Micronesia--A Changing Frontier

Author(s): Karl J. Pelzer

Source: *World Politics*, Jan., 1950, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Jan., 1950), pp. 251-266

Published by: Cambridge University Press

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2009190

MICRONESIA – A CHANGING FRONTIER

By KARL J. PELZER

DEPENDENT areas under American administration have always been a heavy financial burden on the American taxpayer. The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, comprising the whole of Micronesia except Guam, will certainly prove no exception. That Micronesia will prove an economic liability is, however, less important than the possibility that it will also be a heavy political liability.

The humanitarian conscience of the Western world would in any case be quick to enforce its highest standard upon a rich government like that of the United States. A country striving to assert leadership in the development of backward areas all over the world will itself wish to meet these standards in its sole trust territory. However, the material well-being of the Micronesians when under Japanese rule, the great devastation wrought by the war, and the predominantly strategic interests so far dominant in the United States policy in the area—all will make it difficult even for a benevolent American administration to win the approval of the Micronesians. For it to make a record there which will help it in its struggle to win the confidence of colonial peoples elsewhere will be even more difficult.

No tropical dependency has changed hands so frequently during a period of six decades as has Micronesia, now officially known as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Micronesians sixty years of age have experienced the impacts of Spanish, German, Japanese and, most recently, of American rule on their own lives. No two colonial powers have had the same motivation, the same interests, pursued the same policy, or had the same attitude toward the Micronesians. No wonder that this succession of colonial rulers, each imposing its own values and administrative procedures, often without consideration of Micronesian culture, has at times been confusing to the Micronesians.

Micronesia consists of three island groups, the Marshalls, the Carolines, and the Marianas. It lies north of the equator between the meridians 130° East and 180° and comprises an estimated three million square miles. This territory, approximately the size of the United States, has a total land area of only about 700 square miles, scattered over ninety-six island units, which are either clusters of small islands or rather small isolated single islands. The islands of Micronesia are of two types, the so-called "low" coral islands and the "high" volcanic islands. The Marshalls are all low islands, whereas Truk, for example, is a combination of high volcanic islands surrounded by an enormous barrier reef.

The indigenous population of the trust territory is about 50,000. Three-fifths of the Micronesians live on the islands or island groups of Majuro in the Marshalls, Kusaie, Ponape, Truk, Yap, and Palau in the Carolines, and Saipan in the Marianas. The peoples of the Marianas, known as Chamorros, differ considerably from the other Micronesians in that they are mostly of a mixed ancestry resulting from the intermarriage of Spanish, Filipino, Mexican, and, to a lesser degree, German and Japanese immigrants with local peoples. The population of the Marshalls and of the Carolines is, on the whole, more homogeneous, although here too we find families of mixed ancestry, who are often socially and politically of considerable influence. The peoples of Micronesia differ greatly from island group to island group in their culture, but within an island group we often observe a remarkable homogeneity, as, for instance, in the Marshalls. The culture of the various Micronesian groups has undergone both material and ideological changes, but there are considerable differences in the degree to which the acculturation process has been effective. Such differences are especially noticeable from island group to island group, as for instance between Yap and Palau or between Palau and Truk, but they can also be observed within a single island group, such as Truk.[1]

A comparison of the colonial policies and activities of Spain,

[1] In 1946, the writer spent several months on Truk and had ample occasion to observe these differences. They seem to depend in no small measure on the geographic location of the communities in relation to the administrative centers. The nearer the community is to the administrative center the greater is the acculturation process.

Germany, Japan, and the United States brings out the fact that Micronesia has had a different significance for each successive power.

A Missionary's Frontier

Although Spain considered all of Micronesia as her sphere of interest from the time of its discovery in the sixteenth century,[2] only the Marianas came under effective Spanish rule and then not until the second half of the seventeenth century. They served as a way station on the galleon route between Acapulco and Manila. Until 1815 the Marianas were administered as part of the Viceroyalty of Mexico. After that date the representative of the Spanish crown in Manila administered the Marianas. The Carolines and the Marshalls were also regarded as a part of Spanish possessions in the Pacific, but they remained virtually independent until 1874, when Spain became alarmed over German and British expansion in the Pacific and formally proclaimed her sovereignty over the Carolines. Germany, supported by Great Britain, protested against this proclamation, pointing out that Spain had no representatives in the islands. The dispute was submitted to Pope Leo XIII, who confirmed the Spanish claim to sovereignty but stipulated that Spain would have to maintain an orderly government in the Carolines and to protect all western traders. During the period from 1886 to 1898 Spain endeavored to establish her rule over the Carolines, but she was only partly successful in Ponape and in the Palaus.

Spain's interests in Micronesia were rather limited; the centers of her economic activities were located west and east of these islands, in the Philippines and in the New World. Besides serving as a stop-over point on the galleon route, the Marianas were primarily a missionary's frontier. Spain never seriously attempted to utilize the economic resources of Micronesia, yet, with her customary religious zeal, she did not rest until the Chamorros had been completely converted to Catholicism. The Spaniards applied the same colonization techniques in Micronesia that they used in the New World and

[2] Guam, for example, was discovered by Magellan in 1520; Palau was discovered by Villalobos in 1543.

in the Philippines. The Laws of the Indies were extended to the Marianas. The Chamorros were compelled to give up their custom of living scattered in isolated farmsteads and small hamlets and were brought together in villages organized around a Catholic church, where it was relatively easy for the Catholic priest to guard over his community. Spanish Jesuits were in charge of the missions in the Marianas from 1668 to 1769, when they were replaced by Augustinians, who remained in Guam until 1899.[3] The Spanish missionaries succeeded in suppressing much of the old Chamorro religion and in introducing new beliefs and religious practices, which took the place of the old ways. But it seems that although the Catholic Church has become powerful as an institution it was not able to eradicate such deep-rooted practices as magic, traditional methods of treating sickness, or beliefs regarding death and ancestral ghosts.

A Trader's Frontier

Germany's interests in Micronesia were primarily of an economic and more specifically of a trading nature. In the middle of the 1860's German traders came to the Marshalls and the Carolines to exchange consumer goods for copra.

Germany established a protectorate over the Marshall islands in 1885 and purchased the Carolines as well as the Marianas—with the exception of Guam—from Spain in 1899. From that year on the political history of Micronesia is the same, except for Guam, which has been an American possession since 1898. Germany attached Micronesia administratively to her possessions in New Guinea and controlled it until the beginning of World War I.

The chief German trading center in the Marshalls was at Jaluit, from which the Jaluit Co. took its name. This company was formed in 1888 by a merger of three private German firms trading in the area. In its desire to keep administrative costs down to a minimum the German government

[3] It is interesting to note that Spanish Capuchin monks carried on the tradition of Spanish Catholicism from 1901 on. According to Laura Thompson, the Spanish padres "were propagating in prewar Guam a southern European type of Catholicism and culture," a fact which slowed down the Americanization of Guam. Laura Thompson, *Guam and Its People,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1947, p. 186.

entered into an agreement with the Jaluit Co. under which the latter assumed responsibility for any deficit in return for the right to claim all unoccupied land and to exploit any guano or phosphate deposits found in the Marshalls. Although the Jaluit Co. expanded its activities into the Marianas and the Carolines, it did not obtain the monopoly there that it had in the Marshalls. This so-called Marshalls System guaranteeing the Jaluit Co. great advantages drew protests from Great Britain, as a result of which it was abolished in 1906.

During the German period Micronesia was a trader's frontier. Missionary activities were definitely of secondary importance and not always favored by officialdom. On the other hand the administrators were determined to expand the copra trade, and brought pressure to bear on Micronesian communities to enlarge their copra production. Every adult male was obliged to plant eight coconut palms per year. Everywhere coconut groves became more numerous and extensive as the Micronesians, especially on the larger high islands, cleared the forest and planted palms. The only other resource utilized during the German period was the phosphate of Angaur.

The number of German nationals always remained very small, consisting largely of employees of the trading companies and government officials, whose number never exceeded twenty-five for all of Micronesia. In addition, there was a handful of individuals who settled down, married Micronesian women, and carried on as small independent traders or worked as agents for some large trading company.

Germany applied the system of indirect rule, utilizing Micronesian chiefs to administer the islands. The chief task of the German administrators was to supervise the activities of the chiefs, to suppress warfare between island communities, and to foster copra production. Micronesians generally remember the German period favorably because the Germans interfered much less than the Japanese with their traditional ways and because they initiated the copra trade and stimulated copra production, which became the basis for a higher standard of living and enabled the Micronesians to acquire consumer goods previously unknown to them.

Strategic and Settlement Frontier For Japan

Japan, having become keenly aware of the potential strategic value of Micronesia, lost no time in occupying the German possessions north of the equator in October 1914. She met with no resistance, since Germany had no military forces in the islands. Japan's next move was to obtain British, French, and Russian commitments to support her claim to Micronesia in the final peace settlement. These secret agreements strengthened Japan's position in Paris, but she was not able to reach her goal without compromise. Instead of being permitted to annex Micronesia outright, as she had expected, Japan was able to keep Micronesia only by accepting a mandate over the islands from the Principal Allied and Associate Powers, in whose favor Germany had renounced all rights over her former overseas possessions. On December 17, 1920, the Council of the League of Nations confirmed the mandate. The terms of the "C" mandate gave Japan "full power of administration and legislation over the territory . . . as an integral part of the Empire of Japan," but in return Japan was obliged (1) to promote the material and moral well-being and social progress of the inhabitants; (2) to prohibit slavery, traffic in arms and ammunition, and the sale of alcoholic beverages to native inhabitants; (3) to refrain from building fortifications and military bases or from giving military training to the inhabitants; (4) to permit freedom of worship and missionary activity; (5) to submit an annual accounting to the League of Nations.

This political setback was chiefly the result of determined American opposition to the demands for annexation of German territory expressed by Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. The United States did not agree to the Japanese mandate until after the Washington Conference. The limitations to which Japan was subjected must have come as a severe blow to her naval planners since the clause against fortifications of "C" mandates considerably decreased the strategic value of Micronesia to Japan. This was completely offset, however, by the American concession not to strengthen or increase the fortifications or naval bases in the Philippines, Guam, the Aleutian Islands or any other American possession in the Pacific, except Hawaii, Alaska, and the Panama Canal Zone.

Although Japan left the League of Nations in 1935, she kept Micronesia and continued to report to the Mandate Commission until 1938. After that she treated it as a closed military area.

During the 1920's and 1930's it was repeatedly rumored that Japan was fortifying the major islands in violation of the terms of the mandate. Up until 1938 Japanese representatives denied such accusations during hearings of the Mandate Commission. Evidence which has become available since Japan's surrender supports the Japanese contention that she did not violate the terms of the mandate, at least until 1938.

Remembering the reputation that Truk possessed in the United States during the early days of the war, when it was considered to be the strongest naval base in the Pacific next to Pearl Harbor, I questioned both Trukese and European missionaries regarding the date of construction of military installations in Truk during the course of an economic survey in 1946. All informants agreed that military preparations, even on a small scale, did not begin until early 1940 and that the construction of fortifications did not start until either late 1940 or early 1941. I was able to determine the date of construction of airfields because it involved the transfer of communities holding the land needed for such fields. There was not a single airfield in operation in Truk by December 1941, except for a commercial seaplane base on Dublon island. During the war three airstrips and one combined seaplane base and airstrip were constructed in Truk.

A team of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey assigned to Truk came to the conclusion that Japan observed the restrictions against fortifications so long as she was in the League, and even upon withdrawing from the League she "apparently made no attempt to fortify Truk although at the same time she made every effort to develop a Navy which would use Truk as its advanced base."[4] Fortunately for Japan Truk provided a perfect natural anchorage inside its lagoon and could serve as an advanced base without any improvements either to the natural defenses or to the anchorage.

[4] The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Reduction of Truk,* Washington, 1947, p. 2.

The Japanese Navy organized the Fourth Fleet on November 15, 1939, and charged it with the mission of protecting Micronesia. Truk, on account of its central location and its excellent anchorage, was chosen as location for Fourth Fleet headquarters. The Fourth Fleet commanded (a) the Fourth Base Force at Truk, charged with the control of naval garrisons and installations in the Carolines, (b) the Fifth Base Force at Saipan in charge of all the Marianas, and (c) the Sixth Base Force at Kwajalein in charge of the Marshalls.

From the above it becomes apparent that Japan did not attempt to strengthen the natural strategic value of Micronesia until late 1939 or early 1940. However, the development of air power and the use of land-based airplanes in naval warfare gave Micronesia a strategic value that had not been foreseen in 1920. The use of the islands as "stationary aircraft carriers" did not involve the costly installations that are entailed in the construction of first class naval bases.[5]

From the Micronesian point of view the economic development of the islands under Japanese rule is more important than the question of the strategic value of the islands to Japan. After 1920 Micronesia changed from a trader's into a settler's frontier. The Japanese were not content with the limited trading activity that had been carried on by the Germans; instead they carefully analysed the resources and proceeded to develop them intensively. Geographic proximity, population pressure in Japan, an ample supply of manpower accustomed to a low standard of living, a demand at home for every kind of product available in the islands, and a desire to develop a market for Japanese goods all made for a type of economic activity that neither Spain nor Germany had even contemplated.

It is true that Micronesia could not make a really important contribution to the economy of Japan. The economic potential of the islands is limited; but Japan made the fullest possible use of this limited potential by bringing in settlers and by investing substantial sums of capital.

Wherever there was unutilized land suitable for agricultural development roads were built to open the area for Japanese

[5] For a discussion of the limitations of "unsinkable aircraft carriers" see Bernard Brodie, *A Guide to Naval Strategy*, 3rd ed., Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1944, pp. 228-229.

settlers. Extensive tracts were cleared and planted with sugar cane on the thinly populated islands of Saipan, Rota, and Tinian in the Marianas, during the 1920's. The sugar industry employed Japanese immigrants as tenant farmers. During the 1930's the Marianas continued to occupy the key position in Micronesian economy, but Palau, Truk, Ponape, and Kusaie were also developed.

At the outbreak of the war the Japanese civilian population considerably outnumbered the Micronesians, and it is known that the Japanese had ambitious plans of further expanding the size of the Japanese community in Micronesia by transferring the population of Ponape to Kusaie and settling Ponape exclusively with Japanese pioneers.

The Japanese realized early in their administration that although the agricultural possibilities of Micronesia are limited by the size of the land area, the marine resources of the area are plentiful. During the Spanish and German periods, while the Micronesians carried on their traditional subsistence fishing, commercial fishing was unknown. The Japanese, however, made every effort to foster a commercial fishing industry. Just as they engaged in agricultural research, so they carried on intensive marine research, covering such fields as oceanography, types of fish found in the waters of Micronesia, seasonal migration of fish, fishing methods, and the processing of fish. Bonito and tuna were the two most important fish commercially. With the growth of a commercial fishing industry, at first in Saipan and later in the Palaus, Truk, and Ponape, processing plants equipped to dry or can fish, especially bonito, were built in many places, together with ice plants and cold storage facilities. Not content with exploiting the available marine resources, the Japanese endeavored to increase them. For example, they planted trochus (*Trochus niloticus*) on the reefs of the Truk islands, Ponape, and Kusaie, where trochus shells were not previously to be found. On the Palau islands they engaged in the raising of cultured pearls.

These economic activities on the part of the Japanese entailed not only the immigration of some 80,000 settlers, who engaged primarily in agriculture and commercial fishing, but also the investment of a considerable amount of capital. This resulted

in a trade between Micronesia and Japan that greatly exceeded that between Germany and the islands. The main export products were sugar, processed fish, and copra. The first two, products of Japanese enterprise, far exceeded copra, which was primarily a Micronesian product.

The Micronesians benefited greatly in both a direct and an indirect way from Japanese rule. The harbors, wharves, and jetties which were constructed to facilitate communications between the islands as well as with Japan served several purposes. They were a *sine qua non* for effective administration; they aimed to improve the economic and social welfare of the islanders; and they helped to make the pioneering of Japanese nationals successful. Schools were established on all major islands. The buildings were substantial and well-constructed; trained teachers were brought from Japan.

Through the schools the Japanese set out to modernize the life of the Micronesians by discouraging old habits and customs such as tattooing and time-consuming ceremonies and dances which disrupted the daily work schedule. They disapproved of the old-style houses and subsidized the construction of houses with corrugated iron roofs, doors, windows, raised floors, water tanks, and baths. The wearing of western-style cotton clothing became almost universal.

The relationship between Japanese and Micronesians was a much closer one than had existed between Germans and Micronesians, although the Japanese considered themselves superior to their charges. Many Japanese and Okinawans came as poor immigrants to Micronesia and lived very much like Micronesians. Not a small number married local women. Micronesian families welcomed Japanese and Okinawan sons-in-law, especially if they were skilled craftsmen, because of the prestige they gave the family.

There is little evidence that the Japanese farmer and fisherman who settled in Micronesia felt that he had to keep up the prestige of the ruling power. The Japanese did not limit their activities to management and supervision, the way Westerners do in the tropics. The living standards of the Micronesians and the Japanese did not differ greatly; as a matter of fact, well-to-do Micronesians enjoyed a far higher standard of living

than many Japanese and Okinawan immigrants. But the Micronesians greatly resented the Japanese policy of barring them from high schools and from positions of power and prestige in the central administration. Whereas the Germans had employed the technique of indirect rule and made use of Micronesian leadership, the Japanese applied the principle of direct rule. Micronesian chiefs were stripped of their traditional authority while Japanese officials themselves dealt with even minor local problems.

Despite these shortcomings, there can be no doubt that on the whole the Micronesians appreciated the work of the Japanese because of the economic prosperity which they enjoyed prior to the war. The Trukese stress the fairness of the civilian officials and still remember the protecting hand that some civilian officials of the South Seas Government held over them during the war years, when Japanese Army and Navy officers tended to ride rough-shod over the human and economic rights of Micronesian individuals and communities.

An American Strategic and Prestige Frontier

During World War II a number of islands in the Marshalls, Marianas, and Carolines were taken by American troops, while others were by-passed and subjected to blockade and bombing. These were eventually occupied by American forces after the surrender of Japan.

The Cairo Declaration of December 1, 1943 states that ". . . Japan shall be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she seized or occupied since the beginning of the First World War in 1914." This declaration was reaffirmed at Potsdam on July 26, 1945, and incorporated in the surrender documents. With the United States in possession of Micronesia by the end of 1945, certain pressure groups argued for outright annexation while other groups wished to see the islands placed under United Nations trusteeship. After a period of prolonged discussion between government agencies holding divergent views, the United States government submitted a draft trusteeship agreement to the Security Council on February 26, 1947. During the deliberations that followed, the draft underwent only minor revisions and, after the Ameri-

can representative had stated that the United States would withdraw the agreement from the Security Council should amendments be made that the United States could not accept, it was unanimously approved on April 2, 1947. In contrast to the other trust territories, Micronesia was made a strategic area trust territory. This device is definitely a compromise. On the one hand, it partly satisfies those favoring outright annexation for reasons of national security, and, on the other hand, it partly satisfies those who wished the United States to live up to her commitment to abstain from "territorial aggrandizement" and who wished to see Micronesia placed under U. N. trusteeship. Under the terms of the strategic area trusteeship agreement the United States has the right to close specific parts of Micronesia for security reasons even to observers of the U. N. Trusteeship Council. The United States made use of this right on December 2, 1947, by notifying the Security Council that Eniwetok had been closed for the purpose of conducting atomic experiments.

Whereas the old mandate system of the League of Nations ruled out any military activity on the part of the mandatory power within the boundaries of the mandate, the terms of all trusteeship agreements permit a wide range of military activity, excluding only the conscription of islanders, although the latter may volunteer their services. The United States has the right: (1) to establish naval, military, and air bases and to erect fortifications in the trust territory; (2) to station and employ armed forces in the territory; and (3) to make use of volunteer forces, facilities, and assistance from the trust territory in carrying out the obligations towards the Security Council undertaken in this regard by the administering authority, as well as for local defense and maintenance of law and order within the trust territory. Nothing stands in the way of exploiting to the fullest extent the strategic possibilities of Micronesia. Students of strategy, however, are divided on the question of the strategic importance of the islands under the present circumstances. In the overall planning, Micronesia seems at present to receive a rather low rating.

After the approval of the trusteeship agreement by the Security Council, President Truman submitted it to Congress

on July 13, 1947 and asked for a joint resolution approving the agreement. Both Houses acted speedily, and on July 18, 1947 the President signed the joint resolution which thereby became Public Law 204 of the 80th Congress. At the same time the President signed Executive Order 9875 terminating military government in the trust territory, establishing a civil administration and delegating it "on an interim basis" to the Secretary of the Navy.

Since then the President has twice indicated his intention to designate the Department of the Interior as the civilian agency to administer Guam, Samoa, and the Trust Territory.[6] As late as May 14, 1949 he stated: "It is the announced aim of this Government to accord civil government and a full measure of civil rights to the inhabitants of its Pacific territories. The accomplishment of this objective will be furthered by the transfer of these territories to civilian administration and the enactment of organic legislation at the earliest practicable date." Despite such statements the advocates of naval administration keep on arguing against a transfer of the islands from the Navy Department to the Department of the Interior.[7] However, in the light of the record of Navy administration of Guam and Samoa it can only be hoped that Congress will enact organic acts for the various Pacific territories and that the actual transfers can be made speedily. There is the precedent that the Japanese Navy, which had administered Micronesia after 1914, was replaced by a civilian agency, the South Seas Government, in 1922. Since the Navy Department will maintain some installations in the islands because of their strategic character, it would seem economically advisable for a civilian agency administering the islands to depend upon the Navy for communications and transport facilities in order to avoid costly duplication of services.

The discovery that Micronesians did not generally regard the incoming Americans as liberators came as a disappointment to many Americans, who expected that the Micronesians would share their own opinion of the Japanese. The initial

[6] Letter of February 11, 1948 to the Secretaries of State, Army, Navy, and the Interior. Letter of May 14, 1949 to the Secretaries of the Interior and Navy.

[7] See Roy E. James, "The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands" in *America's Pacific Dependencies*, by Rupert Emerson and others. New York, 1949, pp. 109-134.

attitude of many Micronesians of "wait and see" is, however, understandable. This was the fourth colonial ruler to descend upon them in sixty years. The transition from Spanish to German rule and again from German to Japanese rule had been a peaceful and uneventful one as far as the Micronesians were concerned. As a matter of fact, in some instances the outgoing administrators had helped the incoming ones with the task of setting up a new administration. But extreme destruction and desolation had ushered in the American rule.

Obviously, the responsibility for this calamity falls on Japan, which drew Micronesia into her war of aggression after having used at least the period between 1938 and 1941 to prepare these islands for their role in the coming conflict. Not only did the war lead to the complete destruction of the Japanese sugar industry in the Marianas and Japanese commercial fishing in all parts of Micronesia, but it also seriously affected Micronesian agriculture. Some of the most valuable agricultural land was forever destroyed through the construction of airfields. This frequently had involved the filling in of taro fields with coral and sand, which was packed down and then covered with cement. Many of the islands also lost a high percentage of their economically most valuable trees—coconut palms and breadfruit trees. In Truk the Japanese requisitioned land for the construction of several airfields. The blockade of Truk had forced the 40,000 soldiers stationed there to become part-time farmers in order to stave off starvation. Knowing that sweet potatoes and cassava yield more food per acre of land than do breadfruit and coconut, the Japanese ordered the destruction of large stands of these breadfruit and coconut trees in order to convert the orchards into sweet potato, cassava, and vegetable fields. Because of the time that it takes for coconut palms and breadfruit trees to reach the height of their productivity, it will be years before this type of war damage can be repaired.

The most important question for the Micronesians is: What will be the character of American rule? They have realized by now that the United States is not interested in a rebuilding of the sugar industry of the Marianas or in settling its nationals on the land vacated by Japanese settlers. To this we may add that the United States is not, as were Germany

and Japan, interested in the copra of Micronesia. In times of low copra prices it will prove too costly to collect the small quantities of copra that are scattered over literally hundreds of islands separated from each other by great distances, when quantities of copra that exceed the total annual production of Micronesia can be picked up in one month in a single port of the Philippines.

The nature of the Japanese administration, the remarkable development of Micronesia between 1920 and 1940, and the total economic collapse during the war present the American administrators with some difficult problems. Their aim is not a reconstruction of what existed in Micronesia prior to Pearl Harbor but a reconstruction according to a new plan that takes into consideration the functional change of Micronesia from a frontier of settlement, plantation agriculture, and commercial fishing to a strategic frontier deliberately closed to large-scale development or utilization of the resources by American citizens.

There can be little doubt that the economic progress of Micronesia and the extensive modernization of the material culture of all but the smallest, most isolated, sparsely populated islands of Micronesia, were at least partly due to the presence of Japanese farmers, fishermen, merchants, and skilled craftsmen. The economy of Micronesia meshed well with that of Japan. Every product found a ready market in Japan, and in return the islands received cheap textiles, household utensils, tools, and a few other manufactured products. The Micronesians could more easily afford these Japanese goods than they can afford American products today. The islanders interpret it as a lowering of their standard of living and a sign that their economy has deteriorated since pre-war days when they have to work longer hours today than they formerly did in order to earn the purchase price of a specific commodity.

On the credit side, a vigorous and intensive medical program undertaken by the United States Navy medical personnel since the end of the war has improved health conditions greatly and it can be said that no previous administration did as much for the islanders in this respect.[8]

[8] Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, *Handbook on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands,* prepared at the School of Naval Administration, Hoover

The naval administration has undertaken similarly vigorous programs in the field of education, ranging from elementary education, through vocational training and adult education to the training of Micronesian teachers, medical assistants, nurses, and dentists. The American educational program also goes far beyond those of previous administrations. It was the policy of the Japanese to rely on imported personnel from the home islands, which was economically feasible since the pay scales were rather low. For economic reasons, if for no others, it is the aim of the American administration to make the islands as self-sufficient as possible by training skilled and semi-skilled workers, by preparing the islanders to conduct their own local government and carry on their own trade and industry, and by providing the communities with teachers and medical practitioners recruited from the local population.

It is quite obvious that the resources of the islands are so limited that economic considerations did not contribute to America's determination to control Micronesia. For the United States, Micronesia is neither a missionary's nor trader's, nor settlers' frontier, but primarily a strategic frontier. However, it is not sufficient to consider the islands only as a strategic frontier because of the strategic military value of certain islands. It must be realized that this territory has also to be regarded as a prestige frontier, since every phase of American administration of the trust territory is subject to close scrutiny by members of the Trusteeship Council, some of whom are not too favorably disposed toward the United States. The 120-odd questions raised by members of the Trusteeship Council after studying the first American report on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands[9] and the ensuing discussions during the fifth session of the Trusteeship Council in July, 1949, indicate how important it is that the United States discharge its obligations as trustee in an impeccable manner.

Institute, Stanford University, Washington, U. S. Govt. Printing Office, 1948, Chap. XVI, "Health and Sanitation."

[9] *Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.* Information on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands transmitted by the United States to the Secretary-General of the United Nations pursuant to Article 88 of the Charter. Prepared by the Navy Department, Washington, D. C., July, 1948 (OPNAV-P22-100E).