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Editorial...

Man's power over man - Ownership and justice, jealousy and virtue...!

What a lot of human misery as well as happiness are to be found under these terms.

Like they did for me, I presume that the recent happenings in Fiji and the Solomon Islands made you think of justice and injustice "close to home". Ever since man has claimed possession of land, the fundamental question remains; who really owns 'the world'?

- Who knows how many wars have been waged in the history of our planet because of man's lust for

possession of land. How many empires (some consisting of huge tracts of land) have come and gone in the past? How many ethnic races have been wiped out because of land-hungry invaders? How many individual lives have been wrecked in the history of mankind with feuding neighbours or relatives over possession of land? How is the world to solve the problem of life in a 'global village', defining ownership of land, with free movement of people as the so called experts' predict?

We all know that we frail human beings enter and finally depart this world with nothing and yet we often sacrifice our souls for the possession of land.

In most democratic countries of the

western world we take the right to land-ownership for granted either by birth or by naturalisation and long-term residency.

The political disturbance in Fiji is a reason to remind ourselves how fortunate we Swiss-immigrants have been to find such a generous country of adoption like New Zealand. And if we Swiss-Kiwis, as immigrants, should ever be criticised for having made use of the privilege of land-ownership we are in my opinion entitled to point out that most if not all of us have made responsible use of the land and have thereby contributed in a fair measure to the economy of New Zealand.

And if we agree that the world belongs to all of us, you might agree that responsible use is a 'built-in' prerequisite to land ownership.

-Just now,(June 2000), as I am expressing these sentiments in relation to the political troubles in Fiji and the Solomons, I hear that the Swiss Government has given the go-ahead for the creation of **a new International Center in Geneva aimed at promoting Democratic Control over the World's Armies!**

The Swiss Minister of Defence, Adolf Ogi, has announced that the Center would compliment Switzerland's foreign and security policies, which are based on **promotion of human rights**.

It is expected to be operational by 2003 and will have an annual budget of about ten million Francs funded largely by the Swiss tax payer. It is expected that partner countries will mainly contribute by providing experts and other senior staff.

- There may well be people questioning the right and the ability of a small country like Switzerland to take on the role of a 'democratic advisor' to other countries and military forces. But do you know of another country in the world with such a degree of democratic self-Government of the people; people of different cultures, languages and religions?

The Center will be a '**Think-Tank**' and it will oversee projects in various countries. Parliaments of countries in need of assistance may want to improve the ability to control military command and influence security police while the armed forces themselves may want to teach officers how to cope with democratic checks

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