

listed, including a fuller account of indigenous churches that have taken the place of older authority structures in eastern Polynesia.

The most original material deriving from the author's own research is in two chapters on France's relations with Australia and New Zealand, and the work of the Comité de l'Océanie française as a pressure group. The latter was not particularly effective in the interwar period. If anything, politics in both New Caledonia and French Polynesia, which had been quite lively in the late nineteenth century, suffered a setback after 1900 and did not really recover until the period of the *Loi cadre* reforms. But Aldrich is right to emphasize, as few others have done, the place of the British dominions both as rivals in Pacific influence and as complementary markets for the very limited economic production and consumption possible in areas of formal French control. That theme of regional, rather than metropolitan-periphery, development, is not sufficiently addressed by the French writers on empire whose works are thoughtfully assessed at the end of the book.

There are still some gaps in the assessment of the French contribution to administrative and social change in the conclusion. The place of the French legal system, both in personal and commercial law and in *droit administratif* deserves a mention, if only because several generations of Pacific Islanders live under this system, which has fundamentally influenced their land tenure, contract law, and civil rights. Secondly, despite the careful attention paid to metropolitan factors in accounting for the "French pres-

ence," we still have no reasoned explanation of the ways in which decision making in Paris in the days of the Ministry for the Navy and the later Colonial Ministry framed the administration and dominated the politics of France's island possessions. Given the continuation of that "presence" in the most formal ways, consideration has to be given to the mechanisms that overrode, rather than worked through, local legislative and representative systems, whether dominated by settlers in New Caledonia or by Euro-Polynesians in Tahiti. Budgetary centralization and the political subordination of the local executive may in the end have been the biggest single difference between the French islands and the British in the Pacific.

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*A History of the Pacific Islands*, by I. C. Campbell. Christchurch: University of Canterbury Press, and Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989; St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1990, ISBN 0-7022-2291-7, 239 pp, maps, tables, glossary, index. NZ\$29.95.

With similar concision, but less originality and polish, one can say that Ian Campbell's *History of the Pacific Islands* examines the region "from the earliest times to the present day." And all this in fewer than 240 pages. As Campbell states in his preface: "this book is the first since 1951 to present a synoptic history of the region as a whole."

It traverses the three conventional geographical divisions of the island Pacific—Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. Campbell's chapter organization is also conventional. Commencing with a chapter devoted to the original inhabitants and characteristics of their societies, Campbell goes on in Chapter 2 to examine Austronesian settlement of what is now Polynesia. The next four chapters deal with Polynesia until the latter half of the nineteenth century. Melanesia scores two chapters to reach the same stage—that is, the beginning of European annexation—and Micronesia, one chapter. The three major divisions are melded in the subsequent chapters, where a more regional and thematic treatment deals with the politics of annexation, the nature of the societies after a hundred years of Western contact, priorities in colonial policies, the consolidation of colonial administrations mainly after World War I, and the impact of World War II on policies. The process of islands gaining or (regaining) independence merits a chapter, as does the postindependence period with a closing chapter on a retrospective and, as far as any historian will, a prospective overview.

On the cover of the book, Campbell's colleague and current director of the Macmillan Brown Centre at Christchurch, New Zealand, Malama Meleisea, remarks that Campbell has examined historical events and processes from the point of view and interests of the Islanders concerned. This comment is arguable, as is the claim that "no other work has done this."

Although the picture Campbell paints is a valid one and a fine example

of island-oriented history, it is in a Western framework. The bulk of the book deals with the post-Western contact period, while the political and social prehistory of the island societies is sketched very lightly. Although most of the Pacific's indigenous population was and still is in Melanesia, the region first settled by human beings, Campbell's initial emphasis falls heavily on Polynesia—its discovery, early trade contacts, missionization, and the growth of the island kingdoms. Melanesia's two chapters represent a mere half of the attention given to Polynesia.

The chronology of European penetration dominates, where perhaps sequence, pattern, and significance to the indigenous people could have been emphasized more. The exploration and contacting of the populous Highlands of New Guinea by Westerners between the 1930s and 1950s, for example, were just as cosmos-altering to the inhabitants as Cook's contact with the Maori in 1769–1770 and sandalwood trading in Hawai'i in the 1810s. Whether Polynesia looms large in this history because of its importance to the early Westerners or because of the resultant myriad writings on the region, it still reflects a Western definition of significance.

Even in the post-Western contact period, internal historical processes of island societies—for example, the resistance by various *ali'i* chiefs in Tahiti to the monarchy during the reign of Pomare IV, and the vast social implications for ordinary Hawaiians of the Great Mahele of 1848—are not mentioned. Campbell's history is an etic one, based on principles imposed by a

Western historian. It is unlikely that emic (indigenous) perceptions will produce a general Pacific history because of the particularities of culture and location. Most likely, when a general history of the Pacific is written by a Pacific Islander it will still be an etic history, although the interpretation may be different. Islander-oriented history is the province of specialists, be they native or foreign, who have the cultural keys to unlock the meaning and uses of the past for a specific group of people. As Francis Hezel (*Pacific Studies*, July 1988) has pointed out, the expression of that history may not be in the written form so dear to Western historical tradition. What Campbell has done, and all he claims to do without any apologies, is to show with clarity the processes and consequences of interaction between Islanders and outsiders as well as the near-inevitability of European political and often cultural dominance in an island environment, constrained by the inherent nature of their small-scale, isolated societies and distance from world commercial and population centers.

Within the framework he has selected, Campbell writes sympathetically of the historical actors on the Pacific Island stage. Neo-Marxists and other theorists will look in vain for a grand design. Yet analysis walks hand-in-hand with flowing narrative, devoid of jargon. Campbell keeps it simple, but is not simplistic. On the intercultural processes, he rarely overstates the case either for Islanders or for newcomers. Eminently a realist, he does not hesitate to point out the weaknesses and deficiencies in the leadership

of some island societies that exacerbated their existing locational and technological vulnerability to certain predatory Westerners. Pacific societies, past and present, have not been idealized—a temptation to which some writers with a historical bent have succumbed in recent years in a misguided and sometimes dishonest effort to restore Islander identity and self-respect.

As modern Pacific Islanders face the challenge of not simply running localized chiefdoms or small descent or residence groups, but of governing sovereign states, there is an emerging comprehension of the difficulties faced by former colonial administrations. Campbell does not claim that the island states concerned have suddenly absolved their former colonial masters of all their imperialist sins, but there is in the tone of the book far less criticism of the colonial era than was heard twenty or even ten years ago. Perhaps Campbell is reflecting the loss by new Pacific states of the moral high ground rather than their appreciation of the problems of colonial government. He looks forward to the political future of the island states with more optimism, albeit guarded, than other commentators who see in growing political patronage the undermining of constitutional legitimacy and respect for the state. However, in the closing section of the book there is a strong sense of the immense limitations that circumscribe the range of options for Pacific Islanders in their search for economic independence and development. Throughout, although Western impact may not have been “fatal,” Campbell

sees it as an inescapable, unrelenting impetus to adaptation and, often, acculturation by island societies.

The newcomers to the islands are assessed with an equally critical eye as are the Islanders. However, Cook, not as firmly enthroned in the Polynesian pantheon as Campbell implies, is portrayed as he is perceived by most English-speaking Westerners, as a beatified image of the noble, civilized explorer.

However, it must be kept in mind that Campbell makes it quite plain who the potential readership of the book is. It is aimed at the general reader. And it is on that basis that the book should be judged. No specialist historian (or prehistorian) should take it as an affront if a particular field of study—say, a dot of an island with a couple of hundred inhabitants, or a theory of original settlement—has been dealt with summarily. The book indeed is a summary, a synopsis of hundreds of monographs, theses, and specialist studies, which provides an introduction to this huge ocean of islands for the general reader and the novice student.

Although the odd error of fact has crept in—for example, William MacGregor (who, like many others, is omitted from the index) was not the second governor of British New Guinea (161)—the book is fundamentally reliable as a regional history. Campbell's suggestions for further reading seem at times idiosyncratic in view of the fact that he is a Pacific Island scholar and teacher of almost twenty years' standing. The recommended island studies are useful, but some other references are outdated or

unreliable. Students in particular should tread with care here.

Nonetheless those who teach these students will welcome this book. Campbell reduces thousands of individual trees to neat forests. This is not simply a conceptual condensation, but also one of expression. Some recent island and Islander studies can be recommended to students only because they have content unavailable elsewhere; their prose—leadened and labored—is no example for students of history. *A History of the Pacific Islands* is an excellent model for budding writers. Campbell's precision and clarity of prose reflect his familiarity with a massive corpus of information as well as his incisiveness of mind. It may be mundane, but perhaps one token of esteem a practicing university teacher can offer is to say that Campbell's nice phrasing lends itself to the basis for essay and examination questions with the standard appendix of "Discuss." Students appreciate this book; mine have bought out stocks at the bookstore, even though it was originally only a "recommended" text. For them and the general reader, this book is really an essential.

Ian Campbell is to be thanked for giving us this balanced, lucid, and reliable foundation text.

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*The Pacific Theater: Island Representations of World War II*, edited by Geoffrey White and Lamont Lindstrom. Pacific Islands Monograph