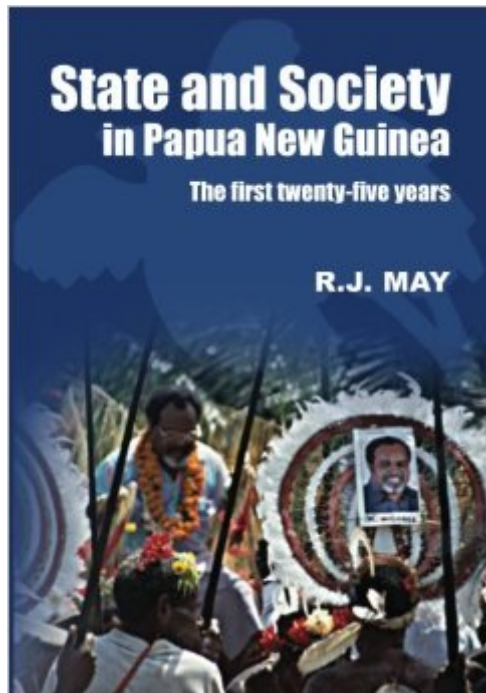


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State And Society In Papua New Guinea: The First Twenty-Five Years



Synopsis

On the eve of Papua New Guinea's independence in 1975 there were many " both within the country and outside " who predicted political anarchy, with the possibility of an army coup or authoritarian single-party dominance, and economic collapse. Such fears appeared to have been justified when in 1975 both the North Solomons (Bougainville) and Papua unilaterally declared their independence. In fact, however, PNG achieved a smooth transition, and in its first decade as a new state enjoyed a high degree of political and economic progress. It remains one of the few post-colonial states that has maintained an unbroken record of democratic government. Nevertheless, from around the mid-1980s a number of problems have become apparent, including: a decline in government capability; increasing problems of urban and rural lawlessness; poor economic management, with growing evidence of nepotism and corruption; environmental degradation associated with mining and logging, and increasing pressure on land; and, from 1988, a rebellion on Bougainville. This volume brings together a number of papers written by the author between 1971 and 2001 which address issues of political and economic development and social change in Papua New Guinea. Dr R.J. May is a senior fellow in the Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at The Australian National University. He was formerly a senior economist with the Reserve Bank of Australia and later foundation director of IASER in PNG (now the National Research Institute). In 1976 he was awarded the Independence Medal for his services to banking and research in PNG.

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