



of the Guam leadership, to rally behind that directive and the status issues that are implied therein.

Ballendorf and Willens have written an important book in that it gives the Guam leadership a rare opportunity when all hope, indeed, appeared dead and gone, all avenues closed.

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*Arnold H Leibowitz  
Counselor at Law  
Washington, DC*

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*Confrontation in the Pacific: The Guam Teachers' Strike of 1981*, Bruce G Karolle, David Becker, Honoka'a, HI, 2005. Spiral bound, 130 pp., photos, index, bibliography, US\$30.00.

(Copies available on request from the publisher, David Becker, Printer, Illuminations, Box 1800, Honoka'a, HI 96727.)

This book describes and explains, from one insider's vantage point, an important and unprecedented event that occurred some twenty-four years ago: the Guam teachers' strike. Not quite half of Guam's unionised teachers clashed with the Government of Guam (GovGuam) in a bitter struggle over salaries and wages. The strike began on 12 January and ran until 10 March 1981. The immediate cause of the confrontation was a newly passed law that raised the salaries of members of the GovGuam elite: legislators, executive branch officials, judges and agency heads. The estimated cost for doing this was in excess of \$2M.

For many weeks, this conflict divided families and set friends against one another. Political parties and church groups found themselves split down the middle. Never before had a Guam issue torn the island's socioeconomic-political fabric as did this 1981 teachers' strike.

While the Governor at the time, Paul M Calvo, had vetoed the bill that was the source of the controversy in mid-December 1980, the majority



of the 15<sup>th</sup> Guam Legislature overrode his veto. Hence, the strike began and the governor had to expend large amounts of taxpayers' money to defeat the strike, since by that time, no compromises could be arranged in either the executive or the legislative branches of GovGuam for workers' pay raises.

The author, Bruce G Karolle, was himself a participant in the strike and recounts the tumultuous events of that period from the point of view of one who was intimately involved. He sheds light on some of the cross-cultural misunderstandings of the time. The first chapter explains the establishment and growth of the Guam Federation of Teachers (GFT) and the second is devoted to the decision to strike. This was no small matter: there were many inside the union who thought such a move was ill advised. The strike itself, the period of 12 January to 10 March 1981, is the focus of chapter three. Then chapter four looks at aspects of the aftermath of the strike. Not the least significant item here is the author's revelation that some 75% of the nearly 600 teachers who lost their jobs were eventually re-hired by the Department of Education (DOE). Finally, an epilogue offers some understanding and evaluation of the whole affair.

A number of previously unpublished photographs allow for greater documentation, and also an appendix lists the names of all the strikers. The book also includes notes and bibliography, data tables and an index.

Veterans of the strike will want a copy of this book, but the book's significance is wider than just personal nostalgia. Students and people studying Pacific islands' labour movements and the establishment of unions will find it especially instructive. The text is not theoretical or didactically comparative in its approach, but as a particular case study, it has continuing relevance to the general understanding of the labour movement in the context of the Pacific. Once again, Guam has logged-in 'an historical first' in experiencing the first major labour strike in the Pacific. We are grateful to author Karolle for his dedicated contribution to the historical literature of Micronesia.

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*Dirk Anthony Ballendorf*  
*University of Guam*