

I ~~also~~ read ~~also~~ about the islands' underacknowledged role in ~~the Second World War~~ WW2, about the Japanese occupation, and the American and Australian campaigns to wrest the islands back from ~~them~~ the Japanese, which included the troop-rallying of Bob Hope, the undistinguished military career of Richard Milhous Nixon and the baseball diamonds that American troops carved out of the cleared jungle. When the Americans held movie nights in their bases, both Japanese and local Bougainvilleans would sneak up to the fence ~~line~~ to watch the images.<sup>1</sup> Most of the victims of the war were Bougainvillean; by the count of the historian Hank Nelson, more than a quarter of the population perished.<sup>2</sup>

I read about the search for gold and other precious minerals that long drew prospectors and fortune-hunters here, as elsewhere in New Guinea.<sup>3</sup> Speckled like gold dust within the accounts of anthropologists, planters (growers of coconuts and cocoa) and naturalists, ~~as well~~ ~~as~~ and those of soldiers fighting on Bougainville, are the stories of frequently unsuccessful prospecting expeditions ~~which that did not~~ failed to dim the strong convictions that riches ~~lay~~ ie there somewhere, if only the right place ~~was to~~ could be located.

In the early 1960s, around the same time the first government school opened, Australian geologists discovered immense, commercially attractive seams of gold and copper<sup>4</sup> in the middle of the main island of Bougainville (often referred to as Bougainville Island) ~~Island~~, near a mountain called Panguna. The pit subsequently gouged out of the mountain was ~~then~~ amongst one of the largest human-made holes in the world. The engineers laid down sets of giant piping under the concrete on the road that would connect ~~down~~ to a purpose-built port.

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<sup>1</sup> Harry A. Gailey, *Bougainville 1943–1945: The Forgotten Campaign* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991); Karl James, *The Hard Slog: Australians in the Bougainville Campaign, 1944–45* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), [doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139196307](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139196307).

<sup>2</sup> Hank Nelson, “Bougainville in World War II,” in *Bougainville Before the Conflict*, eds. Anthony J. Regan and Helga M. Griffin (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2015), 196, [doi.org/10.22459/BBC.08.2015](https://doi.org/10.22459/BBC.08.2015).

<sup>3</sup> Chris Ballard, “The Signature of Terror: Violence, Memory and Landscape at Freeport,” in *Inscribed Landscapes: Marking and Making Place*, eds. Bruno David and Meredith Wilson (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 15; Denise Leith, *The Politics of Power: Freeport in Suharto's Indonesia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Jackson, Graham, Moore & Partners, *Bougainville Mining Limited: A Fundamental Evaluation* (Sydney: Jackson, Graham, Moore & Partners, 1971).

~~To house the mineworkers, A purpose-built town called Arawa was built to house the mine workers was built over on top of~~ a copra and cocoa plantation with a magnificent orchid collection. Into this new town came thousands from elsewhere in ~~Papua New Guinea PNG~~, as well as a smaller number of expatriates, mostly Australians, who created a mirror ~~land image~~ of an Australian country town in the tropics.

Amongst the ~~most frequently~~ requested books in the library were those of recent vintage<sup>5</sup> telling the story of a ~~ten 10-year~~ conflict that began a year before the Berlin Wall fell.

People here called this time ‘the ~~Cerisis~~’, ~~and it~~ was part ethnic in nature, pitting Bougainvilleans against the Papua New Guinean army and police,<sup>6</sup> while ~~est~~ other elements of the ~~Conflict Crisis~~ were more akin to civil war. It was a conflict in ‘which many had no proud ideas’, wrote Bougainvillean academic and novelist Regis Tove Stella.<sup>7</sup>

The ~~most~~ pre-eminent chronicler of this period is a man who ~~resided had an office~~ a few ~~office~~ doors down from mine when I worked in Canberra at ~~the Australian National University ANU~~. His name is Anthony Regan, ~~and he Regan had been engaged in work eding~~ on Bougainville for close to ~~forty 40~~ years. He ~~came here~~ initially to visit his sister, who was married to a Bougainvillean, went on to be a legal adviser during the peace negotiations that ended the war, ~~and has served~~ as an adviser to the government in Buka since its establishment. He has researched extensively and published prolifically on the ~~Conflict Crisis~~, and ~~he~~ has done more than any other person in terms of broadening understandings of historical and contemporary Bougainville.<sup>8</sup> I like Anthony a lot; he was always a gracious

**Commented [GH1]:** Gordon, I am assuming that you are writing from the perspective of being in Bougainville while you write.

**Commented [GH2]:** Is A Regan still an adviser?

<sup>5</sup> Braithwaite ~~et al.~~, ~~Charlesworth, Reddy, Dunn~~, *Reconciliation and Architectures*, 161-; Ronald J. May and Matthew Spriggs, eds., *The Bougainville Crisis* (Bathurst, NSW: Crawford House Publishing, 1990); ~~Tankunani~~ Sirivi and ~~Taleo Havini~~, *As Mothers of the Land*; Sean Dorney, *The Sandline Affair: Politics and Mercenaries and the Bougainville eCrisis* (Sydney: ABC Enterprises Books for the (Australian Broadcasting Corporation), 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Regan, *Light Intervention*, 20.

<sup>7</sup> Regis Tove Stella, *Gutsini Posa* (Suva, Mana Publications, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> Many of Regan’s ~~main~~ contributions are cited ~~throughout in~~ this text. Further readings are listed on his Google Scholar profile; see: ‘Anthony J. Regan’, Google Scholar, accessed 15 December 2021, <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=Ac6GQ6UAAAAJ&hl=en>.

colleague to me when we ~~both~~ worked ~~together~~ in Canberra, and generous with his knowledge and expertise when we worked ~~together~~ in Buka ~~together~~.

There is no one answer as to how ~~the~~ ~~crisis~~ ~~conflict~~ began. As the copper gushed, elements of disgruntlement, jealousies, and slights among ~~st~~ the Bougainvilleans were morphing, sticking and intermingling into combustible compounds.

Five elements emerged. The first was frustration that ~~it was the~~ ~~g~~Government of ~~Papua New Guinea~~ PNG, which became independent from Australia in 1975, ~~that~~ was receiving the bulk of royalties from the mine,<sup>9</sup> with only a dribble going back to Bougainville's ~~own~~ provincial government. Element two involved the dissatisfaction of landowners close to the mine with low payments for the use and destruction of their land,<sup>10</sup> and particularly ~~with~~ ~~how~~ ~~the~~ ~~uneven distribution of~~ this money ~~was being distributed unevenly~~ among ~~st~~ different groups, ~~suffusing the~~ ~~causing jealousies to suffuse the~~ mountain-scapes and valleys with ~~in~~ ~~jealousy~~.<sup>11</sup> ~~The third~~ ~~Element~~ ~~three derived from~~ ~~was~~ the Bougainvillean mine-workers' unhappiness with the terms and conditions of their employment, especially as compared to ~~the conditions~~ ~~enjoyed by~~ expatriates and 'redskins' (Papua New Guineans from other ~~provinces~~).<sup>12</sup> ~~Element~~ ~~four arose from~~ ~~Fourthly~~, tensions ~~that were~~ bubbling between Bougainvilleans and migrants in ~~Papua New Guinea~~ PNG who had arrived in search of income opportunities.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ogan, "The Bougainville Conflict," 5.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Bedford and Alexander Mamak, *Compensating for Development: The Bougainville Case* (Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1977), 7; John Connell, "Compensation and Conflict: The Bougainville Copper Mine, Papua New Guinea", in *Mining and Indigenous Peoples in Australasia*, eds. John Connell and Richard Howitt (South-Melbourne: Sydney University Press, 1991), 61; Ciaran O'Faircheallaigh, *Mining and Development* (Kent: Croom Helm, 1984), 220; Paul Quodling, *Bougainville — the Mine and the People* (St Leonards: Centre for Independent Studies, 1991), 52.

<sup>11</sup> Colin Filer, David Henton and Richard Jackson, *Landowner Compensation in Papua New Guinea's Mining and Petroleum Sectors* (Port Moresby: PNG Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, 2000); Quodling, *Bougainville — The Mine and the People*, 52.

<sup>12</sup> Jill Nash and Eugene Ogan, "The Red and the Black: Bougainvillean Perceptions of Other Papua New Guineans", *Pacific Studies* 13, no. 2 (1990), 17–17.

<sup>13</sup> Benedict Y. Imbun, "Mining Workers or 'Opportunist' Tribesmen?: A Tribal Workforce in a Papua New Guinea Mine", *Oceania* 71, no. 2 (2000), 129–149.

And all these four elements ~~co-mingled~~<sup>fused</sup> with a fifth factor, the underlying unhappiness amongst some Bougainvilleans at being part of ~~Papua New Guinea~~<sup>PNG</sup> in the first place. A sense of distinctness and separateness pre-dated the opening of the mine.<sup>14</sup> In 1962, local leaders told a visiting United Nations delegation that the Australians treated the Bougainvilleans like dogs and that the administration of the islands should be turned over to the Americans, ~~for of~~<sup>for</sup> whom there were still fond memories after ~~WW2~~<sup>the Second World War</sup>. Australian Government patrol officers who visited Bougainvillean villages around that time describe in their reports the conversations they had with village chiefs, who said about how Bougainville should be left alone and not form part of any other country. Independence was their singing flame. The author of one set of reports had the air of a frustrated creative writer when he wrote: ~~“They were informed of the great difficulties and expences [sic] in running a country; but they remain undisturbed and sometimes argue for ages and come up with some fantastic conclusions.”~~<sup>15</sup> In many of the houses the officer visited, he spotted magazines with colour pictures of happy African families and freshly painted locomotives, trucks and planes in national colours, from recently independent former British colonies. The contents of the magazines made independence seem ~~both~~<sup>both</sup> simultaneously easy and alluring. ‘One gets the impression that this independence can be likened to utopia,’ he wrote, frustrated at a generalised refusal to descend into nuts-and-bolts details, ~~which I found this~~<sup>which I found this</sup> a prescient observation.<sup>16</sup>

**Commented [GH4]:** Gordon, do you have a date for this particular report?

**Commented [GH5]:** Block quote

<sup>14</sup> James Griffin, “Movements Towards Secession 1964–76,” in *Bougainville Before the Conflict*, eds. Anthony J. Regan and Helga M. Griffin (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2015), 291–299.

<sup>15</sup> “Papua New Guinea Patrol Officer Reports,” ([La Jolla, CA: UC San Diego](http://La Jolla, CA: UC San Diego)), accessed 15 December 2021, [library.ucsd.edu/research-and-collections/collections/notable-collections/melanesian-studies/papua-new-guinea-patrol-reports/index.html](http://library.ucsd.edu/research-and-collections/collections/notable-collections/melanesian-studies/papua-new-guinea-patrol-reports/index.html).

<sup>16</sup> “Papua New Guinea Patrol Officer Reports.”