pasifik* remind us of the multiple levels of women's diversity and experience. In the centre pages, the pain in Grace Molisa's poem is the pain of women everywhere who are still denied voice, freedom, dignity, and often life itself. The declaration of the Women's Global Strategy Meeting is a call to action and a reminder that those of us in positions of comparative privilege have a double responsibility to actively engage in opposing forms of globalisation that inhibit human and environmental rights and to be proactive in the development of new strategies for the economic, social, political and spiritual enhancement of all.

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Makere Harawira





# External Agendas, Internal Impacts and Growing Dissent: *Economic Restructuring in the Pacific*

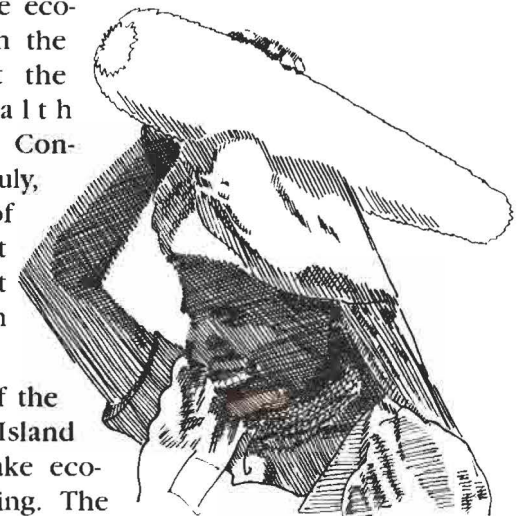
by Claire Slatter

While the Pacific might seem cocooned in a world of its own, the region has been the target of the same kind of economic restructuring programmes that since the early 1980s, have become commonplace across the globe thanks to the power of the IMF and World Bank to impose structural adjustment as the conditionality for loans and economic assistance. As the neo-liberal economic model gained ascendancy and dominance following the collapse of command economies in the socialist bloc, Pacific governments were persuaded – in some cases heavily pressured – to undertake ‘economic reform’ in conformity with the new orthodoxy, despite growing evidence of its catastrophic impacts especially in poorer nations in the South. The region’s traditional donors have played a critical role in instigating national economic reform programmes. The use of commissioned academic research and bilateral aid to inspire and direct economic and social policy in Pacific Island states is unsurprising, but highly questionable. It smacks of arrogance and reflects a new form of colonialism based on the power of market ideology and finance. It is also self-interested and irresponsible.

Fiji’s economic restructuring programme, supported by the governments of Australia and New Zealand, was in full throttle until May this year. Then it was brought to a rude halt and pushed firmly into reverse gear by the Fiji Labour Party-led ‘Peoples’ Coalition Government’. They swept to power in the country’s first national elections under the new 1997 Constitution on a wave of popular opposition to the ‘economic reforms’. Recently the Peoples’ Coalition Government under the leadership of Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry (FLP leader and formerly leader of two of the country’s strongest unions, the Fiji Public Service Association and the National Farmers Union), has begun to undo reforms that were in progress, including restructuring and privatising the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (CAAF), lifting VAT on basic food items and medical supplies, reducing interest on Housing Authority loans, and reversing public sector reforms intended to devolve power from the Public Service Commission to Permanent Secretaries.

The radical turnabout in the implementation of economic liberalisation policies in Fiji will likely reverberate throughout the region and could affect donor-driven reform efforts in other Pacific Island states. Not only has it been demonstrated that unpopular economic policies which hurt ordinary workers can cause the electoral defeat of a government, it is now also coming to light that among the principal beneficiaries of Fiji’s controversial economic reforms were a privileged few individuals. Those who profited include highly paid consultants to the SVT government, and especially to the Ministry of Finance; enterprising ex-workers in affected industries who formed companies to tender for privatised service contracts; and a number of foreign companies awarded lucrative contracts by the SVT government to either implement public sector reform measures or undertake responsibilities formerly performed by a government department. The exposure of these questionable aspects of Fiji’s economic reform programme, and the oppositional stance which the new government in Fiji is sure to take within the South Pacific Forum towards the donor-driven agenda of reforming island state economies could undermine the regional commitment to economic restructuring which the governments of Australia and New Zealand worked hard to secure. Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry’s critical remarks about donor countries using aid to dictate inappropriate economic policies in the region, made at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Fiji in July, gives a foretaste of the position that Fiji may take at the next South Pacific Forum.

Fiji was one of the first Pacific Island states to undertake economic restructuring. The





economic crisis provoked by two military coups in 1987 predisposed Fiji's post-coup leadership towards adopting the economic policy prescriptions offered by international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. An undemocratic political environment facilitated the introduction of early restructuring measures such as the tax-free factory policy, VAT and other tax reforms and the changes to labour laws imposed by decree. Economic rationalist arguments about the need to 'grow the economy', the role of the private sector as the 'engine of growth', the imperatives of raising productivity, finding niche markets and becoming competitive in the international market, the requirements for greater efficiency and, later, the fundamentals of financial accountability and good governance, were variously used to justify a spate of other reforms put in place over the last six years. The SVT government's overwhelming parliamentary majority and the Opposition National Federation Party's preoccupation with negotiating a constitutional settlement (finally achieved in July 1997) ensured a relatively smooth passage for the reforms. Consistent opposition to the reforms, voiced by trade unions, the Fiji Labour Party, critical church leaders and academics and a few NGOs, who highlighted both the wider global agenda of which economic restructuring policies were a part and the negative social impacts of restructuring policies, was largely ignored.

The scope and pace of Fiji's reform programme broadened and accelerated in recent years to include corporatisation of postal, telegraphic, shipping, aviation and housing services, and the restructuring (in preparation for corporatisation or privatisation) of national electricity and water supply services. In the last year, the liberalisation programme was stepped up with the preparation of policy frameworks and legislative support for further financial sector reforms, announced in the 1999 budget.

These included further relaxation of exchange controls; opening up the banking sector to further competition by enabling other financial institutions to accept deposits from the public and allowing licensed foreign exchange dealers to transact negotiable instruments such as bills of exchange and letters of credit; opening up the pension funds 'market' to allow other competitors in to what is seen as a 'huge capital base'; bringing in an international rating agency to provide the government with sovereign debt rating; setting up a task-force to break bureaucratic bottlenecks facing investors; accelerating its privatisation programme by opening the hardwoods and electricity sectors to private investment; and establishing a centralised Revenue and Customs Authority to implement revenue policies and maximise resource collection.

Additionally, a comprehensive public sector reform programme, modeled on public sector restructuring in New Zealand and Australia, sought to clarify the core business of individual ministries and departments. They were required to develop 'corporate plans', annual work plans and budgets; introduce performance budgeting, accrual accounting and annual reporting systems to ensure departments live within their budgets and meet annually projected outputs; and devolve responsibility for these areas and for hiring, firing and promoting staff to permanent secretaries, now employed on contracts and functioning as the chief executive officers of government entities.

The economic restructuring programme in Fiji is one of several currently underway in the Pacific, inspired by two World Bank reports, 'Towards Higher Growth in Pacific Economies: Lessons from the 1980s' (1991), and 'Pacific Island Economies: Towards Efficient and Sustainable Growth' (1993).<sup>1</sup> These became authoritative texts for donors on the problems of Pacific Island economies and the required policy solutions. In most instances, it took national crises of one sort or another (eg the impact of the Asian economic crisis and the financial problems of Malaysian logging companies on national income in the Solomon Islands) to provide donors with the opportunity they needed to make direct interventions, deliver hard-nosed advice, and secure a government's commitment to undertake reform. But the securing of region-wide commitment to an economic reform agenda through the South Pacific Forum (which directed the Forum Secretariat in 1994 to provide policy advice in these matters to member governments) and the institution of regional Finance and Economic Ministers meetings since 1995, have been key means of advancing region-wide economic 'reform'. By instituting reporting mechanisms to monitor progress and oblige compliance with agreed upon commitments and time-frames, the Finance and Economic Ministers' meetings have given greater momentum to the reform agenda and helped speed up the pace of reform.

Australia, New Zealand and the Asian Development Bank have primarily footed the bill for the region's structural reform programmes, providing finance and technical support, often through private consultancy firms with reform experience in New Zealand or Australia. A large number of other donor agencies including the European Union, USAID, IMF, WHO, UNDP, ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre, Japanese Development Agency and French Aid Agencies are also assisting reform programmes in one or more countries. It is evident that aid is being used as a 'carrot' to commit governments to undertake economic structuring or



to reward governments which demonstrate good performance in reform implementation. Australia's Policy and Management Reform (PMR) Fund, first announced in its 1995/96 budget as a fund to assist countries undertaking reforms, allocates grants 'competitively between island countries on the basis of demonstrated commitment to reform'. Samoa has been a beneficiary of this fund, allocated \$7 million for five years to upgrade the Treasury Department following a positive assessment of good performance (cited in Sutherland 1999). In July, the EU approved a S\$18 million Structural Adjustment Facility for Solomon Islands, to help 'keep momentum for the reform process undertaken by the government, while at the same time providing support in critical physical and social infrastructure development' (*Solomon Star*, 23 July 1999;3).

Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), which is what the economic reform programmes being followed in the region really are, were originally justified in terms of making indebted countries live within their means and meet their debt obligations as a matter of priority. Later, as in the case of the Pacific, they were peddled as the formula for achieving economic growth. Today they are often advanced simply as pre-conditions for realizing the benefits of trade liberalisation at the global level. Critics of SAPs point out that these policies advantage the rich (countries and social classes) at the expense of the poor (countries and social classes) and that this explains the staggering growth in poverty in all regions of the world over the last decade, when SAPs have been successfully imposed worldwide by international financial institutions and donor governments, using the leverage they have as lenders and donors. It is now evident that the global application of SAPs paved the way to a global regime of 'free trade' aimed at opening the world, all its resources, and all national markets to corporate interests.

While Forum communiqués give the impression of close agreement among Pacific Island leaders on the path of economic restructuring upon which they have been set at the urgings of external agencies and governments, there are signs of disagreement about the wisdom of following foreign economic advisors (and their local converts) like sheep. Sutherland (1999) cites the remarks of ex - Cook Islands Prime Minister, Geoffrey Henry at the opening of the 1997 Forum on the theme of 'Reform, Human Values and Togetherness' which were that reforms should go beyond narrow economic aspects and be guided by Pacific cultural values and norms. Sutherland also records the President of FSM, Jacob Nena, a year later questioning the pursuit of growth for its own sake and 'at the cost of more

important aspects of true Pacific prosperity'. Nena's snide remarks: 'Remember that economists have jokingly been described as that group of professionals who know the price of everything and the value of nothing. Of course, we can benefit from those economists who understand that prosperity means more than material wealth' indicates that healthy skepticism towards free market fundamentalism and the wisdom of foreign economic experts resides among Pacific leaders. Interestingly, both leaders quoted above questioned the reforms from a cultural and spiritual standpoint, counterposing materiality and the quantifiable elements of social life with the intangibles of meaning and value.

The negative impacts and/or questionable aspects of economic restructuring in the region are tangible enough to warrant concern and serious questioning:

In Fiji, restructuring policies have created low-wage boom industries based on female labour, frozen or driven down wages in other industries and sectors and, through devaluation and the introduction of VAT generally eroded workers' purchasing power. Corporatisation programmes have involved job losses for hundreds of nationals and huge consultancy gains for foreign companies. Public sector reforms, and particularly measures associated with installing computer software in all government departments for an accrual accounting system, have been reported to cost the Ministry of Finance F\$11.9 million (the sum reportedly paid to SAP Australia which was awarded the contract), while the bill for Ministry of Finance consultants engaged on work associated with putting in place the same reforms reportedly totaled a further F\$2 million. These hidden costs of the economic reforms and the huge transfers of wealth from the public purse to private hands that they involve, expose the naked truth about free market economic policies. It is no surprise that the growth in poverty in Fiji in the last decade (35% of Fiji's people are said to be living below the poverty line today) has been accompanied by a spiraling growth in the incomes of those occupying the top decile.

In Solomon Islands, the reforms are considered to have contributed to triggering inter-ethnic tensions on Guadalcanal - reeling from the impact of the Asian crisis and especially the financial problems of Malaysian logging companies which saw the reduction of national income and fiercer competition for jobs, the Solomon Islands government was pressed by aid donors to cut expenditure, freeze wages and step up the promotion of private investment (*Asia Times* 22 July 1999). For those displaced by the cutbacks, returning to the land and subsistence livelihoods was the only



option, but this set the stage for land and land sales to non-Guadalcanal islanders to become a site of tension and for Malaitans to be scape-goated. Australia and New Zealand are co-financing economic restructuring in the Solomon Islands in the midst of escalating ethnic tensions. The high priority that Australia accords this project was revealed in the satisfaction expressed by Parliamentary Secretary to the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Kathy Sullivan MP, at the Solomon Islands Government's resolve to continue with its (Australian-funded) Policy and Structural Reform Program, despite the additional pressures created by the outbreak and escalation of ethnic tension on Guadalcanal. Mrs Sullivan had visited Solomon Islands in early July 1999 to consult with the government on how Australia might assist it deal with the problems on Guadalcanal.

The perils of subordinating social impacts to the economic imperatives of accelerated economic growth, based on the exploitation of natural (forestry and mineral) resources for export markets on the one hand and enforced structural adjustment on the other, is well illustrated in the case of the Solomon Islands - not only has it helped provoke ethnic conflict, it has led to the (temporary?) retrenchment of workers and close down of palm oil production by Solomon Islands Plantation Limited, and a protracted dispute between landowners and the Australian based Ross Mining company over the Gold Ridge mining project. Meanwhile New Zealand's financing of the reform of SI's Inland Revenue Department will apparently give jobs to a contingent of (private) consultants from New Zealand, according to the SI Minister of Finance Alpha Kimata. The NZ consultants will assist SI formulate plans for the restructure, assist with tax investigation and collection of tax debt, and with the establishment of new systems, drafting of legislation, and training of the Department's staff.

In Cook Islands, the reforms produced a massive rise in unemployment (75% increase in 1996 from 1991 levels), as a consequence of public sector 'right-sizing' followed by a sharp rise in out-migration, particularly of young people. The Cook Islands' ability to effectively 'export' a large number of those made unemployed by the reforms to New Zealand has helped cushion impacts at national level. The exodus of skilled people is a major loss for Cook Islands and a possible gain for New Zealand. The impacts of massive cuts in the education and housing and community services budgets (from \$10,666,000 in 1993/94 to \$5,576,000 in 1996/97 and from \$9,093,000 in 1993/94 to \$1,016,000 in 1996/97 respectively) and cuts in health spending have yet to be revealed.

In the Marshall Islands, public sector reforms have reduced the government workforce by a third, imposed a three year wage freeze and frozen increments in the public sector. Budget cutbacks in public sector spending have axed training and income-generating activities formerly provided by the Division of Women within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Social Welfare. The Women's Division now functions merely as a clearing house and meeting station for the National Council of women and other NGOs (Wichman 1998:32).

In Vanuatu, the Comprehensive Reform Programme, funded by the ADB and publicly 'endorsed' through a National Summit in 1997, has been questioned for its evident goal of opening up Vanuatu to foreign investors under the guise of 'private sector-led development' (Salong 1998).

Ironically economic restructuring policies were being sold to the Pacific Island states in 1993 as their path towards economic greatness in the image of the Southeast Asian tigers (World Bank 1993). Despite the collapse of the Asian Tiger growth miracles following the financial crisis of 1997 and the admission by the World Bank's own chief economist, Joseph Stiglitz, that the economic fundamentals of the 'Washington Consensus' were wrong, the same policy prescriptions are continuing to be applied with one accord in this region. The new Fiji government's departure from the pack will hopefully encourage greater questioning by Pacific leaders of where they are going, who is leading the way, and whose interests are primarily being served.

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed critique of these reports, see Slatter, C. 'Banking on the growth model? The World Bank and market policies in the Pacific' in Atu Emberson-Bain(ed) *Sustainable Development or Malignant Growth? Perspectives of Pacific Island Women*, Marama Publications, Suva, 1994, pp17-37.

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# Excerpts from the Speech given by Dr 'Atu Emberson-Bain as Senator of the Fijian Parliament

*This Speech was given on the occasion of the Debate on the President's Address to Parliament at The Senate, Republic of the Fiji Islands, 7 July 1999.*

*The first section in particular is all the more poignant in the light of subsequent events.*

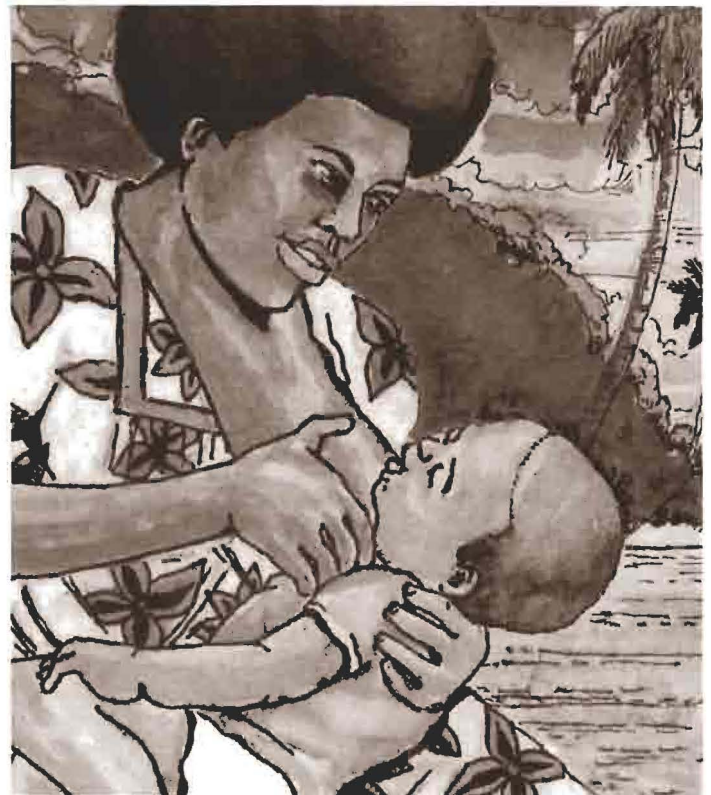
## Multi-Ethnic Society

His Excellency has outlined one of the major tasks facing the People's Coalition Government, and that is "to further strengthen the bonds of unity in our multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society". Within our own shores, it is a sad and shameful fact that ethnic divisiveness, cultural intolerance and religious fundamentalism have been a feature of our political landscape since the military coups of 1987. We have paid a heavy price for this - in the mass exodus of skilled people, in the flight of capital and loss of investor confidence, in the surging levels of corruption, in the economic hardship and escalating poverty, in the declining health services, and in the incalculable damage to inter-ethnic relations and the national psyche.

Sir, in reflecting on the challenge that lies ahead of us, I found myself recalling the inspiring testimony of Nelson Mandela on the occasion of his historic inauguration as the first black president of a new, liberated South Africa. At the time of this great event five years ago, I remember thinking how wonderful it was that in the triumphant defeat of institutionalised racism, and in spite of his terrible first hand experience of the cruelty and inhumanity of apartheid, Mandela was able to stand so tall. Mandela's concern was with healing the wounds of the past and building a unified, non racial South Africa. He pledged to build, and I quote, "a society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of

their inalienable right to human dignity - a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world."

Here in this tiny pocket of the world, we have another rainbow nation. And I believe that we too can be a nation "at peace with itself and the world." The recent elections and our new Constitution have shown that Fiji has moved a long way along the road towards enlightenment and consensus. To echo the sentiments expressed by His Excellency, we should now put aside our partisan loyalties or party differences so that we may move further down the road, away from our divisive past and forward towards creating the kind of society of which





we can all be proud. We have a new chapter in our history to write. Let us write it well. His Excellency presented a comprehensive overview of Government's plans for social and economic development over the following five years. This is the beginning of the journey.

## Health

Sir, I think we all agree that we are faced with a critical situation in our health system and that there is an enormous stockpile of problems that has been bequeathed to us by the previous government. It is obvious that we need more qualified doctors and nurses, cleaner and more efficient hospitals and health clinics, better conditions for medical staff so that we stop the overseas exodus, and more resources to be able to upgrade equipment and facilities. As the work begins, may I ask for some attention to our maternity wards. Some years ago I had first hand experience of the shortage of very basic facilities. The picture is still fresh in my mind of a young woman from Rotuma in the bed beside me looking lovingly at her first born child. The baby wore no nappy, no singlet, in fact it wore nothing at all. It was simply wrapped in a stiff white sheet

blotched with stains. The young mother did not complain. I did. And it was then that I learnt from the nursing staff that the hospital had run out of fresh linen and that this was the best they could do.

Sir, I understand situations like this are still fairly common today and that the problem is worse in the rural areas and outer islands. This is not good enough. Women need to be assured that they can give birth with dignity and that their babies will come into the world crying with pleasure, not horror, at what awaits them. They deserve nothing less.

Sir, in our traditional Pacific Island cultures, early childcare is typically left to women. Within the extended family system, support is likely to come from the older women - the grandmothers, mothers and aunts. The minority of men who courageously cross the line - and help out in the home - are usually ridiculed or laughed at for doing something that is seen as 'unmanly'. But times are changing. The survival of the extended family system is increasingly being threatened by urbanisation and other social changes. Women have moved into the workforce, frequently out of economic necessity. Some, as we can see, are now moving into Parliament! The time has now come for a change on the domestic scene. It is for this reason that I would urge the Health Ministry to consider offering fathers post-natal classes. They will not look back. And if they do, they will see a lot of women cheering them on.

## Traditional Medicine

Traditional medicine could make a significant contribution to improving our health system. In the colonial days, it was generally discredited, even illegal. Yet in spite of the controls, it flourished alongside Western medicine which was viewed by many Fijians, quite rightly perhaps, with a certain amount of cynicism. This cynicism was epitomised in the name Fijians gave to the word hospital - vale ni mate.



I think most of us have been brought up in families where there is a relative who knows about traditional health remedies for minor complaints like boils and stomach problems as well as more serious, even terminal, conditions. This body of traditional knowledge has never been given the recognition it deserves. Nor have the wisdom and skills of the men and women, particularly the women, who practice as traditional healers. Today, it is a sad irony that we find the world's multinational pharmaceutical companies combing our shores for our very own traditional ingredients to use in their very own medicines and drugs. It is ironic that after all the bad press over the years about yaqona in countries like Australia and the US, the plant is now being sought after for its medicinal properties. Money is being made – and believe me much more money is being made by overseas drug companies than our local farmers – and we can even buy back our own yaqona processed into attractively packaged tablets. Worse, patenting or intellectual property claims are being made by overseas buyers over the new products and the process derived from our own indigenous knowledge. All this wheeling and dealing appears to be ushering in a new era of colonial plunder.

My point here, Sir, is that we are sitting on a very rich source of raw materials and traditional technologies but we need to protect and develop it wisely. We have literally hundreds of species of medicinal plants. We are also sitting on a rich and valuable human resource – notably the women who plant, process and practice traditional medicine. I would urge the Ministry of Health to give greater support to traditional Fijian medicine and its practising healers (including traditional midwives). I would also suggest that it explores ways of integrating them into the mainstream of national health policy and practice. There is already at least one precedent for such an approach in the Pacific – Kiribati.

## **The State and Globalisation**

In his opening address, His Excellency outlined the Government's intentions to promote economic growth and social progress. He stated that these challenges "are to be undertaken with a strong sense of justice to ensure that development benefits all in our society, including the poor, the disadvantaged and all those who, through no fault of their own, need the helping hand of the State."

These sentiments, Sir, speak to the type of government we can expect from the People's Coalition in the next five years, in particular the priority it will give to creating the foundations of a more just and equitable society, and its belief that the State carries a social responsibility to be an active player in the development process. These two objectives go hand in hand and are mutually reinforcing. They also run against the tide of market-driven development and economic liberalism which were cornerstones of the previous government, in line with the 'wisdom' of powerful global institutions like the World Bank. Sir, the Market has no inherent sense of social justice or equity. It is not an independent player or disinterested arbiter. It will not magically ensure that vulnerable sections in our community like unorganised workers, women and the poor are protected. The Market will not protect their right to earn a living wage, to enjoy decent housing, access to land, clean water, education and good health. In fact, if left to its own devices, it is more likely to do just the opposite – to threaten these rights and create poverty. This is because profits, not people, count in the Market place, and the dominant or more powerful, not the weak, rule. The Market might create jobs, but what kind of jobs?

Sir, the tide of economic globalisation based on free market thinking is sweeping through just about every corner of the world. We have been made to feel that there is no alternative way to go other than to privatise public assets, to deregulate trade, to deregulate the labour



market, to adopt low wage and user pays policies, to implement public sector reforms, and to push the state out of the way. But the time has surely come when we should determine for ourselves what development model suits us best rather than accepting without question the policies foisted upon us by the heavy-weights in the international community like the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organisation.

His Excellency has outlined Government's intentions to review current policies on economic deregulation and to set tariffs at realistic rates as a form of protection to domestic industries. This is timely. The global economy is not a level playing field. It is not a place where tiny Pacific Island societies like ours can compete as equals with the rich nations of the industrialised North. In fact, the deregulated market (whether in the global or national economy) is open to manipulation by large and powerful interests. If we open our doors indiscriminately, what future is in store for our local industries, for our small farmers and producers, for informal sector economic activity (where incidentally women predominate), for food security, and for the environment?

Sir, we are often urged to create what the World Bank calls an 'enabling' environment for foreign investors and the private sector. I acknowledge the role they can play to promote job creation and national income. I can also appreciate their need for a congenial economic environment as well as political stability. However, I would humbly suggest that in our pursuit of economic growth, we do not bend so far backwards to accommodate the private sector and foreign investors that we fall over! The time has come when the investment incentives and other benefits they enjoy should be matched by corresponding obligations. We need a community of good corporate citizens. Perhaps a code of conduct could be applied to foreign companies operating in our country, especially those taking advantage of

the infrastructural, duty, tax and other privileges applied in the tax-free zones. The code would lay down national standards on employment, health and safety, gender equity, and environmental protection. It would consolidate the basic protection provided by law like the minimum wage guidelines already in place and planned for the future.

### **Pacific Fishing Company (PAFCO)**

Let me share with you some concerns I have about one particular industry, a public enterprise that has received quite a lot of publicity in recent months. This is the government-owned and run cannery at Levuka, PAFCO. PAFCO has relied heavily on women workers, indigenous Fijian workers, for over 25 years. These women have most certainly been the backbone of growth in our industrial fisheries. Their daily job is to process the cooked tuna - to cut and clean, to separate flakes from loin, to fill the cans, to add oil and brine, to check the weights, to seal the lids, and to label, pack and stock take.

In other words, they are a vital link between the time when the fresh tuna is brought ashore and cooked by male workers, and the time when it heads off in small cans for the supermarket shelves of countries like Canada and the United Kingdom, flashing international brand names like John West and Sainsburys. Unfortunately, despite the very important development contribution made by these Fijian women, their workplace environment leaves a lot to be desired. They endure long hours of standing, insufficient ventilation, extreme heat, and the putrid smell of bad fish. And these are not the only problems. Wages are poor; there is a lack of support for working mothers; and harsh measures have been taken to boost productivity. These problems have worsened in recent years because of the company's financial crisis which has brought it to the brink of collapse several times.

Sir, PAFCO has been bailed out by the previous government twice, to the tune of \$10 million worth of taxpayers' money. Not only this. It has also received some \$17 million of Australian aid to develop its infrastructure.

I would like to stress, Sir, that to understand the reasons underlying the company's misfortunes - both financial and industrial - it is not enough to accept what has found its way into the media from company sources. To get the full picture, it is necessary to dig hard and deep. It is not my intention to get out my shovel today. But I would like to stress that there is a very real need to do some thorough housecleaning of PAFCO (and we women know about housecleaning!). We need an investigation into the company's finances, close scrutiny of its marketing policies, an objective assessment of its management expertise (and representation on the Board of Directors), a review of its personnel policy, and, last but certainly not least, a full investigation into the grievances of its women workers whose cries have fallen on deaf ears for far too long.

I am optimistic that appropriate measures will be taken now that we have a Government committed to the interests of workers, women, and the social responsibilities of the State. If this deserving but neglected community of working mothers is given a fair deal, I am confident that the company will be richly rewarded by higher productivity and loyalty, and better revenue returns.

## **Mining**

Sir, let me turn to another area of national development, the mining industry. I should like to comment on Government's concerns about the current downturn in international gold prices, as outlined in His Excellency's speech, and its intentions to work with the mining industry on measures for viable operations. Since His Excellency's address to Parliament,

the Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources has reiterated the Government's concerns. The Honourable Minister has asked what we as a responsible government can do to alleviate the problems faced by the industry, particularly since it does not enjoy preferential treatment like our sugar.

With great respect, may I say that while I appreciate the economic constraints placed on the mining industry at this time, we should think long and hard before offering any assistance. I say this for a number of reasons. First, the Emperor Mines group, which has been the major player, has enjoyed an exceptional range of 'preferences' over the years, in both good times and bad. It has had concessions on income tax, import and export taxes, and royalty payments. It has received loans and grants.

The 21 year Vatukoula Tax Agreement signed in 1983 between the Alliance Government, EGM and Western Mining gave the group even more favours, including generous import duty exemptions, tax deductions, and a lengthy tax holiday for new mines. Most important was the special royalty rate that was approved by the





then Minister for Lands, Mineral Resources and Energy, Peter Stinson. The Minister waived the royalty provisions under the Mining Act and authorised a reduced royalty based on 2.5 per cent of net profit.

This royalty system is still in place today, and it has been at great cost to the country, not to mention the landowners who have been technically entitled to a share in royalty proceeds since 1990.

Let me give you an idea of the losses that have resulted from this dubious tax deal. Between 1992 and 1997, prior to the present slump in gold prices, the value of gold sales from EGM totalled \$365.1 million. The Government received less than \$874,000 in royalty payments. This represents a mere 0.24 per cent of gold sales. Had the standard means of assessing royalty as prescribed under the Mining Act been applied (5% of sales value), the country would have earned \$18.2 million.

If we take an earlier period, 1986-1990, when gold prices were even healthier, partly because of the post-coup devaluations of our dollar, we earned only \$77,000 in royalty payments. Had the proper system applied, we would have earned \$15.1 million.

Sir, while some might be of the view that royalty based on 5 per cent of sales value is high, I would argue that the principle of linking royalty to the gross value of extracted minerals, as opposed to profits, is fair. One reason is that it safeguards against the revenue losses that can result from dishonest company accounting. Another equally important reason is that minerals, unlike other resources, are finite and non-renewable.

Sir, there are many social and labour problems associated with mining operations at Vatukoula. The grievances have a long history and they continue today, as the ongoing strike testifies. They have been of great concern to the Labour Party since its inception, and in particular to our founding leader, the late Dr. Timoci Bavadra, who spent time living and

working in Vatukoula, and knew at first hand the hardships faced by this indigenous community. The grievances include the wage system, the housing situation, the accident record, the anti-unionism of management, and racial discrimination.

An issue of concern here is the blocking of the Report and its recommendations through a legal challenge made by the company. This tactic is one of the oldest tricks in the mining book. It has been used over and over again over the years to block, thwart or subvert attempts to improve the situation for workers. And unfortunately it is always a battle between David and Goliath because, unlike the workers and the union, the company has easy access to abundant financial resources and legal expertise. Sir, I am comforted by who won this battle in the end. And it wasn't Goliath!

I would like to raise one more feature of the mining industry because of its relevance to His Excellency's speech. This is the high levels of pollution associated with it. This problem requires urgent attention and I would strongly caution against it being put aside simply because the industry is being squeezed by depressed gold prices.

First let me say that I can appreciate the concerns of the people of Wailevu who are host to the Mt Kasi Gold Mine, and their calls for more vigilant safeguards against the harmful effects of mining, in particular the industrial discharges into their rivers. The closure of the mine by Government speaks volumes about the environmental nightmare experienced by villagers in surrounding areas. Since the closure, there has been an environmental audit done and an environmental management plan prepared.

But Sir, surely this is the wrong way around. It is a case of putting the cart before the horse. And it has come far too late. The audit and the plan should have been done first before mining operations began so that the interests and welfare of the Wailevu people were properly

protected. Indeed, it is a shocking indictment of the last government which obviously had no problem with putting 'dollars' before 'people'.

At the Emperor Mines in Vatukoula, there has been gross negligence on the part of both past governments and our Australian corporate guests. Water and atmospheric pollution have been around a long time, and they are still with us today. Water sampling in the Nasivi River and its connecting streams and creeks have on numerous occasions confirmed chemical as well as bacteriological contamination. Amongst the chemical contaminants that have been identified are highly toxic substances like arsenic (which is cancer producing in drinking water) and copper, as well as cyanide.

The emissions of poisonous industrial gases, particularly sulphur dioxide, into the atmosphere are another major problem. Sulphur dioxide is highly toxic. It is irritating to the skin, eyes and respiratory system, and it can cause bronchitis and asphyxia. At Vatukoula each day, vast quantities of sulphur are pumped into the atmosphere through the roaster. It is common to see doors and windows shut when the emissions are strong. In fact, one of my first memories as a researcher in the town over 15 years ago was the sight of school children walking to school with paper bags over their heads to keep out the fumes.

Sir, it is of great concern that the Department of Mineral Resources does not undertake any monitoring of air quality or roaster emissions at Vatukoula. After all these years, the Department has no pollution standards to apply. Overseas, in countries like Australia, government regulations lay down acceptable levels of gas, dust and other impurities, and they enforce these. Here in Fiji, over 60 years since mining began in Vatukoula, we are still putting our workers' lives, and the lives of their families, on the line.

The problem of industrial pollution is not only confined to what is or isn't in our mining

law. It is also sometimes a matter of how our existing law is not properly enforced. This problem applies to water pollution, for example. Previous governments, going back as far as the 1940s, have repeatedly reminded EGM of its obligations under the public health and mining laws. But they have buckled under pressure. There have never been any prosecutions.

The Vatukoula community is not healthy. We have had stories appearing from time to time in the press about cyanide traces in fish, sick cattle and water that is unfit for human consumption. More recently, the health problems of police officers were publicised. Believe me, this is just the tip of the iceberg. For years, the community - the workers, their wives and children - have been silently suffering from a disturbing range of respiratory and chest complaints including asthma, diarrhoeal diseases, nose and throat problems, and skin complaints.

We need to ensure that all future mining developments are properly assessed for their social as well as their environmental impact, before they are given the green light to proceed. And here I would stress the word 'before' so that we do not have a repeat of the Mt Kasi situation. I would also strongly suggest that there be full involvement of the community including the landowners and the women who are key stakeholders. I mention this because the documentation I have seen in relation to Mt Kasi suggests that there have been no serious consultations with the people. What may I ask is the point of an environmental impact assessment if there is no consultation with the people whose environment is at stake?

Let us learn from the lessons of our neighbours - from Bougainville and Ok Tedi in Papua New Guinea, and Nauru - before it is too late.





# PNG'S People-Centred Development Betrayed

by Elizabeth Cox, HELP Resources, Wewak, PNG

## The Constitution compromised, the national economy collapsed: citizens' bitter pills and struggle for survival

Papua New Guinea has experienced a quarter of a century of political independence, yet her citizens move into the new millennium full of despair. PNG has amassed a massive foreign debt, which has escalated in spite of the mineral and petroleum booms of the 1990s and despite stringent structural adjustment packages adopted to counter the impact of the Bougainville civil war and the massive fiscal mismanagement, political corruption and greed exposed during the last decade. Political and economic commentary within and on PNG is replete with criticism which is difficult, if not impossible, to counter. Economic policy in PNG now follows aid and loan conditionalities with options becoming increasingly limited, as successive leaders have driven the country into a corner of debt and no choice. 'Treatments' now being administered to PNG include successive user pays systems for health and education and the implementation of a strangling Value Added Tax. The current Prime Minister has openly declared that PNG was on the verge of financial bankruptcy for which he blames the moral bankruptcy of previous governments.

Grassroots citizens of Papua New Guinea must now swallow very bitter pills; medicine that works in ways diametrically opposed to the tonic of the PNG Constitution,



the vision, promises and hope of independence that they drank so joyously and optimistically in the euphoria of 1975. Access to basic services has become increasingly unequal. Foreign ownership of large and small businesses increases including those previously 'restricted' areas of employment. The most basic of health and education services have become increasingly more remote for the rural majority and expensive for the urban populations.

*This state of affairs is precisely what the independence leaders and visionaries who consulted and dialogued extensively to draft the national constitution set out to avoid.*

Not only is the development of PNG ownership undermined. The confidence of the people both in themselves and in a succession of governments which restate and reinterpret the nationalist declaration that Papua New Guineans can manage their own affairs; socially, economically and politically, has been totally undermined. The widespread lack of trust and confidence in leaders and policies is confirmed on a daily basis by radio programs and newspapers and is the common topic for street and village small talk.

With the progressive removal or reversal of the laws and policies that were designed to achieve integral human development, local self-reliance and national sovereignty, rural people and grassroots workers now feel very profoundly that the objective of their daily struggles has shifted from nationalism, self-reliance and development to solely and simply, survival. Surviving daily social, political and physical stresses and trauma is a skill that all citizens must cultivate. It is a preoccupation for the majority of women and girls.

This scenario is a far cry from the slogans and catchcries of independence. Self-reliance, *bung wantaim* and *yumi yet inap*.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to reflect on what went wrong. This paper outlines and analyses the history and the changes in the structure, outlook, orientation and intentions of government and of non-government organisations and community-based organisations. It attempts to explain how many once fervently idealistic peoples' organisations have, thus far, failed to remain faithful to the constitutional vision and promises for our people.

## **Eroding the ideals of rural self-reliance and people-centred development**

The nationalist sentiments of the independence decade were matched by a great deal of thinking about and organising around rural development. Offices were set up in national government and schemes were established to reflect the sincerity of the first leaders' solidarity and support for the people and rural development. Many rural development organisations and projects trained, mobilised and motivated people around the idea of self-sufficiency at family and community level. People debated what was appropriate, and the merits of cash and food crop emphases vis a vis the national goals. There was much reflection and exchange on strategies for inspiring youth to be part of a mass movement for rural development and self-reliance, principles to which the Lutheran Development Services' *Yangpela Didiman* (Young farming people's) program alone has remained faithful for almost thirty years.

Immediately post-independence PNG citizens optimistically shared a widely held and seemingly sincere commitment to return to the village, as the centre for visioning an equitable and secure future for all and a platform for implementing gradual, people-centred change which would in turn drive a just and equitable national development.

This movement was echoed in the formation of an Office of Village Development within the Prime Minister's Department, the awarding of Village Development Fellowships which recognised and sponsored inspirational and progressive young leaders in innovative rural development programs.

National food and nutrition programs, appropriate technology conferences and the collective production of *Lik Lik Buk*, (PNG's now world famous, home-grown rural development how-to manual and catalogue) reflected a mood of confidence, creativity and collective will to build rural prosperity and equity.

## **The post-colonial nationalist vision**

In the early 1970s, PNG's national planners cooperated in the formulation of a progressive Eight Point Plan for national development, while the then progressive politicians, national philosophers and ideologues who wrote the constitution articulated the peoples' values and vision in five inspirational National Goals and Directive Principles. Many national leaders were swept up in the desire and movement to realise these plans and goals through programs and projects in their own home villages. Leaders and planners were accessible and keen to spend time to dialogue, debate and together with their people build a body of development theory and practice for PNG, based on direct experience and reflection.

Hundreds of thousands of rural citizens felt that there was genuine political interest and administrative support for initiative and innovation in rural development, rural education, and the formation of popular rural movements. There was a strong sense of solidarity and direct communication between the policy makers and planners at national level and the leaders, writers and implementers working on the ground in grassroots communities in villages and rural and peri-urban settlements.

There are enduring pockets of Papua New Guinean disciples, devotees, and 'doers' who committed themselves to realising the national goals and directive principles: women and men who became highly committed to the goal of self-sufficiency, and highly skilled in many appropriate rural technologies and training methods. Many remained working humbly in grassroots communities and organisations, but they did not necessarily inherit the personal contacts, resources, political power and connections of their transient, enthusiastic expatriate friends and mentors.

## **The vision and movements deserted**

There were many different interpretations of PNG's post independence call for 'self-reliance'. John Luluaki, a well-known PNG lawyer reflected recently, for the past three decades, in terms of the legislation and policy, PNG has been busy "*opening mines rather than minds*".

Important national development seminars and workshops in the 1970s and early 1980s brought PNG's development philosophers, planners, policy-makers and practitioners together regularly for networking, exchange and debate to further their understanding and build their capacity to make progress on PNG's once-famous 'National Goals' and the 'Eight Aims' for rural development. Originally they had the blessing and support of a handful of rapidly rising nationalist leaders who were all-too-soon moving on to bigger and more lucrative contacts and contracts.

While well-intentioned volunteers and local leaders and rural development practitioners led their social and practical experiments in rural social development, the progressive restructuring of the nation's economy proceeded to lock the people and the land into quite another kind of development. By the early 1980s large-scale logging and exploration for further mining sites were proceeding apace and gaining ground throughout some of the most remote and inaccessible country. Over time, the support of national and provincial politicians for rural organisations dwindled, especially if their community-based programs hindered or critiqued foreign investors who had friends and alliances in high places. At the same time, rural and village development grants became rapidly politicised, distorting and disruptive in their influence.



## Conflict of interests: Local and foreign

Development workers who believed that their work contributed to affirming and articulating the constitution, felt compelled to raise awareness about the dangers of inappropriate design and execution of large and expensive loan-funded rural development programs, wholesale resource exploitation and dubious foreign lending. Inevitably, volunteer, church workers and long-term, local development workers found themselves in conflict with government agricultural, forestry and planning officers. They were increasingly regarded with suspicion, some labelled subversive and anti-development.

In the 1980s, many rural Papua New Guineans were being torn in different directions, between the poles of quick money, political connections and local power bases on one hand and faith in and loyalty to the articulation of the constitution through low-cost rural development initiatives dealing with health, nutrition, adult education, appropriate technology and small scale enterprises on the other.

The national youth movement, profoundly male in its origins, orientation, membership and operations, began to mass around the people and the projects, which promised quick fixes, fast tracking of development and easy money and power. By contrast, the mass women's organisations maintained a long-term interest in the core rural and community development agenda, which attracted less and less political support.

The organisations which set integral human development as a core objective, became increasingly divorced from the emerging mainstream male-to-male political patronage, pay-off and handout-based approach to rural development. Election campaigns and rural development projects became linked activities. The planned and loan-funded development projects became increasingly large, foreign-owned. The needy and the greedy citizens, alike resigned, accommodated and submitted themselves to this system. There was little support for anything else.

Some of the more innovative rural development movements and programs had sufficient integrity and were strong enough to survive, even thrive well into the 1980s in spite of partisan and globally shaped local development trends and directions. Non-government and church based overseas donors continued to support training, innovation, national networking and

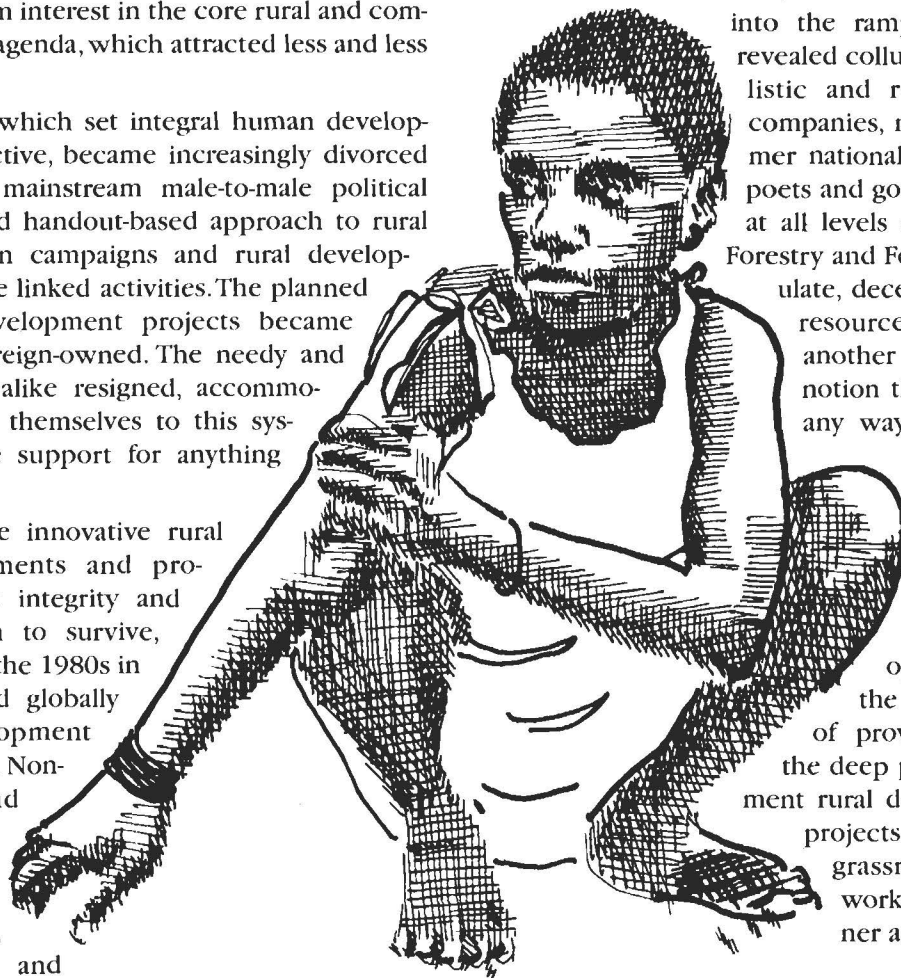
exchanges. However, by the mid to late 1980s, the long-established and most grounded rural development programs - those that came closest to working in 'Papua New Guinean ways' and harmonising with the other 'National Goals' were rapidly losing political support. There was nothing for politicians to gain for themselves in these grassroots struggles, dreams and efforts towards sustainable rural development.

## The price of ignoring people

Progressive disregard and disenfranchisement of the people had its price. By the end of the 1980s the government of PNG was facing deep crises, in direct confrontation with the deeply destructive social and environmental consequences of the mining and logging industries. A civil war had begun in Bougainville and PNG's sovereignty was threatened from within. The intransigence of Bougainville rebels, the sustained civil war, the wanton mass destruction of physical infrastructure, beginning with the mine and government resources, reflected how deeply people felt about their land and the sustainability of their subsistence base. It also exposed how far they were removed from and unmoved by the appeals of government for the people to fall in line with the nation's chosen political and economic path.

The revelations of an intensive Inquiry into the rampant logging industry, revealed collusion between monopolistic and ruthless Asian logging companies, national politicians, former nationalist leaders writers and poets and government functionaries at all levels of the Departments of Forestry and Foreign Affairs, to manipulate, deceive and intimidate the resource owners. This dealt another devastating blow to the notion that government was in any way loyal to the national goals and directive principles of the constitution.

The combined impact of these national crises in development together with the continuing corruption of provincial politicians, and the deep politicisation of government rural development grants and projects served to polarise the grassroots development workers and national planner and politicians.



## **Literacy, environment and human rights movements in PNG**

The 1990s saw a new wave of development organisations. This was the decade of the indigenous NGO movement. Many new organisations emerged, attempting to combine political awareness and advocacy of social justice, human rights and people's power and participation with practical programs. Three notable areas of work were the NGO literacy movement, the grassroots environment movement and local human rights organisations.

For the first time PNG University graduates were on the inside and leading development organisations and programs, rather than merely patronising from the outside. The thrust was political - people's politics, with the emphasis on ideology and building mass awareness rather than providing practical and technical support for community initiatives and development. The battle, between differently positioned and aligned Papua New Guineans, regarding recognition and realisation of the promises of the constitution and basic rights, particularly the rights of land and other resource owners, was on.

Literacy movements moved from a conservative church-based model of the colonial past and took on a Freirian approach. The consciousness-raising thrust of the NGO literacy movement found itself at ideological and methodological odds with a renewed government interest in literacy, motivated by a desire to at least be seen to be working towards the global goal of 'Education for All'. Most funding was channelled into the government program yet the NGO initiative connected, inspired and communicated direct to the heart of thousands of disenchanted rural communities. For an important political and historical 'moment' that lasted almost a decade, the peoples' will and the people's ways were given space and support from educated citizens, sympathetic donors and global networks of solidarity.

Although the local environment movement always suffered lack of funding, in the wake of the Bougainville and national logging crises, it was able to mobilise and inform hundreds of thousands of people of corruption and graft in the industry. However, the literacy and the environment movements were weakened by the fact that they did not sufficiently acknowledge, inform or build their work on the important social movements and developments that had gone on for two decades before them. The rhetoric and calls to action were global in their themes but failed to build on a base of local history and local experience or support local action to meet basic needs.

The young, mostly male leaders and activists at the helm of these movements made the strategic error of thinking that they were the first to arrive at a political analysis of PNG's colonial and post independence history and the first to conduct popular awareness. They thus missed the potential for building a solid connection and

securing a mandate from the well-grounded community organisations and organisers that had emerged in the heyday of mass rural development as well as the conscientising efforts of the 1970s and 1980s. They also lacked female leadership.

Without a practical rural development base, without solid alternatives to the structures and systems they critiqued, the male activists who represented themselves as the champions of the nascent civil society, could not attract the majority of the mature rural population, who feared that taking up new ideologically-based development programs could lead to neglect of an already tenuous subsistence base and a high risk of falling out of favour with political patrons or cutting off the possibility of benefiting, albeit briefly, from local resource exploitation projects.

For a period of five years there was much solidarity between the new, progressive and mostly male led home grown NGOs and the mass and solidly founded, rural women's organisations, but the former tended to use, even abuse, rather than support, the women's core agenda of advocating and implementing women's increased participation, gender equality and gender justice.

### **The co-option of male leaders and the destruction of a nation**

Like the expatriate development workers who had led many of the efforts to realise the constitution through the rural development initiatives of the 1970s and 1980s, the young male PNG development leaders of the 1990s became the self-appointed thinkers, spokespeople and negotiators for the grassroots population. However, this time around they not only lacked continuous mass mandate, they also lacked a solid program base. Their rhetoric had no connection to practical programs, beyond the brief years of intensively active literacy movements. The enduring relevance and inspiration of the national constitution was still their platform, but it was a reference point for rhetoric and demagoguery that was half political and half personal, rather than the substance of a popular education program and rural movement.

After a wave of popular support and donor assistance in the early 1990s, the local NGO movement has been challenged, fractured and divided by many internal and external forces. Some of the self-proclaimed leaders, mainly male, formed surprising alliances with the World Bank and mainstream politicians in the closing years of the 1990s. Many moved on to conventional politics and gained a seat in parliament. Entering parliament as a small independent bloc, they became instrumental in the formation of what has since been pronounced the most corrupt and incompetent of PNG's post independent governments. They have quickly assumed and enjoyed the spoils of power, some allegedly involved in production of



pornography, others blatantly betraying the block women's vote that put them into positions of power, by doing an about-face and publicly promoting the right for "big" men to practice polygamy. They have allegedly continued to forge dubious alliances with current and ex World Bank advisers on privatisation.

*In short, the erstwhile, self-appointed leaders of PNG's emerging civil society have changed their colours and joined those who oppress the people.*

### **National crisis and the deceptive allure of globalisation and privatisation**

The women of PNG are increasingly burdened with the challenge of feeding families, sending children to school and caring for the sick, while facing massive inflation and endlessly rising fees. They watch this unfolding story with passive resignation and growing cynicism. They turn to their reliable sources of survival: food production, marketing and processing. Many of their elected leaders, who are in the pay of the foreign investors, have deserted them or are now exhorting and directing people to accept and applaud PNG efforts to join the new drive and impulse towards globalisation and to drink the panacea of privatisation. Many pockets are being lined as the naive local front men for global interests smooth the passage of growing corporate power, diminishing national government control, buying influence and distorting governance at the provincial and local levels of government and putting the people, especially the poorest, last.

The Constitution was translated into Tok Pisin at independence but has never been utilised effectively as the framework for a popular vision and action for appropriate development. If known, understood and owned by the ordinary people, the PNG Constitution could inspire and fortify their sense of identity and rights. It would be their legal and political shield against encroaching globalisation. It would also discourage the use of violence as a means for expressing frustration or resolving conflict.

Too many people in PNG do not or cannot read the expensive one-page advertisements taken out by politicians and government departments in the daily newspapers by politicians, nor do they know much about the luxury lifestyles of too many leaders indulging at the expense of the people. They are told that PNG has decided to 'retire' its massive foreign debt by being a small player in a big global game, by jumping on the bandwagon and being members of APEC and WTO.

There is no substantial critique in the community. The majority are busy surviving, living by the fruits of very hard and honest labour, often eking out little more than a bare subsistence livelihood. People whose land and resources are poached become paupers, and far too many resort to selling their mores, their bodies, their children, in order to survive. The infrastructure and services they need

to achieve a better life, with accessible and adequate basic services, are collapsing. Basic education and health have become increasingly more expensive. AIDS is on the verge of ravishing the nation.

### **Women's struggle: collective action for citizens' survival**

In PNG, now, no one objects substantively, collectively or strategically to the creeping tentacles of globalisation. In some places, there has been violent resistance by landowners which, we have seen, leads to massive destruction and spiralling violence of citizen against citizen, men and boys against women. Only when the going gets really tough, as it did in Bougainville, where a guerilla war was sustained for a decade and devastated 60 years of infrastructure building, do the new global pirates gear up to subtly move on and relocate.

It is the women who try to hold things together. The women produce, recycle, repackage and market whatever they can, wherever they can. They are PNG's new and taken for granted informal sector. The informal sector provides cheap and accessible clothes, food and snacks for the well off, around the clock. It lights up and renders safe, the dark and much-feared streets. The informal sector belongs to the people - to the women - and yet they are despised and beaten, bullied, harassed and intimidated by both police and street gangs.

Meanwhile globalisation will advance. The people of PNG and the leaders of a still quite weak civil society must take stock, and critique their own track record of integrity and achievement, if they are to reclaim their constitution, maintain their sovereignty, regain the respect and confidence of citizens that will be necessary to turn things around. Women must be there at the coalface: monitoring, documenting, critiquing and changing the status quo.

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<sup>1</sup> Literally "Let's cooperate and work together" and "We can do it ourselves"

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*An Australian-born PNG citizen, Elizabeth Cox has lived in PNG for almost thirty years, most of that time spent in community-based rural development work and adult education. She is currently director of a new NGO, HELP Resources, advocating and facilitating Health, Education, Livelihood and Participation for all.*

*Elizabeth is also a member of the DAWN Steering Committee, author of a number of training manuals and facilitator of grass roots' work with women doing their own documentation.*



# The Historic Significance of Seattle

*Vandana Shiva, ecofeminist and founder of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resources Policy in India*

The failure of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial meeting in Seattle was a historic watershed, in more than one way. Firstly, it has demonstrated that globalisation is not an inevitable phenomena which must be accepted at all costs but a political project which can be responded to politically.

50,000 citizens from all walks of life and all parts of the world were responding politically when they protested peacefully on the streets of Seattle for four days to ensure that there would be no new round of trade negotiations for accelerating and expanding the process of globalisation.

Trade Ministers from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean were responding politically when they refused to join hands to provide support to a "contrived" consensus since they had been excluded from the negotiations being undertaken in the "green room" process behind closed doors. As long as the conditions of transparency, openness and participation were not ensured, developing countries would not be party to a consensus. This is a new context and will make bulldozing of decisions difficult in future trade negotiations.

The rebellion on the streets and the rebellion within the WTO negotiations has started a new democracy movement - with citizens from across the world and the governments of the South refusing to be bullied and excluded from decisions in which they have a rightful share. Seattle had been chosen by the U.S to host the Third Ministerial conference because it is the home of Boeing and Microsoft, and symbolises the corporate power which WTO rules are designed to protect and expand.

Yet the corporations were staying in the background, and proponents of free-trade and WTO were going out of their way to say that WTO was a "member driven" institution controlled by governments who made democratic decisions.

The refusal of Third World Governments to rubber-stamp decisions from which they had been excluded has brought into the open and confirmed the non-transparent and anti-democratic processes by which WTO rules have been imposed on the Third World and has confirmed the claims of the critics.

WTO has earned itself names such as World Tyranny Organisation because it enforces tyrannical

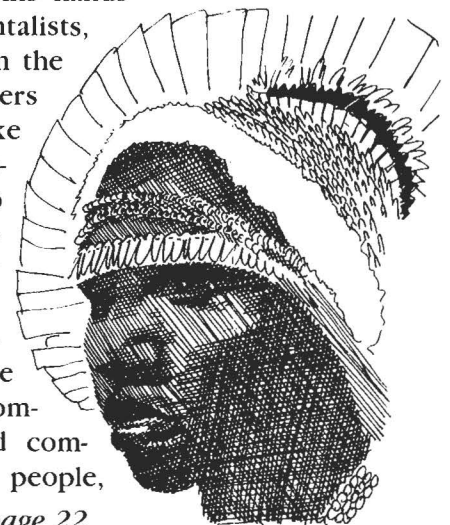
anti-people, anti-nature decisions to enable corporations to steal the world's harvests through secretive, undemocratic structures and processes. The WTO institutionalises forced trade not free trade, and beyond a point, coercion and the rule of force cannot continue.

The WTO tyranny was apparent in Seattle both on the streets and inside the Washington State Convention centre where the negotiations were taking place. Non violent protestors including young people and old women, labour activists and environmental activists and even local residents were brutally beaten up, sprayed with tear gas, and arrested in hundreds. The intolerance of democratic dissent, which is a hallmark of dictatorship, was unleashed in full force in Seattle. While the trees and stores were lit up for Christmas festivity, the streets were barricaded and blocked by the police, turning the city into a war zone.

The media has referred to the protestors as "power mongers" and "special interest" groups. Globalisers, such as Scott Miller of the U.S. Alliance for Trade Expansion, said that the protestors were acting out of fear and ignorance. The thousands of youth, farmers, workers and environmentalists who marched the streets of Seattle in peace and solidarity were not acting out of ignorance and fear, they were outraged because they know how undemocratic the WTO is, how destructive its social and ecological impacts are, and how the rules of the WTO are driven by the objectives of establishing corporate control over every dimension of our lives - our food, our health, our environment, our work and our future.

When labour joins hands with environmentalists, when farmers from the North and farmers from the South make a common commitment to say "no" to genetically engineered crops, they are not acting in their special interests. They are defending the common interests and common rights of all people,

*continued on page 22*





# A Woma *Declaration of the Wome*

We are female human beings poised on the edge of the new millennium.

We are the majority of our species, yet we have dwelt in the shadows.

We are the invisible, the illiterate, the labourers, the refugees, the poor.

And we vow : **No more**

We are the women who hunger - for rice, home, freedom, each other, ourselves.

We are the women who thirst - for clean water and laughter, for literacy, love.

We have existed at all times, in every society. We have survived femicide.

We have rebelled - and left clues.

We are continuity, weaving future from past, logic with lyric.

We are the women who stand in our sense and shout - **Yes.**

We are the women who wear broken bones, voices, minds, hearts - but we

Are the women who dare whisper - **No.**

We are the women whose souls no fundamentalist cage can contain.

We are the women who refuse to permit the sowing of death in our gardens, air, rivers, seas.

We are each precious, unique, necessary. We are strengthened and blessed and relieved at not having to be all the same.

We are the daughters of longing. We are mothers in labour to birth the politics of the 21st century.

We are the women men warned us about.

We are the women who know that all issues are ours, who will reclaim our wisdom, reinvent our tomorrow, question and redefine everything, including power.

We have worked for decades to name the details of our need, rage, hope, vision.

We have broken our silence, exhausted our patience. We are weary of listing refrains on our suffering - to entertain or to be simply ignored.

We are done with vague words and real waiting; famished for action, dignity, joy.

We intend to do more than merely endure and survive.

They have tried to deny us, define us, defuse us, denounce us; to jail, enslave, exile,

Gas, rape, beat, burn, bury - and bore us. Yet nothing, not even the offer to save their failed system, can grasp us.

For thousands of years women have had responsibility without power - while men have had power without responsibility. We offer those men who risk being brothers a balance, a future, a hand. But with or without them, we will go on.

For we are the Old Ones, the New breed, the Natives who came first but lasted, indigenous to an utterly different dimension. We are the girlchild in Zambia, the grandmother in Burma, the woman in El Salvador and Afghanistan, Finland and Fiji.

We are whalesong and rainforest; the depth-wave rising to shatter glass power on the shore; the lost and despised who, weeping, stagger into the light.



# n's Creed:

## 's Global Strategy Meeting

All this we are. We are intensity, energy,  
the people speaking - who no longer wait  
and who cannot be stopped.

We are poised on the edge of the millennium  
- ruin behind us, no map before us, the  
taste of fear sharp on our tongues.

Yet we will leap.

The exercise of imagining is an act of  
creation.

The act of creation is an exercise of will.

All this is political. And possible.

Bread. A clean sky. Active peace. A woman's  
voice singing somewhere, melody drifting  
like smoke from the cookfires. The army dis-  
banded, the harvest abundant.

The wound healed, the child wanted, the  
prisoner freed, the body's integrity hon-  
oured, the lover returned. The magical skill  
that marks into meaning. The labour equal,  
fair and valued. Delight in the challenge for  
consensus to solve problems. No hand  
raised in any gesture but greeting. Secure  
interiors - of heart, home, land - so firm as  
to make borders irrelevant at last. And  
everywhere laughter, care, celebration,  
dancing, contentment. A humble, early  
paradise, in the now.

We will make it real, make it our own,  
make policy, history, peace, make it  
available, make mischief, a difference, love,  
the connections, the miracle, ready.

Believe it.

We are the women who will transform the  
world.

*Written by Robin Morgan, in collaboration with  
Mabnaz Askami, Diane Faulkner, Perdita  
Huston, Corinne Kumar; Paola Melchiori,  
Sunetra Puri and Sima Wali, at the Women's  
Global Strategy Meeting, November 1994,  
sponsored by the Women's Environmental and  
Development Organisation (WEDO).*

From Canadian Somer Brodribb's edited book, *Reclaiming  
the Future: Women's Strategies for the 21st Century*

*Globalisation, politics, trade, gender,  
are mostly words to most Vanuatu Women.*

*Women know the joys of Family life  
in contrast to their personal angst, anxiety,  
frustration, headache, heartache, backaches,  
pain, persevering and enduring suffering.*

*In terms of the politics of trade  
Women are not there as the players.  
They are there as the grass roots on the field.  
Out of sight. Out of mind.*

*They are not there as players.  
They are not there among the players.*

*They don't know the game.  
They don't know the rules of the game.  
They don't play the game.  
They don't get a chance to play the game.*

*They get trampled on.  
They suffer every impact of the game.*

Grace Molisa  
Vanuatu  
20/07/99



*continued from page 19*

everywhere. The divide and rule policy, which has attempted to put consumers against farmers, the North against the South, labour against environmentalists had failed.

In their diversity, citizens were united across sectors and regions. While the broad based citizens campaigns stopped a new Millennium Round of WTO from being launched in Seattle, they did launch their own millennium round of democratisation of the global economy.

The real Millennium Round for the WTO is the beginning of a new democratic debate about the future of the earth and the future of its people. The centralized, undemocratic rules and structures of the WTO that are establishing global corporate rule based on monopolies and monocultures need to give way to an earth democracy supported by decentralisation and diversity. The rights of all species and the rights of all people must come before the rights of corporations to make limitless profits through limitless destruction.

Free trade is not leading to freedom. It is leading to slavery. Diverse life forms are being enslaved through patents on life, farmers are being enslaved into high-tech slavery, and countries are being enslaved into debt and dependence and destruction of their domestic economies.

We want a new millennium based on economic democracy not economic totalitarianism. The future is possible for humans and other species only if the principles of competition, organised greed, commodification of all life, monocultures, monopolies and centralised global corporate control of our daily lives enshrined in the WTO are replaced by the principles of protection of people and nature, the obligation of giving and sharing diversity, and the decentralisation and self-organisation enshrined in our diverse cultures and national constitutions.

A new threshold was crossed in Seattle - a watershed towards the creation of a global citizen-based and citizen-driven democratic order. The future of the World Trade Organisation will be shaped far more by what happened on the streets of Seattle and in the non-governmental (NGO) organisation events than by what happened in the Washington State Convention Centre.

The rules set by the secretive World Trade Organisation violate principles of human rights and ecological survival. They violate rules of justice and sustainability. They are rules of warfare against the people and the planet. Changing these rules is the most important democratic and human rights struggle of our times. It is a matter of survival.

Citizens went to Seattle with the slogan "No new round, turnaround".

They have been successful in blocking a new round. The next challenge is to turn the rules of globalisation and free trade around, and make trade subservient to higher values of the protection of the earth and people's livelihoods.

The citizens' Seattle round of the democratisation of the food system synthesised common concerns of people from across the world to ensure that the way we produce, distribute, process and consume food is sustainable and equitable. In the Third World and the industrialised world, common principles have started to emerge from people's practises to ensure safe and healthy food supply. These principles enable us to shift to nature-centred and people-centred food systems.

1. Diversity rather than monocultures to ensure higher output per acre.
2. Decentralisation and localisation in place of centralisation and globalisation.
3. Ecological processes instead of industrial processes of farming.
4. Food rights and food security rather than free-trade as the basis of distribution.
5. Democratic control rather than corporate control of the food system.
6. Patent-free and genetic engineering-free farming to ensure the respect and protection of all species and the integrity of ecosystems and cultures. This involves excluding life forms from TRIPS and Biosafety from WTO rules of free trade.
7. Cultural diversity in place of the global monoculture of fast foods and industrial food chains.
8. Small farms and small farmers in place of corporate farms and absentee land owners. This involves protection of existing small farms and land reforms to redistribute land.
9. Fair trade, not free trade, to ensure farmers and producers get a fair return. Trade as a means rather than end, with global trade subservient to values of ecological sustainability, health and social justice.

Against all odds, millions of people from across the world have been putting these principles into practice. The post Seattle challenge is to change the global trade rules and national food and agricultural policies so that these practices can be nurtured and spread and ecological agriculture, which protects small farms and peasant livelihoods, and produces safe food, is not marginalised and criminalised. The time has come to reclaim the stolen harvest and celebrate the growing and giving of good food as the highest gift and the most revolutionary act.



# A General Discussion on the Social Impacts of the Economic Reform Programme in the Cook Islands

*By Vaine Wichman*

## **Preamble**

Public and economic reform programmes have become a catch phrase in the Pacific region. Island governments are pursuing rigid reform policies to realign economic growth and development along more realistic and productive lines. Translating private sector growth strategies into action has become the challenge as public services contract and conducive legislation is introduced. This paper looks at obvious social issues that are a product of economic reform programmes and presents general discussions on invisible implications of reform programmes not often considered in the reformed economic policy framework.

## **The Economic Reform Programme (ERP)**

In 1994 through to 1996, the Cook Islands experienced a cash liquidity problem as a result of national overborrowing, lack of returns on borrowing, and the downturn in the tourism industry, to name just a few of the key structural imbalances at the time. It became clear that the Government would not be able to meet its financial commitments up to the end of the fiscal year. The critical situation provided the impetus for a thorough approach to public sector reforms, development of a new economic strategy and formulation and adoption by Cabinet of an Economic Reform Programme (ERP) outlining the Government's intention for economic reform. The ERP included: public sector downsizing, strengthening financial and economic management, stimulating private sector growth, reforming the leading productive sectors (tourism, agriculture and marine resources) and addressed sustainability and social equity issues.

The overall aim of the ERP involved correcting imbalances based on high levels of Government expenditure; high levels of public sector relative to private sector employment; low levels of domestic savings; wide and growing trade imbalance; and the under-utilisation of local resources.

## **Some social impacts of the ERP**

Public sector downsizing and fiscal and economic responsibility measures (output budgeting) have been the main catalysts for reforming and realigning sector operations and policies. Visible outcomes of macro-level reform policies impacting on social sector policies include: a high level of out migration (particularly the economically active) affecting the community; a noticeable impact on the workload of women, particularly in the outer islands; changes in spending patterns; health and education service delivery being affected; and a shift in the structure of employment towards the private sector.

Since the ERP began, a casualty has been the loss of the young and economically active group overseas, at a time when the country needs their energies most to sustain the transition from a public sector led economy to a private sector growth one. However given the mobility of Cook Islanders there is an assumption that once the economy picks up again on a more permanent basis, there will be a return migration. Over the ERP, budget policy directives support maintaining public expenditure levels in education, health and the social service and welfare sectors. Despite this directive the quality of service delivery in these sectors has been at its lowest, particularly with outer island services suffering the most in terms of inadequate supplies, essential resources and manpower shortages.

## **Social Groups Vulnerable to Reform Programmes**

### ***Health***

Demographic projections for the next few years suggest a rise in the population (especially the young and the old). The implications of this rise will influence the delivery of health services in the country. As an essential service, the Health Ministry will be committed to a reform of health service delivery in line with resource availability and management, and changing demographic and geographic variables that determine the cost, level and scope of health operations. Clearly,

*(see next page)*



the elderly, who are the social group prone to most diseases relating to aging will be most affected in terms of cost increases as a result of purchasing prescriptions. MOH's immediate concern to address and upgrade community preventative health care and services enhances the vulnerability of the present and future old aged group as many community oriented programmes are targeted at the mother, children and upcoming labour force.

Outer islanders in general will always be affected by shifts in basic health service delivery. Children in the 0-5 age group, are the future labour force, and their health status today decides how productive they will be in 10 to 15 years from now. Frequent illnesses at this age can lead to constant health problems in their economically active years.

### **Women**

Increased hardship has been placed on women as the loss of income coupled with the introduction of some user charges have combined to put more pressure on them to manage family budgets. There has been a significant move back to traditional labour intensive methods of housekeeping in an effort to stretch household budgets. Financial pressures and the adoption of more labour-intensive household practises have reduced their ability to contribute to their communities and to care for their extended families in some instances (Buchan, D. Social Impact of the ERP Report, 1997).

### **Youth**

Limited formal employment work opportunities on the outer islands highlight the vulnerability of school leavers. The problem is compounded as alternative employment is constrained by lack of trade and career oriented training programmes for young people. It is no wonder therefore that their sights are fixed on migrating to Rarotonga, and further afield to New Zealand.

### **Outer Islanders in general**

The outer islanders are the rural poor of the Cook Islands in both economic and social terms. One key area where the unfairness in resource grants has had a harsh impact is education and training. The outer island pupils do poorly at school in respect to the national norm and there is a risk that poor schooling could maintain the place of many outer islanders as unskilled labour at best.

The outer islands also get an unfair share of health spending. The poor allocation shows up in the poor state of the health service in the outer islands. The serv-

ice is basic and has needed upgrading for a long time. Health audits since 1985 have shown many clinics badly kept, unclean and short of drugs and equipment. If the outer islands are to progress there must be some reallocating by the state of funds for education and health. The Outer Islands will also have to learn to sustain their infrastructure.

## **Concluding Discussion**

Probably the only certain thing about ERPs in the Pacific region is their inevitableness. For all Pacific Islands it has been only a matter of time before governments concede to external pressures to restructure expenditure, private sector, and fiscal and monetary policies along international monetary lines that encourage competitiveness and efficiently functioning national capitalist economies. The fall from grace of national government bureaucracies with electorates, donor partners, and international lending agencies has given way to the removal of market constraints - government being the main one. This contraction of Government however theoretically was to be balanced by a refocus by Government on those activities and issues that Governments should be involved in, namely - educating the population and ensuring their health and welfare and safety. Unfortunately it appears that the Cook Islands ERP, has followed the model of economic restructuring without installing facilities that will cushion the impact. Or is this simply the way ERPs perform? Invisible, marginal, and social sectors are confirmed casualties of ERPs and like the public sector have to accommodate the fiscal cuts that spread through the economy during such periods of reform.

There does not appear to be a creditable model of economic restructuring or reform that paints a desirable picture for the lesser fortunate members of the state and country. Maybe the challenge is to find something other than opening our economies to better markets and job opportunities.

*As a development economist, Vaine has worked in the Cook Islands and other Pacific Islands with Pacific communities (and rural communities in particular) in empowerment programmes through income earning and employment creation activities. In 1996 she was part of an ADB/Cook Islands Government team that was tasked with spearheading the economic reform programme in the Cook Islands. Since then she has set up a Pacific wide consulting service in the area of socio-economic development with the Cook Islands as her base.*



# Globalisation and the Response of Maori Women

by Makere Harawira

## Globalisation as Concept

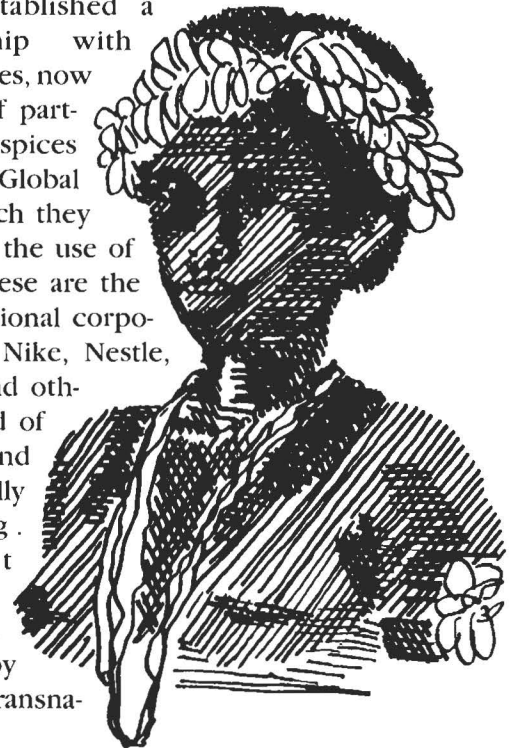
While there is a great deal of rhetoric about both its benefits and evils, as a concept globalisation tends to be very poorly defined. At one level, the term 'globalisation' refers to the processes by which the world is becoming more interdependent. Interdependence is a concept that is extremely well understood by indigenous peoples because it is embedded in our psyche. Our genealogy which is the foundation of Maori society, connects us to first Papatuanuku, (Earth Mother) and her children, to Tangaroa (God of the Sea) and his children, to Ranginui, (Sky Father) and beyond that to the entire solar system. These are fundamental concepts that have been passed down from our ancestors for generations and are integral to Maori world views.

The term globalisation also encompasses concepts such as the notion of the global village and the ways in which we are becoming politically and socially more and more interdependent. In today's context however it primarily refers to what is seen as the unstoppable construction of a global economic order. As Renato Ruggerio, ex-Director of the World Trade Organisation stated, "We are creating a single global economy". Embedded within this new single global economy is a set of neoliberal European epistemologies which define human beings as economic units and the free market as a rationally operating framework within which perfect competition exists. Economic liberalism and free trade are the lynch pins of the new economic order designed to carry humankind on a wave of economic triumph into the new millennium. It is a model which has its roots in the mercantilism of the earliest forms of imperialism and which is deeply ideologically flawed.

The problem is not just economic globalisation nor even the notion of the market. Adam Smith's theory of self-regulating market efficiency depended upon small, locally-owned enterprises that compete in local markets on the basis of price and quality, not globalised free trade and footloose capital. What we are in fact witnessing is the assertion of new forms of global capitalism that are more insidious and more dangerous than ever. The popular concept of nation-states exercising

sovereignty on behalf of national interest and of the interests of the various groups residing within their borders is being heavily challenged by the locating economic power within transnational corporations whose wealth exceeds that of many countries. The architects of this global capitalist order are powerful businessmen, heads of transnational corporations who also sit in powerful positions of influence within the Clinton Administration.

Human rights, foreign policy, military engagements, are selectively responded to by states on the basis of economic interest, be it defined as political or strategic. Underneath every encounter of war, every humanitarian intervention by the US and its allies, including the interventions in Kosovo, is an economically defined set of interests or agendas. The United Nations, that body created following World War 2 as guardian of the new world order of the time, within which human rights instruments, regulations that circumscribe the rights of multinational companies and ensuring the ability of states to provide for the rights of citizens, and within whose framework the draft declaration of the rights of indigenous peoples has been struggled over inch by inch, who declared 1993 as the Year of Indigenous Peoples and established a new partnership with indigenous peoples, now has a new set of partners under the auspices of a non-binding Global Compact by which they acquire rights to the use of the UN logo. These are the heads of transnational corporations such as Nike, Nestle, Shell, Novartis and others whose record of corruption and genocide is equally outstanding. Development within the UNDP is now defined and determined by this group of transna-





tional corporate interests. We are witnessing the assertion of new forms of capitalism, of a new global capitalist order in which the resources, the wealth, the assets of the world are increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few, while the vast majority are increasingly dispossessed.

Arguably the most disenfranchised, disempowered and dispossessed groups within this new global economic order are indigenous peoples and minorities all over the world. The object of deliberate genocide, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of indigenous people have died during our time in the struggle to retain the right to live on and care for their territories on which they not only depend for survival but have ancient, deeply-held spiritual and genealogical connection. This is well documented in countless UN reports.

Yet despite the documented evidence these facts are determinedly ignored by mainstream reporting, ignored by governments and ignored by the majority of people who either don't know due to a well-controlled media, or simply are occupied with their own daily struggle. And then there are those whose need to ensure their own survival results in a particular and selective form of myopia. So that while righteous indignation can be freely generated over ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, that same righteous indignation is largely absent regarding the plight of thousands of indigenous peoples.

## **Multilateral Economic and Trade Agreements**

The framework of this global capitalist economic order is sustained and regulated by a series of multilateral agreements whose function is to protect the interests of business over that of governments, civil society and most certainly indigenous peoples. International regulations which in the 1970s enabled states to regulate the activities of multinational interests within their borders have been overridden by multilateral economic and trade agreements which protect and enhance the rights of investors over the rights of citizens, over indigenous peoples' rights to their natural resources, to the land which is their very being, over environmental regulations, over labour agreements, over the most basic human rights to a decent living standard and a decent wage. These agreements are enforceable in courts of law both nationally and internationally.

One of the central pillars of this global economic order is the World Trade Organisation which came into existence in 1993 due to the inadequacy of the GATT

agreement as an enforcer of the international regulations that provide the structure for the global capitalist order. New regional economic agreements such as NAFTA and APEC are also designed to reinforce this economic order. Built into these international and regional agreements are legally enforceable clauses protecting the rights of trade and investment - for which read transnational business interests - over those of local communities and countries.

For instance, the Most Favoured Nation clauses common to the GATT, WTO, NAFTA and APEC mean in simple terms that investors must be treated at least as well as the most favoured country with whom business is being done. It means that you cannot discriminate on the grounds of human rights, environmental regulations, genetically modified foodstuffs etc. National Treatment clauses mean that investors have to be given at least the same rights as local businesses. States can no longer support local businesses, protect labour conditions and the rights of women and children where they are deemed to restrict or inhibit the ability of foreign investment to make a profit.

## **Loss of Environment and Resource Protections**

The provisions of these regional and international agreements override nation-state regulations including environmental regulations, genetically modified or hormone treated foodstuffs, labour laws and all citizenship rights. The loss of nation-states ability to regulate environmental and other protections within their own borders has enormous implications for indigenous peoples' lands and resources including intellectual and cultural property rights over which the battle being waged in Aotearoa/New Zealand for some years now has been led by Maori women and fiercely resisted by the government. Economic globalisation has fostered the rape and plunder of indigenous intellectual and cultural knowledge by multinational pharmaceutical companies who collect and study plant materials which have been used by particular indigenous groups for often thousands of years for very specific uses, and then patent the results of their research so that firstly, they own the property rights and therefore also the profits and secondly, so that in many cases, this plant can no longer be freely used by those who have traditionally used it. The entrenched nature of capitalist thinking and practice means it is almost impossible to counteract this practice.

In Aotearoa, Maori women have been the initiators of a claim before the Waitangi Tribunal which seeks to

protect Maori intellectual and cultural rights over flora and fauna. The most noticeable aspect of this case which is a landmark case and which has implications for indigenous people everywhere, is the way that the Crown has consistently put obstacles in the way of the case because of its implications for foreign investment. The significance of this claim is wider than might at first be realised in that it represents the strongest case for protecting New Zealand's flora and fauna from pillaging and exploitation by overseas-owned multinational companies.

## Structural Adjustment and the Global Economic Order

Structural adjustment programs such as those imposed in Yugoslavia, Russia, Brazil, Mexico, Aotearoa, to name just a few, are an integral part of the development of the new global economic order as they are the means by which the assets and resources of countries are made available, often at rock bottom prices<sup>1</sup> to the same groups of creditors whose debts are paid off by loans through the IMF. A key principle of economic restructuring, whether in Aotearoa/New Zealand or Brazil, is the separation of economics from social issues.

This in turn becomes a means of separating the people from their lands, their resources, their sacred taonga (treasures), their livelihoods, their very being. At the international level, at the regional level – as in the APEC leaders' decision-making – and at the local level – policy and decision-making is based on the notion of economic gain without counting the cost in human terms.

In the South Pacific the increasing pressure being applied to small Pacific Island states by aid donor countries such as Australia and New Zealand to pursue reforms and open up their economies, combined with the cutthroat tactics of foreign companies in lowering labour costs and conditions, are wreaking havoc on the living standards and sustainability of small Pacific Island countries such as Fiji, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea.

## The Aotearoa Experience

Fifteen years of structural adjustment in Aotearoa has been nothing less than disastrous. The embracing of free market ideologies has resulted in a record trade deficit and a record overseas debt that was the original justification for the privatisation and sale of the country's assets. The move towards minimalist government has permitted the opening up of the country's essential services to power brokers and the consequent loss of social, health and educational services to significant

parts of the country. As elsewhere in the Pacific, the outcome has been a huge increase in the disparity between the wealthy and the impoverished, and the number of the latter is growing at an alarming rate. However the government continues to produce false statistics which give a rosy glow to the picture of the nation's economy.

Under the National government, Aotearoa/New Zealand led the way in the dismantling of trade barriers in order to participate in international trade agreements. The New Zealand government entered into multilateral and bilateral agreements with less economic protection than any other participant. The fact that such agreements enable the sale of or trade in almost all such resources, assets and enterprises as remain in New Zealand ownership, when they privilege foreign investors without requiring any return to this country, caused Maori as well as many other New Zealanders great concern.

Rather than increased employment and the promised reduction of our overseas debt, the privatisation and structural adjustment program of these 15 years has resulted not only in a record overseas debt of \$102 billion (up from \$97 billion the previous year) but also an enormous increase in unemployment. This has been coupled with economic rationalisation applied to public policies for health, welfare and education, for all of which Maori statistics are the worst in the country. In fact the rapid reforms experienced during the past 15 years within Aotearoa have been matched by record negative statistics in the areas of health, employment, income and housing.

## Global Economic Capitalism – Neo-Colonialism

For indigenous peoples, these new forms of economic globalisation are a continuation of the colonisation which has been perpetrated on them since the beginnings of capitalist expansion. Nevertheless the experience of globalisation is not the same for all people within groups. Economic globalisation has enormously increased the hardship and despair of many groups of women. Indigenous women's experience of globalisation is one of multiple layers of





oppression. From the very beginning, colonisation turned indigenous societies on their head. In the case of Aotearoa/New Zealand, colonisation has reversed the form and structure of our societies, rewritten our histories, redefined who we are and our relationships with one another as with the experience of my own *iwi* (tribe).

As was the case with some other First Peoples Nations in Aotearoa, Waitaha were a matriarchal people. Waitaha women were the holders of knowledge that was highly *tapu*, or sacred. They held knowledge of *whakapapa*, of medicines, of plants, and of the stars. With the advent of colonisation not only was the *whakapapa* of many of our women displaced and often lost, so also was the knowledge that they held, knowledge that was held as sacred and which provided the foundation of tribal ontologies.

The systematic rewriting of Maori histories and the sustained and deliberate attack on Maori social structures and values of collectivity which has continued to this day has not only fragmented our people and dispossessed them of their lands but also removed the status of Maori women and relegated them to the lowest level of society. These new forms of colonialism integral to the construction of this new global capitalist economic order are seeing indigenous women are once again experiencing multiple layers of oppression.

The influence of western liberal patriarchal values has been one of the most significant contributions to the oppression of Maori women. The cooptation of indigenous leaders by neoliberal ideologies of individualism, competitiveness and consumerism is increasing the levels of oppression experienced by many indigenous peoples. The most significant and disruptive effect of colonisation which is being reiterated in the current forms of economic liberalism and globalisation of the economy has been the theft of long and deeply-held traditional values and understandings of collectivity, of *manakitanga* (caring for one another), of *kaitiakitanga* (Caring for Earth Mother), for Tangaroa and for their children and in the further redefining of our social structures as corporate tribes.

Much of the current practice being constructed as *iwi* or tribal development is in direct opposition to the deep cultural values and philosophies that underpin Maori social and spiritual life. One example is the trading of resource consents for activities such as mining. Another is the obtaining of consents for experimental GMO farms in exchange for the short-term benefits of employment and training. These contradictions and tensions that have arisen within Maoridom as a result of global capitalism add a further tension to the issues which Maori confront through globalisation.

Instead of enabling a revival of traditionally-held beliefs and practices, self-determination for Maori is now being reconstructed in terms of an economic base. The effect is the further displacement and fragmentation of traditional social structures of *whanau* and *bapu* and the undermining of spirituality, fundamental values and relationships that are the core of cultural identity. The *whenua* (land) with which Maori have deep spiritual connections and whose loss so traumatised our people has become a commodity to be traded, symbolising the theft of the deep spiritual beliefs and values which locate us within the universe and in relationship to each other in particular defined ways.

The infiltration of neoliberal ideologies into Maori leadership can be interpreted as yet another level of oppression particularly of Maori women whose voice the male elite leadership often try to silence. Despite this Maori women continue to be in the forefront of consciousness-raising, resistance and other forms of political action which mobilise opposition to the assertion of the inevitability of economic globalisation. Outstanding female Maori elders such as Whina Cooper, Eva Rickard, Mira Szaszy, Sana Murray, Del Weihongi, to name but a few, have led the way for the current endeavours by Maori women to combat the loss of Maori traditional values and the insidious forms of colonisation being asserted by economic globalisation.

## Final Comments

In closing I would like to say that I have come to the conclusion that the world order that is currently being created is terminally ill. I have begun to realise that it cannot be worked with or fixed from inside. It is embedded in epistemologies that are counterproductive to any form of sane and genuinely sustainable and peaceful world order. It needs replacing with a completely new model or at the very least, major surgery. As indigenous peoples who are experiencing a further wave of colonisation through global economic capitalism, and who as a result are hugely over-represented in all negative indices, the challenge for us is to seek ways of transforming these outcomes not only for Maori but for all who live on this planet.

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<sup>1</sup> as for example, in the case of Yugoslavia, Russia, and Brazil

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# PATENTING PEOPLE: THE HUMAN GENETIC GOLDRUSH

by Jean Christie, Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI)

Almost weekly, we hear that scientists have discovered another “human disease gene” - associated with a disease or condition such as breast cancer or baldness, osteoporosis, obesity or blindness. Gene hunting has become big business, and pharmaceutical industry giants are vying for control over genetic discoveries that could eventually make millions in cures. Hidden behind the headlines of “promising new discoveries” is a bigger story: the genetic goldrush of the 1990s. A handful of “genomic companies”, bankrolled by industry, are feverishly patenting human genes.

Few would question the need for medical research. But many people are questioning the privatization of the human genome that is occurring in its wake. When Rockefeller University scientists discovered and patented the “obesity gene” in 1994, for example, they licensed the patent to Amgen for \$US 65 million. Drug multinational Boehringer Ingelheim was to pay Sequana Therapeutics up to \$56.5 million for the “asthma gene”. Bayer was negotiating to pay Myriad Genetics up to \$71 million for the discovery of genes related to obesity, osteoporosis and asthma. Human Genome Sciences has patents pending on more than 250 human genes and their proteins. And what’s the result of these patents? Corporate monopoly over human genes, and research related to them. Consider the case of Britain’s Manchester Regional Genetics Centre, which was accused last year of violating a patent on the cystic fibrosis gene, held by a Canadian-based company. The company demanded a \$5,000 license fee plus a royalty of \$4 every time the Genetics Centre screened for the cystic fibrosis gene. In this case, the issue died when it was discovered that the patent was not valid in Britain. But the implications of such monopolies on human genes are staggering.

And where are the human gene hunters going in their genetic quest?

Often to remote places, where relatively isolated peoples have a particular susceptibility, or resistance, to a specific hereditary condition.

What, one might ask, is wrong with that? Nothing, if the targeted people were to give their considered agreement, after being fully informed about what research was being proposed and why; who was behind it; how the researchers would use the tissue samples they collected; and who might profit from the research results. But this is not how such tissue collection has usually taken place. Though research subjects often give tissue samples for some purpose (eg. medical diagnosis), they don’t consent to the patenting of their genetic parts. In most cases, they would be surprised to know that human gene patenting was even a possibility.

In 1993, RAFI opened a can of worms when we unearthed and then publicized a US government patent application on the cell line of a Guaymi woman from Panama. Soon after, similar US patent claims were discovered on the cell lines of people from Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Only after much publicity and persistent protest by indigenous peoples around the world were these claims dropped - two before the patents had issued, and in the Papua New Guinea case, after the patent had been granted.

Not long before these patent claims became known internationally, the Stanford University-based Human Genome Diversity Project (HGDP) was launched, with plans to collect hair samples, blood, and cheek scrapings from thousands of individuals, representing 722 peoples around the globe. Almost overnight, the project became a lightning rod for groups who learned they had been targeted, with not a word of consultation, let alone agreement. When challenged by indigenous peoples and other civil society groups about





how the rights of their research subjects would be protected, and whether the collected material could be sheltered from patent claim, HGDP spokespeople consistently missed the mark. They tried, belatedly, to address some of the ethical questions raised by their plans. But they failed utterly to come to grips with the policy vacuum in which they were operating. Thus, when the three human patent claims described above were revealed, opponents to the unregulated collection of human tissue and to "human patenting" went into high gear. They called for a halt to the HGDP and all similar tissue collections, until the policy issues surrounding gene hunting and patenting could be adequately addressed by appropriate international bodies. They publicized their concerns wherever they could - at an International Conference on DNA sampling, the Conference of the Parties to the Biodiversity Convention, the UNESCO Bioethics Committee, and the World Health Organization - to name some. And they had an impact.

When the HGDP requested a substantial grant from the US government, the US National Academy of Sciences (NAS) was called upon to review the HGDP, which they did in late 1996. This provided the opportunity that critics needed to make their voice heard. RAFI arranged for colleagues from Colombia and the Solomon Islands to go to Washington, and join RAFI in appearing before the NAS Panel. The testimonies of our Southern partners were the only first-hand accounts the Panel heard from peoples who had been the target of gene hunting and patenting. In the end, they won the day. The US National Academy of Sciences concluded that a global survey of human genetic diversity was merited, but that the HGDP itself was ethically and scientifically inadequate. And so a point had been made. But human tissue sampling continues under other guises, and the policy vacuum remains three years later.

So what should be done? In short, these issues must be placed squarely on the agendas of the decision-making bodies that can take appropriate action - to monitor and regulate tissue collection and stop human patenting. RAFI has proposed a number of actions. For instance:

- The United Nations system must decide which UN body should have responsibility to conserve and protect human biodiversity, and establish binding procedures governing the use and international exchange of human genetic material (including by military institutions)
- The World Health Organization (WHO), and other world medical bodies must adopt internationally-

accepted medical ethics and informed consent protocols, to cover the commercialization and/or patenting of genetic material obtained from human beings

- given World Trade Organization requirements for governments to adopt intellectual property laws covering living organisms, and the WTO's planned review of its intellectual property (TRIPS) provisions, a UN body should ask the World Court for an Advisory Opinion on the patenting of human genetic material. (See below.)
- In its review of TRIPS, The World Trade Organization could be pressed to exclude from patentability all inventions that claim human genetic material.

Governments and civil society organizations, including indigenous peoples, human rights, medical, and research bodies can work together nationally and regionally to promote and publicize the need for these and similar actions.

*Please see RAFI's website at <http://www.rafi.org> for more detailed information about all of the issues raised in this article.*

#### Proposed Wording for a UN Resolution on the World Court

**RECOGNIZING** that patenting of human genetic material is becoming commonplace in some patent jurisdictions,

**RECOGNIZING** that many peoples find the patenting of human genetic material contrary to ordre public, or morality,

**RECOGNIZING** that TRIPS Article 27 requires signatory states to provide for the patenting of microorganisms, and

**RECOGNIZING** that many states are now drafting intellectual property legislation to conform with TRIPS,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the (name UN Body) request an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice, to determine whether WTO members may exclude from patentability all inventions which claim human genetic material, on the grounds of ordre public

# Women and the Perils of Reproductive 'Choice' in West Papua

by Leslie Butt

One of the most effective ways to assess the position of indigenous women in a given society is to look at ways that those in power attempt to regulate reproduction. Conception, childbirth, child-spacing and sexuality are all realms that politically interested parties can attempt to manipulate so as to affirm or enable political goals. One arena of particular concern for feminists has been how interventions that reflect specific political aims constrain women from achieving in their daily lives what southern feminists call "reproductive self-determination." The problem is particularly acute for indigenous women - original landowners displaced by incoming settlers - who have lost the right to rule themselves and to dispose of resources that belong to them. Indigenous women lack the means to engage state policies on equal terms, and as a result they are particularly vulnerable to attempts to control their reproductive life histories (e.g. number of children, use of family planning technologies, child-spacing patterns). In Indonesia, for example, indigenous women face powerful state forces that seek to control population growth in order to promote a two-child family policy, which in turn enables the state to implement fundamental economic policy. The economic impetus behind the "two is enough" motto is such that sustained attempts to regulate the number of children born is the norm, even in remote communities that do not historically have large families.

This paper suggests that a prevailing value in Indonesian institutions, that of familism, coalesces in the realm of interventions into indigenous women's reproductive lives. Familism, I argue, undermines existing indigenous cultural values, and in so doing enforces state-sanctioned family ideals that not only destroy any illusion of "reproductive self-determination," but also challenge the future prosperity of indigenous groups.

The ways that indigenous women in West Papua have observed and responded to these values is the subject of this paper. After sketching what familism means in West Papua, with particular emphasis on Family Planning (KB) outreach, I describe the rumours that circulated during field research I carried out in the highlands of West Papua in 1994 and 1995, among a group called the Dani. I also assess current political activism by indigenous women who oppose a pattern of sexual assaults by the military on local people. Both the Dani and the activists are women who reject Indonesian ideals of familism, and who demonstrate that "reproductive self-determination," as an ideal, involves engagement with forms of social and political activism that expand far beyond the realm of individual reproductive practices.

## "Familism" and "Family Planning" in Indonesia

In Indonesia, a controversial feature of the constitution is its "family principle." This is a set of values that construe the economy and the state as a family. The political advantage of an all-pervasive familism, according to one critic, is "to propagate a conforming society built around the nuclear family, instrumental to state power". Paternalistic values infuse all levels of political organization, including idealized models of women who function "as appendages of their husbands". Djajaningrat-Niewenhuis among others, has written of a pervasive but unstated valuation of restrained, monogamous women as deferring to male heads of households, and devoted to ensuring the household runs smoothly and that children are reared successfully. Correa calls these values fundamentalism, which she defines as a scripting of women's potential wherein women are heterosexualized, domesticated, and married. According to Enloe, fundamentalism pervades international law, which holds up the family as the basic unit of the sovereign-nation state, with woman's place in it sacrosanct. In Indonesia in particular, fundamentalism pervades multiple state institutions, including the military, the Civil Servants' Wives Association, the Family Planning Board [BKKBN], and is even found in the "Happy Families Law" which provides guidance to the Ministry of Health and to the Family Planning Board. In Indonesia's easternmost province of West Papua, familism functions as an ideology that legitimates the actions of the relocated military and civil servants who implement state policies.

Indonesian in-migrants to West Papua, often called "newcomers" by the indigenous people, have been importing family-based values since 1969, but these values by no means dominate the cultural landscape. There are currently 250 linguistically distinct indigenous groups in West Papua, and each group engages in cultural practices shaped in part by subsistence patterns characteristic of coastal, swamp or highlands terrain. These people have been broadly labeled Melanesian, Irianese, or Papuan, and number some 900,000 strong. However, since 1969 Indonesian citizens from other islands have relocated with such alacrity to the resource-rich province that they now form the majority of the current population of approximately two million people. In the main, newcomers support the nation's conservative development mandate, one which places cultural difference second to the unifying goals of the country. The objective of development is to make "the different ethnic groups ...in the long run disappear because of integration...and there will be one kind of man".

There are two realms where familism has had a forceful impact in West Papua: one is the military. Over the past four



decades, many indigenous groups, including the OPM - a long-lasting sovereignty organization - have opposed integration into Indonesia, using overt political organizing and violent action alongside more passive means of resistance. In response, the military has played a key role in both the governance of West Papua and in the implementation of Indonesian economic policies. Under this principle of a dual mandate, ABRI's role extends to the political and social spheres with the goal of "developing the nation." Thus, since 1969, West Papua has been called a "Military Operations Area," which allows the military to limit access to outside observers, journalists, and researchers. In the central highlands of the province, special military controls are in place, notably around the U.S. company Freeport-McMoRan's gold and copper mine, the second largest gold mine in the world. The military in Indonesia, argues Sunindyo, is powerfully bound to a familistic model of the state. In addition, the military operates from a masculinized position that denies women political power, naturalizes an idealized nuclear family, and excludes women from the public sphere.

A second area where familism dominates is in the realm of family planning. According to state policy, the aim of free birth control that the government offers is to reduce population growth by encouraging parents to limit their offspring to a total of two children. "Two is enough," Indonesia's Family Planning Board's [BKKBN] motto intones. The Board implements policy by attempting to transform people's values

towards one of a small, mutually interdependent nuclear family, and women of reproductive age are targeted as one of the means to best achieve this.

There is a host of evidence suggesting that the practice of family planning in isolated regions of Indonesia veers more towards coercion than it does free and informed choice. Despite the energetic goals and the optimistic prose of family planning policy, several critics have suggested that the logic and practice of family planning relies on a foundation of coercion that was well-documented in the earliest efforts at population control and that still prevails. The rationale is that people will not take up contraception without strong direction.

Guidance is perceived to be most effective when it comes from a combination of individual persuasion and community influence. Strategies include recruiting members of the village of potential users as volunteers; encouraging village heads

and their wives actively to support the program; and training midwives and health workers to promote the program: all these meant that the line between free "choice" and imposition of family planning goals was very thin. As Warwick summarizes: "While the [Family Planning Board] maintains that contraceptive users are ready for more freedom, it continues to operate a system that does not grant them such freedom...The free choice of individuals is thus endorsed so long as it is in harmony with the national consensus". In the present, the use of quantified targets - women birth control users who are termed "acceptors" - ensures that highly motivational community persuasion continues to be a prominent feature of birth control distribution on the ground. In short, it is something of a truism to say that the interest that Indonesian women may evince in family planning does not occur in a political vacuum, and that politics have a great deal to do with the "choice" that women may make to use or not to use family planning methods.

### A Highlands Case

By drawing on field research from 1995, I talk first about contraception services, and then about the kind of rumours that one highland group, the Dani, circulate about birth control in order to come to terms with coercive interventions and narrow assumptions about women's potential.

Compared to coastal populations, the Dani have been relatively marginalized from Indonesian development activities. And yet, with great alacrity over the past decade, the Dani have been presented with the opportunity to use free birth control. Even though the geographical distance from the centre of power in Java means that many government services are neglected, the Dani nonetheless have been offered up-to-date technologies such as Norplant and Depo-Provera. Norplant is an implant consisting of 6 silicone rods containing 30 mg. of synthetic progestin that temporarily sterilizes women for up to five years after insertion<sup>1</sup>. Depo-Provera, also a temporary form of sterilization, is given by injection, usually once every three months. At local health clinics, during outreach "safaris" and through motivational seminars on nutrition and development, indigenous women are presented with ample opportunity to use these reproductive technologies.

In addition to an institutional structure that limits women's choices, the actual supply and provision of birth control minimizes options. Norplant and Depo-Provera are the only forms of fertility regulation readily available to Dani women. While families can choose condoms, IUDs and pills in other provinces, in the highlands newcomer clinic workers will not prescribe pills to Dani women.<sup>2</sup> They argue that women "forget," "use them improperly," or "feed birth control pills to their pigs," echoing judgments made worldwide about uneducated women's putative inability to use reproductive technologies correctly. Judgmental attitudes by clinic staff who are not indigenous also curtail women's options. Of the Dani women I interviewed during research in 1995 who had ever tried Norplant or Depo-Provera, two-thirds found complaint with the way the service was provided by



newcomers. Newcomers treated them with a lack of respect at clinics and did not listen to them, they said, or newcomers yelled at them, or workers sent them home and told them to come back another day. Women consistently do not receive full and detailed explanations about how birth control works. In addition, judgments grounded in cultural essentialisms affect women's access to the service. In the administrative center in the highlands, workers at the two clinics have set up a segregated service system for family planning and maternal and child health: "indigenous day" and "newcomer days." This segregation exists, one administrator explained, because: "the Dani are dirty and women won't want to use the same examining table as a Dani." If a Dani woman attends a clinic on the wrong day, she is sent home.

Overall, many Dani women consider the concept of reproductive control quite exciting. From the viewpoint of Dani cultural values, women can maintain the ideal local form of patterns of child-spacing and still have sex. Women are quick to seize the potential of birth control as a safer and more legitimate form of fertility regulation than abortion. Birth control potentially liberates Dani women from less than ideal husbands, from sexual restraint, and from cultural expectations about women's behaviour that can be as restraining as those of the nation-state. Dani women do make choices about the trajectory of their reproductive lives. However, they do so within circumstances constrained by state policies and by discrimination shaping local practice. The following example highlights Dani ambivalence about a service that simultaneously enables as it constrains.

### **Cultural Constructions of Birth Control**

Dani ambivalence comes to life in rumour. Rumours, anthropologists have shown, are a means to reflect upon and consolidate responses to ongoing events. That rumour about birth control is rife suggests that this new technology has multiple meanings for the Dani, meanings not constrained to issues solely about women's rights to reproductive control. Dani talk and Dani rumours about birth control suggests a forceful ambivalence. Most Dani that I interviewed articulated a recurring fear: birth control exists to eliminate the Dani people, the rumor persists. Birth control is a government ploy to make the Dani disappear; "birth control kills," the rumour goes. After all, they reason, we have traditional patterns of birth spacing that limit our births to one child every six years or so; why is the government so insistent on providing us with birth control? The first time I heard this rumor, I was with a trained Dani health worker, who actively dispensed birth control as a key part of his job. He wondered aloud, "maybe the government wants to kill us. Maybe it's a government plot, the government has secrets no one knows about." When I questioned him about this statement, he said it was a topic actively debated among the men and women that attended his clinic and in his home village. A minor tribal leader and polygynous husband of three wives was also adamantly opposed to birth control:

*Birth control is dangerous. The government makes birth control and it doesn't do a good job compared to school*

*which he approves of. It can kill women. A woman took birth control and then couldn't get pregnant and then she died. Birth control can kill you if you don't have schooling. If you can read and understand ideas about birth control then maybe it's okay but otherwise it is too dangerous. They shouldn't make it available.*

Corroboration with Dani adults in several regions of the valley suggest that the rumor is widespread, and very much alive. An educated priest and activist, inclined to vocal critiques of the government, states with finality: "birth control is government genocide."

The story of Pelesina's experiences with birth control shows how women and men invoke the rumor as explanation during a time of uncertainty. In 1994, Pelesina had three children and was in a monogamous marriage to a man who was both a church and a traditional clan leader. After the birth of their third child, Pelesina's husband persuaded her to try Depo-Provera injections so as to allow them to engage in sexual relations. When her breastfeeding child "had her two front teeth," Pelesina swallowed her fear of birth control and allowed her husband to convince her that it was not scary. Pelesina followed directions given her by the nurse at the small health clinic some 10 kilometres away, and so, every three months for six years, she walked to the clinic and received another injection. When she decided it was time to have a fourth child Pelesina stopped getting the injections but found she was unable to conceive. She asked for "fertility drugs"<sup>4</sup> which she said she drank several times until she got pregnant. Pelesina miscarried this fetus, which she interpreted as a profound calamity. She called her husband and they went to the river and sat down and looked at the miscarried fetus and they saw that it had no hands, no legs, no face and no ears, just a head and a body, "an egg with a person inside" described Pelesina. Pelesina worried that she had damaged her womb beyond repair through the use of birth control and the additional drugs she had taken. "Was this something that has been done to me on purpose?," she wondered aloud during my interview with her. She knew that "women who get the injections have lots and lots of miscarriages and stillbirths and problems at childbirth," and that "women who do not are free of these kinds of problems." A friend of Pelesina, resistant to using birth control, said unequivocally, with a directness unusual for women, that government birth control was "poison on purpose."

Birth control is also often linked to broader concerns about development. Rumors revolve around the idea that "development" (glossed as *pembangunan* by the Dani to include all government-sponsored activities that control economic or social change) actually disempowers Dani, that underneath all the rhetoric of positive growth and economic opportunity lies a festering, monstrous hate. Several Dani articulated that "development" serves to take power and wealth away from the Dani, not give it to them. Thus rumors about the real reasons behind a rice paddy enterprise, birth control, infant immunizations, or other new health initiatives, circulate within a broad but consistent theme of elimination. In short, they worry that there will be no Dani left.



Only from the perspective of reproductive interventions is it possible to see why the local family planning board would want to promote birth control in a community where birth rates already fall below replacement levels. Infant mortality rates are over one in four, at 280 deaths per 1,000 live births. In other areas in the province, also served by family planning products, infant death rates of 400 per 1,000 live births have been tallied. I am not suggesting that the relationship between family planning and infant death rates is deliberate - that is, that the state seeks to kill its citizens through this tortuous trickery - but I am suggesting that the kind of antipathy expressed by Indonesia towards the indigenous peoples of West Papua in general has its articulation in the silences over infant mortality rates, and in the lack of concern over the consequences of an iatrogenic technology.

## Discussion

In West Papua, the value the nation-state attaches to family planning is in full evidence: there are more services aimed at controlling reproduction and at improving infant well-being than any other health measures. But this bureaucratic presence can mislead the casual observer into a complacency wherein she becomes confident that basic health concerns are being dealt with, when in fact they are not. The stated goals of birth control, and the one communicated to women ad nauseam is that women should seize the chance to control their own reproduction. This ideology of liberation is fed to women worldwide. Yet it obscures certain patterns prevalent in contemporary population control policies: that contraception can work without concomitant economic development; that contraception too often occurs in the absence of adequate health care; and that contraception takes priority over other important technological innovations that can improve quality of life. Birth control is slipped in and offered alongside health interventions universally lauded as essential and benevolent; this is a relationship of political expedience, not one of pragmatics or logic. To remain concerned with the issue of women's freedom, however important, misses out on the larger implications of ethnic discrimination in West Papua. It is not just Dani women's bodies who are being targeted here, but through them, Dani men and women of future generations.

We can take comfort in the knowledge that, despite ideologies promoting obeisance, West Papuan women do not respond to state policies that disempower them in either a passive or a deferential way. For example, indigenous women have helped to found the Institute for Human Rights and Advocacy [IHRSTAD] in West Papua's capital city, and have used this platform to lobby for international recognition of the forms of abuse they have experienced. As a result of their efforts, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Ms. Rhadika Coomaraswamy, tried last year to get a visa to visit the women in West Papua, and to conduct a fact-finding mission on gender-based violence on indigenous women. She was refused entry. Nonetheless, Coomaraswamy's U.N. report on violence against women contains a strongly-worded critique of human rights violations in West Papua. One woman who was tortured and

assaulted in 1994 has just testified before the U.S. Congress at a briefing on human rights developments. Two other women have traveled to the Netherlands to work with a non-profit organization there, PaVo, and have spoken about sexual assault on two separate occasions at the 1999 U.N. Commission on Human Rights 55th session. Last but not least, in 1998 Yosepha Alomang, has launched a six billion dollar lawsuit against Freeport McMoran Inc. on behalf of her people, the Amungme, for the environmental and personal damages they have suffered as a result of having a gold mine on their land.

Leaving aside the issue of the potential successes of these women, what is striking is that in taking a political stance on human rights, women deny state strategies. The women who are fighting back take a position that clearly opposes that of a simplistic familism or of a single-minded preoccupation with reproductive rights. The communal values that these women share - loyalty to a nationalist struggle, loyalty to tribal group, loyalty to kin, and loyalty to family - together make them strong enough to move beyond limitations of state visions to make a choice to engage in public action. These women do not negate the importance of family; what they are denying is the state's narrow construct of it. They deny that making choices about reproduction is only about the individual woman's body, and they deny that women's key role is as supporter and nurturer of her husband. Only through understanding political control over reproduction as a form of gendered violence can we begin to decipher the links, as Milan Kundera puts it, between the very horrors that take place on the big stage of Indonesian politics, and the small horrors of indigenous private lives.

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## Endnotes

- 1 There are 1.5 to 2 million Norplant users worldwide; 1.3 million of these women are in Indonesia.
- 2 Warwick describes discrepancies in access to different forms of birth control across the country, and Storey suggests that these discrepancies are rooted in coercive forms of government regulation.
- 3 The Dani ideal is to have a child approximately once every six years.
- 4 Pelesina had heard from her sister-in-law that there was a liquid that could make her fertile, and when she went to the clinic the staff there offered her some medication which they termed "fertility drug." The staff members that I interviewed were unable to recall what precisely they gave Pelesina but they stated they occasionally gave out several birth control pills to women who had used Depo-Provera injections for prolonged periods of time as birth control pills often helped to regulate irregular menstrual cycles.

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# Resisting Writing and Writing Resistance

by *Teresia Teaiwa*

## Introduction

When I was first invited to the CAPI/SPPF conference this year, I was told it would be on indigenous women, culture and development. With this understanding, I wanted to contribute to the conference by addressing some of the politics around the term "indigenous" in the Pacific. The Pacific Islands region contains an overwhelming diversity of languages, cultures, and political arrangements. If we take the term "indigenous" to mean "native" or "First Nation" then we can speak of "indigenous" Pacific Islanders while keeping in mind that colonial and postcolonial histories of migration also create "non-indigenous" identities which are just as legitimately Pacific Islander. If we take the term to mean "Fourth World" or struggling for political sovereignty, then we have to acknowledge that most Pacific Islands have "Third World" status, and thus are historically and politically distinct from those Pacific Islanders who are still engaged in a decolonizing process. In a nutshell, the term "indigenous" does not have the same currency and significance for the independent Pacific as it does for the decolonizing Pacific.

As a Pacific Islander, a student of Pacific history, and a lecturer in History/Politics at the University of the South Pacific, I have seen tremendous differences in the approaches to culture and development taken by islanders in the so-called independent Pacific compared to islanders in the decolonizing Pacific. In general there tends to be more complacency about culture and less critical analysis of development in the independent Pacific nations compared to those Pacific nations still engaged in the decolonizing process.

Women in the independent Pacific, however, have provided important critical perspectives on both culture and development in their nations; on occasion they have even seemed to devalue "indigenous" culture altogether. Women in the decolonizing Pacific, on the other hand, seem to have found culture to be a source of empowerment, and a necessary aid in their development. I wanted to talk about these differences and explore some of their implications at the conference;

however I was advised that these issues might be too esoteric for an audience not familiar with the diversity and complexity of the Pacific Islands. My tack then changed to introducing conference participants to a variety of writings by Pacific Island women, in order to illustrate some of these points.

This paper is part of work in progress. I provide an overview of writings about and/or by Pacific Island women, then focus on publications about Pacific Island women from the University of the South Pacific (USP), discuss one of the most important independently published works to emerge from Pacific Island women outside of USP, and finally highlight some writing by indigenous women in the decolonizing Pacific for comparison.

## Overview of Writings about and/or by Pacific Island Women

Sin Joan Yee, Deputy Librarian at USP, and long-time advocate of women's interests, assisted me in this project by compiling a 117-page list of all our holdings by or about Pacific Island women. The printout does not make for very scintillating reading, but it does reveal a very interesting picture of the shape and texture of writing by and about Pacific Island women. It is hoped that eventually a thorough inventory will be taken of all these holdings, noting the numbers of reports, speeches, unpublished papers, published articles, newsletters, etc.; the numbers of female and male authors, indigenous and non-indigenous authors; and numbers of holdings on development as distinct from those on culture. The last bibliography of women to be compiled for the USP was by Joan Yee and Donita Simmons in 1981, and until such time as this is updated, I provide a brief overview of USP's holdings below.

The USP Library cataloging system gathers all indigenous people of the self-governing Pacific Island nations under the designation "Pacific Islander." The system also includes indigenous people in occupied territories like the Maori (New Zealand), Aboriginal (Australia),



Hawaiian (U.S.), East Timor/West Papua (Indonesia), Kanak (France). The term "Pacific Islander" in the USP Library catalog further embraces settler populations like Indo-Fijians, and Europeans or mixed race people in various parts of the region.

So, for instance, the range of materials that can be gathered about "Pacific Islander" women includes work by non-indigenous women about non-indigenous women [e.g. Myra Jean Burke's *Our Time but Not Our Place: Voices of expatriate women in Papua New Guinea* (1993)];

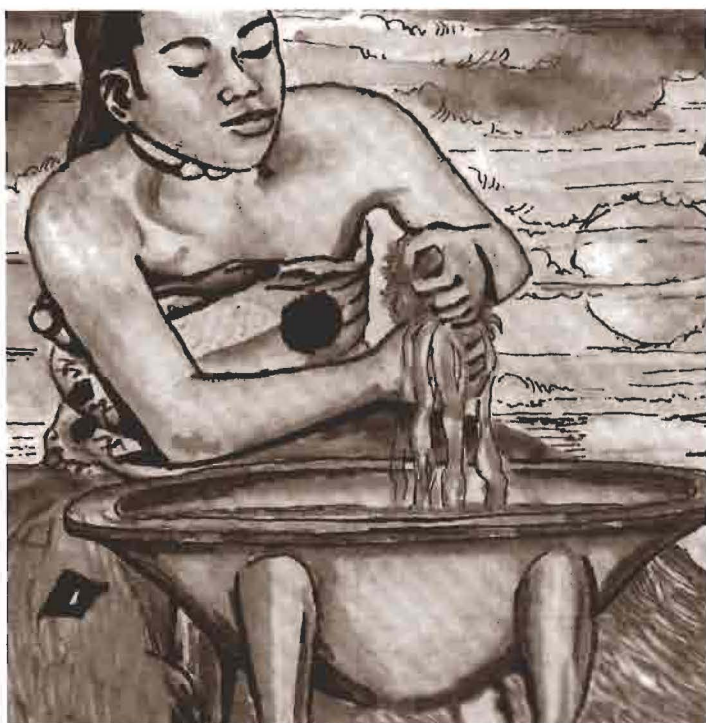
non-indigenous women about indigenous women, [e.g. Margaret Jolly's *Women of the Place: Kastom, colonialism and gender in Vanuatu* (1994)];

non-indigenous men about indigenous women [e.g. Roger Keesing's *Kwaio Women Speak: The micropolitics of autobiography* (1985)];

non-indigenous Pacific Islander women about non-indigenous Pacific Islander women, [e.g. Shaista Shameem's video documentary *Indo-Fijian Women of Suva: the untold story* (1991)];

non-indigenous Pacific Islander men about non-indigenous Pacific Islander women, [e.g. Brij V. Lal's *Kunti's Cry: Indentured Women on Fiji's plantation* (1985)];

and indigenous women on indigenous women [e.g. Robyn Kahukiwa and Patricia Grace's *Wahine Toa: Women of Maori Myth* (1984)].



The majority of the USP Library's holdings on Pacific Island women are published reports and studies. These are often commissioned by government, or regional and international organizations and agencies like the South Pacific Commission/Pacific Community, the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the International Labor Organization, among others. It is important to understand the political-economics of scholarship in the region: academic writing by Pacific Islanders is overwhelmingly tied into the research needs and development agendas of national governments and donor organizations; there is very little research pursued in the Pacific that isn't shaped by political and economic market forces.

In this section I want to draw attention to some key issues relating to writing by and/or about culture and development in relation to Pacific Island women. Though popular discourse often positions culture and development as contradictory and oppositional terms, I recognize that they are of course quite fluid—culture can accommodate development just as surely as development can accommodate culture. To clarify, however, let me define culture and development as I use the terms here. By "culture" I mean the inherited wealth of knowledge, custom, and materials that distinguish one group of Pacific Islanders from another and distinguish Pacific Islanders from other peoples. The term "development" refers here to an ideology of progress and change which implicitly values modernization, efficiency and profit.

The bulk of published articles and archived material authored by Pacific Island women is on development issues. Some examples of the writing in this area are Padma Lal and Claire Slatter's report, *The Integration of Women in Fisheries Development in Fiji* for ESCAP/FAO (1982); Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop's paper for the USP School of Agriculture, *Educating Future Women Farmers: the South Pacific* (1994); and Hilda Lini's *Report of the First Vanuaaku Women's Conference* (1978). Such literature is indicative of the practical issues facing women in the independent Pacific – labour rights, food security, education, and political representation are some of the recurring themes. As I will discuss later, a strong stream of critical writing on development by Pacific Island women has emerged over the years.

The USP Library has very few holdings by Pacific Islanders explicitly focussing on women and culture. A

*Reflection on the Role of Women in the Kiribati Context in Relation to Culture*, a B.A. thesis for the Pacific Theological College by Ronite Bontio Manaima is one of the few from the independent Pacific. On women and culture in the decolonizing Pacific, there is more: like Sonja Peter's *Yarrtji: Six Women's Stories from the Great Sandy Desert* (1997); *Toi Wahine: The Worlds of Maori Women*, edited by Kathie Irwin and Irihapeti Ramsden (1995); and Laura Souder's *Daughters of the Island: Contemporary Chamorro Women Organizers of Guam* (1987).

## **Resistance to Writing: University of the South Pacific Publications by and about Pacific Women**

I have discussed above the USP Library holdings on Pacific women – the Library holdings of course include publications from within and without the university region. In my contribution to the conference, however, I focussed solely on books published by the University of the South Pacific (USP) – probably the largest publisher of Pacific Islander writing in the world. As USP is a regional university owned by 12 independent island nations (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu), my discussion was thus limited to the ways in which women in the independent Pacific wrote about culture and development.

USP publications by and about women may be categorised in two ways: the literary and the academic. USP's literary publications by women are larger in number, and have made lasting impressions regionally and internationally. The region's most well-known poet is a Tongan Konai Helu Thaman. She also has the distinction of being the first Pacific Island woman professor and the only Pacific Island professor to hold two professorial chairs. All Thaman's collections of poetry, *You, the Choice of My Parents* (1974), *Langakali* (1981), *Hingano* (1987), *Kakala* (1993) and *Love Songs* (1999) have been published by USP. Ni-Vanuatu Grace Mera Molisa is another of the region's premier poets and a prominent political activist. Her volume *Black Stone* (1983) is a USP publication, but in collaboration with the Vanuatu USP Centre Molisa self-published *Black Stone II* (1989), her last collection of poetry. One of the younger and more sensational voices from the region, Sia Figiel, has recently had two works published by USP: *Girl in the Moon Circle* (1996) and *To A Young Artist in Contemplation* (1998). With these, together

with collections of poetry by Makerita Va'ai of Samoa, Vaine Rasmussen of the Cook Islands, Jully Sipolo of the Solomon Islands, and other Pacific Island women, USP has an impressive list of creative writing publications by women. In these works there is inevitably critical engagement with cultural politics and development issues – most stridently in Grace Mera Molisa's poetry and to varying degrees in others'. A particularly interesting anthology of creative writing by Pacific women is a francophone volume of poems, most of which were originally written in English. Including previously anthologized Pacific poets like Konai Thaman, Momoe Von Reiche (Samoa), Jully Sipolo and Afu Billy (Solomon Islands), and closet poets like Mildred Sope (Vanuatu) and Margaret Reade (Fiji), *Poemes Du Pacifique Au Feminin* (1983) is a collector's item.

Unfortunately, the university has not encouraged much academic investigation and writing on women, so there are very few significant publications in this category. Some of the landmark titles include *Land Rights of Pacific Women* by Cema Bolabola et al (1986), *Pacific Women: Roles and Status of Women in Pacific Societies* edited by Taiamoni Tongamoa (1988), and *Tamaitai Samoa* edited by Peggy Fairbairn Dunlop (1996).

The first two titles are quite small volumes, the first only 128 pages in length (including the index), and the second 104 pages (including the index). *Land Rights of Pacific Women* contains chapters on Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, and the Cook Islands; however, the article on Fiji comprises more than half of the volume, leaving only sixty some pages to be shared among the four other island countries. Text space in *Pacific Women: Roles and Status* is more fairly distributed among the chapters on Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Both volumes provide social science perspectives on issues, and seem aimed at providing definitive statements on the conditions, status, and rights of women in the Pacific. Although both volumes include contributions by non-Pacific islanders, there is no discursive difference between theirs and the island women's contributions. By this, I mean that neither Pacific nor non-Pacific islander writers situate themselves in relation to their research subjects, and both utilize the authority of academic discourse rather than invoke the authority of their identity. Both Pacific Islanders and non-Pacific islander contributors to the two volumes describe "case studies" and take somewhat objective and empiricist stand-



points, although a few of the chapters end on a note of advocacy with recommendations for policy implementation. There is very little explicit or critical engagement with existing literature in the chapters. Although there is a bibliography provided at the end of *Pacific Women*, and some of the chapters in *Land Rights* end with a list of references, it is not clear how the contents of either volume expand on already established anthropological knowledge.

Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop's *Tamaitai Samoa* (1996) breaks the USP mould somewhat by situating itself between academic discourse and creative writing. As a collection of biographies of Samoan women, *Tamaitai* allows its subjects to tell their own stories - neither forcing them into an academic frame nor demanding literary performances from them. The women featured in the book range in education, experience, and feminist consciousness. Similar in many ways to Laura Souder's collective portrait of Chamorro women organizers in *Daughters of the Island* (1987), *Tamaitai Samoa's* discussions of cultural and development issues are thoroughly engaged and engaging. In my opinion there need to be more works like this produced by USP to give face/name/humanity to the statistical profiles and anonymous case studies conducted by "development" oriented writers.

There are several more issues of note about USP that impact on the nature and direction of the writing produced there: USP does not have an anthropology department; USP has a whole school dedicated to studies in "social and economic development" and has a postgraduate centre for "Development Studies"; USP's charter prohibits any discrimination on the grounds of sex or gender and this has been interpreted by successive administrations as a restriction from promoting affirmative action for women. These factors can help to explain the seeming resistance at USP to writing about women in general, and the more specific tendency for the little academic writing that does exist to focus more on women in development rather than women and culture.

The question arises, between the long list of creative writing by Pacific Island women published through USP and the short list of their academic writing, how much can be learned about culture and development in the Pacific? Given the state of our writing, the onus predictably falls on the reader: I do not recommend trying to understand culture and development or women in the Pacific - especially within the USP region - without

reading our literary works. Pacific Island women's creative writing demonstrates a variation on what Samoan writer Albert Wendt meant when he suggested that our fiction writers were producing better histories than our historians: I would say that the critical analyses of culture and development being produced by Pacific Island women creative writers are as important as those being produced by our academic writers.

## **Writing Resistance: Development and Indigenous Women in the Independent Pacific**

In 1994 a book was launched which for the first time attempted to bridge some of the great distances in the Pacific. Edited by 'Atu Emberson-Bain, *Sustainable Development or Malignant Growth? Perspectives of Pacific Island Women* provided a bridge between Pacific Island women's creative writing and academic work, as well as a bridge between Pacific Island women's different geographic/environmental/colonial/decolonizing/postcolonial experiences within cultural and development processes. Although the academic writing and the creative writing remained distinct in form, by interweaving them in her volume, 'Atu Emberson-Bain paid tribute to a desire among Pacific Island women not to have their knowledge and expressions separated.

*Sustainable Development or Malignant Growth?* may also be seen as a watershed in the history of a cohort of women academics and activists in the Pacific who have consistently contributed to the clear articulation of a critical resistance to unsustainable development agendas in the independent Pacific. 'Atu Emberson-Bain, with Claire Slatter, Vanessa Griffen and Arlene Griffen, comprise a formidable cohort of Fiji-based feminists. 'Atu Emberson-Bain is presently a senator in Fiji's Upper House, an appointment she was given by the governing Labour Party in 1999. Emberson-Bain's signature text *Labour and Gold in Fiji* (1994) is a labour history of the Vatukoula Gold Mine in Fiji published by Cambridge University Press. The gold mine of course relies on a predominantly male labour force, but Emberson-Bain's interest in gender and feminism is evident in her other work. She has produced reports for the Asian Development Bank like *Women in Development: Kiribati* (1995) and has collaborated on research with Claire Slatter to produce *Labouring Under the Law: A critique of employment legislation affecting women in Fiji* (1995). Slatter's

commitment to grassroots development is evident from her publication of a variety of material from bibliographies, to directories and reports on women's roles in South Pacific agriculture for the East-West Center in 1984. Currently, Slatter's research interest has been in the impact of globalization and structural adjustment on women—while completing her Ph.D. on these issues through Massey University, she is simultaneously serving as the General Coordinator for the Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era (DAWN Pacific) network, succeeding prominent figures in Third World/Southern feminist analysis, Peggy Antrobus and Gita Sen.

Vanessa Griffen is well-known among high school students in the region for her classic short stories *The Concert*, *Marama*, etc. Among Pacific women her name is synonymous with a health handbook she compiled in 1982 called *Caring for Ourselves*. Modeled on the Boston Women's Collective's *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, it is a testament to the embodied politics of early Pacific feminists. Vanessa Griffen's interest in women's health translated into several papers for conferences on population and development, but her reputation as an activist was secured by her spearheading and publication of the proceedings of the first Pacific Women's Conference in 1976. Entitled *Women Speak Out!* the publication establishes some of the key debates around feminism for women in the region. After teaching in the History/Politics Department at the University of the South Pacific for some time, Vanessa Griffen has directed the Asia Pacific Women's Bureau based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for the last five years. Her sister Arlene Griffen also left an academic career at the University of the South Pacific to take up work as the Coordinator of Greenpeace Pacific in 1999. Arlene Griffen's foundational work in her M.A. thesis from the University of London, *The Different Drum: A feminist critique of Pacific literature in English* (1985) has unfortunately not had the circulation required to assist in the mainstreaming of feminist ideas in the education.

In *Malignant Growth or Sustainable Development?* this cohort of Emberson-Bain, Slatter, and the Griffens collaborated with other well-known women activists and academics in the region like Cita Morei and Isabella Sumang of Belau, Caroline Sinavaiana and Noumea Simi of Samoa, Konai Thaman of Tonga, Premjeet Singh and Kushma Ram of Fiji, among others to produce a volume rich in analysis. The text addresses issues such as mining, logging, tourism,

fisheries, militarism, documenting both colonial and postcolonial corruption and providing feminist critiques of political and economic power inequities.

## Resistance Writing: Culture and Indigenous Women in the Decolonizing Pacific

As mentioned previously, the likelihood that culture is taken as an object of thorough critical analysis for indigenous women writers in the Pacific decreases with the level of national political independence. So indigenous women writers in the decolonizing Pacific have produced some of the most compelling analyses of culture throughout the region. Two examples I would like to highlight are Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's *Mana Wabine Maori* (1991) and Haunani-Kay Trask's *From a Native Daughter* (1993). Both are collections of writing compiled from years of research and activism. Te Awekotuku is Professor of Maori Studies at the University of Victoria in Wellington, New Zealand. Trask, former Director of the Center for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawaii, has led a colourful and controversial career as a provocatively activist academic.

*Mana Wabine Maori* differs slightly from *From a Native Daughter* in content and tone: while the latter is a collection of speeches that are quite strident, strategically and insistently repetitive, the former is comprised of essays on a wide range of topics. Both authors explore cultural and political issues for indigenous people and Pacific Islander women from feminist perspectives, but they do so in distinctive ways. For instance, in *Mana Wabine Maori* the issue of Maori women and

tourism is addressed with an excerpt from Te Awekotuku's Ph.D. thesis, while *From a Native Daughter* addresses issues relating to tourism and Hawaiian

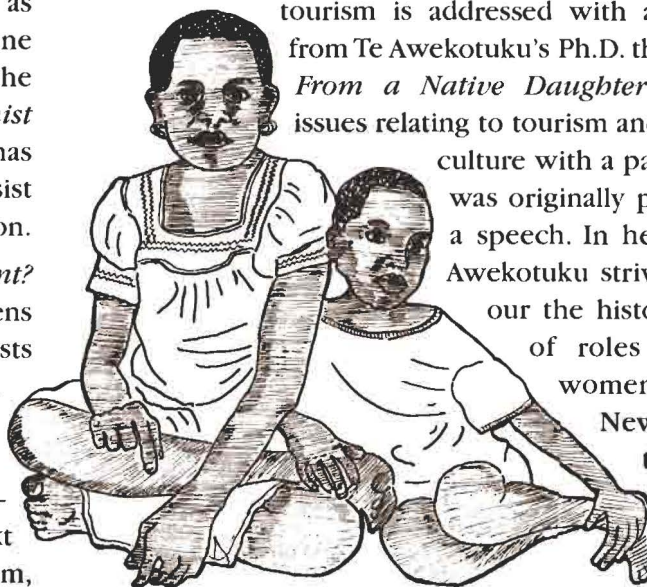
culture with a paper, which was originally prepared as a speech. In her piece Te Awekotuku strives to hon-

our the historical roles of roles of Maori

women in the New Zealand

tourism industry

- particularly as





tour guides - and she shows the indigenous origins of the guide figure. In no way an apologist for tourism, Te Awekotuku seems more interested in identifying the personalized politics of cultural commodification and negotiation rather than dismissing or advocating indigenous boycotts of the industry. Trask's approach however is unaccommodating: she focuses on the highly corporatized structure of tourism in Hawaii and describes the industry's relationship with indigenous Hawaiian culture as one of prostitution. Trask describes the general roles of Hawaiian women within indigenous culture and in the tourist industry - hospitality and entertainment - but does not trace or highlight the roles or experiences of "real" women in the way that Te Awekotuku does. Given the contexts of their production, however, it is understandable that Te Awekotuku's exposition is more compelling as documentary while Trask's speech has more rhetorical power. Indeed Trask ends her speech by saying "If you are thinking of visiting my homeland, please don't. We don't want or need any more tourists, and we certainly don't like them. If you want to help our cause, pass this message on to your friends" (Trask 1993:195-196).

As the leading commodifier of culture in the region, tourism presents the most urgent arena for analysis. The difference in the two approaches may be described thus: while Trask identifies and demonizes the process by which generic abstractions of natives are created within tourism, Te Awekotuku humanizes and historicizes native figures who might otherwise be reduced to generic abstractions in Trask's framework. In spite of their differences, Trask's and Te Awekotuku's work centres on culture in a way that is noticeably absent in the writings of women like Emberson-Bain, Slatter and the Griffens.

## Conclusion


I have observed that in the west, when people are trying to get a handle on a subject, their first instinct is to try to find something to read. What I have tried to do in this paper is provide an introduction to the Pacific through the selected writings of Pacific Island women on culture and development. And this allowed me to get at some of the issues I initially wanted to raise in a more focussed manner. If you study the writings by Pacific women, you will see some huge expanses and some dense concentrations - sometimes in the area of culture, and sometimes in the area of development. I understand the expanses as resistance to writing, and the concentrations as the writing of resistance. In the

independent Pacific there is significant resistance to analytical writing about women evidenced by the paucity of substantive material published by the University of the South Pacific. However, a cohort of women academics and activists has produced substantial research in order to facilitate political and economic resistance to unsustainable development policies. Interestingly, this cohort of women does not mobilize aspects of indigenous culture in their resistance efforts.

Meanwhile, in the decolonizing Pacific well-known indigenous activists and academics have articulated histories and theories of cultural resistance to colonialism. For Pacific Island women across the divide between sovereign nations and decolonizing movements, culture and development provide ambivalent possibilities for liberation and oppression.

*Teresa Teaiwa, a lecturer at the University of the South Pacific, gave the talk on which this article is based while attending a symposium on Women, Culture and Development co-sponsored by SPPF and the University of Victoria's Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives.*





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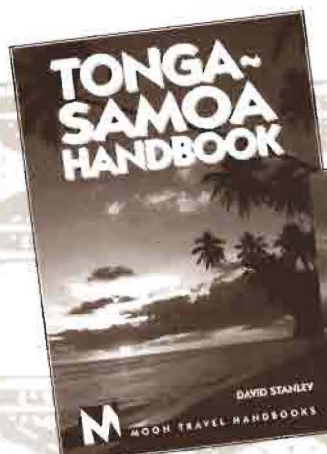
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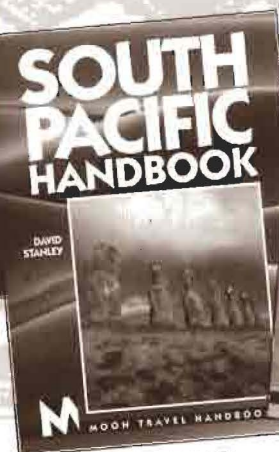
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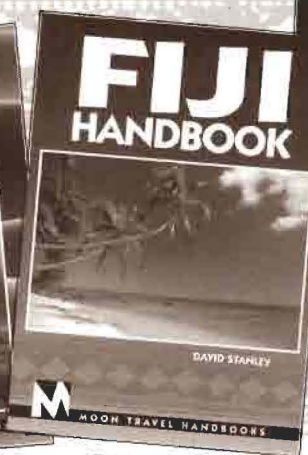
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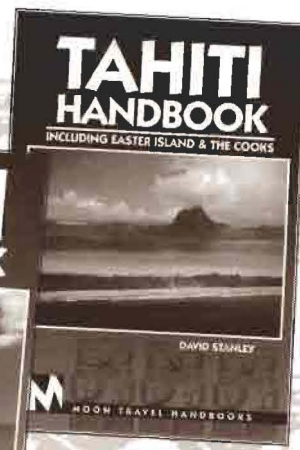
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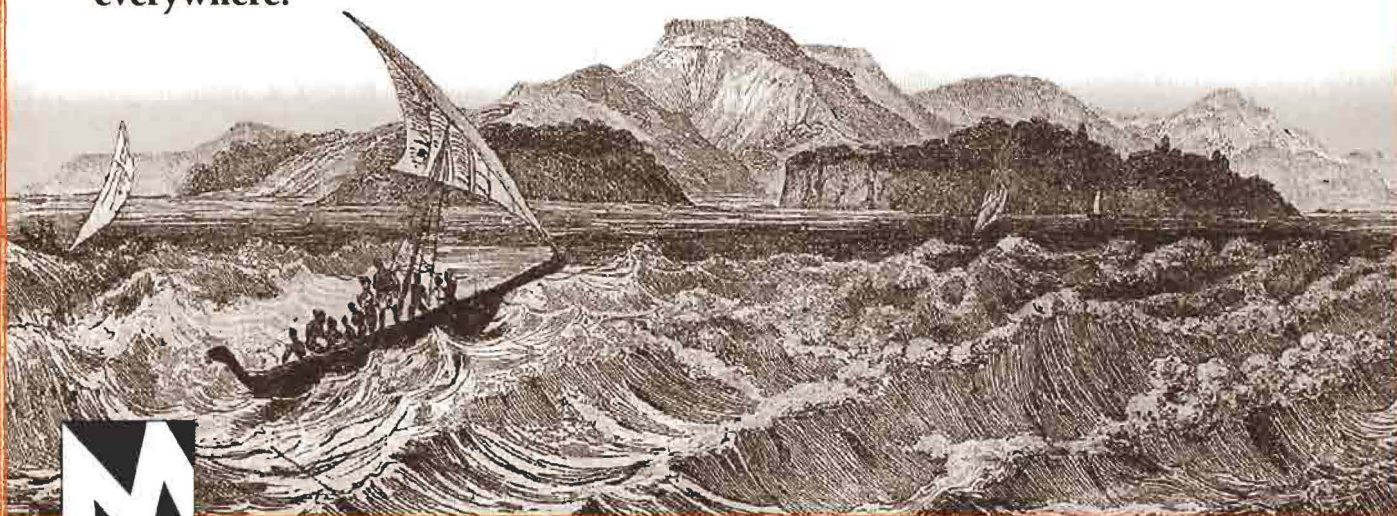


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