

Comments on Political Future of Micronesia¹

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Change is part and parcel of human history; it is affecting the whole world including American society, the so-called model of democracy. Change in Micronesian society is being sculptured both intentionally and unconsciously, to fit American society. When Americans talk about development in Micronesia, they are quick to point out that the United States, despite its shortcomings in the administration of Micronesia, has done much.

Nevertheless, I personally feel that the American people in trying to "help" the Micronesians develop themselves have failed utterly and miserably to take into consideration the point of view of the Micronesians themselves. If Americans were honest and sincere in aiding Micronesia, weight, quality, and direction of change must be given top consideration. This has not happened in the past but it may be happening now with some Americans realizing that what is good for America is not necessarily good for the rest of the whole world—and for Micronesia.

Although as a Micronesian, I have repeatedly criticized the United States for its actions or inactions, in a way I am glad that "development" in Micronesia has been slow, and that we have been able to adjust to it, relatively speaking, without succumbing to it. I do not mean, however, that development has been a blessing. I have seen what it has done to the Hawaiians, the brown-skinned Hawaiians, and more recently the Guamanians. All I can say for these people is that I feel sorry for them. They are beyond redemption. But Micronesia is not yet beyond redemption, I hope. It has not reached the point of no return. I disagree with those individuals, Americans and Micronesians alike in and outside of Micronesia, who hold that if Micronesia is going to progress, we have to blindly set up an association on American terms or for that matter on conditions imposed by the Western world. In Micronesia we still can have modernization without having to do it the American way. We have seen modernization take place elsewhere in other ways. I am convinced that it can come about through one or combination of these ways in Micronesia. To insure that this modernization does actually come about, Americans and Micronesians must be able to cooperate. But if the Americans on the one hand fail to do so, their real motives will be exposed for the whole world to see. On the other hand, if Micronesian leaders fail, they will be deposed by later leaders. Micronesia is for the Micronesians, each and every one of us, not a few manipulators.

¹ Based on a paper presented at a Symposium on the Political Status of Micronesia held at the Center for South Pacific Studies of the University of California, Santa Cruz, on March 27-29, 1969.

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All Micronesians must enjoy the fruits of modernization not merely a few.

American colonization in Micronesia must come to an end. It is in the interest of the colonizer and the colonized that de-colonization must begin now, at once. For the sake of harmony, stability and order, the Americans must replace the policy of development of the native to a most positive and human one. This policy must emphasize realization and appreciation of the Micronesian himself rather than his development. Human qualities are not developed—they are realized and appreciated. This means a change in education of the Micronesians now sponsored by the Americans. As it is now, the educational system in Micronesia is designed to make Americans out of the Micronesians. This Americanization of Micronesians is done in the name of modernization. Micronesians unknowingly are being robbed of their value systems which are replaced by the white man's value systems. Racism must not be allowed to continue in Micronesia.

I know some Americans in Micronesia and outside of Micronesia are watching us to observe how their efforts have modernized us. But they do not realize that unconsciously they are creating brown-skinned white men out of us. This cultural and psychological imperialism must be ended. But the ending cannot be accomplished either by Americans or Micronesians alone. Americans must do their part by drastically changing their present philosophy to one based on realization and appreciation of the Micronesians. On the other hand, Micronesians must pull themselves out of this cultural quicksand. They must rise up and express their human dignity. This can best be done, I feel, at this time through independence.

I want to define my use of the word "independence." National isolation is neither a desirable nor a possible ideal in the world which is daily becoming more of a unit. International and intranational activities dominate the world, the nations are growing more and more interdependent. My ideal and objective cannot go against history and time. I must be prepared to desert narrow nationalism in favor of more cooperation and internationalism. Independence, therefore, cannot mean for me isolation but cultural freedom—cultural and psychological freedom from American imperialism.