

## Book and Media Reviews

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have with what is ultimately a robust contribution to the growing field of settler colonial studies, and—I have to admit—sometimes the metaphor really works. Rohrer likens the intellectual project to paddling a canoe: not a graceful glide, but a grunting, sweaty effort to move forward through powerful and shifting currents. It is not supposed to be easy.

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*Domination and Resistance: The United States and the Marshall Islands during the Cold War*, by Martha Smith-Norris. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0-8248-4762-3, x + 159 pages, extensive endnotes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$62.00.

Anthropologists, journalists, and filmmakers examining the impacts of US militarism in the Marshall Islands are numerous and sometimes trip over one another during research. It is refreshing to have a trained historian provide perspectives from a different discipline, as each field of study brings its own methods and foci.

Martha Smith-Norris's book supplements our collective knowledge about US Cold War activities in the Marshall Islands in many important ways. The sixty-five pages of endnotes and bibliography, as well as many photos in the text, include resources not discussed in other examinations of this topic and bring into clarity large-scale patterns of US behavior. Rather than treat US nuclear weapons testing and US missile testing in the Marshall

Islands as two separate activities, the author shows how the missile testing is an evolution of US actions and motivations at its Pacific proving grounds that began with nuclear weapons tests in 1946 and continue with contemporary US activities on Kwajalein Atoll.

Of critical importance to this history, Smith-Norris's archival sleuthing amplifies the contributions of Marshallese activists by documenting resistance to US military tests, including the sail-ins and sit-ins led by the landowners of Kwajalein. The archival research focuses on the ways that these protests embarrassed the United States or halted missile tests and on the fact that these resistance groups sometimes comprised mostly women. The impact of Marshallese protests on the military and political leadership in the United States becomes evident in source material Smith-Norris presents, such as the response of the US commander of the missile base in Kwajalein to the 1982 sit-in: "We should not underestimate the determination of the landowners . . . or their capacity to undertake further occupation measures calling for physical discomfort or even violent confrontation" (121).

Through her archival research, Smith-Norris also amplifies the colonial arrogance of US Government practices, such as the takings of land without obtaining Marshallese consent, including the decision to use Bikini Atoll in 1946 for nuclear weapons tests: "For a sum of \$10, the government of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands granted the United States the 'exclusive right to use and occupy' all of the Bikini Atoll 'for an

indefinite period of time.’ This document was signed by two American representatives . . . [but] significantly, no members of the Bikini Council were asked to sign the agreement” (45–46).

Another pattern that surfaces from the archival evidence is the US Government’s repeated resettlement of Marshallese on atolls or islands that were not previously occupied and that were unfit for full-time human habitation such as Rongerik, Ujelang, Ejit, Kili, and Mejatto. Smith-Norris’s meticulous archival research also substantiates previously documented patterns of human experimentation involving Marshallese exposed to radioactive fallout, resettled on contaminated lands, or used as control populations in biomedical research; none of these activities were for the “benefit” of the Marshallese. After reviewing documents pertaining to biomedical experimentation on Rongelap, the inhabited atoll closest to the ground-zero location of Bikini Atoll, the author concludes: “Clearly, the [Atomic Energy Commission’s] research interests prevailed over concerns for the health of the Rongelapese” (89).

While the standard format for most book reviews is to discuss both the strengths and critiques of a publication, this review draws inspiration from Shawn Wilson’s call (in *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* [2008]) to build relationships, in this case between disciplines and researchers. As Wilson pointed out: “Criticizing or judging would imply that I know more about someone else’s work and the relationships that went into it than they do them-

selves. I have no doubt that as others did their research, they used the methods and paradigms that seemed most suited to the job as they saw it” (2008, 43). With Wilson’s approach in mind, I consider it most important to address what Smith-Norris provides—the strengths—so the contributions of her work can interact with and add to other forms of knowledge.

There are so many different communities in the Marshall Islands impacted by US militarism, each with unique stories to tell. Even the survivors and champions with experiences from one atoll community might not know what it is like to walk in the shoes of another. The findings from Smith-Norris’s archival research are best used in combination with other source material to give a fuller account of this unique history, including its contemporary manifestations. Rather than criticize or judge her work, my suggestion is to read her book in tandem with other research because no single person or research project can include the enormity of understandings about the impacts of US nuclear weapons and missile testing program in the Marshall Islands.

Supplemental materials that could work in concert with Smith-Norris’s research include accounts that focus on women’s roles in this history such as *The Bikinians: A Study in Forced Migration* (by Robert C Kiste, 1974); *For the Good of Mankind: A History of the People of Bikini and Their Islands* (by Jack Niedenthal, 2001); *Consequential Damages of Nuclear War: The Rongelap Report* (by Barbara Johnson and Holly Barker, 2008); and *Don’t Ever Whisper: Darlene Keju* (by Giff Johnson, 2013).

US Government documents center on political and military interests, often male bastions, and tend to silence or minimize the roles of Marshallese women. Similarly, it is important to consider accounts beyond Bikini, Enewetak, Rongelap, and Utrik; there are entire communities that were not the focus of political and military actors or of Smith-Norris's analysis, such as the Marshallese workers hired by the Atomic Energy Commission and Department of Energy to clean-up Bikini and Enewetak, or communities such as Ailuk, Likiep, Wotho, Aur, and others that have significant histories related to these issues. Limiting analysis to the four atolls plays into a US narrative of history by minimizing and erasing the broader impacts of US nuclear testing/militarism in the Marshall Islands. It is also important to include all sixty-seven nuclear weapons tests in the Marshall Islands as part of the nuclear history. The sixty-seventh test, not discussed by Smith-Norris, was an airdrop off the waters of Enewetak; leaders in the Marshall Islands fought hard (an example of successful resistance) to get this test included as part of the history, noting that the air and seas around the Marshall Islands are as much a part of the nation as the lands on which people reside. Marshallese, like other indigenous peoples, stress interconnectivity between the air, sea, and land and recognized that they are part of the same universe.

Smith-Norris brings forward a much-needed focus on the resistance of Marshallese people. I hope that this book will inspire other researchers and storytellers to continue documenting the multiple and numerous forms of

protest including the vitally important sail-ins and sit-ins. There is a long and underreported history of Marshallese who refused to take part in US Government medical experiments, and of leaders who have circumnavigated the globe at great expense and time to challenge and resist US Government narratives of this history. Many of those leaders have passed away, but they have left a legacy of fighting and resistance for the next generation. Ilo kautiej im kakememejer wot (with deep respect we remember) Lijon Eknilang, John Anjain, Almira Matayoshi, Nelson Anjain, Ismael John, John Milne, Darlene Keju-Johnson, im ro jet rejako (and others who have passed away).

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*Maisa: The Chamoru Girl Who Saves Guåhan*. Feature film, 36 minutes, DVD, color, 2015. Directed by Michael Q Ceballos; distributed by Guam Department of Education and Twiddle Productions Inc, Honolulu. Language: Chamorro. For more information, see <http://maisa.twiddleproductions.com/index.html>

“Tâta, malago' yu' umegga' *Maisa!*” is one of the most ubiquitous phrases one hears in my household. Translated into English, what my two-year-old daughter is enthusiastically saying is “Daddy, I want to watch *Maisa!*” *Maisa: The Chamoru Girl Who Saves Guåhan* was created from a brilliant collaboration between the Chamorro Studies Division of the Guam Department of Education and

During World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union fought together as allies against the Axis powers. However, the relationship between the two nations was a tense one. Americans had long been wary of Soviet communism and concerned about Russian leader Joseph Stalin's tyrannical rule of his own country. The Cold War: The Atomic Age. The containment strategy also provided the rationale for an unprecedented arms buildup in the United States. In 1950, a National Security Council Report known as NSC-68 had echoed Truman's recommendation that the country use military force to contain communist expansionism anywhere it seemed to be occurring. HISTORY reviews and updates its content regularly to ensure it is complete and accurate. VIDEOS. Martha Smith-Norris opens with a dedication to Tony deBrum, the minister of foreign affairs who presented before the UN Trusteeship Council in 1981 and all of the others who fought, and continue to fight for justice in the Marshall Islands, demonstrating her argument expands beyond the discipline of history (v). She provides a valuable text to realize the contemporary and ongoing implications of the US nuclear and missile defense programs in the Marshall Islands and beyond. In July 2017, 130 nation-states gathered at the United Nations (UN) for the conference to negotiate a legally binding Domination and Resistance. The United States and the Marshall Islands during the Cold War. Martha Smith-Norris. Start free trial. Add to reading list. Share book. 344 pages. English. PDF. Martha Smith-Norris. Book details. Related. Information. Publisher. University of Hawaii Press. Year.