

Unit 39: Administration in Pohnpei:

Paradise lost – Paradise gained

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Glossary

Administration	the ruling organization, also called the government
Arable	fertile land suitable for plantations and agriculture
Civil authorities	the officials, bureaucrats and appointees of the ruling power
Expropriation	to take (something) from another's possession for one's own use
Incessantly	Endlessly, without stopping
Unicameral	Political term, means having a single house of parliament

In this unit on “My nation: My government” you will study how Pohnpei was ruled by four different colonial powers.

At the end of this you will be able to;

- Describe the Spanish, German, Japanese and American periods of rule
- Create a timeline of changes in Pohnpei
- Describe the impact of colonial rule
- Appreciate the strength of Pohnpeian culture and custom

The Spanish Administration

The Spanish had been active in Micronesia for several centuries but had not influenced the people or the way of life. They had an irregular and inconsistent administration. But in March 1887, the second Spanish **administration** was established with the arrival of a Governor Don Isidro Posadillo and his staff. Another band of missionaries also arrived on Pohnpei.

From the outset, **civil authorities** and Catholic priests worked together to plant the Spanish faith and culture. They regarded the Church and government as inseparable. Civil authorities (the Government officials) initiated a few modest public work projects such as road construction, paraded their troops in sight of the islanders, and sent official reports to Manilla on the bi-monthly mail ship. Catholic Missionaries went about the village teaching their religion and obligation to God and King

alike. The Missionaries depended upon the support of the Spanish authorities for funds and legal backing.

Three months after the Spanish government was installed a serious uprising occurred that led to the death of the new governor and several of his men. The uprising was put down at the arrival of several Spanish warships. The officials of the Spanish colony had spent four fearful months waiting on board a derelict ship in Net Harbour. After the military reinforcements landed at Pohnpei, the Spanish settlement at Colonia was fortified by the building of a large wall, and Catholic mission work was resumed throughout the island.

Another outbreak of hostilities took place in 1890. A rebel force of Pohnpeians from Madolenihmw attacked a company of Spanish troops who were building a church.

A third war broke out in 1898 in the district of "U". This was between Pohnpeians in the north which had become Catholic by this time, and Protestant areas in the southern part of the island. Spanish warships were again called in to put an end to the trouble.

Tension between different religious and district factions on the island usually ran high. For example, the American Protestant missionary, Edward Doane, was arrested by Spanish authorities in 1890 and sent to Manila in the Philippines for trial.

The Catholics thought the Protestants were rebels, who wanted to undermine the Spanish government. The Protestants thought the Spanish were using their political and military authority to enslave the people of Pohnpei. They thought the Spanish wanted to destroy the mission they had built up over thirty years. The most controversial figure was Henry Nanpei, the recognised leader of the Protestants.

The Spanish administration on Pohnpei was made more difficult by the friction between different districts around the island. The Pohnpeians quarrelled among themselves **incessantly**. It should also be noted that the Catholic missionaries were also disagreeing with the Spanish government over its colonial policies. In 1899, in the peace treaties after the conclusion of the Spanish American War, Spanish rule in the Caroline islands and Marianas came to an end. The islands passed to German control.

Questions and Activities

1. Who arrived when the second Spanish Administration centre opened?
2. What did the priests and civil authorities do?
3. Describe two events that occurred during the Spanish Administration.
4. Who was the leader of the Protestants?

6. Answer true or false for the following:
- a) The Spanish Governor assassinated was Don Isidoro Posadillo.
 - b) The Pohnpeians fought the Spanish three times.
 - c) The Protestants and Catholics were fighting because the Spanish favoured the Protestants.
 - d) The war between the people of U and Madolenihmw was caused by the Catholics because they stole the Protestant's land.
7. The Spanish Administration came to an end when they lost the war against the Pohnpeians.

The German Administration

After the Spanish American War the United States allowed Spain to sell its former Micronesian possessions to Germany. This treaty was signed in June 1899 and the purchase price was four and a quarter million dollars.

German business were already well entrenched in the Carolines and Germany was eager to extend her commercial interest. Germany was expanding and building up her colonial holdings in the Pacific. Together with northern New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago, the Carolines, Marianas and Marshalls formed a ring of German possessions in the Pacific that could have strategic value for a strong naval power. They later added Nauru and Western Samoa to their empire.

The German colonial government initiated a program of social and commercial development in the new possessions. A handful of German administrators made new laws and relied on Melanesian policemen to enforce it. Government centres were set up at Rabaul (New Guinea), Apia (Samoa), Colonia in Pohnpei, Meon in Chuuk, Saipan, Kolonnia on Yap, Koror in Palau and Jaliut in the Marshall Islands.

The German administration began with a vigorous policy of social and economic change. They demanded islanders turn in their firearms and ammunition and call a halt to the local warfare that prevailed on almost every island. The sale of alcohol to islanders was banned. Head taxes were levied on the island population and all able-bodied men were required to work on roads, docks and other public projects.

Land deeds were introduced in the eastern Caroline Islands resulting in changes in inheritance patterns. Good **arable** lands were converted into plantations in an attempt to increase copra and crop production. Phosphate mining in Angaur Island in Palau began with labourers imported from the Carolines.

The first German administrator found the Pohnpeians were suspicious of foreign colonists and jealously protected their ancient customs and liberties and traditional leaders, the Nahnmwarkis. However, the efficiency, good organisation and lack of corruption among the German administrators created a workable relationship between the Germans and the Nahnmwarkis.

This relationship broke down in 1910 when the administration began to build a 5 metre wide road around the whole island in order to extend the power of the colonial government. The Sokehs Rebellion of 1910 caused the death of both Pohnpeians and Germans. Once again warships came to Pohnpei to restore colonial rule. Many Pohnpeians were exiled.

At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Japan immediately took control of all ex-German colonies in the north Pacific. The 15 years of the German period are not remembered by Pohnpeians perhaps because the population was only three to four thousand at the time. The population today is ten times that number. More influential was the period which followed when for thirty years Pohnpei was changed dramatically by Japanese rule, and then by 50 years of US rule.

Questions and Activities

8. What was Germany's main interest in Micronesia?
9. How much was Micronesia worth in 1898?
10. Mark on a map where German government centres were located.
11. What project caused the islanders to rebel in 1910?
12. What changes did the Germans introduce?
13. Why were Pohnpeians impressed with the German administration?
14. Complete and write out the following sentences using one of the options:

i). Germany colonies in Micronesia began in ____:

1850s, 1885, 1889, 1899, 1885, 1914,

ii) The German colonials initiated a _____ program:

- (a) Social & political
- (b) Health and social
- (c) Economic & political
- (d) Social and commercial
- (e) Health and political.

iii) Phosphate mining began on _____:

(a) Pohnpei, Chuuk, Marshall Islands, Palau.

iv) The German government demanded the islanders turn in their _____:

(a) land

(b) homes

(c) wives

(d) firearms and ammunition

(e) canoe

v) The German governor started a 5 metre wide road around Sokehs in _____:

1890, 1899, 1908, 1909, 1910

vi) The population of Pohnpei during the German periods was _____:

2000, 3000, 5000, 10000

The Japanese Administration

Japan obtained legal control of Micronesia in the Versailles Peace Conference in 1920. The conditions of the *League of Nations Mandate* were that Japan must allow missionary activity and must not fortify the islands. Japan established and subsidised the Congregational Protestant Mission on Pohnpei in 1920, and in 1920 allowed Spanish Catholic Jesuit Priests to take over the work of the expelled German Capuchin Priests.

The Japanese administration took over most German land acquisitions and some Pohnpeian lands by purchase and others by **expropriation**. Land acquisition increased in the late 1930s for military purposes.

To develop Pohnpei economically, the Japanese concentrated on fishing and agriculture between 1921 and 1939. The largest single industry was processing and exporting of dried *bonito*, the only fish exported in any quantity to Japan. Fishing by non-Micronesians was licensed and supervised.

The Government offered subsidies for the purchase of marine engines, boat and equipment to any group of Japanese expatriates willing to enter the industry.

The land code was changed to encourage Japanese development. A more accurate survey of plots was undertaken and Japanese nationals were allowed to buy and retain titles to land without the approval of the traditional leaders of the area. Inheritance law was adjusted to include women as heirs. Pohnpei was only 10% of the total Japanese land area in Micronesia but it had the third largest immigrant population in the mandate.

The former German agriculture station was reconstructed in 1926. It was called the *Tropical Industries Research Institute, Pohnpei Branch* and was staffed with experts from Japanese universities. The research departments studied livestock and forestry as well as agriculture.

The production of starch from arrowroot and sweet potato was Japan's second largest industry on Pohnpei. In the 1930s, tapioca replaced the sweet potato as the main crop. By 1938, the starch acreage was converted into sugar production.

The Japanese made Pohnpei almost entirely self supporting in produce. Among the crops developed were pumpkins, squash, pineapple, papaya, sugarcane, watermelon, onions, cucumbers, beans, rice, eggplant and coffee. Introduced food included tomatoes, green peppers, okra, spinach, cabbage, lettuce, parsley, watercress turnips, radishes, carrots, peas, peanuts and soybeans.

Schooling

Pohnpeian children aged eight and older were offered the opportunity of three years of study at one of the elementary schools. The school year was for eight weeks, six days per week, and half of the regular course consisted of learning the Japanese language. The other half consisted of learning arithmetic, physical education, singing and manual work or housekeeping. In 1935, attendance at a government school became mandatory

The Japanese students on Pohnpei, attended a regular course for six years with two supplementary years. . In the thirty one years of the Japanese administration, only three Pohnpeians received schooling in Japan.

The War years

The war exploded on Pohnpei in mid-February 1944 in a series of air bombardments. The most devastating attack was in May 1944. The USA did not land on Pohnpei, bypassing it to move quickly on towards Okinawa and Japan. Pohnpei was liberated on the 11th September 1945. Pohnpeians

remember the war as a time of hardship especially the last year and a half. There were shortages of food and especially clothing. Thousands of Japanese were trapped on Pohnpei as the war passed by.

Questions and Activities

15. When did the Japanese obtain legal control of Micronesia?
16. What did the Japanese do during 1920?
17. Describe the economic development of Pohnpei during the Japanese administration?
18. List all the food crops that were introduced to Pohnpei.
19. Describe the dual educational system.
20. Answer true or false for the following:
 - (a) Pohnpeians could attend school in Japan.
 - (b) Starch production from arrowroot and sweet potatoes was Japanese largest industry on Pohnpei in the 1940s.
 - (c) Most of the land acquisition by the Japanese was through purchase.
 - (d) Under the League of Nations the Japanese were allowed to fortify Pohnpei.
 - (e) The Japanese concentrated on the economic development of fishing and agriculture between 1921 and 1945.
 - (f) Japan's largest single industry in Pohnpei was dried bonito.
21. Write a paragraph of 100 words on why some Pohnpeians have good memories of the pre-war Japanese period?

The USA Period

(a) USA Naval Administration

The three groups of islands and atolls - the Marianas, the Caroline Islands and the Marshall islands - were occupied at the end of the war by USA armed forces and were placed under a Naval Government. The Military Governor issued proclamations, which set forth the basic rules for the conduct and the government of the people in the occupied territory.

(b) Civil Administration

On 18 July 1947 the USA assumed responsibility for administering the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under the Trusteeship Agreement approved by the Security Council of the United Nations on 2 April 1947, and a joint resolution of the USA Congress on the 1 July 1947. This Trusteeship Agreement was entered into under the provisions of the International Trusteeship System provided for in the Charter of the United Nations.

The *Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI)* consisted of those islands which, prior to World War II were administered by Japan under a mandate from the League of Nations. They were also known as the USTT or United States Trust Territory)

The President of the USA, and the Secretary of the Navy, appointed a “High Commissioner” to lead the administration of the TTPI. The administration consisted of three levels - the Office of the High Commissioner (the Executive), the Congress of Micronesia (the Legislature), and the High Court (the Judicial branch).

(c) Municipal government

The administration of Pohnpei was transferred from the US Department of the Navy to the Department of Interior in July 1951. The municipalities of Pohnpei had become legal entities in a directive on May 28 1947.

These municipalities were more or less independent of the TTPI administration. They were influenced by the traditional leaders. The chief executive of a municipality was elected and a judge was appointed to each municipality by the Governor, upon the recommendations of local people.

The first session of the *Pohnpei Island Congress* met in 1952. This body was replaced eleven years later in 1963 by the *District Legislature*, a **unicameral** body with representatives from all islands in Pohnpei district and all municipalities. Twenty members were elected to a four-year term. It had legislative power to cover all matters concerning the citizens of Pohnpei. In 1979, the District Legislature became the *Pohnpei Legislature*.

Pohnpei also belonged to the Congress of Micronesia (created on September 1974) which governed all USA territories in the north Pacific except Guam and CNMI. Two senators (4 year terms) and two representatives (2 year terms) were elected from Pohnpei.

In the early 1960s the USA “rediscovered” Pohnpei because of criticisms of USA neglect in the United Nations, and publically in *Reader’s Digest* magazine. As a result, the USA implemented expanded programs and increased funding and in 1970, the first American Civic Action Team was established.

(d) Compact of Free Association

In 1970, the Congress of Micronesia refused an offer by the USA to create a commonwealth to govern all USA territories in the north Pacific. A "Future Status Commission" was created to determine the future political status of the entities in the TTPI. The options were Full self-government, a new relationship with the USA, or to become USA territories (colonies). As the idea of a single government was not attractive, Pohnpei, Yap, Chuuk and Kosrae, joined together as the Federated States of Micronesia, and signed a separate compact of free association with the USA. This was signed in 1983 but was not implemented until 3 November 1986.

After forty years the TTPI came to an end. By this time the old *TTPI* had broken up into five entities. The CNMI and Guam remained USA territories. Palau, Republic of the Marshall islands and the FSM became separate independent nations..

Under the terms of the first Compact of Free Association (1986-2001) the USA offered grants of \$60 million for the first five years, \$51 million for the next five years and \$40 million for the last five years.

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) had been born on May 10 1979, when the new national flag, four white stars circled on a light blue field was raised at Paliker, the capital on Pohnpei. The following day Mr Tosiwo Nakayama was elected as the first President (from the state of Chuuk) and Mr Petus Tun (from the State of Yap) as the Vice President. Mr Bethwel Henry of Pohnpei was the first speaker of the new Senate and Mr Leo A. Falcam became the first elected governor of Pohnpei.

Questions and Activities

22. What happened on 18 July 1947?
23. What were the three levels of administration in the TTPI?
24. What happened to the Governor of Pohnpei in:
 - (a) 1952
 - (b) 1963
 - (c) 1979
25. When did the first FSM Compact of Associations end?