John Frum Movement in Tanna, as people found a new identity after years of cultural repression. The movement was a combination of cargo cult and ancestral religion, marking both a return to custom and a rejection of European-imported ideas. The later myth of the return of John Frum from America to protect indigenous culture emphasized the resistance to the new political movements bringing about independence.

The final chapters of the book deal with the violent opposition of Tanna to the newly established government of National Unity. The bloody outcome will no doubt interest readers trying to understand the present-day political life of Vanuatu.

MYRIAM DORMOY VUROBARAVU

University of the South Pacific Centre,
Vanuatu

---


There are times in every society’s history that come to be recognized as great turning points. Often these periods are not recognized as such at the time, but only later with the advantage of hindsight. Looking back from the late 1980s over the major changes that have occurred in the 1980s in New Zealand’s race relations, the late 1970s was probably such a time. It was a period when the myth of racial harmony in New Zealand was challenged as never before by assertions of cultural identity from within the Maori community.

One such assertion was the so-called haka party incident on 1 May 1979 when a Maori group confronted the University of Auckland Engineering Students’ capping group over what they considered to be an ongoing abuse of Maori culture. The engineering students had annually conducted a mock haka as part of their pregraduation celebrations. Their actions took no account of the ceremonial significance of the haka within Maori culture. A male war dance that symbolized the strength and power of the tribe, the haka was usually reserved for ceremonial occasions.

In this brief study Kayleen Hazlehurst has undertaken a systematic analysis of the incident and its immediate aftermath in an attempt to see why the conflict occurred and why different groups reacted as they did. A New Zealander herself, Hazlehurst trained in political and sociocultural anthropology in Canada. Since then she has been involved with legal aspects of intercultural problems in both New Zealand and Australia.

The study is divided into three sections. The first deals with the incident itself and the reaction to it in the following weeks. Hazlehurst clearly documents mounting tensions as years of formal requests for the mock hakas to cease were ignored. If anything, the mock hakas became increasingly offensive in the 1970s. In the wake of the mock haka confrontation, the New Zealand media generally proved
unsympathetic to the Maori point of view, emphasizing the physical violence that had occurred and implying that gang members were involved. Maori leaders, such as Dr Ranginui Walker, who attempted to give the Maori point of view were accused of condoning violence.

The second section deals with the trial of eleven of the Maori participants in the confrontation and the subsequent inquiry into intercultural harmony in New Zealand by the Human Rights Commission. Hazlehurst's familiarity with legal procedures is apparent as she clearly lays out the respective arguments for the prosecution and the defense. While the prosecution emphasized the use of violence, the defense concentrated on showing the cultural offense that the mock haka had caused. The judge's summation reveals his sensitivity to Maori concerns as well as to the legal rules within which he had to operate. The inquiry of the Human Rights Commission revealed a sharp division in attitudes toward race relations. Respondents argued either that all are equal as citizens of the nation state, or that without allowance for diversity minorities are always dictated to by rules defined by the majority.

The final section seeks to determine how He Taua, the Maori protest group involved in the haka incident, was formed. Clearly rejecting media claims of a premeditated action with gang connections, Hazlehurst portrays He Taua as an ad hoc collection of individuals drawn from informal networks of friends and united by their objection to the mock hakas as insulting to their culture. Hazlehurst's strong sympathy for the Maori point of view is evident throughout. Her portrayal of middle-class white New Zealand society is at times very sketchy. We are never really told what middle-class means in New Zealand. Is there a distinct white working class who think and act differently? Just how unifying was the issue of race over this incident within the Maori and Pakeha communities respectively?

Hazlehurst's assertion that the Pakeha restrain their emotions and see physical violence as more offensive than insults, while the Maori do exactly the opposite is not backed up with any detailed studies relevant to the issue.

While Hazlehurst mentions that she conducted many interviews with both Maori and Pakeha New Zealanders, only comments by Ranginui Walker and Patrick Hohepa figure prominently. The other actors come down to us through official publications, court transcripts, and public forums such as newspapers.

This study would have been strengthened by placing the haka incident in more of a historical perspective. The active assertion of Maori cultural values has a long heritage stretching back to the arrival of the first European visitors on the shores of Aotearoa. The fundamental changes in race relations in New Zealand in the 1980s are also surely relevant. Hazlehurst remains silent on the significance for New Zealand of the Canadian and Australian experiences with which she has been involved. There is little discussion of the crucial issue of equal rights versus protection of minorities within the modern multicultural state. Admittedly all of this is beyond her
stated aim. This study clearly illustrates the lack of understanding between various groups within New Zealand. Hopefully it will form the basis of a more wide-ranging study in the future.

Paul D'Arcy
University of Hawaii at Manoa


The history of the Pacific Theater of World War II has been extensively documented in numerous written texts and in films. For the most part, however, the wartime experiences represented in these accounts are those of the major contending nations—the Allies and the Japanese. Much neglected has been the highly significant fact that this war was waged on or near Pacific islands inhabited by indigenous peoples with little understanding of the means and motivations for World War II and little desire to become involved in it. Yet, become involved they did. Islanders were literally caught in the middle as the contenders struggled for control of the Pacific; they were given very little choice in the matter of their participation. The continued self-centeredness of the contending nations is evident today, more than forty years after the end of World War II, when we still know very little about Islanders’ wartime roles and even less about their understandings of these wartime experiences.

This lack in our understanding of World War II has been the focus of ongoing research coordinated by the Institute of Culture and Communication of the East-West Center in Honolulu. These two important works have begun to correct previous representations of the war by providing oral accounts of Melanesians, particularly those involved in the Solomon Islands campaign. Both volumes contain materials collected by anthropologists, historians, and political scientists working in the field; others compiled by the Western Solomons oral history project; plus narratives presented at a conference on World War II held in Honiara in 1987. With the exception of introductory chapters by the editors that serve to place the narratives in context, all accounts are by Melanesians. These accounts were originally recorded in the local languages or in Solomons Pijin. In 'O'O these accounts are translated into English, with care to retain the narrator's original content and style. The Big Death contains some of the longer accounts, which are given first in Pijin and then in English as a contribution to bilingual and bicultural education in the Solomons.

The accounts in these two volumes