

'It is a portrait of deep and sustained fear. It is also a portrait of an Australian orientalism that has been successfully transplanted and developed on Antipodean shores' (p 45).

In a later article (2004), Manning described the *Herald's* depiction of Palestinians as 'comprehensively simplistic, naive and offensive'. While the *Telegraph* was less 'one-eyed', on the gang rapes and asylum seekers it was 'more strident and virulent'.

The fact that this study suggests Sydney journalism, in both foreign and domestic reporting, has picked up the 'imperial inheritance with full force' is perhaps not too surprising (p 44).

But the degree of starkness in the distortions and stereotypes of representations of Arabic and Muslim people is undoubtedly fertile ground for challenge to the status quo.

And it would be interesting to see similar media research replicated in New Zealand. In view of the Ahmed Zaoui affair (see p 184) and attitudes over the US occupation of Iraq, it would hardly be a surprise if findings in Auckland are actually worse.

#### References

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## Bougainville's inspiring tribute to survival by women of peace

*... as Mothers of the Land: The birth of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom*, edited by Josephine Tankunani Sirivi and Marilyn Taleo Havini. Canberra: Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, 2004. ISBN 1 74076 043 3

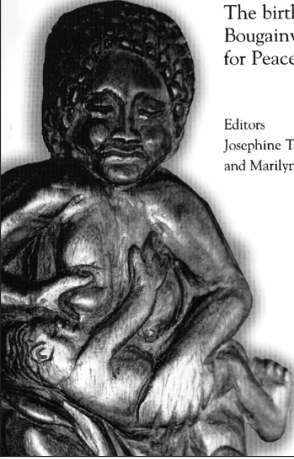
AS A journalist, I covered the early part of the Bougainville war. In October 1989, while freelancing, I was dispatched by *Pacific Islands Monthly* and other media to Arawa to report reflectively on the conflict one year on after it had started.

This was at a time when Joseph Kabui was still premier of the North Solomons province (now he is president of the assembly) and there was still hope that the struggle over the giant Panguna copper mine and the right to self-determination would be resolved.

... as  
**MOTHERS  
of the LAND**

The birth of the  
Bougainville Women  
for Peace and Freedom

Editors  
Josephine Tankunani Sirivi  
and Marilyn Taleo Havini



Kabui told me at the time: ‘In an attempt to find a long-lasting solution, we have to look at decentralisation – more local power.’

But it was already too late – the national Government in Port Moresby was obstructive and short-sighted. Now almost 15 years later, and at the cost of more than 10,000 lives and the destruction of what was the most advanced province in Papua New Guinea, Bougainville does not have its coveted independence, which it richly deserved, but at least it will have autonomy this year.

My *PIM* cover story was published in the next month’s edition under the banner headline ‘MINE OF

TEARS’. One of my sidebar stories was an interview with a young reporter on the *Arawa Bulletin*, Moresi Tua, who is now with *The National*.

He was the first journalist to interview Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) military commander Sam Kauona in the jungle. As a result he was hounded by the PNG military who tried to force him to reveal where the interview took place. But he refused to reveal his sources or any information about the interview.

However, because of my article he again became a military target. Later Moresi Tua was wounded but survived when PNG soldiers opened fire on a group in a canoe in an infamous incident.

Two years after my Bougainville visit, I joined the University of Papua New Guinea as journalism lecturer. My wife, Del, and I moved to Port Moresby to live there for almost six years, with Del teaching at St Joseph’s International School where she experienced many students who survived the nightmares of Bougainville.

While at UPNG, I also had the privilege of teaching a number of young Bougainvillean student journalists. Among them was one young woman involved in coverage by our student newspaper, *Uni Tavor*, of the aborted Sandline mercenary crisis in 1997.

Gorethy Kenneth went on to be-

come renowned as the *Post-Courier* reporter in Buka. Last year, Gorethy was harassed and threatened by armed men claiming to be supporters of Harold Keke, leader of the GLF (Guadalcanal Liberation Front) in the Solomon Islands.

Accusing her of being a spy, they threatened to burn down the newspaper office. She was evacuated by her newspaper and went into hiding, later returning to Buka.

Bougainville has always had brave, dedicated and committed women, struggling for independence and a better life. And now ... *As Mothers of the Land* – written by 11 of the women who have survived and led by their courage and example – has become a testament to the struggle and suffering of all Bougainville people.

It is a tribute to their survival, their search for peace and their efforts to rebuild a shattered society.

Along with co-editors Josephine Tankunani Sirivi, Sam Kauona's wife, and Marilyn Taleo Havini, contributors include one of the founding Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom (BWPF) members Rosemarie Dikaung, Lucy Madoi, of Bougainville Interim Government; nursing educator Scholastica Raren Miriori; and also Vikki John, Australian-born activist of the Bougainville Freedom Movement.

Three things, in particular, are striking about the book: One is the extraordinary resourcefulness of the women – how they adapted to cope with the terrible impact of the military blockade imposed by the Port Moresby politicians.

The blockade was a shocking crime against humanity, a sort of genocide while the rest of the world turned its backs on the suffering Bougainvilleans. During this time, PNGDF forces strafed villages, raped, mutilated and executed both women and men, and rounded up people, forcing them to stay in 'care centres' as internal refugees.

Why did the world community allow this to happen? Contrast the global silence over these atrocities with the saturation media coverage and outrage over the killing and mutilation of four American security men in Fallujah, western Iraq in mid-April, a week before the launching of this book in New Zealand.

The second point is the strong spiritual faith shared by the women and the role of the Catholic Church, in particular.

The final point is the positive role played by New Zealand in the peace process, which is surely the model that NZ should follow for other conflicts. We need soldiers for peacekeeping, not war.

The book is split into three sec-

tions, 'Bougainville women in war' – which is further subdivided into chapters on life on the run, blockade and occupation, 'Women in community' and 'Women in politics'.

Miriori contributes a harrowing chapter on 'rape, a weapon of war' and an account of many other atrocities.

She names a military policeman accused of being a rapist and who used a coffee mug handle on his penis: 'This man is still here in Buka and nothing has been done to correct this injustice. This is a man who used to cut the ears off and then kill our men' (p 65).

There are countless moving segments in this book. But one episode, in particular, reveals the humanity and dilemmas amid war.

In 1995, Josephine and Sam's daughter Melanie, then aged six, had become violently ill and she was coughing up blood. It was vital to take her to Arawa Hospital even though it was dangerous as PNGDF forces controlled the medical facility. No sooner had Josie and Melanie arrived, when a colonel turned up:

In the afternoon the colonel ... came with his staff commanders to visit us. When he came into the room he said good afternoon and asked me, 'Are you the [BRA general's] wife?' I answered, 'yes.'

He went on to say, 'You are born to

this system and this system will help you, don't worry about anything.' I told them, 'All I want is for you to save my daughter's life.' They were very calm while talking to me. They told me that some of the soldiers were former students of Sam's from the Goldie Barracks in PNG so they had come to see his daughter.

Amazingly, there was also one of my schoolmates from Passam National High School. He said, 'It's a long time now that I have been here in Bougainville. I wanted to see you but I was told you were in the bush. We will look after you and your daughter (p 43).

But two days later Melanie was recovering and concerns for their safety mounted. The soldiers had moved the pair to another part of the hospital and kept them alone.

At home, Sam was anxiously monitoring the PNGDF's high-frequency radio network. He heard soldiers talking about my being in the hospital with Melanie and he feared for our safety, so he sent his operations commander, Ishmael, on a rescue mission to get us out of hospital (p 44).

Ten years of war was cruel, devastating and divisive for the women of Bougainville. But in 2001 more than 150 women leaders gathered from throughout the island to develop a

positive seven-point peace-building plan for women's organisations.

Josephine Sirivi and Marilyn Havini, have long been at the forefront of this struggle. They were part of the peace process and reconciliation since their inclusion in the 1997 and 1998 negotiations in Burnham and Lincoln, New Zealand, on the future of Bougainville.

By sharing their experiences in this book, they have provided rare glimpses of the realities of Bougainville's struggle that are insightful for journalists. And they have also provided a beacon of hope and inspiration.

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## Paying with her life for telling it like it is

**Veronica Guerin, starring Cate Blanchett, directed by Joel Schumacher, 2003.**

**I**MAGINE the outrage if Australian finance journalist Mark Westfield was shot dead for exposing the corporate crookery that went on before the collapse of insurance giant HIH. Or if the daring duo of gold Walkley winners Kate McClymont and Annie Davies were killed for reporting the Oasis rugby league affair. Or if investigative reporter Natalie O'Brien was assassinated for revealing the official lies behind the Tampa children overboard scandal.

Awful as it is, this will give you some idea of the shock and rage that convulsed Ireland over the brutal slaying of leading crime reporter Veronica Guerin, gunned down in a peaceful street outside Dublin for telling the truth about the sleazy and violent