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Cultures of Commemoration: The Politics of War, Memory, and History in the Mariana Islands

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bears a fascinating resemblance to the Zona Libre Margolies discusses in his book.

However, these criticisms are minor. Margolies's book is an important contribution to the literature. By exploring an understudied side of the history of U.S. foreign policy, it helps readers to better understand the rise of U.S. power and hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. It would be appropriate for an upper-level undergraduate or graduate course.

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Cultures of Commemoration: The Politics of War, Memory, and History in the Mariana Islands. By KEITH L. CAMACHO. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011. 280 pp. \$52.00 (cloth).

Keith L. Camacho has written a historically based monograph that uses a wide variety of oral histories and government documents to examine the experiences of Chamorros before, during, and after World War II. Throughout his work, Camacho looks comparatively at U.S. rule in Guam, Japanese rule in the Northern Mariana Islands, and the long-term impacts of each system on the experiences, attitudes, memories, and activities of this diverse indigenous population. According to Camacho, "Chamorro public memories of the war have developed in distinct and often divergent ways because of a complex past premised on American and Japanese colonial history of the Archipelago" (p. 2). Camacho furthers the projects of other Pacific scholars by presenting World War II as a central event in Pacific Islander histories. Camacho also portrays indigenous perspectives as important aspects to understand World War II.

In chapter 1, Camacho discusses how both U.S. and Japanese colonizers fostered an ideal of Chamorro loyalty as a form of social control before World War II (p. 20). After acquiring Guam through the War of 1898, the United States government encouraged the Americanization of Chamorros on this island through pro-U.S. celebrations (like Flag Day), naval medical policies, and executive orders. The Japanese government gained control of the Northern Marianas from Germany in 1914 and encouraged Japanization through the education of Chamorro youth and nationalistic public ceremonies. However, neither the Japanese nor the United States government intended to incorporate these indigenous peoples as full-fledged members of their national polity.

Despite the similar focus on loyalty by U.S. and Japanese coloniz-

ers, Camacho constantly highlights the diversity of Chamorro experiences in Guam versus the Northern Mariana Islands. In chapter 1, Chamorros in the Northern Marianas experienced a relatively tolerant coexistence with their Japanese colonizers while Chamorros in Guam worked within stricter cultural and social constraints created by the United States government. Chapter 2 explains how during World War II, Chamorros in the northern islands supported the Japanese military while those in Guam longed for the return of the United States. After the war, Chamorros in Guam were extremely grateful for the return of the U.S. military. Their suffering during Japanese rule from 1941 to 1944 solidified the loyalty and dedication of Chamorros in Guam to the United States. In contrast, Chamorros in the northern islands feared U.S. rule due to strong anti-American wartime propaganda spread by the Japanese government. While Camacho does not always provide analogous amounts of evidence and detailed examples for each region during each period of analysis, his overall comparative approach to this subject is an important and effective way to highlight both the diversity of Chamorro experiences in the Mariana Islands, as well as the function of U.S. and Japanese colonialism in the Pacific, the two major strengths and contributions of this work to the fields of Pacific Islander studies and colonialism.

Camacho also analyzes the function of postwar commemorations as exercises of past and present politics in chapters 4 and 5. He claims that “close attention to the politics of institutional and personal memories of war enables one to better understand the competing histories on which public memories are built” (p. 13). Commemorations in Guam evolved over time, starting initially in the 1940s as coping mechanisms for dealing with postwar traumas. In the 1950s, the celebration of Liberation Day (21 July 1944) shifted from a focus on “reconciliation and rebirth” to a focus on “rehabilitation and modernization” through economic development (p. 93). In the 1960s and 1970s, this event started to emphasize multiculturalism to appeal to the growing number of Japanese tourists to the island, as well as the increasing population of migrant laborers. In the early 1990s, the group United Chamorro Chelus for Independence Association (later renamed *Nasion Chamoru*, or Chamorro Nation) protested the colonial dimensions of Liberation Day activities and eventually pushed for self-determination on the fiftieth anniversary of this event in 1994 (p. 109). In the end, multiple groups tried to instill various levels of religious and secular, as well as political and economic themes in Liberation Day celebrations.

In the northern islands, Chamorros did not engage in commemora-

tions that specifically praised U.S. liberation until the 1990s. Instead, they supported Japanese, Korean, and Okinawan religious and commemorative efforts in the postwar period. Such activities included the construction of Japanese peace memorials and bone-collecting missions (p. 117). Camacho discusses how the eventual embrace of the United States as liberators coincided with Northern Mariana Chamorro leadership efforts to become integrated with the United States and gain U.S. citizenship. However, it remains unclear how this shift in rhetoric and view of the United States was disseminated and became embraced by the wider Northern Mariana Islands Chamorro population, who had been suspect of the U.S. government for decades.

Chapter 6 is an admirable attempt to make visible the uncommemorated and often covered up history of indigenous Chamorro collaborators with the Japanese government, as well as the variety of female relations which existed with Japanese soldiers during the war. Camacho acknowledges the difficulty in studying these topics because little documentary evidence exists. Also, few people are willing to discuss these issues. Camacho explains how “these women and men, their descendants, and well-meaning people, might not commemorate their experiences for fear of re-inflicting undue pain and suffering” (p. 160). While it is important for scholars to figure out hidden histories with the evidence that does exist, this section is not as strong as the other chapters due to the lack of documentary evidence about the situation in Guam, as well as the absence of any information about the northern islands.

Throughout most of this work, Camacho writes in a clear and straightforward language that both scholars and the general public will appreciate. He is well versed in multiple historiographies, which shows through his frequent quotations of multiple scholars throughout all the chapters. However, this information sometimes draws attention away from Camacho’s own specific arguments. Camacho also created an ambitious spectrum of issues to analyze. Many topics that he engaged with definitely warrant further study. Overall, *Cultures of Commemoration* is a well-researched and well-written piece that will make a significant impact on the study of World War II, war histories, memory and commemoration, Pacific Islander studies, as well as U.S. and Japanese colonialism. Scholars, students, and the general public interested in these subjects will highly benefit from reading this text.

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