

BOOK REVIEW

BOMBS IN PARADISE

by Brian Martin, *Canberra Peacemakers*

DURING the next 20 years, most of the people living on the Hawaiian island of Oahu are likely to die a violent death – and all at the same time. Oahu is one of the most nuclearised areas in the world. Among its many military installations are nuclear weapons storage facilities, radar tracking systems and Pearl Harbor. Oahu is a prime target in the event of nuclear war.

The military uses of Oahu, and of Hawaii generally, may be called *The Dark Side of Paradise* – the title of a recent book about nuclear Hawaii. It is written by four local anti-nuclear activists. Information is presented carefully and calmly:

- details of the many Hawaiian military installations;
- a catalogue of nuclear accidents of all types, both actual and potential;
- a balanced summary of the current state of US-USSR military rivalry, weaponry and policies;
- the economic and social impacts of military spending, especially in Hawaii;
- the potential for citizen nonviolent action for peace.

The material is well documented and up to date. Also included are useful lists of suggested reading and organisations to contact.

Besides providing a good overview of the military threat to a local area, *The Dark Side of Paradise* provides some valuable hints to Australian anti-war activists. The Hawaiian peace activists have done a lot of digging to obtain information about nuclear accidents, transport of nuclear weapons and the functions of military facilities. Public exposure of such 'secret' information is embarrassing to the military.

The public information and action campaigns of the activists also provide a number of insights – such as the general fruitlessness of working through administrative and legislative channels. Finally, the book itself is an example of the sort of sound, clear, broad and concise investigation of military forces which does not exist in such a unified form in Australia.

In Hawaii it must be hard to be optimistic about the possibilities for denuclearisation. The heavy human and economic presence of the military and intelligence agencies on the islands seems to be an insuperable obstacle to fundamental change. The authors of *The Dark Side of Paradise* do not have any final answers. Nor do they tell in this book how to confront the psychology of powerlessness and national chauvinism, or the political and economic might of the military-industrial complex. But the very vitality of Hawaiian anti-war struggles should be an inspiration.

Australia may not be a paradise, but it has been called 'The Lucky Country'. Australia too has its dark side, which includes US military bases and a government subservient to the US military interests. Yet with Australia's relative political autonomy and lower danger from nuclear attack near populated areas, there should be greater chance of successfully opposing the nuclear threat – and a greater responsibility to make the struggle.

THE DARK SIDE OF PARADISE

Hawaii in a Nuclear World



Jim Albertini, Nelson Foster, Wally Inglis and Gil Roeder, *The Dark Side of Paradise: Hawaii in a Nuclear World* (Honolulu: Catholic Action of Hawaii, September 1980), US\$3.95, 100 pages.