

SEMINAR ON THE MORAL ISSUES RELATED TO POLITICAL STATUS CHOICE

Held in Kolonia, Ponape, June 3-9, 1973

Sponsored by the Micronesian Seminar

The purpose of the seminar is to consider some of the moral issues related to the political alternatives that are presented to Micronesia today. The discussions of the political status question will be placed in a larger context than simply the legal or jurisprudential. Emphasis will be given to total human development and how it might be best achieved in the political choices that Micronesians must make in the future.

The main objective of the seminar is to afford an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas on the moral issues related to status. It is hoped that a consensus statement expressing a stand on several of the moral issues might be drafted during the final two days of the seminar. The proceedings of the seminar will eventually be published in pamphlet form and distributed to all who are engaged in political education programs throughout the Trust Territory.

Each of the discussions held during the morning and afternoon sessions of the first four days will be preceded by a short presentation given by one of the participants. This brief talk will delineate the issue and raise questions surrounding it.

At present the topics to be discussed during the evening sessions are undetermined. In some cases participants may choose to continue discussion on one of the day's topics or a related question. Towards the end of the week we would hope to take up the question of a follow-up political education program that can carry to the people of Micronesia the reflections on moral issues that have come out of the seminar.

6/1/67
[Date 673]

15
7

SEMINAR ON THE MORAL ISSUES RELATED TO POLITICAL STATUS CHOICE

List of Participants

- Ms. Guadalupe Borja
Information Specialist, Public Information Office, Saipan.
- Mr. Nick Bosy
Personnel Department-Head, Truk
- Mr. Alan Burdick
Attorney, Ponape
- Fr. Joseph Cavanagh
Pastor, Kittu, Ponape
- Fr. John Condon
Pastor, Tomil-Gagil, Yap
- Mr. Carl Heine
Director, Office of Joint Committee on Future Status for
Congress of Micronesia, Saipan.
- Mr. Dwight Heine
Special Consulttant to High Commissioner, Saipan
- Fr. Francis Hezel
Director, Micronesian Seminar, Truk
- Hon. Ambilos Ieshi - *did not attend*
Ponape
- Fr. Richard Hoar
Pastor, Babeldoap, Palau
- Hon. Resio Moses
Representative from Ponape, Congress of Micronesia
- Mr. Daiziro Nakamura
Public Affairs Office, Saipan
- Hon. Tosiwo Nakayama
S_enator from Truk, President of Senate of Congress of Micronesia
- Mr. Carlos Salii
Assistant Attorney General, Saipan
- Mr. Francisco Uludong
Private Citizen, Palau
- Dr. William Vitarelli
Vice President for Reserach and Development
University of Guam

Peace Seminar, June 1973

CHS

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

F. KATHEZEL, S.J.

I am very pleased to welcome all of you to what we hope will be a week of collective reflection on matters of greatest importance to Micronesia and its people. All of us in this room are well aware that Micronesia is at the threshold of making a political decision that is the most critical one that a group of people can make -- what place these islands are to have in tomorrow's world; what will be the future political status of Micronesia. This is not an easy decision for a people to make; and we shall not, of course, be attempting to make a decision this week. The choice of a political status for Micronesia belongs to the men in the tax patch and the copra cutter in the village as much as to us. Without attempting to preempt a decision that is not ours to make, let us nevertheless admit quite openly from the outset that we will most certainly be attempting to influence it when it is made. It would be a foolish waste of time to sit and talk among ourselves if we felt otherwise.

Perhaps these last remarks bear some explanation, especially since our hall this morning is generously sprinkled with Americans, some of whom happen to also be Catholic priests. Americans, and particularly American priests are normally expected to have the good sense to politely sidestep political issues that arise in a developing country. Some of us, however, do not concur with this position. While we acknowledge that the decision is not ours to make, we very much have the concern that a responsible decision be made by the people of Micronesia, and as educators and leaders -- in one way or another -- we are doing everything in our power to assist in

the difficult task of political education. If this meeting were the 7th Round of the Status Talks -- which it most assuredly is not -- and our concern this week were to frame a model compact or hammer out a definition of Micronesia's future political status on the spot, things might be different. But our purpose this week is not to negotiate nor to assemble the nuts and bolts of a political document. Our task is to reflect during this week on something even more fundamental than a political document -- the national goals of the Micronesian people. Our purpose is to stimulate others, eventually the man with the third-grade education on the most remote atoll in Micronesia, ^{to reflect on} on such goals.

Before draft compacts or constitutions can be framed, a people must decide for themselves what sort of life they want, what they feel is of more importance and what of lesser importance. Constitutions and compacts, after all, are only legal expressions of what a people aspires to be and the values that they hold most dear. Such documents presuppose an answer to a more basic question: what will best enhance the quality of life for Micronesians? In this seminar we will be less concerned with pragmatically debating the independence vs. free association question, I hope, and spend more effort on these prior questions. What does enhancing quality of life mean in Micronesia? How can the people of Micronesia best grow, individually and collectively, into a happy, satisfied, responsible populace?

Each of us brings his own suppositions to this meeting. Some presuppose no doubt, that a measure of material prosperity is of the first order of importance if Micronesians are to assured of the quality of life they deserve. Others proclaim their willingness to pick up a hoe and tend

their fields, if it comes to that, in order to achieve the autonomy and self-reliance which they regard as even more directly related to human growth and happiness. There are, unfortunately, few public fora open to the discussion of such basic premises; discussion all too often proceeds immediately to the pros and cons of a particular political status without sufficient opportunity to voice our assumptions regarding what makes life more human. It is, therefore, to ~~discuss~~^{clarify} (and perhaps argue) our assumptions as to what constitutes the 'good life' that we have gathered this week. Our purpose is to go well beyond the legal documents that will necessarily be our point of departure to ponder in some depth the issues which will help to determine the choice of political status for Micronesia.

We have called these issues moral issues, for they are closely bound up with the human development of Micronesians -- and ~~and~~ whatever deeply affects human development ~~is~~ cannot be anything but moral. An article announcing this seminar which appeared in the Micropioneer was facetiously headlined "Moral or Venial", as if moral questions had to do only with those individual acts that a man performs, affecting only himself and God. ~~That is not the case~~, nothing could be further from the truth. All human actions -- individual and corporate, public and private -- that are capable of either furthering or retarding the growth of human beings have a moral character. Thus, just as it is immoral to wantonly cripple a child and to impair his physical growth, it is also immoral to impede the full human development of not one person but many in their quest for a fuller, richer, life. Moral issues, then, are those that have a more direct bearing on the over-all human growth of a person or people.

The Church has demonstrated an interest in the human welfare of people in the past and continues to do so today. At some time -- during the early post-war years -- this interest may have been manifested in the concern to help the people of Micronesia cope with the problems of providing adequate housing and improving food production. This is why the Church has long been associated with cooperatives, credit unions, and other forms of community development work on many of our islands. Today, although this developmental work continues, changing times and new problems have led to Church involvement in ~~these~~ ^{the} more sensitive areas of political development and social justice -- often to the surprise of those Christians who believe that politics should be the realm of secular man and his secular interests. This feeling is particularly strong in the United States, ^{which} ~~which~~ has made something of a fetish of separation between Church and State, and has attempted to draw clear lines between the provinces of each. But Christians and their Churches must be concerned about the establishment of peace and justice. They must also be prepared to act upon these concerns; to work for reform of institutions, societies and entire nations, if this is necessary. The Church must be ready to speak out fearlessly and without self-interest on moral issues, regardless of whether these issues are political, economic, or educational. The fact is, ~~that~~ one of the principal tasks of the Church will always be to meddle in whatever affects the well-being of people. As we ~~have~~ Jesuits in Micronesia have meddled in economics, medicine, ^{and} the education of the young ^{in the past} -- so we are meddling in ^{today} politics. Let me reassure you on one point however -- that the priests you see in your midst were not brought here to tell you what is moral and what is not. There are no "teachers" here and no "students". Any education that takes place will be of one another and will result from our collective reflection.

As those of us who represent the Catholic Church in Micronesia and those others whose concern for the welfare of Micronesians in the future are drawn together in this common enterprise, let us pray that our efforts during these weeks will make a contribution to shaping Micronesia's future along lines that will lead to genuine growth for the people of these islands.

Let me say a word also now about the organization sponsoring this meeting, The Micronesian Seminar. Last year during our Vicariate Planning Council for the mission, an effort was made to give our work in the Caroline-Marshall mission new directions to keep pace with changing needs. A new mission program was created to sponsor a study of contemporary social issues in Micronesia. The Micronesian Seminar was intended to stimulate theological and social reflection on problems of the day. The Seminar is a mission project in the same way that Xavier High School is; it is a program of the Catholic Church designed to serve all of Micronesia rather than a single district and is under the authority of the Bishop. Although its headquarters is presently ^{located} at Xavier High School, the Seminar ^{is} quite independent of Xavier. It undertakes such limited research as it can, but normally tries to prod others into research. ^{Occasionally} the Seminar will ^{occasionally} publish historical research and send information to scholars in other parts of the world, but its principal job is inquiry into today's issues.

Let us turn briefly to the question of the weeks ahead.
What can we hope for from this seminar? First, a mutual enrichment and a deepening of ^{individual} thoughts on the political status issue. Primarily this seminar was intended to be a "think tank" operation in which there was to be a free flow of ideas to the benefit of all present. This will require the active participation of all of us, an honest willingness to examine our convictions, ~~and to be heard~~ a willingness to express ourselves and to hear

6

each other out. Secondly, our gathering might well be expected to catalyze political education programs in the districts and to furnish ideas for these programs. What we discuss here must spill over into the towns and villages; it must reach the people of Micronesia to stimulate their own thinking and prompt from them a response of their own. Accordingly, we will take up later in the week the question of how we might cooperate to best achieve this goal. Thirdly, as you probably noticed in the program there is time allotted for the drafting of a consensus statement by the group if we should feel that this is desirable. This need not, and very likely, will not mean that at the end of the week we will arrive at agreement on which political status is to be preferred. But it entirely within the range of possibility that we draw up a statement affirming certain basic principles, whatever the status.

Let us begin then -- even those of us who have grown accustomed to long talk sessions; in the confidence that what we do here this week matters a great deal to the Micronesian people.

May I ask Fr. Paulino Cantero to give the invocation at this time.

030980

Date 6/3/73

2.15
7

PROGRAM

Sunday, June 3.

Free Afternoon

6:00 P.M. Welcome Dinner for Participants

Monday, June 4

8:30 A.M. Introductory Remarks: Rev. Francis X. Hezel, S.J.

9:00--12:00 The Right to Sovereignty. In whom does it reside? Distinction between moral and legal right to sovereignty. Survey of the legal documents (Trusteeship Agreement, Draft Compact, etc.).

2:00-- 5:00 The Meaning of Sovereignty. What are the proprietary right of a people implied in sovereignty? Is sovereignty compatible with Free Association as, for instance, outlined in the Draft Compact?

5:30-- 7:00 Cocktails and dinner

7:30-- 9:00 Evening Discussion (topic undetermined)

Tuesday, June 5

8:30--12:00 The Role of Sovereignty in Human Development. How necessary is sovereignty for the maturity and self-respect of a people? To what degree is a sense of national identity a real human need for the people of Micronesia?

2:00-- 5:00 The Role of Economic Growth in Human Development. How much money is "enough"? What alternatives are there to western patterns of economic growth? Should Micronesia follow the path of the western powers with respect to consumption of goods, industrialization, free enterprise, etc.?

7:30-- 9:00 Evening Discussion

Wednesday, June 6

8:30--12:00 The Compromise of Sovereignty. To what extent can the sovereign rights of a people be bartered for material goods? The balance between dollars and dignity, prosperity and proprietorship. Does political independence -- or the fullest realization of national sovereignty -- precede or follow economic development?

03 - 030971

2:00-- 5:00 Local Sovereignty and Micronesian Unity. Is the notion of sovereignty as applicable to each unit within Micronesia as it is to the Trust Territory as a whole? The right to determine one's own political forms versus responsibility to the larger group.

7:30-- 9:00 Evening Discussion

Thursday, June 7

8:30--12:00 Responsibility to the World Community. How do a state's responsibility to the world community for world peace and security condition the political choices that it makes? Is there any meaning to independence at all in an age that recognizes the inter-dependence of all nations? How can the danger of excessive nationalism be avoided?

2:00-- 5:00 Military Control and Cession of Sovereign Rights. The danger of abdication of land to military interests for any purpose whatsoever. Conflict between foreign military interests and Micronesian sovereignty.

7:30-- 9:00 Evening Discussion

Friday, June 8

8:30--12:00 Drafting of Consensus Statement by Group.

2:00-- 5:00 Further Work on Consensus Statement.

7:30-- 9:00 Discussion of Follow-up Political Education Program in the Trust Territory.

Saturday, June 9

8:30--12:00 Consensus Statement

2:00-- 4:00 Concluding Session. Adoption of Consensus Statement. Resolutions for Political Education Program.