

Dear Friend,

Because we feel that you may be especially interested in this subject, we are sending you a copy of a report on emigration from Palau throughout the past forty years. It was written by a young volunteer from New York, Mike Johanek, who generously volunteered to spend the summer with us, even at his own expense, to do this study under auspices of the Micronesian Seminar. The report is an attempt to describe the dimensions and other characteristics of the well-publicized Palauan out-migration that has been going on for nearly forty years. His report builds upon previous works but goes well beyond them in its attempt to weave different kinds of data, all of it fragmentary, into a solid hypothesis regarding the numbers of Palauans emigrating at various times, their reasons for leaving, and their ultimate destinations. We trust that you will find this paper of interest and value, even if you do not happen to be working in Palau.

Since this papers is being sent away for publication in a journal, we would ask you not to publish it, either in whole or in part, without first obtaining the permission of the Micronesian Seminar. You are, however, free to duplicate it for private distribution or use it for educational purposes without prior permission.

Sincerely yours,
Francis X. Hezel, S.J.
Director

Palauan Out-Migration

Michael C. Johanek

Now nothing remains of (the town) but the stone
roads and the groups of sepulchers now covered by
plant life, where once were houses and families
that no longer exist.

(Valencia, 1892)

Nearly a hundred years ago, when the Capuchin missionary Valencia lived in Koror, Palau was in the midst of a dramatic depopulation. Contact with the West had increased, and with this came the new diseases that decimated the population. Over 80% of the Palauans died, leaving a population of just over 3,000 by the turn of the century. Four decades later, however, Palau had begun to recover. After World War II, the population grew steadily for nearly three decades; by 1972 there were twice as many Palauans in Palau as in 1946. But this near-linear growth reached plateau by the early 1970s. Natural year-to-year growth dropped dramatically, and at times was negative. For the last ten or fifteen years there has been non-appreciable increase in the Palauan de facto population. In fact, there may be a thousand fewer Palauans in Palau today than in 1972, the first so significant a depopulation since the last century.

What is happening in Palau?

Several writers point to the same cause: out-migration. As many as 30% of Palauans no longer live in Palau. McGrath, Force, Nero, Connell, Shewman, Schwalbenberg, Hezel and others have recognized the significance of Palauan out-migration; yet its history remains elusive and largely unexplored. With increased out-migration threatening to change the face of Micronesia after passage of the Compact of Free Association, a critical assessment of Palauan out-migration maybe essential to an understanding of future population trends. This essay will investigate Palauan out-migration, tracing its trends and probing its causes. The paucity and poverty of data frustrate a desired precision, but systematic cross-checking will provide working-range estimates.

The history of Palauan out-migration pivots around the year 1972. Prior to 1972, population rose steadily from the end of World of War II. After 1972, the resident population leveled off at about 12,000 as out-migration jumped markedly. The data in Table 1 below allow us to calculate the different out-migration rates before and after the watershed year of 1972.

Table 1: Population, Births, Deaths and Net Growth for Palau, 1952-1984.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population (1)</u>	<u>Live Birth (2)</u>	<u>Deaths (3)</u>	<u>Net Growth (4)</u>
1952	7132			
1953	7297			
1954	7726			
1955	7656	282	29	253
1956	7999	314	27	287
1957	8563	276	52	224
1958	8987	297	30	267
1959	9072	326	47	279
1960	9320	375	51	324
1961	9674	385	64	321
1962	9965	348	28	320
1963	10280	372	38	334
1964	10628	366	51	315
1965	10832	385	69	316
1966	11225	413	38	375
1967	11574	414	62	362
1968	11904	349	52	297
1969	12291	379	80	299
1970	12525	336	77	259
1971	12686	326	66	260
1972	13025	394	53	341
1973	12673	413	54	359
1974	--	397	65	332
1975	--	381	68	313
1976	--	414	73	341
1977	12911	359	60	299
1978	--	283	47	236
1979	--	315	62	253
1980	12172	296	94	203
1981	12313	281	77	204
1982	12514	315	83	232
1983	12718			
1984	12925			

Sources: TT Annual Reports; 1977-78 Skill and Occupation Survey; 1958 Agriculture and Fisheries Office Census; Palau Five-Year Comprehensive Health Plan; Actual birth/death certificates were consulted as a check on the data.

The resident Palauan populations for each year since 1972 is listed in Column 1, and the number of recorded births and deaths for each year are listed in Column 2 & 3 respectively. ¹ “Net Growth” in Column 4 is simply the difference between births and deaths for each year. By adding the net growth of one year to the population of the prior

year, we arrive at the total number of Palauans that “ought” to be residents. If we then subtract from this total the actual population of the later year, we are left with those Palauans who are no longer residents, i.e. out-migrants.² This will be called the “natural growth estimation” method of calculating out-migration. If we apply this method for the years 1954 through 1972, we obtain a net figure of a few hundred Palauans born in Palau who are no longer de factor residents. On the other hand, a similar calculation for the post-1972 period yields a figure in the thousands. Clearly a dramatic increase in out-migration occurs after 1972.

Pre-1972 Period

But what of the pre-1972 period? By taking the total number of out-migrants prior to 1972 using the natural growth estimation method above, and averaging for different periods of years, we can attain more specific patterns within the 1955-72 period.

Table 2: Out-Migration: Natural Growth Estimation Method.

Period	(1) Total "Crude" ¹ Out-Migration	(2) Total 10% Adjusted Out-Migration	(3) Total 15% Adjusted Out-Migration
1956-59	36/yr	19/yr	32/yr
1960-65	28/yr	61/yr	77/yr
1966-72	1/yr	33/yr	<u>48/yr</u>
		Average 1956-72 = 52/yr	

¹ [Year prior to Base Year + Total net growth over years - population of final year] / number of years.

² Annual net growth + 10% for under-reporting

³ Annual net growth + 15% for under-reporting

The initial “crude” out-migration averages from the three periods show an increase during the second period (1960-65) and a decline in the third (1966-72). However, since the early birth and death records upon which these are based were likely under-reported, the actual figures of out-migration are probably too low. Although migration into Koror was substantial in 1956-72, 55% of the population was still living outside of Koror in 1970, and hence at various difficult distances from the chief medical facility (McDonald Memorial Hospital) where most recording is done.³ Poor roads, less available transportation, poorer health education, among other factors, certainly hindered accurate record keeping. Therefore, Columns 2 & 3 in Table 2 list the calculated out-migration figures on the assumption of 10% and 15 % under-reporting of not growth respectively. Even this new average may be too low since under-reporting in the rest of the TT except for Palau and Ponape, still ranged at about 15-49% in 1980 (US Dept. of State 1981) .⁴ If 1980 conditions in these areas of the TT approximate or surpass conditions in Palau from 1956-72, then Column 3 is likely to place us closest to a

minimum working range estimate of actual out-migration levels. From Column 3, the average number of out-migrants each year during the period 1956-72 was 52/year.

Fortunately, TT reports include separate records of out-migration from 1954-72. These data were obtained directly from Customs records and will be termed “gate count” records of out-migration.⁵ Table 3 breaks down these records into yearly averages for the same years grouped in Table 2.

Table 3: Out-Migration: Gate Count Method.

Period	(1) Out-Migration within TT	(2) Out-Migration out of TT	(3) Total Out- Migration
1956-59	23/yr	30/yr	56/yr ¹
1960-65	69/yr	32/yr	100/yr
1966-72	53/yr	7/yr	<u>60/yr</u>

Average 1956-72 = 70/yr

¹1954-59

Source: TT Annual Reports.

The gate count records reveal a similar pattern in total out-migration (Column 3), although within a higher range than the adjusted figures of Table 2. In both tables average yearly out-migration rose during the 1960-65 period, and then dropped during the 1966-72 period to a level slightly above the average for 1956-59. The higher figures of Table 3 reveal the likelihood that the under-reporting of births and deaths was greater than the 15% assumed in Table 2 (Column 3). This is certainly a plausible thesis, and more confidence may be placed in the higher gate count figures for total out-migration. Table 3 has reaffirmed, in any case, the basic trends for these three periods of years prior to 1972.

Table 3 also breaks down out-migration further, revealing a dramatic decline in the number of Palauans moving out of the TT after 1965 (Column 2). On the other hand, those leaving Palau for areas within the TT—especially Saipan and Yap – increased sharply in number during the middle years of 1960-65, tapering off slightly during 1966-72. Thus, by 1972 out-migration had shifted significantly toward inter-district movement; only 12% of out-migrants seemed willing to leave the TT for Guam, Hawaii and the mainland. The economic incentives had shifted after 1963, and out-migration apparently followed. With dramatically increased TT budgets, economic opportunities soon became available within the TT, and Palauan migration out of the TT declined 87% after 1963-65. Once this new flood of funds started to be felt in local government budgets, even migration within the TT fell off, although not as drastically as migration out of the TT earlier. Not surprisingly, recorded motivations of out-migrants shifted increasingly toward economic opportunity, as Table 4 indicates. This high level of responsiveness to employment prospects, affecting both migration levels and directions, must be considered before implementing any migration policies in the future.

Table 4: Expressed Motivations for Emigration.

Emigration within TT					
Period	Education ¹	Economic	To Join Family	Other	
1956-63	5%	68%	26%	1%	
1965-1972	---	78%	19%	3%	
Emigration out of TT					
Period	Education	Economic	To Join Family	Combined Econ & Family	Other
1957-63	10%	21%	51%	76%	17%
1965-72	5%	44%	29%	73%	21%

¹Education not formally included after 1965

Note: Totals do not always add to 100% due to different denominators used according to available breakdowns.

Source: TT Annual Reports

In summary, we can take both the natural growth estimation method and the gate count records to establish a range for the average annual total out-migration for 1955-72: between 52 and 70 Palauans yearly. As was noted, greater weight is given to the gate count figure of 70/year as it avoids the under-reporting difficulties of the natural growth estimation method.

But could Palau's population have grown by as many as 70 people each year, and still stay within plausible natural rates of growth? In other words, if we take the 70 people we project left Palau each year and pretend instead they had stayed, would the resulting year-to-year growth in population still be realistic in terms of Micronesian growth rates? Or would the added 70 people each year inflate Palauan population growth beyond all norms?

Table 5: Natural Growth Rates, 1954-71.

Year	(1) % Change ¹	(2) Adjusted % Change ²
1954-55	3.3	4.2
1955-56	3.7	4.7
1956-57	2.8	3.7
1957-58	3.1	3.9
1958-59	3.1	3.9
1959-60	3.6	4.3
1960-61	3.4	4.2
1961-62	3	4
1962-63	3.4	4.1
1963-64	3.1	3.7
1964-65	3	3.6
1965-66	3.5	4.1
1966-67	3.2	3.8
1967-68	2.6	3.2
1968-69	2.5	3.1
1969-70	2.1	2.7
1970-71	2.1	2.6
1971-72	2.7	3.2

$$^1 \text{ \% natural growth} = \frac{(\text{Births}_2 - \text{Deaths}_2)}{\text{Population}_1} \times 100$$

$$^2 \text{ Adjusted \% change} = \frac{(\text{Births}_2 - \text{Deaths}_2 + 70)}{\text{Population}} \times 100$$

Natural growth rates in Table 5 are obtained by dividing one year's net growth (Table 1) by the prior year's population. The adjusted percentage of change in Column 2 is derived by using the same formula, but by adding 70 to each year's net growth.⁶ (Note that adding in the average rate of 70 will inflate the earlier years' rates). That Palau could have sustained these 'adjusted' natural growth rates appears quite plausible when compared to growth rates in other TT areas. A 1963 report by the TT Department of Health Services claims that:

Birth rates over 40 per 1,000 populations would agree with what has usually been found where 40 percent or more of the total population is under 15 years of age. In districts where registration is most complete, Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands and Palau, birth rates ranged from 40 to 49 per 1,000 in 1961.

With the death rates around 0.5%, this would support our natural growth rates of between 3.7% and 4.3% prior to 1961, as found in Table 5. After 1961, both the Northern Marianas and the Marshalls record birth rates above 4% and death rates around 0.5%.⁷ Given previously cited under-reporting, the figures of Column 2 fall easily within a plausible growth range, supporting 70/year as a credible out-migration average.

Other sources of out-migration estimates reinforce this average. In a paper delivered at the Fifth Weigani Seminar in 1971, William McGrath presented what has become an often-cited estimate of Palauans overseas. His estimate of over 2,500 Palauans abroad corresponds to our rate of 70/year. If we assume that out-migration begins by 1947 and that average out-migration runs to 70/year with an emigrant community growth rate of 3.3% (the approximate TT average 1960s),⁸ the total emigrant community in 1970 would have reached 2,504 – a figure remarkably close to McGrath’s estimate. Alan Kay, Public Health statistician for the TT Department of Health Service in 1973, made a “rough estimate” of net out-migration during 1967-73 constituting 1,000 Palauans (Kay 1974). With the assumption of 15% under-reporting, our figure for this same period would be 1,051 – very much in line with Kay’s. Moreover, if so many Palauans left Palau largely in search of employment, we would expect to see a shrinking of the working age resident Palauan population – and this is in fact the case. While the 25-50 cohorts comprised 25% of the male population in 1958, they represented only 18.5% of all male residents in 1973. Women in child-bearing years decreased from 31% of the female population in 1958 to 24% in 1973, helping to partially explain the declining birth rate that is evident toward the latter half of the 1956-72 period.⁹

Post 1972

After 1972, the picture changes drastically. From the birth and death statistics in Table 1, total net growth for 1973-80 is 2,771 Palauans.¹⁰ But the population figure has reached a plateau and the census records show 501 fewer resident Palauans in 1980 than in 1973.¹¹ How can we account for some 3,000 “missing” Palauans? Several factors need to be examined, but principal; among these are the rise in overseas student populations and the declining birthrate in Palau.

Student as Emigrants

Palauans, ever competitive and achievement-conscious, have sent their children to be educated overseas in greater numbers and from earlier on than any other people in the TT.¹² The first Palauan to enter the public high school in Guam graduated in 1949; a year earlier, 4 Palauans had finished teacher training at the Marianas Teacher Training School. By 1955, there were over 80 non-resident Palauan high school students in Guam, and two years later 135 Palauans were being educated overseas (Peacock 1955). Although its population was only 12% of the TT total in 1966, Palau claimed 33% of the total TT college students overseas; the same hold true in 1970. By comparison, Truk’s “education explosion” to college occurred only after 1972 (Hezel 1978). Although comprising 29% of the total TT population, Truk sent just 15% of all TT college students overseas; this dropped to 8% in 1970. Palauans also testified to the high value that they placed on education by privately sponsoring a large percentage of these students. A full 48% of privately sponsored TT college students abroad in 1968 were from Palau (TT HICOM 1970). Table 6 below provides an overview of Palauans studying overseas since 1954.

Table 6: Palauans Students Abroad¹

Year	High School	College
1954	--	78
1955	--	109
1956	--	125
1957	--	135
1958	--	86
1959	85	46
1960	101	55
1961	118	68
1962	136	49
1963	115	44
1964	76	47
1965	53	77
1966	46	85
1967	53	78
1968	69	117
1969	83	155
1970	58	193
1971	84	193
1972	50	204
1973	42	262
1974	26	281
1975	28	--
1976	34	236
1977	--	305
1978	--	259
1979	--	524
1980	--	--
1981	--	--
1982	--	270
1983	--	400

¹Figures in this table show only those attending school with government assistance, except for 1979 and 1983 figures for which an attempt was made to include private funding.

Source: TT Annual Reports

The number of Palauans attending college overseas rose from an average of 55/year (1959-65) to 146/year (1966-72), even prior to the availability of US Federal funds for TT college students. After 1972 the number of students overseas, primarily in the US, jumped radically again. The numbers are understated in Table 6 by as much as 50% because only scholarships funded through the TT Board of Education were recorded, thus excluding students financed by US Federal funds, guaranteed loans, private sponsors, and the like.¹³ What is significant here is that, beginning in 1973, the census date was moved from June to September. Since the TT records *de facto* populations, college students are non-residents in that they have left for school before the census count reaches their municipality. This shift of census date may be largely responsible for overstating out-migration in 1973 census, but the continued population plateau through 1980 testifies to a large number of out-migrants, students and others, never returning. That the post-1972 leap in out-migration parallels the dramatic rise in overseas students provides circumstantial evidence that the growing numbers of Palauan students overseas translates into growing numbers of Palauans staying overseas. Although M. Vitarelli (181) indicates that a good percentage of overseas Palauans intend to return home, that percentage falls dramatically when the same group is asked to specify when they will return. Shewman (pers. comm. 1984) feels that the value of returning to Palau in order to maintain social ties and identity is still quite strong, but that few ever seem to return permanently. This impression was reinforced through personal interviews the writer conducted in Truk, Guam and Saipan. Most Palauans indicated they would return to Palau, but later said they were not certain when and would probably only stay temporarily. The president of the Palauan student association at University of Guam, a senior, said he would return to Palau after graduation, but then smiled and acknowledged that he would be back on Guam within a few months to find employment. He feels, as do many others, that he simply cannot get comparable business experience or income in Palau.

The future appears to hold a continuation of high Palauan out-migration, on the basis of the continuing high numbers of student abroad. Palau appears to have a low high-school dropout rate at 10%, and 75-80% of its high school graduates are reported to continue their education abroad (Udui 1982). This would mean that 300 Palauans go overseas for school each year. This estimate, which is confirmed by the Registrar of the University of Guam, is further reinforced by air travel records from 1978 to 1980, showing an average annual net departure of 254.¹⁴ Since nearly all migration traffic is by air, the 1980 TT report considers this a "good indication of the magnitude of out-migration: when taken over a longer period of time. Furthermore, it finds that "out-migration for educational purposes is very significant, which explains the generally large net departures during the July-September quarter of the years" (US Dept. of State 1980).

Hence, students who elect to stay abroad appear to be the explanation for the jump from 70 out-migrants per year in the 1955-72 period to some 385/year during 1973-80.

One factor that may curb this out-migration in the future, however, is government finance. Passage of the Compact would bring an end to all US Federal post-secondary educational assistance within four years of its implementation date. Thus, only those in school when the Compact is signed will be able to receive assistance through graduation. As Thompson (1981) indicates, greater local control of funds appears to signal a shift

away from government sponsorship of overseas education. Although this may decrease the numbers of students overseas, other factors may mitigate its effect. A greater number of Palauans may simply use the free access to the US that the Compact provides for Micronesians to go overseas and find part-time employment to pay for their schooling.

The traditionally high level of private funding of Palauan students has already been noted. It is this private-funding that enabled so many Palauans to attend college prior to the windfall of US funds in 1972. In as much as Palauans still seem to consider college education the key to higher income and greater job satisfaction, they may be willing to replace public grants with private funds, and revert to former strategies to finance their college education.

Declining Birth Rate

It should be noted briefly that the stagnant population level also reflects a progressively declining birth rate, causing the natural growth rate to decline steadily over the last 25 years. More recently the Palau birth rate has dropped 28% from 32/1,000 in 1972 to 23/1,000 in 1981, (Rep of Palau 1983). Palau's 1981 birth rate is very low when compared to the overall TT rate for 1981 of 36/1,000. Perhaps the chief cause of this has been an increase in women opting to work and/or emigrate. A strong family –planning program since 1971 has undoubtedly also played a role in this decline, but the birth rate had already begun falling, indicating that family planning may have only increased the pace of an established trend (Masao Ueda, pers. comm. 1984). The drop in the birth rate may account for diminished population growth during the later 1960s and early 1970s, but we would still expect to find a steady, though slower increase in population through 1980. The lower birth rate may account for smaller population increases, but it fails to explain the stagnant – and possibly declining – resident Palauan population. There are still 3,000 more Palauans since 1972 that are not reflected in the 1980 census, and these must be accounted for by out-migration.

Emigrant Population

For the years following 1972, the out-migration level (from our natural growth estimation method and the airline records) appears to be approximately 300/year and possibly as high as 400/year. This would yield an emigrant Palauan population of at least 5,000. By means of data gathered from the census, interviews, plebiscites, Palauan clubs and earlier essays, an estimated emigrant population for the present year has been compiled in Table 7 below. These figures are presented along with McGraths' estimates for 1970.

Table 7: Emigrant Palauan Population

Location	1970 Estimates (McGrath)	1984 Estimate	% of 1984 Total
Guam	1230	2,100 ¹	41
Yap	310	800 ²	16
Marianas	450	740 ³	15
US Mainland	150	692 ⁴	14
Hawaii	350	520 ⁵	10
Ponape	45	155 ⁶	3
Marshalls	20	45 ⁷	
Truk	<u>35</u>	<u>40</u> ⁸	
Total	2590	5092	

Sources:

¹ K. Nero in Connell 1983; 1980 Palauan Club of Guam census; Shewman, pers. Comm. 1984; emigrant interviews

² K. Nero in Connell 1983; M. Ueda, pers. Comm. 1984; emigrant interviews

³ Shewman, pers. Comm. 1984; emigrant interviews

⁴ US Dept. of Commerce 1983

⁵ Schwalbenberg 1984; Palauan Club of Guam; emigrant interviews

⁶ Schwalbenberg 1984

⁷ Schwalbenberg 1984

⁸ Palauan Club of Truk

Since 1970, the number of emigrant Palauans has nearly doubled, and this may be a slightly conservative estimate. These Palauans in such places as Tokyo, Okinawa, and Germany have not been included. Palauans living overseas constitute nearly 30% of all Palauans today, up from 17% in 1970. The largest concentration remains in Guam, followed by Yap, with its traditionally strong ties to Palau that were reaffirmed in the mid-70s, and Saipan, where a number of Palauan work in government positions for the TT and Commonwealth. A sharp and expected rise is seen in the number of Palauans on the US mainland, although McGrath's 1970 estimate includes only the West Coast.

Ponape has drawn a larger number of Palauans, evidently owing to opportunities in the FSM government. Hawaii continues to attract Palauans for employment and education.

A note should be added concerning other recent estimates. Henry Schwalbenberg (1984) has made a valuable estimate of emigrant population based upon the 1983 plebiscite results that has been a useful source. He assumed, however, that emigrant Palauans would have voted in similar proportion to resident Palauans. From numerous interviews with emigrants, it is clear that a lower percentage of emigrants voted in the plebiscite. Thus, Schwalbenberg's total estimate of 4,126 is too low. His emigrant population projection based upon Nero's Guam estimate (Connell 1983) falls closer to the mark. Connell, in his soon-to-be published volume on migration in the Pacific, estimates the number of Palauan emigrants to be about 3-4,000, although upon what basis is unclear. His estimates may be unduly restrained by the Palau Community Action Agency census of 1980, cited in his work, which concluded an absurdly low, 1,800 Palauans resident overseas. Topping's (1977) estimate put overseas Palauans at about 3-4,000 in 1977. This is quite consistent with our estimate of over 5,000 in 1984.

Conclusion

Having probed past migration trends and surveyed the present situation, we can turn a hesitant pen to the task of soothsaying. Simply extrapolating from present demographic trends would be foolhardy (witness the TT population projection for Palau through the 1970s); causal variables must be discerned.

The single factor claiming the most attention today is the Compact of Free Association. What will happen if it is passed? Will Palauans, lured by permanent US residency rights, flock to the US? Or will new Compact funding and fresh foreign investments provide sufficient bait for overseas Palauans to return? Will lower public funding for overseas college education dim the appeal of foreign "bright lights" for young Palauans?

This writer suspects that the competitive, competent and traditionally mobile Palauans will quickly discern where the economic opportunities await them just as they have done in the past. Although a drop in funding for overseas schooling is likely, Palauans will still have great incentive to emigrate. Some will still be attracted to Yap, the size of whose Palauan community offers welcome support to any emigrant. The offer of permanent US residency will draw large numbers to the US, especially in the first few novel years of its availability. Most emigrant Palauans interviewed shared this view. Initial points of emigration will probably be Guam and Saipan, with the eventual move to Hawaii and California.

Overseas Palauans have frequently noted that while they highly value their Palauan identity—and many expressed their concern that Palau was losing too much of its customs and traditions – they also felt that, on the pragmatic side, Guam and Ultimately the US offered far more than Palau could in terms of experience and job opportunities. Showman adds that once new Compact money flows in, the ante will be raised in clan competition and those finding themselves outside of the new local power clique may find emigration the viable option. Even with increased Compact funds and potentially higher foreign investments, many of the potential blue-collar job opportunities in Palau do not seem very attractive to young Palauans. Palauan college students seem to prefer white-collar positions and the possibility of running their own business. Such

opportunities will be limited in Palau, especially if one is not well connected, even with a large inflow of funds. The bloated TT budgets have propped up a large high-priced white-collar class that the Palauan private economy could never support alone. It may take some years before there will be any significant net increase in white-collar positions in Palau; the Palauan economy cannot afford such a burden to its development in the near future. The job opportunities available in Palau may increasingly go to imported foreign labor, as is already the case to some extent today. Palau may soon come to resemble Saipan in the extent of its dependence upon foreign labor, as is already the case to some extent today. Palau may soon come to resemble Saipan in the extent of its dependence upon foreign labor. Alien labor already comprises over one-third of private sector employment in Palau today and appears to be growing (Connell 1983). Lack of appropriate training may make out-migration a necessity for young Palauans.

The shift in economic opportunities following the increase in TT budgets in the mid-1960s brought Palauans emigrants back within the TT during 1966-72. When new US educational funds became available to Micronesian students after 1972, the emigrants tide swelled to the US. The offer of work and residency rights in the expanding US economy should draw many Palauans to the mainland, and may hold them permanently. Once already existing Palauan communities in such places as Los Angeles and San Francisco expand, out-migration will become even easier and more attractive than it is now.

Contact with the diseases of the West nearly emptied the Palauan islands of inhabitants last century. Palauans may now choose to depopulate it themselves. Will the rest of Micronesia follow?

FOOTNOTES

1 Population Figures from the Palauan Office of Planning and Statistics have not been directly used here, because they represent de facto population and are highly overstated.

2 Number of out-migrants = [Population Year 1 + Net Growth Year 2] – Population Year 2

3 In 1946, 11% lived in Koror (Useem 1944); 39% In 1960 (McGrath 1971); 45% in 1970 (McGrath 1971); and 63% in 1980 (US Dept of State 1980).

4 The 1981 TT Annual Report asserts that Palau's 1980 birth records are 97.1% complete; that nine and more years age records were 85-90% complete appears more than reasonable, if not overly optimistic.

5 These records were discontinued in 1972 owing to their inaccuracy. By TT accounts, difficulty arose after 1969 with the introduction of commercial air service and liberalized migration policies, changes with which the TT records could not keep pace.

6 This corresponds to an average under-reporting of 23%.

7 The birth rate in the Northern Marianas peaked at 5.6% in 1958 (TT Dept of Health 1963)

8 This is consistent with Figures in Connell (1983) and Kay (1974).

9 Udui (1982) finds a high proportion of emigrants within child-bearing years, although her low emigrant population figures may exaggerate this proportion.

10 Vital Statistics are fairly accurate after 1972. Late reporting is included in 1972-81 Figures for Palauan population. 1980 is the last reliable census Figure and differs by less than 2% from the PCAA survey Figure for resident population.

11 As indicated in Table 1, several mid-70s population figures are unavailable. An attempt to use election results during those years proved unsuccessful but colorful. In the 1975 Palau Legislature elections, over 11,000 votes were cast for regular candidates; this was probably twice the number of eligible voters. The at-large candidates fared even better, collecting over 21,000 votes.

12 Only after 1975 do other TT areas such as Truk and Ponape exceed Palau in absolute numbers.

13 Figures for 1979 and 1983 may give a more accurate idea of range than the early figures.

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