

aimed at generating discussion and a sharing of knowledge. His book encourages discourse about the nature of the cultural interactions and transformations that took place among Native Hawaiians, and between them and westerners, during this period.

SUSAN A LEBO
Bernice P Bishop Museum

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An Honorable Accord: The Covenant between the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States, by Howard P Willens and Deanne C Siemer. Pacific Islands Monograph Series 18. Honolulu: Center for Pacific Islands Studies and University of Hawai'i Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8248-2390-7; xvi + 473 pages, tables, maps, photographs, interviews, abbreviations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$52.00.

An Honorable Accord is a valuable contribution to the historical record of events related to execution and implementation of the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America.

The authors, Howard P Willens and Deanne C Siemer, a husband-and-wife team and highly regarded Washington DC attorneys, are remarkably well qualified to tell the story. Willens headed the counsel team for the Northern Marianas negotiators from late in 1972 through execution of the covenant in a ceremony at Mt Carmel High School on Saipan on 15 February 1975, and a 24 March 1976 ceremony in the East Room of the White House when President Gerald Ford

signed the Joint Resolution of the United States Congress approving the covenant.

Since that time, Willens and Siemer have played a role in events related to implementation of the covenant. They worked together in serving as counsel for the First and Third Marianas Constitutional Conventions, in 1976 and 1995-96, respectively. Both are quite knowledgeable about the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and its relationship with the United States, and they have previously coauthored writings on those topics.

This book is not merely a reflection of the authors' own personal recollections and their private review of notes, pertinent documents, and records. They have supplemented these sources with perspectives of some 136 others by conducting taped interviews. They also instituted Freedom of Information litigation to obtain access to additional background information from US agencies.

The authors point to the compact as the only instance in US history in which a people ever joined the United States voluntarily, on terms they had negotiated themselves (343).

From a Micronesian point of view, the covenant was pivotal. Negotiation and execution of the covenant were the most important set of events in Micronesia during the second half of the twentieth century, for these actions had lasting effect on all peoples of the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI).

Negotiations concerning termination of the Trust Territory began in October 1969 on a territory-wide basis, with a general understanding,

grounded in international law as well as internal US directives, that the entire area would be a single political unit on termination of the United Nations trusteeship.

However, the primary US goals, based on military needs, were to have the area become an unincorporated US territory (19) and to obtain land rights in the Northern Mariana Islands, where the United States wished to lease part or all of Tinian for a possible air base; the Marshall Islands, where the United States has long held Kwajalein Atoll for ballistic missile tests; and Palau, where the United States was considering establishing a submarine port, with a Marines Corps base to be on Babelthau Island (26).

When the Micronesian negotiators insisted that Micronesia would be self-governing, or independent, and that territorial status would not be discussed, the Nixon administration in December 1972 opened separate negotiations with representatives of the Northern Mariana Islands. The eventual result was that the broad notion of a politically unified Micronesia, which would have covered an area in the Pacific Ocean as large as the continental United States, was never realized. Instead, the area of the Trust Territory was fragmented into four political units.

As it happened, the United States reached separate agreements with each of those three areas in which it sought land rights for military purposes—the Northern Marianas, Palau, and the Marshall Islands. The balance of the old Trust Territory—Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae—apparently adjudged to have no particular military importance, was dealt with as

one group, now the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). This has led some to contend that in its negotiations with those to whom it had trust responsibilities, the United States placed greater emphasis on its military interests in the strategic trust area than on the people of the Trust Territory.

In this book Willens and Siemers do not explicitly acknowledge this dark side of the covenant story, but they do marshal considerable evidence pointing toward a conclusion that, in entering into the separate negotiations, the United States was simply bowing to the wishes of the people of the Northern Marianas, and to other geographic and cultural realities. The authors remind us that the people of the Northern Mariana Islands did desire a closer relationship with the United States, did dissent from the refusal of the Congress of Micronesia to consider a closer status, and did seek the opportunity to negotiate separately with the United States. They also emphasize that great distances separated the Northern Marianas from the other islands within the Trust Territory, and that there were numerous language groups and diverse cultures within the trusteeship area.

Of course, the points concerning distances, cultures, and languages are true of all the island groups, including those within the far-flung Federated States of Micronesia, which includes numerous cultural and language groups. Saipan itself, the major island in the Northern Marianas, furnishes strong proof that the major CNMI ethnic group, the Chamorros, can live with people grounded in cultures and languages of other areas, including those of the Federated States. The

Carolinians, most of whom hail from the outer islands of Yap and Chuuk, and speak an amalgam of the languages of those areas, make up about 25 percent of the population of persons of Northern Marianas descent on Saipan.

The real issue concerning fragmentation is whether the desire of the people of the Northern Marianas to separate from the rest of the Trust Territory resulted from actions of the United States in treating the Northern Marianas differently from other TTPI areas. For example, the Marianas was administered separately by the US Navy until 1962. Thereafter, Saipan had the economic advantage and prestige of being the capital of the TTPI government. Then, as the authors say, when the Kennedy administration decided to increase investment in the Trust Territory as a step toward terminating the trusteeship, "Saipan benefitted the most from the new American policies and the funds appropriated to implement them" (13). Unfortunately, the authors do not explore whether these and other actions had the calculated or accidental effect of causing the people of the Northern Marianas to desire closer relationship with the United States.

The authors are discreet and generally restrict themselves to a straightforward telling of the story of the covenant. There are some titillating tidbits, such as the executive director of the Marianas Political Status Commission decking an Air Force Colonel in a bar in Songsong Village, Rota (152-154), but this is not a book designed for those who want startling personal revelations or behind-the-scenes tales of harsh words spoken, angry thoughts, or hidden motiva-

tions. Neither, despite the care with which the authors gathered and confirmed information, is it the place for lawyers to go in researching issues that have arisen while the covenant has been in effect. There is little "legislative history" to support a particular interpretation of a specific provision in the covenant.

Yet the authors have done splendidly what they set out to do. The book is an important historical document, of great interest and importance to scholars of the area or to anybody who simply wants to know more about the actions and negotiations that led to and followed execution of the covenant. The reader is treated to a full history of each round of negotiations, a last-minute attempt to prevent the signing through litigation, and, ultimately, execution of the covenant by the negotiators.

This is followed by a thorough telling of subsequent events, including the 17 June 1975 plebiscite in which some 78.8 percent of the Northern Marianas electorate voted for the covenant (292). We see powerful Phillip Burton, chair of the House Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs of the House Interior Committee, move the bill through the US House of Representatives with dispatch, obtaining committee approval by a vote of 30 to 0 on 16 July 1975 and entire House approval by voice vote on 20 July 1975 (299).

Because of opposition mounted by first-term Senator Gary Hart, the covenant encountered more difficulty in the US Senate, but eventually, on 24 February 1976, the Senate approved the covenant 66 to 23, and we arrive in the East Room of the White House for the 24 March 1976 signing cere-

mony. Although implementation of the covenant began immediately, it was not until partial termination of the trusteeship agreement, on 3 November 1986, that the covenant was declared fully effective by President Reagan.

The book then concludes with a fascinating review of the experiences in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands under the covenant during the past twenty-five years. Chapter 10 contains discussions of the major issues of these years, including, among others, judicial and governmental acceptance of the covenant's clauses modifying normal application of the US constitution to land rights, jury trials, and other matters: growth of the CNMI tourist industry and economy; economic challenges of recent years; issues that have arisen concerning relations between the CNMI and US governments; and the notorious immigration and wage issues that have caused widespread consternation in recent years.

To boot, the book sets out the covenant itself and includes a bibliography of numerous books, articles, and documents relating to the covenant and the Northern Marianas. This absorbing book is an invaluable addition to the historical record of events concerning the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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For the Good of Mankind: A History of the People of Bikini and Their Islands, by Jack Niedenthal. Second Edition. Majuro, Marshall Islands: Bravo Publishers, 2001. ISBN 982-9050-02-5; xviii + 264 pages, figures, maps, photographs, appendixes, bibliography, index. US\$16.99.

Jack Niedenthal's work is a labor of love. After Ralph Waltz, Niedenthal was the second young American to arrive in the Marshall Islands as a Peace Corps volunteer, marry into the Bikini community, and come to devote his life to Bikinians. Niedenthal's Peace Corps service was a three-year stint on Namu Atoll between 1981 and 1984. Originally from Pennsylvania and educated at the University of Arizona, he was transformed by his encounter with Marshallese and their culture. After Namu, Niedenthal eagerly accepted an offer by Waltz to teach elementary school on Kili Island, where the people of Bikini Atoll were eventually resettled after their home atoll was selected as an American nuclear test site in 1946.

A Wisconsin lad, Waltz had joined the Peace Corps in the mid-1960s following his university education in Milwaukee. After a year elsewhere, Waltz was assigned to Kili as a teacher. He served in that capacity until Bikinians hired him as their first trust liaison officer, a position involving liaison work between Bikinians and the local Marshallese government, various agencies of the US government, the media, and other outsiders. The liaison officer also managed funds allocated by the US government as compensation and for the rehabilitation of Bikini Atoll. After Waltz's early