

the Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea making it essentially a Melanesian volume that brings into play an important ethnic and racial conflict dimension. Howard looks at each case by first offering useful historical sketches on how mining exploration featured in the early colonization of the islands, setting a pattern of development from which it was difficult to depart.

In the contemporary Southwest Pacific, the old colonially derived state-mining corporation relations have come in for a radical challenge. In Fiji, Emperor Gold Mine has had to yield some of its old paternalistic treatment of indigenous Fijians with the advent of trade unions and many strikes. In Papua New Guinea on the island of Bougainville, the struggle between mining corporation and organized land owners established a pattern of indigenous militancy that has transformed mining relations with local residents. Throughout the Pacific islands, a new dawn of mining corporations — indigenous peoples relations — has arrived but as Howard has amply shown the struggle is far from complete. It is not easy for small bands of illiterate indigenous peoples to confront the might of a multinational corporation which enjoys the confidence of the national ruling elites. This is an exciting volume. The work sets an agenda for new research, comparative in focus and systematically theoretical in orientation, for scholars working on the South Pacific.

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BOUGAINVILLE: The Mine and the People. *By Paul Quodling. St. Leonards (Australia): The Centre for Independent Studies. 1991. xii, 128 pp. (Maps, tables.) A\$16.95/NZ\$22.95, paper. ISBN 0-949769-71-1.*

IN NOVEMBER 1988, a series of violent events began in Bougainville Island (North Solomons Province, Papua New Guinea) which ultimately closed a huge copper mine, the source of 15–20 percent of internally generated income for the entire nation. Efforts by the national government to restore normality only produced a declaration of independence for the province by a self-proclaimed “Bougainville Revolutionary Army.” By April 1992, Papua New Guinea had control of the northern part of the province and an uneasy truce with the south, while reports from the center (the mine’s location) spoke of anarchy, marauding gangs, and severe suffering caused by lack of basic services that the national government denied the rebels.

This tragedy has inspired an outpouring of publication by social scientists, journalists and others with some knowledge of Bougainville. The book under review, although lacking the depth of Douglas L. Oliver’s *Black Islanders: A Personal Perspective of Bougainville, 1973–1991* (University of Hawaii Press, 1991), makes its own unique contribution, for the author is a retired executive of the mining corporation. His interpretations are certainly open to debate, and all the more interesting for that reason.

The book begins by sketching the background of decisions to develop the first major postwar mining operation in the then U.N. Trust Territory of New Guinea. Quodling usefully summarizes matters of financing and

construction before going on to the (ultimately insoluble) problem of adjusting land leases and compensation to Melanesian notions of land tenure. Here as elsewhere, his discussion is full of the wisdom of hindsight, although many of the sources he cites were available to provide guidance to government and corporation, had these authorities been willing to listen.

Chapters 4 and 5 trace the original mining agreement (negotiated between the corporation and Australian administrators) and its subsequent renegotiation, in the light of a changing political economy for both Papua New Guinea and Bougainville. Chapter 6, "The Impact of the Mine," is particularly valuable for the technical information provided. However, readers familiar with the history of the mining project will find Quodling's present admission of facts, like those about severe environmental degradation (p. 29), that company spokesmen had vigorously denied earlier, painfully ironic. Figures on the economic impact of the mine are also worth studying, although it is hard to understand just what the percentages on p. 36 refer to.

The latter chapters of the book consistently portray the mining company as well meaning, but frustrated by conditions beyond its control, whether "lack of government commitment" (p. 52) or the sinister influence of outsiders (p. 55). An example of the relative superficiality of some of these arguments is Quodling's version of the havoc allegedly created by the 1987 "Bougainville Initiative," a demand for a massive restructuring of financial benefits from the mine. His insistence that "*the fundamental cause* of the disruptive activities against the mine, plantations, and other business activities was dissatisfaction with the distribution of financial returns" (p. 65, emphasis added) would appear to confuse a *proximate* cause with a simplistic, all-encompassing explanation. Other scholars are more willing to spell out a complex set of conditions, created by a century of colonial exploitation in various forms, which must be weighed carefully in seeking a complete understanding of the Bougainville tragedy.

Readers' responses to this book will reflect their previous knowledge of Bougainville's history and cultures. Quodling has summarized considerable information in a short compass and produced a useful document, if one allows for his own deep involvement in what has proved to be a predictable disaster for Bougainvilleans. Those who wish to get a more balanced picture will have to consult some of the many other analyses currently available.

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TWISTED HISTORIES, ALTERED CONTEXTS: Representing the Chambri in a World System. By Deborah B. Gewertz, and Frederick K. Errington. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1991. xiv, 264 pp. (Photos.) US\$44.50, cloth. ISBN 0-521-40012-0.

THE AUTHORS have written an important and readable book. This is an original, thoughtful and above all lucid account of the Chambri people of Papua New Guinea and their struggles for identity and autonomy. In the