

ALAN ROBSON

and the sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior* is particularly engaging.

The long section on the Fiji coups differs from the other episodes discussed in the book in having no obvious colonial villain. Yet Robie sees the events in Fiji as a culminating act of forces resisting nationalist reconstruction in the South Pacific. Successive British administrations had fostered an Eastern chiefly élite for the purposes of mediating indirect rule and it was principally this group which governed Fiji until its defeat by the Labour coalition of Timoci Bavadra. Occasionally Robie overstates the case for the coalition. Some Western Fijians saw Bavadra as a political messiah but the election returns don't bear out the contention that they were all that numerous.

However, there is no doubt that the coalition government was seen by various traditional interests as a threat. Its anti-nuclear policies were obviously viewed with disfavour by the United States and France. And the new-found influence of economic nationalists evoked the hostility of foreign-controlled concerns like the Emperor Gold Mines. Thus there are grounds for viewing the resurrection of a government in cahoots with these interests as a defeat for the nationalist forces.

Yet while the Fiji coups were certainly the most dramatic culmination of the region's post-colonial unfolding, they were at least initially not seen as a defeat for nationalism by many

Pacific nationalists. Reflecting this, the island states of the South Pacific Forum were for the most part less willing than Australia and New Zealand to condemn the coups. Nationalism *per se*, is a motor of limited potential for the attainment of distributive justice. It is often asserted by defensive élites in diversionary populist appeals and can sometimes be a mask for communalism and racism. Robie shows his awareness of the conundrum which arise out of this when he asks if the solution to colonial racism will be sought in the substitution of indigenous chauvinist supremacy.

Blood on their Banner is a remarkably stimulating and well-written introduction to modern political developments in the South Pacific. It takes a stand against injustice and compellingly presents the case for the oppressed which is not the least of its achievements.

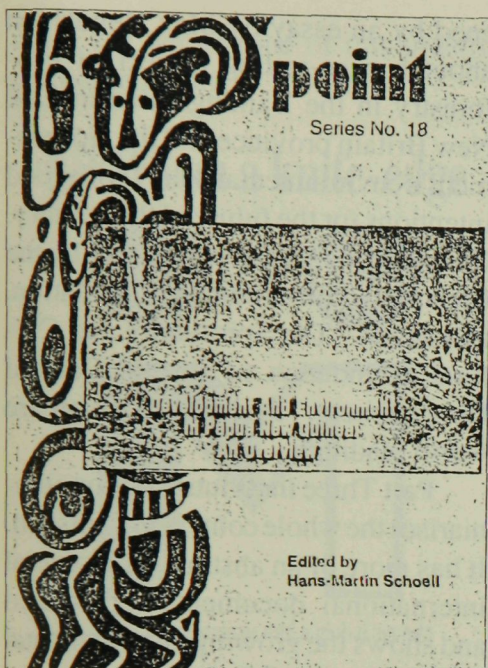
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Confronting major regional threats over development

Development and Environment in Papua New Guinea: An Overview, Hans-Martin Schoell (editor). Goroka: Melanesian Institute, 1994, 365 pp. ISSN 0223-2913 No 18. Price: Not given.

FROM 'wrongdoings' to 'no doings'
— welcome to controversies in devel-



opment in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific. This is Part One of another publication in the Point series from the Melanesian Institute.

Edited by Hans-Martin Schoell, *Development and Environment* is a well-researched perspective on a region and its people caught in a snag of controversial issues in forestry, fisheries and mining. It is a collection of articles from prominent people involved in development, urging for the need for sustainable management of the environment and natural resources with more attention on Pacific Island countries with Papua New Guinea featured prominently.

In his foreword, Schoell writes: 'The articles of this book are rather varied in style and form. Many are more or less conventionally academic, others are discursive, others rather

polemical or even autobiographical. Such an approach seemed appropriate for a perspective that makes no claim to be value-free and which deals with issues that involve progress or setback of national economies, or the devastation of the sustainability of regional environments.'

Most of the material in the book comes from papers given at a conference in Tutzing, Germany, as a follow-up to the controversy surrounding the Stanberg Report, published by the Melanesian Institute on the environmental impact and the economic viability of the Ok Tedi copper mine in PNG's Western province.

Part One focuses on the Greater Pacific, to the PNG mainland and its current development policies with greater emphasis on chapter two where Charles Lepani, former diplomat, overviews the 'Challenges of Economic and Social Development in the Pacific Region'. Ronnie Alexander, Professor for International Relations at the Kobe University in Japan, presents an article on the New World Order and the Pacific Islands, in the preceding chapter of Part One, describing the four real threats of the region.

However, while Alexander describes the four real threats to the Pacific Region, Lepani sees the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse thrust upon the Pacific by otherwise mere spectators. He does not see the conservation of environment, restructure of economy, democratisation and human rights as crucial issues to the region.

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As the recent head of the Pacific Islands Development Program, he has a more optimistic view of the current state of affairs in the Pacific, nevertheless recognising that there are some constraints for the Island states. Lepani, as official speaker at that time for the PNG Government at the Tutzing Conference, repeats the standpoint of 'The Stanberg Report as a mission to distort, disguised as scientific research', and qualifies its content as 'unreliable and of very poor quality, with unrealistic economic, technical and environmental recommendations'.

Dr Otto Kreye, from Stanberg University, further responds on these accusations in chapter four, 'Mining and Economic-ecological Development in PNG'. Dr Kreye writes: 'What is true for Ok Tedi is true for the mining sector as a whole: it has not produced the anticipated revenue and it has not contributed to mitigating the country's unemployment problem. Today PNG has an immense domestic and foreign deficit to overcome. The foreign debt is extremely threatening.' Alex Maun in chapter five describes the tragedy of the people and environmental destruction from the mining operation along the Ok tedi and Fly Rivers.

Similarly, Part Two 'Papua New Guinea Concerns' is revealing and most provocative, and it focuses on controversies in the forestry and fishing industries and the mining operations along the Ok Tedi and Fly River. But this rather bad impression is enlight-

ened by an essay by Max Henderson about a pace-setting project of eco-forestry in the Bainings area in East New Britain province and the Government's environmental policy with good intentions for the future of the country. Chapters one, 'Take my Trees,' by the Melanesian Environment Foundation, and seven, 'The Spirituality and Cultural Foundation of People Centred Development,' by Michael Bopp are worth reading.

Part Three in its introduction summarises the whole content in a nutshell. It has more of an abstract with several international documents reproduced and shows the growing environmental awareness in the international scene, centred around United Nations organisations but also non-government organisations and groups to save planet Earth.

The most important and biggest part of the whole book is Part Four which is entirely on sustainable development and the only two chapters are written by Schoell himself. Schoell discusses here the concept of sustainable development, its history, meaning and then how it may be applied to the Papua New Guinea situation. Ennio Mantovani supports Schoell and highlights the aspects which was presupposed in all the discussed topics in his conclusion on 'The Religious Dimension of Sustainable Development'.

Probably the ending paragraph, 'Any development must serve the needs of the people and not people serving development', on its back cover illus-

trates the whole tone of this greatly researched work.

NEWS on a knife-edge



GEMINI journalism and a global agenda

Richard Bourne



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Independent news champion of the developing world

News on a Knife-edge: Gemini Journalism and a Global Agenda, Richard Bourne. London: John Libbey, 1995; (available in the Pacific from UPNG Press), 216 pp. ISBN 0-86196-486-1. Price: K25 approx.

'BIAFRA is dying bloodily and terror stricken. The triumphant Nigerian Army is advancing into the chaotic heart of General Ojukwu's breakaway country. The demoralised Biafran

Army has been stunned by the *blitzkrieg* onslaught mounted by the Federal forces and is now offering little resistance and feeling.

'Five million civilians are running rabbit-like from the remaining crowded areas. Several Nigerian MiG fighters added to the confusion by rocketing and machine-gunning lines of refugees ...

'As I went north — the only foreign correspondent left inside Biafra — I saw appalling sights of Biafra's death throes. They are burned in my memory: men, women and children carrying pathetic belongings, some collapsing weeping at the roadside. There is nowhere for them to go.'

This was the introduction to Richard Hall's moving report that he filed from São Tomé on 19 January 1970 after being the last foreign correspondent to leave collapsing Biafra. It was also a world exclusive — one of many over almost three decades — for the tiny independent news agency Gemini News which has forged a remarkable reputation in the developing world.

Among other 'hot' stories were 'The day I had a knife in my back,' a report by an air hostess in the hijacking of British West Indian Airways flight 400 from Kingston to Miami in December 1970; the inside story on how Nazi leader Hermann Goering cheated the hangman; the courageous Sinhalese editor who became a go-between in 1987 in a peace bid between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil militants; and a report by one of the first