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#### *About the Institute*

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

Form 3806-S (Rev. 3-52)

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(Name of addressee)

(P. O. and State of address)

*Le Troquer, Schaff, Bidault,*

24 East 82 Street,  
New York, N. Y.  
Jan. 11, 1954.

L'Honorable M. Schaff,  
Député-Maire,  
Assemblée Nationale,  
Paris, France.

Dear Sir:

Because I had not yet received satisfaction from France, I sailed from Rotterdam on the "Nieuw Amsterdam" for New York December 17, 1953, to complain January 1 to ALL 300 or so members of the Congress of the United States in Washington how I was being swindled in the AFFAIRE CHENG HO by French Government Officials in Tahiti. I also had planned to ask Congress to pay my claim of approximately \$ 63,000 against the French Government by subtracting that sum from any further shipment of funds from America to France if the present Government of France, herself, cannot see that justice is done.

*Answer*  
I know from previous answers to letters of complaint that I wrote to a few members of my Congress that they were disturbed to learn how an American citizen is being flagrantly swindled by French Government Officials. Is it not an indication of colonial breakdown in French Oceania? If I had written the enclosed (in English translation) to all 300 members, as I had intended January 1, it would have caused a furore in Washington harmful to France at this critical time. I have nothing against France per se and do not wish to stir up feelings in Washington against her. That is the reason for my present silence. *in America about this scandal.*

But if my claim continues to be ignored by France, you cannot expect me to be silent indefinitely, French Government Officials swindled me out of assets exceeding \$ 63,000, have caused me considerable additional expense fighting for justice, and I do demand just payment. When will that come? My patience is just about ended.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Otto Sager*

24 East 82 St.,  
New York, N.Y.  
Jan. 17, 1954.

L'Honorable M. Coty,  
Assemblée Nationale,  
Paris, France.

Dear Sir:

I have been swindled out of assets exceeding \$63,000 by past and present French Government Officials in Tahiti. This involves the junk-yacht "Cheng Ho."

I travelled from my home in Hawaii to Europe, wishing to sail from Marseilles via Ceylon to Tahiti. Then while in Europe I discovered the officials in Tahiti were insincere in their wish to turn my vessel over to me according to contract. I recently therefore returned to New York.

If the present French Government cannot bring the affaire Cheng Ho to a just end, I as American citizen and tax payer have the right to appeal to members of my Congress for aid. Because of the unnecessary expense this would cause for all of us I wish to avoid such action. May I ask that you cooperate with me and see that



my claim against the French Govern-  
ment for approximately \$63,000 he  
paid? The handling of this case by the  
Ministère de la France d'Outre Mer was  
certainly picayune and unjust.

Sincerely,

Dr. Otto Degener

Monteleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Terr. Hawaii.  
April 5, 1947.

Hon. Mr. Herbert Brownell, Jr.,  
U. S. Attorney General,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I request that you assign a number to my claim for Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000) against the French Government. This claim is the result of a breach of contract, depriving me of the possession of my former 98 feet long, teak and camphor woods, junk-yacht "Cheng Ho", according to the agreement recorded in Book 2156, pages 247-249, Registry of Conveyances for the Territory of Hawaii at Honolulu, T. H. This agreement was signed July 7, 1947, the option maturing five years later. The individuals preventing me from exercising my rights according to the contract being mainly past and present French Government Officials located in Tahiti and vicinity.

The vessel "Cheng Ho" was built by Mrs. Anne Archbold of Washington, D.C., in Hong Kong, at a cost of approximately \$100,000.

In 1940 - 41 the vessel was used for a scientific expedition to the Fiji Islands in which Degener took part as botanist.

Mrs. Archbold sold her vessel, the "Cheng Ho" for "\$1.00 and love" to the U. S. Navy in July 1941. The vessel was used as a Weather Station in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, during the War.

About the end of the War, namely February 3, 1947, Mrs. Archbold regained possession of the "Cheng Ho" from the U. S. Navy under Public Law 305, Otto Degener being her agent.

Shortly thereafter Degener purchased the "Cheng Ho" from Mrs. Archbold.

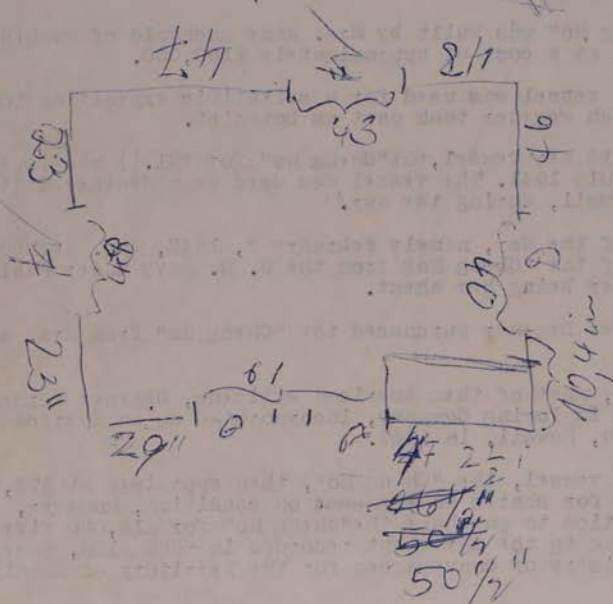
With associates, most of them American citizens, Degener formed the "Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company, incorporated as an American corporation in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1947.

Degener sold his vessel, the "Cheng Ho", then appraised at \$75,000, to this corporation for shares in the same on condition, however, that he own the option to purchase the "Cheng Ho" for \$15,000 five years later according to the agreement recorded in Book 2156, pages 247-249, of the Registry of Conveyances for the Territory of Hawaii at Honolulu.

The Company sent the vessel, stocked with trade goods, to Tahiti under command of Capt. Eric deBisschop, former French Consul in Hawaii. At the time it was not known to Degener and most other shareholders that deBisschop had a criminal record in France and even then was waiting for deportation from the U.S., by our Government as an undesirable alien.

Brvd Höhe  
13-14 m

Höhe = 98 und 103,2  
über d. Tar 22 und  
Unterleiste 29 in hoch





Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii.  
April 6, 1954.

Hon. Mr. Herbert Brownell, Jr.,  
U. S. Attorney General,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I request that you assign a number to my claim for Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000) against the French Government. This claim is the result of a breach of contract, depriving me of possession of my former 98 foot long, teak and camphor woods, junk-yacht "Cheng Ho", according to the agreement recorded in Book 2156, pages 247-249, Registry of Conveyances for the Territory of Hawaii at Honolulu, T. H. This agreement was signed July 7, 1947, the option maturing five years later. The individuals preventing me from exercising my rights according to the contract being mainly past and present French Government Officials located in Tahiti and vicinity.

The vessel "Cheng Ho" was built by Mrs. Anne Archbold of Washington, D. C., in Hong Kong at a cost of approximately \$100,000.

In 1940-41 the vessel was used for a scientific expedition to the Fiji Islands in which Mr. Otto Degener, American citizen resident in the Hawaiian Islands, took part as botanist.

Mrs. Archbold sold her vessel, the "Cheng Ho" for "\$1.00 and love" to the U. S. Navy in July 1941. The vessel was used as a Weather Station in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, during the Second World War.

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Shortly thereafter Degener purchased the "Cheng Ho" from Mrs. Archbold.

With associates, most of them American citizens, Degener formed the "Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company," incorporated as an American corporation in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1947.

Degener sold his vessel, the "Cheng Ho", then appraised at \$75,000, to this corporation for shares on condition, however, that he own the option to purchase the "Cheng Ho" for \$15,000 five years later according to the agreement recorded in Book 2156, pages 247-249, of the Registry of Conveyances for the Territory of Hawaii at Honolulu.

The Company sent the vessel, stocked with sugar and trade goods, to Tahiti under command of Capt. Eric deBisschop, former French Consul in Hawaii. At the time it was not known to Degener and most other shareholders that deBisschop had a criminal record in France and even then was waiting for deportation from the U. S., by our Government as an undesirable alien.



Upon Capt. deBisschop's return from Tahiti to Honolulu with the "Cheng Ho" considerable litigation followed which, however, does not concern the present case. What is pertinent, however, is the evidence shown in the Court Proceedings before Federal Judge McLaughlin and again before Circuit Judge Pence in Honolulu that the Frenchman Capt. deBisschop had registered the vessel fraudulently under the French flag as his own property "in the Office of the Governor of Tahiti." The vessel actually was an American vessel belonging to a company incorporated in Honolulu, Hawaii, U. S. A.

In his attempt to collect a bad debt owing him and associates by deBisschop and to exercise his option to gain ownership of the "Cheng Ho" according to his contract, Degener wrote for visas to visit New Caledonia (on the way to French Oceania, or Tahiti) and French Oceania.

The Governor of New Caledonia, where Degener and associates own no assets whatever, granted Degener a visum good for one year. The Governor of Tahiti, in whose office the former French Consul deBisschop had fraudulently registered the "Cheng Ho" under the French flag as his own property, refused Degener a visum. Incidentally, M. Gallois, Member of the Governor's Privy Council, at that time had chartered the "Cheng Ho" from deBisschop for interisland trading.

Degener, through protests to Mr. Farrington, Delegate to Congress from Hawaii, and to the French Ambassador, was later granted a visum to enter Tahiti for three months.

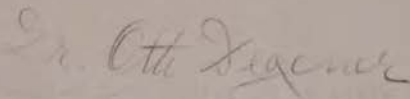
Degener proceeded from New York to Europe, engaging passage on the "Marseillaise" from Marseille, France, for Singapore, on the first lap to Tahiti to take possession of the "Cheng Ho" according to contract.

Degener cancelled passage when he received word June 11, 1952, that the Governor of Tahiti would permit him to take possession of the "Cheng Ho" only on condition:

1. Degener pay the \$15,000 according to option contract.
2. Degener give 51% of the shares or interest in the "Cheng Ho" to the Frenchman, Oscar Nordman, of Papeete, Tahiti. This man selected by the Governor spent two years in jail as result of an insurance swindle involving the sinking of a vessel.
3. The "Cheng Ho" remain under the French flag and under French registry.

In conclusion, I request that you assign a number to my claim for Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000) against the French Government because past and present French Government Officials are depriving me of possession of my vessel, the "Cheng Ho", contrary to contract recorded in Book 2156, pages 247-249, Registry of Conveyances for the Territory of Hawaii.

Yours respectfully,



Dr. Otto Degener

ADDRESS REPLY TO  
"THE ATTORNEY GENERAL"  
AND REFER TO  
DETAILS AND NUMBER

WEB:TFMcG

61-21-0

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

April 19, 1954

hpd

Dr. Otto Degener  
Mokuleia Beach  
Waiialua  
Oahu, Hawaii

Re: Undocumented Yacht CHENG HO

Dear Dr. Degener:

This is in reply to your registered letter of April 6, 1954, relative to a claim presented by you against the Government of France concerning the undocumented junk CHENG HO, which you state has been illegally registered under the French flag at Tahiti.

This Department has no arrangements for the assignment of numbers to claims against the French Government, nor is this Department authorized by law to present such claims.

It is suggested that you take up this matter with your attorneys. We return the enclosures herewith.

Yours very truly

WARREN E. BURGER  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Division

By

*Leavenworth Colby*  
Leavenworth Colby  
Chief, Admiralty & Shipping Section

Enclosure No. 40232

cc: United States Attorney  
Honolulu, Hawaii

*Infel. to Bidault, Schaff, Coty, A. Morice, Senator Milliken, J. Hughes*

Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii.  
April 9, 1954.  
A

Speaker Joseph W. Martin, Jr.,  
Senate Office Building,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

The present courageous stand against Communists in Indo-China is of course most commendable. But if the French Government in Indo-China has been as corrupt as it is in Tahiti, this fact perhaps is the reason why the communists have such a strong hold in that French colony. Dishonesty and misrule breed communistic ideas.

*A. J. Jones*  
I, an American citizen and tax payer, am rather disillusioned with the French and protest any more hand-outs to France until she at least treats us Americans with decency. She accepts billions from us with little feeling of gratitude and passes the buck from one bureaucrat to another when her corrupt French Officials in Tahiti swindle an American citizen of assets worth \$60,000. Due to our weak, uncritical hand-outs, have we not lost the respect of the French? They believe they can do anything to an American.

*Amplified*  
Just to show you how the French in Tahiti are, and perhaps elsewhere in the Colonies, I am taking the liberty of drawing your attention, and that of some of your colleagues, to the following high-handed swindle by past and present French Government Officials. Highest authorities in Paris know about it, but are complacent and do nothing. Why should they? They believe that we in our hysteria are willing to put up with anything!

In 1940-41 Mrs. Archbold of Washington, D. C., conducted her second scientific expedition into the South Seas. For this she used her palatial vessel, the Cheng Ho. This vessel, 98 ft long and 24 wide, was built of teak and camphor woods in Hong Kong in imitation of a famous Chinese junk used in the 15th Century in the salt trade. Unlike the original junk, this modern vessel had two 110 horse-power diesel engines and all modern conveniences. It is said to have cost \$100,000 to build.

Mrs. Archbold invited as guests for the expedition a Registered Trained Nurse and a number of scientists, one being the American botanist Otto Degener, author of several books. Instead of visiting many different islands of the Pacific touched on by the Expedition, Dr. Degener concentrated for eight months on the study of Fijian plants and native customs, largely at his own expense.

Degener not only discovered in Fiji many plants new to Science, including a new Family of Tree Buttercups now bearing his name. He also learned from some old men, who had been cannibals in their youth, ethnological facts. After several years of study, he and various specialists at the Smithsonian and elsewhere published the results of his researches and collecting. This was gratifying to Mrs. Archbold, sponsor of the Expedition and owner of the Cheng Ho.



U. S. Senate  
Committee on Finance

April 30, 1954

Copy

Dr. Otto Degener,  
Mokuleia Beach,  
Waialae, Oahu, Hawaii, T.H.

Dear Dr. Degener:

With further reference to your letter of April 10, 1954 relating to your claim against the Government of France, I have received a report dated April 27, 1954 on this matter from <sup>Shurtz</sup> B. Morton, Assistant Secretary, Department of State who states:

"Dr. Degener has been in communication with the Department and various members of the Congress concerning his claim. A brief summary of the facts as reported to the Department is enclosed for your information."

Although Dr. Degener contends that the controversy is not a private one, the unverified facts as reported to the Department and as understood by it indicate that the claim is a private one susceptible of adjudication in the French courts. The French Embassy at Washington in a note of June 15, 1953, also regards the controversy as a private one within the competence of the French judicial tribunals.

Until Dr. Degener has exhausted the judicial remedies open to him, there is no further action which the Department is in a position to take with respect to his claim."

Be assured that I appreciate having the benefit of your comments on this matter.

With very best regards, I am

Sincerely,

(Signed) Eugene D. Milliken

E D Milliken

Copy  
6/8/54



A. Archibald

3901 - (Re) MAY 3 1961

Washington, D.C.

MAY 3  
7:30 PM



## AIR LETTER

VIA AIR MAIL  
PAR AVION

Dr. Otto Degenerbach

Honolulu  
Hawaii  
2234 University  
Ave.

~~Altamonte Springs~~

MESSAGE MUST APPEAR ON INNER SIDE ONLY  
NO TAPE OR STICKER MAY BE ATTACHED

IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED, THIS LETTER  
WILL BE SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL

YOUR INSECT  
LETTER  
MAIL

FIRST FOLD

SECOND FOLD

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation

Dear Otto -

St. Francis Hospital -  
Miss Beale

Seeing you're taking May 2 - 1914  
your little trip across America - I've  
been in the Hospital here for a month  
with an appendix operation. Have  
to go home next week -

My beautiful ship is left  
rotting! Is there any further word  
about the Chung-Ho. I suppose by  
now she is well rotted in the  
harbour of Tahiti. What a  
complete waste.

Get me news any news of you -  
Yours sincerely  
Anne Beale

Dictated to G. Green

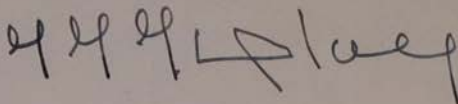
PARIS, LE 17 Mai 1954

M. Otto DEGENER  
Mokuleia Beach, Waialua  
OAHU Hawaï

Cher Monsieur,

J'ai bien reçu votre lettre du 10 avril et je vous adresse aujourd'hui la réponse officielle qui m'a été faite concernant votre affaire par Monsieur le Ministre de la France d'Outre Mer.

Il ne m'est pas possible de revenir à nouveau sur cette affaire et vous prie de croire, cher Monsieur, à l'assurance de mes sentiments cordiaux et dévoués.



J. J. JUGLAS

Député de Lot et Garonne  
Président de la Commission des  
Territoires d'Outre-mer

1 P. Jte



Waialua, Oahu, Hawaii, U. S. A.  
June 1, 1954.

Cofay

My dear Mr. Inglis:

I received your kind letter of 17 May 1954 with the copy of "Petition No. 62 du 22 juin 1952."

Petition No. 62 is not my petition or demand for \$60,000 damages, plus interest, from the French Government for allowing past and present French Government Officials mainly in Tahiti swindle me out of my vessel, the Cheng Ho. Petition No. 62 is what we Americans call a "smoke screen," an attempt to becloud the real issue by stating that the Cheng Ho controversy is one concerning "ordre commercial." As you well know, it is nothing of the kind.

Petition No. 62 shows us Americans that the swindlers in Tahiti have even had the power to dupe or bribe some member or members of the Assemblée Nationale to help them swindle me. That it is impossible to review Petition No. 62 is none of my concern. I repeat again and very plainly that I demand damages of \$60,000 from the French Government, with interest, for the loss of the Cheng Ho. To simplify matters, I suggest that you pass a bill in your Assemblée to reimburse me with this sum without further delay. I am then prepared to give you a quit claim, and consider the <sup>affaire</sup> Cheng Ho as settled. As France has not yet settled the Cheng Ho affaire with honor, I am continuing to draw the attention of members of my Congress to this picayune swindle of an American citizen by past and present French Government Officials in Tahiti. I am also drawing attention to the surprising fact that the Assemblée is evidently so complacent and weak in Tahiti that it has been unable



to solve this outrage though it knows about it for close to two years!

Have you ever wondered how many millions of dollars in grants from the United States have been lost to France and saved for the American taxpayer because members of Congress know about the Cheng Ho swindle? How many more millions will France in justice lose in American appropriations by permitting this corruption to continue? Are we citizens and taxpayers in America not justified in being more critical of France? American newspaper men are becoming more and more disillusioned. Were I unfriendly to France per se, and not merely to the dishonest clique in Ta hiti, I would distribute the Cheng Ho story to members of the American press. I have not done so. I have thus far been complaining about this French scandal to a few members of my Congress during the last few years. I ~~plan~~<sup>shall</sup> continue until I get just payment and the swindlers are punished.

How many more Congressmen, Mr. Ingles, do you want me to approach for help about France's picayune treatment of the Cheng Ho fiasco before I am ruined? I have lost my once magnificent vessel, now lost? Shall I write to all Senators and ~~all~~<sup>in Washington</sup> members of the House of Representatives? I am ready to do so. But now I must close, as I must write ~~the~~ Senator Russell and Representatives Mr. Cornack and Priest about this affair.

Yours sincerely,  
Dr. Otto Regener

Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii.  
June 8, 1954.

My dear Senator Millikin:

I thank you for your April 30 letter regarding the Cheng Ho affair. About two years ago I left Hawaii for Washington to complain to the State Department. Mr. Tallman at the French Desk there kindly listened to my case and then brought me to State Department attorney (whose name I do not recall) in the same building for further advice. After hearing my story, studying my option and several other papers, the attorney unofficially concluded that I had been cleverly swindled. It was his opinion that the best thing for me to do was to forget the entire matter and to avoid throwing good money after bad in fighting for my rights.

The advice apparently was wise and practical, considering the time and money I have spent up to now. But I am an American who resents being swindled by a bunch of foreigners. If I were to go for justice to a French Court, as cleverly desired by the French themselves, the corrupt officials would merely be "white washed" of all blame. I am therefore fighting for my rights from now on without advice of an attorney or the "help" of a French Court - feeling that popular opinion in Washington and Paris can only clear the mess.

Besides feeling I should fight for my rights, a fight not particularly important to any one except myself, I think it is my duty as a good, average American, to advertise the Cheng Ho scandal. This case in Tahiti may very well give a clue to the fundamental trouble in Indo-China: Similar to Tahiti, have not rampant corruption by Officials and a mean, undemocratic attitude by settlers toward the natives forced these capable but downtrodden creatures into Communism just to escape such French misrule and French mistreatment? If we are to win France's disgusted and disillusioned Colored Races from Communism, I fear it won't be by helping the French continue their hegemony. Such action will merely stamp us as imperialists and win for us the hatred of Asia and Africa.

The only way to win the teeming millions of misruled colonials over to democratic ways is 1.) to cut loose from the corrupt French as much as possible, and 2.) take over the areas not yet lost to the Communists, administering them the way we administered the Philippines after the Spanish-American War. Ruled by honest American democracy instead of corrupt French colonialism will then win more and more Asiatic peoples away from Communist ideologies. This would be especially successful when these peoples realize that such rule is but temporary. The Philippines would be an outstanding example to them of our aim. To cut loose from the French would be cheaper in the end, I believe, than wasting the tax payers' funds by turning them over to graft-ridden Officials. Can they be so much better than those in neighboring Tahiti? I think not.

Respectfully yours,

ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

16 Juin 1954

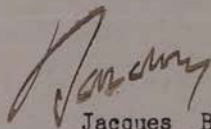
PARIS, LE

Monsieur,

Je vous accuse réception de votre lettre et des documents que vous m'avez transmis, en date du 8 Juin.

Je ne peux pas vous servir d'intermédiaire et vous conseille d'agir par la voie diplomatique officielle.

Veillez trouver, ici, Monsieur, l'expression de mes distingués sentiments.



Jacques RAPIDUX.

M. Piliard: Does this mean through our State Dept. or our Ambassador in Paris? Or what?

Dr Otto DEGENER

Sincerely,  
Otto Degener



## Keeps Foreign Ministry

Mendes-France Forms  
End-the-War Cabinet

PARIS, June 19 (UP) — Premier Pierre Mendes-France today formed an end-the-Indo-China-war cabinet from a wide range of political parties and kept the foreign ministry for himself.

Radical Socialist Edgar Faure kept his present post as minister of finance. The interior ministry went to Francois Mitterrand of the Leftist Democratic and Socialist Union of Resistance (UDSR).

A Gaullist, Gen. Pierre Koenig, was handed the crucial national defense ministry.

**THE 47-YEAR-OLD PREMIER** presented his cabinet to President Rene Coty in a traditional ceremony at the Elysee palace. Most of the members were energetic young men who for years have argued against the government's policies.

By keeping the foreign ministry portfolio for himself — as expected — Mendes-France will be able to negotiate personally in carrying out his promise of ending the fighting within a month or resigning. He is expected to go to Geneva soon to negotiate directly.

The premier's taking over the foreign ministry means that for one of the few times since the war France's foreign affairs will

not be in the hands of Georges Bidault or Robert Schuman who have followed a policy of cooperation with the United States.

Other members of the cabinet: French Union — Robert Buron (Popular Republican) (MRP); Justice — Emil Hughes (Radical Socialist); Agriculture — Roger Houdet (Independent); Veterans — Emmanuel Temple (Independent); Reconstruction — Maurice Lemaire (Socialist Republican); Industry — Maurice Bourges-Mau-  
noury (Radical); Public Works — Eugene Claudius-Petit (UDSR); Health — Louis Aujoulat (Overseas Independent); Moslem Affairs — Christian Fouchet (Socialist Republican).

Secretaries of State: Navy — Andre Francois Montell (MRP); Army — Jacques Chevalier (Independent); Air — Diomedes Catroux (SR).

Associated States — Guy La-Chambre (Ind.); Economic Affairs — Henri Caillavet (RS).

Premiership (two men): Andre Bettencourt (Ind.), Jean Miesse (Rad. Soc.).

Technical Instruction — Joseph Pierre Lanet (UDSR); Atomic Affairs — Henri Langchambon (Rad. Soc.); Overseas France — Roger Duveau (UDSR); Foreign Affairs — Guerin de Beaumont (Ind.); Agriculture — Jean Raffarin (peasant).



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

June 29, 1954

Dr. Otto Degener  
Mokuleia Beach  
Waialua, Oahu, Hawaii

Dear Dr. Degener:

Your letter and enclosures of June 17  
have been referred to this office by Representative  
John W. McCormack of Massachusetts.

Your correspondence will be brought to  
the attention of Mrs. Margaret C. Turner, Secretary  
to the late Delegate to Congress from Hawaii and  
acting head of this office upon her return from  
Honolulu.

Yours sincerely,

*Venita R. Clair*

(Miss) Venita R. Clair  
Member of Staff

Mokuleia Beach, Waiialua, Oahu,  
July 3, 1954.

Mr. Max Pilliard,  
Consular Agent for France,  
Honolulu.

My dear M. Pilliard:

I wish to draw your attention to the fact that I am writing members of the new Government in Paris and members of the U. S. Congress in Washington about the loss of my former vessel Cheng Ho by past and present French Government Officials in Tahiti.

The pertinent contract involved in my claim for damages was registered August 16, 1948, at the Registry of Conveyances for the Terr. of Hawaii, in Book 2156, pages 247 - 249, in Honolulu. It is of course available for your study in the building adjoining the Terr. Tax Office. You may save France from considerable criticism by Americans if you help solve the Cheng Ho scandal. Perhaps you can do so by acquainting some of the following members of the Assemblée Nationale about the truth of the contract and about the true character of one of your predecessors as Consular Agent in Hawaii, the deported Capt. Eric deBisschop:

Raphaël Babet  
Jacques Bardoux  
Henri Bergasse  
Edouard Bonnefous  
Jacques Chaban-Delmas  
Roger Duveau  
E. Frédéric-Dupont  
Guy Jarrosson  
André Le Troquer  
Pierre Mendès-France  
André Monteil  
Pierre Pflimlin  
Jean Raymond-Laurent  
Waldeck Rochet  
Rene Schmitt

André Bardon  
Maurice Bayron  
Georges Bidault  
Fernand Bouxom,  
Jean de Beaumont  
Edgar Faure  
Pierre Garet  
Jean-Jacques Juglas  
Charles Lussy  
François Mitterand  
Marcel Naegelen  
Christian Pineau  
Tony Révillon  
Joseph Schaff  
Mme Germaine Degrand

The above members of the Assemblée know much about the case and probably would appreciate your aiding them in bringing it to a speedy denouement.

As I reside in your consular area, I think you should know what is transpiring.

Yours very truly,

*Dr. Otto S. Gentry*

2707 Lamloa Rd, Hou.

*Agence Consulaire de France*

*à Honolulu*

*L'Agent Commercial*

P. O. Box 2900  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

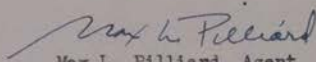
July 9, 1954

Dr. Otto Degener  
Mokuleia Beach  
Waialua, Hawaii

Dear Dr. Degener:

This will acknowledge your letter of  
July 3, 1954 which has been referred to the Consulate  
General de France in San Francisco.

Yours very truly



Max L. Filliard, Agent  
Consulaire de France  
à Honolulu

Waialua, Oahu, Hawaii, U. S. A.  
July 17, 1954.

My dear M. Bardoux:

Thank you for your letter of June 16, regarding the  
Cheng Ho fiasco in Tahiti.

As you see, I try to use, as you suggest, "la voie diplomatique officielle." As soon as local newspapers mention that a Member of my Congress, such as Representative John McCormack of Massachusetts, is particularly interested in American-French relations, I mail him the Cheng Ho story. If the present French Government lacks the interest to settle an injustice caused by French Government Officials against an American citizen, I feel confident some of these American statesmen will eventually request action. It is more delicate, however, for them to give France an opportunity to "clean house" herself without official prompting from America. It is my guess that some of them will become increasingly surprised and disillusioned if the new Government postpones sweeping her house clean of corruption in French Oceania month after month. For the Assemblée Nationale to pay me my bill of \$60,000, plus interest, for the loss of my vessel would be the least troublesome method of settling the entire Affaire Cheng Ho.

Senator Richard B. Russell and Representative J. Percy Priest are presently showing special interest in France. I shall write them next week.

Yours sincerely,



Réf. 23/7/13

PARIS, LE 23 juillet 1954

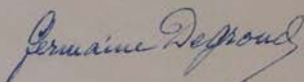
Monsieur Otto DEGENER  
Waialua OOHU HAWAII  
U.S.A.

Monsieur,

J'accuse réception de votre lettre et des pièces jointes que je vous retourne sous ce pli, après en avoir pris connaissance.

Il ne m'est malheureusement pas possible de m'occuper personnellement de cette affaire extrêmement compliquée, dont je m'entretiendrai cependant avec mon collègue, M. Jean MINJOZ.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.



Germaine DEGROND  
Député de Seine-et-Oise

*Agence Consulaire de France  
à Honolulu*

*L'Agent Commercial*

PO Box 2900

~~RECEIVED~~  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

3-60

23 July 1954

Dr. Otto Degner  
Mokuleia Beach  
Mokuleia, Oahu, Hawaii

Dear Dr. Degner:

With regard to your note of July 20, it would appear that Mr. Bordeaux suggests that your claim is a matter to be adjusted with the French Government through the United States State Department.

Very truly yours,

*Max L. Pilliard*

Max L. Pilliard  
Agent Consulaire de France  
à Honolulu

mlp-sd

LE SECRÉTAIRE D'ÉTAT  
AUX  
POSTES, TÉLÉGRAPHES ET TÉLÉPHONES

PARIS, le 30 JUIL 1954  
20, AVENUE DE SÉGUR, PARIS (VII<sup>e</sup>)  
INV 78-60

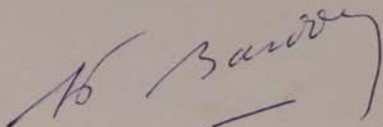
171 / MB

Monsieur,

J'ai bien reçu votre lettre que j'ai lue  
avec la plus grande attention.

Croyez que je ne manquerai pas d'en tenir  
le plus grand compte et j'espère que bientôt  
satisfaction vous sera donnée.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l'assurance de  
mes sentiments les meilleurs.



Monsieur Otto DEGENER  
Waialua, Oahu  
HAWAII, USA

André BARDON

stere  
la  
France d'Outre-Mer

Le Ministre  
2915/MAB/CP

Paris, le 14 Aout 1954

Monsieur le Ministre et Cher Collège,

Vous avez bien voulu me communiquer, le 16 Juillet, le texte d'une protestation formulée contre les autorités françaises par M. Otto DEGENER, citoyen américain, résidant actuellement aux îles HAVAI.

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître que l'intéressé adresse depuis plus de deux ans des correspondances analogues à de nombreuses personnalités politiques françaises, aux membres du Parlement, aux Ministres de la Justice, des affaires Étrangères et à moi-même.

Son affaire, qu'il voudrait placer sur le plan parlementaire, voire international, peut être résumée comme suit:

M. DEGENER, botaniste américain, a acquis à Honolulu, en 1946, une jonque de 155 tonneaux dénommée "Cheng Ho". Dans le but d'affecter ce bateau à un service commercial entre Tahiti et Honolulu, une société à forme américaine, au capital de 15.000 dollars, divisé en 151 parts de 100 dollars, fut constituée dans cette dernière ville sous le nom de "Cheng Ho Trading and Exploring Co", composée de M. DEGENER, d'un ancien Consul Français, M. de BISSCHOP, et de huit autres personnes. M. de BISSCHOP en fut nommé Président et se vit attribuer 67 parts. M. DEGENER rendit le bateau à la société moyennant un dollar, se réservant une option de rachat à faire valoir, en juillet 1952, pour le prix de 15.000 dollars.

En Novembre 1947, M. de BISSCHOP sollicitait auprès du Consul de France à San Francisco, la franchisation de la jonque "Cheng Ho". Celle-ci fut effectivement "francisée" à la suite d'une erreur du service des Douanes de Tahiti et, immatriculée à Papeete au nom de M. de BISSCHOP, et non à celui de la Société.

Cette francisation, l'immatriculation à son nom et la mauvaise gestion du bateau furent vivement reprochées à de BISSCHOP par DEGENER et ses co-associés et la jonque fut saisie à Honolulu.

Après un procès assez embrouillé devant la Cour de cette ville, de BISSCHOP réussit à rentrer en possession du bateau et à le ramener à Tahiti en 1949.

DEGENER et quelques autres américains ont ultérieurement engagé contre lui des poursuites pour obtenir le remboursement d'anciennes avances. Pendant ce temps, le "Cheng Ho", transformé par de BISSCHOP, transporta pendant quelques mois du coprah en Océanie puis fut affrété par un armateur de Papeete.

D'après des renseignements dignes de foi, cette jonque serait dans un état "lamentable" et ne pourrait prendre la mer qu'après une révision générale.

Actuellement M. DEGENER réclame du Gouvernement français 65.000 dollars à titre d'indemnité pour immatriculation "frauduleuse" de ce bateau et pour les pertes que lui aurait fait subir M. de BISSCHOP.

Il convient de noter que l'erreur commise par la Douane de Tahiti, en ce qui concerne la francisation de cette jonque, fut réparée aussitôt qu'elle a été connue.

Il s'agit, en résumé, d'une affaire qui intéresse uniquement des particuliers et qui relève de la compétence des tribunaux de Papeete à qui, ainsi qu'il en a déjà été informé, il appartient à M. DEGENER de s'adresser.



is celui-ci s'y refuse, contestant l'impartialité des tribunaux français.

Je ne puis, en conséquence, que vous suggérer de conseiller à votre correspondant de se conformer à la procédure judiciaire normale qui lui a été indiquée.

J'ajoute qu'un visa d'entrée en Océanie a été accordé à M. DEBES. Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Ministre et Cher Collège, l'assurance de mes sentiments les meilleurs.

(In script et signed) Bien à vous

Robert Buron

Monsieur M.E. NADELEN  
Ancien Ministre  
Député des Basses Alpes  
Assemblée Nationale  
Palais Bourbon

PARIS

Recevoir, Legation de son Excellence et sachant que le content d'expédition de la dette de 33,000 francs, valait son prix. D'autres actionnaires vendirent les leurs au prix d'intérêt à part, les autres sans valeur, après que le Comptable les avait remboursés de leur valeur originale de parité de 100 francs à 100 francs. D'ailleurs, l'ensemble des billets d'avis de 33,000 francs fut en fait remis à l'Etat à l'Assemblée Nationale et son assemblée fut ainsi parvenue à retrouver à Tahiti avec le Comptable, les sommes qui, avec le même de déportation qu'on avait indiquées.

Pendant les années suivantes rien ne se passa, mais les intérêts pour la dette de 33,000 francs furent payés. D'ailleurs, ne se souvenant dans les années suivantes avec le Comptable, il ne finit par abandonner sa femme et sa fille à Honolulu. Pour lever la dette française de M. D'ailleurs, le notaire de D'ailleurs à Honolulu paye 1100 francs au notaire Henri Hoppert à Tahiti, pour traduire les actes concernant le procès, de l'anglais en français. Le notaire français devait représenter les Français dans le Comptable. Il épousa Hoppert, mais ne continua pas à travailler. D'ailleurs, il ne voulait pas de quitter Honolulu pour retourner à Tahiti. Il donna surveillance au notaire qu'on payait des dettes, appartenant à lui-même et ses lois et d'ailleurs la restitution de sa femme et sa fille, selon le content, en juillet 1900.

Pour revenir à Tahiti c'est la plus convenable d'aller via La Nouvelle Orléans, pour être intéressé. C'est pourquoi D'ailleurs écrivit au Comptable français à son français, pour obtenir un visa pour la Nouvelle Orléans et un autre pour Tahiti. Le dernier était appelé l'Assemblée Nationale. Le 11 décembre 1901, il vint la semaine suivante de Conseil. "Cher Monsieur, D'ailleurs à votre lettre de novembre 20, veuillez m'envoyer à l'Assemblée Nationale pour mes affaires. L'Assemblée Française et la Nouvelle Orléans. D'ailleurs, m'envoyez plus, en France et les relations avec la photographie. Les relations seront alors établies par le Comptable pour être établies. Le Comptable américain doit être établi avec les lois.

# RECEIPT FOR REGISTERED ARTICLE No. 397

Fee paid 55 40 (Date) 19

Class postage paid 35 Return receipt fee

Declared value, \$ Letters Special delivery fee

Surcharge paid, \$ Restricted delivery (Accepting employee will place inside in proper space)

in person

or order

Fee paid



From Dr. Otto Dresser (Sender) Honolulu, Hawaii (Post office and State)  
 Addressed to L. H. Harnack, Jr. (Addressee) Honolulu, Hawaii (Post office and State)  
 (Street and number) (Post office and State)

GPO 49-15-12065-5

Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
Sept. 2, 1954.

L'Honorable M. M. E. Naegelen,  
Assemblée Nationale,  
Paris, France.

Monsieur: Remerciez d'étudier la lettre de M. Buron, Ministre de la France  
d'Outre-Mer.

J'ai peur Monsieur le Ministre Buron est naïf s'il croit que le Cheng Ho  
fut effectivement francisé à la suite d'une erreur du service des Dou-  
anes de Tahiti et, immatriculé à Papeete au nom de M. deBisschop." Le tri-  
bunal U.S. Federal (Juge McLaughlin) et le tribunal Territorial (Juge  
Pence) enseignant cette "in the Office of the Governor of Tahiti." Ces  
américains ne se sont pas démenagés par politiques locales de Tahiti.

Est il le bon emissaire de service des Douanes ou le Gouverneur qui  
me refut un visa 1 mars 1952 pour aller Tahiti pour engagé un avocat pour  
conformer à la procédure judiciaire normale en Tahiti?

Après je va au Europe avec beaucoup perte d'argent et de temps pour  
voyage Nov. 1952 via Marseille et Ceylon à Tahiti est il le bon emissaire  
de la Douane ou tout les Cabinet du Gouverneur (et probablement le Gouver-  
neur aussi) qui demandent que je remit 51% des pertes d'une nouvelle Cheng  
Ho Cie., au homme de Papeete qui etait avant deux ans dans la prison?

Tout le monde depuis longtemps connaisant en Tahiti que Eric deBisschop  
est un forcat en France et un persona non grata aux Etats-Unis. L'équipage  
du Cheng Ho, en Tahiti huit mois, parlent beaucoup de la histoire mauvaise  
de cette canaille. Tout le monde en Tahiti connaisant Nordman et son dif-  
ficulté avec la loi française. Pourquoi, donc, les fonctionnaires français  
en Tahiti fraternisaient avec ces déportés et attempaient sabotage et  
ploquaient comme poulet un citoyen américain? Est il parce  
que les contribuables payaient leurs fortunes à la France avec largesse?  
Pourquoi les fonctionnaires en Tahiti ont confiance avec tels hommes?  
Combien d'argent et amablement de la Cheng Ho obtenaient ils peut être  
pour sabotage mon depart pour Tahiti autrefois et pour me derobaient du  
Cheng Ho?

N'est pas ma faut que les fonctionnaires en Tahiti sont naïfs ou sont  
corrompus - c'est la faut du Gouvernement Français et je demand, s'il vous  
plait, que l'Assemblée me payet pour mes pertes. Votre Agent Consulaire ici  
est M. Max Pilliard, 2707 Laniloa Road, Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A.

Les fonctionnaires en Washington, lirent mon lettre et mon article,  
comme vous, de l'Affaire Cheng Ho parce que je les raport comme la France  
trait un citoyen américain. Croyaient ils tous les excuses, peut être pi-  
cayunes et naïves, comme M. Buron ou croyaient que le Gouvernement en Paris  
n'est pas très honorables et dans les Colonies n'est pas trop honnête.

\$63,000, avec intérêts, n'est pas toutes mes pertes comme vous connaît-  
voyage de Hawaii au Europe et retour pour rien parceque le sabotage par  
les fonctionnaires Français en Tahiti. C'est mon project écrire, comme E.  
Zola, aux tous les fonctionnaires en Paris et Washington jusqu'à l'Affaire  
Cheng Ho est terminée justement.

Sincerement,

*Dr. Otto Degener*



Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
Sept. 4, 1954.

L'Honorable M. Robert Montillot,  
Assemblée Nationale,  
Paris, France.

Monsieur:

I have not yet received payment of \$60,000, plus interest, on my claim for the loss of my former \$75,000 vessel Cheng Ho due to intrigue by past and present French Government Officials, chiefly in Tahiti. May I request that you aid the present Government in passing a bill in the Assemblée authorizing payment, and punishment of the swindlers? It would end once and for all time this shameful and picaresque affair, hardly worthy of a great and proud Nation.

Petition No. 62 du juin 1952 granted me a visum to visit Tahiti, for which I am grateful. According to the printed Seance du 20 janvier 1953, however, M. Minjoz and M. Pillulin never mentioned corruption in the Cheng Ho affair by Government Officials. Why was this hidden from Members of the Assemblée? Thus, curiously enough, Washington knows more about misrule and corruption in French Oceania than does Paris! *Sept. 23, 1954, & gave this*

*Galley, Governor, Jean F. Toly, official permission*  
Because mention of this outrageous swindle in your Colony was evaded by Petition No. 62, I herewith enclose copies of an article and of a letter about the Cheng Ho scandal, translated into French, for your study. The originals, in English, I am continuing to mail to Members of my Congress particularly interested in French affairs so that they too can learn how an American citizen and taxpayer is being treated. To how many more Members of my Congress and to your Assemblée I must still write depends on how soon France does the honorable thing and makes just restitution.

I believe Congressmen in Washington now find my early warning true that this long-continued Cheng Ho swindle in Tahiti is similar to the type of corruption long practiced by many officials in neighboring Indo-China, causing the past debacle there. When French nationals act thus toward other French nationals, it is too bad but hardly of vital concern to the American taxpayer. But when the Assemblée lacks the will and power to protect an American citizen from corrupt French Officials and depots, should Washington any longer trust the Assemblée with our hard-earned money taken from us by taxes? The Cheng Ho case, I believe, is bringing more and more Americans in Washington to ponder this question.

I request again that you urge the present French Government to pay the Cheng Ho claim and punish the swindlers as proof of the will and power of Paris to clean up corruption in her Colonies. The past irresponsible inaction is costing France some of America's confidence.

Upon payment <sup>for</sup> of the Cheng Ho <sup>loss</sup> claim I am ready to sign a quit claim for your Consular Agent M. Max Pilliard, 2707 Laniloa Road, Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A. or for any other agent you designate, and consider the matter ended.

Sincerely,

*This makes  
none of us suspect  
corruption even at  
higher echelons.*



RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

SECRÉTARIAT D'ÉTAT A LA MARINE

PARIS, le 13 Septembre 1954

LE SECRÉTAIRE D'ÉTAT

LC/ML

S.P. N° 2180



Monsieur,

En réponse à votre lettre datée du 30 Août, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître qu'il vous appartient de saisir votre Consul du litige que vous avez évoqué.

L'autorité compétente américaine, après examen du bien-fondé de vos prétentions, saisira le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères en France. L'autorité judiciaire française pourra alors connaître de votre affaire et faire valoir vos droits comme vous le désirez.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma parfaite considération.

Monsieur Otto DEGENER  
Maialua, Oahu  
Hawaï. U.S.A.

## New Governor Of Tahiti Pays Brief Call Here

The new French governor of Tahiti, Jean Francois Toby, is scheduled to leave for the South Seas possession today after an overnight stopover in Honolulu.

He is accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Jean Edmund Paumelle. Mr. Paumelle is overseas administrator for the Republic of France.

GOVERNOR TOBY replaced Jean Petitbon as administrator of Tahiti.

The newly-appointed governor general of New Caledonia, Rene Hoffherr, is scheduled to arrive Saturday in Honolulu from San Francisco. He will arrive aboard a Pan American Airways flight at 6 p.m. and leave the same day for his new post, accompanied by his assistant, James L'Allemande.

GOVERNOR TOBY was greeted on his arrival yesterday by officials of South Pacific Air Line, which plans to operate flying boat service between Honolulu and Tahiti.



Pan American

GOVERNOR TOBY

Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
Sept. 23, 1954.

His Excellency,  
M. Le Gouverneur Jean F. Toby,  
Papeete, Tahiti.

Dear Sir:

I am greatly pleased that both Their Excellencies, Governors Graziani and Petitbon, have left Tahiti and that you have been appointed to your present post.

I herewith enclose an article and a letter explaining the Cheng Ho swindle. In the English translation I am mailing them to Members of my Congress, particularly interested in France, asking their kind help. In the French translation I am mailing them to various Members of the Assemblée Nationale, requesting their kind aid. From the enclosures you will better understand what has transpired in Tahiti and be able to verify for yourself my statements. Some of the Tahitian members of the crew, I believe now residing in or about Papeete, are Edouard Toomaru, Roger Johnston, Theodore Tairui Tu, Tapu a Maheha and Manuel Teitioroo. They were on the voyage from Papeete to Honolulu on the Cheng Ho under deBisschop and can likewise give you first-hand information.

Because of the machinations of past and present Government Officials in Tahiti regarding my former teak and camphorwood vessel Cheng Ho, I am respectfully demanding \$60,000 damages, plus interest, from the French Government. This matter, I imagine, must be settled in Paris or, if there is too much delay, through Washington.

There are two other matters, minor ones, of interest to me and the American citizens I represent. These can be settled directly in Papeete:

1. Eric deBisschop, ex-Consul of France in Hawaii, owes me (and the men I represent) a debt exceeding \$3,000, plus interest. All documents regarding this debt are in the hands of M. Henri Hoppenstedt or of M. Oscar Nordman, both of Papeete. For self-evident reasons I no longer wish M. Hoppenstedt to represent me in the collection of this debt but am eager to have some reliable and honest person or agency collect it for me. The person or agency is to receive as fee one-third of the sum collected. May I request that Your Excellency appoint the proper agent to bring this matter to a successful conclusion?
2. Henri Hoppenstedt of Papeete was engaged to collect the above-mentioned debt by me. He did nothing about it, yet induced us, under what we in America would call false pretenses, to pay him a fee of \$150. I demand that he return this sum, plus proper interest, to me.

I am convinced that when the average French Government Official, like the American one, learns the truth about the AFFAIRE CHENG HO, he will insist that I be treated with justice. I wish therefore to facilitate your study of the case and your sending a correct report to the Assemblée. I hence enclose herewith letters authorizing you to collect all documents

and other pertinent written matter about the Cheng Ho, the \$3,000 debt and the unearned \$150 fee, in Tahiti. Such material is in the hands of M. Henri Hoppenstedt and M. Oscar Nordman, both of Papeete. Neither of these men are to represent me henceforth in any way.

You may wish to have some of these documents photostated for future reference. Please mail me all this material, registered, within a month or six weeks as officials here may also wish to study them.

Hoping that you will finally bring the AFFAIRE CHENG HO, which has cost the French Government so much in time and money, to a successful close, I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

*L. C. Geyser*



Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
Sept. 23, 1954.

M. Oscar Nordman,  
Papeete, Tahiti.

Dear Oscar:

This is to certify that you are to surrender to His Excellency,  
Monsieur Jean Francois Toby, Governor of Tahiti, all documents and letters  
referring to the Cheng Ho case received from me or through my agency.

With a change of Government I believe the Cheng Ho affair will finally  
end with justice.

Aloha, *Otto*

Dr. Otto Degener

*Dr. Otto Degener*

Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
Sept. 23, 1954.

M. Henri Hoppenstedt,  
Papeete, Tahiti.

Dear M. Hoppenstedt:

This is to certify that you are to surrender to His Excellency, Monsieur Jean Francois Toby, Governor of Tahiti, all documents and letters referring to the Cheng Ho case received from me or through my agency.

I also request that you return to me the \$150, with interest, which you requested from me and the men I represent for certain legal work for which you were expressly engaged. This work you failed to accomplish.

Yours very truly,

*Dr. Otto Sengner*

death of Wilma Montesi (TIME, Feb. 15 *et seq.*). "My conscience is completely at ease," Scelba told the Chamber. "The government has nothing to fear and nothing to hide. . . I wish the whole country would at last realize it." The Chamber stood behind him on the vote, 264 to 264, one of the solidest victories he has recorded in eight months as Premier.

## FRANCE

### Leaks

"The affair surpasses anything that even the most fertile imagination could conceive," cried Paris' *L'Intransigeant*. "The truth is somewhere . . . but one begins to wonder if it will ever see the light of day."

All France seethed with indignant fascination last week as the arrest of one Communist-hunting policeman mushroomed into a major scandal involving high government servants, top state secrets and espionage. While Premier Pierre Mendès-France labored across the channel at the London Conference, a dizzying succession of arrests, disclosures and confessions revealed that vital secrets of France's National Defense Committee had methodically leaked to the Communists. There were suggestions that the secrets had been going to other foreign powers as well. The permanent secretary-general of the Defense Committee was indicted for negligence. Two of his highest-ranking aides were arrested as spies, along with a Red or ex-Red who apparently worked as a double or even triple agent. France's chief Communist hunter was accused of being a Communist himself. Supporters of Mendès-France even implied darkly that the affair was an anti-Mendes plot supported by the U.S.

**Raised Asking Price.** One central fact that arose above the confusion was that high state secrets from the private councils of the Defense Committee—composed of the Premier, the President and a handful of France's top Cabinet ministers and generals—had fallen into Communist hands. The first of three disclosed incidents was last May, when Joseph Laniel was Premier. The second involved minutes of the Defense Committee meeting of June 28 (two weeks after Mendès-France had become Premier), at which the committee discussed the details of France's near-hopeless military plight in Indo-China. The Geneva Conference was then in progress, and the Communists' familiarity with the stark facts about France's position presumably allowed them to raise their asking price for a settlement. Mendès-France was at Geneva when he first heard of the leaks, by way of Police Inspector Jean Dides, a member of the anti-Red squad who had been demoted after Mendès' regime took over. Dides kept at his ferreting among the Reds anyway (TIME, Oct. 4), and one day in June he told an old friend, who had joined Mendès-France's Cabinet, that the defense minutes had been transmitted outside the committee. Dides refused to tell



ANDRÉ BARANÈS  
On a bright red bicycle.

the minister where or how he learned of the leaks.

Alerted to the danger, Mendès-France ordered his young, ambitious Interior Minister, François Mitterrand, to "turn the house upside down" and find the leak. But only three days after the Sept. 10 meeting, Dides told his Cabinet friend, Minister for Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs Christian Fouchet, that he had a complete verbatim transcript of the meeting. A few days later, Dides was arrested, and the transcribed minutes were found in his briefcase.

**Blunt Hint.** Before a military court of inquiry, Dides at first stuck to his refusal to reveal his source. But after a second grilling, he revealed that he got the papers from a shady little Tunisian named André Baranès, a fellow-traveling journalist. As Dides described him, Baranès played the doubly devious game of passing government secrets to the Reds and Red secrets to Dides. Where did Baranès get the documents he handed over to Dides? "A policeman," said Dides, "doesn't ask his agents where they get things." Baranès, however, could not be found.

**"Forgive Me."** As more than a week passed without an arrest, press and politicians of the right wing cried for action and implied that Mendès-France and his ministers were powerless or afraid to act. If the Dides affair was not to blossom into a full-scale threat to the regime's existence, Mitterrand and his police needed more facts and arrests. One morning last week, the police rocked the country with two arrests. Jailed as the men who leaked from the Defense Committee were René Turpin, 42, and Roger Labrusse, 40, both ardent leftists and both high-ranking officers on the staff of Jean Mons, the permanent secretary-general of the De-

fense Committee. At the Interior Ministry, the two confessed to turning over the secret minutes to Baranès.

Secretary-General Jean Mons, not able to believe in the guilt of two such trusted employees, was brought to the ministry to hear their confessions. "Forgive me!" cried fat, thin-mouthed René Turpin, who had made a career by attaching himself to Mons and traveling upward with him. "This is an affair of crypto-Communism," said the police. "They knew perfectly well where their information was going. They wanted to give the opposition information for their campaign to stop the war in Indo-China and ban the atom bomb."

The arrests took some of the heat off the government, and the government in turn turned more heat on the case. It promptly suspended Jean Mons from his secretary-general's post, then indicted him for imperiling the nation's security and "laxity" in the handling of state secrets. Then police caught the scent of André Baranès: Jean Dides, after withholding the information for two days, reported that he was hiding out in a country house south of Paris. The hiding place, oddly enough, was provided not by the Communists but by a right-wing deputy of the National Assembly. The police caught up with Baranès as he was pedaling for the Swiss border on a bright red bicycle. They bundled him into a car and hurried him back to Paris. After 15 hours of uninterrupted grilling by four secret service men, Baranès admitted receiving the committee documents from Labrusse and turning them over to the Communists. He also admitted turning the documents as well as certain Communist information back to Dides in order to convince the policemen that he was an honest double-dealer—but, Baranès explained, everything he gave to Dides was first doctored by the Reds to conceal or mislead.

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA

### Beetles & Banishment

It was back in 1949, as every good Communist knows, that those wicked Americans dropped the first Colorado beetles on Czechoslovakia's burgeoning potato fields. The diligent, hardheaded commissars of Horazdovice district were not panicked by the sly American trick. At the first notice of potato bugs in their district, they sent for a young local plant pathologist named Cestmír Nováček and ordered him to liquidate the nasty, crawling little capitalists. For five years everything went fine, and the "invasion" took little toll of Horazdovice's potatoes. This year, however, the potato harvest in the Pilsen area was a bust. The fact that it could all be blamed on the weather did not satisfy the Communists. Again the commissars sent for Pathologist Nováček.

Last week, in a Pilsen court, Cestmír solemnly told his story: instead of destroying the beetles, he had made pets of them. "I intended," he said, "to trace their biological development, but when the larvae



became beetles, I got the idea of performing an antistate act. I stopped in a slope under Vlkovec Hill, opened my box and threw my beetles into a potato field. I hated the people's democratic regime because the working class had nationalized my sandstone pits."

Sentence: Twenty years in prison and banishment from the profession of plant pathology "forever."

## GREAT BRITAIN

### Genius in the Gutter

At the same time that Anthony Eden made Britain's commitment toward German sovereignty and rearmament, Britain's most reckless statesman made a last-ditch effort to exploit the fears and emotions aroused by that issue. Aneurin Bevan did not conceal his purpose: to wrest



ANEURIN BEVAN  
Labor's love lost?

the Labor Party's leadership from the temperate hands of Clement Attlee.

His arena was the seaside town of Scarborough, where delegates sharing among them the proxies for more than 6,000,000 members of the Labor Party gathered for their annual conference. Nye Bevan's followers were loud and vociferous; only two weeks before, at the Trades Union Congress, they had come close to carrying the day on the German issue. At Scarborough, they expected to be stronger, felt they had Clem Attlee hanging by a thread.

On the platform, Attlee glided into the battle calmly, like a confident parson addressing his flock. The party executive had approved German rearmament only with "serious misgivings," said he, but "I know from experience that you do not get a response from Russia by conciliation." Behind him, Bevan glowered shagily. Up hopped little, beady-eyed R. W. Casasola, head of the foundry workers, to make the Bevanites' move—a resolution to reverse

the Labor executive's position and condemn any sort of German rearmament. Shouted Casasola: "Give the Germans arms, and you are on the sure road to World War III." As speaker after speaker echoed the cry, Bevan beamed and nodded his leonine head in approval. But he could not speak—as a member of the executive, he was barred from speaking against an executive-approved motion.

"Shame, Shame!" Then young (33) Laborite M. P. Desmond Donnelly rose dramatically. Donnelly had been a faithful Bevanite and opponent of German arms. But he had just returned from a trip through Poland, East Germany and Czechoslovakia, Donnelly told the delegates. What he had seen convinced him, "sadly but definitely," that German rearmament was necessary. Said Donnelly: "If every plan for controlled German rearmament is rejected, we shall find ourselves with no controls—but with the arms." Bevanites began to boo. Shouting above the swelling uproar, Donnelly suddenly pointed an accusing finger at Bevan and cried: "Some people will bear a heavy responsibility before history for their folly." Bevan sat flushed and angry.

"Shame, shame!" bellowed outraged Bevanites. "Withdraw! Let Nye reply!" Burly Arthur Deakin, chief of the Transport and General Workers Union and Bevan's frequent antagonist, lumbered to his feet to demand that Donnelly be allowed to continue. Bevan's pent-up anger and frustration burst. "Shut up," he hissed savagely at Deakin. "Shut up yourself!" yelled Deakin. "You big bully!" cried Bevan. "You're afraid of him," snapped Deakin. "Bully yourself!"—accompanying this last thrust by what one newspaper called "a gesture not usually used in polite society."

As the polling began, a tense silence fell over the great hall. When Party Secretary Morgan Phillips received the paper bearing the result, his hand shook. By a vote of 3,270,000 to 3,022,000, the national executive's resolution supporting German rearmament had carried. The margin of 248,000 votes was even closer than it looked: only three days before, the executives of the woodworkers union had met, decided to reverse their anti-rearmament stand at the Trades Union Congress, and to switch their 129,000 votes to Attlee's side. Without that switch, the Bevan forces would have won by 10,000 votes and the official policy of the party turned to neutralism.

**Gift from the Gods.** It was not by any means Scarborough's only blow at the clamorous ambitions of Nye Bevan. He was soundly licked for party treasurer by his arch rival Hugh Gaitskill and, since he had deliberately refused to stand for sure re-election to the party executive, this left him without an official position in the party leadership for the first time in ten years.

Nye told his followers what he intended to do with his new freedom. "I know now that the right kind of political leader for the Labor Party is a dedicated calculat-

ing machine who must not in any way permit himself to be swayed by indignation," said he bitterly. "Power inside the movement no longer lies inside the executive. I am going outside to meet it where it does lie." It was a flat declaration of war on the party's leadership. By implication, Nye also declared war on the trade-union leaders, who, he hinted, did not represent their members' real wishes. Those leaders reacted promptly. "Mr. Bevan is a remarkable man, but his judgment is so bad as to bring his genius to the gutter," snapped one unionist. "Apparently in his disappointment, Mr. Bevan has lost his head," said Arthur Deakin.

Bevan had suffered a humiliating and probably a final defeat in his dramatic drive to capture the Labor Party from the moderates. "The strange alliance of Bevanites, pacifists, nonconformists, free-



CLEMENT ATTLEE  
Redeemed woodworkers gained.

elections-and-reunification-firsters, anti-Germans, carpetbaggers and bandwagon-jumpers and lunatic-fringers was shattered [at Scarborough] and became once more disparate and unhomogeneous," said the *Manchester Guardian*. "This issue was for [Bevan] a gift from the gods, and he failed."

But no one had heard the last of Nye. He was free now, and eager to thump his tub at mill gates, dockyards, and pit heads, trying to woo the workers from their leaders. "Bevan may be dead," said one Laborite, "but he won't lie down."

## GERMANY

### The River Flows West

When Dr. Otto John, chief of West Germany's security organization, defected to the Communists, the news made black headlines all over the free world. Last week the State Department totted up some figures which were a reminder that



PRÉSIDENCE  
DE LA  
RÉPUBLIQUE  
LE SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL

Paris, le 25 Octobre 1954,

Monsieur,

Monsieur le Président de la République  
a bien reçu votre communication du 26 Août 1954.

Malgré les termes parfois désobligeants  
que contient votre lettre, il m'a prié de transmettre  
votre requête à M. le Ministre de la France d'Outre-Mer  
seul qualifié pour apprécier la suite qu'il convient de  
lui donner.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de  
mes sentiments distingués.

*Ch. Merveilleux du Vignaux*

Ch. MERVEILLEUX du VIGNAUX

Dr. Otto DEGENER  
WAIALUA, OAHU  
Hawaï ( Etats-Unis )

Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
Jan. 8, 1955.

L'Honorable M. Gerard Deliaune,  
Assemblée Nationale,  
Paris, France.

Monsieur:

I have not yet received payment of \$60,000, plus interest, on my claim for the loss of my former \$75,000 vessel Cheng Ho due to intrigue by past and present French Government Officials, chiefly in Tahiti. May I request that you aid the present Government in passing a bill in the Assemblée authorizing payment, and punishment of the swindlers? It would end once and for all time this shameful and pleayune affair, hardly worthy of a great and proud Nation.

Petition No. 62 du juin 1952 granted me a visum to visit Tahiti, for which I am grateful. According to the printed Seance du 20 janvier 1953, however, M. Minjoz and M. Pflimlin never mentioned corruption in the Cheng Ho affair by Government Officials. Why was this hidden from Members of the Assemblée? Thus, curiously enough, Washington knows more about misrule and corruption in French Oceania than does Paris! <sup>Sept. 23, 1954</sup> ~~Sept. 23, 1954~~, I gave His Excellency, Gouverneur Jean F. Toby, officials' permission <sup>to collect this</sup> to get all documents regarding the Cheng Ho embroglio from "avocat" Henri Hoppenstedt and affreteur Oscar Nordman in Tahiti to aid the investigation and to facilitate settlement.

Because mention of this outrageous swindle in your Colony was evaded by Petition No. 62, I herewith enclose copies of an article and of a letter about the Cheng Ho scandal, translated into French, for your study. The originals, in English, I am continuing to mail to Members of my Congress particularly interested in French affairs so that they too can learn how an American citizen and taxpayer is being treated. ~~They likewise should aid me.~~ To how many more Members of my Congress and to your Assemblée I must still write depends on how soon France does the honorable thing and makes just restitution.

When French nationals act thus toward other French nationals, it is too bad but hardly of vital concern to the American taxpayer. But when the Assemblée lacks the will and power to protect an American citizen from corrupt French Officials and déportés, should Washington any longer entrust the Assemblée with our hard-earned money taken from us by taxes? ~~The Cheng Ho case, I believe, is bringing more and more Americans in Washington to ponder this question.~~

I request again that you urge the present French Government to pay the Cheng Ho claim and punish the swindlers as proof of the will and power of Paris to clean up corruption in her remaining Colonies. The past irresponsible inaction is costing France some of America's confidence.

Upon payment for the Cheng Ho loss I am ready to sign a quit claim for your Consular Agent M. Max Pilliard, 2707 Laniloa Road, Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A., or for any other agent you designate, and report to the State Department that the matter is ended.

Sincerely,

The "Cheung Ho," formerly in U.S.  
Navy and thereafter property of  
Dr. Otto Degener, being practically  
stolen by past & present French  
Government Officials and deposited at  
Tahiti

Honolulu Advertiser 1/9/55  
**The French**  
**Time Has Come to Realize They Are Odd Race,**  
**Asserts Disillusioned Columnist**

By ROBERT C. RUARK

Oh, the French they are a funny race, and it seems to me that the time has come to realize it, no matter if they did do us the favor of recognizing Germany in the NATO business. They have hung us on the hook twice in the past six months, willing to throw us all away just to make their own bargain, and you begin not to care very much whether Mendes-France drinks milk or doesn't.

The sad—actually, the saddest—thing about France is the selfishness that has made the country undependable. It was the earthly heaven of a great many people of other nations, and the French selfishness has finally turned and bitten itself in a vital spot. Made-moiselle from Armentieres was the secret love of all the World War I Americans. All Germans love France, really love it, as a shrine. It was the home of all tourists when they left home. La Belle France—how beautiful the name, how lovely the idea.



RUARK

Except the French don't fight very well any more, even with their feet. They claw and scratch at one another, and bargain with their friends, right up to the last bitter moment, so you can't count on them as allies unless you pay a grand prix in anxiety.

Sure, they come in finally because they have to come in. But they wear out the welcome with the bargaining. They also wear out the trust, and I do not particularly care how wide is the smile of Mendes-France, in addition to the milk he drinks.

Another sad thing about the French is that they don't like anybody. Not even themselves. They don't trust anybody. They don't invite trust by anybody. And they aren't tough enough to make this individualism stick. France is a nation of shopkeepers, each out to make the extra franc, and damn public relations with the rest of the shopkeepers on the street.

The French are technically with us now against the threat of Russia. But in the French parliament, there are a hundred deputies who pay the equivalent of \$5,000 each a year to the Communist party. The cooperation with Russia is today exactly the same as was the cooperation with the Nazis.

The threat of perpetual treasonous indecision is so strong that if there were a war with Russia tomorrow the last best hope of our side would be to discount France as an ally, because you couldn't trust the nation from the Hotel Crillon to the Place de la Concorde, which is certainly not very far.

As an ally it is worthless, because it is too busy fighting inside itself. It is too busy not knowing how to make up its own mind. It can throw out a government in a minute. It can make a Vichy if it has a new Petain, or a new Moscow if some Russian suggests it. It's the country of great expediency, and you don't even have to prove the statement.

One of these days France is going to have to take some stern steps inside, and make up her mind, in addition to worrying about Christian Dior and the tourist trade. One of these days France is going to have to leave the neckline or the hemline for something slightly more important, such as self-determination. All because France now has no real friends and no real enemies. She is trying to play harlot with everybody, and watching the cash register, while someone, soon, comes along and steals the house.

The moonlight on the Arc de Triomphe is a lovely thing. But one of these days somebody is going to change the name—that is, if the arch is still standing.



RODRIGUE BERTOL  
165 BROADWAY  
NEW YORK 6, N.Y.

*he meant  
1956  
O.D.*

January 17th 1955.

Dr. Otto Degener.  
Waialua.  
Gahu.  
Hawai.

Dear Sir:

I have examined carefully all the documents which you forwarded me. They consist chiefly in more or less polite "Fins de non recevoir" from the French authorities. Owing to the conditions in la Nouvelle Calédonie, and in France, I am sorry to state that we have no chance of success by starting an action in Tahiti; it would require large expenses and the deposit of a bond, and I do not see how any recovery should be effectuated.

With best personal regards.

*Rodrigue Bertol*  
Rodrigue Bertol,

hg:PB

1955  
**Pflimlin Begins  
Organizing New  
French Cabinet**

PARIS, Feb. 12 (UP)—Pierre Pflimlin began forming a cabinet today, his chances of winning national assembly approval Monday or Tuesday greatly enhanced by a series of backroom conferences with political leaders.

Pflimlin called on President Rene Coty at the Elysee Palace shortly after midnight and informed him officially he would try to solve France's crisis by presenting a full cabinet list to the divided assembly early next week.

HE RECEIVED his greatest boost last night when the Radical Socialist party of Pierre Mendes-France, who was ousted a week ago as premier, voted by a narrow margin to support him. He had conferred with Mendes-France during the day.

The Socialists, as expected, said they would not join his government but they did not threaten to vote against him. They also left the door open to future support if he follows Mendes-France's policies in North Africa.

He had the support of his own party, the Catholic Popular Republicans, and probably also the support of Antoine Pinay's independents, although it was the Popular Republicans who torpedoed Pinay's efforts to form a government earlier this week.

THE FACT Pflimlin promised a "complete" cabinet list—including the state secretaries—magnified his task. There would be about 15 secretaries and 15 cabinet members to select during the weekend of backroom bargaining.

The 48-year-old Pflimlin is of the same tough, younger, political generation of Mendes-France. If he should fail to form France's 21st post-war government, it was believed Coty would ask Christian Pineau, president of the Socialist parliamentary group, to try.

A2

HONOLULU ADVERTISER  
Saturday, Feb. 12, 1955.

## **Pflimlin To Form Cabinet Over Weekend**

PARIS, Saturday, Feb. 12 (UP)—Popular Republican Pierre Pflimlin announced early today he has definitely accepted the task of trying to form a new French government and will ask for national assembly approval early next week.

THE PREMIER-designate decided to go ahead after the powerful Radical Socialist party announced it would support him in his bid to succeed Pierre Mendes-France as France's 21st postwar premier.

Pflimlin told newsmen of his decision shortly after midnight as he left the Elysee presidential palace following a conference with President Rene Coty.

"I told the president I definitely accept the task of forming a new government," the 48-year-old premier designate said.

I HOPE TO ask for the approval of the national assembly Monday or Tuesday but when I come before the assembly I will come with a complete list of cabinet choices."

Sources close to Pflimlin reported he already had decided on four members of his cabinet—Edgar Faure, Gen. Pierre Koenig, Radical Socialist ex-premier Rene Mayer and independent Antoine Pinay, who tried and failed to form a cabinet earlier this week.

THESE SOURCES said Faure, a Radical Socialist, probably would be named foreign minister, a post he held during the last days of the Mendes-France administration.

Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U. S. A.  
Feb. 20, 1955.

Mr. C. Douglas Dillon,  
United States Embassy,  
Paris, France.

Dear Sir:

The two enclosed typed articles (and their French translations) will explain how I am being swindled out of my 98 ft. long junk-yacht "Cheng Ho," chiefly by past and present French Government Officials in Tahiti.

Pertinent papers regarding various phases of this swindle were mailed a few years ago by my attorneys Ingman & Ingman (Young Bldg., Honolulu, Hawaii) to the French attorney Henri Hoppenstedt, Papeete, Tahiti. These, with a fee of \$150, were to help him fight for my rights and for those of several other residents of Hawaii whom I represent. Attorney Hoppenstedt did nothing but pocket our fee. Upon hearing that a new administrator had been appointed for Tahiti, namely His Excellency Governor Jean Francois Toby, I authorized the latter Sept. 29, 1954 to take possession of all my "Cheng Ho" documents, if he can, in the hands of attorney Hoppenstedt and of the ship chandler Mr. Oscar Nordman, Papeete, Tahiti. This should enable the Governor, if need be, to get a clearer picture of the situation.

Tough some important documents regarding the case have been lost to me, sufficient originals and copies remain in my possession to prove my allegations. The most important document is, of course, the contract of July 7, 1947 which gave me the right to regain my \$75,000 vessel just five years later, namely on July 7, 1952. A copy of this, with a few other papers, I here enclose.

As attorneys to protect my rights in the "Cheng Ho" case I in the past retained Ingman & Ingman of Honolulu, the French attorney Rodrigue Bertol (165 Broadway, New York City), and, unfortunately, the Papeete lawyer Hoppenstedt who is evidently over-friendly with the swindler deBisschop and his cronies in Tahiti.

The injustices remaining in the "Cheng Ho" case are not due to the machinations of private individuals as such. They are due to the interference of "unethical" or corrupt French Government Officials chiefly in and about Tahiti. I see no reason why I should engage an attorney to right a grievance which the Paris Government itself should handle.

In conclusion, I request that you kindly draw the attention of the proper officials to my grievance and to the resulting claim against the French Government of approximately \$60,000 damages.

Copies of the two French articles, namely "The Good Ship Cheng Ho" and my letter dated August 18, 1953, I am continuing to mail to members of the Assemblée Nationale to show how shamefully an American citizen is being treated by their officials.

Very sincerely yours,

*E. C. de la Cour*

Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U. S. A.  
Feb. 20, 1955.

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United States Embassy,  
Paris, France.

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Very sincerely yours,

*Ed. C. H. L. L.*



Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U. S. A. Feb. 20, 1955.

His Excellency,  
M. Le Gouverneur Jean F. Toby,  
Papeete, Tahiti.

Dear Sir:

I have taken the liberty to write His Excellency, Ambassador C. Douglas Dillon, United States Embassy, Paris, France, that I authorized you in my letter of September 23, 1954 to study and have copied for your own use in Papeet or for that of your Government in Paris, all my papers regarding the "Cheng Ho" case in the hands of M. Henri Hoppenstedt and M. Oscar Nordman.

m If you have completed your study of these documents, please mail them to me.

Thanking you for your kind favor in advance, I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

*Dr. Otto Spegner*

PAR AVION

ÉTABLISSEMENTS FRANÇAIS  
DE L'Océanie

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE  
LIBERTÉ-ÉGALITÉ-FRATERNITÉ

Affaires  
Administratives

N° 98 /AA

PAPEETE. LE

-2 MARS 1955

19

LE GOUVERNEUR DES ÉTABLISSEMENTS FRANÇAIS  
DE L'Océanie, OFFICIER DE LA LÉGION D'HONNEUR.

à Monsieur Otto DEGENER  
Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu HAWAII

Objet: Affaire Jonque chinoise " CHENG HO ".

Monsieur,

En réponse à votre lettre du 20 Février 1955, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître que le Chef du Territoire n'a pas qualité pour intervenir dans le règlement des litiges d'ordre privé.

Je ne puis que vous conseiller de choisir un mandataire qui portera cette affaire devant la juridiction compétente du Territoire des Etablissements français de l'Océanie.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.

Le Gouverneur  
par délégué

LE SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL

*Y. Gayon*

Y. GAYON

Mokuleia Beach, Wai'alua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
March 8, 1955.

His Excellency,  
The French Ambassador,  
French Embassy,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

I wish to draw your attention to the fact that your predecessor in Washington has not settled the "Cheng Ho" swindle perpetrated in Tahiti by past and present French Government Officials against me, an American citizen.

This swindle deals with a breach of contract and the despoiling of my former \$75,000 teak and camphor woods junk-yacht "Cheng Ho." The story, in some detail, is given in the accompanying article entitled "The Good Ship Cheng Ho." This article I have sent to various members of my Congress and, in the French translation, to members of your Assemblée Nationale.

In answer to my complaint, your predecessor wrote the State Department July 15, 1953 (of which letter you doubtless have a copy of the original in French in your files) to advise me of his views. This letter was read by Members of Congress who gave me the opportunity to state my version of the controversy. This refutation, dated Aug. 18, 1953, to his arguments I mailed to him, with copies to numerous members of my Congress and of your Assemblée. His Excellency evidently never answered, which silence is an eloquent argument that my statements are correct.

I am naturally eager that you see that my claim for \$60,000, plus interest, be settled by your Government without still further delay. To expedite matters, I am therefore taking the liberty of writing also to Hon. M. Faure and members of the Assemblée about it. I am hoping the new Government will not act piecemeal like the preceding one but will "cut red tape" and appropriate the correct sum for payment of damages to me, an American citizen. Your Government can then at leisure punish or fine her own officials in the Government Service in Tahiti to reimburse herself from the loot her nationals have amassed at my expense.

I am not mailing you a copy of the option agreement of July 7, 1947 registered in Liber 2156 pages 247 - 294 in Honolulu as you should still have the copy I mailed your office previously. Instead, I am mailing the copy to the Honorable M. Faure. Mr. C. Douglas Dillon has still another copy.

Very truly yours,

*Edith Dillon*

Mokulua Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
March 10, 1955.

M. Le Secrétaire Général Gayon,  
Office du Gouverneur,  
Papeete, Tahiti.

Dear Monsieur Gayon:

Thank you for your kind letter. It arrived with the same post by which I had written His Excellency, your new Ambassador in Washington, about the Cheng Ho scandal and that I had given His Excellency Governor Toby Sept. 23, 1954 the right to study my documents in the hands of Hoppenstedt and Nordman. These are then to be returned to me.

By the time you receive this letter, I believe His Excellency M. Faure will have about the same information from me. I am sure he will understand that the Governor, surrounded in Tahiti by past and present officials involved in the Cheng Ho swindle, has a particularly difficult task to perform and that it will take considerable courage to bring it to a successful denouement. You will find that few except the responsible Ministre de la France d'Outre Mer believe the myth that the Cheng Ho case simply involves a private citizen of America and a private citizen of France. To assume a laissez-faire attitude, I fear, would merely make the present administration a party to the injustices perpetrated by the previous one in Tahiti. I am suggesting that M. Faure receive a confidential progress report of the case up-to-date from Papeete as Governor Toby has had an unusual opportunity to look into the matter since last September.

I am continuing to spend my days writing the next book of my Flora of Hawaii and writing similar letters about the Cheng Ho swindle to Members of your Assemblée and my Congress. I was so glad to receive the interesting book about "Tahiti et les Iles Voisines" from Prof. René Papy, now in Africa! It is a refreshing work. We have similar interests and have corresponded quite a bit about botanical matters.

Sincerely,

*W. H. Sargent*



Hon. Adv.  
3/26/55



United Air Lines

**YACHT OWNER HERE**—Mr. and Mrs. Omer Darr arrived Thursday by United Air Lines from their home in Los Angeles. Mr. Darr recently purchased the luxury yacht Vega, which will begin regular service between Honolulu and Tahiti this summer. He is here in connection with the new service. Mrs. Darr is the former Harriett Abreu, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Antone Abreu, 204 Makee Rd. It is her first visit here in several years. They are at the Edgewater hotel.

Mokulua Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii.  
March 26, 1955.

Mr. Oscar Darr,  
Edgewater Hotel,  
Honolulu, Hawaii.

Dear Mr. Darr:

I read in today's paper about your purchase of the Vega,  
and your plan to begin regular service between Honolulu and Tahiti.

I owned outright the 95 ft. junk-yacht Cheng Ho and still own the option to purchase this vessel for \$15,000 in the same condition in which I turned her over to the "Cheng Ho Trading and Exploring Company" in 1947.

By July 7, 1955 I had filled all requirements to take possession of the vessel. I, however, refused to do so when the Company, with the aid of present French Government Officials, would not abide by the conditions of the agreement, here enclosed. For example, most of the luxurious cabins of teak and mahogany had been ripped out and required replacement, etc., etc. I was to turn over 51% of the stock to Oscar Nordman of Tahiti who refused to sign a business contract with me until I had turned over the stock to him - rather funny business to which I don't bite. Nordman, by the way, had ship difficulties in his youth, so I naturally wanted everything properly done in a business way.

In short, I refused to accept the vessel under such conditions and on asking \$60,000 damages, the sum remaining after the \$15,000 option price is subtracted from the appraised valuation of \$75,000 at the time I turned the vessel over to the Company.

It occurred to me that the Cheng Ho might fit into your scheme of things bringing passengers and freight to Papeete from the outlying islands, connecting with sailings of the "Vega" from Tahiti to Hon.

Naturally, Schindler, Gallois and possibly Nordman want to keep the vessel and not surrender it to me as it brings in a fine profit in hauling coconuts etc. I demand my vessel according 1) to the agreement of July 1947, or 2) the vessel plus damages for their vandalism in tearing out the teak and mahogany cabins or 3) they can keep the vessel but I want my \$60,000 damages. You, even in Tahiti, may be able to make some deal, with the aid of His Excellency, Governor Toby. Quite a few Members of the Assemblée Nationale, I am pretty sure, would back this up. We two might get together to our mutual advantage.

The Cheng Ho is outstanding: Length overall 95 ft. Length Water Line 85 ft. Beam extreme 24 ft. Draft 10 ft 6 inches. Twin Screw Diesel 110 Horsepower each, Grove (at least when I turned her over to Co.) Engine Lanchester about 185 tons, Net Tonnage about 100 tons. As mentioned before it is entirely of teak and some mahogany.

Sincerely,



JRW/mf

THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
American Embassy

Paris, March 28, 1955.

Dr. Otto Degener,  
Mokuleia Beach, Waiialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii,  
United States of America.

Sir:

The Embassy acknowledges receipt of your letter of February 20, 1955, addressed to Ambassador Dillon.

A careful study of the documents you submitted has been made and it appears that no legal action has been taken by you to regain possession of your yacht "Cheng Ho" since you last communicated with the State Department in 1953.

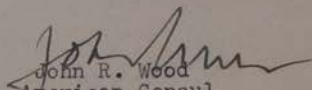
You state that you feel that satisfaction cannot be obtained through French courts as you question their impartiality and demand an indemnification to the extent of \$63,000 directly from the French Government.

The official French position appears to be that inasmuch as the litigation is a private matter between you and De Bisschop, no protests concerning the lack of objectivity of the French courts can be accepted owing to the fact that the case has not been brought before the competent judicial tribunals in French Oceania. Under the circumstances, as reported to the Embassy through your various communications and otherwise, this office is not in a position to intervene at this stage of the case. If there are new developments which would justify such

action

action, the Embassy will be glad to bring them to the attention of the appropriate French authorities. The documents and photographs enclosed with your letter are returned herewith.

Very truly yours,

  
John R. Wood  
American Consul

Enclosures as stated.



RECEIPT FOR  
REGISTERED ARTICLE NO.

918

Date

4/8/50

Value \$

2.50

Special delivery fee

¢

Fee \$

✓

Return receipt fee

¢

Surcharge \$

1.00

Restricted delivery fee

¢

Postage \$

1.00

☐ Airmail

From

Dr. Otto

General

Addressed to

Th. Galles

Papeete, Tahiti

(Address)

(Accepting employee)



GPO c5-15-12556-8

RECEIPT NO.

D

Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
April 8, 1955.

Dear M. Gallois:

Enclosed is a copy of my option to purchase my former vessel "Cheng Ho" from the Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company in the same condition in which I turned her over to the company. At that time she was valued at U.S. \$75,000.

The option price was \$ 15,000 and this I offered for the vessel (as per contract dated July 7, 1947) in July 1952. I met all demands of the agreement. The company demanded, however, that I retain the Cheng Ho under the French flag and turn over 51% shares or parts to M. Oscar Nordman of Tahiti. This, as you see from the enclosed AGREEMENT constitutes a BREACH OF CONTRACT.

Are you prepared to become my partner in the ownership of the Cheng Ho and to bring suit against Capt. deBisschop and the Company and officials involved for breach of contract and for wrongfully depriving me of the "Cheng Ho" since July 7, 1952? I have not had time to see an attorney but I imagine the damages demanded from deBisschop could be 1,500,000 French Colonial Francs.

The French Government, as you probably know, wants me to go to the Tahiti Court to adjust my differences with deBisschop et al. It is my belief that the French Government herself is to blame. According to a letter from His Excellency the French Ambassador in Washington, dated July 15, 1953, to the U.S. State Department in Washington "the only channel open to Mr. Degener to assert them (return of Cheng Ho according to agreement) has always been and still is to apply to the competent jurisdiction of French Oceania."

I heard of your recent difficulty with deBisschop in the Papeete Court.

I was at the Hotel Maiesherbes three years ago while you were in Paris. I tried to contact you but did not get your address from the Nordman daughters when my sister and I visited them at a banker's home on a hill outside of Paris. You were ill at the time, I was told.

Yours sincerely,

*Ernst Otto Degener*

2431 W. Coast Highway,  
April 10, 1955  
Newport Beach, Calif.

Dr. Otto Degener

Dear Sir;

I would not be interested in taking on  
any more responsibilities at the present time.  
The veg. is keeping me busy more than full  
time. Thank you for the offer just the same.

Sincerely,

Omer Larr

Omer Larr

Waialua, Oahu.  
April 13, 1955.

Dear Dave:

I just learned that the Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company (in other words mostly deBisschop and his mother-in-law ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Mrs. Constable) won a lawsuit against a Mr. Gallois in Papeete Court of about 1,200,000 French Colonial francs. Translated into American cash I believe that comes to several hundred thousand dollars. Please phone foreign exchange desk at bank for correct figure.

DeBisschop seems to maintain that all this cash belongs to him. This is not so as some non-admitting resident of Tahiti maintains and, perhaps to get back at deB., informs us in Hawaii. This cash must be divided among all shareholders. Your brother Win - is he now in Hon.? - owns the old block of Archer shares, and shares belong to such men as Emilio Ordonez, Perhaps Roy Peiler, Malayo, Ha old English and I don't know who else. I have none or perhaps just a couple as for working on the Cheng Ho, I was paid cash (this advanced to me by myself) and one share per month.

I want my Vheng Ho documents back some day soon, so I hope you will make use of them without delay to help your brother et al., to the cash that is coming to them. Of course, he may be obliged to go to France to spend his cash there - to get it into the U.S., is a problem in itself.

In addition to the above, deBo, as you know, owes me and Ordonez, Peiler, etc., etc., about \$3,500 on an I.O.U. This is the time to collect that sum for us.

I want my Cheng Ho papers back soon as I expect to meet a resident of Tahiti next month. whb is passing through.

I am dashing the note off to you wikiwiki as I want the laundryman to bring it to the postoffice for me when he comes.

Aloha,

*CH*



Waialua, Oahu.  
April 13, 1955.

Dear Dave:

I just learned that the Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company (in other words mostly deBisschop and his mother-in-law ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Mrs. Constable) won a lawsuit against a Mr. Gallois in Papeete Court of about 1,200,000 French Colonial francs. Translated into American cash I believe that comes to several hundred thousand dollars. Please phone foreign exchange desk at bank for correct figure.

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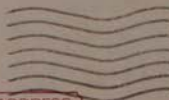
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I want my Cheng Ho papers back soon as I expect to meet a resident of Tahiti next month. whb is passing through.

I am dashing the note off to you wikiwiki as I want the laundryman to bring it to the postoffice for me when he comes.

Aloha,

CHH



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Dr. & Mrs. C. Hardy,  
P. O. Box 540, 57  
Kagawa, Oahu.  
Oakton, Virginia

Waialua, Oahu.  
April 14, 1955.  
Dear Dr. & Mrs. Haugby:  
P.S. ~~WAAWA~~

Donald S. Marshall  
% Union Steamship  
Lines, Tahiti

What beautiful weather  
we are having today & so  
we must go to H.P.  
Aloha, O.S. & S. S. S.

Waialua, Oahu.  
April 14, 1955.  
Dear Dr. & Mrs. Hardy:

PLEASE MAIL ME  
the name & address  
of your friend who  
travels between  
Tahiti and the States  
so I can mail him  
the C. H. contract &  
other relevant papers.  
On his way to Tahiti,  
he might then wish  
to chat with me here  
on Oahu about  
details. What a lovely weather  
we are having today & to  
we must go to H. for  
aloha, O. & S. Rogers



Mokuleia Beach, Waialua,  
Oahu, Hawaii.  
April 25, 1955.

My dear Mr. Wood:

Thank you for your letter of March 28 regarding the Cheng Ho swindle.

My local attorneys, Ingman & Ingman, were unfortunate in selecting the Tahitian attorney Henri Hoppenstedt to represent me and associates in Tahiti. If you have an annotated list of present attorneys practicing in Tahiti, may I have a copy?

Is there an international court that could handle the Cheng Ho controversy in view of the fact that I am an American citizen and deBisschop is a French one?

A few weeks ago, the naturalized American citizen George Archer, Tahitian by birth and former shareholder in the Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Co., informed me that his relative, a member of the Papeete Legislature, will be passing through Honolulu next month on his way home from Paris. We are planning to meet with him.

Mr. Archer is no longer connected with the company, having surrendered all his shares to pay attorney fees. He is rather bitter.

Incidentally, Mr. Archer told me that the Oscar Nordman to whom I am required by the French Government to give 51% shares or rights in a new Cheng Ho company (not required by my option contract at all!) spent some time as inmate of the penal settlement on Devil's Island. He and an associate are supposed to have sunk a vessel, filled with cargo, to get the insurance. The vessel was sunk in such shallow water that divers could haul up drums and cases of cargo. Upon opening them they were found to contain sand.

Our Consular Agent has an office in Papeete supplied, I believe, through the kindness of Mr. Nordman.

Mr. Archer likewise informs me that the former French Consul deBisschop is now a Government Official in French Oceania - I believe the Austral Islands.

Yours sincerely,



JRW/mf

THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
American Embassy

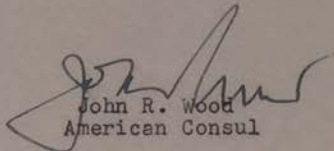
Paris, May 4, 1955.

Dr. Otto Degener,  
Mokuleia Beach Waialua,  
Oahu,  
Hawaii.

Sir:

The question which you raise in your letter of April 25, 1955 relating to the submission of your legal difficulties with a French citizen to an international court might be taken up by you with the Department of State in Washington since the Embassy is not in a position to advise you on this point.

Very truly yours,



John R. Wood  
American Consul

RECEIPT FOR  
REGISTERED ARTICLE NO.

1078

Date

5/19/55

Value \$

Special delivery fee

\$

Fee \$

Return receipt fee

\$

Surcharge \$

Restricted delivery fee

\$

Postage \$

☒ Airmail

From

Addressed to

(Address)

(Address)

(Accepting employee)



GPO c9-16-12665-8

Mokuleia Beach, Waialua, Oahu,  
Hawaii, U. S. A.  
May 18, 1955.

Mr. Donald S. Marshall,  
Union Steamship Lines,  
Papeete, Tahiti.

Dear Mr. Marshall:

Our mutual friend, Mr. Craighill Handy, advised me to write to you because of your shipping interests.

I owned outright the 95 ft., junk-yacht Cheng Ho and still own the option to purchase this vessel for \$15,000 in the same condition in which I turned her over to the "Cheng Ho Trading and Exploring Company" in 1947.

By July 7, 1952 I had filled all requirements to take possession of the vessel. I, however, refused to do so when the Company, with the aid of past and present French Government Officials, would not abide by the conditions of the agreement, here enclosed. For example, most of the luxurious cabins of teak and camphorwoods had been ripped out and required replacement, etc., etc. I was to turn over 51% of the stock to Oscar Nordman of Tahiti who refused to sign a business contract with me until I had turned over the stock to him - rather funny business methods to which I cannot agree. Nordman, by the way, had ship difficulties in his youth, a fact not known to me clearly until later. My wish to have everything done in proper business fashion turned out to be particularly necessary.

In short, I refused to accept the vessel under such outrageous conditions and have been asking from the French Government \$60,000 damages, the sum remaining after the \$15,000 option price is subtracted from the appraised valuation of \$75,000 at the time I turned the vessel over to the Company. Since French Officials (excluding His Excellency, the present Governor, of course) are largely responsible for this imbroglio, I feel it is up to the French Government to untangle this mess and make good the damages I have sustained. On the recent advice of our State Department in Washington and our Ambassador in Paris, I am to resort to the French Court for justice. If I fail to get it, the State Department will interest themselves in my case.

Naturally, deBisschop, possibly Gallois and Nordman, want to keep the vessel and not surrender it to me as it gives or at least gave them a handy profit in hauling copra and other cargo. I demand my vessel according 1) to the agreement of July 1947, or 2) the vessel plus damages for their vandalism in tearing out the cabins etc. or 3) they can keep the vessel. But I want my \$60,000 damages, plus interest.

Dr. Handy suggested that you with your knowledge of shipping, particularly in and about Tahiti, might wish to join me in settling this mess to our mutual advantage. I am sure our State Department and numerous Members of our Congress and of the Assemblée Nationale would be pleased and back us. I believe also His Excellency Governor Toby would be on our side.

I am eager to get your reaction and answer any questions you have regarding this case.

Sincerely,



Waialua, Oahu, Hawaii, U. S. A.  
May 20, 1955.

Copy

Dear M. Bertol:

You may remember you helped me with the Chey Ho swindle in Tahiti two or three years ago. Since that time, I have become married and am now home again in Hawaii.

I just learned from a part-Tahitian-part-Frenchman, M. George Archer, now resident in Honolulu, that the swindler Capt. de Bisschop (or rather the Chey Ho Trading & Exploring Company in which he or his relatives own most stock) won a judgement against a M. Gallois, former charterer of the Chey Ho in Tahiti, of 1,200,000 French Colonial Francs. Whether he got payment or not I of course don't know.

I, as you know, own the option to purchase the Chey Ho for \$15,000 and meet all requirements to take <sup>the vessel</sup> over. The Capt. de Bisschop, or whatever you called it, and should be sued for breach of contract. He is an official <sup>agent</sup> of the French Government and various local officials in Tahiti illegally helped him in the swindle. I thought





Waialua, Oahu,  
Hawaii, U. S. A.,  
May 30, 1955.

Dear M. Bertol:

You may remember you helped me with the Cheug Ho swindle in Tahiti two or three years ago. Since that time, I have become married and am now home again in Hawaii.

I just learned from a part-Tahitian part-Frenchman, M. George Archer now resident in Honolulu, that the swindler Capt. de Bisschoff (or rather the Cheug Ho Trading & Exploring Company in which he or his relatives own most stock) won a judgement against a M. Gallois, former charterer of the Cheug Ho in Tahiti, of 1,200,000 French Colonial francs. Whether he got payment or not I of course don't know.

I, as you know, own the option to purchase the Cheug Ho for \$15,000 and met all requirements to take the vessel over. The Capt. defaulted, or whatever you call it, and should be sued for breach of contract. He is an official now of the French Government and various local officials in Tahiti illegally helped him in the swindle. I thought therefore (and still do) that the Government should be responsible for my loss. The State Department, however, advises me to take my case to Court which the

Tahiti government also desires. I should  
think there, I, an American citizen, have  
little chance of winning unless the honest  
officials, due to notariety of the case, in-  
sist nothing unjust is done in Tahiti.

In addition to the Chep Ho swindle  
de Bisschop owes me (and others I represent)  
a debt of about \$3,000. This should be  
collected.

Can you take over these matters on a  
contingency basis, that is, one-third of the  
cash for you as fee saved from the "wreckage?"  
You had contacted M. Rebecqer in Tahiti  
and the fee with him would have amounted  
to more than one-third which induced  
me to drop the matter. As mentioned before,  
am now married and therefore the contingency  
basis is the only one I can manage without  
Mrs. Degener and I starving to death.

Do let me have your reaction soon.

Mrs. Degener and I are quite well and  
enjoying our botanical work. I hope the  
past few years you likewise have been  
well in spite of the horrible New York  
Climate

Sincerely,  
Dr. Otto Degener



RODRIGUE BERTOL  
165 BROADWAY  
NEW YORK 6, N.Y.

June 2, 1955

Dear Dr. Degener,

It was a very pleasant surprise to receive your letter. I remember our agreeable association of a few years ago, and I recall your charming book, which would deserve a larger circulation, for the present time it is very scarce and a delight for book collectors. It deserves really to be more known by the general public.

I do not remember a great deal about the case, but I warn you first, that since 1945, the reputation of the French government and of her <sup>former</sup> colonies has been poor. I know that French Tahiti, had some trouble during the war, and is now very badly governed; you know that the French authorities are successful in nothing: losing the French possessions! I report only a power of attorney, which was received in Tahiti, but I cannot remember much about the case. Would you kindly send me a short résumé of the case, and I would be glad to help you, in the best of my ability. Congratulations for your marriage, and my best wishes

*Ambassade de France  
aux Etats-Unis*

*Washington, D.C.* June 22, 1955

My dear Mr. DEGENER:

On March 8th, you were kind enough to write me  
a letter regarding your claim against Mr. Eric de BISSCHOP,  
a French citizen living in TAHITI.

After consulting again with the competent authorities  
in Paris I cannot but confirm the terms of the note which the  
Embassy sent on June 15th, 1955 to the Department of State and  
which the latter has brought to your knowledge.

Truly yours,

*Maurice Couve de Murville*

Maurice COUVE DE MURVILLE  
French Ambassador  
to the United States.

Mr. Otto DEGENER  
Waialua  
OAHU  
Hawaii.

Waialua, Oahu, Hawaii.  
July 11, 1955.

Mr. Rodrigue Bertol,  
165 Broadway,  
New York 6, New York.

Dear Mr. Bertol:

This is to verify my letter of May 30, 1955, to which I received a very belated answer from you due to confusion in address.

I own the option to purchase the \$75,000 Cheng Ho according to the agreement of which I enclose a photostat copy herewith. The Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Co., of which Eric deBisschop is apparently leading shareowner, with aid of other French Officials in and about Tahiti, refuses to honor this agreement. I consequently wish you to sue whoever is responsible for the loss of my vessel. Since I am a retired teacher and author of books that have little popular demand, it is impossible for me to spend a dollar on the case. I am therefore eager for you to legally fight for my rights strictly on a contingency bases, you receiving one third and I two thirds of any cash or other kind of settlement.

The one bundle of papers contains the contract and letters explaining the history of the imbroglio. I think you should read this first. The other bundle shows you the reactions of various government officials in Paris and Washington. I believe they will TRY to have the rather weak and perhaps dishonest Tahitian Government see that they treat us honestly - to do otherwise would invite too much criticism.

In addition to the above important project, there is the comparatively trivial one of collecting an unpaid debt of about \$3,000. My Honolulu lawyer Ingman has certain papers concerning it, and presently he is on vacation. What bothers me mainly, however, is that the most important papers about the Cheng Ho option contract and the \$3,000 debt are in the hands of the dishonest lawyer (who was engaged by us) Henri Hoppenstedt or Oscar Nordman (imprisoned years ago for sinking a vessel to get the cargo insurance), both residents of Tahiti.

After having allowed the Cheng Ho to deteriorate, there is danger that deBisschop et al., will try to palm off this wreckage, with all kinds of claims and damage suits hanging to it, on us instead of paying us damages in cash.

Write me your reactions and advice. I have lots and lots of letters about this case but they, I believe, would not help us any, merely be confusing

Aloha,

*Otto Degener*

Waialua, Oahu, Hawaii.  
July 11, 1955.

Mr. Rodrigue Bertol,  
165 Broadway,  
New York 6, New York.

Dear Mr. Bertol:

This is to verify my letter of May 30, 1955, to which I received a very belated answer from you due to confusion in address.

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Aloha,

Otto Legendre



Trustees

STEPHEN WHEATLAND  
President  
RALPH LAWSON  
Vice President  
RICHARD HALL WISWALL  
Secretary  
LEVERETT SALTONSTALL  
STEPHEN PHILLIPS  
WALTER MUTH WHITEHILL  
LOUISE DU PONT CROWNSHIELD  
AUGUSTUS PEABODY LORENG  
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Honorary Curator of Japanese Ethnology  
GEORGE LAMBERTON SMITH  
Honorary Curator of Anthropology  
JOHN ROBINSON  
Honorary Curator of Maritime History  
OSGOOD WILLIAMS  
Honorary Curator of Steamship History  
LUDLOW GRISCOM  
Honorary Curator of Ornithology  
DONALD STANLEY MARSHALL  
Research Anthropologist for Polynesia

East India Marine Hall, Salem, Massachusetts

Expedition to Polynesia

20 July 1955  
Peapack, Tahiti

Dear Dr. Degener

I have just received your communication of 18 May 1955, upon my return from the Austral Islands, and have read your letters and each of the enclosures with care and interest. Although I have a great deal of sympathy for your situation, particularly in view of the great personal and scientific esteem in which Ed Hardy holds you, my own precarious position as arbiter in the Emory/Stimson controversy makes it prudent that I take no other active hand in any type of controversy. This is particularly true in regard to anything of a commercial nature.

I am truly sorry not to be able to assist you. You may remember our meeting in the basement of Bishop Museum in July or August of 1951. Most sincerely,  
Donald S. Marshall

4.25  
August 18, 1955

Mr. Oscar G. Nordman  
c/o Service De Ravitaillement Maritime  
Maison Nordman  
Fournisseur - Shiphandler  
Papeete, Tahiti

Dear Mr. Nordman:

I have received information recently that the Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company or deBisschop obtained a large judgment against a Mr. Gallois in Papeete Court earlier this year. If this is true, will you please advise whether there is any chance of collecting on the judgments which my clients hold against the company.

Very truly yours,

David N. Ingman

DNI:jn

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JOHN ROBINSON  
*Honorary Curator of Maritime History*  
OSGOOD WILLIAMS  
*Honorary Curator of Steamship History*  
LUDLOW GRISOM  
*Honorary Curator of Ornithology*  
DONALD STANLEY MARSHALL  
*Research Anthropologist for Polynesia*

Expedition to Polynesia

Papeete, TAHITI  
15 August 1955

Dear Doctor Degener -

Thank you very much for your kind note of 9 August; and also for the books which you mentioned sending. I only hope that they were sent to my museum address, for I leave Tahiti on the next plane for the long trip back home, via New Zealand, Australia and Europe. The plant data will be interesting to me, for I share Doctor Handy's belief in the significance of the zoological environment to human behavior.

I look forward to renewing our acquaintance in the future. Do you ever come East? If not, perhaps I shall see you in Hawaii next summer.

Most sincerely,  
Don Marshall

Assembly President Here *Hon. Adv. 8/24/51*

## Tahiti Reported Getting Ready for Tourist Boom

The sleepy islands of Tahiti have begun to rouse themselves in preparation for a swelling tourist business, Walter Grand, president of the territorial assembly of the French possession, said yesterday.

Mr. Grand arrived in Honolulu at 11:30 a.m. aboard a Qantas Empire Airways plane en route to Paris further talks on developing Tahiti's tourist industry.

He said he will seek some \$200,000 to be used to construct an international airport about two miles outside the capital city of Papeete. There will be facilities for handling South Pacific Air Lines' flying boats, too, he added.

MR. GRAND said Tahiti has only a small military airport on the island of Bora Bora. He said it was not too suitable for use by commercial airlines.

In Papeete's harbor, Mr. Grand said, some \$125,000 has been appropriated by the assembly to lengthen the main pier by about 13 yards.

He said the action was taken in preparation for the planned arrivals of several passenger liners, including the two to be placed on Matson's South Pacific run next year.

Construction on the pier extension is to begin shortly.

MR. GRAND also said he thought the U. S. will eventually have to reopen its consulate in Tahiti. A building for that pur-

pose was given to this country by Queen Pomare about 1890 and was in constant use until 1948 when President Truman's administration went on an economy drive and closed it.

He said, however, that when full-scale tourist operations by American firms get underway in the next few years, a consulate will be a "must."

ON THE PLANE with Mr. Grand was Jean-Ceran-Jerusalem, a member of Tahiti's R.D.P. party. Mr. Grand, who is staying at the Edgewater hotel, is a member of the Republican Sociaux party.

Mr. Ceran-Jerusalem, accompanied by his wife, are staying at the home of an uncle, George Archer, a musician in the band at Don the Beachcombers.

The trio leave for the Mainland tonight aboard a United Air Lines plane.



ADRESSE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE :  
OCEANIC

CABLE ADDRESS :  
OCEANIC

OSCAR G. NORDMAN & FILS  
SERVICE DU RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME

SOCIÉTÉ HOTELIÈRE  
ET DE  
RAVITAILLEMENT MARITIME  
MESSAGERIES MARITIMES  
THE OCEANIC S.S. CO.  
MATSON NAVIGATION COMPANY  
MARINES ALLIÉES  
ET AMIES  
ETC.

MAISON NORDMAN  
POURVOYEUR - FOURNISSEUR - SHIPCHANDLER - PROVIDORE  
PAPEETE - TAHITI  
CORRESPONDANT ET AGENT  
PACIFIC ISLANDS MONTHLY

UNION STEAMSHIP COMPANY  
OF NEW ZEALAND LTD.  
UNITED STATES LINE  
GENERAL S.S. CORPORATION  
ALLIED AND FRIENDLY  
NAVIES  
ETC.

September 9th 1955

Mr. David N. Ingram  
Attorney at Law  
Honolulu T.H.

Dear Attorney

It is me that sent the information to the Pacific Islands Monthly, about the " Cheng Ho " and already the vessel is getting repaired by Gallois et Cie.

I would suggest that you write to Messrs. GUILPAIN et VITRY, attorney at Law, Papeete, to give you all the informations regarding the judgments obtained by de Bisschop for the " Cheng Ho Trading & Exploring Company of Honolulu.

When writing to Messrs Guilpain and Vitry attorneys at Law, please mention my name.

Very truly yours,

*Oscar G. Nordman*  
Oscar G. Nordman

Waialua, Oahu, Hawaii.  
Nov. 28, 1955.

Mr. Rodrigue Bertol,  
165 Broadway,  
New York, N. Y.

Dear M. Bertol:

I have not heard from you since mailing you some pertinent Cheng Ho documents and asking you to handle the case, or cases, involved on the contingency basis, I to get two-thirds and you one-third.

My former attorney Ingman, who was away on vacation, is back. I never realized that he had gone to New York City to ~~see~~ the "World Series" in baseball, I believe. What a monotonous waste of time!

His brother, he tells me, has a claim or judgement against the Cheng Ho people, and he sent his legal papers to Tahiti but simply gets no reply from there.

Let me know what you wish to do or are doing. Shall I mail you additional papers, or are you not interested.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Otto Degener*

Waialua, Oahu, Hawaii.  
Nov. 23, 1955.

Mr. Rodrigue Bertol,  
165 Broadway,  
New York, N. Y.

Dear M. Bertol:

I have not heard from you since mailing you some pertinent Cheng Ho documents and asking you to handle the case, or cases, involved on the contingency basis, I to get two-thirds and you one-third.

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Let me know what you wish to do or are doing. Shall I mail you additional papers, or are you not interested.

Sincerely,

*L. O. DeGuer*