

Alex Mamak and Ahmed Ali, eds. *Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific*. Winchester, Mass.: Allen & Unwin, Inc., 1979. Pp. 144, bibliography, index. \$18.95 (paper \$7.95).

Alex Mamak. *Colour, Culture, and Conflict: A Study of Pluralism in Fiji*. New York and Rushcutters Bay, Australia: Pergamon Press, Ltd., 1978. Pp. xi, 203, illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index. \$20.00.

The island states of the South Pacific share certain common characteristics after emerging from prolonged periods of colonization by various European powers. They are poor and overpopulated; the traditional economies, at one time self-sufficient, were destroyed. Dependent on primary-producing monocrop economic systems that are subjected to wide fluctuations in prices on the world market, the islands are now pawns to multinational corporations which virtually dictate their economic life. Food production is inadequate for local needs; meat and even fresh fruits and vegetables are imported from the bountiful store of their imperial masters. Malnutrition is widespread; a Coca-Cola and Cheesties culture has been implanted as a regular part of the islander's diet. High unemployment and low wages compounded by high material expectations impel large numbers of islanders to migrate to New Zealand and Australia in search of the good life and bright lights. The migrants live in ghettos, suffer discrimination, and are harassed by immigration authorities. Out-migration is matched internally by a steady flow of rural residents to urban areas looking for jobs and adding to the strain on public services available in the towns. Culturally, European colonization has imprinted preferences for forms of music, clothing, diet, and education which, locally, are a poor imitation of their counterparts in the imperial countries. These cultural crumbs from the table, crudely absorbed and readily assimilated by islanders, are the local measure of the mastery of the modern Western world. The Protestant work ethic is part of the package. It requires a routine of mechanical behavior that ascribes "laziness" and "inferiority" to uncooperative islanders. "You are poor because you are lazy;" this goes in tandem with "you are lazy because you are black or brown." All of this is part of an ideological system that justified external intrusion and witnessed the loss of land and domination of society for the islander's "own good." They needed to be saved from themselves. Self-contempt and cultural alienation attended colonial penetration. These attitudes are part of a colonial legacy that continues to haunt the islander's self-image, and self-respect. Finally, the island states have inherited a new stratification system with gross inequality in the distribution of property and prestige. Because the pyramid is steep, few ascend the social ladder beyond degr-

ading manual levels, for example, as sales clerks and hotel servants. Many others are even without this “benefit.” Drinking, the last refuge, leaves large numbers of young and old incurably alcoholic, delinquent, un-Christian, and parasitic. This is, in brief, a picture of the colonial legacy: economic dependency; cultural alienation; social inequality; psychological self-contempt; and political servility. There seems to be no way out; statistical data published regularly points to the population explosion outstripping gains in per capita income. Aid packages are partly oriented to pay the interest on accumulated external debt and to subsidize annual budgetary deficits. They are rarely designed with any urgency to acknowledge the existing realities; indeed, they tend to exacerbate the problems of underdevelopment.

These are not distortions or exaggerations; they are daily testimonies which most islanders experience. It is not a legacy of pride—either to the colonizer or colonized. However, the colonized must live with it. The situation offers little optimism if current economic strategies and external relationships are maintained.

For us, the relevant question to ask is this: how did this state of affairs eventuate? More specifically, did the indigenous peoples of Melanesia, Polynesia, and Australasia willingly cooperate with the alien intruders in the rape of their societies? Did they resist? How much blame must they carry themselves? And what are they doing about it now? The book *Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific* by Alex Mamak and Ahmed Ali addresses itself to the issue of “resistance, destruction, dispossession, and discrimination” (p. 133) in the South Pacific. The authors claim that very little scholarship has been devoted to rebellion and social movements in the region; they wish to correct the traditional view that the islanders were passive or conservative agents in their own undoing (p. 133). They regard their work as a departure from other studies which have emphasized assimilation and cultururation, and much of the current ongoing research which focuses on “nation-building;” “modernization,” and “micro-nationalism.” Ali and Mamak have undertaken in this volume to highlight “the shameful record of colonial treatment” (p. 133) of the islanders by presenting five case histories of rebellions launched by oppressed peoples against their oppressors. In some ways, this book, by focusing on insurrectionary movements, may indirectly be skirting the last alternative available to the indigenous islanders to change the course of events in their lives and those of their children.

Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific is written by six authors each contributing to the case histories. The five cases deal with conflict between white and nonwhite peoples but have sought to do so within an interpretive framework that utilizes three variables simultaneously: race,

ethnicity, and class. In the area of theory, the authors regard their work as original and useful. They state that "to date, no attempt has been made to give equal emphasis to all three concepts." (p. 14). The case histories of rebellion are: (1) The Aborigine Gurindji strike action at Wattie Creek by anthropologist Hannah Middleton; (2) The Maori Parihaka rebellion in New Zealand by historian Daniel Lyons; (3) The Maasina Rule in the Solomon Islands by historian Hugh Laracy; (4) An Indian industrial strike in Fiji by Ahmed Ali, and (5) The strike by the Bougainville mine workers in 1975 by anthropologist Alex Mamak and geographer Richard Beford. Each of the authors presented his case history by following a common organizing framework outlining the setting and historical background. This is followed by analysis of the rebellion utilizing the analytic variables (race, class, and ethnicity) developed by Ali and Mamak in the introductory chapter. The concluding chapter attempts to pull the insights generated by the case discussion into some sort of coherent whole.

Substantively, *Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific* does not live up to expectations. Partly, this is because too much is attempted in four short chapters. To be sure, each author handled his materials very adeptly. However, the idea of resistance is not traced from the point of contact and colonization; the case histories suggest sporadic encounters between oppressor and oppressed. They do not describe the instruments or methods of colonization, the disruption, the dispossession, the exploitation, the transformation that occurred at the outset, or the means by which subjugation has been modernized and perpetuated. Indeed, most of the cases examined dealt with challenges that transpired in the recent past when the colonial acts of ethnocide, exploiter-exploited relationships, and land seizures had already consolidated.

The problem is not insignificant. Although Ali and Mamak have done well to identify this significant lacunae in the literature, the case histories have been at best suggestive of the wealth of similar if not more significant events that await exploration. Further, much of the existing literature on contact is about European exploration and activity told by European scholars. A history of colonization told from the point of view of indigenous interests and experience may serve well to redeem the image of the islander as a compliant, unwitting, and cooperative creature who invited without opposition his own servitude and destruction. The time of a new defiant history is presently underway in other parts of the Third World especially in the Caribbean and Afro-America where scholarly resources are devoted to a reinterpretation of slavery, in particular slave rebellions and insurrections. Given the deplorable condition of the current state of affairs in the islands, such a new history may contribute significantly to restoring the dignity of the islander. Chances are that such a

new history may even rekindle struggles that will challenge the new forms of economic and political bondage that perpetuate the condition of selfdom in the South Pacific.

In the area of theory, *Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific* must be regarded as a contribution in the right direction. Its emphasis on the "class" factor in addition to the traditional variables, "race" and "ethnicity," however, is not as brave as it could have been. An extensive literature on dependency theory and class formation is now available to enrich this angle of the book. Ali and Mamak are correct in pointing to the increasingly salient role that class differentiation is playing in social and economic relations in the islands given the increase in wage employment, localization, urbanization etc. What the case histories fail to do adequately is to link the economic and class factors to an interpretation of the structural dependency with the outside capitalist world in which the multinational corporations that dominate the Pacific island economies play a preeminent role. The conditions described at the outset of this review can hardly be accounted for otherwise. Neither can a program of redemption appropriate to the situation be designed without such a far-reaching analysis. Finally, the term "race class" is not a contribution. If the authors wished to acknowledge the continuing role of race and ethnicity in explaining the problems of exploitation, discrimination, inequality, etc., then that can be easily and lucidly done without adding such an awkward term to the cluttered terminological jungle that already exists in the social sciences. Overall, then, *Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific* is a worthy contribution to a new direction in theory and substance that scholarship on the South Pacific urgently needs to take.

The second book in this review overlaps with the first in the theoretical area of pluralism. *Colour, Culture, and Conflict: A Study of Pluralism in Fiji* by Alex Mamak utilizes a variant of the cultural pluralism model, originally set forth by J. S. Fumivall and elaborated upon by M. G. Smith, to examine the problem of integration in Fiji. In *Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific* the editors were critical of the various pluralism models because of their preoccupation with racial and ethnic categories to the exclusion of the class variable in the study of multi-ethnic settings. Mamak in *Colour, Culture, and Conflict* foreshadowed some of the fundamental elements in the analytic framework that was subsequently applied to *Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific*. The author rejects any analysis that is exclusively focused on the race variable; he points to the new differentiations, especially class cleavages, that have been created as a consequence of increased urban-rural migration, industrialization, and overlapping membership in voluntary associations.

Colour, Culture, and Conflict was originally submitted as a doctoral dissertation to the anthropology department at the University of Hawaii.

It is an empirical study of racial conflict in Fiji, the research location was Suva and the methodology substantially depended on survey sampling and participant observation. Its main proposition is that racial divisions among Indians, Fijians, and Europeans are not cast in rigid impermeable compartments, but are modified by shared activities at the workplace by contacts in neighborhood residential settlements, and by common membership in voluntary associations such as trade unions. In particular, the point is stressed that urbanization has increased interethnic contact and cooperation leading to restraints in the expression of racist and communalist sentiments. Mamak's contribution is probably most significant in pointing to the internal differentiation within the Indian and Fijian communities which render monolithic interracial confrontation unlikely. Further, the intense tension that tends to be generated by bipolar conflicts is modified by the existence of a third group, the Europeans. In the end, argues Mamak, all these interracial criss-crossing overlapping relationships herald an optimistic era of interracial relations based on noncommunal factors. Indeed, the suggestion is inescapable that in due course Fiji will witness a new melting pot of races in which ethnic interests are eclipsed and superceded by other criteria in social organization. If this theory of integration proves correct operationally in Fiji, then, at last, a proven formula of redemption would have been invented available to be applied to the numerous communally-divided societies that clutter the international scene with interminable brutal and bloody internecine crises. If Mamak's theory of social change does solve Fiji's nervous interracial problems, then we need not look away with hopeless frustration from Cyprus, Guyana, Northern Ireland, Surinam, Malaysia, Nigeria, Lebanon, etc.

Research for *Colour, Culture, and Conflict* was conducted in the early 1970s; the book was published in 1978. In the intervening period significant events would explode on the Fiji scene nullifying Mamak's optimism and discrediting this theory of social change. In September 1975, Mr. Sankasi Butadroka introduced in the Fiji Parliament a motion that demanded the immediate expulsion of Indians from Fiji. The motion was debated for an entire month and reported extensively over the local mass media. Indian fears of "Uganda again" climbed to intense heights; reassurances by Prime Minister Ratu Mara that they would not be expelled could not eliminate the widely-shared belief among Indians that Butadroka's proposal received tacit endorsement by the vast majority of Fijians. Indian-Fijian distrust is deeply embedded in the country's history and social structure. The veneer of interethnic cooperation that Mamak so carefully documented but magnified into a portrait of qualitative changes in race relations was rudely torpedoed in this period of crisis.

Plural societies are particularly vulnerable to instability precipitated by ethnic chauvinists seeking their own aspirations. Slow, incremental

acts of bridge-building across ethnic boundaries are put to severe test and frequently completely shattered when the irrational sentiments that communal loyalties tend to evoke are activated during crisis situations. It does not take much to trigger interethnic conflagration in plural societies. The Fiji case is replete with examples of communal conflicts that bordered on violence. Mamak's study would not have fallen into the trap of easy optimism if it had been comparative taking cases from Malaysia, Guyana, or Cyprus for analysis and insight. Evidence that a live volcano resides under the skin of Fiji's social organization is not difficult to find. When the September 1977 general elections occurred, the 25 percent support from Indian electors for the Fijian-dominated Alliance Party evaporated to 14 percent. In addition, the land issue was inflamed again and again in 1975 through 1977 as Indians accused Fijians of economic jealousy in limiting the availability of land to Indian tenants, and Fijians in turn pointed to Indian greed and increased economic power in Fiji. The land issue spilled over into violence when in one notable case a number of Butadroka's followers using bulldozers pulled down several Indian dwellings without government intervention. Indians do not feel at home in Fiji. Every year many migrate seeking permanent homes in Canada, the US, and Australia. Unfortunately, the slow interracial harmony that was beginning to develop around shared interests and increased overlapping memberships in voluntary associations that Mamak surveyed was practically undone between 1975 and 1978. Perhaps it can be rebuilt slowly again. However, the fragility of this area of cooperative behavior will undoubtedly be buffeted again by future crises. This had been the experience elsewhere. The interlude between crises can easily delude the analyst to place his bets on a new optimistic era of racial harmony. What is partly established by the recent events in Fiji is that communal and racial cleavages can be softened around their raw edges by periods of peace and quiet when the forces of urbanization and industrialization slowly weave aspects of ethnic behavior together. However, the problem is much more fundamental; the ethnic boundaries are not easily susceptible to erosion. Even in the United States where the melting pot theory first evolved, the persistence of primordial cleavages has baffled the analysts. A democratic setting provides an environment particularly vulnerable to intercommunal strife because of the competition for votes and office.

In the area of theory, Mamak's contribution on the concepts pluralization and pluralization is partly useful because of the resurgence of ethnonationalism in Fiji and other multiethnic societies. The author relies heavily on Leo Depres' formulation of the reticulated plural society model applied to Guyana in the book *Nationalist Politics and Cultural Pluralism in Guyana*. Depres' model was rejected because it was geared to fit a racially polarized conflict situation. Mamak incorporated, as a pivotal

variable, the emergent social differentiations and their ethnically overlapping memberships in his own adapted pluralism model, exaggerating the role of integrative forces thereby. If Depres' analysis of Guyanese society overemphasized sectional forces, Mamak's underrated them. In the end, Depres' model fared well as a predictive instrument in the light of events that transpired in Guyana, while Mamak's integrative optimism has suffered enormous setbacks. On balance, however, *Colour, Culture, and Conflict* is an insightful and systematic empirical work and a welcome addition to the literature on racially-divided societies around the world.

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REVIEWS

Dennis M. Ogawa. *Kodomo no tame ni--For the Sake of the Children: The Japanese American Experience in Hawaii*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978. Pp. xxiv, 615, bibliography. \$15.00.

Although this book is about history, it is a different kind of history book, for it includes reading selections of a kind not usually found in objective histories. It also has a message for Hawai'i, and by extension, for all multi-ethnic societies. Assembling a surprising variety of primary sources and readings, the book depicts the experience of the Japanese Americans in Hawai'i from the first legendary arrival of shipwrecked sailors to the present. The term experience is a key one. The author has not been content to end with an already striking assortment of readings--editorials from contemporary newspapers, snatches of biography, excerpts of congressional hearings, arguments from controversial pamphlets--he has also offered selections from imaginative literature. Ogawa has found in these selections a way of filling in the element missing from other historical sources: the personal, human context, the everyday flavor of life, the unresearchable element in history. We can learn about Japanese values such as filial