

lacking in context.

Part of the difficulty seems to be Tarling's desire to avoid needless repetition of observations already presented in his earlier work, *Britain, the Brookes and Brunei*, but as events in Brunei, Sarawak, Sabah and Sulu were intricately intertwined, and tended frequently to be considered as a whole by both local and London authorities, the problems of dividing the material are formidable. The present book is advertised as a companion volume to the former. It appears rather, despite a slightly different thrust, to be an extension of it, and regarding the period prior to the formation of the North Borneo Company, the reader is inclined to wish that the two books could have been published as a single multi-volume work, so interdependent and complementary are they.

Similarly, in spite of its prominence in the title, Sulu's role in the book is circumscribed. Within the frame of British policy toward North Borneo, the Sulu Sultan functioned principally as the legal peg on which every cession of the area from 1761 had hung. Britain was therefore constrained to support his independence or at least the fiction of his independence vis-a-vis the Spanish for as long as possible. This was to the Sultan's advantage, but a successful British drive to engross the internal trade of North Borneo, long Sulu's most valuable economic hinterland, was not. According to at least one scholar, Sulu's hold on the commerce of the region was not broken by the North Borneo Company until as late as the 1890s.¹ Tenure of North Borneo was of overriding concern to both Britain and Sulu, but because of their differing perspectives, the legal status of the matter, which so exercised the British, did not automatically reflect the real boundaries of the Sultan's freedom of action. What the reader misses in the narrative of British-Spanish-Sulu dealings, is an occasional alternative standard by which to judge it, when and how much the British view of Sulu, coloured as it was by diplomatic necessity, diverged from actual local circumstance.

Strictly speaking, however, such questions lie outside the defined purpose of this book. In all that touches British concerns, what emerges is a skillful, often fascinating portrait of the multiple moves — from conflict to sometimes ungainly compromise, as each new challenge to her interest arose — by which Britain's imperial expansion in North Borneo gradually took form.

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Pacific Islanders under German Rule: A Study in the Meaning of Colonial Resistance. By Peter J. Hempenstall. Australian National University Press,, Canberra, 1978. 264pp., illustrations, maps, end papers. Aust. price: \$19.50.

GERMANY lost her Pacific colonies in 1914. Yet until very recently only scant information on German rule has been available. At best it has been fragmentary, and it is still far from complete. It may be that this is due to the fact that it is the winners who write history. If so it should also be said that such neglect has been

¹ James F. Warren, *Trade, Raid, Slave: The Socio-Economic Patterns of the Sulu Zone*, Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1975.

encouraged by the simple fact that very few Australasian historians, who are the group most interested in the Pacific, can read German. Cut off from the sources they have therefore, tended to leave German Pacific as a kind of *terra incognita*.

Fortunately, this is now changing. Hempenstall is one of about four scholars currently writing in English on German colonialism in the Pacific, and this book is the first study which approximates to being a comprehensive account of the topic, although its focus, as the title indicates, is decidedly narrower. Hempenstall's main interest is in the demands the Germans made on the people in three territories — Samoa, New Guinea and Ponape — and in the islanders' responses. He has worked his way through a vast quantity of German archival material — official, commercial and missionary — to produce a detailed, original, and clearly written narrative of some dramatic episodes in the island people's challenge to foreign domination.

In Samoa the nationalist cause was led by Lauaki Namulauulu. He was a man committed to maintaining traditional values and deeply resented Governor Solf's attempt, begun in 1905, to alter the basis of chiefly power by tying Samoan leadership more closely to the administration. Lauaki's campaign of protest almost led to open war with the Germans in 1909, but then, rather than bring such an affliction on his troubled country Lauaki surrendered. Soumadau, his counterpart on Ponape in Micronesia, was less squeamish. In 1887, when Spain ruled the island, Ponapeans from his district of Sokehs had killed over eighty soldiers as well as the Governor; and Soumadou was ready to follow their example when in 1908 the German regime introduced a programme of taxation, compulsory labour on roads, and land reform. The revolt began in 1910 when Soumadau shot the administrator, and was crushed four months later, with the aid of six warships and nearly five hundred troops. In the vast and politically fragmented district of New Guinea centres of resistance were more numerous and dispersed than in Samoa and Ponape but opposition to European encroachments was no less resolute — and was just as firmly countered.

Hempenstall's data clearly illustrate the dictum of the Governor of German East Africa in 1905 that 'Kolonialpolitik is the politics of conquest, . . . the occupation of a land by a foreign people does not succeed without conflict.' At the same time he makes clear the islanders' strong sense of their own worth and identity. Any temptation to generalize glibly about 'German colonialism' must, however, be modified by the fact that such observations apply not only to German territories or to the pre-1914 era. The New Zealand administration shot Samoans, the Australians executed New Guineans by the score, America has called on the resources of a superpower to establish its permanent dominance over Micronesia, while the English judicial system recently did violence to the virtue of justice in depriving the Banabans of the enjoyment of their homeland. As for the islanders, the spirit of Hempenstall's resisters was shown at the South Pacific Conference at Honiara in 1979 when the island governments, defeating Australian and New Zealand opposition, voted for a resolution condemning continued French rule in the Pacific Islands.

Hempenstall's book not only fills a large gap in our knowledge of the past, it also justifies the study of history as a means of understanding the present.

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