

R

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

HANDLING	CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED	MESSAGE REFERENCE NO. A-2
----------	--------------------------------	------------------------------

TO: Department of State

INFO: CANBERRA, PORT MORESBY, TOKYO, CINCPAC FOR POLAD,
CINCPACREPGUAM/TTPI, USUN

FROM: Status LNO SAIPAN DATE: 1/20/75

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV TQ

SUBJECT: Comments on Education for Self-Government Program

REF: PASS OMSN AND INTERIOR FOR DOTA

10
5

DISTR. DISTRIBUTION			
ORIGINATING OFFICE			
AF	ANA		LA
CR	EUP		
L	NEA	PER	PM
REP	SCI	SS	SY
AGN	AID	AIR	ARMY
			DOT
EMR	HER	INT	LAB
		NSC	OPIC
STR	TAH		
AMH			
SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION			

There is enclosed the full text of a commentary, "Micronesia's Education For Self-Government Frolicking In The Backyard?" by an American Jesuit priest, Francis X. Hezel, who is the principal of Xavier High School in Truk. The article appeared in Marianas Variety News & Views in its January 10 issue.

Father Hezel, who has written a number of thought-provoking essays on various aspects of Micronesia's future development, especially its educational system, strongly criticizes in this article the present program of "Education for Self-Government" (ESG). He suggests that the ESG program has failed to undertake the furthering of true self-government but has rather devised a bland, even vacuous, program which has as its basic premise not to stir up trouble for the TT administration. He criticizes in particular the ESG's gingerly handling of the question of possible independence.

Father Hezel considers that the ESG program should embrace as its final goal full self-government, that political education should be controversial, that true nationalism should be promoted, and that education for self-government should involve experience--participation--and not just concepts.

BERGESEN

Enclosure: 24-25
Marianas Variety News and Views 1/10/75 article
UNCLASSIFIED

STATUS LNO: Alf E. Bergesen:lav	DRAFTING DATE 1/20/75	PHONE NO.	CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY Status LNO: AEBergesen
---------------------------------	--------------------------	-----------	--

FORM DS-121
11-72

REVIEWED BY *[Signature]* DATE 25 MAR 1980

RDS or XDS EXT. DATE _____
 TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____
 ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS
 DECLASSIFIED RELEASABLE
 RELEASE DENIED
 PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS _____

05-418903

UNCLASSIFIED

Page 1
Encl 1
A-2 from Saipan

MARIANAS VARIETY NEWS AND VIEWS

Micronesia's Education For Self-Government Frolicking In The Backyard?

Recent political education efforts in Micronesia are floating on a sea of radio tapes, filmstrips, posters and classroom lessons. These are largely the creation of the Education for Self-Government Program mounted by the Trust Territory Administration a year and a half ago. For all its output of materials, the ESG Program labors under serious handicaps. The controversial circumstances surrounding the birth of ESG gave rise to the lurking suspicion that, despite its name, the real object of ESG just might be something less than self-government after all. Many people continued to wonder whether the contents of the program were being "sanitized" by mightier powers than those residing on Saipan.

ESG has become everybody's scapegoat today because it is assumed that it is the major instrument of political education in the Trust Territory. Actually ESG has very little to do with political education and even less to do with authentic education for self-government. It is, therefore, unfair to blame ESG members, who are performing as well as they can in trying circumstances, for the supposedly meager amount of political education that is taking place today.

The failure of ESG to live up to its name is not due to faulty execution, but the limitations built into the program from the outset. One does not tie a child to a clothesline in the backyard and then complain that he has never explored the other side of the street. Education for self-government (or anything else) can't be done without the freedom to explore, notwithstanding the risks. And this freedom ESG does not have!

There appears to be conspiracy afoot to keep political education as vacuous as possible. The Administration, arguing that it cannot take sides on important political issues, is content to distribute booklets and news-sheets that couch proper platitudes in five-syllable words. The platitudes are promptly translated into the vernacular and transmitted, via the local broadcasting station, to anyone who will listen. In its concern to hold a middle course and keep all parties happy, the government may be succeeding in pleasing none. And, even more important, in educating none!

RECEIVED

05

418904

UNCLASSIFIED

Page 2
Enc. 1
A-2 from Saipan

Whether anything can be done to improve the calibre of political education in the Trust Territory depends on the willingness of the Administration to untie the baby from the clothesline and let it wander out of the backyard. This bold move, of course, might take it into any number of "unsafe" areas. But the overall effect, in my opinion, would be to make the efforts of ESG and local programs much more meaningful and effective. There are at least four important dimensions of good political education for self-government that are currently being neglected. It is with the desire to help remedy this situation that I make the following recommendations.

First of all, education for self-government must embrace as its final goal full self-government. Now it is no secret that full self-government must ultimately lead down one of two paths: either virtual independence or full incorporation into another sovereign state.

ESG cannot direct people's attention to the fork at the end of the road as long as independence remains a dirty word in government circles. My impression is that Micronesian employees are afraid to discuss independence as a serious political goal out of the fear that this would virtually be an act of treason towards the present administration.

My second suggestion regarding political education is that it be controversial.

If political education does what it is meant to do — that is, lay bare the vital issues that underlie political decisions — it is bound to lead to differences of opinion among the population. The formation of partisan groups with strongly held positions on the issues of the day is the most eloquent testimony to the success of political education efforts in any free nation. Conversely, the absence of such groups can be an indication that a political education crusade has not generated the awareness that it should have, perhaps because it has failed to delve into the critical issues that most deeply affect people.

In their zeal for impartiality, Americans serving in the Trust Territory are sometimes quick to forget the long-tradition of pamphleteering that extends back to pre-Revolutionary War days in their own country. America's own political self-education and subsequent choice of status was not accomplished by bland fact sheets and impartial public talks, but amidst fiery political harangues and inflammatory handbills that were issued from the cellars of the revolutionaries.

05-418905

UNCLASSIFIED

Page 3
Enc. 1
A-2 from Saipan

One of the most successful political education efforts I have heard was a series of radio programs prepared for the Trukese people by the "Anti-Independence Coalition" and the "Independence Advocates" here. A speech in favor of Free Association was answered the following week by one advocating Independence. This lively exchange of views produced strong interest among people who would not otherwise have bothered to listen to political education broadcasts. When someone argued on one of the programs that political independence would mean fewer 40-HP outboard engines, fewer Datsuns, and fewer gold teeth, people understood. They were also quick to grasp the significance of the counter-argument: that there are very few gifts without strings attached and that Micronesians may find themselves paying for the lavish subsidy they now receive with their culture and their land. Micronesians listened and learned because these were flesh-and-blood issues.

My third observation is that any worthwhile education for self-government must deliberately promote, in whatever way it can, a true spirit of nationalism among people.

The mere mention of the word "nationalism" often seems to cause a good bit of embarrassment in polite government circles.

Nationalism might be better understood to mean a compelling spirit of national identity among a people. It is what happens to individuals in a state as they are discovering that they are really a people. A healthy nationalism carries with it robust feelings of self-confidence and pride -- "We can be ourselves in spite of everything!"

My final observation on authentic education for self-government is that it be experiential, not just conceptual. They must learn how to actually govern themselves. This Micronesians will learn not through manuals or directives, but by doing it, first in smaller ways and then in larger.

Micronesian leaders have been quick to learn the administrative skills necessary for self-government. But self-administration is not at all the same thing as self-government!

People who are learning self-government need, first of all, to develop the confidence that they can truly handle their own affairs.

UNCLASSIFIED

05-418906

If self-government means only the ability to pinpoint the need and draw up a petition for aid to be submitted to someone else, then Micronesia is well on its way to self-government. But if it means developing a confidence in one's own resources to answer the need, then Micronesia is moving further away from self-government.

Self-government, in the view presented here, implies the ability to cope with one's own problems. It is founded on the "can do" type of spirit that seems so noticeably absent in many quarters of Micronesia today. What we encounter so often these days is a very different kind of attitude: "We can do -- if HEW or Interior lets us!" This is hardly the kind of thinking that forms a strong foundation for self-government. But how could it be otherwise when there is such widespread concern for developing everything, from dispensaries to disposal systems, except self-reliant communities?

Perhaps there is little that the ESC Program itself can do to remedy this situation, since the causes of the problem lie far beyond the perimeters within which ESC operates. The same may be true with respect to some of the other points made in this article. That is why I stated earlier that the Program has little to do with real education for self-government. If government-sponsored programs are to remain confined to the backyard, then others must assume the responsibility for venturing into these vital areas. On no account, though, can Micronesia sit back comfortably and assume that the real job of educating its people for self-government is being done. It has yet to begin.