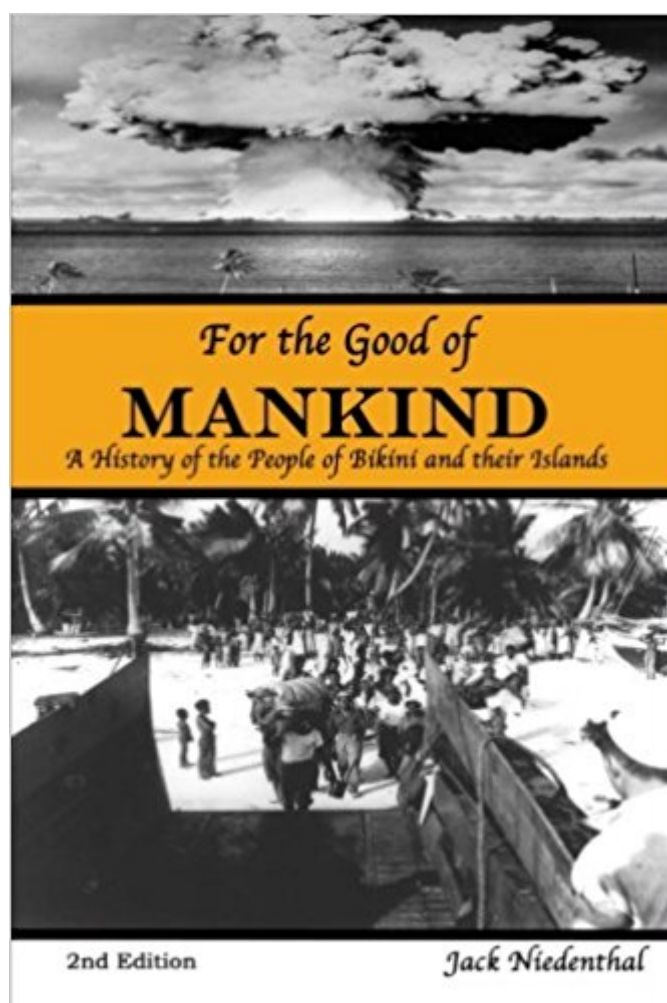


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# For The Good Of Mankind: A History Of The People Of Bikini And Their Islands (Second Edition)



## Synopsis

In this, the second edition of *FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND*, new interviews have been added along with a Foreword by anthropologist Dr. Leonard Mason. By using firsthand accounts by the people of Bikini describing their half-century of nuclear exodus, this important book journeys through the Marshallese and Bikinian cultures from ancient to modern times. I thoroughly enjoyed the book, particularly reading the history of Bikini in the words of the people. The book assures that these traditional stories will be available for others to read, but perhaps most importantly, for younger generations of islanders.

• -Allen P. Stayman U.S. Compact of Free Association Negotiator 1999-2001. "FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND is a compelling account of the troubled history of the people of Bikini Atoll. Niedenthal's skillful use of oral history enables the Bikinians to tell much of their own story, and his personal reflections about that history and his own involvement with the community enrich the account. A welcome and useful contribution to Pacific Islands studies."

• -Robert C. Kiste, Director Center for Pacific Islands Studies University of Hawai'i "Although Niedenthal peppers the book with his own insights and commentary, it is the words of Bikini elders that tell their story of how 23 American nuclear tests disrupted their lives beginning in 1946."

-Pacific Islands Magazine, March 2002 "For the Good of Mankind is a remarkably unique book..."

-International Monitor Institute, May 2002 "Jack Niedenthal's work is a labor of love..."

-The Contemporary Pacific magazine, Fall 2003 "[For the Good of Mankind] is probably the most complete history of Bikini Island, and will continue to be a reference touchstone for future studies of the Marshall Islands and even the south Pacific...The cultural observations are superb."

-Nick Wreden, Peace Corp Writers Magazine, January 2004

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Niedenthal's use of oral history enables the Bikinians to tell their own story. A welcome contribution to Pacific studies." --Robert C. Kiste, Director, Center for Pacific Islands Studies, U. of Hawai'i  
I thoroughly enjoyed the book, particularly reading the history of Bikini in the words of the people. "  
--Allen P. Stayman, U.S. Compact of Free Association Negotiator

Having lived, studied and worked in the Marshall Islands from 1981 until the present, author Jack Niedenthal speaks fluent Marshallese. His wife, Regina, is a Bikini islander. They have five children and one grandchild. His first six years in the Marshalls were all spent in the isolated jungles of the outer islands. He was a Peace Corps volunteer on Namu Atoll (1981-84). He then contracted to work with the Bikini Council on Kili Island (1984-late 1986) teaching English to the adults, teaching in the elementary school and working with the Kili/Bikini/Ejit Local Government Council. After the death of former Trust Liaison, Ralph Waltz, he was asked by the Council to begin work as the Trust Liaison for their local government (1987 to present). Duties of the Trust Liaison for the People of Bikini include the management and coordination of the funds allocated by the United States government to compensate the Bikinians for their suffering and to facilitate the radiological cleanup of Bikini Atoll. He acts as a liaison for the Council to the media, the U.S. government and its various agencies, the scientists who work on Bikini, the Bikini Council's attorney, trustees, money managers, construction companies, engineers, project managers, auditors and business associates. The Trust Liaison also coordinates travel schedules, is used as an advisor and translator, manages the Bikinians's scholarship program, and is responsible for the Bikini Council's accounting. He also manages the Bikini Atoll Dive Program for the Bikinians. He has published a number of articles and photos about the people of Bikini in World View magazine, The Health Physics Journal, the San Francisco Chronicle and others. He is also an award winning filmmaker/producer/director of full-length feature Marshallese language films that include *Ä'a Noniep* (2009), *Yokwe Bartowe* (2010), *LaÄ inbwil's Gift* (2011) and *Ainikien Jidjid ilo BoÄ* (The Sound of Crickets at Night) (2012). He founded Microwave Films of the Marshall Islands.

If you're interested in histories of the Marshall Islands, there aren't many books easy to find. And what is available is generally the terrible story of Bikini and the US nuclear tests. Most Americans know, intellectually, that Bikini is where the bomb was tested. However, to read a book like this

one-- made up largely of the words of long-time Bikini community members-- is very different than knowing. Niedenthal is a long-time resident and advocate of the Bikinian community, and has done a real service with this book. In his introduction, he says how shocked he was that "the Bikinian children I was teaching really didn't have a full understanding as to what had happened to their own people". So he had the idea of recording the stories of the elders in order to capture the history, and the struggle to survive. This book is a selection of transcriptions of those recordings. Hearing the story in the voices of the people is much stronger than a simple recounting of the facts would have been. Recommended if you have an interest in Bikini, the Marshall Islands, or the history of the nuclear weapons and nuclear testing.

Great book!

My son spent the year in the Marshall Islands teaching and I was very interested on the subject from the very start. The book helped me see the Marshall Islands in a different light especially since I had never really known about the island before last year.

I enjoyed this book very much. It was very detailed and told the true story about the people of Bikini and what they have been through. It is often sad, but confirms the spirit of the people of Bikini.

It is generally accepted that the dropping of two Atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought WW2 to an end. Had the Japanese not surrendered, however, no third bomb existed. Whilst the explosions happened just as they were supposed to happen, this new dreadful science was very new and, in a post war-torn world, had to be tested and refined. No western power, however, was prepared to have such weaponry tested anywhere near their own country - not even within distant range of fall-out. For this reason, one of the world's remotest islands in the southern Pacific was eventually chosen. In the summer of 1946 the United States detonated two 21 kiloton bombs code-named Able and Baker. These were the fourth and fifth such bombs ever exploded. Another bomb was also due to be detonated but this was cancelled after the fallout from Baker created far more radiological contamination than was ever expected. In order to conduct such tests, the United States had, in the first instance, to forcibly remove the indigenous population of the Bikini Islands. How powerful is one nation that it is able (apparently quite legally) to remove another from their homes so that the former can practise with big bombs. This book is the story of those Bikini Islanders and their life-long struggle to regain their homeland. Yes, many have now come home, but it will be

a long time before they can even hope to resume a traditional existence. Truth is is is highly unlikely `that' will ever happen. The Bikini islanders were removed from their homes "for the good of mankind," personally, I think this book should be read for the same reason. NM

I found my teenaged daughter reading this book one day, so when she was finished I picked it up... This is a story so worth reading. The author's life at first seemed hopelessly entangled with his subject's to a point that I thought the book would eventually read like a one-sided diatribe. I was very, very pleased with how he presented the Bikinian's story, however, and would highly recommend this small but important piece of Pacific history to anyone who wants to know how an indigenous people can be so horribly abused by a super power. Astounding material.

A wonderful book from a man that knows, that has been there, and is still there watching the people of Bikini cope and recover from the terrible atomic/nuclear bomb blasts. He has the facts of history, the insight into how it affected the island people, all combined with personal stories and the local culture and legends. I've lived in Micronesia for about twelve years and learned so much new about the Republic of the Marshall Islands. If one has an interest about how our country deals with other peoples, this book will give an idea about how sometimes we play the international game. Very nice work, with facts and figures. I liked it. Buy it!

This book was an eye opener. It makes you wonder why this event that happened so many years ago in the middle of the Pacific has been buried for so long. This is not a cut and dry history, this book is a very readable journey through a culture that is unique. The author lets us know who he is, so it enables the reader to understand the person who is doing the interviews. That was a nice and unexpected touch. I found the book to be thought provoking and would recommend it to anyone who has an interest in studying the history of the Pacific.

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