The political background of the Marshallese involves the pre-European area of independence wherein the CHIEFS more or less aggressively expanded their domains by warfare. The leaders and their land holdings varied throughout the years and this type of aggression practically ceased when the Germans established their protectorate in the islands in 1885. The Japanese seized the Marshalls in 1914 and apparently the Marshallese offered no objection to the restrictions imposed upon them at that time. Some time about 1937 extensive military establishments were begun in the area displacing the inhabitants both from their land and to be used a laborers in the construction work where most needed. The Marshallese past has therefore always been condition of subjection and their personal attitude and behavior indicates no objection or resentment to strangers. This might be summed up as a static political situation in a period of watchful comparison between the Americans and previous occupying powers.

There is a tendency today to entwine the old Marshallese political structure with the new democratic procedures by electing lesser Chiefs as magistrate or political leaders. The old aristocracy retains its respect and leadership to a large extent even though the awe and fear of the old days has disappeared or diminished to a large degree. The roll of the Paramount Chief carries considerable weight probably due to his control over the allocation of land. This prerogative has also diminished and is considerable less than what it was at one time. Dispossession and feudal rights are economic forces in the overall political set-up but they are not exerted as indiscriminately as they used to be.

The impact of the U.S. and the demonstration of freedom of expression has had a very noticeable effect as is evidenced at the council meetings which are held in the atoll.
at each visit of the M.G. field officer. These council meetings at which the magistrate and scribe preside, are taking on the color of the old New England town-hall meetings and the people are becoming increasingly appreciative of M.G.'s attempt to teach them to handle their own affairs. The increased interest displayed by the members in the use of popular elections; the less and less reluctance in expressing ideas and opinions at council meetings; the good judgement displayed in court procedures and decisions, all indicate an awareness of political justice and an honest effort to demonstrate their ability to assume responsibility if proper guidance and assistance is offered them.