

MICRONESIA, BY THE PEOPLE

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FRIENDS OF MICRONESIA

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# MICRONESIA

## *By the People*



"The history of these islands over the last few centuries has not been the history of the Micronesian people.

It has been the history of missionaries, colonizers, commercial exploiters, warring armies, atomic testing, and, now, of a vast, unresponsive, indifferent bureaucracy."

*Sen. Petrus Tun, Yap [1970]*

## INTRODUCTION

Though few Americans have heard of Micronesia, there is almost a sense of *deja vu* pervading the consciousness "recollecting" life in the tropics. Micronesia is, indeed, among the most idyllic places in the world. Minute coral atolls against the blue-green Pacific and lush verdant islands like Ponape rise up out of the ocean lending an air of mystery which Somerset Maugham wrote. Tourists have not found their way here yet. The miles of deserted white sand beaches, palms of our folk lore do exist here, islanders often wear bright red hibiscus flowers in their gleaming black hair and the tranquil sound of a ukelele is the only thing that pierces the heavenly silence.

Yet there is another reality too. Since the bloody American conquest of these islands from Japan in World War II, nuclear blasts have been detonated in Micronesia vaporizing islands, destroying life-giving vegetation and, most tragically, claiming over 200 islanders. In 1972, a 19-year old man died of leukemia induced by radioactive fallout from a 1954 test on Bikini atoll. All but one of the other young people on his home island have had thyroid tumors requiring surgical removal. The islanders returned to their homes after irradiation from this "accidentally" over-powered bomb. Land taken away by the United States military 30 years ago has been returned to its rightful owners and as a result of U.S. policy, urban slums have been created, juvenile delinquency is common, there are wildcat labor walkouts and acts of violence against American property. Most important, there is a growing independence movement.

Nowhere else today in the American Pacific Imperium is change occurring in so rapid yet undetected fashion. The trust territories created by the colonial powers who controlled the United Nations, Micronesia has also been neglected. Now, however, following 25 years of what has been rationalized as a purposeful policy of "benign neglect," Micronesia is embarked on a voyage that will transform the 2,300 islands into a Japanese-American Hawaii-style tourist paradise. The palms and the *ersatz* "native-style" high-rise hotels will be a strategic bomber base, nuclear weapons storage depot and a Marine guerrilla warfare training base. Although few know it, there are already 5000 American scientists and technicians perfecting the ABM system and other Doomsday devices.

Micronesia is being given a new role in American military thinking. It is now seen as a central link in an emerging United States island-based Asian defense line stretching from the Indian Ocean, through Australia and Micronesia, to Japan.

Although tied to the United States, Micronesia literally hangs on the rim of Asia. Off the eastern edge of the Mariana Trench, the deepest known abyss on earth — the 35,000 foot Mariana trench. The larger islands in the Marianas, like Guam, Saipan and Tinian are extensions of a mountain chain that begins with Japan's Mount Fuji, 1500 miles to the north of Guam. Extending westward to Palau, the westernmost point in Micronesia — only 500 miles from Indonesia and the Philippines and the closest American territory to Australia, New Guinea, Singapore and all of Southeast Asia.

Joining this north-south island arc are numerous other islands in the Carolines and Marshalls that stretch across the Pacific equator forming a series of stepping stones that span the whole Pacific between Asia and Hawaii. Most of these are surrounded by protective barrier reefs which make them resemble naturally fortified medieval castles. Within the larger of these atolls, fleets of Japanese and American ships took shelter in World War II.

A compromise arrangement between the post-war hawks and doves, Micronesia is, in the military's view, a permanent possession of the United States although legally it is only "administered" by the U.S. until such time as the people request self-government. Time has now arrived but since the mid '60s when this movement toward independence was first perceived, the U.S. has striven utmost to Americanize Micronesia to head off what today has become a majority movement.

In 1963, President Kennedy made it official American policy that Micronesia was to be permanently tied to the United States. Drew Solomon, Harvard business school professor and later an assistant secretary of State, headed a survey team which recommended the rapid Americanization of Micronesia. The main provisions included the introduction of "American patriotic oriented curriculum" in the classroom, deluging the islands with Peace Corps volunteers and pouring in money to make Micronesia dependent on continued U.S. funding. In almost Machiavellian terms, the Solomon Report called for creating a "reasonably self-governing" but "on the other hand retain[ing] adequate control through the continuation of an appointed U.S. administrator" who had "the authority to declare martial law and assume legislative and executive powers when the security requires . . ."

Although the 115,000 people of Micronesia have yet to secure even mock executive power, to a great extent the recommendations of the Solomon Report have been implemented. So many Peace Corps volunteers were sent to Micronesia in 1965 that *capita* basis India would have had almost 5 million volunteers in the country at one time. The budget was increased thousands of government jobs so that today 45% of those employed work for the U.S. government. The school system is run in the typical American style, using American materials and methods almost exclusively. It has become an achievement with almost no concept of local relevance. Self-help projects continue to be discouraged and imported labor is now common from the Philippines, South Korea and Japan to do work Micronesians could be doing themselves.

For a time it seemed as though American policy might be working but in recent years there have been a number of increasingly militant opposition to continued colonial status and a correspondingly greater concern for self-reliance. In 1972, Micronesia, created in 1965 as part of the Solomon Report design, voted to begin negotiations for independence after talking exclusively about some form of "free" association with the United States.





# As the United States sees it, the current negotiations are not so much about the future of Micronesia, as they are about the future role of Micronesia as a military base in the Pacific.

Carl Heine



## The four points

*Sovereignty in Micronesia resides in the people of Micronesia and their duly constituted government;*

*The people of Micronesia possess the right of self-determination and may therefore choose independence or self-government in free association with any nation or organization of nations;*

*The people of Micronesia have the right to adopt their own constitution and to amend, change, or revoke any institution or governmental plan at any time;*

*Free association should be in the form of a revocable compact, terminable unilaterally by either party.*

*Adopted by the Congress of Micronesia [1970]*

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# ILLUSIONS

## ABOUT AMERICA

### DESTRUCTION

"Viewing America as a benefactor of Micronesia seems to be one popular illusion shared by numerous people, including Americans themselves. The now huge amounts of money through grants and federal programs being poured into Micronesia, the many expatriate employees with technical skills and abilities, planning education and housing programs and the like are offered as examples of this role of benefactor. I choose to take a different view, however, for I see the intent of the funds, the plans, programs, and people as being part of the U.S. role as manipulator—not benefactor. Whatever good the U.S. has done in Micronesia has either been at the urging of the U.N. at our request and complaint, or because it dovetailed with American interests—military interests—in Micronesia. If anyone still finds this doubtful, then I ask them to read the Solomon Mission Report which is much more explicit than my speech. When this report was made public in the *Young Micronesian*, denials were issued which tried to create the illusion that the report was never implemented. But, if one studies the report's recommendations and compares them with the record, it is obvious that the recommendations of the report were, indeed, implemented and those who say otherwise are either liars or fools.

"Many people still cling tenaciously to the illusion that America came to Micronesia as a liberator, but I say to you that they came here as conquerors and oppressors. Americans battled their way across our islands first in order to launch an invasion of Japan, and, second, to secure our islands so that they would never be used again to threaten the United States or its allies. Since that time we have been oppressed culturally, economically, politically, and spiritually. American laws and customs were forced upon us, dislocating our old traditions; economically we were placed in a vacuum by American influence and authority, cut off from the rest of the world and only those who could pull themselves up by their bootstraps made progress; as in economics, politically we were placed in a zoo cage and the key thrown away; spiritually we were subjected to a new kind of oppression, but oppression just the same, by the degradation of our values and our self concepts and the usurpation of our traditional forms of leadership and authority.

"For those people who maintain the illusion that America is a developer of Micronesia, promoting the general social, economic, and political welfare of our islands, I say that the reality of America has been a destroyer. "In the name of national interest and security, the United States has fostered programs which have destroyed our initiative, our family ties our good customs along with our bad, our self-confidence as a people, and our respect for our ancestors. Through its influences it has also destroyed the beauty of our islands through pollution and poor planning. It has destroyed and razed our islands, contaminated our lagoons, and made ill our people by testing radioactive bombs. It has, for example, paved over the whole island of Kwajalein and recreated on it sterile, efficient replicas of spiritless modern-day America charged with the duty of testing missiles carrying civilized man's most savage weapon—to destroy, destroy, destroy—all of us.

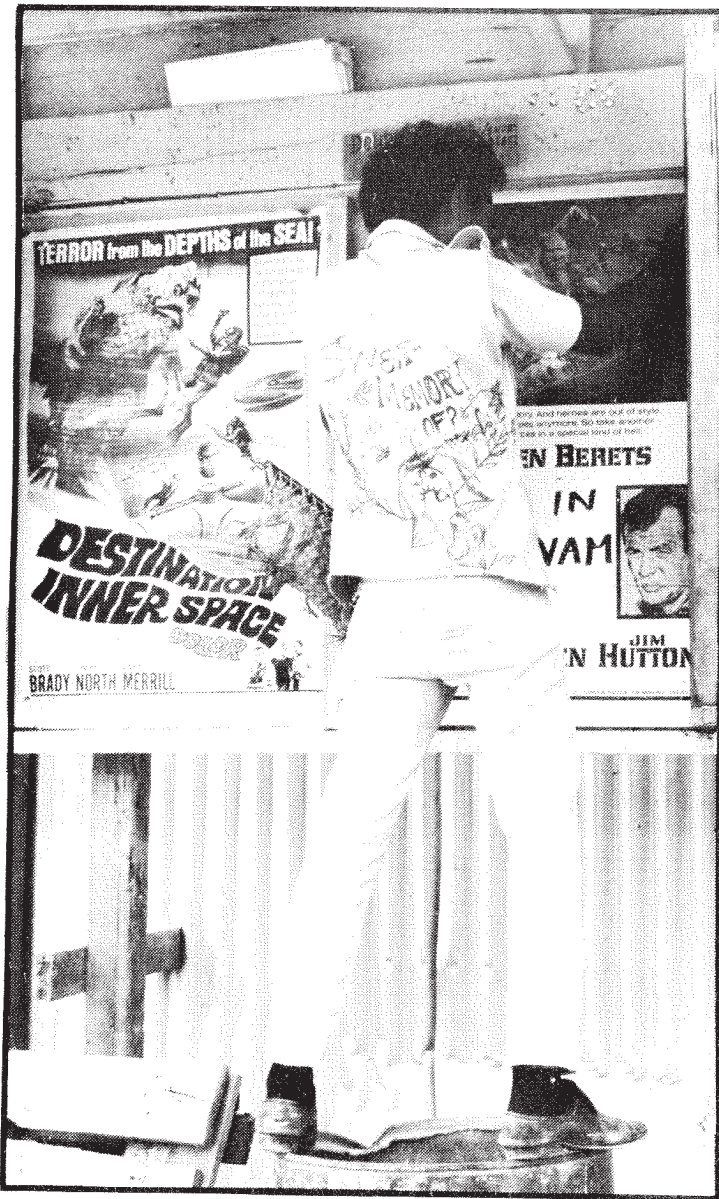
### UNITY

"Another illusion entertained by those who would rather not face reality is that America is the great unifier of Micronesia—that our political and social unity has been gained through America's efforts. But the reality is that America is the great divider, and those of us who are entertaining the notion that they could do better—not as a part of Micronesia, are formidable examples of this divisive influence. This divisive nature of American influence has its roots in the jurisdictional tug-of-war match over Micronesia that went on between the Navy and the State Department and which was resolved in a schizophrenic compromise known as the Trusteeship Agreement administered by the Department of the Interior. We have been living in the shadow of this conflict and compromise for over a quarter of a century and it has produced a divided Micronesia—a Micronesia which only we can pull together.

"And to those people who share the illusion that what is new and American is good, I would say that you are entertaining the greatest illusion of them all. I would say: look at Puerto Rico, Hawaii, American Samoa, and Guam. Those were the Micronesias of years past.



## LAND



**“Many people still cling to the illusion that America came to Micronesia as a liberator, but I say they came here as conquerors and oppressors.”**

“Another illusion concerning America and American influence is that of the concept of permanence. Nothing is permanent in America except change. This is shown by their attitudes toward land. Land, to Americans, can be compared to poker chips—something to be possessed, and gambled with—something to be used and exchanged. As a consequence, Americans have no real, no permanent homes. They are forever on the move, buying and selling homes, and their land. The result is that when they step outside their doors, when they drive to the store, when they go to another city, they are homeless strangers with only a language and money as common bonds.

“We in Micronesia have a greater sense of belonging to our land and to our customs than the people of America. America, after all, is barely 200 years old. Yet perhaps some Micronesians have forgotten or have not been taught that our cultures are thousands of years old and that our land and its importance is an inseparable part of our customs, traditions, lore, and our very way of life. No matter where he is in the world, a Micronesian knows where his home is—he knows that he can always come back home to his piece of land, no matter how small or large; it is his land and it is part of what makes him a Micronesian. Americans have no such concept, they can be ‘home’ anywhere in the world because they have no birthright to forsake. All Americans need to find a home is money. I much prefer the reality of Micronesia to the illusionary America, for I know that whenever I am in Micronesia that my land is my birthright and that is something that cannot be taken away. It is a security and comfort to my mortality; it is a birthright I will pass on to my sons and daughters.

“Illusion and reality—these are the choices we must consider; the Draft Compact of free association between America and Micronesia is the illusion of what we think America and free association with it will give to us—and the reality of what it has done for us in the past.

“Must we choose the illusions of hope and reach for something that we think is good or must we face up to the realities of the past and the future and have the courage to do what we know is right? I think our choice is self-evident and we as members of this Congress are duly bound to choose the alternative that will preserve and protect our culture, our lands, and our way of life.

Which do we choose?

*Hans Wiliander, Truk (1972)*





*... if the people of Micronesia are to preserve their identity and individuality and obtain full self-confidence and human dignity, the means must be established whereby the values, traditions, and cultures of Micronesia are preserved. Your delegation maintains that only a Government of Micronesia, internally self-governing with full Micronesian control of all its branches, can adequately preserve the Micronesia heritage, and enhance the identity, individuality, and dignity of the people of Micronesia.*

*Under our present quasi-colonial status . . . the people of Micronesia are being suppressed. American power and influence are currently so dominant in Micronesia that Micronesia and its people are being "Americanized" at an ever-increasing rate. This is having a tremendous effect upon all aspects of Micronesian life and society, and it will be impossible to control this influence until the people of Micronesia can establish their own government.*

*Your delegation believes . . . that self-government is essential for Micronesia and that it is extremely important that it be achieved as soon as possible.*

Report of the Political Status Delegation of the  
Congress of Micronesia (1970)



## SELF-GOVERNMENT?

To say that the United States has allowed a major share of self-government to the Micronesian people even after 25 years of administration would be, I am afraid, a distortion of the state of affairs in Micronesia as we see them. But through the initiatives exercised by the Congress of Micronesia the door to self-government is beginning to open.

### LAND AND SEA

As all of the members of the Council know, the question of land is nearest and dearest to the hearts of my people. It has always been a cornerstone of our future political status negotiations with the United States that ownership and control of land in Micronesia must rest in Micronesian hands. During the years of the United States administration of Micronesia, this has unfortunately not been the case. While it is true that nominal control of land, use of land, is still in Micronesian hands, in fact it has rested, until this very year, in the hands of the American administration.

But control of our own land cannot be complete unless and until the administration agrees to a change in the law of eminent domain. The present law, which antedates the Congress, provides that the High Commissioner alone has the right to determine what constitutes a "public use," he can then simply condemn the land to the Government. Several times the Congress has tried to amend this regressive law; each time, the administration has vetoed reasonable changes. The Congress, on one occasion, took the drastic step of repassing such a measure over the High Commissioner's veto, only to have the Secretary of the Interior—who has absolute and final authority—administer his veto power.

I am again sure that I do not have to stress to this Council the importance of the sea, as well as of the land, to Micronesia. If our security is in the land, our wealth and our sustenance, and our economic future, are in the sea. For this reason the Congress of Micronesia has been extremely concerned with developments in the area of international limitations of territorial waters, the seas and the sea-beds. The Congress of Micronesia has on numerous occasions in the past considered legislation which would have broadened the present three-mile territorial waters of the Trust Territory. On each occasion the Trust Territory Government, on instructions from Washington, has spoken out against such legislation, or has disapproved it.

### THE BUREAUCRACY

I am sorry to have to report that, during the past year, the replacement of expatriate personnel by Micronesian personnel was minimal. Despite an increase in government employment by almost 20 per cent during the reporting year, the percentage of Micronesians employed by the government increased less than 1 per cent. Thus, while an already too-large government is still increasing in size, the level of Micronesian participation in that government is hardly increasing at all. About 9.36 per cent of our government employees are expatriates, as compared with 10.20 per cent just a year ago—a reduction of less than 1 per cent.

The mere increase in the size of the bureaucracy is alarming, not only in its implications that size brings lowered efficiency, or that jobs are created simply to cover up the mistakes that the administration has made in training Micronesians solely for government jobs, largely behind desks. More important, the 20 per cent growth in the size of our government means that much less of the annual budget can be devoted to badly-needed capital improvement projects, and that much more must go towards salaries and administration. The nearly 10 per cent increase in expatriate personnel means that the share of the budget utilized for salaries will be increased even further, since expatriate salaries are so much higher

**“We are and always have been a peaceful people. Within memory, our islands have been devastated by the horrors of war, our people dislocated, our islands turned into radioactive infernos, blown up completely or altered by the awesome force of the hydrogen bomb so that they are unrecognizable if they are still there at all.”**



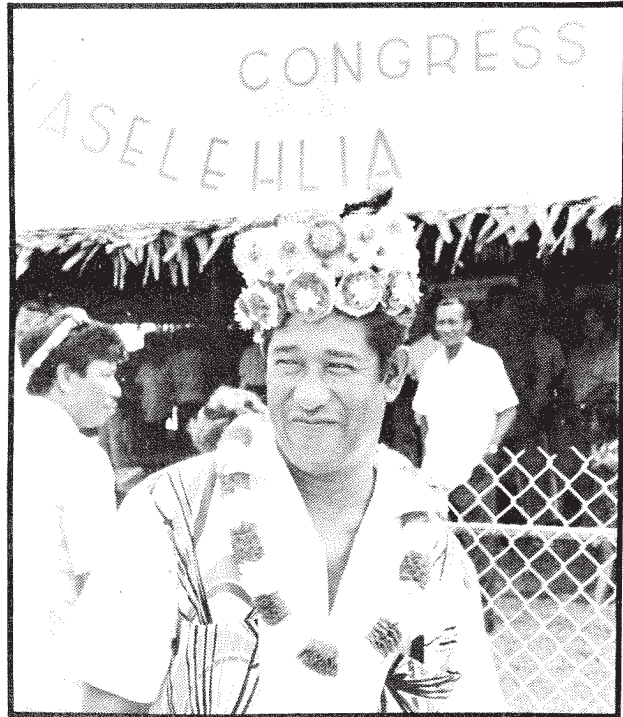
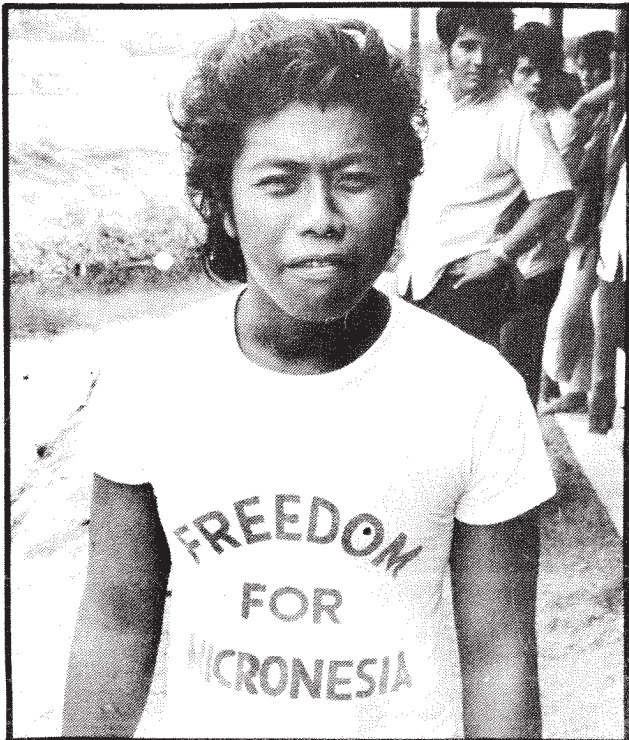
than Micronesian salaries to begin with, and since expatriates occupy high-level, high-salaried offices far out of proportion to their numbers. The figures indicate that the average expatriate employee earns about three and one half times what the average Micronesian employee earns.

The figures indicate the sad story of the American administration of Micronesia: too much government, devoted to the wrong things; too many bureaucrats, and not enough capital improvement; and, even after a quarter of a century, too many expatriates and not enough Micronesians, and second-class status for Micronesians in our own land.

### SELF-GOVERNMENT

The extent to which the Administering Authority has failed to implement self-government in Micronesia is further augmented by the fact that so many of the major decisions affecting the Trust Territory continue to be made not in Saipan, the provisional capital, by persons who live and work in Micronesia, but some nine thousand miles away, by persons who have been there seldom, if ever. This type of "absentee government" is not conducive to the best interests of the people of Micronesia; it is not consonant with the principle of self-government for Micronesians.

During the Fourth Congress the High Commissioner refused to sign a number of measures. Some of these eventually became law in different forms;



others were disapproved for technical reasons or because of administrative problems which would have arisen had they been allowed to become law.

The remainder of these measures will never become law as long as the Administering Authority retains full and final power and absolute control over what can and cannot become law in the Trust Territory, despite the expressed wishes of the people of Micronesia through their representatives in the Congress. If the Congress of Micronesia is structured on the American model, then it would seem logical that the American system of checks and balances between the several branches of the Government should be an integral part of this system. And yet in Micronesia a very important part of this system of checks and balances is conspicuously absent: the power to override the veto of legislation by the Chief Executive. The experiences of the Congress in the past show that even the attempt to override a veto is but an exercise in futility; if the High Commissioner again refuses to sign the measure, the Secretary of the Interior has final, unchallengeable authority over whether it becomes law or not. Further, members of the Congress have been informed by the Administering Authority that as long as the United States remains Administering Authority in Micronesia, it will never relinquish this control, not even as to purely internal matters. This is hardly self-government; this is hardly taking into account the wishes of the people; this is not fulfillment of the obligations of the Trusteeship Agreement.



### POLITICAL EDUCATION

About the best that I am able to report about the administration's political education program is that it, too, has been a total failure. One indication of exactly how far the program has come in 25 years of United States administration is that just recently, for the first time, spot radio announcements have been made to inform the people that the Trust Territory Government is divided into three branches, executive, legislative and judicial. These announcements are, paradoxically, made almost exclusively in English, so that those who really need to understand them—those without schooling—cannot do so. Little has been done to prepare the people of Micronesia for the awesome responsibilities of self-government; as a result, beyond a handful of leaders, higher government employees and the educated elite, very few people even know the rudiments of the political system in the Trust Territory.

### THE U.S. MILITARY

The vast majority of the people of Micronesia does not want and has no use for the United States military. Yet the United States has disregarded the wishes of the people in proposing its demands for military lands in Micronesia after the end of the Trusteeship. That the people of Micronesia hold this attitude should not come as a surprise. We are and have always been a peaceful people. Within memory, our islands have been devastated by the horrors of war, our people dislocated, our islands turned into radioactive infernos, blown up completely or altered by the awesome force of the hydrogen bomb so that they are unrecognizable if they are still there at all. Only recently, the United States announced its intention of conducting a series of tests at Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshall Islands for the purpose of seeing how big a hole in the ground its bombs can make.

We welcome the recent United States offer to return Bikini and Eniwetok, even though in a real sense they do not belong to the United States to return. Of course, those islands which have been blown off the face of the earth by bombs cannot be returned. Twenty-five or thirty years of life away from one's home cannot be returned either.

Because of its sad experience with the military—not only under the United States Administration but also under our past rulers—our only hope is that we be left alone in peace. We hope that we do not have any enemies, and we do not want them—ours or anyone else's. It is therefore our hope that Micronesia and eventually the entire Pacific Ocean can be neutralized, closed to the warmakers of all nations—truly an ocean of peace in a world of strife and conflict.

Where have we gone during these past 25 years? A few roads, some hospitals and schools, some bad experiences and some good ones. A quarter-century—half a lifetime—under American administration has brought little that will remain long after the Administration has gone. Yet, if it has left us anything, America's 25-year legacy to Micronesia is that the Micronesian people know how important it is to control their own lands, to run their own Government, and to be a free people.



With the continuing support of the United Nations, and with the acceptance by the United States of the full spirit of its Trust obligation to promote the Micronesian people to self-government or independence, I am confident that Micronesia will one day soon see the fulfilment of a century of dreams, the satisfaction of our fundamental right to be free and to live as free men in a sovereign nation we can call our own.

*Sen. Andon Amaraich, Truk [1972]*



**“... We have stood against the most powerful government in the world”**

*[The following declaration was recently signed by 50 traditional and elected leaders in Palau]*

**“JOINT DECLARATION OF THE UNITED LEADERSHIP OF THE PEOPLE OF PALAU AGAINST THE USE OF LAND IN PALAU BY THE UNITED STATES MILITARY:**

“Whereas, the people of Palau were subjected to untold suffering and misery during World War II as a result of the fact that Palauan land was used by an alien military power; and

“Whereas, the people of Palau have no desire to have military installation and personnel on Palauan land in the future, because this could result in suffering human beings within or without Palau; and

“Whereas, the people of Palau see the right to control their land as the basis of freedom, justice and equality both present and in the future; now, therefore,

“We, the traditional and elected leaders representing the entire people of Palau, assembled in Koror, Palau on the this 20th day of November 1972 hereby declare that we are unequivocally opposed to the use of land in Palau by the United States Military; and

“We further declare that the Joint Committee on Future Status of the Congress of Micronesia is hereby respectfully requested to implement this declaration.”

*[From an editorial in Tia Belau by Kodep, regarding the Declaration of the Palauan leaders against the U.S. Military]*

We are a few people, only 13,000 of us but we have stood against the most powerful government in the world. We have stated our position for the world to know. Our future generations will know who stood up to protect our basic rights. They will know whose names were in the joint declaration but who refused to sign it. They will know who were the *real* leaders at the time when the most powerful nation wanted to install bases in Palau. They will be able to read their names off the joint declaration.

In lauding the joint declaration, I am not oblivious to the fact that the United States has the legal right in the Trusteeship Agreement to set up military bases anywhere in Micronesia. But I contend that they do not have the moral right to it as we, Micronesians, were never a part of the Trusteeship Agreement. I also realize that the United States has the military power and can thrust the bases down our throats (all it takes is one B-52 to make a round over Palau and all 13,000 of us will be reduced to ashes), but history will record it that we said NO when they came.

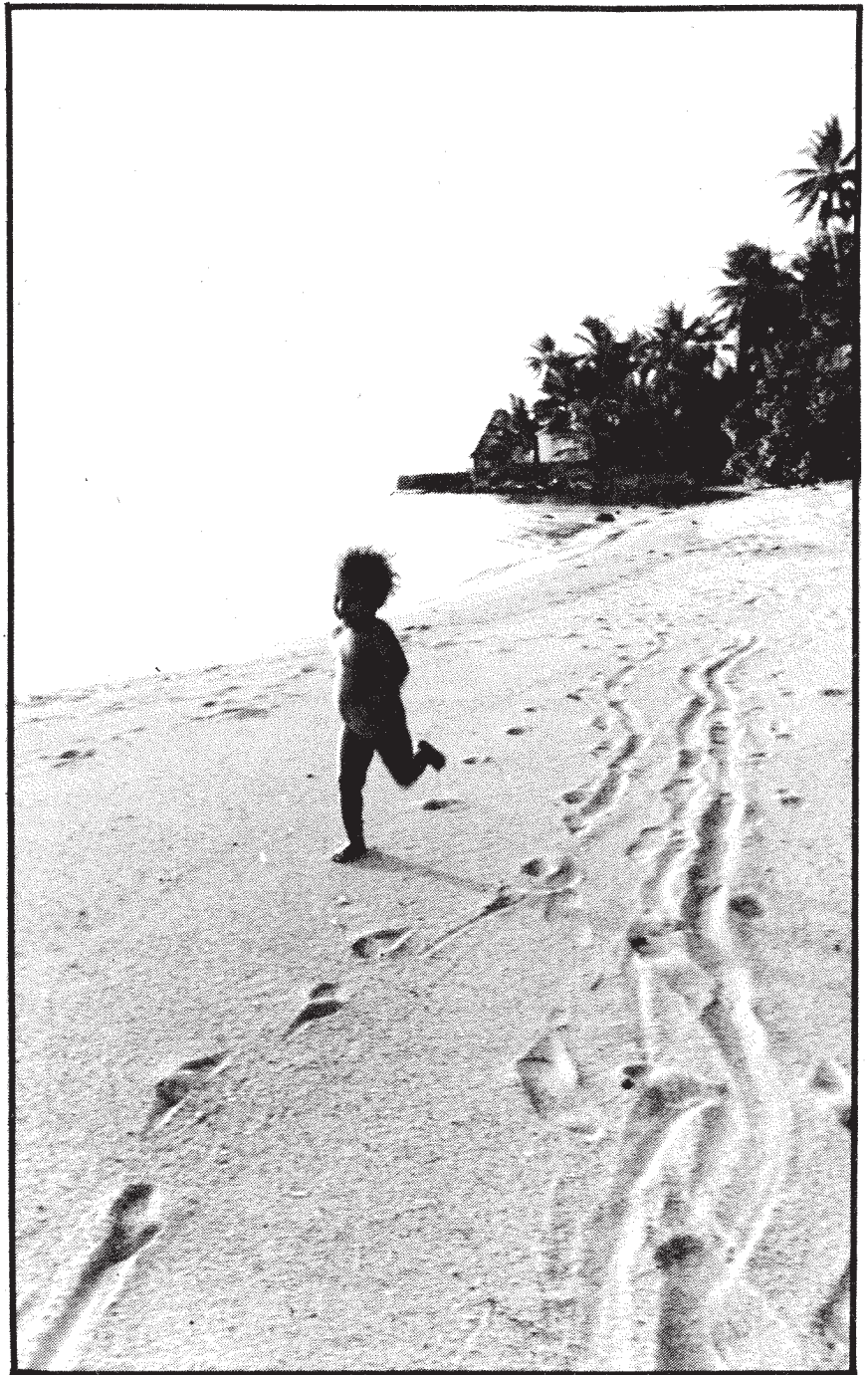
I am sure that the joint declaration took the United States by surprise as it did everyone in Palau, including our leaders themselves. Our position now is in black and white, but I'll bet the United States will do all in its power, including all sorts of threats and manipulations, to get some of us, those who have no backbones, to come out and repudiate the joint declaration. I will not be surprised either if the United States will eventually pay off some of our people to achieve its ends in our islands. But we must be strong. **WE MUST NOT LET THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DIVIDE AND CONQUER US.** Small and few we are, but let us guard against temptations and protect our faiths to our land. There is only one Palau, and it is ours!



*Bikini Nuclear Test (1954)*

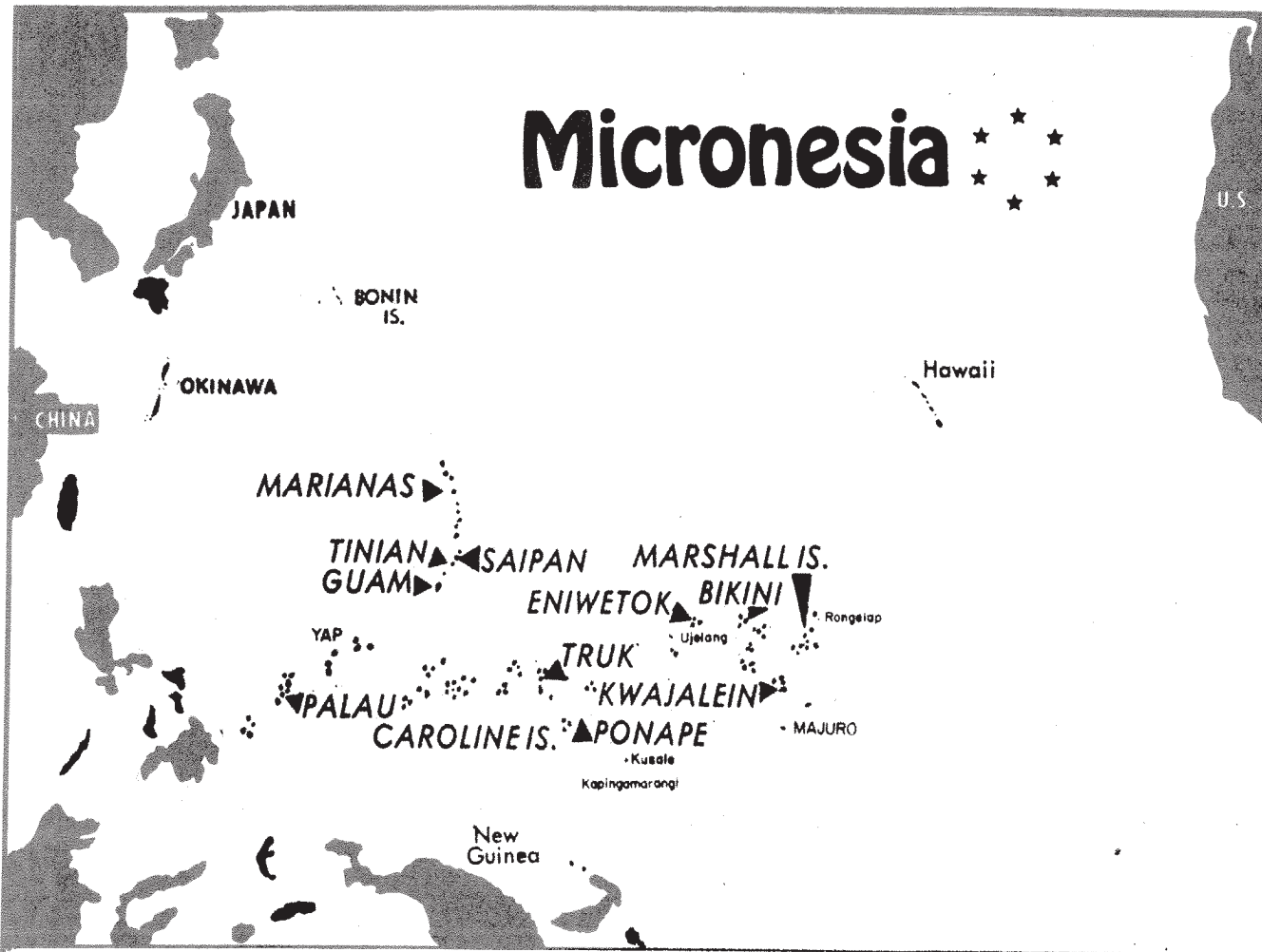
1. Our Island  
Water  
Crystal Clear  
Caressing the Sand.
2. Palm fronds.  
Wind rustled  
Glossy green.
3. LAND  
Loved, tended;  
Provider of Food
4. Gentle People  
In rhythm with Their sea  
Their Palms  
Their Land.
5. Dawn Sky  
Lightening Flash  
Scorching Heat  
Fine, white powder  
Hot wind.
6. Winds  
Free— blowing  
Free— blowing  
BEARING RADIATION.
7. People hurt.  
Thyroid  
Leukemia
8. WHY?

*A poem by John Anjain.*





# Micronesia



**MICRONESIA** is one of the three great island groups of the Pacific. Micronesia's three island chains — the Carolines, Marshalls and Marianas — contain 2,300 islands, almost 100 of which are regularly inhabited. The total population is about 115,000. The islands have been divided into six administrative districts which very roughly reflect cultural and language divisions. Since 1947, Micronesia has been controlled by the U.S. as one of 11 United Nations trusteeships. Micronesia is the only trusteeship which has not become self-governing. Only in Micronesia was the administering power given the right to build military installations. The U.S. has used the islands for nuclear weapons tests, naval and air bases, missile testing, germ warfare experimentation and as a CIA training base for Nationalist Chinese guerrillas. In 1954, the people of two islands were severely injured by nuclear fallout from tests on Bikini atoll and some islands have been vaporized and completely disappeared into the sea as a result of H-bomb tests.



**HISTORY:** Micronesia was 'owned' by Spain which only colonized the Marianas but nearly eradicated the people there. Guam was an American 'prize' in the Spanish-American War (1898) at which time Germany bought the rest of the Spanish domain. Japan gained control in 1914 but lost the islands to the U.S. in bloody fighting in World War II. Traditional livelihood comes from subsistence agriculture and fishing and these still predominate on the outer islands. The old authority patterns of clans, chief and democratic councils are undergoing rapid transformation as foreign institutions are imposed.

**GOVERNMENT:** Micronesia is run by the U.S. Department of the Interior and increasingly by the Defense Department. Although Micronesians are now replacing Americans in administrative positions, a new coterie of American consultants and advisers continue to rule the islands under the American High Commissioner. The U.S. appropriates about \$60 million a year and provides another \$25 through other federal activities. The biggest single part of that is for American's salaries; 73% of the 1973 budget went for administrative expenses.

**ECONOMY:** The economy is "virtually stagnant," according to a recent UN report. Economic weakness is cited by Micronesian leaders as the chief barrier to independence from the U.S. In Fiscal year 1971, Micronesia imported goods valued at \$26 million but exported only \$3 million, a 25% drop from the year before. Tourism took up some of the slack caused by a perpetually declining copra market, but little of the tourist development is controlled by Micronesians. The U.S. is now encouraging the growth of a foreign controlled cash economy but continues to discourage the growth of self-reliance.

**"We have the trust, the United States has the territory."  
Ataji Balos**

**MILITARY PLANS:** Micronesia is slated to become a major post-Vietnam fallback position as part of an island-based defense line running in a broad arc from the Indian Ocean to Japan. A giant multi-runway airbase and supply center is planned for Tinian, the island from which Hiroshima and Nagasaki were atomic bombed. Nearby Guam is already a major U.S. military bastion and home of almost 150 B-52s. The Navy has outlined plans for a Marine guerrilla warfare base, an airfield, a submarine port and an H-bomb storage depot in Palau, the closest U.S. controlled territory to Southeast Asia. Kwajalein, in the Marshall Islands, is the center of U.S. anti-ballistic missile testing and a target area for missiles launched from California, over 5000 miles away. Bikini and Eniwetok, the former H-bomb test sites, continue to be used for nuclear weapons related research and testing.

**FUTURE STATUS:** Since 1969, the Congress of Micronesia has been meeting with the U.S. to discuss a new political status. The announced U.S. position is to maintain a "lasting political partnership" with Micronesia. Micronesia rejected outright a U.S. offer of "commonwealth" status; in ensuing rounds of talks the U.S. has proposed a permanent association based on U.S. rights to military bases. Micronesians have consistently demanded the right to unilaterally terminate any agreement with the U.S. The independence movement is growing rapidly and is now supported by a majority of the people, except in the Marianas. The U.S. has now initiated attempts to divide Micronesians and has commenced separate negotiations with the Marianas while blocking meaningful talks with the rest of Micronesia. There are increasingly frequent labor disputes and more vocal attacks on the U.S. administration. Political education programs are developing and ties are being established with supporters from other nations.





# EDUCATION FOR SELF-RELIANCE

Ever since the beginning of the American Administration in Micronesia 27 years ago, we have been demanding more education for our children. But we have never really stopped to consider why we want education—what its purpose is. Is education a training for skills required to earn big, fat salaries in the modern sector of our economy?

Education must be relevant to Micronesia. Before we can have relevant education, let each and everyone of us ask himself or herself this basic question: Who am I? Are we foreigners or Micronesians? If the answer is that we are Micronesians, then why are many of our children taught to know the first President of the United States and not to understand the origin of the Yapese, the origin of the Ponapeans, or who first ruled Ponape? Education is a process by which youngsters of all nations come to grips with the appreciation of who they are and learn how to perpetuate their cultures so they can best utilize the resources of their immediate environments.

Our present educational system is a divorce for its participants from the society it is supposed to be preparing them for. Everything we do stresses book learning and underestimates the value of our society of traditional knowledge and the wisdom which is often acquired by intelligent men and women as they experience life, even without their being able to read.

A basic look at the economy of Micronesia today is totally discouraging in that Micronesia last year exported goods that were worth \$3 million while importing \$26.1 million worth; it is elementary to state that any country which exports less than it imports does not have a viable self-sufficient economy. This problem, accordingly, seems at this time the most pressing and dominant problem in our life today; for it is economy that destines the fate of whole human endeavors.

What can we do now to alleviate this grievous problem? Education for self-reliance seems to be the only alternative. Education for self-reliance means using the resources we have—our manpower and our land—to the best advantage. This means people working hard, intelligently, and together; in other words, working in cooperation. Education for self-reliance also means a dynamic and constructive part in the development of a society in which all members share fairly in the good or bad fortune of

the group, one in which progress is measured in terms of human well-being, not prestige buildings, cars, or other such things, whether they are privately or publicly owned. Our education must therefore inculcate a sense of commitment to the total community, and help the students accept values appropriate to our kind of future, not those appropriate to America.

This means that our educational system must be a cooperative endeavor, not individual advancement; it must stress concepts of equality and the responsibility to give service which goes with any special ability, whether it be in carpentry, in mechanics, in fishing, or in plain farming. Our education must counteract the temptation to intellectual arrogance; for this leads to the well-educated despising those whose abilities are non-academic or who have no special abilities but are just human beings. Such arrogance has no place in a society of equal citizens.

In conclusion, education for self-reliance must serve the purpose of Micronesia. It must encourage the growth of the cultural values we aspire to. It must encourage the development of a proud, independent, and free citizenry which relies upon itself for its own development, and which knows the advantages and the problems of cooperation. It must ensure that the educated know themselves to be an integral part of the nation and recognize the responsibility to give greater service the greater opportunities they have had. This is not only a matter of school organization and curriculum. Social values are formed by family, school, and society—by the total environment in which a child develops. But it is no use our education system stressing values and knowledge appropriate to the citizens of other countries; it is wrong if it even contributes to the continuation of those inequalities and privileges which still exist in Micronesia because of our past. Let our students be educated to be members and servants of the kind of just and egalitarian future to which Micronesia aspires.

DERSON RAMON

*From an article in the Micronitor, for which Derson Ramon is Ponape editor.*

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The growing number of Micronesians going to schools under the American educational system poses both an alarming and hopeful determining factor in the political fate of Micronesia. Alarming because such Western oriented education could be cited by American propagandists as evidence that Micronesians are psychologically and sociologically ready to be made part of the American political culture; and hopeful because Americanization of young Micronesians, via college education particularly, develops in them the habit of independent thinking.

This kind of thinking, foreign to Micronesia, is now being seeped silently into Micronesian consciousness through American education. The increasing outspokenness of Micronesian leaders against American policies in Micronesia is indicative of this growing independence in thinking. That Micronesian students in Guam and Hawaii are beginning to emerge from their carefree docility and commenting vehemently on the political developments in their islands is another manifestation of this fortunate miracle.

Though we cannot deny our being fortunate in this ironic phase of higher education, we may not be all that fortunate; at least not until the question of our political status has been resolved. This trend is just one of many educational developments that can transpire, quite conceivably to the detriment of Micronesian interests. Even education is but one aspect of our larger problem—the political dilemma.

The rationale for educating Micronesians may be well-meaning but we should not fail to recognize other underlying motives, especially the political ones, which may attempt to subvert the real purpose of education. So although we are hopeful to see Micronesians continually come out of the American education system as independent thinkers, we must not forget that power is still a one-way anathema, flowing from Washington, Double Cross, that we can combat only by organizing and coordinating the thoughts and activities of our independent thinkers, not by having them act out their frustrations individually.

*Yinug, Yap [1971]*





We have forgotten that it is Micronesia's strategic position that has determined U.S. policy toward us. It is not altruism that has done so. When the U.S. was not in need of additional bases, Micronesia was ignored. Now that the people of Japan, Okinawa, the Philippines, and even Guam, are displaying opposition to the American military, Micronesia has become very important to U.S. security.

We have forgotten that military bases are used for killing people. The Micronesian people are not killers. We should not want our islands used for killing other human beings. . . . If members of the Congress vote to allow the military into Micronesia, we will have an exceptionally heavy burden to bear in the future.

We have forgotten that we have a choice before us. We can ratify the compact and seal our fate forever. Or, we can begin the process of remembering all that we have forgotten about ourselves.

I hope that we do the latter and that we get busy on the job of drafting a constitution. Ratifying the compact would be a serious mistake. This is probably the most important moment in Micronesian history. We should choose with care. I hope that we have not forgotten the responsibility we owe to the people of Micronesia.

*Rep. Ataji Balos, Marshalls [1972]*



## INDEPENDENCE MEANS SELF-DIGNITY

"Independence" is a much abused word. It is a very relative term and has many connotations. To many of us Micronesians independence provokes a lot of unnecessary and unjustified fears. Those of us who are afraid of becoming independent are not to be blamed for after so many years of foreign domination—four hundred years of alien rule by four imperialistic countries is a record unbeaten by any former or present colonized people—it is only natural for us to shrink from the thought of finally becoming free men. It is this freedom that is at the root of our desire to become independent, to build a proud island Nation of Micronesia.

There is no denying that no nation in the world now is totally independent. We are not talking about absolute independence for Micronesia, for it is impossible. Even the United States, our "mother" country, is not absolutely independent; she is in fact

dependent on other nations from which she extracts about 60% of wealth for her power and well-being of her citizens. The world has become so small and has changed so much that interdependence has become a fact of life among all nations and people.

Independence must be viewed by those of us who still have questions, as relative and should not be mistaken for its political meaning and significance for Micronesia.

Independence does not mean that Micronesia will return to her "dark ages." It does not mean that we will live like our ancestors four centuries ago. It does not mean that we will erect a wall around Micronesia nor put a stop to change and progress. It does not mean that we will end our friendship that we have developed with the American people during the last 25 years. It does not mean many things that we have been made to believe.

*It means freedom!* Freedom from any more outside domination. It means freedom to decide for ourselves. It means freedom from being told that *that* or *this* is good for us. It means freedom to run our own lives as we see fit! It means freedom for us to learn from our own mistakes. It means freedom for Micronesia to do her own thing. It means that we want to be our own master in our own house!

Change will come about in Micronesia whether we like it or not and whether Micronesia is independent or not. But under independence Micronesia can best control change and progress. We will be the one to decide what kind of society we want to see in Micronesia in the future. We will decide what kind of change we want Micronesia to go through. We will also decide in what direction and at what rate, how fast, we desire Micronesia to change. Under any status short of independence, we will have lesser say and role in making basic and important decisions that will affect our own lives and the lives of our children. Independence will at least guarantee that any change or decision will be made for and in the best interests of our people and not those of others. Micronesia will be responsive to and responsible to Micronesia.

Independence offers Micronesia the best opportunity to salvage parts of our rich cultures and traditions by putting an end to further contamination. It is the best device for Micronesians to save what is left in us that is still Micronesian. It is a chance for us to restore what has been robbed of us. Independence means *pride and self-dignity* for Micronesia.

Francisco Uludong,  
*The Young Micronesian* (1971)



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## ECONOMIC SELF-RELIANCE

Economic realities of independence

"In speaking to you on the Economic Realities of Independence, I would like to first ask for a willing suspension of your disbelief, for I would like you to join me in conjuring up a vision—not a dream—but a vision, a vision of what Micronesia can be like as an independent nation.

"In this independent Micronesia, no fish would be imported, because of the development of small and medium sized fishing companies and cooperatives and the establishment of canning factories. Micronesia, however, would export large quantities of trepang, cultured pearls, and shrimp and crayfish to world markets.

"Micronesia would also import no beef, chicken, pork or eggs. Beef could be raised on selected islands, such as Rota and perhaps Babelthuap in Palau. Pork, chickens and eggs could be produced in each district in sufficient quantities to provide for all of Micronesia's wants and any excess could be exported to Guam.

"Micronesia would import no onions, potatoes, lettuce and other such vegetables and fruits because Micronesians would have heeded the government's urging for families to grow enough to provide for themselves and because of the agricultural training and practice experienced by students in elementary, secondary and vocational schools. Micronesia would, however, export large quantities of bananas, black pepper, cacao and citrus fruits to Guam and other markets. Micronesia would also export its copra to a central regional Pacific processing plant where it would be either desiccated or refined into oil before shipment to Japan.

"Micronesia would import no beer or alcoholic beverages because of the prohibitive import tax and because several districts produce a variety of beverages from local plants.

"No cars would be imported into Micronesia. Only essential farm equipment, jeeps, trucks and buses would be imported. The buses would be needed for the transportation systems developed in all the district centers, replacing expensive and short-lived private luxury cars.

"Less foreign labor would be needed in Micronesia because of increased vocational training programs qualifying Micronesians in middle and upper levels of manpower. Micronesia would spend less money for public programs because all Micronesian secondary or vocational school graduates would be required to donate two years of service to the 'Micronesian Conservation and Construction Corps,' which would construct roads, docks, seawalls, and fish hatcheries; aid in the construction of public schools and hospitals; and help in the planting of coconut trees and the clearing of land for agricultural purposes.

"Micronesia would import few if any outboard engines, because it would import small, diesel engines which would be used in vessels built at boatyards in Palau and Truk.

"There would be few foreign investor's permits issued because of the success of the Bank of Micronesia in providing Micronesian investment capital for gradual and carefully planned Micronesian development and also because of the formation of many cooperatives and clan or family-owned corporations following traditional patterns of cooperative effort.

"There would be no big resort hotels owned by foreign corporations, but rather small, locally owned accommodations using local materials. Tourists would have to receive advance permission before entering Micronesia and would also have to pay a tourist tax. Not every tourist would be accepted and some might be asked to leave if they do not respect Micronesians or their culture. Micronesia would be an exclusive tourist area. The waiting list would be long.

"In independent Micronesia you would see no jet planes but perhaps there would be several DC6's and a service that is adapted to suit Micronesia's needs, not the requirements of a tourist industry. Additionally, the planes would be owned by Micronesians or the Micronesian government and not by a foreign firm.

"This Micronesia would also have its own shipping service within its islands, and would pick up cargo from transshipment points delivered by Japanese and American freighters in the course of their normal transpacific routes. The shipping company too would be owned by Micronesians.

"The Micronesia that I see would have no military bases, or testing or restricted areas in it, and would be an internationally recognized neutral area, and perhaps a place where international research efforts in marine biology and other related fields might be carried out.

"Finally, in the Micronesia I envision, the people would lead productive lives in harmony with their cultures and not in an attempt to emulate western patterns of society and economics. Micronesian youths would be taught the values of their traditions and customs. Lore, skills, and crafts of our ancestors would be taught and cherished. Education at all levels would prepare our people to respect the land and the sea and their customs while enabling them to participate meaningfully in and understand the modern world around them.

"This, of course, is a vision of the economic realities of an independent Micronesia. (1) Now I would like to talk about the realities of present-day

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"The natural beauty of our islands, their clear lagoons, our pure air and our vast ocean with its fabulous, untapped riches; our people themselves, and the uncomplicated way of life of our island culture are becoming the envy of the so-called developed countries everywhere . . . We read everyday of how 'civilized' man is poisoning himself in his smog-filled cities, of his polluted rivers and lakes, of urban blight, slums and ghettos, racism, violence in the streets, war and robbery. These are the warnings we should be heeding, for there are now businessmen, investors and developers looking avidly to our islands. They are talking about *land* for hotels and mass tourism, of drilling in our lagoons for whatever riches they can find, of our ocean and its fabulous wealth and of how they can 'develop' us so that we also will be able to join in the mad rush toward a materialistic society. This kind of development is not worth the price!"

*Sen. Roman Tmetuchl, Palau [1970]*



## Micronesia under the Trusteeship Agreement.

### THE PRESENT NIGHTMARE

"At the opening of the Second Regular Session of the Congress of Micronesia, Speaker of the House of Representatives Bethwel Henry summed up the state of Micronesia's economy in his opening remarks. Looking at the large amount of United States grant funds as opposed to the rate of economic growth in the Trust Territory, he said that, 'While our coffers overflow with money, we find our policies bankrupt.' (2)

"His reference was to the nearly 100 million dollars a year that is being pumped into Micronesia's economy either through grant funds, or federal programs versus a slow economic growth rate, an increasing gap between imports and exports and a rapidly falling price of copra on the world market.

"The economic realities of Micronesia today are nightmarish. As pointed out by the Visiting Mission of the United Nations in their 1970 report, the Trust Territory is 'obviously living beyond its means. In 1968, 95 percent of its budget was derived from grants by the Administering Authority.'(3)

"Micronesia is characterized by high rates of unemployment, yet the goal of the educational programs is to enable nearly every elementary graduate the opportunity to complete four years of secondary school.

"The Government is the largest employer in the Trust Territory with nearly 7,000 employees out of a total work force of some 13,000. Also, a great number of those workers in the private sector are supported indirectly either by government employment or government spending.

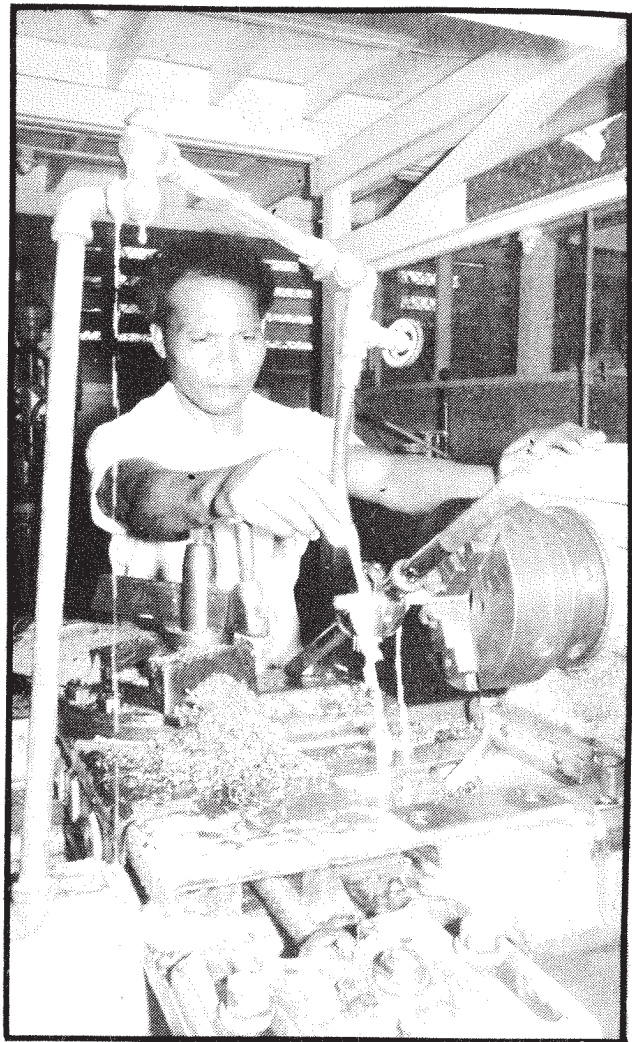
"Micronesia has a high cost of living that is growing higher every day and Micronesia's citizens are forsaking their traditional homes in outlying islands attracted by high-paying employment (mostly government) in district center areas, where they also acquire tastes for expensive imported foods.(4)

"Also because of the flight to the district center areas, we find crime and juvenile delinquency on the rise and deterioration of and indifference to traditional cultural values.(5)

"Finally, while today the Trust Territory Administration vigorously promotes the 'invisibly export' of tourism as a partial answer to Micronesia's economic woes, we find that past planning efforts have resulted in the gross pollution of some of Micronesia's finest beaches and lagoons.

### THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

"One might rightly ask how such an unfortunate state of affairs has been allowed to develop. The answer, while perhaps more complex than they would appear on the surface, might be narrowed down to the following:



1. The nature of colonialism and its effects.
2. America's inexperience as a colonial power.
3. The nature of America's interests in Micronesia.

"For good or evil, America's presence in Micronesia partially offered, partially imposed new values, customs, institutions and desires. This is a natural consequence of the dominance of a small country like Micronesia by a large, industrial country like the United States.

"Unfortunately, both for the United States and Micronesia, America's relative lack of experience in being a colonial power contributed vastly to the waste and intentional and unintentional neglect which have had their influences on the state of Micronesia today. The official policy for nearly 20 years in Micronesia was the so-called 'zoo philosophy.' Administrators came and went, programs were started and forgotten. No one but the Micronesians had a sense of history regarding Micronesia's development. This unenviable record



might be best contrasted with that of Britain's in its power-World War II development of Tanganyika—now known as Tanzania. Britain began implementing educational and developmental programs for Tanganyika as early as 1946, which partly explains that country's smooth transition into independence in 1961.

"Tied up with the effect of America's inexperience with administering a foreign country, are its interests and responsibilities as expressed in the Trusteeship Agreement. On one hand the United States is committed to promoting the 'social advancement of the inhabitants and to this end shall protect the rights and fundamental freedoms of all elements of the population... (and) protect the health of the inhabitants.' On the other hand, the United States is entitled to 'establish naval, military and air bases and to erect fortifications in the Trust Territory; (and) to station and employ armed forces in the Territory---'(6) Unfortunately, when its strategic rights are in conflict with its legal and moral obligation, it has usually been the latter that have suffered. One graphic example of this is the irradiation of 239 Marshallese citizens during the March 1, 1954 nuclear test.

"During the 1960's it became apparent that the United States would eventually have to relinquish its hold on Micronesia, lest it be stigmatized as the 'Portugal of the Pacific.'(7)

"This abrupt about-face in the United State's attitude toward Micronesia was spelled out in the Solomon Mission Report and evidenced by a tenfold increase from six to 60 million dollars in the Trust Territory's budget from 1962 to 1972. This 'feast or famine approach to development and nation-building simply is not in the best interests of the Micronesians.(3) What the United States has tried to do is develop Micronesia's economy with the 'fastest possible development with minimum Micronesian participation,' as opposed to the Congress of Micronesia's view that what is needed is 'fastest development with maximum Micronesian participation.'(8)

"The huge sums of money, spent without regard for constructive long-range concrete goals, have resulted in a situation regarding Micronesia's economy as characterized by Congressman Sasauo Haruo, Chairman of the House Committee on Economic Development when he said: 'If I were to paint an overall picture of Micronesia's present economy it would be a confused and bleak jumble; it would be a picture of disparate and disruptive forces at work in a helter-skelter fashion. At one level we find lack of continuity, bureaucratic lethargy, poor communication, lack of direction, confusion over priorities and inappropriate programs. All this is compounded by a general lack of forceful and continuous monitoring, support and review of economic development and its effects.'

"So far I have discussed the vision of an

independent Micronesia, a vision that I consider to be not unrealistic, and the seemingly unreal picture of Micronesia's present economy. How to bridge the gap, then, is the question. And instead of leaving the question unanswered, I wish to propose some answers to this question. I would modestly suggest that in order for an independent Micronesia to achieve a viable economy there immediately be initiated a program whereby developmental goals will be formulated for Micronesia and that a plan be developed that will enable Micronesia to achieve these goals, a plan that will take into consideration all of the social, cultural, political and natural constraints which would influence such an endeavor.

"Lest I appear to have been unduly harsh regarding the Administering Authority's past efforts toward developing our economy, I should note at this point, that indeed there have been sincere attempts by the Administration to get Micronesia's economy moving. Their awareness of the need for coordination of





# TO THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

MICRONESIA HOUSE 2220 University Avenue, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

## AN OPEN LETTER TO PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

We are Micronesians studying in America and we write this open letter to you because we believe strongly that you can understand our problem and have the power to help us.

Twenty-four years ago our country of Micronesia was placed under the United Nations and at the insistence of the United States Government was made the only strategic trust territory whereby the United States was guaranteed the right to use our islands for military purposes. Since then, the United States has repeatedly taken advantage of this "legal" right by using some of our islands to develop deadly military weapons. All this has been done in the name of "international peace and security" but at great damage and irreparable loss to our people and islands.

Our islands have been essential in the development of the American military might and their names should be familiar to you. Bikini, in the 40's and 50's was the site of atomic and nuclear tests. So was Eniwetok. It is reported that Eniwetok is still being used by the military for biological and chemical warfare experimentation. The people of Rongelap became "human" guinea pigs in 1954 when radiation from a hydrogen bomb test "accidentally" reached their island. Today, they are still a subject in medical journals and doctors from the Atomic Energy Commission regularly visit their island for medical check-ups. Kwajalein and the islands nearby, twenty-six years after the war, are still in the hands of U.S. military and provide the biggest and the only missile testing base outside of the United States. Saipan, for eleven years, was a CIA training base for Asian guerrilla forces. Other islands have also been used for military-related programs and projects.

Our people from a number of these islands are still living in exile and they long to return but the U.S. military will not allow them. They willingly accepted these burdens when the United States wanted their islands so that the children of America could live in peace and security. But it appears that the United States still wants to inflict more "peace burdens" on our people and extract more sacrifice from them. According to a UPI story (The Honolulu Advertiser, 6/10/71), the United States now wants to transfer the atomic war weaponry from Okinawa to Micronesia. And we are confused and disturbed by this. We asked ourselves, have we not done enough for peace and security of America's children? Or is not the world safe enough for Pax American? We don't know the answers to these troubling questions. But like many Americans who do not like atomic weapons in their backyard, we don't want them in our midst.

We know what war means. When Japan fortified our islands in violation of the League of Nations mandate, it was an invitation to enemy attacks. American bombs and bullets killed many of our people and destroyed our homes and islands. If the US Government establishes bases in Micronesia and puts bombs in them, it will be abandoning its UN obligations to protect our people and islands. We will be a target of enemy attacks in future wars. We don't want to go through that same experience under the U.S.

We consider you, people of the world as our friends. Slowly and reluctantly, we are beginning to wonder if the United States Government is not our enemy, too. We are a small country and our people are very few and weak. If necessary, however, we will fight but only with your help shall we win. We, therefore, earnestly ask all decent and peace-loving people to help us stop the US from planting the deadly war weapons in our midst. Please, let it be known that CHILDREN OF MICRONESIA, TOO, WANT TO LIVE IN PEACE AND SECURITY.

In the Name of Peace and Humanity,  
MICRONESIAN INDEPENDENCE ADVOCATES  
August 1971