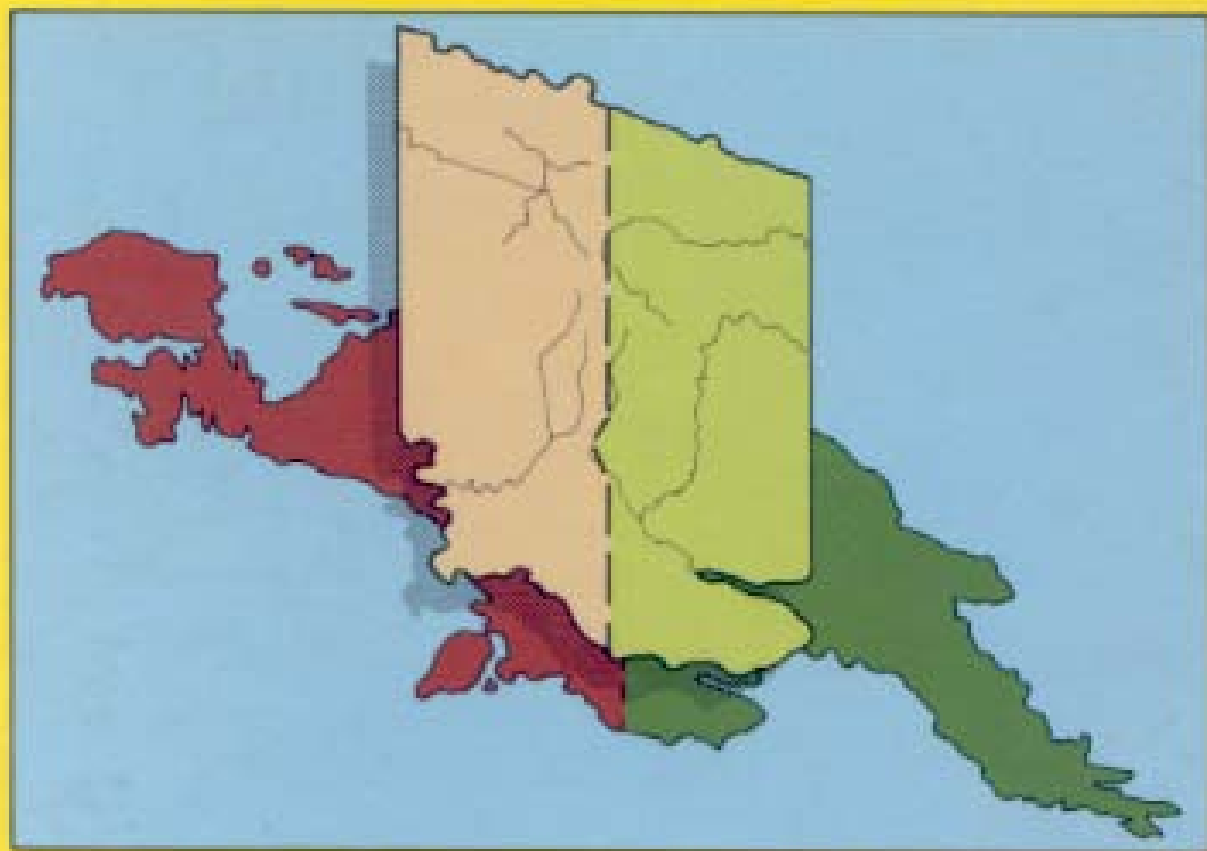


BETWEEN TWO NATIONS



The Indonesia — Papua New Guinea
border and
West Papua Nationalism

R. J. May (Ed.)

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PREFACE

In 1969, in an event referred to by Indonesia as the 'Act of Free Choice' (*Perpera*), but by some others as an 'act free of choice', 1,022 delegates appointed by the Indonesian administration to represent the people of Irian Jaya voted to become formally part of the Indonesian Republic. Although official and unofficial observers were critical of the manner in which the United Nations' Temporary Executive Authority was brought to an end, few outside Irian Jaya itself seriously contested the outcome of the act. Within Irian Jaya, however, some Melanesian nationalists actively resisted the authority of the Indonesian government, while others 'voted with their feet' by crossing into Papua New Guinea.

On the other side of the border, Papua New Guinea progressed to independence in 1975, and though leading Papua New Guinean politicians often expressed sympathy for the position of their Melanesian neighbours, successive Papua New Guinea governments maintained the broad policies of the colonial government, seeking to discourage border crossing while dealing sympathetically with 'genuine refugees', and giving high priority to the establishment and maintenance of good relations with Indonesia.

Between 1975 and 1984 refugees continued to trickle across the border into Papua New Guinea and a number of border incidents precipitated recurring short cycles of tension and self-conscious cordiality between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. Nevertheless a basic border agreement, negotiated on Papua New Guinea's behalf by the colonial government in 1973, was successfully renegotiated in 1979 and 1984, official visits were exchanged, joint border development plans were discussed, and machinery was established to deal with the problems of border administration. Despite the recurring problems along the border it appeared that both governments were anxious to promote good relations between their countries.

In 1984 the border situation deteriorated markedly. Following an attempted local uprising by West Papuan nationalists in early 1984, and subsequent repressive action by Indonesian military authorities, a flood of refugees began to pour across the border into Papua New Guinea and a series of border violations by Indonesian troops and aircraft created new tensions between the two countries which the machinery set up under the border agreement proved inadequate to cope with. By mid 1985 there were about 12,000 border crossers in camps along the border in Papua New Guinea, few of whom showed

any inclination to cross back, and repatriation - and broader questions of Papua New Guinea's attitudes to the circumstances which had given rise to this influx - had become salient in Papua New Guinea's domestic politics and a subject of some concern internationally.

In 1979 a group of interested observers met in Canberra to discuss recent developments on the border. The results of this discussion were published in that year as Working Paper No. 2 of the Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University (May 1979b). In late 1983 an update of this volume was commenced, but the exercise was overtaken by events. Instead, the present volume has emerged as a substantial reexamination of the border situation and Papua New Guinea-Indonesia relations over the border. Chapters by Prescott, Mackie, May and Herlihy present material included in the 1979 volume updated to take account of developments since 1979. Verrier presents an account of developments to 1969 which was lacking in the earlier volume. New contributions by Osborne, Arndt, and Smith and Hewison look respectively at the OPM, transmigration, and border crossers. Hastings, who contributed an introductory chapter in 1979, provides a concluding overview.

Those who have followed discussion on this subject over recent years will appreciate that this publication brings together contributors of quite widely diverse attitudes and opinions. Editorially I have tried to ensure that the historical and factual content of the volume is consistent, and to avoid excessive overlap between chapters. But no attempt has been made to suppress the diversity of attitudes and sympathies among the contributors. It is for readers to arrive at their own judgments.

In putting the volume together I am heavily indebted to Claire Smith and Hilary Bek for their customary excellence as typists, proof-readers and occasional sub-editors, and to Jo Costin for her assistance in the final preparation of the manuscript and index. Photographs were kindly made available by *The Times of Papua New Guinea*, through Rowan Callick, South Pacific Post Pty Ltd (*Post-Courier*), *Sydney Morning Herald*, through Peter Hastings, *Niugini Nius*, Mark Baker, Hank di Suvero and Robin Osborne. Except for those supplied by Victor Prescott (1.1-1.3), all maps were drawn by Keith Mitchell, cartographer with the Australian National University's Department of Human Geography. The title of the volume was largely the inspiration of Beverley Blaskett.

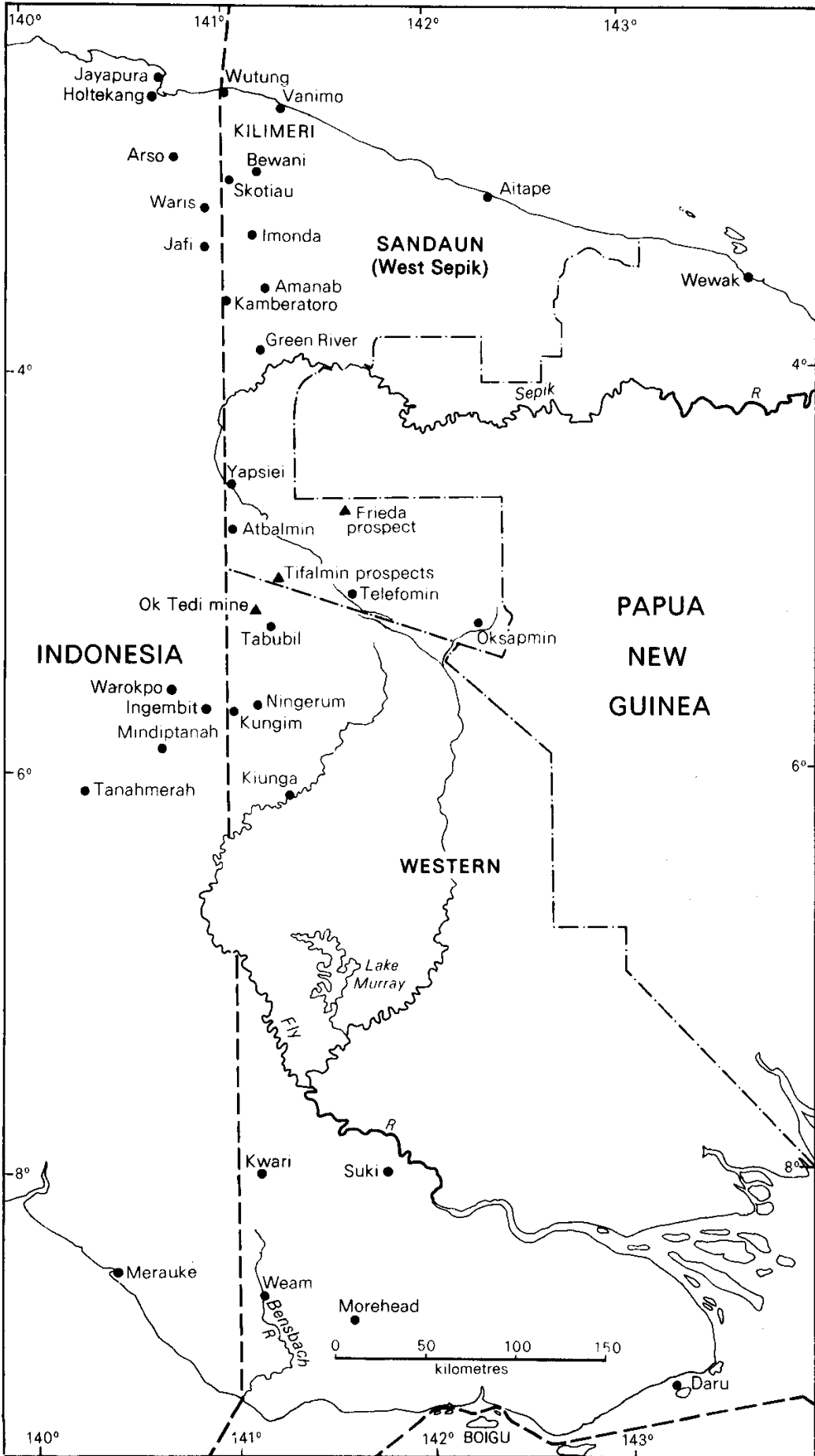


FIGURE 1 *The border area*