The Contemporary Pacific: A Journal of Island Affairs is a biannual publication intended to provide a scholarly forum for the examination of important current issues and events in the Pacific Islands region. The need for such a forum is acute. The larger world has touched and been touched by the Pacific Islands in profound ways in the twentieth century. It is becoming increasingly evident that the islands of the Pacific are islands in the physical sense only. Over the last three decades, there has been a steady growth in the study of Pacific Island affairs. However, much of this literature reflects traditional academic topics and approaches. Systematic study of contemporary Pacific Island societies still tends to play second fiddle to works on earlier eras or on “traditional” societies. Moreover, for a variety of reasons, the existing literature on contemporary topics is often widely scattered over large numbers of discipline-based publications and inaccessible to both scholars of Pacific Island affairs and a more general audience.

This situation must be rectified. The tempo of change in the region has accelerated dramatically in recent decades, spawning human problems that are urgent but generally poorly understood. The complex new economic, political, and strategic situation in the region requires analysis that is comprehensive, thorough, and interdisciplinary. The Contemporary Pacific is intended to provide a scholarly vehicle for a broad-ranging exchange of ideas on contemporary developments in the Pacific Islands, expressed in the ordinary language of intelligent discourse.

Because of its orientation, the journal will inevitably address controversial issues. Articles on topics such as decolonization, development and underdevelopment, dependency, extraregional interests, nuclear testing, ethnic relations, and the politics of health and population pressures are bound to elicit a wide range of responses from readers and contributors. This is as it should be. Our journal will actively encourage the dissemina-
tion of divergent viewpoints in an effort to transcend artificial and out­moded political and disciplinary boundaries.

In addition to articles and book reviews, The Contemporary Pacific will offer three specialized sections designed to promote discussion and facilitate research. The Political Reviews section will present four regular summaries of political events, issues, and trends in the island world over a one-year period, two in each issue. Three will cover affairs in Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia, and the fourth will provide an overview of the international relations of the entire region.

The Dialogue section will offer short reflective pieces, focused communications about current research, and brief reactions to interpretations and ideas expressed in the journal. The Resources section will provide notice of specialized bibliographies, archival holdings, and information on such topics as the status of index coverage of Pacific serials, and the nature of holdings at a given library in the Pacific Islands. From time to time, beginning with our next issue, we will publish issues on special themes, with articles focusing on a particular current issue or series of events, sometimes under a guest editor working within guidelines set by the Editorial Board.

The Contemporary Pacific has been started with a grant from the University of Hawaii. It is copublished by the Center for Pacific Islands Studies and the University of Hawaii Press. The current members of the Editorial Board are all associated with the Center. As the only academic program in the United States to focus on the islands of the Pacific, this is the logical home base for the journal. The Contemporary Pacific complements the Center's other publishing activities, which include the Pacific Islands Monograph Series and South Sea Books.

But the journal is not an official organ of the Center for Pacific Islands Studies. It is an independent entity governed by guidelines established by its Editorial Board and advised by a panel of eleven correspondents from eight different countries and ten educational institutions. Although the journal is based in Hawai'i, subscriptions, contributions, advice, and suggestions are welcomed from everyone interested in the nature of the human experience in the Pacific Islands, regardless of discipline, location, or nationality.

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