
"With whom do the historians actually empathize?
The answer is inevitable: with the victor."

Walter Benjamin

from Theses on the philosophy of history

BIKINI ATOLL :

A History Lesson

1946-1978

greg sholette, assembler

1978

GREG SHLETTE

OFFSET BOOK

"The mushroom, now the common symbol of the atomic age, was far more spectacular than any still photograph can suggest. Its height and statuesque beauty were impressive; but even more impressive was the speed of its writhing upward surge."

"This new bomb is no mere creator of dazzling light and peach-colored clouds; it shakes the very foundations of military strategy."

"In order to test the destructive powers of the atomic bomb against naval vessels, I would like to see these Japanese naval ships taken to sea and an atomic bomb dropped on them. The resulting explosion should prove to us just how effective the atomic bomb is when used against the giant naval ships. I can think of no better use for these Jap ships."

Sen. Brien McMahon(D.,Conn.) 8/25/45

"Once, a mother and her child were swimming toward a small reef when a big man called Ladobu came along, and taking pity on them he dropped some sand into the sea from a basket he had brought with him. By virtue of this act an island originated." 1961

Story from the Marshall Islands, from Tales from Ulithi Atoll by William A. Lessa

"The final run began at 8:50 a.m., from a distance of more than 50 miles. Course and altitude were held constant. Visibility was excellent. Within a few seconds of 9:00 a.m. the bomb was released and the bombardier called " Bomb away, bomb away!"

"Men stared fascinated as the relentless count began .In a few seconds the awful explosion would come. Not few: Two! One!

The results are history. Ships were crushed, and sank; two million tons of water and spray buried scores of ships.

Even more deeply buried—lost in the drama of the moment—were the underlying problems,

the guiding motive. Why plan an Operation Crossroads? Why send 42,000 men, 242 ships, 156 airplanes, 4 television transmitters, 750 cameras, 5000 pressure gages, 25,000 radiation recorders, 204 goats, 200 pigs, 5000 rats and why transport Numbers 4 and 5 of the atomic bomb family thousands of miles across land and sea for two brief moments of majestic destruction?"

What was needed: a protected anchorage at least six miles in diameter; a site which was uninhabited, or nearly so; a location at least 300 miles distant from the nearest city; a location within 1000 miles of a B-52 base; freedom from severe cold and storm; predictable water and wind currents; control by the United States.

"Bikini won out. Its 162 inhabitants could be transferred readily. The few coral heads obstructing the anchorage could be eliminated by dynamiting."

"A mammoth Operation Plan was prepared- a plan so vast and detailed as to suggest the Book of Fate itself. The Plan contained several thousand large, finely-printed pages and served as a bible throughout the Operation. Heart and Plan was a set of twenty-nine annexes ,each a veritable encyclopedia on all plans relating to a given phase of the Operation . The titles of the Annexes are illum-

inating;they are:

Movement Plan
Logistics Plan
Communication and Electronics Plan
Security Plan
Safety Plan
Air Plan
Instrumentation Plan
Bikini Evacuation Plan

Oceanographic Survey Plan

Harbor Information

Aerological Plan

Boat Pool Plan

Typhoon Plan

Ship Preparation Plan

Reboarding and Inspection Plan

Air-Sea Rescue Plan

Nonparticipating Observers Plan

Re-entry Plan

Plan of Operation on A-Day

Plan of Operation on B-Day

Photographic Plan

Salvage Plan

Army Ground Group Plan

Public Information Plan

Target Layout Test A

Target layout test B

Rongerik Evacuation Plan

Reports

Drone Boat Plan

Several of the annexes, which themselves contained voluminous appendices and even appendices to appendices, were many hundreds of pages in length, and contained a wealth of charts, graphs, etc.*

*The Operation Plan was so complete that the

writer, who studied it with some care, had throughout the Operation the impression of attending a good Technicolor motion picture of a recently-read book."

"Lines of organization were pleasantly invisible at Bikini. Officers and enlisted men, scientists, and observers, became a part of the tropical scene."

"The earlier names of the Atoll's 26 islands were difficult to spell and would have been almost impossible to handle in dispatches. Accordingly a set of simple code names was adopted by the Task Force."

" To reduce the insect nuisance, Bikini and Enyu Islands were sprayed every few weeks with DDT..."

"Coral heads were another menace to navigation inside the Lagoon. They consisted of great underwater obstructions rising nearly 200 feet above the lagoon floor. Many of them extended up to the level of the lagoon surface. Composed of coral and also deposits made by the calcereous algae, they were solid enough to damage any ships which might collide with them.

Some were in positions to interfere with the mooring of target vessels or to impede the submerging of the target submarines. Accordingly ,the tops of these coral heads were dynamited .Over 100 tons of dynamite were used."

CONGRESSMAN SUPRISED- ABOARD U.S.S.

PANAMINT OFF BIKINI July 1,1946(U.P.)

Representative Dean M. Gillespie, Rep. of Colorado, said he had expected much more brilliance and a heavy blast after having viewed pictures and read about the previous three bombs.

New York Times pg3 July 1,1946

GERMANS IGNORE BOMB TEST

Frankfort, Germany June 30, 1946 (U.P.)

... hungry Germans and Americans showed little interest in the Bikini test. Hungry Germans in bomb scarred Frankfort showed far more concern over the live stock and fish doomed for slaughter than over the effects of the bomb.

New York Times pg3 July 1, 1946

"The test animals which had been placed on the target vessels...were removed on the afternoon of A-Day...the more heavily-exposed animals exhibited hyper-irritability, muscular weakness, diarrhea, and increased rate of respiration. Some of these were moribund, with exaggeration of symptoms, bloody diarrhea, and inability to stand. These symptoms appeared to have caused the animals

no intense pain."

"* Juda, Magistrate of Bikini Atoll, commonly called King of Bikini, witnessed one of the Tests, but the other 161 inhabitants obtained only second-hand accounts. He was flown back to Bikini the day preceding B-day, before final approval for such a visit had been obtained from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was received aboard the flagship MT. McKINLEY amid much embarrassment. The situat-

ion was saved by a quick interchange of radiograms with the office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, D.C. Word came back to Bikini that the Task Force Commander might "use his judgment" in the matter."

"The order to evacuate the natives came from the Navy Military Government Officer in February, when choice of Bikini as the test site became final. The Bikinians, convinced that the Tests would be a contribution to world peace, indicated their willingness to evacuate. Their decision was reached at a meeting of the Atoll Council."

From:

BOMBS AT BIKINI: THE OFFICIAL REPORT OF
OPERATION CROSSROADS Prepared under the
Direction of the Commander of Joint Task
Force One by W.A. Shurcliff Historian of
Joint Task Force One, Wm. H. Wise & Co. 1947

KING JUDA'S CONTRIBUTION

To the editor of the New York Times:
A dispatch from William L. Laurence
in the Times of July 17, tells of little
King Juda of Bikini: the Atom Island, who
gave up his island paradise where he
ruled 167 souls, for peace and the good
of mankind. Contrast this action with the
selfish attitude of a group of well-to-do

residents of Westchester and Fairfield
who do do not want the U.N. Headquarters
located there. This shows how much we
have to learn from these Bikinians who
practice what they preach.

Arthur Ohlman, N.Y. July, 21 1946 pg8

"Bikini Island, in the atoll of the
same name, is a crescent-shaped shelf of
coral of about one twenty-sixth the area
of the Pentagon Building in Washington."

"Though coverd with vegetation and life sustaining trees, it (Bikini) is now, except for a strange tribe called "Atom-Bomb people," uninhabited."

"As for Juda of Bikini and his people now living on Rongerik atoll, they probably will be repatriated if they insist on it, though United States military authorities say they can't see why they should want to: Bikini and Rongerik look as alike as two Idaho potatoes."

From:

THE STRANGE PEOPLE FROM BIKINI: PRIMITIVE
THEY ARE, BUT THEY LOVE ONE ANOTHER
AND THE AMERICAN VISITORS WHO TOOK THEIR
HOME by Lt. E. J. Rooney, USNR

New York Times magazine, March 31, 1946

Bikini is an atoll in the Ralik (western) chain of the Marshall Islands in the central Pacific Ocean. Lying north of the equator, at 12 N, 165 E, it forms part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, since 1947 a United Nations strategic area trusteeship administered by the United States. Bikini was a site for peacetime atomic explosions conducted for experimental purposes by the Un-

ited States between 1946 and 1958. The population of the island, numbering less than 200, was moved to other islands before the tests began.

The word "bikini," describing a very brief two piece swimsuit for women, which came into vogue at the time of the atomic tests, has entered the international vocabulary.

In view of the special interest taken in Bikini because of its nuclear past, a return to the coconut economy of other times is unlikely. Further scientific studies are to be conducted, and tourism may be encouraged.

From:

THE NEW ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA:KNOWLEDGE
IN DEPTH VOL.2, William Benton publisher
1973

Amendments proposed to the Security
Council of the United Nations regard
ing the Pacific Island Trusteeship:
1.ARTICLE 3-An amendment was proposed
by the Representative of the Union of
Soviet Socialist Republics to delete the
words "as an integral part of the United
States."Upon accepting this amendment
the United States Representative said

"...Article 6 of the U.N. trusteeship agreement reads as follows:

1. Foster the development of such political institutions as are suited to the trust territory and shall promote the development... toward self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the expressed wishes of the peoples concerned..."

INTER ALIA: "In agreeing to this modification, my Government feels that it should affirm for the record that its authority in the trust territory is not to be considered in any way lessened thereby."

2. ARTICLE 6(1)-An amendment was proposed by the Representative of the U.S.S.R. to add after the words "toward self-government" the words "or independence as may

be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the trust territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned." In accepting modification in article 6(1) the United States feels that it must record its opposition not to the principle of independence, to which no people could be more consecrated than the people of the United

States, but to the thought that it could possibly be achieved within any foreseeable future in this case."

From:

HANDBOOK ON THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE
PACIFIC ISLANDS

Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
Washington 25, D.C. 1948

"A useful summary of some of the principal factors to be considered in deciding upon proper financial policies of the Trust Territory government is contained in the report by Mr. Donald J. O'Connor entitled "An Economic Perspective of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands," September 15, 1952.

Mr. O'Connor points out the heavy cost of Trust Territory administration in com-

parison with the economic productivity of the native economy. He emphasizes the importance of working toward a situation where local productivity and revenues from local tax sources will pay the cost of the government there.

"In particular, he advises strongly against any premature effort to push wage and salary levels of native personnel up to the

American standard. According to Mr. O'Connor, therefore, any effort to pay native personnel at the same level as white personnel should be strongly resisted.

I definitely concur with the general trend of Mr. O'Connor's thinking."

"...the Trust Territory has established an administrative framework...personel necessarily include the district administrator and his assistants, communications people, and those engaged in performing health, educational, law enforcement, and judicial functions."

"In addition to personnel carrying on the above functions, there are in each case a

number of both white and native personnel engaged in supplying the utilities and services commonly demanded or expected by white persons..."

"It should be clearly understood that although the indigenes of the Trust Territory are subject to United States jurisdiction and control, they are not citizens of the United States and it is not contemplated that they will ever acquire such status en bloc... From an immigration standpoint any indigene desiring to enter this country is treated like an alien from any other nation."

"It may come as a surprise to many people to know that the overwhelming majority of the natives are Christians... There may be doubt about many of the so-called gifts of civilization which the white man brings to such an area, but not about our religion. Christianity remains our finest gift."

"I believe it should be made categorically clear to all concerned that the United States Government must for security reasons retain absolute control of this entire area forever, or for as far as we can see in the distant future ...The islands were purchased at the cost of much blood and treasure. It is inconceivable that they should ever be allowed to pass into the hands of any other

nation, either hostile or friendly."

From:
REPORT ON THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE
PACIFIC ISLANDS by SENATOR HUGH BUTLER
TO THE COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR
AFFAIRS, Printed by U.S. Government Print-
ing Office Wash., 1953

OUTLINE

- The 1946 bomb test pages 1-19
- The people and
their island pages 20-38
- U.S. government's
plans for the
Trust Territory
1948-1953 pages 39-54

Blank pages can be used for your additions:

Los Angeles Times **1978**
U.S. ERRED

Bikini Island: Lost Again to Radiation

BY JERRY BELCHER
Times Staff Writer

BIKINI, Marshall Islands—When the Americans made him leave Bikini for the first time, in 1946, Andrew Jakeo was 34 years old.

When, after using the fragile Pacific atoll for 23 nuclear test blasts, the Americans in the person of President John B. Johnson told him his

BIKINI ATOLL :

A History Lesson

1946-1978

greg sholette, assembler