Micronationalist movements in Papua New Guinea

R.J. May, Editor
MICRONATIONALIST MOVEMENTS
IN
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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The story of development is not just a nation's story; it is the story of numerous subnational communities trying to cope with profound change.

Enloe (1973:34)
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In the early 1970s the emergence of a large number of locally based mass movements appeared to be one of the more interesting aspects of the rapid political and social change taking place in Melanesia. The proliferation of such movements had important implications for governments seeking at the same time to promote national unity and to encourage local development initiative. It was also of considerable interest to scholars, particularly in relation to Melanesia's history of 'cargo cults' and related responses to the stresses imposed by European colonization, and to the study of social and political change under conditions of rapid modernization and political aggregation.

As director of what was then the Australian National University's New Guinea Research Unit (which, following the handover of the Unit to the Papua New Guinea government in 1976, has become the Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research), around 1974 I initiated a series of studies by local observers of some of the more important of these movements. The contributors - who included anthropologists, political scientists and economists - were given a set of guidelines which directed them, under a series of subheadings, to have regard to specific aspects of each movement's origins, objectives and methods, and sources of support and opposition, and asked them to assess the achievements, strength and prospects of the movement according to a number of listed criteria. But while it was considered important for comparative purposes that all the studies attempt to answer some basic questions, it was recognized that with the diversity of the movements covered it would not be possible to approach each study in the same way. In the event some comparability has been achieved, though the circumstances of each movement and the predilections of individual authors have largely determined the shape of each chapter.

At the same time I endeavoured to put together a collection of statements by movement leaders which set out their philosophies and intent. For a number of reasons this proved to be a difficult task
and only two such statements have been included in the volume - that by Mél on the Highlands Liberation Front (chapter 13) and a 'Basic Document on Papua Besena' reproduced as an appendix to chapter 11.

For a variety of reasons, most of which will doubtless be familiar to those who have been involved in an ambitious editorial undertaking, it took some time to get the collection together. However in early 1978 the completed manuscript was lodged with a major European publisher. Subsequent financial difficulties on the part of the publisher forced the abandonment of the project and in 1980 the manuscript was returned. It has since been revised and two contributions missing from the 1978 collection have been added.

In the course of putting the volume together (more than once), I have become indebted to a number of people. In particular I gratefully acknowledge the editorial assistance of Mary-Lou Allen, Susan Faircloth and Charlotta Blomberg, the cartography of Harold Ellwand and Theo Baumann, and the typing of Jan Bretherton, Emma Bundari, Aiva Kutson, Hilary Bek and Claire Smith. Photos included in the volume are reproduced by kind permission of the Sydney Morning Herald and the Post-Courier newspapers.

R.J.M.
October 1982
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INTRODUCTION
Chapter 1

MICRONATIONALISM IN PERSPECTIVE*

R.J. May

One of the most remarkable aspects of social and political change in Papua New Guinea in the late 1960s and early 1970s was the proliferation of spontaneous local movements, differing in their origins and specific objectives but sharing a broad concern with the achievement of economic, social and political development through communal action. Some of the movements emerged from a background of local cult activity; others were established ostensibly to organize local opposition to particular policies of central government but came to assume wider objectives; still others were specifically motivated by a desire to achieve development through local community action; a few emerged to press for a geographically more broadly based regional autonomy.

In an earlier paper (May 1975) a preliminary attempt was made to provide a brief survey of the more significant of these movements and to place them in some sort of social, cultural and historical perspective. The term 'micronationalism' was introduced in that paper to describe a varied collection of movements which displayed a common tendency, at least at an ideological or psychological level, to disengage from the wider economic and political systems imposed by colonial rule, seeking in a sense a common identity and purpose, and through some combination of traditional and modern values and organizational forms, an acceptable formula for their own development.

In employing this term to describe so disparate a group of movements it was our principal intention to draw attention to the convergence in

* Some of the material in this chapter has appeared in a preliminary and abbreviated form in May (1979).
objectives and organizational style of movements with often widely divergent origins and in particular to emphasize their common tendency towards disengagement or withdrawal (but not, as a rule, formal secession) from the larger, national community. Although most of the movements described possessed a loosely defined ethnic base, many of them cut across linguistic and tribal boundaries and few placed much emphasis on ethnicity, some even specifically seeking a multiracial membership; for these reasons (and also because 'ethnicity' is at best a slippery concept, especially in the culturally complex situation of Melanesia) we avoided the term 'ethnonationalism', which has been employed by some authors to describe somewhat similar movements in other countries. We also rejected the term 'primordial' (Shils 1957), which has been attached to comparable movements in other new states but generally seems to imply greater internal coherence and intensity than most Papua New Guinea movements have possessed; similarly, terms such as 'communal association' and 'voluntary association', used to describe groups in Asia, Africa and Latin America, seemed to suggest more clearly defined membership and organizational structures than was the case with movements we described for Papua New Guinea in 1975.

In chapter 14, which follows the detailed studies, we have attempted to set down an anatomy of micronationalism; for the present, however, the essential characteristics of the movements we have described as micronationalist might be summarized: (a) membership is based on community or region and is typically fairly loosely defined; (2) objectives are universalistic but place major importance on broadly based and generally egalitarian 'development'; (3) ideologically (if not always in practice) emphasis is on achieving objectives through communal self-help, rather than through dependence on that colonial creation, 'the state'. It is in this last sense that we speak of 'disengagement' and 'withdrawal' (and by implication distinguish micronationalist movements from pressure groups and

1 For some cautionary comments on the use of this term see various papers in van den Berghe (1965), especially that by Mercier; Connor (1973); Cohen (1978). Also see Heeger (1974:88-94).

2 And by at least two authors (Premdas 1977 and Griffin 1975c) in reference to movements described in this volume. (Also see Griffin p. 138 below.)
political parties\(^1\)). At the same time, although we have included in the category 'micronationalist' some movements which might be described as 'separatist' (see pp. 22-24 below), micronationalism does not imply political separatism in the usual sense of that term (cf. Griffin 1973a, 1976; Premdas 1977; Woolford 1976: chapter 11); nor does political separatism necessarily imply micronationalism.

By way of further clarification it might be useful to say what we have not included within the ambit of micronationalism. We have not included relatively narrowly-focused interest groups (such as farmers' clubs and cattlemen's associations), whose membership tends to be restrictive, whose objectives tend to be specific, functional and individualistic, and whose activities are primarily concerned with access to government services. We are not concerned with political parties\(^2\) (though the fact that some micronationalist movements have sponsored electoral candidates does not disqualify them from our definition). Nor are we looking at 'cargo cults'.\(^3\) More tentatively, we have sought to confine the term to movements which extend beyond the level of a single village or clan, thus excluding the numerous small 'village development associations' which have sprung up (partly in response to government stimulus) since around the

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1 Cf. Wolfers (1970) and Stephen (1972) both of whom included the Mataungan Association and Napidakoe Navitu in their surveys of political parties.

2 For a comment on the definition of political parties, with reference to Papua New Guinea, see Wolfers (1970).

3 'Cargo cults' might be broadly described as movements which seek to achieve a substantial increase in material welfare ('cargo') through mystical or quasi-mystical means (cf. Jarvie (1963:1): 'Cargo Cults are apocalyptic millenarian movements, primarily of Melanesia, which promise a millenium in the form of material and spiritual cargo'). Outside the more precise anthropological literature, however, the term has been attached loosely, and often pejoratively, to a variety of spontaneous local movements, many of which have had little to do with cargo expectations narrowly defined (cf. Walter 1981). The extent of a link between cargo cult and micronationalist movement is a subject to which we will return (see below pp. 10-12 and chapter 14).
mid 1970s. (Information on grants approved by the Office of Village Development up to 1978 suggests that there were probably well over a hundred such organizations scattered throughout the country towards the end of the 1970s.) Finally, though they are closely related to the micronationalist phenomenon, we have excluded from our definition ethnic and regional associations formed among urban migrants (see p. 25 below).

In retrospect, 'micronationalism' may seem an overly dramatic term to use in the description of the local movements we have identified, especially in a country which has displayed the high degree of political stability which independent Papua New Guinea has; nevertheless the term has gained some currency and we will continue to use it in this volume as a convenient umbrella, albeit one which casts a wide and perhaps poorly-defined shadow. ¹

In the chapters which follow, eleven of the more notable movements which emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s are examined in detail. A concluding chapter seeks to extract from these studies certain broad characteristics of the movements, to account for their proliferation in this period, and to assess their place in the process of political and social change in Papua New Guinea. As a preliminary to this the remaining pages of this chapter describe the broad historical background against which the movements developed and to indicate briefly the dimensions of the micronationalist phenomenon of the 1960s-1970s.

¹ Gerritsen, also writing in 1975, used the term 'dynamic communal association' in reference to at least some of the movements included in our 1975 survey (contrasting such community based organizations with "class" based' interest associations) (Gerritsen 1975:14). More recently, Walter (1981) has used the term 'community development association' in a similar context.
Before European contact Papua New Guinea's population consisted almost entirely of small, largely independent communities of subsistence cultivators. Within these communities social, political and economic relationships were generally close and fairly well defined. Between them, notwithstanding some extensive trading networks and enduring political alliances, relations tended to be limited.

Under the impact of missions, traders and colonial administrators the situation gradually changed. As tribal fighting diminished and as plantations and commercial and administrative centres were established people began to move outside traditional tribal boundaries and to take up wage employment in the colonial economy. Later, encouraged by the colonial administration, rural villagers turned increasingly to cash cropping, producing mostly export crops whose income provided the means with which to acquire the goods and services of the modern sector and sometimes also to buy into traditional systems of status attainment. In time co-operatives were introduced as a method of promoting collective local enterprise and steps were taken to foster individual and group enterprises in secondary and tertiary as well as primary production. As in other parts of the developing world, a growing proportion of the population shifted at least temporarily to towns where they became wage earners or used established networks of kinsfolk to stay on as pasindia.

Politically, the colonial administration sought to foster participation in the imposed system through local government councils at the local level and through a systematic programme of political education to reinforce the introduction of Westminster style political institutions at the national level.

The early relationship between the colonial regime and its subjects was, however, essentially exploitative. Traditional villagers and those on the periphery of the colonial society sensed an inability to bridge the gap between their own situation and that enjoyed by their colonial masters; this in turn generated a sense of deprivation and frustration which

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1 From the English, passenger; hence one who is 'carried', dependent.
manifested itself from time to time in spontaneous local movements which sought, through a variety of means, to remove the blockages to the people's enjoyment of material wealth and power. Usually such movements were mystical and millenarian in nature but sometimes too they expressed themselves through acts of defiance against government and mission. With rare exception the colonial regime regarded such movements, loosely lumped together under the term 'cargo cults', with suspicious and hostility and frequently they were repressed under the various regulations which prescribed against illegal cults, illegal singsing and spreading false reports.

As in other parts of the Pacific, the experience of the second world war stimulated the growth of spontaneous local movements seeking change: it demonstrated the vulnerability of the colonial regime, it diminished at least temporarily the status inequalities between colonizers and colonized, and for many Papua New Guineans who came into contact with large numbers of people from other parts of the two territories for the first time it brought a vague sense of national identity. It also helped to produce a number of men with a broader world view and better understanding of the process of modernization than their elders, some of whom returned to their villages after the war with ambitious plans for social, economic and political reorganization and improvement for their people through communal effort.

Despite the fact that many of these movements displayed a fairly high degree of economic pragmatism and political moderation (even though a large number expressed opposition to incorporation in local government councils), official attitudes towards them remained, at best, guarded. Other observers, however, recognized in their objectives and organization a change from cargo cult to political movement, a shift 'from religion to pragmatism, from myth to self-help'.

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The record of these early postwar movements was generally disappointing. Some degenerated into a pattern of behaviour reminiscent of prewar cults; others simply fizzled out as expectations failed to materialize and popular support gradually dissipated. The histories of the two best documented movements, that founded in Manus by Paliau Maloat (Schwartz 1962; Mead 1956, 1964) and that formed in the Papuan Gulf by Tommy Kabu (Maher 1958, 1961; Oram 1967), are illustrative of a general pattern.

Paliau, a former policeman, came back to Manus at the end of the war with plans for a comprehensive social, economic, political, religious and cultural transformation. His 'New Way' (Niupela Pasin) envisaged a break with traditional social organization and religion, the construction of new villages, a programme of organized communal work and saving, and the establishment of schools, councils and village courts. The movement also sought to bring together traditionally conflicting tribal groups within the Manus Province. It sought cooperation with government but was antipathetic to the missions. In 1947 and again in 1952 supporters of Paliau were caught up in cargo cults which emerged in the area in competition with the Paliau movement. These cults involved expectations of a 'Second Coming' of Christ, destruction of property, and cemetery rituals; cultists had visions and experienced 'shaking'. Paliau resisted these manifestations of cargo cult but as prophecies went unfulfilled he was able to capture most of the large membership they mobilized. At its peak the Paliau movement had about five thousand supporters (around a third of the total population of Manus) and included several of the province's twenty-five language groups. However, with the establishment in 1950 of the Baluan Local Government Council (of which Paliau became president) and with the general failure of the Paliau movement to fulfil its economic objectives, the movement began to decline from around the mid 1950s, though Paliau went on to become a member of the House of Assembly and gain the respect of the colonial administration.

Tommy Kabu was another whose wartime experiences inspired him to reorganize his people to improve their welfare and status. Like Paliau,

1 For accounts of similar movements in other parts of Melanesia in this period see Guiart (1952) on the Malekula Native Company (Vanuatu) and Cochrane (1970) and Keesing (1978) on the Marching Rule (Solomon Islands).
Kabu was a former policeman. On his return to the Purari delta after the war Kabu set up a movement, known as 'the New Men', whose principal objective was to further the economic development of the area on an autonomous, cooperative basis. Traditional customs were rejected; new, decentralized, villages were built; produce associations were established with a view to marketing sago and copra in Port Moresby, and a kompani was formed and some shares issued. Income from produce sales was to be divided between returns to producers on a cooperative basis and investment in new undertakings. The movement brought together villages from several tribes and Hiri Motu, the lingua franca of Papua, was adopted as a common language. For a while the movement 'suspended' Australian administration in the area, establishing its own police force and village courts and organizing military style ceremonies, but this was quickly and peacefully stopped by the government. Within a few years, however, it was clear that the economic programme was a failure; the intertribal kompani collapsed, though several supporters of the movement went into individual business ventures; and around the mid 1950s the movement seems to have faded out.

Another well documented movement, which emerged a few years later and is still in existence, provides something of a link between the early postwar movements and those which sprang up in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Hahalis Welfare Society was created in 1960 as a breakaway from the East Coast Buka Society established a few years earlier. The East Coast Buka Society was formed by traditional leaders in opposition to the introduction of local government councils and cooperatives; when the majority of its members was persuaded by the government to support the council, the Welfare was set up on the initiative of some younger villagers to continue the resistance and pursue development instead through local communal action. Its broader aims have been described as being to integrate the whole community as a productive unit; to invest the group's income in an enterprise in which all would share equally; and to establish a relation of mutual respect and assistance between traditional leaders, the younger men and women with education, and government-appointed officials (Rimoldi 1976:2). Although there seems to have been a millenarian streak in the movement's activities during the early 1960s, the Welfare had a firm business orientation, being involved in copra and cocoa production and marketing, trade stores, trucks, road building and a credit
union. Its leaders expounded a communalistic social philosophy - the most publicized aspect of which was the Hahalis matrimonial clubs, or 'baby gardens' - which incorporated both traditional and western elements. In 1962, following a decision not to pay annual head tax, there was a violent confrontation between the government and the Welfare, which resulted in the arrest of the movement's leaders, John Teosin and Francis Hagai, and almost six hundred supporters, most of whom were released after a court appeal. Subsequently Hahalis supporters resumed the payment of taxation and the government left the movement pretty much to itself.

With the construction of a road across the island in the early 1960s, the provision of a high school, and improvements in government services, some rapprochement was achieved. The church, however, has remained hostile. In 1966 the Hahalis Welfare Society was registered as a private company. While shareholders provided a membership core, its adherents were said to comprise half the population of Buka in 1973 (that is, half of about 25,000) (Oliver 1973:153) and some villagers on northern Bougainville. Since then, and especially since the death of Hagai in 1976, the Welfare seems to have gone into decline, though it supported Bougainville separatism and has cooperated with the new provincial government.

During the 1960s and early 1970s there was a pronounced acceleration in the pace of social, economic and political change in Papua New Guinea. Among the important elements of this were a marked increase in the absolute level of Papua New Guinean participation in the cash economy, a belated - and correspondingly rapid - localization of the bureaucracy, and a conscious effort on the part of the colonial administration to promote a sense of national unity. Inevitably, the structural adjustments which accompanied these developments created tensions in the society and the rapid movement to self-government and independence in the 1970s served to focus these tensions, much as Geertz had described in his much quoted study of primordial tendencies in new states (Geertz 1963; also see Ake 1967).

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This reaction took different forms. Some groups, displaying a higher degree of continuity with historical antecedents, turned to a mixture of mysticism and modern business aspirations, with varying degrees of antipathy towards government; these groups might be loosely described as marginal cargo cults.¹ Others emerged as organized opposition to existing or proposed local government councils or to large scale development projects in the area, but came to assume wider objectives. A third type of response, probably the most common, was the formation of what might be termed self-help development movements. These typically drew their membership from a small number of clans or villages and their broad and often vaguely expressed objectives were to achieve social and economic improvement through communal effort. A few groups, for whom questions of political status seem to have been particularly important, sought to mobilize a broad regional consciousness as a basis for demands for greater autonomy. The following paragraphs briefly describe some of the movements which were active during the 1970s, using the categories suggested above. But as we have argued earlier, and as will become more apparent from the detailed studies presented in other chapters, these categories are fluid; indeed what is interesting about the movements which proliferated in the late 1960s and early 1970s is not so much their differences as their convergence, over time, on similar objectives and behaviour.

Marginal cargo cults. Among the movements which came into being in the early 1970s two attracted particular popular attention because of their large scale, broadly based membership, and their association with movements in which mystical practices designed to increase money or improve material conditions played an important part. These were the Peli Association (whose story is told in chapter 2) and the Pitenamu Society (described in chapter 3).

The Peli Association was established in 1971 in the aftermath of what was described at the time as one of the biggest and most explosive cults in the country's history. It quickly gained massive support

¹ Cf. Guiart's description of the Malekula Native Company (Vanuatu) as being 'en marge du "Cargo Cult"' (Guiart 1951a).
throughout the Sepik Provinces but, following a split in the leadership and growing disillusionment among its members, it declined. Before its decline the Peli Association had successfully contested a national election and by-election and had taken faltering steps towards the establishment of orthodox business enterprises.

Pitenamu first came to public notice in the same year. Having its origins in the Morobe highlands and, like Peli, strong links with earlier cargo cults in the area, the movement soon won widespread support throughout the Province. Although it is sometimes difficult to disentangle Pitenamu's more 'secular' from its more 'cargoistic' elements, like other micro-nationalist movements it expressed a clear demand for greater political autonomy — reflected in antipathy to local government and in its early self-identification with the Pangu Pati — and for economic development, to be achieved through communally supported modern business enterprise. By 1976, however, the movement was in a state of decline with little to show in material terms other than a small shareholding in a foreign-owned company.

Another movement with strong linkages to an earlier cargo cult is the Tutukuvul Isukal Association (TIA) of New Ireland (though TIA in its present form might more properly be regarded as a self-help development movement). In the early 1960s there was unrest in the Lavongai Council area on New Hanover and extensive government action was taken against tax defaulters. Then in the 1964 national elections people in the area insisted on voting for 'Johnson of America' and after the election about K1000 was collected to pay for the US president's fares to New Hanover, where it was hoped he would set up a new administration. The Johnson Cult, as it became known, was led by young but uneducated villagers. It had no specifically cargo philosophy and emphasized work rather than ritual; between 1965 and 1967 there was some organized communal planting of coconuts as a cash crop. However, its main objective was to get rid of the Australian administration and to bring in the Americans as a means of improving the welfare and status of the people. The movement quickly attracted several thousand supporters in southern New Hanover and on the mainland of New Ireland. Its members refused to pay council taxes and boycotted government cooperatives, and there were violent confrontations
with government field officers (Billings 1969). In an attempt to divert the people's energies along more profitable lines, in 1966 TIA was formed as an 'investment society' by an expatriate catholic priest at Lavongai. The Association received strong support from the cultists, as well as from opponents of the cult, and by 1967 had collected K12,000. Initially it sought development through communal copra production and development of unused land ('tutukuvul i sukal may be translated as 'stand together and plant'); subsequently it acquired a freezer, a small sawmill, workboats, and in 1977 three plantations. In 1968 a TIA candidate easily won the national election in the Kavieng Open electorate. Payment of local government council taxes has been a condition of membership of TIA; however, many members remain antipathetic to the council and this antipathy seems to have increased since 1975 when university students from New Ireland worked with the movement during a university vacation.

Local protest movements. Several of the more prominent micronationalist movements of the 1970s had their origins in organized local opposition to government policies. Among these may be listed the Napidakoe Navitu of the North Solomons (formerly Bougainville) Province, the Mataungan Association of East New Britain, the Nemea Landowners' Association of the Central Province, the Koiari Association of the Central Province, the Ahi Association of villages near Lae, and the Musa Association of the Northern (Oro) Province.

The history of Napidakoe Navitu is recounted in chapter 4. Its establishment was the outcome of a series of public meetings held at Kieta in 1969 to protest the government's proposed resumption of Arawa plantation and press for a conference on other land problems associated with the Bougainville copper mine. Subsequently it represented the people of Rorovana and Arawa villages in an unsuccessful legal action against the government's resumption of land and in the successful negotiation of compensation. Navitu, however, assumed objectives beyond the immediate issue of land. Its main aims were said to be the economic, social and political development of Bougainville, political autonomy, and better education; a supplementary list of objectives included the unity of all racial groups and political and religious bodies on Bougainville, promotion of traditional culture, maintenance of respect for marriage and the stability of the family,
early self-government, and the nomination of candidates for election to the House of Assembly. The Navitu also became involved in business enterprises, though these did not prove to be particularly successful. Support for the movement, which initially came almost entirely from the Nasioi people, grew rapidly; within twelve months it claimed six thousand members from 116 villages in the Kieta District (Middlemiss 1970:101) and support cut across linguistic and religious divisions.

Napidakoe Navitu was generally hostile to the government and it saw the Kieta Local Government Council as 'dominated by kiaps [government field officers]' (Middlemiss 1970:101). Expatriate domination of local business enterprises also came under fire. The movement was critical of many aspects of the mining project on Bougainville, especially the share of profits retained locally, but did not oppose the mine or the operating company. Increasingly the Navitu became an advocate of Bougainville secession and a supporter of a referendum on the issue of separatism. By the early 1970s, however, other developments in Bougainville - particularly the emergence of a more broadly based Bougainville nationalism - and internal dissention began to undermine the political significance of Navitu; it also suffered an economic decline. Nevertheless, the movement survives, with some of its early detractors now holding office.

The Mataungan Association was founded in the same year as Napidakoe Navitu. Its formation came after a series of public meetings organized to protest the government's decision to form a multiracial local government council on the Gazelle Peninsula. The Association's interests, however, soon spread to a range of other issues, including land matters, economic enterprises, education, and the preservation of certain aspects of traditional Tolai culture. Opposition to the proposed multiracial council was expressed through mass meetings and marches and a partially successful attempt to have the council elections boycotted; subsequently Mataungan officials seized the keys to the council building and there were physical attacks on a number of Tolai leaders who supported the multiracial council, resulting in the arrest of several Mataungan Association executives. After the council was elected, Mataungan supporters refused to acknowledge it and instead of paying council taxes paid equivalent amounts to the Association, which in due course set up its own 'council',
the Warkurai Ngunan. They also boycotted the council-run Tolai Cocoa Project. In 1970 the Association's patron, Oscar Tammur, presented a submission to the Select Committee on Constitutional Development calling for an independent government for the Gazelle Peninsula and threatening that 'the Association and its followers would break away from the Territory of Papua and New Guinea if its wishes were not satisfied' (Select Committee on Constitutional Development 1971:3).

The government's initial reaction to the Mataungan Association was a show of force. Large numbers of police were flown in and some villages known to be sympathetic to the Association were raided. A Commission of Inquiry into local government and other matters in the Gazelle Peninsula was set up in 1969, but its report did nothing to ease the situation. Eventually the government acceded to demands for a referendum on the council issue but the Association refused to accept the government's condition of a secret ballot. A further attempt to settle the issue by negotiation between the Association and several prominent Tolais (the Warmaram group) also failed. The Gazelle Local Government Council was suspended in June 1972. Three months later, in what was generally regarded as a victory for the Mataungan Association, the government introduced legislation designed to create 'a new type of local self-government for the Gazelle'.

The legislation provided for a trust to manage the property of the council and for the recognition of three groups: the Warkurai Ngunan, the Warbete Kivung (a group of Tolai who have refused to participate in local government since its inception) and the Greater Toma Council (comprising groups loyal to the Gazelle Council, who had held informal elections towards the end of 1972). These groups, to be represented on the executive of the trust, were given power to tax registered members and the executive of the trust was given responsibility for deciding on economic and community projects.

Mataungan Association candidates successfully contested the 1972 and 1977 national elections and have held senior portfolios in both the coalition governments of Michael Somare and of Julius Chan. From an early stage, too, the Mataungan Association has been involved in economic

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Confrontation between police and Mataungan supporters, 1971

(Photo courtesy The Sydney Morning Herald)
enterprise, establishing a market (in competition with the Rabaul Council's market), and acquiring interests in plantations, cocoa and copra marketing, trade stores and a tavern. In 1972 a New Guinea Development Corporation was registered, with authorized share capital of K250,000, to carry on the Association's business activities.

Mataungan Association leadership has come mostly from young educated Tolai and support for it has cut across traditional intertribal enmities. In late 1973 an official estimate of Mataungan Association supporters on the Gazelle Peninsula was 15,000; although less active now than in the early 1970s, the Mataungan Association is still a movement of substantial political importance locally and the Development Corporation has become a successful model of local capitalist enterprise. Its place in Papua New Guinea's recent political history is analysed in chapter 5.

The Mataungan Association was a source of inspiration to a number of individuals and groups with feelings of grievance against the government and a desire to see economic, social and political development take place through local community action. Among movements which have acknowledged the influence of the Mataungan model are the Kabisawali Association, the Boera and Hiri Associations and Komge Oro (see below).

The Nemea Landowners' Association emerged in 1970 near Abau in the Central Province to express dissatisfaction both over land alienation in the area and with the government's closure of the Cloudy Bay Local Government Council. Its members sought to form their own 'government' and to achieve economic and social development in the area, with financial assistance from the central government. The Association is examined in detail in chapter 6. Two smaller movements appeared in the same district at about the same time. The Wake Association was formed ostensibly, like Nemea, to secure registration of tenure over tribal land, though clearly it was strongly motivated by a desire to counter Nemea influence in the area. The Ganai Association whose establishment probably also owed something to Nemea activities, was set up to oppose prospecting and timber exploitation in the area.
Demands for a separate local government council and for compensation for tribal land taken over by the Papua New Guinea Electricity Commission appear to have motivated the formation in 1973 of the ethnically based Koiari Association. The Koiari, who occupy the foothills of the Owen Stanley range behind Port Moresby, have also voiced general aspirations for local social and economic development. In 1973 a deputation from the Association, accompanied by the regional MHA, Josephine Abaijah, presented a schedule of demands to the Electricity Commission; the Association secured the promise of a road link to Koiari villages and in 1976 the Koiari were given their own council. Subsequently they received a substantial cash compensation.

The Ahi Association was established in 1971 following release by the government of an urban development plan for Lae. The Association, which represents five peri-urban villages, was created in the first instance to prevent the imposition of town plan proposals which might be contrary to the interests of the villages and to take up claims against the government for compensation in respect of alienated land. A compensation settlement was negotiated in 1974 and funds received were subsequently invested in the purchase of a large commercial building complex in Lae. Other social and economic ventures have included the construction of a market and the establishment of a provincial cultural centre. The Ahi Association has also provided a means of political expression for these peri-urban villages. Its story is told in detail in chapter 7.

The Musa Association comprises people of several tribes in the upper and middle Musa river area of the Northern Province. Its formation in 1975 appears to have been prompted by local opposition to a government decision to dam the Musa river and relocate the affected villages. However, the movement declared its main objective to be communal economic development. To this end it collected subscriptions which were used to finance the establishment of a wholesale store and to start cattle projects in the area. Leadership of the movement has come primarily from older villagers, though the Association has been assisted by a young educated 'adviser'.

Two other local protest movements merit brief mention. The Purari Action Group was established in 1974 by a group of young educated Gulf
Province people in Port Moresby to organize opposition to a large scale hydro electric project in their Province. In opposing the scheme the Group has called for 'alternative development on a more realistic scale, based on agriculture and farming' (Pardy et al.1978:216). The West New Britain Action Group emerged about the same time to protest against development projects in that province based on resettlement of migrants from other Provinces. Unlike the local protest movements already mentioned, however, neither the Purari Action Group nor the West New Britain Action Group appears to have extended its activities beyond the immediate objective of protest.

Self-help development movements. While a number of the movements which began ostensibly as movements of local protest subsequently adopted broader objectives of autonomous local development, many of the movements which emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s were established specifically to pursue development through communal action (though, to complete the circle, some later acted as local protest groups).

One of the most prominent of these was the Kabisawali Association, whose early history is documented in chapter 8. The aims of the Kabisawali movement, as stated by a supporter (Mwayubu 1973), embrace political, economic and social aspirations:

First it's a move to tell the government and the leaders we do exist as it seems we have been overlooked for any development. Secondly to fulfill the meaning of the Association broadly speaking, wants to run its own affairs like running the Tourist Industry with hotels and tourist amenities. It wants to revive the islands happy life with festivals and traditions without too much of a loss to the western world.

In 1972 supporters of the Association established a Kabisawali People's Government. The following year Kabisawali candidates contested the Kiriwina Local Government Council elections and having won a majority proceeded to dissolve the council, a move which was tacitly accepted by the central government. The movement's business activities have included

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1 For a more detailed discussion of the Purari issue see Pardy et al. (1978) and Kairi (1977).
involvement in trade stores, trucks, road building, tourism, artifacts trading, and a variety of more ambitious projects. Following the Mataungan model, a Kabisawali Village Development Corporation was established in 1974 to undertake business and other activities, including traditional kula exchanges, artistic and cultural activities, and promotion of youth and adult education. Compared with other self-help development movements, relatively little emphasis was placed on subsistence agriculture. From about 1975, and especially following the imprisonment of the movement's effective leader, John Kasaipwalova, in 1977 on a charge of stealing funds allocated by the National Cultural Council, Kabisawali appears to have declined as a popular local movement and its organizational centre of gravity seems to have shifted, for a while, to Port Moresby and Lae. In 1973 Kabisawali's successes prompted the movement's opponents in the Trobriand Islands to form a rival organization, Tonenei Kamokwita, with similar social and economic aims but without Kabisawali's hostility towards the central government. This movement is described briefly in chapter 9.

The other conspicuous followers of the Mataungan-Kabisawali model were the Boera and Hiri Associations, and Komge Oro. The Boera Association was established in 1972 at Boera village near Port Moresby to promote village development on a self-help basis. The main initiative for its formation seems to have come from young university graduate, former public servant and Pangu Pati chairman, Moi Avei. The Boera Association subsequently extended its activities to other nearby Motu villages and a larger, ethnically based, movement, the Hiri Association, was formed. Later a Hiri Village Development Corporation was set up to manage the organization's economic interests, which included passenger motor vehicles, trade stores and an artifact and local fabric fashion shop in Port Moresby. The Hiri Association had little success with its business activities and from about 1976 support for the movement gradually fell away.

Komge Oro claims to have been formed in 1969, consisting mainly of people of the Binandere, Aega, Chiriwa and Biage tribes in the Northern (Oro) Province. (Komge is an acronym from the five rivers in the region and oro is the Binandere word for the traditional men's house). However

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1 For an analysis of the impact of the Boera Association on the village people see Moi (1979).
the movement did not attract public attention until 1974 when it successfully organized local opposition to a proposal to establish a large timber processing plant in the area.\footnote{See Waiko (1977).} As stated by its principal spokesman, university graduate John Waiko,

\begin{quote}
...\textit{Komge Oro} and its members are committed to pursuing cultural, social and economic activities based on village community initiative, and to developing resources with village leadership.... The emphasis is placed upon subsistence living as a basis for self-reliance, and the acceptance of cultural activities that are bound up with that way of life. Any other innovation, be it in the form of technology, crops or techniques, must be geared towards supporting and improving the subsistence basis rather than distorting or replacing it with a cash economy (Waiko 1976:17-18).
\end{quote}

Under the guidance of two vocational school graduates, village pig and poultry breeding centres were established and village youth clubs were organized to help clear and plant gardens large enough 'to hold ceremonies not only within a village or a clan but beyond the tribal and indeed the regional level'; appropriate technology was to be promoted, small village industries established, and a village barter system encouraged (Waiko 1976). Waiko was also reported as saying that members hoped that Komge Oro would be a springboard for the mobilization of the whole Northern Province, 'leading the people towards true self-reliance and control over their own destiny' and called on the Province's trained leaders throughout the country to 'come home'.\footnote{Post-Courier 12 August 1974. For some critical assessments of the movement see Yaman (1975). }

One of the Northern Province's trained leaders, senior civil servant Simon Kaumi, did return home in 1974, after being suspended for making public attacks on the government. Kaumi became patron of another local self-help development movement, the Eriwo Development Association. The Association, formed in 1974, expressed antipathy towards the central government (Kaumi was reported\footnote{Post-Courier 16 January 1975.} as saying in 1975 that if Papuan separatism
failed his people would try to set up a 'Northern Province Republic') and to local government councils (the Eriwo established their own 'council', named Bubesa). Soon after the formation of the Association, a wing of it, adopting the bold title of 'Papuan Republic Fighters' Army' and led by Kaumi, seized an expatriate-owned plantation and occupied it in the name of the Association. Plans were subsequently announced for village redevelopment, cattle projects, supermarkets, and tourism development on the seized plantation. The central government responded by negotiating the purchase of the plantation for the Eriwo people, but the development plans were never fulfilled and popular local support for the movement appears to have dissipated.

Another self-help development movement which achieved some prominence in the early 1970s and which is examined in detail in this volume is the Damuni Association of the Milne Bay Province (see chapter 10). The Association was created by prominent councillors in the Province in the late 1960s following rejection by the commissioner for local government of proposals for council involvement in certain business interests. Through an associated company, Damuni Economic Corporation Limited, the Association acquired plantation interests in copra and cattle, and a freezer. In 1975 the movement's leader was elected to the National Parliament. Since about 1976, however, this movement, too, seems to have been in a state of decline.

On Goodenough Island in the Milne Bay Province three communally-based self-help movements appeared at about the same time. The Kobe Association, formed around 1970 on the initiative of an expatriate schoolteacher, sought to promote self-reliant development but was also an outspoken critic of government policy generally and local government council activity specifically. The Island Development Association, set up in 1971 by Goodenough Islanders working in Port Moresby, had similar aims but was stronger in its criticisms of central government, local government and expatriate business, its president at one stage threatening to chase government personnel and expatriate businessmen from the island (Kaidaday 1974). In 1974 a third organization, the Aioma Association, was established along similar lines. None of the Goodenough movements, however, appears to have been very active.
Among a number of smaller self-help movements which sprang up in the Central and Milne Bay Provinces the Hood Lagoon Development Association is notable primarily because it was the subject of a pamphlet circulated by the government in 1976 as part of its government liaison (political education) programme (Office of Information 1976). The Association, established in 1974, mobilized communal labour and capital for a self-help development effort which included road construction and the purchase of a truck and freezers to facilitate the marketing of fish in Port Moresby.

Self-help development movements were slow to emerge in the highlands but by the mid 1970s there were several, mostly small, local movements. One of the larger and more successful of these has been the Pibilika (or Pipilika) Association. The Pibilika are an ethnic group, comprising a number of clans which claim common ancestry, in the vicinity of Mt Hagen in the Western Highlands Province; they number about six thousand. Formation of the Association followed a meeting in 1974 organized by a local bigman in an attempt to bring an end to a long period of tribal fighting in the area (Timbi n.d.; also see Mark 1975). Having succeeded in engendering a sense of Pibilika solidarity, the bigman went on to suggest that the Pibilika combine in a joint business venture. Initially trade stores and a petrol station were mentioned, but following advice from two young educated Pibilika men then in Port Moresby more ambitious plans were formulated. In 1975, having raised K11,000 from members and with a government loan of K212,000 the Pibilika Development Corporation acquired a local plantation which the government had purchased from its expatriate owners. Aided by unusually high coffee prices in 1976-77, the group repaid its loan within a year, declared a 100 per cent dividend to its shareholder members, and proceeded to purchase another, smaller plantation, make a substantial downpayment on a large motel in Mt Hagen, and purchase several trucks to be used mostly for coffee buying. There was also talk of establishing a special fund to provide loans to member clans for village development. Up till 1977 the enterprises were run as before by European managers with plantation labour mostly from outside the Province. In that year, however, inter clan disputes led to the subdivision of the large plantation and its partial reorganization on a smallholder basis.
Regional separatist movements. Opposition to existing local government councils and general antipathy to central government characterized many of the movements which have been described in the foregoing paragraphs.

In a few instances such autonomist sentiments expressed themselves through the creation of what might be termed regionally-based separatist movements. In describing these movements as 'separatist', however, it should be said that, with the possible exception of the North Solomons, what the movements seem to have been after was not secession (which except for the North Solomons was not a practical option) but recognition by the national government of specific regional interests. The threat of separatism, in other words, was probably more strategic than real - even though not all the supporters of 'separatist' movements appreciated such a distinction.

The two most commonly cited examples of separatist movement are the North Solomons (Bougainville) and Papua Besena.

The existence of a strong separatist sentiment in Bougainville was evidenced at least as early as 1968 when a group of Bougainvillean leaders and students, meeting in Port Moresby, called on the government to hold a referendum to determine Bougainvillean feeling towards separation. This request was not granted but the issue remained a lively one and in 1973 a Bougainville Special Political Committee was established, under the chairmanship of university graduate Leo Hannett, to help define Bougainville's political aspirations and act as a pressure group for political change (Mamak and Bedford 1974:22). The committee brought together traditional leaders and young educated Bougainvilleanes, including MHAs, presidents of local government councils, representatives of non-council areas and outlying islands, and representatives of the Hahalis Welfare Society, Napidakoe Navitu and the Mungkas Association (an urban-based association founded by Bougainvillean students in other Provinces).

After protracted, and often acrimonious, negotiations with the central government an interim district government was established in 1973 and a Provincial government (the first under the new constitution) in 1976, the latter, however, not before frustrated Bougainvilleanes had made a symbolic unilateral declaration of independence for the 'North Solomons Republic'. The story of North Solomons nationalism has been told elsewhere. ¹

¹ The most comprehensive account of the period to 1974 is that of Mamak and Bedford (1974). Also see Griffin (1973a, 1974, 1976), Hannett (1975) and Conyers (1976).
It will not be repeated here; although North Solomons nationalism has had much in common with the micronationalist phenomenon which is the subject of this volume, it is distinguished from the movements described here in that it was much more a coalition of political forces at a point of time than a coherent single movement. Moreover, while the movements we describe as micronationalist have been characterized by a package of broad social, economic and political objectives, North Solomon nationalism appears to have had the specific objective of political separatism, and, with the granting of provincial autonomy the 'movement' seems to have lost its coherence.

Papua Besena is subjected to examination in chapter 11. This movement emerged in 1973 under the leadership of Josephine Abaijah MHA, in opposition to the Australian government's commitment to granting independence to a unified Papua New Guinea, and with the stated aim of liberating Papua not only from Australian colonial rule but also from domination by New Guineans. But apart from the broad objective of 'liberating the minds of the Papuan people', the aims of Papua Besena have been vague and sometimes apparently inconsistent. Papua Besena claims to be a Papua-wide movement with supporters in all the Papuan Provinces. Lacking a coherent organizational structure, it has chosen to work with and through a number of Papuan organizations with similar objectives. (These have included the Social Workers' Party of Papua New Guinea, the Papuan Black Power Liberation Movement, the Papua Group, Simon Kaumi's Papuan Republic Fighters' Army, and the Koiari Association.) But in fact, as McKillop argues below, the movement has drawn most of its support from villages in the National Capital and Central Provinces and has served, primarily, the interests of an educated elite. In March 1975, six months before Papua New Guinea's independence, Papua Besena staged a unilateral declaration of independence, but no attempt was made to take this declaration beyond the symbolic act and in 1977 Besena candidates successfully contested the national elections. The movement's 'parliamentary wing' subsequently became part of a highlands-dominated coalition which, following a vote of no confidence against prime minister Somare in 1980, formed the new government.
A rather different sort of separatist movement is the Highlands Liberation Front (HLF), which is the subject of chapters 12 and 13. It was set up towards the end of 1972 amongst students from the (then) four highlands Provinces at the University of Papua New Guinea with the principal aim of liberating 'all highlands people from white and coastal domination in the public service, private enterprise and the armed forces'.

As well as demanding the appointment of highlanders to senior administrative positions in the central government, it advocated a high degree of political decentralization and a majority local equity in all business enterprises in the highlands; there was talk of establishing a highlands development corporation to control tourism and to establish small businesses. Acknowledging inspiration from the Mataungan Association and Napidakoe Navitu, the HLF supported economic development through local community efforts and economic self-sufficiency, was concerned with adult education, and identified with traditional social forms. In 1972 a model village project, initially designated 'HLF Demonstration Village No. 1', was established at Olu Bus in the Western Highlands Province to give practical expression to the self-help philosophy of development (see Kaman 1975; Reay 1979). The HLF claimed to have the support of about one thousand highlanders in the public service and tertiary institutions and from several highlands members of parliament but it failed to attract a significant following in the rural villages, remaining essentially a movement of the educated elite, and by 1976 was moribund.

On a smaller scale, the Wahgi Tuale was created in the Western Highlands in the early 1970s to press for a separate province in the Wahgi-Jimi area. The Tuale appears to have been a loosely structured organization with both local bigmen and university students occasionally acting as spokesmen. At least some of the latter, including Philip Kaman, the founder of Olu Bus, seem to have seen the Tuale as a potential self-help movement with broad social and economic goals. Other, less articulated movements emerged at about the same time to press for separate provinces within the existing West Sepik (Sandaun), Eastern Highlands and Morobe Provinces (May 1975:40).

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1 Post-Courier 28 November 1972.
Two associated developments of the late 1960s-1970s which are clearly related to the micronationalist phenomenon are not discussed in this volume but merit a brief note. One is the emergence of ethnic associations among urban migrant groups (see Skeldon 1977). To date this has not occurred in Papua New Guinea on the scale it has in parts of Africa and Latin America, and the objectives of such associations have generally been confined to a limited range of welfare and sporting activities. The other concerns the establishment of at least one regionally-based women's movement. The movement, best known by the titles Wok Meri or Kafaina has branches throughout the Chimbu Province and in the Eastern Highlands. It has much in common, ideologically and organizationally, with the micronationalist movements described in this volume and has been the subject of several studies elsewhere (Munster 1975; Anggo 1975; Sexton 1980).

Micronationalism and government policy

In this brief survey we have attempted to convey something of the mood of the late 1960s and 1970s, against which micronationalism developed, and to illustrate both the variety in which micronationalism manifested itself and, at the same time, the convergence by various movements on similar objectives and patterns of behaviour. In the concluding chapter we will return to a more systematic examination of objectives and organization and we will take up the question of why micronationalist movements proliferated in the way we have suggested when they did. Before turning to the detailed studies, however, it is perhaps useful to sketch in one more element of the general background, namely the changing attitude and policies of government.

It has already been observed (p. 5) that the historical attitude of colonial governments towards spontaneous local movements was one of suspicion and hostility. Apart from the facts that they frequently followed practices unacceptable to officialdom and that their leaders were often suspected (sometimes with good reason) of exploiting their followers, such movements were commonly regarded as a threat to the authority of government and church. Official policy towards them was at best neutral and more often actively repressive.
By the 1960s government policy had become rather more tolerant but movements were still seen primarily as a source of local disturbance and a potential threat to the orderly progression to self-government and independence as a united country (cf. Rowley 1969). As late as 1971 an official review of the political education programme in Papua New Guinea recommended that the recent development of micronationalist movements such as Napidakoe Navitu, the Mataungan Association, and the Papuan Front organization must be resisted and countered, and the same year Papua New Guinea's deputy administrator told the House of Assembly that separatist movements would be discouraged no matter who started them.\footnote{HAD II(17):123, 20-24 September 1971.} A particular source of concern was the frequent opposition of micronationalist movements to local government councils and refusal by their members to pay council taxes. It was this more than anything else which prevented the Australian administration from taking a more sympathetic attitude to the movements and it was this which led to the early violent confrontation with Hahalis and the Mataungans.

The accession to power of a national government, following the country's third general elections in 1972, produced a more substantive shift in attitudes and policies. In 1975 prime minister Somare wrote in his autobiography,

> During recent years one of the most important developments in Papua New Guinea has been the emergence of spontaneous efforts by village and ethnic based organizations encouraging self-reliance. The government recognizes the importance of [such] groups (Somare 1975:139).

In relation to individual movements, the new government displayed a willingness to negotiate at ministerial level and to make settlements (as it did with the Mataungans, Kabisawali, Ahi, the Nemea Association, the Koiari Association and, eventually, the North Solomons) to meet the circumstances of particular situations. It also provided a good deal of financial and technical assistance to particular movements.

In the area of national policy making, a specific commitment to decentralization and self-reliance was embodied in the Eight Point Plan
announced by the government in 1972, and the potential importance of
local movements as a means of implementing the Eight Aims was recognized
in a number of policy decisions which gave positive encouragement to local
groups. The most important measures in this context were the creation in
1974 of a Task Force on Village Development (initially headed by Moi Avei,
the organizational force behind the Boera Association), whose purpose was
to assist village groups, and the establishment of a Village Economic
Development Fund to provide grants for village group (but not individual)
projects. Village groups also received assistance through favoured access
to the Rural Improvement Programme,¹ through the establishment of a
Plantation Redistribution Scheme, the administration of which favoured
village groups, and through grants from the National Cultural Council to
support local cultural projects. Development Bank lending policy was
also revised to favour village self-help movements and requests from them
for technical assistance were received sympathetically. Other relevant
measures included the introduction of village courts and the establishment
of experimental Komunity Kaunsi in Kainantu (Uyassi 1975; Mogu and
Bwaleto 1978; Warren 1976) and, under the North Solomons provincial
government, of village government (Anis 1976; Connell 1977) as alternatives
to local government councils.

In 1974 Papua New Guinea's Constitutional Planning Committee gave
consideration to the possibility of making special provision for local
movements within the constitution. But while welcoming the growth of
'associations spontaneously formed by the people outside the framework
of local government' it was 'unable to foresee a situation in which these
bodies might act as the main link between the national government and
village people'; the Committee, however, expressed the belief that 'such
bodies should seek representations on district-level [i.e. Provincial]
assemblies' (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:10/3).

There is little doubt that the Somare government's more sympathetic
attitude to local movements encouraged their proliferation. At the same
time, it seems likely that the shift in government attitudes and policies
to local movements did something to modify the micronationalist response;
it is arguable that the government's apparent sympathy towards micro-
nationalist movements enabled it to divert the energies of at least some

¹ Note, however, the comment of Colebatch (1979:120), that 'few of the
local development associations appeared as [RIP] project sponsors'.
potentially troublesome movements into social, economic and even political activities which accorded with the changing priorities of the government and in that way to incorporate them into the system. In this way, paradoxically, the government may have contributed to a decline in micronationalism. This is an argument to which we will return in chapter 14.
MARGINAL CARGO CULTS
Early in the morning of 7 July 1971 - the seventh day of the seventh month - a large number of people climbed to the summit of Hurun (Mt Turu) near Yangoru patrol post in the East Sepik Province. There, after a prayer meeting, they removed two cement markers. These were strung on bamboo poles and carried down the mountain while villagers lining the route said prayers and counted rosary beads; subsequently, and somewhat anticlimactically, they were deposited outside the patrol post at Yangoru.

This marked the end of a phase of cargo cult activity in the area. But it was the preface to the establishment of an association which soon claimed a huge membership in the East and West Sepik Provinces. This association provided an organizational base from which the cult's leader was elected to the House of Assembly with a massive majority and a financial base around which were formulated vague ambitions for regional economic development.
Figure 2.1 East and West Sepik Provinces, with inset of Yangoru area
The area

Yangoru patrol post\(^1\) is situated in the southern foothills of the Prince Alexander range in the East Sepik Province close to the foot of Hurun. Hurun, a 1213 metre peak frequently covered in clouds, is a prominent local landmark and a sacred place. The Yangoru sub-district covers an area containing, in 1971, about 18,000 people; it is within the Maprik District. The people within the sub-district are mostly Boiken speakers but the area also includes some Arapesh speakers to the north and northwest and Sawos speakers to the south. The Boiken speaking area extends to the east, towards Wewak, which is the Provincial centre; to the west of the Yangoru sub-district are some 39,000 Abelam speakers who along with the Boiken and Sawos form part of the Ndu linguistic family (Laycock 1965, 1973).

Traditionally the people around Yangoru, like the Abelam, were shifting cultivators, their main foods being yam and taro. The region has a rich material culture and ritual and magic, particularly the ceremonies associated with yam growing, play an important part in the peoples' lives. Traditionally people built cult houses (*haus tambaran*) in which were stored powerful ceremonial and magic objects. Ancestor spirits (in the Boiken language, *kori-yava*) are important in traditional religion and each clan had its spirit (*masalai*) which dwelt in sacred places and could cause personal affliction, failure of gardens or shortage of game to those who offended it. The Yangoru people also recognize a 'big' *masalai*, named *Wale-rur'n*, whose sacred place is on top of Hurun and gives Hurun its name.

For the Yangoru people, and for most of the people of the Maprik District, European contact was established early in the century but until the second world war it was minimal. The Catholic Church apparently bought land at Ambukanja in 1914 but there appears to have been little mission activity in the Yangoru area until after

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1 Since 1976 areas administered from what were patrol posts have been redesignated sub-districts.
During the second world war there was a large number of Japanese in the East Sepik and heavy fighting in the Yangoru area; the final Japanese surrender took place there. After the war village people received substantial war compensation payments.

In the early postwar years European influence began to exert a more pervasive pressure on traditional society. A patrol post was established at Yangoru soon after the war and patrolling became more frequent. Cash cropping was introduced in the early 1950s, with coffee, rice, peanuts and later cocoa and cattle being developed around Yangoru. (There are no European plantations.) Labour recruitment also expanded in this period and since the early 1950s it has not been uncommon for villages in the Yangoru area (and other parts of the Province) to have absentee rates among work age males of over 40 per cent. During the 1960s a fairly good road system was developed; by 1968 it linked Wewak, Yangoru and Maprik.

In 1948 the Catholic mission was reestablished in the area, moving from Ambukanja to Negri, west of Hurun, and subsequently setting up several other stations nearby. Later an Assemblies of God mission was established at Yangoru and in the late 1960s there was a Jehovah's Witness missionary and a Seventh Day Adventist pastor in the region.

The Yangoru Local Government Council was formed in 1962, with 38 wards and 45 members, and five years later became multi-racial. Co-operatives and Rural Progress Societies were also established.
What development did take place in the Yangoru area, however, (and this is equally true of the Sepik Provinces generally) fell well short of people's expectations. Their disappointment was reflected in continued high rates of outmigration, the recurrence of cargo cults (one of whose leaders, Homb nei, came from Ambukanja), and a good deal of antipathy towards local government. It probably contributed, also, to the popularity of Australian Bonanza and other chain letter schemes promising easy wealth, which flourished in the late 1960s and early 1970s before being outlawed by the government.

The cult

The Hurun cult seems to date back to about 1969 when two men, Matias Yaliwan and Daniel Hawina, became convinced that a number of cement survey markers placed on top of Hurun were preventing material benefits from flowing to the people. Yaliwan and Hawina led an attempt to remove the markers. There was, it seems, no promise of cargo in the form of material goods if the markers were removed; Yaliwan said only that the markers were erected without consulting the people and that if they were removed garden crops would improve, game would become more plentiful and the rivers and creeks would abound with fish. In December 1969 Yaliwan, Hawina and some others removed one of the markers. They were arrested and sentenced to gaol terms ranging from four to nine months.

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1 There were four markers on Hurun: three were geodetic survey markers put there by the US and Australian air forces in 1962; the fourth was a survey marker placed there in the 1930s by former Sepik District Commissioner Townsend (Hwekmarin et al. 1971:2).

2 In some versions Yaliwan is reported to have said that the erection of the markers was a violation of the sacred place of Walu-rur'n. Almost certainly this attitude was present. In 1971 Ward 7 of the Yangoru Council (which includes Ambukanja and Marambanja) vetoed applications for prospecting authorities in the region of Hurun and in 1972 the Peli Association successfully opposed moves to construct a radio telephone tower on Hurun.
Yaliwan, a man in his early forties in 1971, comes from Ambukanja, near the Yangoru patrol post. For some years Yaliwan was in the police force, serving in Goroka and Madang, but he left the force sometime around 1960. Subsequently he was employed by the Catholic mission in Wewak, where for a while he worked in the powerhouse. While in Wewak he was an active member of the Legion of Mary, a Catholic lay religious organization with a strong following in the Province, and arranged prayer meetings in Wewak. He also became a member of the Christian Democratic Party, a political party begun in 1966, apparently on the initiative of a Catholic missionary worker at Boiken, and which in November 1967 was said to have over 1000 members and to have collected K450 in the Yangoru area. Yaliwan left the mission in 1966 and in 1968, supported by Hawina, he contested the national general election. He was however an inconspicuous candidate: he received few votes and brief biographical notes on the candidates prepared by government officials at the time listed him as having no known mission or political affiliations. About this time also Yaliwan wrote several letters to the Administrator and other senior officials who dismissed him as a religious crank. Yaliwan is a quiet man but with a strong personality. He is intensely religious and claims that he communicates with God and that God has given him special powers, including the power to interpret the hidden meaning of passages in the Bible, and to foretell the future. Yaliwan has been described (Hwekmarin et al. 1971:5) as 'a recluse who spends long periods in prayer and lives away from other villagers on a ridge where he often locks himself in his house for long periods'. In May 1971, when asked by the press to comment on some of the bizarre stories surrounding the cult, Yaliwan replied that he did not go walking around the villages and as a result did not know what the talk was

1 Stephen (1972:74-5) gives a brief account of the Christian/United Democratic Party. In the 1968 election six (including Yaliwan) of the nine candidates contesting the Ambunti-Yangoru electorate were listed as either CDP or United Democratic Party.
Matias Yaliwan addressing a Peli meeting on Hurun, 1976

(Photo courtesy R.J. May)
in them. He is widely believed to have supernatural powers, including the ability to overhear conversations held many miles away - a fact which in 1971 helped to silence his critics.

Hawina (also known as Daniel Wavingian), who was in his mid thirties in 1971, comes from nearby Marambanja and is related to Yaliwan by marriage. His father is a prominent man in the area, being a former paramount *luluai*¹ and at one stage president of the Yangoru Rural Progress Society. Hawina was educated to standard 3 in Wewak and then attended the Kerevat Forestry School in East New Britain, subsequently being posted to New Ireland. He returned to the Yangoru area in 1962 and began working with Yaliwan in 1966. As with Yaliwan, the dominant mission influence on Hawina has been Roman Catholic but while in Rabaul he came under the influence of the Jehovah's Witnesses. He has the reputation of being a heavy drinker and has been involved in a number of brawls, at least two of which have brought him periods in gaol. He is a willing and effective public speaker. In 1971 he was widely believed to have the ability to create money, a secret he had bought from a man in Rabaul for K100.

A third person who became prominent in the movement in 1971 was Peter Koe. Koe, a carpenter from Yule Island in the Central Province, came to Wewak in 1959 and in 1962 became associated with Yaliwan. Although he was not among the cultists gaol in 1969 Koe took an active part in the happenings in July 1971 and subsequently he became Yaliwan's personal secretary. In 1973 Koe left the movement and went to the West Sepik Province where, with assistance from the then Department of Business Development, he became a successful building contractor.

Following release from gaol, Yaliwan and Hawina returned to their preoccupation with the survey markers and began enlisting

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¹ *luluai* were village officials appointed by government. A paramount *luluai* was normally responsible for an area roughly equivalent to a census division.
support. They visited a number of villages in the area and in the early months of 1971 Hawina addressed mass meetings around Wewak. Yaliwan told followers that God had said the survey markers must be removed and both Yaliwan and Hawina called for immediate independence.

The removal of the markers was set down for the seventh day of the seventh month. The cult quickly built up a substantial following in both the East and West Sepik Provinces, most of whom had paid a K12 membership fee. Some of this money was collected by Hawina in the name of the Solomon Association and Hawina is alleged to have told some people that 50 toea of their fee was for membership of the Christian Democratic Party. By July 7 the cult leaders had accumulated about K22,000. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Wewak, Bishop Arkfeld, and the provincial commissioner, Mr E. Hicks, were asked to hold sums of money for the movement but both declined.

The government, recognising that strong opposition to the cult might only strengthen belief in it, adopted what is generally described as a 'low profile approach'. Field officers of the Division of District Administration (DDA) were instructed to discourage support for the cult, enlisting non-cultist villagers to speak against it 'and to generally "rubbish"it', broadcast through Radio Wewak, the government run radio station in the Province, were directed against it, and a senior DDA official was brought to Wewak to assist the anti-cult forces. However no attempt was made to take action against cult leaders or supporters. The secretary of the Department of the Administrator, Mr Tom Ellis, told The House of Assembly in June 1971 that

... the Government cannot stop the cult until there is solid evidence that people are interfering with the liberty or rights of the individual or that the law is being broken. 1

1 Post-Courier 19 May 1971.

2 HAD II (14):4171, 1 June 1971.
The government rejected suggestions that it attempt to undermine the cult by itself removing the survey markers and said it had no intention of defending the marker against removal by others; however, Ellis told the House, 'legal action will be taken against any person who may remove the said marker'. In a supporting statement, the member for East Sepik Regional, Michael Somare, said 'I feel we should not introduce the subject for discussion on the floor of this House because it will give a bad name to this country'.

In May 1971, doubtless prompted by colourful accounts of the cult, including reports of planned human sacrifices, Ellis visited the East Sepik Province to investigate its activities. In Wewak he spoke with local MHAs Beibi Yembanda (Wewak Open) and Michael Somare. Somare supported the government in its attempts to discourage support for the cult but Yembanda was an active cult member and though under government pressure he disowned the cult, he announced that he still believed in it and would show members of the House of Assembly a magic stone and pictures and letters in support of the cult from local government councillors. The MHAs from Maprik (Pita Lus) and Dreikikir (Kokomo Ulia) also campaigned against the movement - Lus seeking legislation to prevent cargo cults - but the MHA for Ambunti-Yangoru, Nauwi Sauinambi, himself from Washkuk some 120 kilometres distant from Yangoru, while expressing opposition to the cult seems to have taken no active part in the campaign against it. Shortly before 7 July government officials met with Hawina and after cordial discussions it was agreed that there would be no violence when the markers were removed.

1 HAD II (14):4172, 1 June 1971.

2 It was said that Yembanda had purchased the secret of money making from Hawina. Yembanda's wrist had been cut and the wound filled with lime; a coin was then bandaged over the wound. When the bandage was removed a few days later, it was said, Yembanda had the ability to make money. Also at this time he acquired a stone from Hurun which, it was alleged, possessed magical money making powers. (See Post-Courier 17 May 1971).
Local government councillors, like villagers generally, were divided on their attitude to the cult. Many openly supported it; some were concerned by a rumour that local government councils would cease to exist after 7 July and called on the government to act against Yaliwan and Hawina, as it had against earlier cult leaders. However the East Sepik Provincial Advisory Committee in June expressed its support for the measures taken by the government to combat the cult.

Missions in the area, who were responsible for some of the more exotic accounts of cult activities, were active opponents of the cult and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Wewak was enthusiastic in denouncing it and forecasting hunger and violence when cult supporters' expectations were not fulfilled. Bishop Arkfeld also said that the cult had Jehovah's Witness elements to it (Hawina was in the habit of quoting from a Jehovah's Witness publication) but this was promptly denied by a Jehovah's Witness minister. Ironically, however, missions participated in the growth of the cult through a substantial increase in sales of copies of *Nupela Testament* (the pidgin translation of the New Testament) and cult rituals drew heavily on those of the Roman Catholic Church.

As 7 July approached thousands of people converged on Hurun. As far away as Vanimo (250 kilometres to the west) there were reports of workers leaving their jobs to journey to the mountain. Trade stores in the area made record sales of food, blankets, and kerosene. Police and extra government officials, including the director of Civil Defence and Emergencies, set up camp at Yangoru but it was announced that no special action would be taken to watch the ceremony on Hurun and no police or government officials would be present. 'We do not expect violence', the Administrator said, 'so

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1 One patrol report in 1971 notes that several Yangoru councillors were opposed to the cult and says of one councillor's opposition, 'This has some significance because [he] is a man so sensitive to the majority opinion that he has been known to vote in a Council meeting against a motion proposed by himself a few moments earlier'.

we have not made preparation for it'. Nevertheless in Wewak the
crime riot squad was put through an intensive training programme and
in Yangoru a senior member of the police special branch, wearing
dark glasses, was to be seen serving over the counter of an
expatriate owned trade store. In view of a cult prophecy that 400
American aircraft would arrive at Hurun\(^1\) aircraft were asked to keep
clear of the area. In the surrounding villages followers of the cult,
and many non-followers of the cult, prayed, read their bibles, and
observed a number of taboos laid down from Marambanja.

The removal of the survey markers was accomplished without
incident. The following Sunday cultists returned to the mountain and
after a prayer session removed a third survey marker (earlier it had
been reported that Koe would remove one of the markers as a symbolic
gesture towards national unity).\(^2\) Yaliwan then announced to
followers that he was the one true leader of Papua New Guinea and had
renamed the country \textit{Papina} (meaning one country). After this people
gradually returned to their homes and the additional government
presence was quietly removed. Despite Ellis's earlier statement, no
charges were made. Asked what he intended to do with the money which
had been collected, Yaliwan told reporters that it would be used to
set up an association to bring together people from all over the
world.

\textit{The Peli Association}

Late in July 1971 the formation of the Peli Association was
announced. \textit{Peli} in the Boiken language is a species of hawk; it is
said to symbolize strength, intelligence and unity. It is also

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\(^1\) This was one of a number of stories associated with the cult, some
of which are recorded in Hwekmarin \textit{et al.} (1971).

\(^2\) A fourth marker was removed in 1973.
Hawina's clan totem. 1 Hawina was named as president, William Hawari, the founder and secretary of the Wewak-based National Labour Party (NLP) and a friend of Hawina, 2 was named as advisor, and Elizabeth Samuk as treasurer; Yaliwan, though acknowledged as 'leader' of the association, did not take office.

The Association established its headquarters in Marambanja and later in 1971 a substantial and well equipped office was set up there. The contract for construction of the office was given to Koe. It was also said that the Association would share an office in Wewak with Hawari. Early in 1972 the Peli office was employing a full time clerk and two 'banking' officers.

Membership of the Association was open and a membership fee of 70 toea (as opposed to the 'contributions' of K12 or so which had been collected previously, and continued to be collected) was payable. In at least some instances membership receipts carried the name of the Christian Democratic Party. Membership money was sent to Marambanja and Peli officials occasionally went round villages to 'check the accounts'. It is less clear what happened to the 'contributions', especially after 1972 when some decentralization took place in Peli organization, but most seems to have gone to Marambanja.

1 It is perhaps significant, too, that chapter 8 of the Book of Revelation in the Nupela Testament is illustrated with a line drawing of an eagle (see below).

2 Hawari was born in 1943 near Wewak. In 1969, in Rabaul, he formed the Sepik Youth Movement, a trade union type organization which aimed at improving working conditions throughout Papua New Guinea and securing the return of all tribal land to traditional landholders. Although the Sepik Youth Movement seems never to have got off the ground Hawari did attract some support from trade unions and left wing groups in Australia and in 1970 was invited to Australia. On his return he established the NLP, with a platform similar to that of the Sepik Youth Movement. In 1972 he stood as NLP candidate in the Wewak Open electorate but polled poorly. The NLP did not attract much support and it seems likely that in his association with Peli (and later also with the East Sepik District Workers' Association) Hawari was seeking a wider base of support.
Committee members (komiti) were appointed for each village or group of villages in which there was support for the Association\(^1\) (in some villages two or three komiti were appointed) and between late 1971 and 1973 these journeyed frequently between their own villages and the Association's headquarters at Marambanja to hold discussions with and receive instructions from Yaliwan and Hawina. Komiti were generally appointed to the position by Peli supporters in the village, though some were self appointed. Often they were leaders in traditional village activities but the group included some notable innovators and many had travelled outside the Province. Beneath the komiti there were usually representatives (bosboi) at roughly clan or hamlet level and these in turn were assisted by a large number of young men ('workers') and girls ('flowers'), generally chosen by komiti, some of whom appear to have taken on the work voluntarily and some under pressure from their elders.

The objectives of the Peli Association were never clearly stated. At its first public meeting, attended by about 200 people, it was said that the Association's aims were the removal of Australians and Chinese from local government councils, greater development in the Sepik with more roads and bridges, and control of the funds collected by the cult. The first of these echoed a demand voiced earlier in 1971 by Hawari as spokesman for the NLP, a large number of whose supporters attended the inaugural meeting of the Peli Association, but was subsequently denied by Hawina who said that the Association's leaders were in favour of multi-racial councils.\(^2\) On its general attitude to non nationals the movement was also ambivalent. On the one hand Yaliwan is reported as believing that the

\(^1\) The idea of komiti seems to have been taken from the CDP.

\(^2\) In August 1971 Hawari said that the Administration, businessmen and the Christian missions were to be blamed for the birth of the Hurun cult, which 'gained support because the people are dissatisfied with their wages and living conditions... The Administration does nothing towards development in this area. The business community is slow to localise'. This again reflected the NLP platform.
Australian government and Europeans living in Papua New Guinea were a hindrance to a better system of independent government by the people of Papua New Guinea (Hwekmarin et al. 1971:10); on the other hand cult leaders, Yaliwan in particular, preached the unity and harmony of all people and had welcomed non nationals to witness the ceremonies on Hurun.\(^1\) Allen (1976) also noted in 1972 that while the Association prided itself on its indigenous nature there seemed to be a common desire to have European members. Towards the government the Association was generally antipathetic. Although there was no overt confrontation between the government and the Association, Peli fed upon a sense of dissatisfaction with government generally and local government councils specifically; in 1972 Peli members were directed not to pay council taxes and some members were prosecuted. Notwithstanding this, however, at the height of Peli's career about half the local government councillors in the area were Peli supporters. Government field officers also reported a general lack of cooperation from villages where the Association was most influential. In its attitude to the missions, also, the Peli Association was generally antipathetic but not openly hostile. Several stories associated with the Hurun cult in 1971 involved missionaries, and specifically the Catholic father at nearby Wilaru, cheating the people (Hwekmarin et al. 1971).

However there is little doubt that what attracted the great mass of the Association's following were its cargoistic elements. Some believed that Yaliwan and Hawina had discovered the secret of creating money; others, while not really believing, joined the Association just in case (a frequent comment by villagers in 1972

\(^1\) Koe, who apparently had made hostile comments against Australian reporters on this occasion, was subsequently reprimanded at a meeting of the Wewak-But Local Government Council.
was, 'We are just giving it a try' ('Mipela traïm tasol'); others succumbed to social pressures to conform.¹

Yaliwan undoubtedly played on peoples' expectations of cargo. In occasional, usually ambiguous, pronouncements from Marambanja, Yaliwan said that Papua New Guineans had been deceived by the missions and had ignored the word of God; as a result they had been denied the material well-being enjoyed by Europeans. By implication Yaliwan had access to the word and could achieve that material well-being. In support of this Yaliwan made extensive reference to Nupe La Testamen, and especially to the Book of Revelation particular passages and illustrations in which were said to have special meaning. Publicly, however, Yaliwan denied that the Peli Association was a cargo cult and emphasized that 'cargo' was not free and would not come without work or money earned. In March 1972 he said that Peli Association officers would tell village people to plant and harvest cash crops from whence the money would come.

There were political elements, also, in the doctrines expounded by Yaliwan: he preached the unity of all people, quoting in support chapter 7 of Revelesan in the Nupe La Testamen, and advocated independence for Papua New Guinea. One of the stories associated with Yaliwan was that he had a key which had been given to him by God; God had given the same key to the Samoans and Fijians who, after removing cement markers from their mountains, were able to get independence. This, it was claimed, was the key illustrated on page 844 of Nupe La Testamen (Hwekmarin et al. 1971:10, 22-3). Allen (1976) argues that these beliefs provided the basis for a coherent political doctrine:

¹ On this last point see Stent (1973a, 1973b). Stent refers particularly to the importance in traditional society of such pressures and the likelihood of an individual incurring blame, for example for a poor yam harvest, if he has not observed the taboos laid down by the society.
Because the Book of Revelation requires all men to be of one mind, only one man could be elected to the House of Assembly for the whole of New Guinea. If everyone voted for Matias Yaliwan, the unity of the nation would be clearly demonstrated. Once Matias Yaliwan took over the leadership of the country he would proclaim independence. Exactly what was expected to happen after that is not at all clear. It seems in view of later events that Matias expected to 'Kamap long wanpela ples klia', that is, he would have revealed to him the secrets of monetary wealth.

Hawina, also, appealed to supporters primarily in cargoistic terms. One of the stories associated with Hawina was that he had discovered the entrance to an underground 'heaven' which was the source of monetary wealth.

Rituals designed to increase money became a central component of Peli Association activities. Hawina's ability to create money has been referred to above. In the early stages of the cult activities there were reports also of people burning money and rubbing the ashes on their faces or on cuts on their wrists in order to make their money increase and of people cleaning up graveyards and burying suitcases which they expected to have filled with money. At the time of the ceremonies on Hurun there was in Marambanja village a 'power house' (paua haus) in which were stored certain magic objects of the cult leaders and the money they had collected. Subsequently the word spread that it was in such paua haus, or 'banks' that money was created and there was a move to establish paua haus in a number of villages. In these paua haus the 'workers' and 'flowers' carried out an activity referred to as 'washing money' or 'fighting the dishes', in which sums of money collected by Peli members were tipped back and forth between two large enamel basins; if this was performed correctly, it was claimed, the activity would bring about an increase in the amount of money in the basins.

1 There is an illustration of this in National Geographic Magazine 144(3), September 1973: 363.
'Memorial Gardens' near Marambanja village

(Photo courtesy Post-Courier)
Since failure to achieve an increase was generally attributed to a failure on the part of the worker or flower it seems that in at least a few cases an increase was achieved at the personal expense of the worker or flower or his or her parents or friends (see Stent 1973a). Paua haus activity probably reached a peak in 1973. In March 1972 there were two paua haus, at Yangoru and near Kubalia, and twenty flower girls, from all over the East Sepik Province, were employed to count money, which, said Koe, was flowing like a river. In May it was announced that additional paua haus were to be built in Wewak, in villages along the Sepik River and in the West Sepik Province. Money produced in the paua haus was to remain the property of the Peli Association but it was said that dividends would be paid to members in June or July. By July there were 9 paua haus and plans to build 600, and there were said to be more than 60 flower girls. In November the Association claimed there were 49 paua haus. The number probably increased during 1973, but by September some paua haus had been abandoned. Patrol reports in early 1974 noted a definite decline in both paua haus and memorial gardens and a report dated October 1974 commented that the 'majority of people consider it a joke nowadays'.

A second 'money creating' activity involved the finding of money in graveyards or 'memorial gardens'. In some instances suitcases were buried and it was said that when these were dug up again they would be full of money. There were some memorial gardens operating as early as 1971. In July 1972 it was reported that 800 memorial plots had been sold at Marambanja, each with a wooden cross and the name and number of the member, at a cost of K10 per plot. In the same month a large number of supporters claimed that when they had opened suitcases which they had obtained from the memorial gardens their money had not increased. Hawina explained that these people must have broken the 'law' of the Peli Association (recognition of traditional taboos regulating social behaviour was an important element of the money making activities) and that those who believed in his special powers had found their suitcases full (but were each expected to donate K50 of their winnings to the Association). Those
who were unsuccessful would get another chance, after they had confessed their wrong-doings.

Both *paua haus* and memorial gardens were promoted by three men from the Aiome area of the Madang Province who joined Peli in 1971, apparently at the invitation of a former president of the Kubalia Council, and subsequently settled in the area; it has been alleged (by Hawina, amongst others) that these men imported the ideas. However, graveyard rituals, at least, seem to have been going before their arrival. Hwekmarin *et al.* (1971) suggest that in this people may have been influenced by graveyard rites they saw performed by the Japanese during and after the second world war.

From the second half of 1971 until well into 1973 support for the Association continued to grow and the Association's membership spread throughout the East and West Sepik Provinces. At March 1972 Yaliwan claimed a membership of 62,489 and subscriptions amounting to about K100,000. Estimates of the Association's membership at the peak of its activity in 1973 range between 100,000 and 200,000 (a patrol report from Nuku in the West Sepik Province, for example, recorded that in 1972 'nearly almost all people' were Peli members) and funds collected probably exceeded K200,000. During 1971-72 the government negotiated the purchase of large areas of land at Kunauki and Chimbian-Timbunke in the relatively undeveloped grass country south of the Sepik highway and paid out about K166,000 to traditional landowners; this region has a history of antipathy towards government and was an area of strong support for Peli and much of this money is believed to have found its way into the Peli Association's funds.

1 Stent (1973b:22) records that it was one of these men, Mangaravi, who introduced the idea of memorial gardens to the Kambangei branch of the Peli Association - and was paid K60 for doing so.
Peli in politics

The movement's early association with the CDP and the NLP has been referred to above. However in the first few months of its career no attempt was made to identify Peli with a political party. In August 1971 the MHA for Maprik, Pita Lus, accused Hawari of trying to get control of the Peli Association and divert its funds to the NLP but Hawari denied this and indeed there was no apparent evidence for the statement.

Towards the end of 1971 it was announced that Yaliwan intended to contest the national election to be held in February and March 1972. It was reported that he would oppose the sitting member for East Sepik Regional, Michael Somare, but in the event, lacking the educational qualifications necessary to contest a regional seat, he nominated for the new Yangoru-Sausia electorate (and Somare was re-elected unopposed).

The government declared a moratorium on the cult during the elections but said it would continue its campaign against it after the elections if support for the cult continued.

Seven candidates contested the Yangoru-Sausia electorate, including the sitting member for Wewak, Yembanda, but according to the official report of the election only two conducted any campaign: the Pangu candidate, Bais Yambinangra, and Yaliwan. During late 1971 and early 1972, accompanied by Hawina and Koe, Yaliwan travelled extensively in the Sepik Provinces preaching the Peli philosophy, promising an end to council taxes and workdays and cessation of malaria spraying,1 and calling for national unity and early independence under his leadership. At this stage Yaliwan seems to

1 Malaria spraying, which often makes a mess of personal belongings and results in the death of chickens and cats, is opposed in a number of villages. When this opposition became identified with the Peli Association, however, a number of villages which had previously resisted spraying came forward to request visits from spraying teams.
have made no reference to the CDP. Although in some of the
villages Yaliwan was not received well (Allen (1976) records that in
one incident, between Maprik and Dreikikir, Peli leaders and Pangu
Pati supporters actually came to blows), the widespread network of
Peli komiti assured him of a better general reception than most other
candidates in the Sepik electorates.

In March 1972 Yaliwan was returned with an overwhelming
majority, receiving 7684 first preference votes (82 per cent of the
total votes cast) to his nearest opponent's 474.

Yaliwan's influence on the election, however, was not
restricted to the Yangoru-Saussia electorate. In December 1971,
notwithstanding the fact that candidates in at least two other Sepik
electorates were professed Peli supporters, Peli komiti were
advising people outside the Yangoru-Saussia electorate to vote for
Yaliwan by writing his name on their ballot papers; the following
month at a meeting at Marambanja, they were instructed to advise
people not to vote. Government concern over the possibilities of a
large informal vote or a widespread abstention were sufficiently
strong that in January the chief electoral officer, Simon Kaumi, flew
to the Sepik to investigate the situation and there followed an
intensive campaign to emphasize to voters that they could only vote
for candidates in their own electorates. Despite this, as the polling
date approached there was a substantial movement of people from nearby
electorates into the Yangoru-Saussia electorate and in the Maprik
District the people of four villages said they would boycott the
election because they could not vote for Yaliwan. At end February
1972 Kaumi estimated that Peli had 'possible majority following' in
the Yangoru-Saussia, Dreikikir and Maprik electorates and a strong
following in the Wewak electorate. Early voting figures confirmed the
government's fears: while the turnout in Yangoru-Saussia was high,
in nearby electorates it was low (on the first day of polling in Wewak
it was reported that 380 out of about 16,000 eligible voters had
voted) and the proportion of informal votes high. A second visit by
the chief electoral officer after voting had commenced failed to halt
this trend. Allen (1976) has suggested that Peli activity may have affected the outcome of the election in Dreikikir but its impact on other electorates seems to have been inconsequential.

At a celebration party in Wewak after his election Yaliwan said that he would call for immediate independence for Papua New Guinea. The same month he announced that Peli had taken over the CDP and would develop the party to seek independence. Shortly after, it was announced that the Peli Association would ask the Mataungan Association and the People's Progress Party to merge with it; at the same time Koe criticized the Pangu Pati, saying that it should request independence not self-government. Yaliwan later visited Rabaul where he sought support for the Peli Association amongst Sepik migrants but a proposed meeting with Mataungan Association patron, Oscar Tammur, fell through (it was alleged that Yaliwan refused to see Tammur). Shortly before the opening of the House of Assembly a rally was held in Wewak, at which Yaliwan, Koe, Jimmy Simbago (at one stage Peli Secretary) and Hawari spoke. Hawari announced that the NLP and Peli leaders would hold several protest marches during the year.

The Third House of Assembly was opened on 20 April 1972. It was rumoured that after the governor-general's speech Yaliwan would declare himself the leader of Papua New Guinea, however the day passed without incident except that the clerk of the House confiscated a photo, taken during the adjournment of the House, of Yaliwan standing beside the speaker's chair. Four days later, during the course of debate of address and reply, Yaliwan delivered his brief maiden speech, in which he said:

My name is Matias Yaliwan and I am the elected member for Yangoru-Saussia. It is my wish that I am the leader of Papua New Guinea. It is also my wish that immediate self-government should be achieved followed by immediate independence. This is what I, Matias Yaliwan, leader of Papua New Guinea want.¹

The speech drew no comment. Subsequently Yaliwan spoke briefly on the need to upgrade the Yangoru-Saussia road and in support of the national flag but he was otherwise an inconspicuous member of the House.

In an interview with Yaliwan in 1975, Yaliwan confirmed that he was, in 1972, the leader of Papua New Guinea, adding (somewhat oddly in view of the first claim) that he was also deputy leader of the United Party.

In June 1972, in response to a statement by Pita Lus calling on the government to take action against the cult led by Yaliwan, Yaliwan told the House that he had resigned from the movement and had nothing whatsoever to do with it and that his name must not be associated with it any longer. Four months later Yaliwan announced that he was resigning from the House of Assembly. His formal resignation was eventually received in June 1973.

In the ensuing by-election eight candidates nominated: Lainus Hepau, who succeeded Koe as Yaliwan's secretary in 1973; Peli member Winias Kwakbimalu; three Pangu candidates (including Tony Bais, subsequently provincial commissioner, whose father had stood against Yaliwan unsuccessfully in 1972) and three others. Hepau led all the way in the fairly closely contested election defeating the endorsed Pangu candidate, John Wauwia, on the sixth distribution of preferences. (Winias was eliminated on the second count.) In a speech to the House in March 1974 Hepau told members:

The people want the Government not to establish any sort of project on Mount Turu. God made man on this mountain, and man has since spread to other parts of the world. It is time now for all the countries of the world to come together as one big country, yet nobody has told my people the meaning of self-government or independence. The only person who told us anything about these two things was Matias Yaliwan, when he removed the marker from the mountain. No one with the proper knowledge of the two things concerned has mentioned anything to us about them. I, Lainus Hepau, believe in what Matias Yaliwan
told me, and this can be proved in Chapter 9 of St. Matthew’s Gospel, if you care to read it. ¹

**Peli in business**

One of the stated objectives of the Peli Association was to control the funds collected by the Hurun cult leaders. Earlier several odd uses for the funds had been suggested, one of which was to send the money to the American based Four Square Gospellers’ Interdenominational Church, which it was believed could alter the times of day and night to make the rising and setting of the sun in Papua New Guinea coincide with those in the US; a spokesman of the church, however, said that the church would not accept the money. An attempt by the manager of the Commonwealth Bank in Wewak to persuade the Association to deposit its funds in the bank was unsuccessful.

Initially a good deal of the money collected went on the construction and equipment of the Peli Association office at Marambanja and on paying for the movement of Peli leaders around the East and West Sepik Provinces, but subsequently a somewhat more definite business orientation seems to have emerged. Late in 1971 the Association purchased two trucks and in July 1972 announced plans to purchase another seven; these, it said, would be used for transporting Peli members and carrying copra and coffee bought by the Association. These and other vehicles bought by the Association later (which seem to have had a fairly high mortality rate) were used extensively for the private transport of Peli members but the Association itself never did become involved in copra or coffee buying. Application was made for a passenger motor vehicle (PMV) licence but this has never been granted. ² Another idea was to use

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² On one occasion the Association was charged with carrying passengers without a PMV licence but the charge was dismissed when it was established that the passengers had not been carried for gain.
Peli Association funds to make loans of around K100-300 to members for business purposes. Some such loans were made (mostly, it seems, to copra, coffee and cocoa growers) but no systematic record was kept and in practice many in effect became grants.

In October 1971 the deputy provincial commissioner at Maprik was reported as saying that if the Peli Association's future plans were to help the people the Administration could offer advice but the Association would not advise the Administration of their future plans. And again in announcing the election time moratorium in February 1972 it was said that the Administration would support the Peli Association if it was truly something directed at the economic development of the area. In fact, however, neither the Department of Business Development nor the (then) Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries made any move to assist Peli and Peli did not seek their assistance.

Towards the end of 1974 the Peli Association purchased a European owned trade store at Yangoru for around K10,000 and acquired the liquor licence which went with it. The liquor licence, however, was suspended and subsequently cancelled and the store manager (Peli secretary, Jimmy Simbago)\(^1\) prosecuted for selling liquor outside the prescribed hours. Applications to regain the licence were unsuccessful and in 1976 the store was sold, at a substantial loss, to one of Hawina's brothers. Thus despite the vast sums collected since 1971 the movement has little to show: by 1976 only two roadworthy vehicles; an investment of K1,500 with the Papua New Guinea Investment Corporation, and some cash held by Hawina and, allegedly, by Yaliwan (see below). A good deal of the money has gone on vehicles now written off, a large sum disappeared with a young

\(^1\) In early 1975 Simbago was sacked for alleged misuse of funds and attempts were being made to persuade Hawina's brother, Andrew Wafimbukia (then manager of the Sepik Producers' Co-operative Association at Maprik), to accept the position. He declined.
expatriate at one time employed at the Catholic mission at Wilaru, and a sizeable amount must have been spent on travelling expenses and on beer; where the rest has gone no one seems to know.

*Peli in decline*

Membership of the Peli Association continued to grow following Yaliwan's election to the House and by mid 1972 had spread well into the West Sepik Province. But from the early months of 1972 some reaction appears to have set in. In January there were reports that nineteen villagers had gone to Marambanja to withdraw their contributions and had been turned away by Hawina. In March the Greater Maprik Local Government Council passed a resolution calling on the government not to employ Peli members and called for the dismissal of councillors who belonged to the Peli Association. Then at a meeting in May 1972, from which Yaliwan walked out, Hawina was told that Yaliwan had until the third session of the House to fulfil his promises; if he had not done so by then, the people said, they would call for a by-election. Soon after there were reports that Peli Association members threatened to destroy all the buildings in Yangoru if the money they had paid was not returned. In May also the Wewak-But Local Government Council expressed concern that the growth of Peli was 'going unchecked' by the government and asked the Association to open its power houses for a day so that people could see for themselves whether or not they should remain with Peli; Hawina refused. The same month Pita Lus announced that he would introduce legislation against cargo cults in the next session of the House.  

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1 Somare made a similar statement in Wewak in May 1972. Subsequently Lus told the House (*HAD* III (3):220, 19 June 1972) that 'anybody who is a trouble stirrer and who confuses people, should he happen to come from another district [the implicit reference was to Koe], should be deported to his own area', but in September 1972 Lus said that he had spoken to the government about a law to prevent cargo cults but the chief minister had advised against it (*HAD* III (6): 552-3, 4 September 1972). Lus went on to say that to counteract the cult the government should build schools, roads and bridges; ironically, this was an early objective of the Peli Association.
Yaliwan also began to have misgivings about his role. In early June 1972 he resigned from Peli, ostensibly because Hawina refused to enforce an order by Yaliwan that Peli members leave Marambanja to return to their villages, work in their gardens, work for the councils and pay council tax. In his reply to Pita Lus in the House of Assembly in June Yaliwan said:

> The Honourable member has no right to talk about this business of cargo cult. It is the people's own doing and it is their money and not Pita Lus's or mine. We have to watch and see what they are doing and whether it is true or false... What the people are doing is what they like doing. I, myself, have not seen this money. It is the affair of the people... I resigned from this movement because I discovered that its beliefs are not true and I have had nothing whatsoever to do with it since.¹

And again in September Yaliwan told the press that there were many things about Peli which disturbed him; money could not multiply without hard work. Subsequently Yaliwan has said that while removal of the markers from Hurun was his idea (and was successful, in that gardens had improved and game become more abundant), *paua haus* and memorial gardens were Daniel's projects, though Yaliwan himself was prepared to give them a try until it became clear that they were not generating wealth.

With the resignation of Yaliwan, Hawina took control of Peli and, it seems, most of the Association's money and its vehicles. Yaliwan was to have received the revenue raised through the 70 toea membership fees paid to Peli and Hawina claims he gave Yaliwan K36,000; but Yaliwan says he has received nothing. Accompanied by Koe, Yaliwan withdrew to a hamlet near Wamoin, about 35 kilometres to the southeast of Yangoru and near the home of former MHA Yembanda. There he established a headquarters with impressive buildings and gardens enclosed by a barbed wire fence.

¹ *HAD* III (3):221, 19 June 1972.
In retrospect the split between Yaliwan and Hawina was probably developing for some time. There is little doubt that Hawina provided the main organizational force behind the Peli Association and he appealed most directly to people's cult-nurtured hopes of monetary returns. It seems also that Hawina was largely responsible for the anti government, anti mission, anti expatriate elements of Peli. Yaliwan's role seems to have been much more that of spiritual leader and it seems as though, to some extent, Hawina exploited Yaliwan's reputation for having supernatural powers to give status to his own organizational efforts. Yaliwan, despite his somewhat ambiguous pronouncements, had repeatedly denied that Peli was a cargo cult and it seems that after his election to the House continued pressure on him by the government, and perhaps also evidence of disillusionment among some of the Peli Association supporters, increased his concern on this issue. When in October Yaliwan announced his intention of resigning from the House he said that he was a victim of Peli sorcery, that the Peli Association had called on sorcerers to make him sick in the head and that visits to a doctor in Port Moresby had failed to cure him.

In September 1972 Hawina, Peli vice president Marcus Yaklesambo and five other Peli members were arrested as the result of a brawl at the Maprik Hotel and despite a deputation to the Provincial Office and threats of violence by Peli supporters Hawina was sentenced to ten months imprisonment and the others to shorter terms. Yaliwan was asked to resume leadership of the Association but refused. In the meantime a young man named Kami, from Holik village, appointed himself leader of the movement and claimed that Yaliwan's powers had been transferred to him. Kami attracted some of the Peli supporters away from Marambanja (a patrol report of November 1972 refers to Peli activities in terms of 'Marambanja style' (power houses) and 'Holik style' (memorial gardens)) but the Holik breakaway was only one element of a more general decentralization of Peli organization which took place during 1973, and with this decentralization came eventual decline.
At the time of Yaliwan's resignation from Peli Koe said that he and Yaliwan would reform the Christian Democratic Party and Yaliwan subsequently announced that he would form a new association with a new name but carrying out activities similar to Peli. This was done in November 1972 with the creation of the Mt. Hurun Christian Democratic Association, later renamed the Seven Association,\(^1\) after the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. According to Yaliwan the Seven Association had nothing to do with the Peli Association though he invited Peli members to join by paying a 70 toea membership fee.\(^2\)

There is some confusion as to the aims of the Seven Association. In announcing its objectives, in March 1973, Yaliwan said the Association was a Christian group and believed in God. Its sole and somewhat ambiguous objective was to establish the law of God;\(^3\) in this, the Seven Association had no conflict with the government or missions. Yaliwan specifically denied any interest in economic or political activities (though he continued to call for the unity of all people and prior to September 1975, independence) and said that the Seven Association had nothing to do with \textit{paua haus} or memorial gardens. Yaliwan fought with Hawina and said he would have nothing further to do with him. He also believed that the Peli Association opposed the election of Hepau in 1973. Hawina, on the other hand, claimed that the Peli and the Seven Associations had the same objectives and when asked (May 1975) if Peli would contest the next national elections replied that Peli would support whoever Yaliwan decided to nominate. Meanwhile, despite some geographical alignment — with Seven

\(^1\) In 1977 the Association was known as 'Four Corners'.

\(^2\) In 1973 a common distinction was between 'Daniel members' (who allegedly had paid K12) and 'Matias members' who had paid 70 toea.

\(^3\) Here Yaliwan referred to \textit{Nupela Testament, Rom 13} - 'Yumi mas aninit long ol gavman' ('We must support the government').
Association support concentrated around the Kubalia area and Peli support around Marambanja and places to the west - Peli supporters not directly involved in the dispute between Yaliwan and Hawina seemed to have little awareness of the split and still tended to identify Peli with Yaliwan.

In January 1973, following the alleged disappearance of money from paua haus, a protest meeting against the Peli Association was held at Yangoru. The meeting appears to have been organized by students from the area home on vacation. Reporting on the meeting the Post-Courier (2 January 1973) recorded:

Spokesman for the meeting, House of Assembly interpreter John Wauwia [the unsuccessful Pangu candidate in the 1973 by-election] said it had been decided to combat cult activities in the area through the Yangoru Youth Club. The club is associated with the Roman Catholic Young Workers' Association. At a later stage the youth club will undertake village development, with the co-operation of the village people and encourage the people to help themselves.

By early 1974 active mass support for the Peli and Seven Associations seems to have largely disappeared and most paua haus and memorial gardens had been abandoned. Patrol reports in late 1973 and early 1974 also reported frequent threats of violence against Peli officials.

Late in 1974 Yaliwan again attracted national attention when there were rumours that he was to be crucified. Yaliwan denied these reports but said that the Seven Association would do something to bring about independence; there was, however, no further incident.

In 1974 the Yangoru Council introduced a Ward Development Fund Scheme under which half the revenue from council tax was returned to

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1 In 1975, however, Seven Association members constructed a Seven Association 'office' near Maprik, at Waigakum No. 3.
ward committees to use as they wished (other councils in the East Sepik are expected also to adopt the scheme). In a few Seven and Peli dominated wards this meant that the money was being administered in effect by the Associations, and indeed Yaliwan, who earlier had unsuccessfully tried to persuade people to pay contributions to the Seven Association instead of the council, claimed credit for the scheme. According to Yaliwan, in the Seven Association areas money would be used for construction of schools and a hospital - but not for roads, which was 'council work'.

In late 1975 the government abandoned its earlier tolerance of the Peli and Seven Associations and two hundred komiti (but not including Yaliwan or Hawina) were charged variously with illegally collecting taxes and spreading false reports. One hundred and fifty were sentenced to five to six months imprisonment with hard labour and fifty were fined and released.

This notwithstanding, in August 1976 the movement organized a ceremony on Hurun to dedicate a memorial to Papua New Guinea's independence in September 1975. A meeting of about five hundred people was addressed by Yaliwan, Hawina and Hepau, all of whom expressed their gratitude to the government for bringing the people to independence and a pig and case of beer were presented to the officer-in-charge of the Yangoru sub-district.

Seven months later Yaliwan was a late nominator for his old Yangoru-Saussia seat in the national elections. Although government officials regarded his candidature as something of a joke, and despite the fact that he did not actively campaign, Yaliwan came fourth in the seven man first-past-the-post contest, scoring an impressive 13 per cent of the vote.\(^1\) Early in 1979 he announced his intention of contesting the forthcoming provincial election and was duly elected.

\(^1\) An account of the 1977 election in Yangoru-Saussia is contained in Winnett and May (forthcoming).
Conclusion

In May 1971 a senior government official described the Hurun movement as 'one of the biggest and most potentially explosive cults in the Territory's history'. About eight months after this the Administrator, Mr L.W. Johnson, was reported as saying that pure cargo cults might be dying in Papua New Guinea; that cults were changing and becoming economic development associations. He said he felt that East Sepik cultism was changing in nature with the formation of the Peli Association.

Historically, the Administrator's prediction turned out to be optimistic. From the start, the Hurun cult was one shade removed from 'pure' cultism in its preoccupation with finding the means of generating wealth as opposed to expecting goods to appear in response to certain rituals (though this distinction was probably not made by all the cult's supporters). With the establishment of the Peli Association Yaliwan and Hawina, perhaps assisted in this by Hawari, were astute enough to emphasize 'rational' objectives, such as regional economic development, while at the same time visibly drawing their following from people whose reasons for support were firmly rooted in a magico-religious world view. In this way the Association was able to widen its appeal to include some who had not been attracted to the cult. The Peli Association was spectacularly successful in establishing a formidable organization and in the relatively narrow political objective of electing its leader to the House of Assembly. It was, however, quite unsuccessful in relation to its objective of economic development.

Peli's failure in business was due largely to a lack of managerial competence among its leaders and an inability to formulate

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1 Post-Courier 18 May 1971.

2 Post-Courier 14 January 1972.
economic objectives in operational terms and follow them through.\(^1\) Moreover, despite the supportive statements of senior officials quoted above, the Association received virtually no help from government field officers most of whom, understandably, felt that they could not lend support to Peli without losing faith with those who had co-operated with the government in seeking development through more conventional channels. In the long run it was this failure which brought about the decline of the movement, though the decline was undoubtedly accelerated by the split between Yaliwan and Hawina, by Hawina's imprisonment in 1972-73, and by the associated decentralization of the movement which deprived it of the vital force of charismatic leadership. Under these circumstances the government's early policy of 'low profile' campaigning against the movement while avoiding confrontation, almost certainly helped pave the way for Peli's decline.

The Hurun movement is widely acknowledged to have failed. In the process a large number of village people lost sizeable amounts of money. However there has been surprisingly little bitterness over this. As many village people observe, they have tried other activities, such as cash cropping and co-operatives, with little success; the Peli Association is just another unsuccessful experiment.

It is unlikely to be the last. Over time it is to be expected that such movements will base their appeal less on magico-religious grounds and more on conventional western social and economic values, but expectations themselves are a function of development and it is likely that organizers of movements whose main orientation is developmental and generally modernizing will continue to raise the expectations of their followers above their capacity to deliver.

\(^1\) Also, the absence of expatriate plantations in the area deprived Peli of one form of investment open to similar movements in many other parts of the country.
Chapter 3

THE PITENAMU SOCIETY

R. Adams

Though it is little known beyond a small group of government officials and Lutheran Church personnel, the Pitenumu Society of the Morobe Province developed during 1971-74 as a movement of major dimensions and considerable significance. It represented a wide group of relatively disadvantaged villagers from the Morobe highlands and their urban kin who considered development had passed them by. In a few short years it demonstrated an extraordinary ability to draw together diverse groups of Morobeans motivated by collectivist ideals, a determination to secure greater control over their affairs and a drive for economic betterment. The strong Pindiu and Tangket cult associations have been sufficient for some to damn the movement as 'cargo cult'. Examination shows it to signify much more. Within its complex structure there are clear political and socio-economic orientations, and its relationships with established institutions, including the Pangu Pati, indicate that it is far from being an exclusive cult that has withdrawn from active association with established bodies and associations.

Pindiu origins

The origins of the Pitenumu movement can be traced to the area embraced by the Pindiu Local Government Council, an area encompassing the large Mongi river basin in the interior of the Huon Peninsula approximately midway between Lae and Finschhafen. The basin comprises three deep valleys, the Mongi in the east, the Kua in the centre and the Bulum in the west.

1 The name Pitenumu is an acronym derived from the first two letters of the four areas from which support was initially obtained: Pindiu, Tewai, Nawae and Mumeng.
Figure 3.1 Morobe Province, with inset of Pindiu sub-district
Pindiu patrol post, the administrative centre for the area's 19,000 inhabitants, is located in the eastern Mongi valley, closest to Finschhafen, the district headquarters, but quite distant from the Kua and Bulum valleys, the area of greatest cult activity.

The Mongi and its tributaries have cut deeply into the forested uplands leaving a rugged terrain that militates against the development of adequate systems of transport and communication. In common with most parts of the Morobe highlands, there is no road network linking the area with the external world, despite intermittent road building efforts over many years. Two airstrips, at Mindik and Pindiu, service the area and a third at Ogermannang, commenced in 1968, was completed in 1975. Per capita yearly income is estimated at K4, or K18 per adult male,\(^1\) coffee production providing the principal source of income.

Until the 1950s, the region remained a Lutheran Church domain, disturbed only by an annual government patrol and the activities of appointed village officials. Kate speaking evangelists from Finschhafen introduced the gospel to the area in 1911 and a central school and church were established at Ogermannang in the Bulum valley in 1912. Education, through the medium of a Kate village school, and medical services (a small mission hospital operates at Wagerzaring, close to Pindiu) were provided by the church, inter village roads were built and an airstrip was constructed at Mindik in 1961. Church organized stores, later to be taken over by NAMASU,\(^2\) initially accounted for a significant proportion of commercial activity in the area. The new religion and the associated institutions greatly changed the pattern of village organization and acceptance of the new order was almost total.

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1. Townsend (1975:5). The Pindiu Patrol Report 1972-73 No.3 estimates the average adult (household) income as K12-15 per year.
2. The Native Marketing and Supply Ltd., formally established in 1959 by the Lutheran Mission of New Guinea.
The church-sponsored changes, though not destroying the basic value and epistemological system, superimposed on the village a well organized social and religious structure which was seen to be efficient and satisfying, particularly where appropriate material progress was concerned. Material progress, however, has not satisfied the people. The increased intrusion of external world influences in the past few decades and the crises of confidence arising from the non-achievement of desired material changes have meant an inevitable weakening of the position of the church, whose position has also been eroded by the expanded role and power of the government over the last two decades. The establishment of the local government system, the development of a secular education system, and the growth of the government medical facilities and other services have introduced new variables into the system.

A series of 'roads' to material advancement has been held out to villagers in the postwar period and has been eagerly grasped in the expectation of substantial change.

Coffee production was posited as an answer to the problem of low income and limited commercial development. Widespread planting began in 1949 and continued through to the 1960s but with a journey of several days to the nearest selling point, fluctuating prices, high absentee rates and an absence of trade store goods, achievement fell far short of expectations, with much of the coffee being left unpicked and trees unpruned and unweeded.

The planting of coffee and the subsequent generation of some cash income did, however, encourage involvement in several commercial ventures, none of which is seen by villagers today as being particularly successful. The Finschhafen Marketing and Development Society (FMDS) was promoted in the 1950s by the government and was formally registered in 1959 to provide a regular shipping service and more competitive trade store outlets
and to market coffee and copra. NAMASU was established in the same period to assume control over and expand the commercial activities then undertaken by the Lutheran Church. Duplication of effort and resources by the two organizations, ineffective control systems, staffing difficulties and repeated defalcations, have meant low returns or losses.

Despite shortcomings much has been achieved by both NAMASU and FMDS in improving transport services and in providing a reasonable supply of trade store goods and marketing facilities at Pindiu and Mindik, the two centres established respectively by government and church. However, what financial returns there have been to the villager shareholders and members have been small, while expectations have often been unrealistically high. Modest dividend payments on small shareholdings have prompted resentment and the villager living away from the station can see little return for his investment, though he is clearly affected by the high prices charged for the store goods, low produce prices and the great distance necessary to carry coffee beans for sale.

A further hope of commercial development was held out to the villagers by an Hungarian entrepreneur, John Biro, who followed the path of FMDS and NAMASU, establishing with the aid of village contributions the KZUBT company (the initials of the early contributing villagers) with stores at Pindiu and Mindik. His venture made considerable impact and he was able to establish close personal contacts with the people. The collapse of this enterprise with Biro's departure in 1971 engendered considerable dismay and speculation as to the reasons for failure. The Lutheran Church, a former local member of parliament, Mek Singiliong, and the government are variously deemed to have been responsible for Biro's departure. For the people another promising 'road' was closed.
Establishment of the Pindiu Council in 1961 brought further hope of beneficial change, with promises of roads and improved health, education and other services. Bolstered by substantial government subsidies it has indeed made significant progress in some areas. However, these benefits have not been equally shared and areas such as the Bulum valley, furthest removed from the council headquarters and the administrative centre at Pindiu, have received least benefit from council activity.

For the villagers, substantive benefit from processes of change has been slow to accrue, particularly in relation to development elsewhere and to villagers' aspirations. The intrusion of external forces has upset the balance of traditional society and attainment of a new equilibrium has not been achieved. The long association with the Lutheran Church and the enthusiastic postwar support for government sponsored change has effected only marginal changes in the traditional way of life. The introduced institutions - council, church, co-operative, NAMASU and House of Assembly - have seemingly not been able to meet the villagers' needs nor have they helped the villager satisfactorily to adjust and adapt to the forces that impinge upon him.

**Pindiu cults**

A pervasive system of thought and belief concerning European wealth and power, progressively supplemented and revised, has been inextricably interwoven with the successive Pindiu postwar development efforts, intermittently giving rise to cultist forms of behaviour. Whilst the origins of the present day beliefs may be traced back beyond the second world war to experiences, experiments and traditional wealth myths, it is convenient to follow the development of the present day **Tangket** cult from a cargo cult which developed in Pindiu, and indeed in most parts of Morobe, in 1946-48 following the return of villagers from wartime activities.
In 1946-47 a movement known locally as the *skin guria*\(^1\) (shaking of the body) broke out in the middle Bulum area, spreading throughout the Bulum and into other parts of the Mongi basin. Cheeving, Anzilong and Ipongi from the Zewitsan village and close kin of Nubos, the present Pitenamu leader, were the major activists but most centres generated their own leaders and today these provide links between the present Tangket cult and the *skin guria*\(^2\).

In common with other major postwar movements, followers of the *skin guria* cult were urged to support the church by regular prayer and attendance at morning and evening devotions. Village hygiene and personal cleanliness were emphasized and village activity patterns were strictly organized, with villagers attending morning devotions from 6 to 7 a.m. then lining up to march to garden work and other village duties. Pigs were killed and 'shaking' by the leaders and their followers occurred as a means to obtain contact with the spirits. 'Cargo' was to be delivered by planes (some of which were to land in small areas cleared in the centre of cemeteries), by ship and by trucks which were to appear from a hole in the ground which went through to America. Bush houses were built to receive the expected wealth, and symbolic cane rifles, to be transformed at the appropriate time, were carried by groups of villagers who marched about in military style. The cult, as with similar movements, brought strong hopes of revolutionary changes in the existing order.

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\(^1\) Missionary reports refer to this as the 'Mangzo (Inner Fire) Movement'. See Helbig (1946), Bergmann (1947), Pilhofer (1963:184-8), Steinbauer (1971:62-4). Informants throughout the area during 1974-75 fieldwork consistently referred to the activity as the *skin guria*. This is the Pidgin term and would be used in discussion with non-missionary people. *Mangzo* is a Kate word.

\(^2\) These linkages have undoubtedly been emphasized to legitimate the various succeeding phases. This notwithstanding, a strong element of continuity is evident.
The spread of the *skin guria* movement brought response from both mission and government. The principal leaders were held in detention for a day at Ogeramnang, the site of the Lutheran church and school, where a special meeting was held to deal with this crisis. The meeting renounced the cult and the principal activists were struck on the arms and shoulders with the branches of a shrub traditionally used for counter-magic. A large stone was inscribed with details of the meeting and the leaders were then required to hold the stone and renounce the cult. The inscribed stone, together with branches of the exorcizing shrub, was then 'planted' as a taboo sign (*tambu*) at the entrance to the church and small replica stones were placed at key points throughout the area.

This action, carried out by an indigenous pastor, acting within the villagers' frame of reference, had a profound effect and though there were sporadic local outbreaks of activity the main impetus of the movement was halted. Also the fact that the cult had attracted such fervent response over a considerable time without securing the promised benefits inhibited active continuation of the cult. The cargo experience, however, persists and knowledge of it permeates thought and action to the present day. This predisposition was strengthened by the breaking of the large Ogeramnang *tambu* stone and the smaller replicas at various intervals through the 1950s, the big stone by an earth tremor, an event seen to be of considerable significance (villagers report finding small amounts of money on this occasion). The remnants of the large stone were finally dispersed in 1968 when the Ogeramnang church was resited to enable construction of the new Ogeramnang airstrip.

The 1950s, however, were primarily a period during which energies were directed towards more secular pursuits. This was a time when widespread coffee planting and collection for FMDS and other commercial enterprises attracted great enthusiasm and input of physical and monetary resources. Significantly, a number
of the principal activists in the present *Tangket* movement occupied prominent positions in these activities. Here were new approaches to be followed. But returns from these development efforts were seen to be totally inadequate. The hoped for transformation of village life did not occur and while pressures upon the village system grew with an increased outflow of migrants, the relative disparity in standards of development locally and elsewhere appeared more marked. In this situation it is perhaps not surprising that people began to resort to magico-religious beliefs.

The period 1961-64 saw the beginning of the *Tangket* cult, a movement which was to sweep the greater part of the Pindiu area. Collective preoccupation with the separate elements of what was to develop as the *Tangket* cult is apparent but it remained for a series of dream visions by Kopa Oziong from Nomanene, beginning in 1962, to articulate and validate these collective feelings and beliefs. The dream vision provided knowledge of the needs to plant the *tangket* shrub (*Cordyline* spp.), to collect money and to practice hygiene work. These elements, of course, had a clear foundation. A series of hygiene courses for aid post orderlies and councillors was held at different intervals beginning in 1960; these courses provided a link with the *skin guria* hygiene rules. Pictures of a house surrounded by a decorative shrub fence, used to illustrate the concept of household cleanliness, struck a responsive chord in the minds of several of the participants. *Tangket* had long been assigned special powers amongst the people of the Huon Peninsula and there appear to have been small amounts planted in 1946-49. Different varieties of *tangket*

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1 Stephen Lehner (1928) describes in detail the significance of the red *tangket* which was believed to possess blood-soul substance.
occupy an important role in local myths and are used for garden magic, initiation and funerary rites. The money collection injunction clearly stems from the experience of concerted money collections for FMDS and other causes.¹

Saliong, a former aid post orderly from Kotkin village, and Akinu from Mindik, both affinal kin of Kopa, assisted in propagating this new belief system and organizing money collections and tangket planting. However the construction of the Mindik airstrip in 1962-63 and council development plans, together with church and government action against Akinu and Saliong, considerably contained the movement. Popular support at this juncture was far from complete and there appears to have been a significant degree of local resistance to the movement arising from secular involvements and expectations.

A further phase occurred in 1968 and appears to have been associated with the final removal of the tambu stone fragment at Ogeramnang and a short-lived earthquake cult in the Kua valley. Again, support was not complete. 1970-71, however, saw the commencement of the most widespread and intensive period of tangket planting and money collection. Tangket covered the villages of the Mongi basin and followers, in their fervour, declared their intention of placing a tangket border around the government station at Pindiu.²

The expanded influence of tangket activity during this most recent phase stems from a number of interacting influences. Cult doctrine and ritual had by this time been fully developed

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¹ The concept of an initial stock of money as the basis for the generation of further money was established through the prewar 'money magic' movement and its successor phases.

² Although no tangket was placed around Pindiu station itself, the house of the officer-in-charge at Mindik is surrounded by tangket as is the church at Tumnang, overlooking Mindik airstrip.
and widely diffused through a well developed organizational system
under the guidance of strong and competitive leadership. Continued
resentment arising from perceived development failures, the
removal of John Biro and the political climate of the period
helped provide a favourable environment for its growth. Increased
conflict between the movement's members and church leaders was
also a very significant factor. A decline in the position of the
church, together with increasing resistance to church injunctions
against polygyny, had brought great tension between cult and
church authority. Although villagers have not broken with the
church and still attend services, large groups have been subject
to church discipline for long periods and widespread tension
existed. Given the underlying search for autonomy and independence,
conflict with authority in this situation provided an external
enemy and so injected into the situation more fervour than might
otherwise have been attained.

The strength and solidarity of the movement was undoubtedly
enhanced by encounters with external authority: a bitter struggle
in the case of the church, in respect of cult practices and
polygynous relationships, and a somewhat more subtle demonstration
of power in regard to the government, particularly with respect
to Pindiu Council. This power encounter emphasizes a fundamental
preoccupation which has persisted in varying forms since the time
of the skin guria cult. The cargo, rifle, money and tangket
motif have each demonstrated an underlying concern for power.
The passage of time has brought a de-emphasis of the first two\(^1\)
and major concern with the third, a more specific goal object and
one legitimized by the FMDS collection of the 1950s. Tangket
planting of course primarily derives from its magico-religious

\(^1\) Though small outbreaks of marching with cane rifles occurred
in 1971 and, as noted above, there was a short-lived and
localized earthquake cult in 1968.
properties but it attained secondary functions as a consequence of the opposition its planting occasioned. Increasingly, *tangket* therefore served as a symbol of protest and of indigenous identity and power\(^1\) while money occupied both a symbolic and instrumental role.

**Tangket cult ritual and belief**

*Tangket* cult ritual belief, though a syncretic amalgam of modern and traditional, essentially represents a recourse to traditional magico-religious beliefs as a means of securing desired goals. Drawing heavily upon traditional elements - *tangket* shrub, cult house and dance feasting - it has amplified aspects of the *skin guria* cult and draws upon several features of secular experience, most notably that of money collection.

Membership of the movement is signified by the planting of a double row of *tangket* around village dwellings,\(^2\) payment of the required joining fees, participation in dance feasts and obedience

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\(^1\) Village informants have stressed the Papua New Guinean and traditional origins of *tangket* in contrast to the cement and steel fence used by the Europeans. In this pre independence period, it consequently assumed a political purpose not originally intended.

It should be noted here that whilst this essay focuses sympathetically upon the development of the Pitenamu Society and its *Tangket* antecedents this should not be construed as implying general criticism of the Lutheran Church with which the movement has been in conflict. As noted, the church has been the dominant body in the post contact period and it has been inevitable in the stress situation to which the villagers have been exposed that the church should, in some measure, be the subject of the stress responses manifested by these people. The writer has not attempted here any direct assessment of the position and role of missionaries and the Lutheran Church but the valuable contribution by the Lutherans in exploration, linguistic work, anthropology, education, health and general socio-economic development is fully recognized.

\(^2\) More recent plantings have taken the form of additional lines of *tangket* and impressive walkways of *tangket* along entrance paths to villages.
to tangket rules. The tangket shrub serves, among other things, as a distinctive symbol of membership and belief. The planting of tangket provides an occasion for feasting and dancing as do the visits of the movement's leaders and other appropriate occasions.

Tangket law requires burial of menstrual material beneath the tangket and the maintenance of cleanliness in the area surrounding the house, particularly the intervening space between the two rows of tangket. Small amounts of money are placed together with the menstrual material\(^1\) and sweeping of the space is considered to help bring money - suitably multiplied - to the surface. Small amounts of money are reported as being found in the morning by women around the base of the shrubs, presumably following some earthly intervention. There have been allegations that animal blood and menstrual blood have been buried under the floor of 'money houses' (moni hauu) to assist the 'work money'.

The emphasis upon hygiene, and against fighting and stealing, which characterized the skin guria cult, remains but in attenuated form. Church laws regarding monogamy have been relaxed (though not proclaimed), it is said, to help overcome fighting, problems of unmarried mothers and extra-marital sexual activity and to conform with traditional practice.

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\(^1\) The rationale for menstrual burial is not completely certain. It would appear that a limited amount of experimentation relating to menstrual burial as a means of wealth generation occurred during the skin guria phase, one assumes deriving in part from the pre war shilling multiplication beliefs brought from Mape. Wagner (1964:37, 40) in discussing the postwar cult activity in the Kalasa and Kabwum areas, makes brief mention of menstrual blood beliefs and collected evidence points to considerable diffusion of cult beliefs throughout the Huon Peninsula and beyond. The councillor and aid post orderly courses emphasizing hygiene, and the associated assertions that European women have special methods of disposal, clearly exerted some influence in the development of the practice though one suspects more as a rationalization than a major causal influence. Primarily the practice must be regarded as deriving from traditional fertility beliefs and practices particularly in association with basic concepts of blood as spirit essence.
Development of *moni haus* ritual directed attention away from the *tangket* as a direct producer of wealth though *tangket* ritual remains central. The procedure of money collection and record-keeping gravitated to the *moni haus*, previously the ancestral cult house, sited outside the village. The associations with traditional ancestor worship and initiation rites, though not articulated, are quite implicit. The traditional *Lopiong*\(^1\) figure and bullroarers have been produced in several cases, as recently as 1971, but this has not been general. (These cult houses also figured as the houses where wealth would be received during the *skin guria* movement.)

Collections are held periodically by the cult leader or his village representative. Individuals are given a number which is carefully recorded by the secretary outside the *moni haus*. The recording of one's number is accorded considerable significance, ensuring one's right to future benefits and conferring quasi legal status upon the ceremony. Support and continuity of contribution is maintained through villagers periodically being given night time glimpses of money inside the house and through the cult leader calling out the increased amounts of money secured for specified individuals. Inability immediately to disburse the money is explained through the fact that the money is too hot to handle, an allusion to the spirit forces operating to produce increased wealth, or as the result of alleged breaches of *tangket* rules. Some distribution of money is made to accommodate difficult individuals or to sustain flagging hopes.

Village women enjoy membership of the cult, paying reduced fees and participating in dancing and feasting. Sexual promiscuity and prostitution have been alleged but apart from an increased number of polygamous relationships there is no evidence of regular or organized activity of this nature.

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1 The Lopiong or Lopio cult is widespread in northwest New Guinea. See Schmitz (1960), Richert (1965), McElhanon (1969) and Wama (1974).
As a consequence of some external encouragement and a clear desire by individual villagers, emphasis in recent years has been placed upon investment of money collected. A considerable number and variety of business proposals with associated money collections have appeared in the Pindiu area in recent years: Siki store, trucks, a soap factory, large stores in Lae, fixed trust investments and others, but generally they have not proceeded beyond money collection and a vague investment proposal. Funds collected by Kopa and Akinu were used to establish the Somai Company in 1971 for investment in dump trucks but insufficient finance was deposited and the money remains idle in a Lae bank account.

Saliong's line used some of their collection for cattle projects. Despite the indisputable magico-religious basis of the movement, a significant and an increasing proportion of the members are concerned that the money be properly invested and that effective controls over its collection and expenditure be instituted. This business-investment strand has become increasingly prominent, reflecting increased exposure to commercial activity and a determination to move beyond the limited options available in the village environment and gain access to business beyond the village. Pitenamu is the logical extension of this development.

Tangket leadership and organization

The strength of the Tangket cult and its related body, the Pitenamu Society, has rested to a significant degree upon a framework of strong interpersonal ties - kin, affinal and business/exchange relations, a pattern developed most effectively by Nubos but present in all cult groupings. A flexible system of

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1 Nubos Etek initially supported the Kopa-Akinu enterprise but withdrew in 1971 determined to operate as an independent entrepreneur. It was at this time that a variety of stories circulated about Nubos's special power and his dream revelations.
organization operates throughout. Each leader has been a major figure within his own village, attracting around him a body of close supporters and assistants. In member villages, key figures were won over through feasting and kinship and business ties; head committee members were appointed but other village figures might be given roles such as secretary or store manager.

Four figures, Kopa, Saliong, Akinu and Nubos have dominated the Tangket movement in the Kua and Bulum area. Each has established spheres of influence based upon his village of reference and those contiguous villages where kinship and exchange ties have been close. Their influence has extended to other villages in proportion to the strength of kinship and exchange ties present, success in wooing leading figures in such villages, the prestige of the leader and the energy with which he and his lieutenants have been able to promote his particular variant of Tangket activity.

The cult leadership roles and behaviour patterns derive from a complex of influences and motivation: 'big man', power and status seeking on an extended scale, visionary prophetism, entrepreneurship, individual opportunism and varied responses to external influences. The leadership positions are not discreet but rather embedded in the full fabric of village life. One cannot separate cult leadership from the total political picture in the region. The Tangket movement, particularly in the Bulum and Kua valleys, has been a well established and strongly supported aspect of village life. Cult leadership is interwoven within the existing village power systems and for a full understanding of the leadership positions one would necessarily have to examine the constellation of leadership roles and the inter-relationship between the exercise of influence and power in the different spheres of village life. It would be quite misleading to regard the Tangket cult as a revolutionary movement which has swept aside existing systems and leaders in its quest for a radical new way of life.
**Pitenamu: growth and development**

The Pitenamu Society evolved from the *Targket* cult unannounced and without clear plan or intent. The emergence of a Province-wide grouping was occasioned by the conjunction of several influences. Pitenamu first came to the attention of the Provincial administration in the latter part of 1972 with the organization of money collections from the Kumagolo settlement, an encampment between Bulolo and Mumeng, and the operation of a passenger motor vehicle inscribed with the same 'Pitenamu'. An exchange of memos and reports at this time suggested Pindiu as the origin of the movement and expressed concern in regard to probable cargo cult influences and objectives.

**Puling Sapa-Nakes business goals**

Pitenamu's origins may be readily traced to two somewhat minor Pindiu figures, Puling Sapa and Nakes Sauwia Marigi (Maleng), who sought and gained assistance through the office of the then Department of Business Development in the establishment of a well conceived and legitimate commercial venture. The subsequent development of the Society was a consequence of the convergence and interaction of quite broad and diverse influences. The embryo business enterprise, particularly following the development of firm links with the *Targket* movement, served as the locus for a political and socio-economic movement of major dimensions. Detail is given in the following pages of the direct ties and influences of *Targket* practice and Pindiu.

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1 Puling was born at the coastal village of Oligadu where his parents had moved from their natal Wamuki village near Hamoronong/Ebabang. Prior to the second world war Puling worked at the Wau-Bulolo goldfields. Subsequently he travelled to the Sepik with Ben Parer and experienced two eventful escapes from Japanese custody during the war. Following a period of employment with ANGAU he extended his education at Keravat and Dregerhafen prior to assuming responsibility for the Tamigadu copra project.
leadership yet any narrowly defined view of the Tangket cult and the Pitenamu movement must necessarily inhibit comprehension of the complex broader influences underlying these developments.

Puling Sapa, stricken with partial paralysis of arm and leg, an affliction which prevented effective continuance of his role as supervisor of the ten village Tamigadu Congregation copra project, came to Lae in 1968 with ideas of establishing a bulk store trading enterprise. Puling is a man with a deep sense of responsibility and an earnest desire to secure an improved way of life for his fellow men. Puling's chance discovery of a Development Bank investment booklet whilst he was idle at Oligadu inspired ambitious thoughts of business development. In Lae, initial residence at the Ebabang compound brought Puling into contact with Nakes, an affinal kin from Hamoronong. The youthful Nakes had intermittently worked in Lae as a painter's assistant and prior to his alliance with Puling had attempted unsuccessfully to establish a store and coffee buying enterprise at his natal village. This failure did not dampen his desire for business involvement and on hearing of Puling's business plans he quickly sought a partnership. The two approached the Business Development office in Lae and were advised that the establishment of the proposed bulk store and coffee marketing enterprise with branch outlets would require recruitment of wide support and the collection of considerable funds. The initial plan for an Ebabang/Hamoronong sponsored enterprise was broadened to encompass the Mindik area and the two, with assistance from Business Development, opened the 'Mindik Lain Share Account' in November 1969.

Numerous meetings to discuss the business proposal were held in Lae's migrant settlement areas, particularly at the large Buko settlement where the two later took up residence, and Nakes travelled to Mindik seeking support from village people in that area.

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1 The Ebabang compound is to be found at the edge of a large settlement generally known as the Siassi Compound. The Ebabang group come from the Hamoronong/Ebabang area of Pindui. All trace descent from a common ancestor.
Puling approached the matter of business organization seriously, carefully setting out in impressive detail procedures to be followed in the organization of the enterprise, to be called the Hube Company. He listed requirements for each branch store, set out multiple examples of various types of business records, and as well as expounding upon appropriate commercial practice gave short bible talks and other instructions on the approach of a 'good life'.

Although the enterprise initially was perceived narrowly in terms of the Mindik Lain Account, and subsequently the Hube Company, support was drawn from an increasingly wider area. It was quickly recognized that sufficient capital would not be obtained from the Mindik-Ebabang area and the Lae meetings progressively attracted interest and support from other groups. Puling sought assistance from the Pangu Pati komiti established by Tony Voutas (Voutas 1970) and the younger Nakes made rural patrols and established links with a widening circle of Morobeans. Until 1971 there was little to distinguish the activities and business proposals of Puling and Nakes from the miscellany of investment schemes current at the time. Both had some

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1 No company was ever registered though initial organization was in terms of a company structure with member contributions obtained in multiples of K10 and the issued receipts spoken of as share certificates.

2 Then as now, different groups and individuals generated a variety of investment proposals. Unless articulated with the assistance of an external agency such as the Department of Business Development, these were commonly little more than vague suggestions of generalized desires. Business Development endeavoured to assist several business ventures in the Pindiu area, arranging incorporation of the Somsi Company, the Kopa/Akinu sponsored enterprise which aimed at investment in heavy duty trucks, and negotiating the planned establishment of the Oboramia Soap Packaging Factory, a proposal that obtained support from the Mongi valley area close to Pindiu station. There appears to have been no direct Tangket connection in this second case though informants allege that the principals promised supporters expatriate style houses. Neither proposal came to fruition.
exposure to the *Tangket* cult through contacts with Pindiu people visiting Lae and periodic visits to their home villages\(^1\) but neither could or did claim particular *Tangket* knowledge or power. Puling is regarded as having spirit influence as a consequence of his partial paralysis but this should not be accorded particular significance.\(^2\)

**A multi-dimensional movement**

It is possible at this time, however, to note an increasing coalescence of the separate forces and influences that gave rise to the development of *Pitenamu* as a Province-wide movement. The two principals and their company provided the opportunity during 1971-73 for a fortuitous conjunction of disparate groups and influences that together constitute a significant aspect of the process of political and socio-economic change during the decolonization period.

The period 1971-72 saw a rapid expansion of the enterprise. Support from residents in the Buko settlement and other migrant compounds in Lae grew rapidly at this time, as reflected in a substantial increase in bank deposits. Residence in the Buko settlement and meetings at Buko and 2/7th\(^3\) brought Nakes and Puling into close contact with other ethnic groups. A groundswell

\(^1\) Settlers from the Kotkin and Hamoronong/Ebabang area have established a small number of *Tangket* hamlets, generally with cattle projects, in the lower foothills near Bukaua and Oligadu. Saliong of Kotkin has exercised considerable influence in this locale.

\(^2\) A Lutheran report (Tingasa n.d.) paints Puling as the principal *Pitenamu* villain yet the writer has found no evidence to support such a conclusion. It would appear that many supporters interpreted Puling's strictures according to their own frames of reference but whilst Puling gave tacit support to the 1971-73 *Tangket* involvement there is no evidence to implicate him as a *Tangket* activist.

\(^3\) '2/7th' is a small migrant settlement, comprised largely of Nabak people.
of support developed and a coterie of supporters from the different ethnic communities was attracted to the embryonic movement, each recruit providing a link with his area community and drawing village support through letters, visits, and contact with visitors to Lae. Particularly strong support came from communal groups originating in the Nawae Council area north of Lae, which shares a common boundary with the Pindiu region. The organizational structure that evolved conforms to the model successfully developed by the Pangu Pati in the Morobe Province and by the Vitiaz Society, an urban welfare body: a loose coalition of ethnic groups and communal sub-groups, each with a vaguely defined hierarchy of komiti and, where appropriate, an acknowledged 'big man' or major communal figure as president with nominal responsibility for his particular region. In addition, a constellation of younger and better educated individuals serve as secretaries, recording money collections and fulfilling a symbolic role as persons with cognizance of western ways, particularly as pertaining to business. The structure is clearly one that maximized recruitment and support.

Wosae Magnukae, principal secretary to Nubos in 1973-75, was recruited by Nakes to help control and account for the collection of money. Wosae, previously a clerk with the Tewai Council, is from the Dudua Census Division and gained familiarity with the Mindik area through a period of residence there with his father, Pastor Magnukae. As well as bringing Tewai support to the growing movement, he is a fluent speaker of the main Pindiu group of languages and through his father had some knowledge of Tangket beliefs. To some degree he assumed the secular guidance role initially performed by Puling Sapa.

**Tangket ties**

The movement came under the direct influence of the Tangket cult following a trip by Nakes to Hamoronong in 1971. During this
visit he met Kopa, Saliong and Nubos Etek, leading Tangket figures, and gave money to all three. At Nawong, a subsidiary Hamoronong hamlet, Saliong and Nubos each established a Tangket cult moni haus and Nakes appears to have given full support to the cult, telling Puling on his return that he was following an approach that would secure more members and enable the enterprise to develop successfully. One may posit a number of reasons for this development. Puling, by virtue of age and infirmity, was unable to exercise effective control over his younger colleague and, despite his secular training and inclination, was not unsympathetic to the Tangket beliefs; Nakes being relatively young and strongly influenced by village ties appears to have readily accepted the authority of the Tangket leaders, particularly that of Nubos. Moreover, at this stage the enterprise had developed a momentum of its own and an orientation quite receptive to magico-religious techniques as an aid to securing desired change.

Underlying political and socio-economic forces

The movement also attached itself to the coat tails of the emergent Pangu Pati and was caught up in the political and socio-economic forces related to the Pangu phenomenon. Puling told people that it was not satisfactory that Morobe Province was not being developed and that a company must be established to find a means of obtaining money. He appealed to the need for development, unity, help for the people and indigenous business development. Puling sought support from Pangu komiti, speaking of Pangu as a prospective government and a means of securing self-government and of Pitenamu as a means of establishing business activities to help the people. The developing Pitenamu Society was seen as growing alongside the Pangu Pati, the two together as vehicles to help the people. Several of the Pangu komiti and activists from Nawae were quite early attracted to the Puling-Nakes venture, providing further links to their own village communities and other areas. Close examination of the background of other Pitenamu komiti reveals that many campaigned
and collected for the Pangu Pati and most were strong Pangu supporters. On reflection, such ties are not unexpected: Pangu obtained mass support as a movement of change, a party that challenged the existing order and promised a better life to its supporters; Pi tenamu developed at approximately the same time with a similar appeal. Pi tenamu komiti who campaigned and collected for Pangu, though quick to emphasize the separation of the two groups, obviously were influenced by the Pangu ideals and aspiration and it is doubtful if any clear cognitive distinction existed. Several Pi tenamu komiti at one juncture were simultaneously collecting K10 membership share subscriptions and Pangu 40t membership fees. Puling, in speaking of the need to develop Morobe and to join together in establishing business as a means of securing a new and happy life, received a ready response from supporters. Pi tenamu members in speaking of their Society and its goals have used terms such as sanap long Morobe Provins (strengthen Morobe Province) and bungim warwan pipel (unite as one people). Pangu's 1971-72 campaign appeals and rhetoric, centring upon economic development, unity, and self-government and independence, together with the visible evidence of change and the associated expectations, certainly influenced broad sections of the Morobe population including those attracted to Pi tenamu. It is difficult if not impossible to disentangle and accurately assess the different motives and perceptions of the komiti and supporters drawn to Pi tenamu at this time given the vague generalized statements of method and intent, the continuing concern to reaffirm the group's bona fides in the face of external pressures and criticisms, and, amongst individual members, an absence of clear comprehension (the promise of money increase aside) of the nature of the work of the movement. It is possible, however, to distinguish a sense of moral purpose, corporate solidarity and consciousness of common endeavour that transcends simple money magic or cargo fantasy and manoeuvre and manipulation for individual purpose.
There has been an obvious readiness to give credence to the magico-religious powers of the Pindiu work and its efficacy in assisting the Pitenamu enterprises. Nakes, and later Nubos, encouraged this and Nubos quite deliberately used the mont haus practice with great effect. No doubt this greatly effected the prevailing mood and the nature of commitment to the cause. Nonetheless the phenomenon is more than this and given the underlying temper of the times and the changes in levels of political consciousness it is more appropriate to speak of an ongoing mood or animus and a frame of thought and action derivative of the interacting forces present in which Pitenamu developed.

Membership was attracted primarily from the more disadvantaged Morobe regions: Pindiu, Nawae, Tewai, Watut, Wantoat and the upper Markham. A common pattern prevails: low levels of infrastructure and institutional development; low income and literacy levels; prolonged contact, with stimulated but unsatisfied expectations, and the apparent absence of effective channels through which desired changes might be effected. The Bulum valley, the source of the Tangket cult, provides the archetypal area, a region of frustration and unfulfilled promise.

The individual member drawn from these areas and from the settlements and compounds of Lae might be characterized as lacking marketable skills, of limited formal education and still strongly tied to traditional subsistence life styles or drawn from the urban low income sector or the urban unemployed. It may be inappropriate to speak of these people in terms of 'marginality' or as a depressed underclass or an urban and rural proletariat, but they can be broadly identified as a stratum of underprivileged drawn from distinctive spatial zones of 'underdevelopment'. For some,

1 The concept of relative deprivation as introduced by Aberle (1962) and refined by Gurr (1970) provides a most pertinent conceptual framework from which one may analyse the Pitenamu phenomenon. The relevant hypotheses advanced by Gurr will be examined in a separate study.
infrastructure improvements, improved access and communication, and diffusion of innovations, may encourage more realistic expectations and enable greater exploitation of available resources. However, it would be unrealistic to expect the position of many disadvantaged areas and underprivileged groups to improve significantly, and the position of some will deteriorate in relative terms. From this perspective the Pitenamu phenomenon might be viewed in part as a response to the frustrations, tensions and disintegrating influences arising from the colonial 'development' experience.

It might be further suggested that the development movement, with its strong business/cargo associations, provided for some Pangu supporters a more tangible and materialistic mode of expression and involvement than that provided by Pangu. In these terms support for the Society could be conceived as a low level position in a continuum of support patterns ranging from that elicited from simple subsistence villagers still strongly influenced by magico-religious beliefs to support drawn from the sophisticated urban dweller. Pitenamu and Pangu developing at similar times and generating a comparable mass movement momentum, tapped similar sources of frustration, perceived deprivation and authority rejection. One may draw the distinction that Pangu is unmistakably a secular political organization with definite political aims and policies whilst Pitenamu is of a more primordial nature with a definite quasi millenarian component and leaders who were ready to use the pervasive beliefs in magic and the supernatural as a medium of expression and a means of attracting support. But it is doubtful whether many supporters at this time saw the distinction; rather, support for one merged into support for the other. It is foolish to expect the same sets of values, norms, goal expectations and behaviour patterns in respect of the introduced institutions, such as political parties, as one finds in the countries from which such institutions derived.1 Supporters of the Pangu Pati were

1 See Zolberg (1968: 71-72).
and are influenced by the norms, values and structures of the traditional system and it will be some time before new values are internalized and appropriately modified behaviour patterns and expectations are established.

New directions and assembly at Kumagolo

The group, now 'formally' designated as the Pitenamu Society, could fairly claim to have attracted wide support from the major areas of the Morobe Province with the exception of Kabwum, the coastal lowlands and the lower and mid Markham valley area. It is remarkable that this following could be secured from such a wide geographical area within a space of several years. The formation and growth of the Society, whilst obviously deriving in part from the initial leadership of Nakes and Puling, aided by the energy and organization of the komiti activists attracted to the new enterprise, must be seen in part as a concomitant of the political and socio-economic forces of the 1971-73 period.

Exercise of control by Puling Sapa progressively diminished during 1971 and the original conception of a bulk store enterprise was eclipsed to some degree by the compound of generalized desires produced by the political and socio-economic developments of this period and the magico-religious beliefs developed as a consequence of the direct Tangket cult involvement. Evolution did not flow from any clearly articulated objectives or a purposive plan of action during the period 1971-73 but rather reflected a considerable element of spontaneity and an absence of effective organizational control and sense of direction.

Following the death of Nakes in June 1973 the group's bank account signatures were changed, deleting Sapa's name and thus removing him from any position of formal authority in the organization. Wosae Magnukae was acknowledged as the principal secretary, formally displacing Puling, though assumption of this role must have been
progressively effected prior to this. The extraordinary
development of the movement during the period 1971-73, the establish-
ment of direct ties with the Tangket movement and the dependent
position of Nakes in the Tangket system into which he had been
drawn, resulted in increasing influence by Nubos and his associates
upon Pitenamu and finally the assumption of visible and direct
leadership in the latter part of 1973.

The nature of the struggle for influence and control leading
to Nubos's emergence as the leading figure in the Pitenamu Society
remains somewhat blurred. Nakes's failing health, his dependence
upon others for a consistent and persuasive doctrine and his
subordinate role within the Tangket movement, together with his
failure to demonstrate progress towards goal attainment, enabled
others to move into positions of power within the organization.
Pitenamu komiti at this time became increasingly critical of the
absence of demonstrable progress and criticisms were made of
Nakes's alleged diversion of money to private purposes. Various
delégations visited Nubos at his Hamoronong-Nawong retreat in
late 1972 and 1973 and transferred support to him. Within the
Pindiu area Nubos had gained a major following and his accession
to formal leadership clearly appeared to offer enticing prospects,
particularly in view of the depleted bank balance and the faltering
momentum of the movement.

Following Nakes's death a series of meetings formally
confirmed Nubos's position as the new leader of the movement.¹
His assumption of leadership brought new strength and vigour to

¹ Nubos was 'marked' initially as the manager and namel man
(middle man) of Pitenamu. At this time Wakeong from Zewitsan,
Nubos's own village, held the position of 'Lae Tangket President'
and Yaeng, in recognition of the strong Mumeng and Watut support,
held the position of president of the Mumeng branch, though he
was spoken of at times as president of the Society. There is
of course no fixed hierarchy of positions in the western mode but
Nubos indisputably was the dominant figure from 1973.
the movement. *Tangket* belief had been considerably diffused prior
to Nubos's appearance in Lae but as a major *Tangket* figure and
a 'manager' of great repute Nubos brought to the Society great
ritual authority together with considerable drive and organizational
capacity. This gave a more explicit and purposeful approach to
the process of wealth generation, both secular and non secular.

In Lae a *moni Haus* collection centre was established at the
Yalu Plantation, a 250 acre holding located some 25 kilometres
along the Highlands Highway from Lae. A semi permanent material
house was constructed there together with four bush material
sleeping houses. Following the destruction of these facilities
(see pp. 96–97) a second *moni Haus* was built at the Nawae settlement
at Busu river. Increased support was attracted from urban and
peri-urban residents who brought their contributions to Yalu and
later Busu, and *komiti* encouraged a further flow of money and
support from rural villages.

A bush material *moni Haus* was established by residents
of the Kumagolo settlement, 15 kilometres north of Bulolo,¹ in 1972
and a permanent material structure erected following Nubos's
arrival at the end of 1973.² The extraordinary gathering at the
Kumagolo settlement of disparate groups of Morobeans provided
visible evidence of the expansion of support at this time.

Indigenous miners have long worked in this area, some
since before the second world war. Katuma, a Nawae activist
associated with the area as a gold miner and then as a Pangu

1 The settlement is strategically located midway between the
Mumeng and Bulolo townships, near the junction of the Bulo
and Watut rivers. The Watut valley provides access to the
sizeable mid Watut and Aseki-Menyamya populations.

2 *Tangket* was planted at both Busu and Kumagolo though none
was planted at Yalu in deference to the views of the
plantation manager.
komiti, was drawn to the movement through Nawae associates recruited from the Lae migrant settlements. He provided a strong link with local inhabitants who expressed considerable interest in the new activity. Christian, the president of the Pangu Pati branch in Bulolo, who had campaigned with Katuma, became a firm supporter of the Society, apparently being attracted by its quasi millenarian aspects. From Dangal village, a group that lays claim to the Kumagolo ground, he brought large numbers of supporters. Wami, an Upper Watut leader working the adjacent Widubosh claim, was attracted by the advantages of access to the Society's PMV and brought considerable support from the Upper Watut and Aseki areas. Pastor Wain, a leading Mumeng figure, and his son Yaetang Yaeng, now president of the Morobe PMV Association, were also drawn to the movement, again bringing members and support from their areas of influence. Mumeng and mid Watut support was also bolstered through marriage exchange (Nubos gaining another wife) and through the agency of Yaeng of the Dangal area, who had earlier joined with Nakes in Lae and now as nominal president of the Society helped rally support at Kumagolo. This pattern recurs again and again. Initial links were provided through Pindiu, Nawae and other ethnic groups in the area and through Lae komiti and the movement developed a momentum of its own, attracting local komiti and leaders to the enterprise. The backing of key local leaders and their supporters was secured through alliances of mutual benefit in which the local figures gained ritual status, a sense of higher level participation and increased status through prestation and material assistance in local areas in return for mobilization of support.

Nakes held two meetings at Kumagolo in 1972 and small areas of tangket were planted. The operation of the Society's PMV, together with several private vehicles, facilitated the growth of support but it was not until Nubos's energetic drive for support that Kumagolo developed as a centre of great size and significance. The settlement achieved maximum size during the latter part of 1973
following Nubos's assumption of direct control, attaining a resident population variously estimated at between 6000 and 8500 people. The settlement at this time presented an impressive sight. The bush material houses, neatly laid out on a hillside overlooking the river and the Bulolo road, accommodated quite harmoniously Society members drawn from many parts of the Province. The greatest number was from the immediate areas - Watut, Mumeng and the mining, timber mill and peri-urban settlements of the Bulolo area. There were, however, komiti and delegates drawn from the most distant parts of the Morobe Province.

It is difficult to disentangle and assess the influence that led to the assemblage of such a large, diverse grouping of people. Undoubtedly the growth of the movement and the associated expansion of Kumagolo provided a momentum of its own and a feeling of potency and satisfying security against the strictures of church and council. Komiti stated that they saw themselves as representing their supporters and that it was better that they came together to monitor and discuss the progress of the Society rather than rely upon communications from town to village. Nubos as leader appears to have generated an air of excitement and expectation. Komiti informants when questioned spoke of Nubos as fixing the problems so that Pitenamu would prosper again producing beneficial change seen from a magico-religious framework; generally there appears to have been optimism but uncertainty as to the nature and mechanism of the changes that Nubos might achieve ('Nubos bai em i wokim wanem kain kain rot' - 'Nubos will find a way'). Nubos himself not unexpectedly anticipated major advance towards greater wellbeing. Many or all of the constituent groups had contributed over many years to a wide range of ventures and one expects that many saw Pitenamu as the successful climax after the failures of the past. Although the Society leadership was particularly anxious to refute 'cargo' assertions and associations it is quite evident that the Pindiu magico-religious influence, particularly in association with Nubos's leadership, proved a major attraction for supporters. There
was a deliberate attempt to draw upon the *Tangket* model as a means of inducing desired change and Nubos quite deliberately manipulated these beliefs to advantage and maintained an aura of uncertainty and expectation as to his powers and methods of operation.

At the same time, however, there was a firm, purposive attempt to secure investment of the collected monies, a healthy scepticism by some towards money magic processes, and a very pragmatic desire to see that the collected money was appropriately invested. Society leaders of their own volition chose to approach the senior community development officer at Lae (Werner Knoll) to secure assistance with the investment of collected monies. Very considerable concern, arising from the dissipation of collected monies by Nakes, and an earnest desire to attain business objectives so long articulated, prompted Society representatives to follow Knoll to Port Moresby in an effort to secure a meeting with prime minister Somare, Morobe regional member, Boyamo Sali, and other government ministers. This pressure was strengthened by the growth of the Kumagolo settlement, the persistent criticisms of Nakes for having 'consumed' previously collected money, and by a secular drive by the Pitenamu leadership towards commercial investment. Some of the settlers, exasperated by the long delays experienced in regard to organization of business and frustrated by and resentful of the 'development' experience, asserted they would settle in Lae where facilities long sought for their home villages were available.

The growth of the Kumagolo settlement occasioned some concern, particularly on the part of the Department of Social Development and Home Affairs. It was felt that continuance of the settlement would weaken the fabric of village societies through loss of the more able adult males, and there were insufficient means of sustenance at the Kumagolo settlement to sustain such a large population and services were entirely lacking. Eventually, continued persuasion and progress in negotiations for investment with Pagini-Brambles Transport Pty Ltd., a Lae based transport company, resulted in a gradual exodus of all but a small number back to their home villages.
Action and reaction

Growing support for the movement in the rural villages of Morobe and the reality of the group's presence at Kumagolo brought mixed reactions. Government response broadly conformed with the neutral stance recommended by official policy in relation to suspected cultists.\footnote{This neutral stance concealed a wide continuum of individual attitudes. Some implicitly regarded the movement as being influenced by the paranoid states manifested by Pindiu cultists. Others, most notably Social Development and Home Affairs personnel, sought to emphasize and encourage the very positive aspects of the movement. The Department of Business Development, which had previously sought to assist groups from the area, actively assisted the Puling-Nakes venture. However, the failure of the Hube Company, the Oboramia soap packaging enterprise and the Somsi Company to develop as ongoing commercial enterprises was undoubtedly discouraging and correspondence from Provincial headquarters suggesting that Business Development was encouraging cargo expectations discouraged support for these activities, and a change in Business Development staff provided the opportunity for a break with the Pitenamu group.}

The most notable example of what might be construed as overt opposition arose from conflict over the payment of taxes to the Mumeng Council. Representatives of the Kumagolo settlers were rebuffed by council officials when they attempted to pay taxes \emph{en bloc} during 1974; a lump sum of K500 brought in a bag was refused and the insistence that members must pay their taxes individually brought an angry exchange of words between settlers and officials. As a consequence of the tax issue the encampment area was visited on two occasions by representatives of the council and government, including, on one occasion, the deputy provincial commissioner and a police inspector. The first visiting party was unable to reach the settlement because an access bridge had been washed away and the second found the encampment deserted. It may be argued that the Kumagolo settlers were given rather special treatment, especially since there is no explicit requirement in the local government ordinance that taxes be paid individually and non payment of head tax was by no means peculiar to the Pitenamu settlers. However, the matter did not develop further as efforts by officers of the Department of Social Development and Home Affairs and a visit by Boyamo Sali...
succeeded in persuading the main body of settlers to return to their villages.

Much more definite opposition to the movement was articulated by sections of the Lutheran Church. The principal source of this antagonism was the long established church opposition to cults embracing traditional magico-religious beliefs. Belief in contact with ancestral spirits and recourse to magical assistance to gain access to wealth and improved wellbeing has traditionally been considered synonymous with the influence of Satan and therefore to be firmly opposed. The history of the Lutheran and other churches in Papua New Guinea is replete with periods of bitter struggles and distressing divisions occasioned by cargo cult movements.

Puling Sapa was brought before Lutheran Church officials and later called before a circuit meeting and questioned and criticized before the congregation. Despite protestations to the contrary he was considered a true cargo cultist. A report by the president and secretary of the Lae District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Guinea (ELCONG) summarized these views together with the findings of an investigative committee (Tingasa n.d.). Province and circuit church meetings during 1973 and 1974 brought from some of the movement's more vocal critics accusations of prostitution, blood sacrifices and a disregard for the proper development channels and institutions. Despite these severe criticisms there is within ELC-PNG a body of opinion far more

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1 A traditional church attitude is illustrated by the declaration of faith endorsed by the 1964 Synod of the Lutheran Church (Janssen 1974) which refers to 'praying to the dead and making preparation for expected goods in cemeteries ... or any other places' as 'abject perversities' and proponents of such activities as 'victims of satanic deception'. However, this should not be taken as uniformly representative of Lutheran understanding and policy; a number of sensitive and sophisticated studies of the cult phenomenon have been undertaken by field missionaries and senior members of ELCONG (see for example J.F. Wagner (1964), H. Wagner (1963) and articles cited in Point 1, 1974).

2 Since renamed Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea (ELC-PNG).
favourably disposed to Pitenamu, which recognizes the complex of influences that lie behind such movements, the presence of soundly based thinking and constructive goal orientated behaviour in the movement, and the need for positive response. However the possibility of a flexible response is lessened by the loss of some of the church's more experienced personnel and by the fact that in a time of rapid change most organizations in the Province are struggling to maintain their present structure and activities and consequently are unlikely to take major new initiatives. Sympathetic reaction by some individuals notwithstanding, behind the ideological conflict between Pitenamu and its critics is an implicit struggle for power and influence. Having demonstrated its capacity to mobilize support and surmount existing divisions, the movement has been perceived by some as a threat to established positions of authority and influence. The virulent denunciations and cargo cult assertions that underlie such perceptions have caused great resentment amongst Pitenamu members.

Although business is emphasized as the Society's principal goal, its appeal encompasses political, social, religious and economic spheres of activity and clearly impinges upon church and council domains. In such circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that some feel threatened by its development. A number of the Papua New Guinean pastors have expressed unequivocal opposition to the movement and the writer was a little taken aback by the clear enmity shown towards Pitenamu by one pastor who insisted that Pitenamu collectors be prevented from making further collections. Similarly a number of local government councillors have been adamantly opposed to the movement.

The most direct manifestation of this opposition occurred at the end of 1973 with a physical attack upon the Yalu Plantation money collection centre. The activity of the Nawae/Nabak komiti operating out of the 2/7th settlement and their meetings and collections of money at the Yalu Plantation aroused the enmity
of sections of the Nabak community including an assistant pastor with the Lutheran Church. Late one evening two truckloads of anti cultists from the 2/7th and Taraka settlements visited the plantation and after some argument kerosene and firebrands were produced. The moni haus and four bush sleeping houses were all burned to the ground. A quantity of money variously estimated at between K4000 and K7000 was reported lost in the blaze. A court action followed and one of the persons identified as having lit the fire was given a goal sentence but no indemnification for the loss of the money occurred. One of the principals in explaining his opposition to Pitenamu stated that he and others were concerned about the effect of the involvement of the Nabak people upon the commercial success of the Nabak plantation and about the 'unnatural' aspects of the society's activities ('the society does not accept the authority of the church or government and members do not pay council tax'). The Pitenamu members living at 2/7th were also forced to move to the small Busu settlement further along the river near the site of the former city tip site. Overt opposition diminished somewhat following this confrontation and as a consequence of the strenuous efforts by Pitenamu leaders to counter criticisms of the movement. Pitenamu members and their leaders have protested bitterly at what they consider untruths, fabrications and distortions and the constant accusation of cargo cultism, the universal term of reprobation in such situations. Repeatedly they have sought to stress their Christianity and their willingness to co-operate with local government councils. Representatives attended several Lutheran circuit and district meetings in an attempt to counter criticism and in August 1974 attended an Area Authority meeting to explain their activities. Responses were varied but the meeting accepted a motion that 'the Society should talk on Radio Morobe and circularize councils and other bodies on the work of the Society'.

1 Morobe District Area Authority Sixth General Meeting, August 1974, p.3.
Society have been fervent supporters of the local government system, there has been no evidence of consistent opposition to councils per se and members have publicly sought to dispel arguments of anti-council bias. Similarly though there has been a bitter struggle with church authority, there has been no rejection of Christianity and it would be quite misleading to use the terms 'nativistic' or 'revivalistic' as indicators of a desire to return to the old ways.

Although the movement has been in clear conflict with church and state at higher levels of organization, an examination of Tangket cult influence at village level indicates a considerable capacity to achieve accommodation with the established institutions. Tangket cult activity in some Pindiu villages has in the past been virtually unchallenged and within the Bulum valley widely supported, particularly in response to church attacks.¹ It is at higher levels of organization and activity that opposition is most strongly manifested.

Money and business

Though it is evident that the Pitenamu leaders have been influenced by a variety of motives, for the general body of members the contribution of money and its return suitably increased has been from the beginning a central concern. The mechanics of commercial activity and basic investment concepts are most inadequately comprehended both by leaders ² and the general body of supporters, a situation facilitating magico-religious

¹ In villages where conflict between supporters and opponents of the cult occurred, the cult group generally moved to a new village or hamlet.

² Nubos when questioned by the writer as to possible rates of return on investment suggested a K100 profit from a K40 subscription.
explanation and manipulations of member support. However, whilst leaders have lacked the necessary comprehension of business realities, and the credulity of members has clearly been exploited as a means of securing support, there has been present from the very beginning a consistent business/investment orientation and close attention has been given to the proper recording of income and expenditure. The success of Nubos as an entrepreneur in the Pindiu area was seen as a most desirable prerequisite for leadership of the Society. Undoubtedly his purported spiritual powers were a central factor but supporters do not cognitively separate business and magico-religious beliefs and one should not lose sight of the fact that within the Pindiu area Nubos appeared to be a successful entrepreneur in the field of commercial endeavour and had demonstrated appropriate 'big man' values in assisting a number of groups in the establishment of coffee and trade store activities.

No substantive move towards the establishment of the proposed Hube Company bulk store enterprise occurred in the formative period of the Society but in 1972 the embryonic Pitenamu Society purchased a PMV truck to carry people between Lae and Wau-Bulolo. Though providing transport for members and a conspicuous investment symbol this expenditure secured no financial return for the group; indeed it incurred substantial expenses for repair and maintenance and occasioned considerable organization and control problems. Control of the vehicle alternated between the various ethnic groups and this gave rise to disputes as to driving and transport rights and questions of responsibility for fuel and repair costs. The vehicle was finally abandoned in 1974 following smash damages and mechanical breakdown. Several other PMVs have been operated ostensibly as private vehicles but in part financed by Society funds. Nubos operated a small Mazda utility wholly financed by the Society for transport of himself, komiti, 'big men' and supporters.
Following the renewal of money collection under Nubos's guidance there was a strong drive for an appropriate business involvement. Contact was made with the Lae office of the Department of Social Development and Home Affairs and Werner Knoll endeavoured to assist the group in securing sound investment of collected funds. One may explain the contact with Knoll and the strong desire for investment of the collected money in a number of ways. There was a strong and increasing awareness of the necessity of utilizing the collected money and being involved in business as part of the process of wealth generation. Contributions have been carefully recorded. Members have been particularly sensitive to the problem of control of collected money especially since there was general acceptance that Nakes had 'consumed' previously collected money. Nubos himself was determined to secure a satisfactory business involvement and related to this the growth of the Kumagolo settlement; the concomitant pressures so generated reinforced this investment drive.

Further, the achievement of an impressive business investment was seen as a means of legitimating the activities of the Society to both followers and critics and of course as a means of attracting further support. Those less kindly disposed might suggest that the business investment was intended primarily as a cover for 'cargo' activities and individual self-seeking opportunism. This element is not entirely absent but observation of the continuing concern of members and head komiti for proper investment of the money, demonstrated by regular contact with Knoll and close checks of the records, indicates a very worldly and pragmatic concern for proper investment.

After some delay an acceptable proposal was negotiated through the Community Development Office whereby the Society agreed to purchase a parcel of shares in the Pagini-Brambles Transport Pty Ltd., a major transport and heavy equipment enterprise with headquarters in Lae. A formal share application for 7000 K1 shares at a
premium of K0.42, a total subscription of K9940, was submitted in October 1974, and a use thus found for a proportion of the group's funds. Though one may question the premium imposed by Pagini-Brambles, purchase of the equity shareholding was a significant achievement marking the group's entry into the world of legitimate commerce. The tangible evidence of this commercial involvement, and the publicity given to it, helped moderate criticisms of the group's activities and bolster the Society's image, boosting follower morale and buttressing the position of Pitenamu's leaders. In retrospect this period probably marks the zenith of Pitenamu fortunes. The Pagini-Brambles share purchase was to be the forerunner of more substantial investments.

A metal drum cleaning and repair business valued at K50,000 was brought forward for consideration and the Society was encouraged to think in terms of directing profit from business investments back to rural villages for project work in co-operation with the relevant local government councils. However the long delay in effecting investment, the considerable dissipation of money capital, the limited short term cash flow that can be expected from the equity shareholding in Pagini-Brambles and inflated expectations of returns, placed very considerable pressure upon the organization and on Nubos as the centre man.

The years 1975 and 1976 now appear as a period of decline, or in a more optimistic vein a period of reorganization. The drum container business proposal was allowed to lapse and no further money has been brought forward for investment by the group. The difficulty of exercising control over the collection of money by komiti and bogus collectors has continued to be a problem though with the lapse of support this is no longer critical. The position of Nubos is now quite tenuous and accusations similar to those made against Nakes have been made with increasing frequency. The organization is unable to generate a cash flow sufficient to meet
demands of the general membership for monetary return or to demonstrate evidence of progress towards that goal. Representatives of constituent groups have become increasingly insistent in their demands for explanation and less willing to participate in the affairs of the Society. Nubos has regularly varied his place of residence and on one occasion the tyres of his vehicle were deflated when he preferred to travel to Bulolo rather than explain to a group of Markham people the status of the Society's affairs. Wosae Magnukae has attempted to assume leadership of the movement but has not received full support and the Society has been reorganized with separate regional and sub-regional groupings, each concerning itself with local commercial and economic development activities with Pitenamu envisaged as an umbrella co-ordinating structure and a channel for larger commercial investments.

If it were possible to leave aside the other goals and influences and attempt judgement according to established commercial criteria, one would not be able at this juncture to express any great confidence in the economic future of the enterprise. Examination of the Society's records of income and expenditure and bank statements indicates that the group probably collected, on a conservative estimate, between K30,000 and K40,000 between 1969 and 1975. Recorded expenditure shows money allocated to vehicle purchase and repair, gifts to village groups and leaders, building construction at Kumagolo and Busu, contributions for the erection and stocking of a number of village trade stores, a helicopter charter for Nubos to Zewitsan at K180, some K6000 claimed to have been burned in the Yalu fire, an uncertain amount of money expended on feastings and prestations, the K10,000 Pagini-Brambles share purchase and various sums disbursed for air fares and sundry expenses. A not inconsiderable amount was also expended whilst the six thousand or more people were encamped at Kumagolo during late 1973 and the early part of 1974, as little food was available from gardens to feed the settlers. Of this
amount only the K10,000 Pagini-Brambles share purchase can be considered as an investment able to generate future revenue. When one considers the large number of people with claims to such revenue, the ability of the group to generate monetary payoffs to meet the inflated expectations of members is very limited.

Of course consumption of money capital is not a phenomenon unique to quasi cult groups; some would regard this as the norm for a great proportion of business ventures. It is possible to write at length upon the financial failings of councils, co-operatives, and private and group ventures and upon the financial misdemeanours of principals in these groups. Many of these have failed despite strong support from government agencies. Pitenamu has received minimal support and has been able to provide considerable non-monetary payoffs to members; hence one should not be too hasty in condemnation of the group's economic failings. Nonetheless it is apparent that the group is unable to continue as an ongoing commercial enterprise without further collections of money, which do not appear to be forthcoming, and quite unable to meet the inflated expectations of contributors. Whilst some credit should be accorded to Nubos for his pursuit of economic investment it is necessary to recognize as a corollary the problem of stimulating inflated expectations and dissipation of money capital in the process of support recruitment, investment of such money capital of course being essential for system growth and maintenance. In the absence of a facility to generate adequate money from commercial investment or an investment of other resources sufficient to produce material returns, the system cannot be sustained for any length of time. The satisfactions obtained from autonomous collective activity, cult ritual, dancing, feasting and other diversions, and the satisfactions gained from the Pagini-Brambles investment could not continue to satisfy member demands, particularly after the symbolic attainment of political power values through the Pangu Pati victory in the 1972 elections, self-government and independence, and a degree of accommodation.
with church and state. Tangible material returns remain the predominant goal yet in its present form and without external assistance the structure will have difficulty in meeting these expectations.

**Power and politics**

While economic values are most salient, collective and individual power seeking appears to be a fundamental motivating force in the development of the Tangket cult and the Pitenamu Society, as it was in the 1946-48 skin guria movement. Although the cargo-rifle syndrome persists in an attenuated form, it has been largely displaced by money and a mix of magico-religious and secular-instrumental techniques for its multiplication.

Power, however, is the common denominator. Money, as with cargo-rifles, serves as a symbol of desired power, providing a pathway to equality, access to autonomy and independence, re-establishment of integrity, removal of tension, the termination of the ascendancy of alien institutions and influences, and an end to the impotence of villagers. Parallel with political and socio-economic change the nature of the response has altered.

Today, though continuity with the past remains, one finds resort to collectivist movements, a search for unity through wider structures and institutions, a greater willingness to challenge established authority, and greater resort to secular involvement.

Pitenamu must be seen, in this context, as a movement with clear political connotations, a significant aspect of populist, collectivist movement for change which gained its most tangible expression in the emergence and widespread support for the Pangu Pati. It is then possible more readily to identify the links with the past and the political evolution from the earlier cargo cult phases. Support for this view can readily be found in
the examination of the studies of similar change movements in response to the colonial experience in other parts of the world.¹

No political aims have been publicly proclaimed by Pitenamu and the Society has refrained from presenting itself as a political body with activities likely to disturb established structures. The popular concern with broad change and improvements in the position and material status of supporters, partly formulated in a magico-religious framework, has inhibited clear statement of purpose. So too has an inability to conceptualize and articulate broad political and socio-economic objectives and means of securing them. The generalized desire for autonomy and for greater wellbeing and improved position has not been matched by knowledge or understanding of modern secular processes and the experience with established institutions has entailed frustration and disillusionment.

Whilst the movement signifies in part a movement of protest, a groundswell grassroots movement seeking to redefine its relationships with established structures and institutions and re-establish communal power and control, the Pitenamu phenomenon at the same time represents an autonomous move towards newer institutions and values, a searching for new responses, for self-initiated and controlled means of advancement, a progression to a more selective, adaptive and secular mode of response and a further phase in the process of political and socio-economic change.

The geographic spread of the movement, whilst enabling a wider tributary base and greater power for the leadership, expanded the power base of the movement and helped provide a

¹ See Wilson (1973) and Rotberg and Mazrui (1970) and the detailed bibliographies in these monographs.
countervailing force to that of the Province-wide church and government structures. Opposition from these sources has shaped Pitenamu's public posture. The Society has sought to avoid direct conflict or confrontation, endeavouring to dispel cargo cult allegations and emphasizing its commercial objectives and its support for Christian values. As noted, Pitenamu representatives have argued the Society's case at church circuit and council meetings and have presented an outline of their activities to a meeting of the Morobe Province Area Authority. Further, they have demonstrated an increasing willingness to use the local radio station to publicize their activities and the formal signing of share parcel application and the receipt of the Pagini-Brambles share certificates provided the opportunity for a half page newspaper cover and presentations to the provincial commissioner and the prime minister.

Although the movement has been anxious to secure public recognition and respectability, particularly in the face of some strong opposition, one could anticipate more overt political activity and a more direct relationship with the formal political institutions if the movement consolidated its position and secured a more experienced leadership.

Finally, transferring attention to the plans of individual motivation and behaviour, a perspective that enables greater understanding of the activities of Pitenamu and its related groups is one that focusses upon the interpersonal competitive struggle for power, status and influence in the Morobe Province.

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1 The movement must be seen in part as an alternative power system and it is instructive to note that one of the criticisms directed against Pitenamu by a church report was that it did not follow established channels in relation to local government councils and the central government. Similarly, several government officers have commented that support for the movement must mean loss of support for councils.
For Nubos, it can be seen that involvement in the *Tangket* cult and accession to leadership of Pitenamu has provided a route to a position of power, wealth and prestige in no way possible within the established institutions. The struggle for power and influence between Nubos and Akinu, the conflict with church leadership, and the uneasy relationship with Pindiu Council demonstrates the limitation of any analysis centred upon a narrow cargo explanation or one that views the movement solely on the level of the collective. Nubos has skilfully manipulated traditional magico-religious beliefs grafted to a schema of secular economic endeavour in his struggle for power and status. To this must be added the successful use of kin, descent, marriage and exchange in traditional 'big man' style to mobilize support from an extraordinarily wide area. The *Tangket/moni haus* ideology and ritual combined with a business-development theme presented in differing combinations according to the audience, has provided the medium within which the various actors, Nubos, Akinu and lesser figures, have played their game. The real prize for the principal actors has not been cargo but power, prestige and, perhaps for those operating in an urban environment, personal wealth. The same game of course is played in other arenas with different rituals but for a similar prize and with greater emphasis on personal gain.

### Organization and leadership

Organization of the *Tangket* movement, as noted above, rests upon a framework of strong interpersonal ties - kin, affinal and economic - focussing upon several leading figures each with his respective sphere of influence. Beyond Pindiu, ethnic divisions - as with the Pangu Pati model - provide the basis for the Province-wide Society organization, each distinctive ethnic group having a president or *het komiti, komiti* and secretary (often several) and close supporters occupying ill defined
positions of authority and status. In each of these separate ethnic divisions the system of close interpersonal ties is repeated to a considerable degree. Nubos occupied the central leadership position on the basis of his acknowledged ability and power but he was the managing organizer and 'centre man' rather than a person who stood above and separate from his peers. Decision making is very much a group process along traditional lines rather than a situation of dominance by one man. Though leadership by Nubos was accepted, separate autonomy was retained and representatives of the constituent groups consistently exhibited a cautious attitude towards the handling and disposition of money contributions.

However Nubos, until 1976, was able to exert a most powerful influence over group leaders and the general membership. He is an extraordinary individual, an entrepreneur in the broadest meaning of the word and a somewhat ruthless graduate of the Pindiu cult-business environment. He is a person considered to possess undefined powers and was acknowledged as having demonstrated major business ability and power in the Pindiu area. Whilst pursuing secular involvement he quite deliberately exploited the widespread belief in his special powers and sought to strengthen his position in the manner of the traditional 'big man', purposively manipulating traditional social beliefs, values and practices to advantage. A considerable proportion of collected money was disbursed through public distribution in the traditional manner with modern variations - ceremonial feasting and beer parties organized through the agency of village notables, collective tax payments, marriage exchange, money and material gifts and assistance in the establishment and restocking of village stores. The Society's financial records clearly reveal this pattern of disbursement. Marriage exchanges facilitated inter-communal linkages and Nubos recruited new allies and strengthened support by acquisition of additional wives and contribution of women to support groups.
The mobilization of support through the use of traditional methods, however, is at once a weakness as well as a strength. Expectations were raised to unrealistic levels and support had to be secured and maintained, in the absence of financial returns, through the consumption of capital. Though reasonable records have been maintained by the secretaries of the movement, this has not been sufficient to inhibit dissipation of investment capital, an inevitable process (some would argue) given the multi-functional nature of the Tangket and Pitenamu response and in particular the magico-religious associations and the aura of power and authority that surrounded Nubos. The flexible organizational structure indeed facilitated mobilization, fulfilled status demands and enabled appropriate payoffs to be sustained for a limited period. At the same time this system created control problems in respect to economic objectives. Consideration of the varied motivations and limited experience of the leadership and the total environment within which they have operated helps provide a better understanding of the barriers inhibiting successful achievement of an ongoing Province-wide socio-economic system able to generate appropriate material benefits to members. The mobilization phase has now passed and it is unfair to focus upon economic viability criteria alone as measures of organizational effectiveness. The structure that evolved was one developed in response to varied needs and goals and it was symptomatic of the forces and influences present at the time. In the present (1980) post mobilization phase attempts have been made, with limited success, to reorganize the Society into functionally separate and largely autonomous subgroups. The future of the movement, however, is uncertain.

Conclusion

Assessment of the achievements and significance of Pitenamu is difficult. It is the product of complex influences and individual motivations, and evaluation of these is unavoidably influenced by the particular frames of reference chosen by the observer.
In broad terms the movement may be seen as a genuine grassroots movement which has developed at this period of the country's development quite spontaneously without external support or guidance. It represents a broad move towards integration, a demand for recognition and autonomy and for social and economic advance based upon traditional collectivism and leadership patterns and drawing upon the inter-ethnic links created by the colonial order and the partly assimilated commercial values of the new order. It is a populist mass movement, a movement of change and protest and a movement that seeks, through a mixture of old and new, the combination of traditional magico-religious beliefs and modern economic processes, to regain for people control over their own affairs. In these respects it may be seen as utopian and futile, yet it represents a clear desire for change, a demand for freedom and autonomy and a response to the colonial system and the processes of peasantization induced by the intrusion of the capitalist market system. Though more sophisticated movements attract greater attention and support, movements like Pitenamu deserve far wider recognition as groups striving for control and self betterment rather than as eccentric magico-religious associations. A sympathetic understanding of the motivation of movements such as this and the environment in which they operate would shed greater light upon the patterns and problems of political and socio-economic developments in areas such as Pindiu. If such movements can be aided through the establishment of machinery to utilize effectively the resources which they can mobilize, and used to promote new ideologies of change and development, the impact could be considerable.
LOCAL PROTEST MOVEMENTS
Chapter 4

NAPIDAKOE NAVITU

James Griffin

Napidakoe Navitu derived its name from an anagram of the initials of the different ethnic groups in the vicinity of Kieta \(^1\) (Middlemiss 1970: 100) together with the Nasioi word (navitu) for a united people or association. Though predominantly an organization of Nasioi-speaking people - the largest language group in the North Solomons (formerly Bougainville) Province - the association was not parochial. Its membership included members from the contiguous Torau, Eivo and Nagovisi groups (plus a few from Buin and Siwai); its 'charismatic patron', Paul Lapun, was from the Banoni language group, and its explicit aims were directed at 'Bougainville as a whole' (ibid.).

The movement sprang to life as a result of the Australian Administration's attempt in 1969 to resume both indigenous and expatriate held land at Arawa and Rorovana in order to provide a town and port services for the Bougainville copper mine. However, the gestation of Navitu can be traced back to at least 1964 and it was nurtured within the ethos which ultimately produced the Province-wide secession movement of 1974-1976.

The colonial experience did little to create in Bougainvilleans a sense of a common destiny with other Papua New Guineans. Bougainvilleans perceived themselves as being set apart by their geographical insularity, their traditional relations with the Solomon Islands, their distinctive skin colour, and their historical experiences, which included a conviction of being 'neglected' and 'exploited' by Australia for the benefit of other Papua New Guineans (Hannett 1975).

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1 Na - Nasioi; Pi - Pirung (coastal group); Da - Daru; Ko - Koromira; E - Eivo.
Figure 4.1  South Bougainville, linguistic divisions
At the beginning of the Japanese invasion of Papua New Guinea in January 1942 there was a particularly ignominious flight by a number of Australian officials and planters from Kieta. Partly as a result, many local villages collaborated with the Japanese, although it is reasonable to infer that deep-seated antagonism towards Australians already existed (Griffin 1978:140-141). No part of Papua New Guinea suffered more devastation and starvation than central and southern Bougainville suffered in the following three years. After the war attempts to develop indigenous industries were frustrated until the 1960s and cargoism was rife in the area (Griffin 1978:161-2). In 1962 a United Nations visiting mission was asked by a meeting of over one thousand people in Kieta to take the mandate away from Australia, who had treated the people 'like dogs'. It urged that the USA should take over development, which Australia had neglected. Australia was also accused of ignoring promises of non-segregation made during the war.1 Race relations were reckoned to be as bad in Kieta as anywhere in Papua New Guinea and few Bougainvilleans were prepared to work on expatriate plantations (Ogan 1971:138). In the 1964 national election villagers refused to vote for any of the European candidates in the New Guinea Islands Special Electorate (ibid.:140). The 'rebellion' of the Hahalis Welfare Society on Buka Island against the imposition of a local government council and head tax (Rimoldi 1971) was followed with interest further south and there was almost certainly some direct influence from Buka of the 'new ways' originated by Anton Kearei and developed by the Hahalis Welfare Society. Patrol officers recorded an unexpected appearance of cargoism in the area in the early 1960s and court action was taken against leaders.2

With good reason, Kieta was one of the last areas on Bougainville in which local government was imposed (1964) and, although this was not accompanied by violence, as on Buka, there was a polarization of opinion such that, after six years, only two thirds of the eligible population were covered. The earliest Nasioi proponents of the council were almost

1 Kieta Patrol Report 1961-62 No. 3.
exclusively Seventh Day Adventists and Methodists (together about 20 per cent of the local population), groups which had been 'loyalist' during the war and were generally non cargoist. Administration officials saw councils as a solvent for cults and disaffection and encouraged grandiose ideas of what councils could achieve: 'Sapos mipela gat Kaunsil, mipela stap olsem ol waitman' ('Once we get councils, we will be the same as the whitemen'). This absurdity only inflamed council opponents, some of whom resisted Administration encouragement to plant cash crops because they saw it as a ruse to draw people into the council (Ogan 1972). That there were not more dissidents was probably due to what Eugene Ogan characterizes as the 'charismatic' leadership of Paul Lapun, an advocate of councils and the founder and first patron of Napidakoe Navitu (Ogan 1971, 1974). As will be seen Navitu was not, like the Hahalis Welfare Society or the Mataungan Association, directly opposed to a particular council. In fact the rise in membership of the Kieta Council from 9699 in 1970 to 11,734 in 1972 may have been due to Navitu's permeation of that body. However, the fact that the abolition of councils became a major priority once provincial government was instituted in 1974 indicates how basically unacceptable they always were (Connell 1977).

Ogan, the foremost authority on the Naising in the late colonial period, believed that although Navitu had

an infrastructure... I think the momentum, the thrust, skill comes from the personality, the character, as understood by Bougainvilleans, of this remarkable man, Paul Lapun (Harries et al. 1973:44).

It is therefore essential to outline Lapun's career. Born in 1923 at Mabis in the Banoni language area, he was selected by the Catholic mission in the mid 1930s for its first seminarian training programme. Lapun spent the war (as did Anton Kearei and Aloysius Noga, mentioned below) in Rabaul, but, unlike Kearei, subsequently left the seminary still a pious Catholic and in good odour with his church. He became a mission teacher and in 1960 was noted by the kiap as owning 'over 400 trees ... employing labour to further his plantings. His groves ... are an example of correct
Figure 4.2  North Solomons Province
procedure to those in the vicinity'.

Although the kiaip had seen him in 1960 as only 'a front man' for some traditional leader, he was subsequently appraised as 'ceaseless in his efforts to develop his area'.

He showed his awareness of Provincial political realities in 1962 when he rejected the idea of an 'official' rural progress society but collected money for an independent cooperative society, although there was no real difference between the two. The people, said the kiaip, would not have 'an RPS or anything similar'.

In 1962, after a political education tour of Australia, he became an advocate of councils and the Bana (Banoni-Nagovisi) Local Government Council was formed in his area without incident in 1965. His influence, however, in the recalcitrant area of Kieta proved to be even greater. Lapun spoke Nasioi and Nagovisi fluently as well as his own Austronesian vernacular and a little of the Buin and Siwai languages. His reputation for 'special knowledge' seemed to grow with distance.

The cultic Nasioi in the Guava census division would appear not to have been opposed to local government as such but wanted to join 'Lapun's Council', Bana.

In the 1964 election for the House of Assembly Lapun received twice the vote of Severinus Ampaoi, the first president of the Kieta Council, in the Aropa Valley (Nasioi) and won overwhelmingly in Ampaoi's home base at Guava (Ogan 1965). Like Kearei on Buka in the 1950s, Lapun was thought by cultists to have divined the essential cargo message during his seminary days. Both understood the need to mobilize rather than disperse cultic sympathies as well as to speak in 'rational secular' terms to non-cultists.

However, unlike Kearei, Lapun did not alienate the paramount Catholic mission and he upheld the authority of traditional elders. He strongly condemned the sexual 'immorality' of the Hahalis Welfare Society; he was a fierce opponent of sorcery; and his easy collaboration in later years with the Moral Rearmament Association (Hastings 1969a, 1969b; Beazley 1970) shows a tolerance of Christians other than Catholics. Without identifying

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1 Banoni Patrol Report 1959-60 No. 3.
2 Boku Patrol Report 1959-60 No. 3.
4 I. Namake, personal communication.
5 Kieta Patrol Reports 1963-64 No. 9, 1964-65 No. 6.
himself with the administration, as Kearei ultimately did (serving for seven years as president of Buka Council), Lapun gave the impression of moving confidently and being acknowledged in the whiteman's world. News of his immediate appointment in parliament as under-secretary for Forests would have confirmed this. To cultists he would yield up his secrets in his own good time, but he was also worthy of support by those with no supernatural hopes.

What a young Rorovana graduate called the 'merciless intrusion' (Dove et al.1974:181) of the transnational copper company in 1964 brought profound psychological shock to the Kieta area, involving as it did massive technology denuding forest and plantation, an influx of thousands of white and brown workers ('redskins' to black Bougainvilleans), demands on land for development and the use of police to ensure compliance. The rate of change can be illustrated by the following data:

... the number of persons licensed at Kieta to drive a motor vehicle increased from 45 in 1966 to 3,953 in 1970; cargo tonnages at the port of Kieta increased from 35,000 in 1968 to 460,000 in 1971; and the urban population increased from around 750 in 1966 to over 14,000 in 1971 - the peak of the construction phase (Mamak and Bedford 1974:3).

There was also the shock of learning (in 1966 from the minister for territories himself) that, of the astronomical riches in the ground, nothing would go directly to the owners except standard occupation fees of $A4.95 per hectare plus compensation for specific damage to livelihood and property. Cargoists scheduled the end-of-the-world at Guava for April 1967; related beliefs survived that non-event. A number of Catholic missionaries, notably Americans who did not acknowledge the British right of eminent domain in a trust territory, encouraged villagers to stand out for greater compensation. Around the same time other grievances arose in relation to attempts by a Japanese company to fell timber at Tonelei near Buin, and by the Administration to mine road metal at Malabita, also near Buin (Tsibim 1967; Fingleton 1970).
Lapun, in spite of his official post, retained his independence of the Administration. In 1966 he succeeded in modifying mining policy in Papua New Guinea by persuading the House of Assembly that landowners should receive 5 per cent of the 1.25 per cent mining royalties, where previously all was to go to the government; he failed, however, in his attempt to have 40 per cent allocated to the development of his Province. He became known in the house as 'King Paul the Black' and his reputation spread to other parts of Papua New Guinea (see Kiki 1968:195). He was careful to emphasize, however, that his people were not opposed to mining as such but to the lack of consultation and their lack of direct gains. In fact, the attitude of villagers would appear to have been less ambivalent than that. In Bougainville, the 5 per cent in itself was regarded by the people as a negligible monetary concession; nevertheless it enhanced Lapun's reputation for special access.

In 1976 Lapun resigned his official post to become deputy leader of Pangu Pati, although he had already opened up discussions with a Solomon Islands leader on the possibility of a 'reunion' of the Solomons archipelago (Hannett 1969) and must have been contemplating mobilization of the burgeoning sentiment for secession which developed naturally with political devolution (Geertz 1963) and was fostered by the advent of mining. In the

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1 HAD II (3):627, 21 November 1968.

2 Kiki writes of his unsuccessful campaign as a Pangu Pati candidate in Baimuru (Gulf Province) during the 1968 elections:

Only in one area of Baimuru did Pangu Pati enjoy some unexpected popularity. Everybody here was talking about Paul Lapun, our member for Bougainville. He was very popular in the area because he had fought for and gained mining royalties for the people of Bougainville. In Baimuru the Phillips oil company was then looking for oil and the people were anxiously wondering who would help them to get money for the oil on their land. This was the only genuine political issue the people raised in that whole area (Kiki 1968:175).

As stated below, Lapun's popularity and personal friendships in Pangu circles and his wide repute in Papua New Guinea were factors in weaning him away from secessionism to an integrative position for Bougainville.
1968 elections he won the South Bougainville Open election with 82 per cent of the vote and successfully rolled out supporters for Joseph Lue who stood against strong expatriate candidates in the regional electorate (Ogan 1971). Secession was also being mooted by a group of radical Bougainvilleans at Holy Trinity seminary, Madang. In 1966, they published their own mimeographed journal, Dialogue, the first 'intellectual' journal produced by indigenes. A number of them, in particular Leo Hannett, subsequently left the seminary and became ardent Bougainville patriots. In September 1968 Hannett and Lapun led the call for a referendum on secession by twenty-five Bougainvilleans living in Port Moresby (Hannett 1969). This signalled the founding of the Mungkas Society, a self-styled 'pressure group' of Bougainvilleans then living outside the Province, which was formed to promote, at the very least, provincial autonomy (Griffin 1973c). The personal ambivalence of Lapun on secession even at this stage can be seen in his unsuccessful sponsorship of a motion in the House of Assembly to have Niugini adopted as the national name. He was profoundly influenced by his friendships within Pangu Pati and the respect with which he was regarded by other Papua New Guineans. His attitude to the mining operation was similar: it could continue but only on satisfactory terms, namely a general renegotiation of the copper agreement and more gains for Bougainvilleans.

The September 1968 meeting also mooted the formation of a Bougainville Landowners' Association, as it was becoming increasingly clear that substantial areas were needed for a townsite and port facilities for the mine. Although other sites were initially preferred by the mining company,

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1 HAD II(2):259, 30 August 1968.

2 Although ultimately the area manager for CRA, Colin Bishop, was reported as stating that Arawa plantation was 'the only suitable place for a copper project townsite' (Post-Courier 7 April 1969), this was not so. The best journalistic account of the issues is McCarthy (1970:190-221). It tallies substantially with this writer's independent research of 1969.
the Australian Administration thought to forestall the serious opposition it would encounter if it alienated indigenous-occupied land by resuming instead the rich one thousand acre expatriate-owned McKillop plantation at Arawa together with smaller portions of land belonging to the villages of Arawa and Rorovana. Far from appeasing the villagers, the administration found that they did not concede its right to McKillop's land any more than their own. The Arawa people saw McKillop as owning only 'the skin of the land' (trees, buildings, etc.), not the ancestral substance (Griffin 1970). In the face of a flagrantly propagandist campaign by the Administration, through patrols and radio, and attempts at intimidation, a meeting of 1200 people from twenty-five villages, chaired by Lapun, took place in Kieta on 27 April 1969. It voted almost unanimously against the resumption of Arawa land and demanded that CRA leave Bougainville if a favourable government reply were not received in two weeks.\(^1\) It asked that a fully representative conference be convened to discuss land problems and alternative sites for the new town, at least one of which had been preferred by CRA. The conference was to include Paul Lapun, representatives of the landowners and the Kieta Council, traditional leaders, and a representative of the company and of the Administration (Middlemiss 1970:100). The Administration not only did not agree to the proposal but stepped up its radio campaign (McKay 1976; Jackson n.d.) which was in the hands of the (then) district commissioner, an ex naval petty officer who had almost certainly been chosen for the position because of his authoritarian style. News was distorted and an unsuccessful attempt was made by an assistant administrator to bully Lapun into a humiliating public apology for critical statements he had made.\(^2\) Some further meetings were held, culminating on 6 July in the founding of Nasioi Navitu, the name of which was changed in August to Napidakoe Navitu. At the first official meeting 1500 members signed up from twenty-five villages, only four of which were in the Kieta Council. Lapun was elected patron and president of the executive committee;

\(^1\) *South Pacific Post* 30 April 1969; *Australian* 3 May 1969.

\(^2\) *Post-Courier* 18 June 1969.
Barry Middlemiss, a twenty-nine year old Australian overseer on McKillop's plantation, became secretary, and Raphael Bele, a Rorovana leader, treasurer. The 'joining' fee was $2.40 per annum (later raised to $4 per annum). By the end of August seventy-two villages had joined (Middlemiss 1970); by November there were 116 villages and over 5000 members.  

By April 1970 Middlemiss (1970:101) was claiming over 6000 members in the Kieta district:

Thus in a very short space of time the Napidakoe Navitu had achieved the unity of Kieta people – something the Administration had been trying to do for some time. The Administration had failed to gain the confidence of the people. On the other hand, Napidakoe Navitu had united Catholics, Methodists, Seventh Day Adventists, cargo cultists, people within and outside the councils.

In the first stage the explicit aims of Navitu were:

1. To further the social, political and economic development of Bougainville. This has to be stressed. We looked to the development of Bougainville, not just the Nasioi or the Kieta area of South Bougainville, but Bougainville as a whole.

2. To promote political autonomy.

3. Better education for the people of Bougainville through church and Administration schools (ibid.).

While *The Australian* could report (12 August 1969) that 'Secesssion is now becoming a key factor' on Bougainville and both Middlemiss and Bele talked openly about secession,  

2 it was not explicitly mentioned when Navitu's constitution was adopted in October and released to the press.  

3 This was a gesture towards the small minority in the Kieta area (including Methodists and Seventh Day Adventists), who up till that time had expressed loyalty to the Australian conception of Papua New Guinea, as well as to those leaders, particularly in the Buka and Teop-Tinputz council areas of North Bougainville, who expressed opposition to secession (Griffin 1972).

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2 Bele, personal communication; *Post-Courier* 22 August 1969.

3 *Post-Courier* 2 October 1969.
Perhaps more important was the emphasis placed on traditional culture and customs as well as advancement in the modern sector. Navitu's objects were:

(a) To encourage and foster economic, social and political development on the island of Bougainville and to unite the Bougainville people as one economic, social and political community.

(b) To restore, maintain, foster and encourage among the people of Bougainville an understanding and appreciation of their traditional culture and customs.

(c) To maintain a respect and appreciation for marriage and family ties and to encourage respect for and obedience to traditional customary marriage laws and to safeguard the stability of family groups.

(d) To create and endow scholarships for school children to assist in their advancement and education and to provide financial assistance for university students seeking to study such courses as the association may from time to time decide upon.

(e) To nominate candidates for election to the House of Assembly of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea to the parliament for the time being under whatever name.

(f) To unite all racial groups and political and religious bodies on the island of Bougainville.

(g) To endeavour to encourage and seek early domestic internal self-government for the Territory of Papua and New Guinea while depending upon Australia for financial assistance and guidance and control for external affairs (Bougainville News 1(1)).

In contrast to the western-imposed system of 'democratic' elections used for the Kieta Council, Navitu assembly members were elected by consensus and from them the seventeen executive members were elected by secret ballot. Clan leaders were thus given traditional respect (Paia 1977:73-74) in contrast to the attitude to councillors, some of whom were chosen for rather cynical reasons. John Dove (1977:82) cited one man who was elected to the Kieta Council as a punishment. He also reported that in Koromira, south of Kieta, the election process was subverted and it was agreed that 'Election i no stap long custom bilong mipela. Mipela makim man mipela i laikim' ('Elections are not part of our tradition. We appoint the man
Police grapple with protesters at Rorovana, 1969 (see p. 125).

(Photo courtesy The Sydney Morning Herald)
we like). The enthusiasm with which Navitu was supported in 1969 reflected the lack of substantial expectations from the council. It is significant that its headquarters were in Kuka, a non council village.

In the immediate term there can be no doubt that Navitu stiffened the sinews of the Rorovana people in their spectacular confrontation (non violent resistance on their part) with a riot squad equipped with gas masks and canisters, visors, shields and batons, and led by a district commissioner carrying a holstered revolver. Funds were raised to send Lapun and Bele to Australia, where they gave witness to oppression and consulted parliamentary, church and citizen groups. The international publicity given to photographs of police grappling with bare-breasted women over survey pegs - 'Australia's Shame: This Is How the World Will See Us' was the headline in the tabloid Sydney Sun - ensured that the mining company would pressure the Australian government into allowing it a more immediate hand in the land negotiations. Although prepared originally to get land on the cheap, the company did not want the continued hostility of the local people and realized that delays in bringing on production would be more expensive than more generous compensation (Griffin 1970). Villagers agreed that land negotiations would take place only through Navitu, which hired its own Australian lawyers for the purpose. The amount of land sought from villagers was reduced, cash compensations were considerably augmented, share options were made available, rents payable increased, and lease renewal or reversion rights more generously defined. Lapun also went to Australia to support a

1 Post-Courier 15 August 1969.

2 The main items in the agreement between the Administration, CRA (or, more precisely by this time, Bougainville Copper Pty Ltd) and the Rorovana people were:

- A lease over 140 acres to be granted for 42 years. (This was a substantial reduction on amounts previously sought.)

- The mining company would pay $30,000 cash as compensation for displacement (although only three houses were involved) and for the loss of 120 acres of coconut producing land over a period of 10 years (the approximate time it would take to bring the land into production).

- The Rorovanas were to have an option of taking up 7000 shares at issue price in Bougainville Mining Ltd, when this company floated.

(Continued on page 126)
staunch Navitu villager (and councillor), Teori Tau, who in 1968 had been convicted of pushing a CRA surveyor into a river and who in 1969 was to challenge unsuccessfully New Guinea's mining ordinances in the Australian High Court.¹

Navitu did not succeed in spreading significantly beyond the Nasioi, Torau and Eivo areas. Possibly Lapun, who worked through strength of personality rather than organizational technique, saw no immediate need for it even in his home area. There was little to disturb local inertia: in Banoni there was no likelihood of land alienation, no influx of whites and 'redskins', while indirect benefits (such as remittances from workers) came from the mine. Nor was cultic activity notable in the south. In the Siwai and Buin areas, where no perceptive observer would have failed to discern the secessionist feeling and the sentimental links with the western Solomon Islands, there was little understanding of how rapidly political devolution would occur even after the Whitlam forays into Papua New Guinea in 1969–1971.

In late 1972, eight months after Somare and a few weeks after Whitlam had come to power, Aloysius Noga, the fluent English-speaking president of the Buin Council, told this writer that while self-government might come within a few years, independence was fifteen years off. Bougainville had no need of secession movements at the moment as there was plenty of time

¹ $7000 annual rent was to be paid, the rate being reviewed every seven years on the basis of 5 per cent of the unimproved capital value or $7000 cash, whichever is the highest.

² New houses on the land being leased were to be built to European standard.

³ The company agreed that, if at the end of the 42 year period it wished to renew the lease, a further compensatory payment of $30,000 would be made. It also agreed that, at the end of the lease, the land would revert to the Rorovanas with all improvements, including buildings, roads, etc. at no cost (CRA Gazette 12 September 1969).

to define its destiny. He had been assured of this by members of
Mr Barnes' troupe from the Department of External Territories and by
kiaps. He seemed incredulous that it could be otherwise. Noga was forty-
four and had been one of the first three New Guineans to be ordained to
the Catholic priesthood. Favoured by the Administration for his pro-
Administration stance, he had represented Papua New Guinea at the United
Nations in 1970 and been a member of the Commission of Inquiry into
Alcoholic Drink in 1971. He believed that Bougainville should cooperate
with Australia and the rest of Papua New Guinea. In the north the very
name, Napidakoe Navitu, rooted the movement among the Nasioi. The Buka
islanders were used to leading rather than following. Both Buka and Teop-
Tinputz councils were dominated by Administration supporters and were
under white planter tutelage, the two unsuccessful white candidates for
the regional seat in 1968 being dominant in the two northern bodies
(Ogan 1971). Indigenous plantations were yielding reasonable profits
during the cocoa boom of the 1960s and they too often relied on 'redskin'
labour. This, they were told, would come to an end in the event of
secession. Sentiment for a 'reunion' with the Solomons was also more
attenuated and links with Rabaul more common (Griffin 1972). Only some
perceived positive threat, otherwise the rapid onset of independence
without provision of provincial autonomy would have caused a linking up
with the organization which had arisen out of the Kieta area's problems.

There was also the problem of the personality of Navitu's secretary.
When the land crisis occurred, Barry Middlemiss (born 1938) was simply an
abrasive young overseer on McKillop's plantation. His interest in
McKillop's problem rapidly developed into an opportunity to become a
spokesman and negotiator for the Rorovana and Arawa people and a trusty
ally of Paul Lapun. Attempts made by the Papua New Guinea administrator,
the district commissioner, and other functionaries to blame the villagers' resistance to land acquisition on 'white stirrers,' only enhanced
Middlemiss's standing, as had his preparedness to stand with the villagers
in the face of the riot squad. He then doggedly helped to bring the land
negotiations to a successful conclusion, building up a reserve of goodwill

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1 For example see Age 2 August 1969.
which survived a number of callow and ineffectual actions and an attitude towards local people which was often as domineering as that of the kiap whom he denounced. He took imaginative initiatives which, however, lacked systematic and informed execution. As Radio Bougainville was used to try to undermine Navitu and radio time was refused to him to explain Navitu policy (McKay 1976:63-67; Jackson n.d.), he founded in 1970 a monthly newspaper, Bougainville News (average copy size, twenty-four pages); this disappeared in 1972 after some eighteen issues. Indifferently educated and with a very shallow grasp of public affairs, Middlemiss lacked the ability to turn out substantive copy, even resorting to plagiarism on occasion. Issues were padded out with photographs. He wrote fleering criticisms of the Administration, the district commissioner and Radio Bougainville, he personally pushed the secessionist argument rather than merely urging a referendum, and he did not baulk at anti 'redskin' remarks. He was careful, while a Methodist himself, to give space to the Catholic mission's activities and, while baiting the mining company over the need for renegotiation of the agreement and the need for a greater share of the profits for Bougainville, he nevertheless accepted mining as the price of material progress and took pride in the magnitude of the operation. 'CRA is the best thing that ever happened here', he told the Melbourne Age (23 August 1969). The company patronised Bougainville News with advertisements and its press releases were sometimes published verbatim.¹

He wanted early self-government but regarded Whitlam's design for independence by 1975 as a 'disaster'. He showed his essential conservatism with

¹ It is an interesting reflection on attitudes to the mining company that, partly under the influence of Middlemiss, the Kiet a council invested in it when one million 50 cent shares were offered to residents of Papua New Guinea at the $1.55 issue price. However, the same Navitu supporters who were represented in the council did not use their compensation to take up what was explained to them as being lucrative pickings. They felt that it was another white man's trick to make them accept the loss of their land. And further, they considered that the act of buying shares would indicate to the copper company that it had reciprocal rights to their lands (Review 29 January 1972).
a souvenir issue for the Duke of Edinburgh's visit in March 1971. Such attitudes were tolerated, even approved, by many inarticulate indigenes. Where, however, Middlemiss overstepped Melanesian decorum was in his public abuse, both verbally and in print, of such figures as Joseph Lue (MHA, Bougainville Regional), Donatus Mola (MHA, North Bougainville Open), Aloysius Noga, Jock Lee (Buka planter) and other notables. This reached a pitch when he was elected to the Kieta Council in 1970, aggressively dominated its proceedings, rapidly became its vice president and had himself elected as the Kieta Council representative to the Bougainville Combined Councils' Conference together with Teori Tau. Any chance that Navitu would reach beyond the Kieta District was destroyed by behaviour which Middlemiss was later to regret.¹

When the Administration ignored Navitu's call for a referendum on Bougainville's future status, Middlemiss printed his own ballot paper. Following the lead given at the meeting in Port Moresby in September 1968, he asked people to state, first, whether they wished to remain with Papua New Guinea or not and, secondly, whether they wished to remain alone, join with the rest of the Solomon Islands or join with the New Guinea islands. This last option had been put forward by the abortive Rabaul-based Melanesian Independence Front in October 1968 (Griffin et al. 1979:154). In March 1970 Middlemiss claimed that more than 16,000 voting papers had been distributed and that about 11,000 of these had been returned showing 'overwhelming support for the complete break with Papua New Guinea'.² In fact, the circulation of the ballot papers was chaotic. Many Navitu supporters were alleged to have filled in multiple forms when voting papers were left indiscriminately at trade stores. In Buin Aloysius Noga indignantly burnt thousands of them and asked for the removal of Middlemiss from Bougainville.³ This demand was taken up in the House

¹ Middlemiss, personal communication, 1974.
² Post-Courier 11 March 1970.
of Assembly by Lue and Mola (both now assistant ministerial members),
where they deplored 'the way in which Mr Middlemiss has tried to make
himself the spokesman for the people of Bougainville and taken over the
role of the elected representatives of the district'. They called 'on
the Government to investigate the status of Mr Middlemiss in the Territory
with a view to deporting him to his country of origin'.\(^{1}\) Where the
Post-Courier's editorial (15 May 1970) had applauded Noga for denouncing
Middlemiss, it drew the line at the 'martyrdom of a man... (the House)
wishes to forget'.\(^{2}\) The motion was adjourned and lapsed in 1971. Aside
from the democratic principle involved, Administration officials had come
to tolerate Middlemiss. Where a CRA lawyer could still believe in January
1970 that Middlemiss had been an object of gun running during the Rorovana
crisis\(^{3}\) and others had seen him as a crypto-communist (Griffin 1972:272),
district officials realized that Middlemiss was not a security threat,
that he could be a useful if irritating mediator with recalcitrant Navitu
villagers, and that, as long as he was identified with secessionism, it
could be discredited in the eyes of influential Bougainvilleans in other
parts of the Province. They also preferred to believe that secessionism
was caused by avidity and that settlement of the land question had
effectually dampened it.

In 1971 Lapun made a final attempt to involve the House of Assembly
in secession. Claiming to be 'tired of this talk about secession' he
moved that the Administrator appoint a committee to tour the Bougainville
Province to determine whether or not to have a referendum. If the
majority did not want it, that would put a stop to the issue, he said.
The committee was to consist of three MHAs chosen by the House of Assembly,
the three Bougainville MHAs (Lapun, Mola, Lue) as observers, three public
servants chosen by the House from a list submitted by the Administrator,
and three Bougainville people, two to be chosen at the forthcoming combined
Bougainville local government councils conference and one from non council

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\(^{1}\) Post-Courier 8 June 1970.

\(^{2}\) Post-Courier 12 June 1970.

\(^{3}\) P. Opas, personal communication, 1970.
areas. The issue was to be regarded as a matter of urgency and the committee was to report back before the end of 1971. The motion was defeated by fifty-seven votes to fourteen with the United Party and People's Progress Party firmly against and a few of Lapun's Pangu friends (including Pita Lus and Tony Voutas) tolerantly in favour. The Mataungan leader, Oscar Tammur, and the Manus leader Paliau Maloat, were also in favour while the chairman of the Constitutional Select Committee, Paulus Arek, voted yes with the intention that the whole emerging nation, not just Bougainville, would be the electorate in the event of a referendum. Lue and Mola did not vote; nor did Michael Somare. However half-hearted Lapun may have appeared in the House - Tore Lokoloko accused him of being led on this issue by Middlemiss - he could tell Navitu supporters he had done his best. ¹ By the end of 1971 it was clear that Lapun wanted a form of 'statehood' for Bougainville, not secession.²

Navitu Enterprises had been set up as the economic arm of Napidakoe Navitu with Middlemiss as manager-secretary. Some eight vehicles, including air conditioned buses, were purchased from funds raised, including money handed over by Lapun from collections prior to 1969. Although given privileged access to routes and licences by the administration, which from 1970 did not want to see this indigenous business fail (with further local disgruntlement), and although a senior mining official could credibly claim (personal communication) that the company had bought the buses twice over - Navitu was gratuitously given the Panguna mail run³ - the business collapsed, principally through poor management. Navitu Enterprises also took over a garage in Arawa and tried to trade in local artifacts. Middlemiss himself lacked experience but he was prepared to state publicly to the Bougainville tertiary students' political seminar in December 1972 that the root of Navitu's problem was the wantok system (free taxi rides, etc.):

² Lapun, personal communication, 1971.
It is a sad truth that people here have not had sufficient discipline or education to withstand "The System”. We have seen the rise and fall of perhaps the biggest co-op in the Territory on Bougainville, Busiba. In my opinion the failure of Busiba was a human failure. The largest contributing factor to the failure... is the obligations that are endemic in traditional native society... In my opinion the only way "work bisinis" on Bougainville will flourish is for people in charge to humble themselves and accept advice from experienced businessmen (Middlemiss 1972).

Some listeners smiled at this audacity; a new, less hostile district commissioner felt that Navitu Enterprises should have made considerable profits. 1 Its first balance sheet at the end of 1971 showed a loss of $1800; by 1974 it had slumped into liquidation and there was general unease at the lack of accountability for money raised and invested. Middlemiss by this time had withdrawn from politics to run his own news-agency in Arawa.

It seems clear that in early 1971, in line with its objective of nominating candidates for the 1972 parliamentary elections, the Navitu executive canvassed a slate for all four electorates in the Province. A problem had arisen with the carving out of the Central Bougainville Open from the former North and South Bougainville Open electorates. Paul Lapun (South) was now living in a different electorate from the Nasioi (Central), most of whom had refused to vote in the 1968 regional election or had voted invalidly for Lapun (Ogan 1971). Moreover, Joseph Lue had, in Bougainville eyes, identified himself with the Administration by taking an assistant ministerial post, supporting CRA in 1969 and opposing separatist aspirations. The selection of candidates and their endorsement by Lapun were to be crucial. Middlemiss was eager to stand but he continued to rile many people by his domineering manner and he was, after all, a white man. Although he received endorsement from Kieta Council in July 1971, Bougainville university students announced his intended candidature as self-serving and opportunistic. 2 Lapun maintained a

1 W. Brown, personal communication, December 1972.

2 See, for example, Post-Courier 28 September, 13 October, 13 December 1971.
discreet loyalty to an old 'comrade-in-arms' but it was clear to this writer that he sought a better option. At meetings of the Navitu executive in December 1971 Bele was nominated in spite of his lack of education (Anis et al. 1976). As a Pangu member, Lapun (personal communication, December 1971) accepted that self-government might be imminent, particularly after the Australian elections scheduled for December 1972, and without specifically endorsing any candidate, emphasized those qualities which were most desirable (Anis et al. 1976). Navitu committee men carried the news to their villagers.

Having settled his own views on secession in favour of an undefined 'federal' solution, Lapun sought a candidate for the regional seat who would match his own realism. He passed over Leo Hannett because Hannett had become too closely identified with the University's Black Power Movement, had been too scathingly critical of the church, and appeared out of touch with Provincial attitudes. For obverse reasons, Lue was unsuitable as having become 'pikinini bilong kiap' ('a child of the Administration'). Lapun's nomination fell on John Momis, a young outspoken Catholic priest who was known throughout the Province, had fiercely anti-establishment views, advocated indigenous rights, self-reliance and self-determination, was vehemently opposed to the mining company (see Momis and Ogan 1972) but, like Lapun, would seek solutions to Bougainville's problems by means other than secession. Momis was also deeply respected for his personal integrity and sense of vocation. In order to assist Lapun to explain to the expatriate bishop why Bougainvilleans wanted Momis released from his sacred duties to participate in politics, Navitu paid this writer's fare from Port Moresby to Buka in December 1971. The bishop at first demurred on the grounds of the needs of his diocese but finally left the decision to his indigenous priests.

The elections showed Navitu's strength in the Kieta area. In the regional electorate Momis gained 90 per cent of the Nasioi vote, more even than he gained in his home base in the south or in the north. In the Guava census area, where villagers in 1968 had given Lapun more than 99 per cent of the vote and had made almost the same percentage of informal/
invalid votes in the regional election, Momis in 1972 gained 97 per cent. In the Central Open electorate Bele gained 55 per cent of Nasioi first preferences and Middlemiss slightly more than 13 per cent (though 31 per cent in Guava). As one was a Torau speaker and the other white and as the two most successful of the other three candidates, who were all Nasioi, at times claimed sympathy with Navitu, Lapun and Navitu clearly rolled out the vote. Middlemiss did particularly well in the more remote areas of Eivo, Rotokas, and Aita and together he and Bele pulled 4657 out of 6894 formal votes. After preferences were allocated Bele defeated Middlemiss 3641 to 1917 (Anis et al. 1976).

With the unexpected formation of a coalition government by Michael Somare in 1972, Lapun became minister for Mines and Energy, Momis deputy speaker and later deputy chairman (actually de facto chairman) of the Constitutional Planning Committee, and Donatus Mola, minister for Business Development. Bele, whose secessionist ardour had been temporarily dampened by a Moral Rearmament-sponsored visit to Northern Ireland (for a cautionary lesson on civil war), to Switzerland (for a cautionary solution to separatism) and to Rome (for overawing moral uplift), sat quietly supporting his leaders. Bougainville now appeared to be firmly entrenched within the polity. Lapun was confident that, with Momis's support, he could bring about a renegotiation of the copper agreement, more royalties for Bougainville and a satisfactory degree of Provincial autonomy.¹ Superficially, it also appeared that Lapun was able to control less accommodating persons at the village level. An anti National Day demonstration was planned by Navitu supporters for 11 September 1972. The national flag was to be pulled down from the Kieta Council chamber. After Lapun condemned the proposed gesture, the Navitu executive committee met and called the demonstration off. At Arawa on National Day to an assemblage of 3000 people Lapun said,

We in Bougainville are separated from the rest of Papua New Guinea by a big sea, but we are part of this one nation. A nation is not one skin colour. It is the people of one country, under one government. Unity will not be easy, but we must try.

¹ Lapun, personal communication, April 1972.
'Could the worm have turned?' asked a normally perceptive Pacific Islands Monthly correspondent, who also thought that, 'despite teething troubles', Navitu Enterprises had 'a rosy future before it'.¹ Mining company officials who thought highly of their own interethnic integration policies, Administration officials, and Pacific Island Regiment leaders who had been on civic patrols in Bougainville all thought secessionism was over.²

At best the Navitu's advocacy of secession could be said to be lukewarm rhetoric. At worst, it could be said to be a political ploy to keep the attention of Papua New Guinea firmly directed on Bougainville.³

Cultic activity, however, continued. In September 1972 the Kietá Council condemned villagers who were digging up bones in cemeteries, dancing naked and behaving promiscuously. As they claimed they were acting under instructions from Lapun, the latter with Bele was accused by members of the council of encouraging them. Though Lapun denied the charge, it is interesting that some councillors would find it credible. What the incident suggests is that Lapun was more a manipulator than a moulder of the underground political will and that attention would be focussed on him only as long as he met his supporters' aspirations. These did not include integration with 'redskins', as future events made clear.

Meanwhile, at another level an initiative was being taken by the student-led Mungkas Society to keep the secession option alive. In December 1972 a Political Awareness seminar was organized at which both Hahalis and Navitu representatives (including Lapun) were present and at which Momis was obliged to affirm that Bougainvilleans had 'an absolute right to self-determination' (Griffin 1973c). Within a fortnight the killing of two Bougainvillean civil servants after a motor accident at Goroka (for which one of them was culpable) roused the whole Province against other Papua New Guineans, particularly highlanders. As the Pacific Islands Monthly correspondent then said: 'The old split between

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¹ Pacific Islands Monthly, November 1972, p. 51.
² Personal communications, November-December 1972.
the southern secessionists and the northern anti-secessionists disappeared overnight' (Pacific Islands Monthly February 1973:3). Navitu now tried to get a proposed visit by Somare to the Province cancelled. Once again Lapun intervened in favour of the visit and Navitu acceded. However, the first serious criticisms of Lapun, as having compromised his cause, were voiced by students who dubbed him a 'traitor' and a 'puppet' of Somare. The return of Leo Hanne tt to Bougainville eventually to assume leadership of an autonomist campaign which in 1975 became openly secessionist, has been sketched elsewhere (Griffin et al. 1979). Lapun gradually lost his ascendancy. Almost coincidentally, in June 1974 he accepted the first Papua New Guinea knighthood, making him an establishment figure. The limitations of his education also became more evident as younger leaders emerged. The initiative in successfully gaining in 1974 the renegotiation of the Bougainville Copper Agreement for Papua New Guinea and the full one and a quarter per cent royalties for the North Solomons Provincial Government passed to others. Navitu became dissociated from its 'charismatic' patron, casting doubt on the efficacy of that epithet in a culture which so readily discards leaders.

Navitu had its own momentum. In December 1973 one Kieta councillor tendered his resignation because, he said, when he rang the bell for a village meeting no one took any notice of him; however, everyone turned up for the Navitu committee man - therefore let a Navitu man become councillor! The council heard him sympathetically but urged him to stay. Peter Teena, once vehemently anti council and president of Navitu from 1971 to 1974, who had, within a year of joining the council, become vice president, declared that the council and Navitu were really 'wankain tupela man' ('two of the same') (Council Minutes, 6 December 1973). By 1974 Navitu's president was Arawa-born, Raphael Niniku, who had been president of Kieta Council from 1966 to 1972 and, as such, was widely thought to be pro Administration. In fact he had been prominent in denouncing Australia before a United Nations Mission in 1962 and at the combined councils conference in September 1968 he had supported the move towards secession, taken in Port Moresby.¹ During his unsuccessful election

¹ South Pacific Post 23 October 1968.
campaign in 1972 he had said that he was a Navitu sympathizer (Anis et al. 1976:460). One could almost say that Navitu ultimately assimilated the Kieta Council and paved the way for its ultimate dissolution. All government councils began to lapse in Bougainville with the advent of interim provincial government in 1974; village governments began to take their place and these were formally recognized by the Papua New Guinea government in 1976 (Connell 1977).

Navitu was in its turn assimilated by the Bougainville Special Political Committee (BSPC) set up by Leo Hannett in 1973 to negotiate the future status of the Province within Papua New Guinea and the subsequent autonomist movement which unilaterally declared independence in 1975 (Griffin et al. 1979:209-217). Hannett reconciled all council and non council areas so that the Hahalis, Navitu, Pikei (Baitisi), Toiapingoal (Nissan) societies and the outer atolls (Kilinailu, Nuguria, Tauu, Nukumanu) were merged with the former combined councils conference group in one ethnonational entity.

After being in the van of the secession flare-up following the killings of Rovin and Moini, it would seem from passages in the BSPC proceedings that Raphael Bele attempted to assert a leadership role for Navitu (Mamak and Bedford 1974). This, granted the virtual defection of Lapun and the lack of sophisticated leadership, was impossible. Particularly with its economic arm defunct yet with access to prosperity (the mine began production in 1972 and crop prices were generally high), Navitu's aspirations were taken over by the new Provincial leadership. In 1975 it was described by a former local government officer as 'dormant but able to rise like a phoenix in the event of a crisis'. This proved to be true. The Navitu network was enlivened during the secession crisis of 1975-1976, it urged Bele's resignation from the National Parliament in 1975 and, following reconciliation and the granting of provincial government, ensured his reelection in both 1977 and 1982, in spite of his ineffectuality in Port Moresby. Its younger leaders unsuccessfully supported Hannett rather than Momis in the regional electorate in 1977, and in 1980 preferred Hannett to the inaugural Premier, Alexis Sarei (1976-80). Hannett had been more uncompromising than either rival during the secession crisis, was more conciliatory towards cultists and seemed

1 D.J. Duggan, personal communication, 1975.
more committed to exclusively North Solomonese goals. Before the 1982 elections Navitu staged a protest march in Kieta for the repatriation of mainland 'squatters' and helped Bele to an increased majority, particularly as several highlanders had the gall to contest Central Bougainville. Melanesian Alliance was clearly the ethnic party.

The objectives of Napidakoe Navitu can be said to have been achieved in 1974–1976, although it would not be true to say that the association itself achieved them all. The land disputes of 1969 and other compensatory issues were adequately settled; a moral victory was scored over the colonial Administration; the mining agreement was drastically renegotiated to the chagrin of the intrusive transnational company (another moral victory); the full one and a quarter per cent royalties were paid to the provincial government; the North Solomons was united under a provincial government with real powers; local government councils were abolished and traditional authority sanctioned through village government; attempts were being made to foster traditional culture in schools and through provincial agencies; education came under substantial provincial control and North Solomonese maintained a high level of access to positions throughout Papua New Guinea in tertiary institutions, public service, church and business, and privileged access in the North Solomons itself; the elections of 1977 and 1982 saw Mola and Lapun eliminated and all four MPs committed to the one party, the radical Melanesian Alliance, led by John Momis. Whatever limitations were initially imposed on Navitu by intraprovincial rivalries and by the lack of suave and conciliatory leadership, it was not an introvertedly parochial association but one which correctly divined where, in the short term at least, the 'terminal loyalty' of the geographically insulated Province as a whole would lie. And it took purposive steps to this end within its own district, which did not assert merely sectional interests or preclude blending its aspirations with those of other North Solomonese. This enabled most Navitu supporters eventually to accept a pragmatic approach to association with Papua New Guinea which appeared more ideologically suited to the northern areas of the Province and provided the soundest basis for any eventual integration. For this reason the term micronationalist has never seemed to this writer appropriate to Navitu. Ethnonational, for all its problems, seems better.

1 Some cultists in the Koromira-Kongara hinterland still urge secession, refuse to join provincial government and even have a private government which levies tax.
Chapter 5

NATIONALISM AND MICRONATIONALISM: THE TOLAI CASE

Ian Grosart

The Mataungan Association emerged in the Gazelle Peninsula of East New Britain in 1969. Its membership was essentially confined to Tolai speakers, who in 1969 probably numbered less than 65,000, about 2.4 per cent of the total population of Papua New Guinea. However, although Mataunganism as an ideology quickly attained intellectual hegemony over most Tolai, the Mataungan Association as an organization could usually count on opposition from at least one third of the Tolai population. In fact on the two occasions when an independent count was conducted - the 1972 elections and the special Tolai political census eighteen months later - the number of adherents was in round figures 15,000, some 55 per cent of the adult population. Finally, although Tolai are and for a long time have been widely dispersed beyond their homeland, Mataunganism as an activity (excluding student events) was confined to the Gazelle Peninsula, a well-roaded, fertile terrain within some fifty kilometres of Rabaul.

Official reaction to the Mataungan Association was to confront the long-neglected Tolai with a sudden abundance of carrots and sticks: on the one hand, a Supreme Court judge sitting continuously in Rabaul for three months to clear up outstanding land cases and the sudden availability of land for repurchase and resettlement; on the other, the flying in of more than a thousand police, including the riot squad (the commitment, in other words, of more than a third of the total police strength in Papua New Guinea), the establishment of police camps, the appearance of helicopters, even naval patrol boats in Tolai space, and the hastily enacted Public Order Ordinance of 1970.
Figure 5.1  The Gazelle Peninsula
In the following pages we will attempt to answer two major questions: first, why was the Mataungan Association able to unite the number it did; secondly, did the Australian Administration misjudge the significance of the Mataungan Association? Both of these are obviously relevant to the wider issue of whether the Mataungan Association was an ethnic, micro-nationalist movement or a nationalist movement, tout court, or neither.

In a brief chronological overview, it can be taken for granted that the Mataungan Association had antecedents and was a response to problems which will be touched on later; for the moment it should be noted that on 16 May 1969 there was an impressively well attended and orderly march of Tolai through the streets of Rabaul in protest against the conversion of the Gazelle Peninsula Local Government Council into a multi-racial council, that is one which would have jurisdiction for the first time over non Tolai, but in which non Tolai would be eligible to hold office. For the next six months the dissidents, who began in mid year to style themselves Mataungans, still appeared to be concerned exclusively with the council, although the correspondent of The Australian had begun, by 17 November, to talk of 'New Guinean Nationalism' and The Advertiser noted on 16 December that, while not one yet, the Mataungan Association was in 'the process of becoming an independence movement'.

Was this premature? Such new initiatives as the closure of the council offices by publicly 'stealing' the keys, the abortive takeover of the Rabaul market, and a more aggressive decrying of the Tolai Cocoa Project were all directly aimed at the council and its activities. The clue lay in the Mataungan Association's insistence that it was not against multi-racial councils in principle, only this one, at this time. As Damien Kereku, president of the Association, put it in October, such a change should not have occurred until self-government; Tolai would then have made the necessary decisions in fact as well as in form (TPNG 1969). The dispute, in other words, was over the exercise of power (Nelson 1972). To take another example, in those days, as Oscar Tammur, patron of the Association, would point out in the House of Assembly,\(^1\) no

\(^1\) HAD II(8): 2207, 9 January 1970.
systematic provisions existed to ensure that members actually understood the legislation for which they were legally responsible, even though it was couched in legal language and few members were fluent in colloquial Australian.

Here, then, we have the essential dynamic of Mataunganism's popular appeal and indeed the significance of its name, since mataungan means 'be alert, watchful, prepared...'. It does not take a very close reading of the parliamentary debates for November 1969 to see that several members, particularly the pro multi-racial council members from neighbouring West New Britain, John Maneke and Koriam Urekit, had clearly grasped both the essence of Mataunganism and the extent of its support which Maneke, against the weight of official pronouncements, put at 50 per cent of the Tolai population. Nor did it seem to them that Mataunganism was an unreasonable attitude for Tolais. It was necessary for Mataungans to be alert, because they believed that no one else, not even the Administration, was looking after their interests. To be a Mataungan was, as Oscar Tammur had said in another context in 1967, to stand on one's own two legs in front of Europeans and to decide for oneself whether to say 'Yes' and then, whether to add 'Sir'.

The second thing to which the Mataungans said 'No' was the new and somewhat frenzied official attempt to respond to the land pressure prevailing on the Gazelle. Hence the confrontation at Vunapaladig in mid 1970. Nevertheless, it was not till eighteen months had elapsed that the Mataungan Association moved, in late 1970 and early 1971, into a new phase by establishing its 'own' council - the Warkurai Nigunan - together with its own New Guinea Development Corporation. This change occurred at the very time (which prompted which?) that the Administration finally abandoned the multi-racial council and was concerned to launch the New Guinea Islands Produce Company as successor to the Tolai Cocoa Project. In this way, 1971 saw a series of increasingly violent clashes. These centred on former Tolai Cocoa Project cocoa fermentaries, included the so-called 'Battle of Matupit', which originated in the non payment of official council tax and temporarily closed Rabaul airport, and ended with the murder of the district commissioner in August.
Riot police advance on Mataungan demonstrators at Ngatur cocoa fermentary, 1971

(Photo courtesy The Sydney Morning Herald)
There was then an uneasy entr'acte until the elections early in 1972 when three out of four Mataungan Association candidates won comfortably, but with closer to half than two thirds of the total Tolai vote. The size of this non Mataungan vote is important, but so is the fact that none of the non Mataungan candidates polled well. As a result of these elections and the new Mataungan Association members becoming part of the governing coalition, the relationship between Mataungans and non Mataungans vis-à-vis the authorities was reversed. Nevertheless, although violent confrontation ceased, relations remained uneasy while the central authorities sought to succeed where the colonial masters had failed. The Mataungans were polite and seemingly co-operative, but no progress was made until 1976 with the reluctant introduction of provincial government. Since then overt Mataungan activity has sought to secure control of the new provincial institutions.

At the national level, however, united Mataungan Association support for the Somare government finally ruptured during the constitutional debates of 1975. The divergent tendencies which then became apparent had in fact existed within the Mataungan Association since at least the second half of 1969; it was their coalition which had made the Mataungan Association the effective organization it became. How far differences of ideological commitment, as opposed to personal rivalries and tactical differences within the leadership, were responsible for this split at the national level remains to be seen.

Putting a thousand people onto the street in a disciplined demonstration is no easy task and some Mataungan marches were in the order of ten thousand. The marchers were Tolai who according to all recent commentators are the best educated, wealthiest and most advanced of the peoples of Papua New Guinea - not, at first sight, rent-a-crowd material. This was the flaw in official claims that the marches were all the work of 'stirrers', and more specifically that Oscar Tammur was seeking to ensure his re-election in 1972. So, why were the Tolai 'available' for Mataungan activity? Much of the essential ground has previously been canvassed from various perspectives (see, for example,

The oldest grievances concerned land and power. Very early on the Tolai learned, as a result of punitive expeditions in the late nineteenth century (led amongst others by the famous botanist Parkinson and the even more famous missionary George Brown), that it was no longer for them to decide who should live amongst them nor on what terms; nor was it for them to exploit as they saw fit the new opportunities opened up, for example by the possession of firearms. Under Australian rule they were even sporadically discouraged from wearing the European clothes to which they had been introduced by the Germans and their predecessors. There is no evidence that the Tolai were in a constant state of unrest, continually trying to rid themselves of an irksome yoke; nonetheless it is clear that a number of efforts were made. Amongst the post World War II attempts the better known include those of Enos Teve, Manoa, and the Raluana Collective or kivung. There were also sundry cargo cults which persisted into the 1960s and a remarkable enthusiasm for co-operative and savings and loan societies. Nor should developments within the missions be ignored. For various reasons all of these activities were on too small a scale for their political dimensions to pose a serious threat to the colonial authorities. Nevertheless they provided experience in organization, experience in the search for an explanation of why Tolai lacked the power of the Europeans and also an accumulation of symbols for subsequent use. One Mataungan Association banner in 1972 reminded Tolai of the Navuneram Incident of 1958 in which two of Manoa's young men had been killed by police rifle fire, and Enos Teve became the first vice president of the Mataungan Association.

By 1914 some 40 per cent of the Tolai land area had been alienated for plantations and other European purposes. The effects of this were aggravated after the second world war by three new developments: a Tolai
population explosion; the only slightly less explosive demand for land for the new tree crop, cocoa; and the malfunctioning of the school system, which by 1970 was producing two and a half primary school leavers for every available high school place. The fact that the last was a better ratio than existed elsewhere in the country was no consolation to the two thirds 'pushed out', or for their parents. Whether official practice during the 1960s of recognizing the Tolai land 'problem' by holding a series of special hearings and inquiries which had little impact actually exacerbated the situation or not is hard to say, but it certainly did not exorcise it. The drop-out, or push-out, problem was a consequence of the development push unleashed on Papua New Guinea by Canberra and Port Moresby in the 1960s and from which the Tolai on East New Britain received new disadvantages and few advantages. These issues however were inextricably interwoven with the arena problem, for both formal and informal channels of communication between the Administration and the Tolai were thoroughly clogged by the late 1960s. Since these grievances were ancient, it now seems reasonable to see the emergence of the Mataungan Association as much more a consequence of these clogged channels and the development push, although at the same time most observers gave primacy to the land issue. Perhaps this reflected official wishful thinking, for the Administration believed that should it be necessary, it could do something about the land problem.

The drive to establish a Papua New Guinea economy was unsettling for many, since its very purpose was to prise people out of old ways and into new. But while 'unintended consequences' can be accepted by the historian in much the same way as acts of God, can the same treatment be accorded to 'ill-considered consequences'? In Papua New Guinea there was a large number of 'ill-considered consequences', associated with the pursuit of development.

In these respects 'the Kremlin' - as the recently completed administrative headquarters of the East New Britain Province were popularly known - symbolizes the development of the 1960s. In terms of efficiency, civilized working conditions and the like, this two-storey,
air-conditioned building was a totally different proposition from the open-sided, tin-roofed, wartime-temporary single storey building which had been the District Office, Rabaul. However, in the old building, or rather from the outside of the old building, lurking Tolai or even more dignified figures who just chanced to be admiring the view, could catch the eye of a familiar figure and so be guided to the person with whom the bureaucratic rules actually required them to do business. The new building, with its air locks at both ends and narrow hostile corridors of frosted glass, effectively cocooned public servants from such uninvited and irregular contacts with their public. Interestingly, the erection of this building coincided with the localization of middle to senior positions in the provincial hierarchy; Salisbury's work on the preferred language in offices (Salisbury 1976:376) is thus also relevant to the issue of opportunities for and channels of informal communication.

Another instance of ill-considered consequences for relations between rulers and ruled concerns the growing occupational differentiation within both the Administration and Tolai society. Such differentiation was in itself an intended consequence of development, but although it was rehearsed with pride on numerous public occasions no one seems to have carefully considered the implications. It was a long time since the Moresby stereotype of life in the villages had had any validity on the Gazelle. Part of the problem, which exploded at Raluana in 1953 on the occasion of the first major dispute over local government, was due to the fact that a lone kiap, representing in himself all the agencies of government, had not been dealing with discrete village groups within which a singular and customary value system prevailed. Instead there were kiaps locked in bureaucratic combat with police and native authority (local government) officers, with agricultural and cooperative officers already in the wings, while many Tolai villages had their own direct line to Rabaul officialdom through commuting police NCOs and with other villages through Tolai clergy and government teachers (Fenbury 1978). By the late 1960s fragmentation of the pastoral stereotype had reached an advanced stage on both sides. On paper this was not a problem, for the lone kiap conducting his village meetings had been replaced by local
government councils and parliamentary representatives. In fact, however, by the mid 1960s everyone on the Gazelle knew that councils were dead and Tolai experience with the House of Assembly had not been encouraging. The famous 'land bill' of Matthias Toliman, who was first elected in 1964, had got nowhere and when the newly elected Oscar Tammur claimed to 'speak for his people' he was often subjected to systematic rubbishing.

What then of the famed Gazelle Council, with its speaker's chair from the New South Wales Legislative Assembly? In what way was it dead? Summarizing points made elsewhere, it can be said that the Gazelle Council, an amalgamation of five earlier native local government councils, was unable to provide a Tolai forum or arena of Tolai politics because it did not embrace all Tolai and it could not encompass many of the matters about which Tolai felt most deeply. The bulk of the people of Raluana and Navuneram, later known as the Warbete, had refused to join the council system from the start. Catholics had been forbidden or discouraged from participating for a decade and were then required to promote council aid to parochial schools. The young were increasingly alienated by the fact that the council conducted its business in Pidgin for the convenience of the official adviser, who spoke no Tolai, and of their elders who were reluctant to speak English in public. Although initially promoted as a form of liklik gavmen, the council system had become from the late 1950s largely an arm of the Administration, taking over many of the agency functions formerly performed by the kiaps. Despite the growing problems of social control, councillors were not finally granted the power to hold courts as they had been led to expect. By the 1960s councils could no longer appoint such key local functionaries as constables, cocoa inspectors or teachers. Above all, perhaps, the council system exercised no control over Rabaul which represented one of the few development success stories of the 1960s, but a success which was enjoyed almost exclusively by European and Chinese (resident and tourist) and created new problems for the surrounding Tolai.

Given all this, and the truly Australian low level turnout in the previous council election, how was it that a further alteration to the council system should have provided the catalytic issue which would play
midwife to the Mataungan Association? There was certainly an element of 'now they are stealing our council', aroused by the proposal to include all races and not just Tolai in the new council which would however still have no jurisdiction over Rabaul (Grosart 1970:285ff). But what really stimulated the better informed was the discovery of the very extensive powers which appeared to have been bestowed on the council under the 1963 ordinance now that Europeans and Chinese were to be admitted. Discovery of the fact, for example, that the multi-racial councils had 'powers' over the airport was more than enough for the Matupits. In short the Australian endeavour to prepare Papua New Guinea for independence without consultation with Papua New Guineans finally came to grief on the Gazelle. Through the Mataungan Association officials were forced to hear counter proposals, while other Papuans and New Guineans were encouraged to formulate them.

Thus the situation on the Gazelle was not merely one of unsettling changes compounding the 40 per cent land alienation, the Tolai population explosion and the lack of jobs for early school leavers or 'push-outs'. There was also a problem of lack of opportunity for Tolai to communicate verbally with the Administration by asking questions, raising objections or proposing alternatives. This was resented. Even Matthias Toliman, member of the Administrator's Executive Council, a pillar of church and state, was affronted by the manner in which changes to the House of Assembly were officially 'explained' in 1972 through a series of pamphlets. The official attitude was that the Tolai could read and therefore the circulation of pamphlets was the most efficient means of 'political education'. 'It is not our way', Toliman snapped.

It needs to be said (although with due caution) that it was fortunate for officials that they could not 'hear' any Tolai contribution, for they were in no position to offer reasoned replies or engage in any kind of intelligent discussion. Two policies above all were non negotiable; they were the cherubim upholding the ark of the covenant of development. And these two - the Australianization of Papua New Guinea and the equal development of all groups of Papua New Guineans - were precisely the two which
provoked most Tolai unease and discontent. It should not be imagined that the Tolai, who were becoming fragmented along new lines, economically, socially and even politically, reacted in a single homogenous way to each official policy. What is being argued is that sooner or later most Tolai living in East New Britain were sufficiently disenchanted by enough official policies and reactions for them to withdraw even tacit support from the Administration in general. When 1969 opened, Tolai had reached the stage of being highly sceptical about the Administration, its works and intentions. The interest of a wide range of Tolai notables in the Melanesian Independence Front (a proposed separatist movement embracing the New Guinea Islands) was a harbinger of the future; but as yet the majority of Tolai living in East New Britain were still 'available', lacking effective organizational identity, leaders, an alternative ideology to the official development strategy, and, above all, lacking a catalytic issue. By the later months of that year the multi-racial council issue had gone a long way to providing all of these for Tolai living in East New Britain.

Elaborating on that last phrase: when Tolai- or English-speakers refer to East New Britain they usually think of the Gazelle Peninsula, a small area north of the Kerevat and Warangoi rivers within a radius of approximately fifty kilometres from Rabaul; this area, the homeland of the Tolai, amounts to only a small fraction of the land area of the province of East New Britain but contains the bulk of the population and the developed resources. This was the milieu of the Mataungan Association and the Mataungan Association was a Tolai movement. However, as its leaders sometimes stressed, and as people in other Provinces occasionally recognized, there was an element in Mataunganism which was relevant to all Papua New Guineans. This is the central paradox of the Mataungan Association: an aggressively local, even ethnic movement flaunting the tubuan figure as its symbol but nevertheless recognized as having meaning for other Papua New Guineans who had no knowledge of the tubuan. Here lies an important part of the case for regarding the Mataungan Association as a nationalist movement, of a kind which takes seriously the notion of unity in diversity. However what was involved was something more than a
general principle and its local manifestation, for there were two foci within the Mataungan Association itself which reflected one of the important lines of cleavage which had developed within Tolai society by the last third of the twentieth century. Describing a similar division between the achieving society and the defensive community, Christopher Harvie (1977:17) has used the terms red and black in an attempt to avoid the irresistible impetus of prejudgment associated with such terms as cosmopolitan and provincial or parochial.

That the Tolai were the best educated, the wealthiest, and the most socially advanced of all the peoples of Papua New Guinea was, on the macro level, all totally true. Tolai students accounted for one third of all the students in the first year of the University of Papua New Guinea (Salisbury 1976), and so on. In the present context the important question is where these paragons were actually located. The answer is that the achievers (in the sense of being western educated and 'socially advanced') were largely achieving outside of East New Britain in the wider arenas created by the Australian Administration. The rest of the wealthy cash-croppers and businessmen were also achieving in Australian-created structures and arenas, but their horizons were more strictly confined to the Gazelle as were those of the large numbers of Tolai who were not well educated, nor wealthy, nor socially advanced. This cleavage between the red and the black Tolai is the most important for a European seeking to make sense of the Mataungan Association saga. But also of political significance are the persisting and apparently pre European rivalry between the people of Matupit and those of Kinigunan or Vunamami; the consequences of the administrative division of the Gazelle into two districts centred on Rabaul and Kokopo; and the extent to which the missionary division between Methodists and Catholics has produced separate subcultures among the Tolai. Finally, however odd it may seem to Europeans, there is an important division between the coast and the bush. It was the temporary bridging or conflation of these cleavages which underpinned many of the successes and failures of the Mataungan leadership.

Although Tolai had been since 1914 in almost continuous dispute with the Australian Administration over control of the Tolai homeland, they -
or rather the red Tolai - had been allies and accomplices in the extension of Australian control over the rest of Papua New Guinea, both extensively as police and teachers in the central highlands and intensively as a strong element in the technocracy which began to emerge in Port Moresby during the last years of Australian rule. It would be a gross oversimplification to think of the red Tolai as loyal to the Australian Administration and the black as disaffected, or even to assume that an individual Tolai must either be red or black in some total or permanent sense. Nevertheless it needs to be remembered that the black Tolai had had a long time to ponder their situation. For them the multi-racial community issue was not a bolt from the blue and it did not fall on virgin soil.

Apart from a temporary check to localization immediately after the second world war, the red Tolai had fewer grievances to ponder. Even the decision in 1964 to introduce separate salary scales for local and ex-patriate public servants was for the majority partly obliterated by the speed of subsequent localization and consequent promotion. By the late 1960s the leading position in Papua New Guinea of the red Tolai was based on the European notions of efficiency as the primary requirement of administration, and of bureaucracy as the means of achieving efficient administration. They were therefore particularly sensitive and resistant to suggestions that the Administration should be made more 'representative' in the sense of reflecting regional origins or that the Administration should in some other way be more politicized. Cabinet, and its predecessor the Administrator's Executive Council, have always been reflective of the regional divisions of Papua New Guinea, as has parliament. But while the Australians deserve credit for this, they were resistant to any such 'political' restructuring of the public service until a very late stage. Although the military authorities gave some degree of recognition to district origins in the mid 1960s it was not until the mid 1970s that regional pressures became irresistible, following the 1976 'leaking' of the hitherto restricted statistics on the Districts or Provinces of birth of the higher public servants. Thus at the time when the Mataungan Association first emerged, the red Tolai had every reason to feel as they sat in the classrooms of the University of Papua New Guinea or the
accelerated executive training courses of the Administrative College, that they were about to enter into their inheritance.

In contrast, the resentments and problems of the black Tolai, like those of the groups around Lae and Port Moresby, had been intensified and exacerbated by the very same developmental thrust which was promoting the emergence of Tolai technocrats. In the first place land disputes, mainly concerning land alienated before 1914, were still unresolved (TPNG 1969) despite a sequence of inquiries and seemingly promising initiatives on the part of the Administration. At the same time, avenues which had always existed but were unknown to the Tolai, appeared to be closing firmly and with malice as soon as they were discovered and attempts made to exploit them (notably in the Japlik and Varzin land cases, and the amendments to land claims legislated in 1968 (Grosart and McColl 1976)). Thus even before the Local Government (Declaration of Validity) Ordinance of 1970, which plugged a 'loophole' discovered by the Mataungans, Tolai had come to suspect that Europeans only insisted on the rule of law when the law was on their side, and that when it was not they changed it. Either way, the Tolai lost.

Secondly, on the 40 per cent of the Gazelle which had been alienated there were approximately 10,000 plantation labourers, mostly from the highlands (Salisbury 1976:369). Between these 'woks' as they were contemptuously called, and surrounding Tolai villagers there was a long history of conflict, but partly under the influence of the emerging political situation and partly due to the achievements of the Administration's developmental policies, both compounded by the opening of the Kokopo Tavern, 'racial incidents' were increasing in frequency and intensity as the 1960s drew to a close.

Thirdly, there was persistent Administration pressure on the Tolai to make more land available in the interests of 'development'. This might have had more success had a reasonable proportion of the fruits of past development ended up in Tolai hands. As it was, the fact that the much publicized biscuit factory at Ulapia employed 'woks' (Chowning et al. 1971)
and the explosive emergence of a European-staffed service sector in Rabaul during the 1960s (Salisbury 1976) seemed merely new variations on an old story. Thus official aspirations to extend and 'upgrade' Rabaul airport or even to shift it bodily to the Kokopo area remained aspirations, although the relevant files, which dated from the late 1930s (A.L. Epstein 1969), grew thicker; and the proposal to develop a largely residential 'satellite' town at Kurakakaul, which could only have been put to paper in the Moresby stratosphere, ultimately died through Tolai opposition (Jackson 1976).

An important element in the situation by the late 1960s was that there were other airports to be upgraded in Papua New Guinea and other satellite towns to be built. East New Britain moreover was now a low priority area on two counts. Since it, or at least the Gazelle, was one of the most developed areas in Papua New Guinea (it contained six high schools, for example) there was massive official support in Canberra and Port Moresby for the notion of a freeze on East New Britain while other areas, notably the highlands, 'caught up'. Further, it was no longer regarded as an economic growth area. Both these factors weakened the official resolve to persevere with projects once the by-now-predictable Tolai resistance (bloody-mindedness in official parlance) manifested itself. Had the Administration really needed a new airport, for example, it would ultimately have had to enter into negotiations with the Tolai. As it was, a series of announcements, most of which were not seriously followed up, merely exacerbated the situation without bringing it to a head until the multi-racial council issue emerged. But the final straw which made the inadequacy of the channels of communication so momentous was the classic taxation and representation issue. In 1968 there was a substantial increase in the council tax to $16 from $10; at the same time it was announced that in future there would be charges for a whole range of health and other services which had previously been free. Also the 1968 budget implemented the financial freeze on East New Britain. No wonder that in December 1968 the Melanesian Independence Front seemed so attractive to so many Tolai of otherwise differing views (Grosart and McColl 1976). And no wonder that Catholics began to scrutinize the council with close attention.
Harvie (1977) applies his *red* and *black* terminology to the Scottish intelligentsia. In the Tolai case, there is a split within the intelligentsia but the *red* Tolai are also divided. For both practical reasons in a parliamentary system, and ideological reasons, the radical *red* Tolai need the support of 'enough' *black* Tolai; at the present time this means not merely from the masses but also from a significant number of Tolai big men. Thus while seeking to raise the consciousness of the masses, they must still appeal to them largely in terms of *black* Tolai values. For these reasons alone it would be premature to read into 'radical' (as in radical *red* Tolai) any socialist or left-wing substance. The Mataungan Association was and is radical because it wants decisions to be made by Tolai people, but this may or may not mean the Tolai people.

If the *black* Tolai had had some eighty or ninety years to think about their powerlessness *vis-à-vis* Europeans, the radical *red* Tolai also had their period of intellectual preparation. It seems fairly clear that the introduction of separate salary scales in 1964 was the first shock serving to loosen the radicals-to-be from the main body of *red* Tolai. This was followed by the debate on the first national five year plan, which was conducted in the high noon of the black civil rights movement, of the Students for a Democratic Society and the spin-offs from the anti Vietnam war crusade, of the apogee of the cult of Tanzania after Arusha, and in the first flush of *les événements du mai*. At the time of the introduction of the two salary scales John Kaputin, for example, was still a public servant and he was to take a prominent part in the debate over the five year plan. Thus the problem of the Mataungan Association was not to find an ideological framework in which to locate the struggle on which they had embarked. It was rather to reconcile two differing frameworks, the radical *red* and the *black*. It is the extent to which a symbiotic relationship was evolved between the two which accounts for the importance and continued existence of the Mataungan Association.

What of the non Mataungans? In an important sense there were none. It had not been by oversight that the president of the Gazelle Peninsula
Local Government Council had become the president of the Melanesian Independence Front, which in its short life provoked such official displeasure. Thinking Tolai were already uneasy about blithe official assurances that everything really was for the best and that Tolai problems, while of course regrettable, should be seen as due to bad luck, someone's personal failure, or simply teething problems. Mataungan leaders were therefore quickly able to undermine the remaining credibility of the widely propagated official ideology of preparation and development by helping rather than persuading Tolai to believe that their problems were a consequence of the working of the system rather than its malfunctioning. Many Tolai, including some strong Mataungans, still conceded 'good intentions' to individual Australians and even to Australia, but no more than that. Closing one's eyes during 1972 it was often impossible to tell whether one was listening to a Mataungan leader or one of his political opponents. The Mataungan Association was almost totally successful in finally discrediting amongst Tolai the Australian claim to know best. It was less successful in establishing its own ideological hegemony. The popularity of the Mataungan's initial stance on the multi-racial council issue can be seen from the fact that less than 7000 defied their boycott on the multi-racial council election in mid 1969 whereas there were just under 14,000 non Mataungan votes in the 1972 House of Assembly elections. Both figures include some non Tolai votes, but the 1973 Tolai political census recorded some 10,000 as 'pro council' and some 3000 as 'Warbete' (that is, anti council but not Mataungan).

So far little distinction has been made between masses and activists. However, it goes without saying that movements like Mataungan Association are not solely dependent on three or four leaders. Nor do the leaders of such movements have exclusive access to the masses. Between them, mediating as well as organizing, on all but the major occasions are the activists. One of the surprisingly neglected questions of politics is where do political activists come from and why? In the Tolai case until quite recently the political pattern had been one of a multitude of big men or dominant males, each with a relatively small following. Precisely
how 'open' it had been and how contact with Europeans had affected this are not of immediate consequence since immediately after World War II there had still been a luluai and tultul in each village or important village section, and the achieving motif was still dominant in oral tradition and song during the 1960s. Official development practices in the 1960s, by contrast, distrusted individuals - particularly entrepreneurs. Its trust lay rather with control of the individual, centralized decision making, hierarchy. Inevitably the application of these principles to the Gazelle produced a large crop of politicians manqué, many of whom were to become members of the Mataungan executive or other Mataungan Association bodies.

From the end of the second world war Tolai society was subjected to internal hierarchialization and to the notion of office in a variety of ways. In the religious sphere the localization of the missions meant much more super- and sub-ordination between Tolai clergy, but also a disappearance of the relative autonomy enjoyed by the individual white missionary since his Tolai 'replacement' was a much more constrained church [and not mission] functionary. On the secular side, there were in 1953 well in excess of a hundred local government councillors and five council presidents but by 1969 there were thirty-eight councillors and one president. That these trends were being pushed by the Administration in advance of popular culture can be seen from the spontaneous emergence of the ward committee system (subsequently abolished by official action). In effect this introduced a new tier of government as villages lost the right to their own councillor. By the late 1960s not only were council offices fewer but the senior positions appeared to be monopolized by a small group of similar age and origin (Salisbury 1976). However, the position was even more unstable than this suggests. It was not merely that there was a large pool of aspirants to office who could convincingly mutter that such monopolization was contrary to 'Tolai custom'; this cleavage was exacerbated by the religious one. Since the head of the Sacred Heart Mission in East New Britain had until the early 1960s regularly denounced councils as Mau-Mau in embryo, this is scarcely surprising.
Both factors would have mattered less had the council system been more successful. There were three principal reasons for the lack of success, all directly associated with Australia's development thrust. First was the bureaucratic commitment to compartmentalization and a naive conception of the division of powers in the so-called Westminster model which cloaked the decision not to give magisterial or even native-magisterial powers to councillors. Secondly, it was further decided councils were to become agents of the Administration and subsidized or pressured into implementing central government policies before their own. Technocratic and other arguments were also employed to deprive them of their power to appoint constables and cocoa inspectors. Thirdly, to survive these disappointments and to cope with the process of amalgamation (which was to culminate in the single Gazelle Peninsula Council and with the vastly increased powers embodied in the new (1963) ordinance proclaimed in 1965) the support of young and better educated Tolai, at the very least, was required. But this was not available to the council. Apart from the widening prospects offered by 'localization' the Administration, by its procrastination over the proposed local government service, had steadily reduced the attractiveness of a once prestigious occupation. Of considerably less significance, but adding to the problem of 'ins' versus 'outs', the leading councillors (Nason Tokiala, Vin ToBaining, Stanley ToMarita and others) were all from the Kokopo rather than the Rabaul District and, if scarcely from the bush, were certainly rural in their orientation.

Since it is being implied that Mataungan Association activists initially comprised a grand alliance of heterogeneous opponents of the status quo, the would-be's and the disappointed, it is reasonable to ask: how was the Mataungan Association so immediately successful in organizational terms? Put like this, the question might seem to suggest that Tolai were culturally incapable of organizing or something of the sort. Whether they could have responded with the speed and flexibility required, however, must remain an open question, since an organizational cadre was already in existence: the Catholic Teachers Association (CTA). It has been emphasized earlier that Catholic notables found it difficult to play
a prominent role in local government councils. The fact that Catholics were being required to support their own schools and taxed 'so that' the council could contribute to the well-being of government schools was an important ingredient in the explosive opposition to the substantial council tax increase of 1968 which was officially attributed to the needs of education. Thus the Catholic population, one half of all Tolais, could not be regarded as more than tenuously committed to the council system. Nevertheless, in one officially sponsored political activity Catholics did excel. The election of Matthias Toliman to the House of Assembly in 1964 was the first major achievement of the CTA, of which he had been the foundation secretary. With a seminary at Ulapia, a prestigious high school at Vuvu, and annual workshops being conducted by the Melbourne-based Institute for Social Order, the CTA on the Gazelle was not short of intellectual stimulus; while, as a political machine, it scarcely seems coincidental that two out of the three Tolai members in 1968 and three out of the four returned in 1972 had been Catholic teachers, or that in both cases it was the electorate centred on Rabaul itself which eluded them. And to Oscar Tammur, at least, it was no coincidence that the Administration appointed a Protestant rather than a Catholic Tolai churchman to its 1969 Commission of Inquiry.1 Nevertheless, though members of the CTA and their associates played a vital role in the early days, not all Mataungans were Catholics and other organizational devices evolved over time.

This new political saliency of Catholics called for ideological exorcism; more generally, in order to bridge the various extant cleavages, including those of economic stratification stressed by T.S. Epstein (1968), it was almost inevitable that considerable emphasis would be placed on being a Tolai and on the superiority of Tolai customs. Thus the constituency of the black Tolai was largely secured (although there was considerable unease and prolonged discussion over the use, and hence exposure to public gaze, of the tubuan figure as the principal symbol of Tolainess). The radical red Tolai, some of whom actually hoped that such customs as the tubuan cult would disappear in the shortest possible time, could see the instrumental power of this Tolai-nationalism

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1 See HAD II(7): 1951, 13 November 1969.
as a means of prosecuting their opposition to the Administration and its development strategy. The consequences of this were that so long as there remained an Australian governmental presence on the Gazelle the alliance between red radical and black Tolai could be maintained with minimal friction. Further, the Mataungan Association's positive proposals for the government of East New Britain amounted to a council system which incorporated every rejected Tolai initiative in some form or another. Put at its simplest, Mataungan Association ideology stressed Tolai nationalism in the classic terms of 'hurrah for us and boo to them', 'them' of course being the Australian Administration, which when not described as evil was derided as uncomprehending of the needs of Tolai. The Tolai opposition was handled in essentially two ways: prospective converts were described as having been brainwashed by the Administration, while irreconcilable foes or potential rivals were at best described as creatures of the Administration, dependent on it for their livelihood.

Two further points need to be emphasized. First, the Mataungan Association was not a wonder-machine; its leaders were able but were not miracle workers. Secondly, a certain distance continued to exist between the rival nodes of Matupit and Vunamami; more generally the Rabaul-Kokopo division was rarely dormant, and it was scarcely coincidental that only one of the four principal Mataungans in the public eye should have been a Methodist. Having made these points, it is important not to overstress them, for the fact remains that the Mataungan Association did induce a remarkable degree of unity among very large numbers of Tolai and although on occasions conditions close to civil war prevailed, their opponents, the so-called council supporters, were seriously impeded by their acceptance, at least in principle, of the ideological hegemony of the Mataungan Association. Being forced thus to contest with the Mataungan Association in terms of specifics rather than principle, the council supporters were continually at a disadvantage. Also, it should be noted that Tolai custom is a much more slippery concept than might at first appear. In practice, any changes in behaviour were bound to be selective; thus, although individuals may have wished to return to the 'old ways' because of the stresses of modernization, there was no guarantee that the
movement's support for such a 'return' would not end up introducing something quite new. There was in fact no historical precedent for the pan-Tolai Warkurai Nigunan, which was put forward as the sort of forum or arena which the Gazelle Council had not provided, and through which in the 1970s Tolai could come to terms with the forces of modernization.

The picture which emerges with the benefit of hindsight is one in which what is of primary importance is the idea, the vision or the concept of Tolais making decisions. Second in importance is the fact of collective action in the name of Mataunganism. Other considerations seem to be a long way behind these two. Mataunganism was thus a much sharper version of the Melanesian Way. It was not merely that there was a more comfortable alternative to the Australian way; the Australian way, 'the system', was morally wrong. Like the Melanesian Way, Mataunganism was an open-ended idea, seemingly available to self-interested entrepreneurs. However, Mataunganism seems to have been far less successfully exploited in this context than the Melanesian Way. The most plausible explanation is that a degree of social control existed or was exerted amongst the Tolai which was lacking amongst Papuans and New Guineans at large. But how, and by whom or what? The answer to the first question is probably: by means of the most appropriate form of pressure. Essential to answering the second question is the existence of the Mataungan executive, comprising a representative from every significant Mataungan village.

The Warkurai Nigunan (which merely means the government of the people), was the Mataungan Association's counter to the Australian-sponsored local government council system. The president and vice president were elected annually by secret ballot, directly by all adult members. Each quasi-village grouping elected one magistrate to the pool of magistrates (that is, where villages had recognized 'sections' each would elect its own magistrate); the concern was to represent actual groups rather than to create new groups by allocating one office to an aggregation of existing, discrete units. Thus there was to be no predetermined number of area councils; the number of these was to reflect demographic trends and the contemporary pattern of communal identity, the area council being
a common council or mass meeting rather than a meeting of representatives. The common concerns of the Tolai as a whole were to be handled by the Warkurai Nigunan provincial assembly, which consisted of the president, vice president, speaker and the chairman of each of the area councils, together with two popularly elected representatives of each area council who were elected afresh for each of the quarterly sessions. Clearly the Warkurai assembly never functioned as intended, that is as the assembly for a Tolai Province. Nonetheless in some places area councils did (and still do) function most effectively as enabling and implementing bodies, deciding how their particular community would respond to actual legislation. Their intended second function of debating, thrashing out and preparing new legislation was clearly inhibited by the Warkurai's failure to embrace all of the Tolai and to secure statutory recognition. The spirit of the Warkurai has clearly been influential, on East New Britain and beyond, in the current statutory approaches to community government and village courts.

The New Guinea Development Corporation (NGDC) is indelibly associated with John Kaputin, of whom one who knew him well in the early 1960s has said, 'He could never make up his mind between business and politics'. Kaputin's enemies might add that he never has, but by 1969 he himself would no longer see these as alternatives. He had reached his position on the radical left via a sojourn at the Administrative College in the euphoric days of the Bully Beef Club, a venture into business in which he believed himself the victim of racial discrimination, a period in Hawaii studying business administration and political science, and a term as an interpreter for the House of Assembly, before becoming manager of the Gazelle League of Savings and Loan Societies in the middle of 1969. It was in this last job that he conceived the idea of aggregating Tolai savings into a single investment fund. Only in this way, he believed, would it be possible for the Tolai to compete economically with foreigners, Europeans and Chinese, and so achieve real freedom, whether or not legal independence had been secured. Official thinking at this time was in terms of establishing 'mini banks' by amalgamating likely groups of savings and loan societies. However the entrepreneurial
streak joined with the nationalist in Kaputin to lead him to the notion of aggregation for equity investment rather than merely making bigger loans. But, as Kaputin has freely admitted, the establishment of the NGDC was not a one-man operation and it took some thirty months, from June 1970 to November 1972, before business operations began. This was partly due to the fact that other things were happening at the time, partly to a lack of official sympathy in many relevant quarters, but mostly the result of a deliberate policy decision to make the whole operation as familiar and in accordance with custom for Tolai villagers as circumstances would permit; time was required both to explore the new terrain and to win the support of the villagers.

The question was therefore allowed to emerge as a recurring topic at the talkfests which characterized Mataungan mass mobilization during 1969 and 1970. The idea of a development corporation became associated with the whole package or alternative road. In the second half of 1970 a systematic educational campaign was launched, working through proven leaders (eight of whom had been Gazelle councilors) but making virtually no attempt to approach non Mataungan groups (Kaputin 1977). In the new year the collection of K5 shares began together with a large symbolic, but nonetheless important, collection of three coconuts per head. Finally, in August 1972 the NGDC was registered as a company after raising K100,000 cash in hand from share subscriptions and another K25,000 from a voluntary labour tax or 'communal activity'. In all, some 10,000 persons were recorded as having contributed.

The NGDC's initial problems concerned the law and Tolai custom: how to comply with the former while incorporating elements of the latter, for both symbolic and instrumental reasons. Later there were to be the usual problems associated with maintaining morale while keeping hands out of the till. Of all the Mataungan Association enterprises the NGDC has had the most consistently bad press, yet it easily bears comparison with its rival, the New Guinea Islands Produce Company (NGIPC), and this is perhaps the most objective criterion to employ. Because it was designed for a more aggressive role than the NGIPC, as an engine for capital
accumulation and an instrument of investment policy, the NGDC did not pay dividends, giving rise to the gibe that it was merely another cargo cult. After the initial flurry, which raised K100,000 in the two years 1970-1972, not too much was heard of money but in 1977 a balance sheet emerged just before the elections and this showed a profit for the three years 1973-1976 of K128,509. Basically the problems have been to find the right sort of management structure and managers (Kaputin 1977). But there is also the problem of how to accumulate fast enough and in an acceptable way. Thus a move out of plantations into town real estate and a tavern has increased profits though possibly not at a rate sufficient to compensate for the loss of symbolic uplift. In this respect the overt competition between NGDC and NGIPC has not always been advantageous to either enterprise. Although it has twice been suggested that John Kaputin's duty lay with the corporation, in both 1972 and 1977 he was ultimately successful in securing the sole Mataungan Association endorsement for the seat of Rabaul Open.

To a considerable degree the Warkurai Nigunan and the NGDC operated as separate organizations with an overlapping membership. Together with the Mataungan Association itself they formed a troika or trinity of identities, distinguishable but nonetheless appearing to move in the same direction. Of the three, the Warkurai has been the most neglected by commentators, perhaps because it was the most exclusively Tolai and the province of the black Tolai. With three such aspects Mataunganism was able to maximize its support and survive for more than a decade. Amongst other contributory benefits, this arrangement limited problems of hierarchy amongst the leaders. As an organization, the Mataungan Association was the political arm of Mataunganism formed to oppose first the multi-racial council and then the Administration and all its works. In East New Britain it was thus able to suspend its operations and even formally to dissolve itself in 1976 in the interests of Tolai unity and a new form of area government for the Gazelle. Outside of East New Britain the situation was more difficult for it was here that the links between the radical red and black Tolai were at their most tenuous, when not non existent.

Discounting for ambition (recognizing that this is not necessarily ignoble
since only with office can politicians achieve for good or ill), this
cleavage can be observed emerging more clearly over time amongst the
Mataungan MPs, with Oscar Tammur the most prone to adopt a black perspec-
tive, Damien Kereku most likely to end up on reflection as a radical red,
and John Kaputin as the most consistent exponent of radical red Tolai
positions.

Thus despite the persistence of coalition politics the Mataungan
Association bargaining strength was not always maintained. With a maximum
of three parliamentary votes in approximately one hundred it was always a
gambler's hand, vulnerable to chance. As long as parliament in its
present form survives, dependable allies are essential for the security
and promotion of Mataungan Association interests. Such an alliance can
best be grounded on ideology or region. John Kaputin has oscillated
between the two. This is less opportunistic than it sounds. In the
present context, the primary problem has been to find and maintain the
balance point between the perceived interests of the radical red and the
black, between conviction and the need for support. This has not been
easy and if the link has not yet broken completely it is because it has
been recognized that John Kaputin personally represents the Tolai's best
claim to high ministerial office and not merely a conduit to cabinet.
Whether, now that he has attained such office, he will slough his radical
red commitments remains to be seen, but in the present parliament at least
it seems unlikely that the Mataungan Association has any further role to
play.

Thus on the national scene the Mataungan Association has experienced
two phases. In the first it was the yeast, the activist minority, the
cutting edge of a Papua New Guinea nationalist movement which, largely
owing to the poor state of physical communications in Papua New Guinea,
ever attained an organizational existence. The second phase has been far
less successful. Attempts to subsume the Mataungan Association under a
larger, equally disciplined and permanent parliamentary body have so far
failed and the unity of the three Mataungan Association members has been
virtually destroyed. Even if in 1981 John Kaputin held the third most
important portfolio in the government, it was a position which could be
lost overnight on the wheels of coalition politics.
On East New Britain, however, there have been three separate phases: first the all-out effort against the Australians, which was followed by the desultory skirmishing which surrounded negotiations to establish some form of participatory government for the Tolai; finally, with the formal inauguration of provincial government in East New Britain, a relatively new cast was able to revive the Mataungan Association and once again it took to the streets of Rabaul. The enemy in this phase has been red Tolai who have returned home seeking to implement the sort of development projects and strategies for modernization which had initially given rise to the Mataungan Association under Australian rule.

Quite early and before John Kaputin's name was indissolubly linked with the Mataungan Association, the correspondent of the *West Australian* (24 September 1969) remarked on 'the striking fact' that the Mataungan Association leaders were young, well educated, and the sort one would expect to assume the leadership in Papua New Guinea. It was a good point, given the prevailing assumptions among Europeans at that time. However, Mataungan Association spokesmen would later claim that their leaders had in fact been providing leadership for Papua New Guinea in mid 1969 and - and this was an integral part of the multi-racial council story - that this leadership was of a different, New Guinean style. This claim was undoubtedly true, but the crucial question is whether this was from choice or necessity, commitment or opportunism.

Why, it may be asked, would an opportunist be a nationalist in the circumstances which prevailed? First one did not need to be very firmly plugged in to village society (and most of the Mataungan leadership was very firmly plugged in) to realize that Australian policies were generating a great deal of resentment and that too close an association with them, at least in their present form, might not be the most certain route to a secure old age. For those prepared to challenge the Australians in such circumstances, whether opportunists or idealists, nationalism was the weapon which had virtually been preordained for their use. With a (micro-) nationalist movement largely constructed from local materials it was possible: (a) to win the sympathy of Australian voters through
peaceful demonstrations and other such media events; (b) to signal to Port Moresby and Canberra by means of controlled acts of violence that in terms of costs-benefits it might indeed be wiser to go sooner rather than later; and (c) in the last resort, to reveal to the Australian voters, by a war of liberation, the costs of staying. Of course things did not reach this last stage in East New Britain, but these were the dimensions of the nationalist weapon available to the Mataungan Association and denied to the Australians, with their allies among the red Tolai.

Theory apart, against the Administration which in one week was to fly into Rabaul over 800 police and was free to redeploy helicopters and large numbers of government vehicles - what resources could the Mataungan Association exploit? The Mataungan Association leadership was in the business of consciousness raising or mobilization, and their principal weapon was numbers. The early years of the Mataungan Association were characterized by mass meetings and rallies, which tended to be liturgical celebrations of solidarity, and by innumerable, lengthy village meetings, including the Friday executive meetings to which every sympathetic village or hamlet sent delegates. It was also a time when the leaders often had to abandon public positions and reissue statements because the executive had had further thoughts on the matter; indeed the leaders often stressed that they were not leaders in the western sense but merely spokesmen of their people.

It has often been suggested that the Mataungan Association was merely an electoral machine. In a sense, of course, it was. It was early put about - and it was a view taken up by the Connolly inquiry (TPNG 1969) - that Oscar Tammur had devised the whole anti Council operation and destroyed the Gazelle Council to assist his electoral chances in 1972. Two others among the publicly exalted leaders also stood successfully for elections as Mataungan Association candidates in 1972. Further, the revival of the Mataungan Association in 1977 antedated the 1977 elections by only a few months. But did the machine merely work for the benefit of these three men, Damien Kereku (Regional), Oscar Tammur (Kokopo Open) and John Kaputin (Rabaul Open)? Did they then seek to edge towards the position of a
Burkean 'representative' or seek to borrow the authority of the government as others did? These are complex questions. In their separate ways these three are amongst the most human of men; but, on the whole, in the period under review they did not dissociate themselves from the old Mataungan Association discipline, primarily because the Mataungan Association executive was composed largely of men who were notables in their own right - pastors or catechists and big men.

Perhaps one of the key phrases for understanding the Mataungan Association and its basic strategy was articulated by John Kaputin. There are, he said, those who get sucked into the system and those who don't. It was vital for the Association in its struggle with the Administration to avoid getting sucked in to avoid (in the terms of Bailey 1969:5) playing according to the normative rules laid down by their opponents, the Australians. At the same time it was initially vital to the Mataungan Association strategy that they should secure and maintain the hearts and minds of Australian media consumers, particularly TV watchers. Hence the exaggerated emphasis on their inability to trust officials to act fairly, which justified the presentation of bizarre counterproposals when the Administration appeared to be acting reasonably. For example, rather than accept a secret ballot, Mataungan leaders proposed, with straight faces, that people should publicly line up behind either Stanley ToMarita, president of the new and contentious multi-racial council, or Oscar Tammur, patron of the Mataungan Association, in some public place such as Elizabeth Park in the centre of Rabaul.

Until the de facto advent of self-government, the Mataungan Association were in a strong position. Their greatest strength was an ability to exploit imaginatively the appetites of the media and hence to influence Australian voters and decision makers. There seem no good grounds for disputing Mataungan Association claims to have played a determining role in the timing of self-government; it acted as the activist group within an independence or freedom movement which in Papua New Guinea had no organizational existence. (Amongst the less canvassed reasons for this last fact, considerable weight should be given to the state of physical
communications since it is clear that road networks and ease of access
to institutionalized gatherings such as markets and church festivities
played a major part in the spread of the CPP and TANU in Africa (Austin
1970; Gould 1970) and on the Gazelle the famed road network facilitated
the Mataungan Association's achievement of mobilization on a scale unprece-
dented elsewhere in Papua New Guinea.) However, in 1969-1972 the
Mataungan network was confined to the Gazelle and scarcely penetrated
into the Bainings, let alone the rest of East New Britain or the sister
Province of West New Britain. This effectively set limits to the expansion
of the Mataungan Association. The cost of servicing non-Gazelle branches
was too great, particularly so for an 'alternative' type of organization
and one in which red and black were intertwined in symbiosis and contra-
diction. Nevertheless the Mataungan Association did inspire other local
groups, while yet others claimed that they had no need of branches in
East New Britain because the Mataungan Association was pursuing the same ends
(Anis et al. 1976). Thus when John Kaputin reached parliament he found there
a few like minds, who have sometimes been described as nationalists or
radicals. At exactly this point in time, however, the Mataungan Association
lost its primary asset, the Australian Administration.

After 1972 The Mataungan Association was a media non event; in fact
there was no clearcut enemy against whom mobilization could be directed
until the advent of provincial government in 1977. This does not mean
that there was a total cessation of activity between these two dates. An
operation of that scale needs time to unwind, time for lesser leaders and
followers to realize, for example, that rallies have lost their point.
But there were also the Warkurai and the NGDC which quite obviously had
not lost their raison d'être with self-government, or for that matter
independence itself. Although the Warkurai and NGDC had each retained a
certain dynamism, so that acrimony was always liable to flare as the
result of innovative moves, over time each tended to become generally
recognized as an integral part of the Tolai scene, in short to become
institutionalized. Both worked, after some initial hassles, in an acceptable
if unexciting way. In addition, following the Mataungan Association imbroglios,
from 1969 the central authorities had shown a much greater sense of urgency
about Tolai land matters and in particular had facilitated the return of
plantation land to claimant or simply neighbouring groups. It may be purely coincidental that 1971 was the worst postwar year for cocoa prices, but it seems clear that the subsequent rise and then startling escalation in prices, linked as it was with the defusing, however temporary, of land pressures, contributed to the general euphoria of the independence era.

So the black Tolai were not unhappy and the red Tolai were for the most part moving rapidly towards the levers of public service and corporate power. But the Mataungan Association element amongst the red Tolai, the radical red Tolai, were looking to the wider arena but wishing to change it as well as participate in it, and they had to contend with the fact that the Tolai amounted to less than 70,000 in a total population of nearly three million. For the moment it was possible to play coalition politics with some success. Over the longer run something more was required. Hence the involvement of John Kaputin in a series of abortive party making activities. These were of two kinds. One was the attempt to organize on the basis of radical-nationalist ideology, from the Nationalist Pressure Group to the Melanesian Action Front. The other (and it should be stressed that in the special circumstances of Papua New Guinea the oscillation was not as extreme as the terms suggest), was a series of attempts to put together a regional New Guinea Islands bloc. To pursue either of these strategies, it was necessary to remain in parliament which meant securing black Tolai votes in competition with such mainstream red Tolai as might choose to stand. There were, therefore, pressures on the Mataungan Association members to play the parliamentary game. Of the three members John Kaputin has probably been the most resistant to pressures, most aware of the dangers of such a strategy, and most aware of the dangers of getting sucked into the system. Oscar Tammur has been perhaps the least aware; his personal project, the Ulagunan School, unlike the NGDC, has become largely dependent on central government assistance and of course requires official recognition.

Without speculating further, it is worth posing the question, what would have happened to the Mataungan Association had the expected occurred and Toliman been in government after 1972, perhaps even as chief minister?
The caucusing after the 1972 elections unexpectedly produced a Pangu led coalition supported by the three Mataungan Association members. This should have been the end of the story according to African precedents, and for the media it was. (Which raises the question: did the African grassroots movements really disappear after independence or merely cease to be newsworthy?) On the other hand it should not be assumed that it is always worthwhile to engage in political activity at maximum intensity. There are clearly times and tides and some times are more appropriate than others. For the Warkurai and even for the NGDC the years after 1972 were a time of enforced waiting. What they required was statutory recognition of 'customary' practices which had not previously been included in either the local government ordinance or the commercial code. The new government said it was sympathetic, but as the months went by it seemed no better able to deliver quick decisions than the Australians. However the chief minister became a frequent visitor, land was made available, cocoa prices began fortuitously to climb, and the Warkurai was given a degree of statutory recognition as a body empowered to raise taxes and to act for the general welfare. This enraged the Gazelle Town Council stalwarts but was rather taken for granted by the Mataungan Association. Until the death of Toliman late in 1973 his followers could hope that a turn of the coalition wheel would find them hosting their own chief minister in Elizabeth Park; but even after 1973 stalemate continued. Gazelle politics, in fact, were largely concerned with maintaining the stalemate while the real struggle went on in the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC).

The final rejection of the CPC proposals, which would have provided inter alia for substantial local autonomy for the Tolai, appeared to leave the Mataungan Association finally weaponless. Indeed this was the case, and both the government and the Mataungan Association knew it. But Bougainville did have a weapon and it was Bougainville which forced a reluctant government finally to embark on provincial government. As in the United Kingdom and in Italy the central politicians and bureaucrats proved most resistant to any devolution of power from the centre, whatever their protestations to the contrary. Simultaneously the pressures for a politicized public service were increased by the leaking of the document.
which revealed the extent of Tolai 'overrepresentation' in the more worthwhile public service positions (see Standish pp. 378-379 below). These two developments forced some of the younger red Tolai to reconsider their situation: if there was going to be provincial government and if the old values were no longer to be beyond criticism at the centre, perhaps it was their duty to ensure that provincial government was 'properly' established back home in East New Britain.

In December 1975 East New Britain acquired its first Tolai provincial commissioner, who made it his task to prepare for the establishment of an Interim Tolai Government (ITG). Both the planning committee and the ITG, which was inaugurated in September 1976, were remarkable on two counts: first, the small part played by Mataungan Association notables and, secondly, the dominant parts played by Stanley ToMarita, who had been president of the multi-racial council, and Ereman ToBaining, another council identity. Also, it was during this period before the elections that the leading positions in the policy secretariat were filled. What is one to make of these events (which occurred, incidentally, with the blessing of Oscar Tammur, then minister for decentralisation, and Damien Kereku - both of whom publicly agreed that 'the parties' should dissolve their respective organizations in the interests of Tolai unity in the future)? The most probable explanation is that everyone expected the Mataungan Association to win the elections. In that event the red Tolai were confident that they were in a position, in fact that it was their duty, to control and educate the politicians in their functions and responsibilities. The Mataungan Association second string leadership, for their part, seem to have had a touching faith that elected executive politicians had 'the power'. The first surprise was that the Mataungan Association did not win a majority of Tolai seats, let alone a majority of seats in the provincial assembly, which represented all the peoples of East New Britain. Despite the fact that they had only three votes in an assembly of eighteen, Mataungan Association activists refused to accept the assembly's election of two 'council' figures as premier and deputy speaker; they claimed that the total number of Mataungan Association votes entitled them to the premiership, since on this occasion they had broken
with previous practice and permitted multiple endorsements. On 15 May
they 'marched' on Elizabeth Park, disrupting the official inauguration
by the governor general. The crisis raged for days, the governor general
being first persuaded to extend his visit and then allowed to leave
unattended and unfarewelled. Almost a week later a new premier 'emerged':
he was Koniel Alar, then vice president of the Mataungan Association. The
deputy speakership was taken by a second Mataungan Association member,
Hosea Biu.

Thus, for the first time the Mataungan Association had at its dispo-
sal some of the power of the state, although it lacked a disciplined
majority in the assembly. The public servants had been 'inherited' and
were still subject to the national government in many important respects,
and the policy secretariat (which had been intended to ease the tensions
in such situations) had also been inherited and had already acquired the
habit of issuing press releases on the government's intentions. It would
be an exaggeration to see the next two years as characterized by a struggle
between the red Tolai dominated public service and secretariat on the one
hand and the premier and his deputy speaker backed by the Mataungan
Association on the other. But there were recurring allegations that the
premier was seeking to convert the statutorily provided institutions for
provincial and community government into some closer approximation to the
Warkurai; that the public servants were plotting against the premier; that
the premier was plotting against the public servants, and so on. On
certain important issues there was total agreement. For example, on the
Tolai right to decide who should have the right to live among them joint
action led to alterations to the national government's new citizenship
procedures. But with the secretariat announcing plans to deal with modern
problems like prostitution, which was still an unmentionable topic for
most black Tolai, and expressing concern over cocoa productivity, which
implied a tenderness towards plantations, and with the premier seeking
to use his power and guile to implement Mataungan Association objectives,
it was a wonder that the situation lasted for so long.

In May 1979 it ended with the arrest and conviction of the premier.
There is a certain coincidence in the dates of the arrests of the East New
Britain premier and of the national ministers for justice and for economic planning which suggests a possible common origin. In each case the crime was a cavalier attitude towards inherited laws, which had not been individually considered by Papua New Guineans. In all three cases the punishments were astonishingly severe. The premier's crime was that he had condoned the organizing of 'Mataungan police', though they had operated on and off on the Gazelle for a decade with only occasional protest or harassment from the authorities. The new factor was that the Mataungan Association were talking openly of their police being given some form of official recognition and salary and the premier was just the man to do it. The authorities having suddenly discovered the existence of the Mataungan Association police, the premier and deputy speaker were each given twelve months with hard labour.

It would be wrong to conclude that a failure to take to the streets in this case means that the Mataungan Association is finally defunct. There are other signs that this is far from the case, for example in the struggle for control of the women's movement. But some explanation does seem called for and it is possible that part of the answer lies in the ex premier's personality. He had been a second string leader. He tried sincerely to implement Mataungan Association policies and was gaoled for his attempts. But he had developed a Queensland style. Perhaps in competition with his provincial secretary he was always in the headlines - but rarely with a well considered statement or one that had been previously considered and approved by Mataungan Association notables. And then there was the big, black government car which he had been unable to resist and which was the source of much unfavourable comment. Finally he had clashed on several occasions with Mataungan Association functionaries. In short, there seem grounds for believing that despite his many merits, the difficult task of moving from opposition to a position of power called for qualities he did not possess, beset as he was with public servants and policy advisers who he was convinced wished him no good. More generally, some of these points can be rephrased to emphasize the fact that the Mataungan Association was not in a state of mobilization. With their own premier in office but no obvious enemy to stand solid in the face of, there
was ample opportunity for the surfacing of old and new cleavages within the ranks. Premier Alar's style may have been an attempt to maintain the initiative as much over Mataungan Association factions as in competition with his secretariat. Nevertheless within fourteen months a third (and by this time sole) Mataungan Association member had attained the premiership.

The suggestion so far has been that all red Tolai were Papua New Guinea nationalists and that black Tolai were Tolai nationalists. Mataunganism as an alliance between the radical red conceptualizers and black political resource was therefore both a nationalist and a micronationalist movement. In this it is probably not unique. The independence movements of the former European colonies in the decades after World War II make more sense when seen in this context as coalitions of micronationalist movements put together by nationalists than they do in a context derived from nineteenth century liberal-romantic notions of nationalism. And after searing experiences with the Third World, there appears to be a growing movement of academic opinion in this direction. Thus in a brief and seminal book Gerald Heeger (1974) has stressed the role of leaders in nationalist movements and has argued that nationalism is their construct, hence its otherwise baffling chameleon qualities. In this he was pardonly reacting against the earlier mainstream view that nationalism is an emotive response to the stresses of modernization. The Tolai experience suggests that he was right in his emphasis but that such stresses do exist and are an important factor which enables leaders or political entrepreneurs seeking leadership to fabricate nationalist movements. Hence the importance on the Gazelle of the clogged communications and the failure of the council system. As the Mataungan Association talkfests were to reveal, there was a massive pent up desire to discuss a whole range of problems only some of which have been identified above. And the growing recognition that this needed to be done on a pan Tolai scale had been a factor in favour of the original Gazelle Council. By Deutsch's (1953) reckoning such characteristics put the Tolai on the verge of being a nation. But as Tilly (1975) and others have recently emphasized, nations and states both have to be made. Such emphasis on political activity and
on the internal politics of nationalist movements help to exorcise the problem of the large non Mataungan vote.

Once we accept that Mataunganism was about power, but power between Tolais as well as between the Tolai and the Australian Administration, we are freed from the necessity of having to explain why an ethnic or nationalist movement does not have the 100 per cent support of its ethnie or nation. We can then turn to a variety of familiar concepts and theoretical formulations. Thus the fact that the Mataungan Association was big enough to win according to the prevailing majoritarian norms, but not so big that there was little point in being on the 'winning' side, suggests that something like Riker's theory of coalitions may have been operating (Riker 1962). The role of Catholics on the Gazelle gibe nicely with the advantages which Gerschenkron has suggested may accrue to the seemingly least fit or those least well adapted to the existing system (Gerschenkron 1962). Not least interesting, and still in the zero-sum mode, there is the recent fascination of political anthropologists (notably Bailey 1969) with factions and the older notion of the 'dual organization' - their side and ours. The Tolai do operate a moiety system and have for long managed to live with an almost even split between Catholic and Uniting Church adherents.

Finally it is clear that there is now, as a result of Mataunganism, a widespread and heightened sense of being a Tolai, although the problems of giving this some institutional expression remain unresolved. Tolai secessionism, however, is confined to the least educated. For them external government is an unnecessary imposition, complicating and delaying straightforward issues and decisions; and in their situation this is often a perfectly rational position. However the more aware, the proposers and initiators of policies for the Tolai as a whole, are clearly reluctant to go it alone. The important point in the present context is the clear evidence of their strictly instrumental attitude to Papua New Guinea, although from the Melanesian Independence Front to the present day they have been conscious of the advantages of separatism on a New Guinea Island basis. This further emphasizes the need to give due recognition to the role of elites in the construction of (micro-) nationalisms. As Cavour is supposed to have said, 'We have made Italy, now we must make Italians'.
Figure 6.1 Abau District, showing land divisions contested by Nemea Landowners' Association
Chapter 6
LAND, GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS:
THE NEMEA LANDOWNERS' ASSOCIATION *

R.J. May

The Nemea Landowners' Association was formed in 1970 among a group of people occupying several villages inland from Cloudy Bay, about 200 kilometres east of Port Moresby in the Central Province. The Association took its name from the language group of six of the villages1 which provided the core of its support.

Accounts by European visitors to the Cloudy Bay area in the late nineteenth century refer to the ferocity of the local inhabitants. Bevan (1890:37) recorded that

... the inhabitants of that part of the coast, especially on the mainland in Cloudy Bay, have always borne a bad name even in the estimation of other natives, as barbarous skull-hunters, murderers and, in some instances, cannibals.

Early patrol reports, too, record difficulties in establishing administrative control. In 1912 people from the villages of Bam and Baisabaga (now part of Doma) attacked a police patrol killing a constable and wounding two others and in 1915 four policemen were killed by the Darava (now Darava 2) people while searching for an escapee. Shortly after this Darava and Oio people attacked the Robinson River plantation wounding the manager and burning buildings; during subsequent police action a village constable was shot and three men were later hanged for murder. Annual reports for Papua between 1912 and 1936 contain numerous references to murder raids between villages in the area, amongst whom homicide formed an integral

* This paper has drawn on newspaper reports, personal interviews and official files. I am particularly indebted to David Marsh who has been most generous in sharing his extensive knowledge and understanding of the Nemea people (without, of course, necessarily agreeing with my judgement).

1 Apaeva, Bam, Darava 2, Doma, Oio and Segili. Dutton (1973) refers to the language group as Binahari. It is part of the Mailuan language family.
part of traditional social life (Williams 1935-36). One result of this was a heavy outflow of adult males to gaol in Port Moresby.

Government agents were established in the area in the late nineteenth century, mainly to assist gold miners who were prospecting in the ranges behind Cloudy Bay, and a station was opened at Abau in 1911. Land alienation began in 1892 and in the early years of this century there was substantial alienation of land, much of which remained undeveloped. The first plantations, employing mostly labour from outside the region, were established in 1907. The largest plantation in Papua New Guinea, Burns Philp's Robinson River plantation, is in the heart of Nemea territory.

After the second world war attempts were made to establish marketing facilities for copra and shell, trade stores were established, an Abau co-operative was formed, and there was a regular shipping service between Margarida and Port Moresby. But none of these attempts to get business going was successful.

From 1941 to 1950 (except for a brief interval during the war) Abau was the headquarters of the East Central Division but with the establishment of Central District in 1950 Abau was relegated to (what was then) sub-district status. In late 1964 Abau station was closed and sub-district headquarters shifted to Kupiano, about 65 kilometres to the west. With this went medical, educational, police and postal services and the Abau market was closed.

The Cloudy Bay Local Government Council was established in 1960. It was the first council in the Abau District but it suffered from having a small and isolated population (about 3500) with little cash income. Advisers' reports in the 1960s continually referred

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1 In 1972 there were about 196,000 hectares of crown land in the Abau District, about 96 per cent of which remained undeveloped.

2 Following the emergence of the Nemea Association Abau was reopened in June 1971 as a base camp and upgraded in November 1971 to a patrol post, with radio, postal and banking facilities.
to non completion of projects and general lack of interest. In 1967 the Cloudy Bay Council rejected a proposal that it be disbanded but in 1969 it was, and the villages were absorbed into the Amazon Bay and Marshall Lagoon Local Government Councils.

The closure of Abau station and the disbanding of the Cloudy Bay Council caused a good deal of resentment in the immediate area and undoubtedly contributed to the dissatisfaction which lay behind the establishment of the Nemea Association. ¹

The Association

The Nemea Landowners' Association appears to have been formed at a meeting in Port Moresby in mid 1970. This followed a visit to the area by Pangu Pati official Albert Maori Kiki (now Sir Maori Kiki) and in its early days the Association saw itself as being closely linked to Pangu - in fact the same collection of people initially referred to themselves both as the Nemea Landowners' Association and as the Nemea branch of the Pangu Pati. It seems also that Kiki helped organize the group and accompanied it, as the Nemea Association, in a delegation to the Administrator in early 1971.

The Nemea Association gave as its principal objective the survey and registration, in the name of the Association, of all customary land in an area of about 50 sq km from the coast to the Owen Stanley range. It was emphatic that this should be achieved before self-government and independence; in other areas, Nemea leaders said, squatting by outsiders had caused problems and they did not want this to happen to them after independence. Once registered, the land was to be subdivided and allocated to traditional landowning clans with some areas being retained for development by the Association. It was proposed to raise capital by a levy of K2 per year on each adult male. The issue of land registration soon became tied up with demands for autonomous local government and economic development but it remained central to the concerns of the Association.

¹ See, for example, Post-Courier 6 September 1972 (letter by Ani Torehai).
The inaugural meeting elected as officers Budo (or Boodor) Agabu of Doma village, president; Moses Anai of Segili, vice president; Philemon Hua of Segili, treasurer, and two other committee members, David Boida and Bagau Lapu, from Nemea villages. Later the number of executive members was increased. Headquarters were subsequently established at Segili and there appears to have been a 'branch' in Port Moresby.

Both Agabu and Anai were men of limited education and some local influence. Anai appears to have been selected by Kiki in the 1960s (when Kiki was president of the Papua New Guinea Workers' Association) to undergo training as a union leader and he became industrial officer to the Port Moresby Workers' Association. He returned to the Abau area to work for the Nemea Association after a lengthy stay in Port Moresby. Both Agabu and Anai display a tendency to become quickly emotional and to lapse into biblical allusions; both claim divine guidance.

A split in the leadership, between Agabu on the one hand and Anai and Hua on the other, developed early in 1973. The basis of their differences seems to have been largely one of approach to local economic development, though much of the division may have been simply a struggle for control of the Association. Specifically, Agabu opposed moves by Anai and Hua to buy and resell copra and coffee, to impose increased levies on timber extraction, and to press claims against crown land; more generally he seems to have been opposed to any economic development before the Association achieved registration. During 1974 Agabu wrote numerous letters denouncing Anai and Hua and claiming that they spent all their time in Port Moresby and did not have the support of the membership. In October 1974 there were reports that at an Association meeting at Abau, Agabu had been voted out of the presidency and replaced by Anai; in four years, it was said, Agabu had not started any projects. However, in 1977 Agabu still claimed that he was president. Anai's support seems to have been centred on Segili and Apaeva villages.
and Agabu's on the other Nemea speaking villages, but for the most part members do not appear to have taken sides and most of the Association's activities since 1974 seem to have been initiated by Anai and Hua.

Initially the Nemea Association drew the bulk of its support from within the six Nemea speaking villages but its influence soon spread to a number of surrounding villages. In 1972 a field report estimated that 75 per cent of the people in the Abau area supported the Association and listed seventeen villages as Nemea supporters. In the same year Nemea leaders undertook extensive patrols from Segili and subsequently claimed support from as far afield as the Milne Bay Province in the east, the Rigo District in the west and the northern slopes of the Owen Stanley range in the Northern Province. There was even talk of establishing a branch at Kwikila in the Rigo District. Thus although the Association had a distinct ethnic base it made no attempt to remain exclusively ethnic; indeed it actively sought outside membership. A good deal of this membership seems to have come from older and less educated village people. Support for the Association probably reached a peak in 1972. Early in 1973 the Association claimed a membership of 6000 but this was almost certainly a substantial exaggeration; moreover, by that time supporters in several non-Nemea speaking villages were demanding back money they had paid to the Association. In any case the number of members firmly committed to the objectives of the Association was probably considerably less than the number which gave their loose support to the

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1 These included the Morawa (Mailuan language family) villages of Badubadu and Si'ini, and the non-Mailuan villages of Ianu, Bonua and Maiagolo. Within Ianu there was also some opposition to the Nemea Association.

2 The Association's constitution, drafted in 1973, actually lists as the first two objects of the Association: '(a) to work in a truly Christian way to improve the welfare of and promote harmony between members regardless of their race, language or clan affiliation; (b) to encourage members to work for national unity within Papua New Guinea'.

3 *Post-Courier* 22 November 1974 quotes a figure of 500. This figure appears to have been supplied by the government.
Association for its refusal to pay council tax.

While the Nemea Association undoubtedly generated a good deal of support it also provoked some specific reaction. About the same time as Nemea was set up some villagers around Amau,¹ to the northwest of the Nemea area, on the initiative of a local Anglican pastor, formed the Wake Landowners' Association. This group had similar aims to the Nemea Association but claimed to be pro Administration and anti Nemea (on one occasion Wake supporters actually chased members of the Nemea executive from Amau village). There was also, briefly, an association in the Morawa speaking village of Ganai which in 1972 was complaining that when the government station was reopened at Abau in 1971 Nemea Association supporters refused to supply labour or materials but were now receiving all the government's attention.

The Association's early link with the Pangu Pati has been referred to above. In an early deputation to the Administration in 1970 Nemea leaders argued in support of their demands for land registration that when the Pangu Pati came to government in 1972 (as it did) Nemea Association members, as Pangu supporters, would have their land returned to them.² However, late in 1971, following complaints that Pangu was being misrepresented in the area,³ the then president of the Pangu Pati, Michael Somare, wrote to the Nemea executive disassociating the Pati from the Association and asking it not to use the Pati's name. Nemea leaders were angered by this and continued to use the Pangu label until well into 1972.

¹ Amau village comprises several tribal groups from around the present sites of Amau, Mori and Ianu villages and from the Keveri valley on the northern slopes of the Owen Stanley range. These groups were brought together by the Kwato mission at the request of Governor Murray in 1936.

² The Nemea Association did not put up candidates in the 1972 general election and the Rigo-Abau electorate returned a Pangu candidate, Dr Reuben Taureka. Taureka, a foundation member of Pangu, became a minister in the coalition government.

³ For example, see HAD II (14): 1332, 10 June 1971.
Nemea leaders frequently compared their activities with those of the Mataungan Association and when in 1974 Mataungan leader John Kaputin was dismissed from cabinet Nemea Association leaders condemned the government and expressed support for Kaputin whom they described as the leader of 'Associations' in Papua New Guinea.

In 1973 there were meetings between Nemea Association leaders and Josephine Abaijah and subsequent representations to the government suggest that Nemea members absorbed a good deal of Papua Besena philosophy, though there were reservations about Abaijah's personal leadership. In 1974 the Nemea Association joined Abaijah in supporting the Koiai people, from the north of Port Moresby, in their representations to the Papua New Guinea Electricity Commission for compensation for alienated land.

The land issue

The Nemea Association's first and primary concern was over land. Initially its demand was simply for the demarcation and registration of customary land in the name of the Nemea Landowners' Association, though there were already in 1969 a number of applications before the Land Titles Commission which challenged the government's title to large portions of alienated land in the area. The chief commissioner of the Land Titles Commission informed the Association that land could not be registered under a group name but that decisions could be given in favour of lineages and this seemed to be acceptable to the Association. In mid 1971 the provincial commissioner authorized the

1 See chapter 11. In one representation Agabu opposed a proposed land survey on the grounds that the investigating officer might bring 'two rules' to their area: 'The names of the rules are Australian colonial rule and New Guinea colonial rule'. In another, Agabu argued that Papuans 'should control their own land, law, police and life styles'.

2 These reservations seem to have been on the part of Agabu rather than Anai and Hua. Agabu seems to have been opposed to Papuan separatism.

3 The reference, presumably, was to sections 4 and 15 of the Land Titles Commission Act.
clearing and survey of land with a view to supporting an application to the Land Titles Commission. However the Association did not proceed with a formal application to the Commission and subsequently the area to which the Association laid claim was substantially increased.

From an area of about 50 sq km the Association gradually expanded its demands until in mid 1972 it claimed all the land from the eastern extremity of Marshall Lagoon to the Bailebo river (adjacent to Margarida patrol post) and from an indeterminate northern boundary somewhere near Safia in the Northern Province to 48 km south of the Papuan coastline – an area of about 150,000 sq km. And from an initially professed non involvement in crown land the Association moved to active participation in claims against the government – notably in supporting the Ianu and Merani people in claims which affected land developed by the government in the early 1960s for the Mori-Bomguina (Cape Rodney) land settlement scheme. In 1974 Nemea executive member Mudio Dinu of Ianu was threatening violence against foreign blockholders if they cleared more bush or planted more rubber trees and a government proposal to expand development at Cape Rodney was shelved because of fears of resistance by Nemea supporters. Moreover, from as early as September 1971 the Association was saying that until its land was registered, Association members would not pay council taxes or allow prospecting or timber development in the area.

In the subsequent dealings between the government and the Association and others, three main areas of land were involved:

(i) an area of 40,500 hectares, described in Deeds of Attestation 684 (DA 684); (ii) an area of 98,415 hectares, DA 662/663; (iii) an area of about 28,750 hectares comprising a number of portions on and around the Robinson River plantation.

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1 Description of the land is confused by duplicated and overlapping purchases but the total area is described by four deeds of attestation: 758 (which includes 957, which in turn includes 762 and 763); 759 (originally purchased as 245 and including 949); 670 (including 950) and 761 (including 951). DAs 949, 950 and 951 comprise the Robinson River plantation.
DA 684 was acquired by the crown in 1906 following proclamation of the land as 'waste and vacant', though it is clear that no real attempt was made to establish whether in fact the land was traditionally occupied or used and the description of boundaries was imprecise. DA 662/663 was purchased, twice in the same year, from traditional landowners but again the boundaries were not clearly defined, the purchases being transacted from the deck of a government vessel anchored at Kapari.

In 1911 the government secretary expressed the belief that because of the irregularities under which the land had been acquired, the crown had 'not the slightest legal claim' to the area covered by DA 684 and DA 662/663 and in 1937/38 (when the Kwato mission purchased land from traditional landowners at Amau) the commissioner for lands stated that the government laid no claim to the land, but the deed of attestation was never cancelled.

The third main area consisted largely of undeveloped portions of the Burns Philip Robinson River plantation and adjoining crown land which had been purchased (more than once) mostly between 1907 and 1911. The area included several traditional villages as well as a good deal of land unsuitable for agriculture.

As early as 1971 Provincial officials had recommended that the bulk of this land revert to customary title. In response to this, and to the representations of the Nemea Association and of the Wake Association and other villages, in May 1972 the minister for lands (Kiki) recommended to the Administrator's Executive Council (AEC) that a

In the first transaction a single landowner was paid two dozen knives, a dozen half axes, 5 belts, 2 lbs beads, a dozen mirrors, 3 pouches and 2 yards of 'turkey red'; in the second transaction nine landowners were paid, collectively, 18 half axes, 27 knives, 9 pouches, 18 yards of turkey twill, 18 mirrors and 36 lbs of tobacco. In 1974 officials involved in the investigation of the land question reckoned this at about eight toea per 1000 hectares.
commission of inquiry be set up to investigate certain claims and alleged injustices against the government's ownership and policies in relation to the lands in the Cloudy Bay-Alotau area. No such commission was set up but the Administrator, on the advice of the AEC, did direct that efforts be made to have the claims within DA 684 and DA 662/663 resolved as quickly as possible. Shortly after, two field reports on the Cloudy Bay situation recommended the reversion to customary title of all undeveloped crown land in the area; this recommendation was supported by the provincial commissioner and some progress appears to have been made in surveying the land.

Meanwhile the Nemea Association continued to press for land registration before independence and to demand the return of alienated land. Following the announcement that the Nemea Association had established its own government (see p. 191) Agabu issued a number of 'certificates' (44 by September 1972) to clan landowners and there was talk of recording clan histories in a published book. The Association also showed increasing concern over the presence of 'foreigners' within the area claimed by the Association.

There appears to have been no real progress on the land question until in mid 1973 the Office of the Chief Minister appointed a senior field officer, David Marsh,¹ to investigate and recommend on the activities of the Nemea Association. Marsh saw the situation as involving more than land but considered that the issue of land alienation was of central importance in any attempt to reconcile the Nemea Association and the government. Following a brief but thorough review of the position and discussions with village people Marsh proposed as a first step to arrange for the reversion to customary ownership of the 40,500 hectares of waste and vacant land comprising DA 684 less a small area (portion 390) occupied by the Kwato mission. Following surveys of the land, meetings were held

¹ Marsh, a former district commissioner, had extensive experience in the area, having first come to it before the second world war as a prospector. He was assisted by a local officer.
at Amau in July and August 1973 and boundaries agreed between the clans - all non Nemea Association groups - who claimed traditional land rights. Marsh's recommendation, supported by the evidence that the crown had no valid title to the land, was accepted and in January 1974 the area was declared customary land. Seven months later it was finally registered in the names of the traditional clan landowners. At the same time Provincial staff from all departments were urged to assist landowners to plan social and economic development and several meetings with local leaders were organized. Late in 1974 a timber road was put through to Ganai and several cattle projects have since been established in the Ganai area.

This accomplished, Marsh turned to the more difficult problem of dealing with DA 662/663. As with DA 684, review of the evidence confirmed the invalidity of the government's claim to the land; however, the return of DA 662/663 was a more difficult exercise on two accounts. For one, the area included a core of strong supporters of the Nemea Association and the success of the government's handling of DA 684, obviously intended to provide a demonstration to Association supporters, had in fact increased hostility to the government on the part of Nemea Association leaders, who all along had claimed that the government was tricking the people in order to steal more of their land and who now appeared to suffer some loss of face. In April 1974 Agabu wrote to the provincial commissioner saying that the Association did not want Marsh to register Nemea land and subsequently refused to talk with him. Secondly, the area covered by DA 662/663 included several pieces of land developed by the government. These included two subdivisions of the Mori-Bomguina land settlement scheme, some other surveyed but undeveloped blocks, an agricultural reserve, an airstrip and roads, altogether comprising 6556 hectares. The area also included a timber rights permit area which, however, was subsequently surrendered. As before, the land was surveyed and discussions held with traditional landowners. Despite early tension between Nemea Association leaders and the investigators, which included threats of violence, agreement was reached on clan boundaries
and on the government's claims on developed land and in April 1974 the Office of the Chief Minister recommended to the director of the Department of Lands, Surveys and Mines that the crown title to DA 662/663 be cancelled and the land, with the agreed exceptions, revert to customary title; recommendations were also made concerning compensation for land retained (though the people did not demand this). Due to indecision within the Lands Department, where there was a proposal to delay the reversion and, surprisingly, to undertake further development of land, the transfer was not accomplished until November 1974. In December clan boundaries were settled for all but one clan (the Buneabura clan of Ianu village, led by Mudio Dinu) and recorded by the Land Titles Commission, and the government commenced compensation payments. Compensation, which totalled about K9000 - between Kl.20 and Kl.50 per hectare - was intended to reflect the original price paid, the value of improvements and infrastructure provided by government, and the abundance of land. As before, discussions were held with the local people about possible future development.

The third area, that surrounding the Robinson River plantation, was in the very heart of Nemea territory. Attempts to negotiate the return of undeveloped land on the plantation and surrounding crown land commenced around mid 1974. Around the same time the Department of Lands secured the agreement of Burns Philp to surrender unused land in about twenty properties and this included 1405 hectares of the Robinson River plantation. In August 1974 the Office of the Chief Minister recommended that all land outside DA 949, 950 and 951, and excluding 957 (see footnote 1, page 184) revert to customary title and that unplanted areas of the plantation also be handed back to customary landholders. Surveys were attempted in late 1974 and early 1975 but due to strong local opposition were abandoned. Consequently the reversion of the land to customary title has not been affected.

Local government

Having enunciated its claims with respect to customary land, the Nemea Association's next step was to seek to establish its control over this land.
Early in 1971 Nemea officials presented a petition to the provincial commissioner. As well as pressing for registration of what they claimed to be Nemea Association land, with subsequent application of customary law within this area, the officials demanded a separate local government council and self-government in 1972. The proposed customary law included provisions for all plantations to revert to the Nemea Association after self-government, for penalties (six months gaol or K100 fine) against unauthorized entry to Nemea Association land and for payments by non Association members constructing a house or cutting a canoe on Association land; it also required all participating clans to plant coconut, coffee or cocoa on their land.

Subsequently, however, Nemea leaders took a stand more specifically against the local government structure and made it clear to the government that they would not accept any form of government other than that of the Nemea Association (though there was obviously a good deal of confusion among members as to what this involved). Members were advised not to pay 1970/71 council taxes. Commenting in September 1971 on the Association's demands, the provincial commissioner at the time observed that the government had two alternatives: to oppose the movement, which would mean pressing with prosecutions for non payment of council taxes in an area where the performance of councils had been less than satisfactory, or to go along with it. He favoured the latter course and recommended that for a two year trial period the Nemea Association be recognized as the governing body for the Nemea Association villages, which should be excluded from the Amazon Bay and Marshall Lagoon Local Government Councils; the Association should have a constitution, should levy an annual fee or tax, should be subject to audit and should maintain regular communication with the government but, he recommended, should be allowed to operate outside the Local Government Ordinance.

The Administrator appears to have been receptive to this suggestion but it was, predictably, opposed by the Office of Local Government which, already concerned by the opposition to councils
expressed by several other groups, feared that such action would set a precedent which could undermine the entire local government system. The suggestion was not taken up and the question remained unsettled.

In 1971 the Marshall Lagoon Local Government Council instigated prosecutions for non payment of council taxes by Nemea Association supporters. Almost two hundred summonses were served; about fifty people paid fines and warrants were issued against ninety people. Thirty-nine men were subsequently gaoled. However patrols frequently met with what was described as 'strong village resistance' and after an initial show of force both councils appear to have abandoned this approach, though they indicated that they would withdraw council services in Nemea Association areas until taxes had been paid.¹

Various demands for a separate Nemea government continued throughout 1972 and the central government was informed that no school, aid post, road or other form of development would be allowed in the area without the Nemea Association's permission; the Association did decide, however, to let the government remain on Abau Island as long as it took account of the wishes of the Association. In July 1972 a meeting of the Nemea Association, attended by Taureka, resolved to establish a system of luluai and tultul² and then to move towards the establishment of a monoracial council (as was being demanded by the Mataungan Association in the Gazelle Peninsula) to which 1971/72 taxes would be paid. It requested the government to send council notebooks but made it clear that it did not want council advisers, who it believed would 'trick' them, and it seems clear that despite Taureka's advice that a council could not have

¹ This denial of council services was repeated in 1974 (Post-Courier 22 November 1974) despite a request from the chief minister that the councils give this decision their 'most serious consideration'.

² Luluai and tultul were village officials appointed by government. The positions were introduced by the German colonial administration and retained by the Australian administration in New Guinea before the establishment of the local government council system. The luluai-tultul system did not exist in Papua, though government-appointed village constables filled much the same role.
legislative or executive powers unless properly formulated under the Local Government Ordinance, Nemea supporters saw their proposed council operating outside the ordinance. In a letter to the minister for local government, Taureka supported what he interpreted as the demand for a monoracial Nemea Local Government Council and the minister promised a full investigation. Subsequent talks between the central government and the Association, however, failed to produce a settlement.¹

Shortly after the July meeting Nemea leaders announced that the Association would have its own government with powers, including a cabinet and public service, similar to those of the coalition government; the Nemea government would be beneath but complementary to the central government and would have complete control in the Nemea Association area. Subsequently the Association appointed an executive committee with a president and 'ministers' with responsibilities corresponding to those of the ministries in the Somare government; there were even proposals for a Nemea army, navy and police force. Later, each of the ministries was allocated a budget of K56. Nemea leaders informed the Amazon Bay and Marshall Lagoon Local Government Councils that the Association did not recognize their authority and asked Provincial officials to cancel local government council elections in Nemea wards.

During 1972 Provincial officials conducted a survey of villages in the area to ascertain their views about local government. The survey reported that ten villages favoured a separate monoracial council, six wished to remain with existing councils, and two were in favour of 'central government' in the area.

Towards the end of 1972 Provincial officials again considered the arguments for and against recognizing Nemea Association authority and recommended accommodating the Association's demands for local autonomy. There were also requests for a clear departmental policy

¹ See Post-Courier 21 August 1972.
approach to the Nemea situation which could be submitted for approval to the AEC. The Office of Local Government, however, maintained its opposition to any scheme which operated outside the Local Government Ordinance, fearing that this would foster secessionist tendencies and undermine the local government system generally, and urged that if the Association did not, within a set time limit, make up its mind on the establishment of a separate council under the ordinance, the government should make it up for them. A submission went to the AEC in January 1973 requesting it to formulate policy with respect to the Nemea Association, with particular reference to the future of local government and land ownership and utilization, but no directive seems to have emerged.

In October 1972, at a Provincial conference, the Nemea Association apparently agreed to establish a council and a draft proclamation under the Local Government Ordinance of the Nemea Landowners Association was prepared. But this did not eventuate. Meanwhile the Association's leaders drew up a constitution and announced that an Association 'tax' would come into effect from February 1973.

Further discussions were held between the commissioner for local government, Nemea leaders and Marsh in August 1973. The commissioner expressed his willingness to help set up a small council, within the ordinance but not necessarily using the term 'council', and to investigate the possibility of financial assistance from the central government. The Association was

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1 The constitution of the Nemea Landowners' Association Incorporated, drawn up after consultation with the Public Solicitor's Office, was submitted to the registrar general in early 1973. Certain provisions of the constitution were not acceptable to the registrar general who referred it back to the Association for revision. At the end of 1976 the constitution had still not been resubmitted.

2 Tax rates were initially set at K3 for men, K1 for women and 50t for old men and inland people; 'really old people' were exempted. There was also to be a levy of K30 on new members and there was talk of a 'plantation labour tax' of 12t per fortnight. The 1975 tax rate was K11 for men; K2 for women and, again, lower rates for elderly and disabled, and inland people.
advised, however, that it had no authority to levy tax. Nothing seems to have come of this but in effect the government gave covert acceptance to the Association's claims to autonomy by not taking further action against Nemea supporters for non payment of council taxes and not taking action against the Association for what amounted to illegal collection of taxes.

In each year from 1973 the Association prepared a budget showing the allocation of its 'tax' revenue between projects. The bulk of revenue (which in 1975 amounted to K2525) went on church schools and missions, and roads; other amounts were spent on fishing nets, water supply, copra and coffee purchases and a truck. Early in 1974 Anai and Hua approached the central government for a loan of K9.5 million to establish the 'Nemea government'. The loan was to cover salaries of teachers, aid post orderlies and agricultural extension workers, to pay for roads, a high school and a health centre, and to meet the wages of plantation workers (presumably after the Association had taken over local plantations). Needless to say this request was not taken seriously; nor was a request in 1976 for a grant of K1.5 million for Nemea government.

When in September 1976 the Central Provincial Government was established Hua complained that the Nemea Association was not represented and that the Abau District would form its own government.

While the question of the form of local government was being debated, the Nemea leaders took more direct steps to establish control over the area they claimed as Association territory. This brought the Association into some conflict with other groups in the area.

One such conflict was that between Nemea supporters, particularly the coastal Badubadu people, and the non Association

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1 The central government's total expenditure for 1974/75 was K400 million.

people of Kapari-Viriolo. Unlike the Nemea villagers, the people of Kapari-Viriolo were traditionally fishermen but their rights to fish in Cloudy Bay were disputed by the Nemea supporters. This conflict sharpened following the installation of a freezer at Abau (see page 196); the Nemea Association claimed authority over the freezer and attempted, with little success, to exclude non Association members from using it.

Another source of friction was the encroachment of plantation workers on Nemea land. There were frequent complaints against plantation labourers stealing betel and coconuts from Nemea land, making gardens and cutting timber outside the plantations, poaching crocodiles, using shotguns illegally, and molesting women. At one stage in 1973 Agabu wrote to the minister for labour calling on him to stop plantation labourers from cutting timber on Nemea land and later that year, when Association members apprehended three boys allegedly sent by the manager of Robinson River plantation to steal betelnut, the Association fined the manager K2 and when he refused to pay wrote to the provincial commissioner and the manager of Burns Philp asking that he be gaoled and then repatriated out of the area. Another plantation manager was threatened with a K30 fine for cutting timber outside his plantation and a local trade store manager was threatened with a fine or gaol at Segili for offending Association members. In May 1975 a Nemea spokesman told the government that the Association did not want any more New Guineans settling in the area and said that if New Guineans did not return to their homes there might be 'serious trouble'.¹ There were also confrontations with timber and mining companies operating in the area and occasional threats that outsiders would be shot.

Business

Behind the dissatisfaction from which the Nemea Association drew its support was a sense of grievance that the people in the

¹ Post-Courier 2 May 1975.
area had been left behind in the process of development. At the basis of the demand for land registration was a desire for economic improvement.

This was reflected in the provision of the Nemea customary law that participating clans plant cash crops, and in early representations to the government Nemea leaders asked for assistance in establishing 'business', specifically mentioning cattle and fishing industries. In 1972 the Association approached the government, unsuccessfully, for K40,000 'supply' to assist the Association to buy coffee and copra, pay for sea transport and establish a sawmill, and in mid 1972 approached the Papua New Guinea Development Bank, again unsuccessfully, for finance to purchase a plantation and a cattle project. About this time, also, the Association entered negotiations with the Seventh Day Adventist mission over the purchase of a coastal trading vessel to carry passengers and cargo between Cloudy Bay and Port Moresby. Subsequently it held talks with Macair Charters Co. Pty. Ltd. with a view to becoming the local Macair agent and having fresh vegetables flown to market in Port Moresby. Then in December 1972, after an initial approach to the Department of Finance, the Association presented the Development Bank with a request for a loan of K400,000. The loan was to be used to provide working capital for the purchase of copra and coffee; to purchase a boat; to establish a sawmill and a goldmine; to buy trucks; and to pay for road building, aid post orderlies and agricultural fieldworkers. The same month another request was made for finance for a freezer and a cattle project. The Bank told Association leaders that it would be willing to lend for selected projects if the Association could show evidence of its ability to manage them; in the event no loan was granted.

In June 1972 a meeting of what was then the Central District Co-ordinating Committee gave special consideration to the possibilities for development in the Abau area. The (then) Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries (DASF) representative reported that his department had shown Anai and Agabu around some
cattle projects and had arranged for some Nemea supporters to attend courses but that there seemed to be little enthusiasm for cattle and though there was plenty of land suitable for cattle it remained unfenced. The Department of Forestry reported that there was not enough timber close to the river to justify a locally operated sawmill. The Department of Lands, Surveys and Mines representative said that his department was willing to send an officer to the area (which subsequently it did) but noted that the Association was opposed to prospecting. A suggestion that the Association be registered as a co-operative was opposed by the then Department of Business Development whose representative reported that the registrar of co-operatives considered that the Association would not meet the legal requirements for registration. Early in 1973, however, DASF established a freezer at Abau to promote the marketing of fish. The Nemea Association claimed the credit for this and sought to establish its authority over the use of the freezer, a move which brought it into conflict with the Kapari-Viriolo people (see above). But although Nemea membership included a couple of coastal villages the Nemea supporters were not traditionally fishermen and after an initial burst of enthusiasm made little use of the facility.

The Nemea Association's approach to development also brought it into conflict with mining and timber companies operating in the area. As early as August 1970 the Association approached the District Office, through the Land Titles Commission, asking that 'gold mines people' be prevented from entering land belonging to the Association and later that year Agabu wrote to the A.O.G. Exploration company saying that he did not recognize its prospecting authority in the area and had removed marking pegs used by the company in sampling beach sands at Table Bay. This opposition was repeated at a meeting between Nemea leaders, government officials and representatives of the company in 1971 and in several later representations to the government. Early in 1972, however, Anai visited the Bougainville copper mine, at the government's
expense, and on his return he seemed more favourably disposed to mining though he believed that if mining was possible the mine should be owned by the Nemea Association (he proposed borrowing from the World Bank for this purpose) and operated by an outside company under the Association's control. Subsequently there seems to have been some inconsistency in the Association's attitude to foreign mining companies but there remained a general suspicion of prospecting before land had been registered in the name of the Association and this undoubtedly prejudiced exploration.

The Association's position in relation to timber development was somewhat more ambiguous. In the 1960s the Department of Forests had granted several permits and licences for timber exploitation in the Abau area, the majority of them to Pacific Island Timbers Ltd. Nemea leaders had themselves tried unsuccessfully to initiate small scale timber development in the area and they were generally opposed to the presence of foreign owned timber companies, at least until Nemea land had been registered. There were several tense confrontations between Pacific Island Timbers and Nemea supporters who accused the company of 'tricking' them. On the other hand such companies offered immediate cash and they constructed roads. Both the Provincial Office and the Department of Forests saw the expansion of the timber industry, with some form of local involvement, as a possible means of alleviating dissatisfaction over the lack of economic development in the area. Early in 1973 the Association was reported to have entered negotiations - apparently on its own initiative but with the concurrence of the minister for forests - with an overseas company for the sale of substantial quantities of timber from around the Robinson River plantation but the company eventually withdrew. Timber thus provided a small source of income but there has been no large scale development.

1 At one stage Pacific Island Timbers had an informal arrangement with villagers to pay for logs at a rate of 10t per 100 super feet. In 1974 Nemea leaders were talking of raising the payment from 10t to K3.
With the prospect of a land settlement in sight and with an apparent stalemate on the issue of an autonomous government, towards the end of 1973 the Association seems to have become increasingly concerned with questions of economic development. Sometime in late 1973 or early 1974 the Association produced a 'development plan' for the Abau area (the first of several 'plans') which listed as objectives: '(i) copra marketing board, (ii) timber industry, (iii) national park, (iv) copper mining, (v) fishing industries, (vi) rubber factory'. It appears that a further approach was made to the Development Bank at this time, but again without success. Nemea leaders accused the central government of blocking the loan they expected to get. About the same time there was talk of establishing an Abau development bank, with funds to come from the Cloudy Bay Savings Club, ¹ virtually defunct co-operatives in the area and the bank accounts of the Nemea Association and the Nemea Branch of the Pangu Pati. It seems to have been intended that the bank's funds be used to finance the marketing of copra and coffee. The Association also intensified its demand for roads, particularly a road from Doma village to the Robinson River wharf. Subsequently Anai and Hua began buying copra and coffee from Nemea supporters for resale in Port Moresby, using funds from 'tax' revenue and the savings club; towards the end of 1974 Hua claimed to have bought nine tons of produce, of which four tons had already been shipped to Port Moresby.

Late in 1974 Provincial officials discussed with Nemea supporters the possible development of a road from Doma to Robinson River and recommended the purchase of a tractor. ² If the people bought a tractor or two, it was suggested, government funds

¹  Savings clubs are normally regarded as a preliminary step towards the establishment of savings and loan societies - credit union type organizations which have been promoted through the central bank. The Cloudy Bay Savings Club was established in 1968 but did not receive the support necessary to justify its registration as a savings and loan society and soon became moribund. In 1973-74 there was a good deal of talk about having the club registered but at the end of 1976 it was still a savings club.

²  See Post-Courier 22 November 1974.
and technical assistance would be provided to help construct the road. In 1975 Rural Improvement Programme funds were provided for this purpose and the following year a tractor and trailer were purchased with the assistance of a grant from the Village Economic Development Fund\(^1\) and a loan from the Development Bank.

**Relations with government**

As with many micronationalist movements, the Nemea Association's attitude towards the government has been complex. At the outset the Association sought to achieve its objectives largely through the existing bureaucratic structure as it understood it. Its leaders made frequent representations, personally and by letter, to District and Provincial officials, directly to relevant departments in Port Moresby, and in 1971 to the Administrator himself. After the Pangu-led coalition came to power early in 1972 the Association (whose leaders, it will be remembered, also described themselves as the Nemea Branch of the Pangu Pati) supplemented this by frequent direct approaches to politicians, particularly the local member, Taureka.\(^2\)

Even at this early stage, however, there were elements of hostility to the government. In August 1970 Nemea leaders complained that government officers had cut grass from land near Segili to use in the construction of a school and they demanded compensation of K1000;\(^3\) 'Many, many years', they said, 'the government has done the wrong thing to us. They have stolen our

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\(^1\) This fund was established by the central government in 1974 to provide financial assistance to village groups.

\(^2\) Association members clearly expected a return from their membership. An early field report, in fact, speaks of 'an undercurrent of a Cargo Cult...in as much as the people have come to believe that if and when Pangu Party come to power...then all the benefits they hope to achieve will flow from this source'.

\(^3\) An investigation revealed that the landowner had donated the grass to the school and no compensation was paid.
timber and our land'. General opposition to local government was in evidence as early as 1971 and early in 1972 there were reports of lack of co-operation with expatriate field officers. A field report in 1972 expressed concern at a 'racist trend' in Nemea's activities, reflected in hostility to expatriate field officers and complaints that there were too many whites in the area.

Due largely to mounting frustration over what it considered to be a conscious ignoring of its demands and due partly to clashes over the non payment of council taxes, from the early months of 1972 the Association progressively adopted a more aggressive stance. In April Anai stopped contractors from collecting mangrove timber for a proposed school building and in May he informed the government that though the Association would accept the offer of a freezer it would accept no other government services. In the same month the Association sent a petition to the U.N. calling for land registration, autonomous government and social and economic development. Three months later Agabu threatened violence against a land titles commissioner who had handed down a decision against a Nemea supported claimant and about this time Nemea supporters spoke with apparent approval of the recent murder of East New Britain provincial commissioner Jack Emmanuel by Mataungan Association supporters. On several occasions riot police were sent to the area to ensure that trouble did not occur in connection with land matters and timber milling operations.

Relations deteriorated during 1973. In January the Association protested to the Australian minister for external territories that the government in general and Taureka in particular had continually ignored its representations and it also took its protests to the Post-Courier and the National Broadcasting Commission. Particular resentment was felt against Taureka, who was accused of 'breaking the law' by failing to help the people as he had been elected to do, and

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it was said that the Association would get rid of him; more generally there was a feeling that the Association had been betrayed by Pangu leaders. Shortly after this the Association boycotted a visit by representatives of the Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters and refused to take part in the activities of a discussion group set up in Abau (as in other parts of the country) to discuss material being circulated by the Constitutional Planning Committee. During the negotiations which preceded the reversion of land to customary title Nemea supporters were generally unco-operative, and sometimes hostile to the point that investigating officers reported threats to their lives. In 1974 Anai and Hua threatened to 'go on to the plantations' in February 1975 if the Association had not received recognition from the government.

On its part, the attitude of the central government towards the Nemea Association was fairly consistently sympathetic. Early field reports saw the Association as having emerged from a justifiable sense of frustration and urged a conciliatory approach to the question of land, local government and economic development. The Association was seen as 'not a hostile group', but with the potential to become one; its leaders were acknowledged to be 'difficult' but it was believed that they meant well. As late as mid 1972 the Central District Co-ordinating Committee agreed that the only possible action was to meet people's needs where this was feasible and to explain the difficulties where it was not. A field report about this time spoke of 'a massive misconception of Government in any form' but political education efforts in the area were described by officials as 'low key and not well received'.

In November 1971, at a meeting at Kupiano attended by government officers, members of the House of Assembly (including

Somare, and representatives of the Nemea Association, the Amazon Bay and Marshall Lagoon Local Government Councils and A.O.G. Exploration, an attempt was made to rationalize the Association's demands and resolve them amicably. However this achieved little other than to emphasize the incoherence of these demands except at a very abstract level.

Subsequently government officers tended to take the initiative in formulating proposals intended to accord with the wishes of the Association. On the question of land, there was from the start a general sympathy with the Association's demands and although the existing legislation precluded the particular solution sought by the Association, the decision to return the land to customary title marked a major breakthrough in government policy with respect to alienated land. On the question of local government, early support for recognition of the Association as the governing authority for the Nemea villages, outside the Local Government Ordinance, was in marked contrast to the government's earlier responses to similar movements and though this view did not prevail, the government's approach to the issue (notwithstanding the early intransigence of the Office of Local Government and the moderately hard line taken on the question of council taxes) was generally conciliatory; the failure to reach a settlement was due more than anything else to confusion on the part of the Association members as to what they actually wanted. In the area of economic development more assistance might have been provided by government departments though some earnest efforts by individual field officers in the early 1970s were frustrated by a lack of commitment on the part of Nemea supporters.

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1 A government circular to all provincial commissioners, dated June 1974, spoke of the 'considerable success' achieved in recent dealings with land demarcation and disputes over boundaries of clan land in the Central Province (the reference was clearly to the Cloudy Bay-Abau negotiations) and detailed the approach taken, recommending the techniques to commissioners. The approach outlined emphasized discussion aimed at obtaining general agreement on boundaries defined by natural features.
At the political level, the Association executive continued to enjoy easy access to ministers until well into 1972 and ministers, particularly Taureka, made some effort to accommodate their demands. Between then and the beginning of 1973, however, relations appear to have deteriorated. Replying to criticisms by the Association in January 1973 Taureka was reported as saying that meetings with the Association had 'proved fruitless because of a complete lack of understanding by the Association executive of both government and local government' and that 'as the situation stood, there was no way in which central Government could help the people in an orderly fashion'. Shortly after, the acting chief minister (John Guise) said that the government would not tolerate the sovereignty claims of the Nemea Association; 'The sooner they come to their senses the better'.

About this time also a change in provincial commissioner brought a less conciliatory attitude to the Provincial Office and growing fears of intimidation of non Nemea members in the area and of violence against government officers led to suggestions that the police detachment in the area be strengthened.

Notwithstanding this, the government maintained a general policy of non confrontation and the decision to appoint a special investigating officer to look at the Nemea situation was essentially conciliatory. Moreover, the appointment of Marsh assured that the Association's demands, though lacking in clarity, would be dealt with sympathetically.

The government's recognition of the Nemea Association, as some warned it would, perhaps added weight to the Association's leadership and helped promote it, sometimes to the dismay of

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pro government neighbours. However the success of this strategy seems to have been reflected in the avoidance of violent confrontation and the successful handover of alienated land.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Nemea Landowners' Association was the result of a feeling of frustration among a group of people who felt themselves to have been robbed of their land, neglected by the government, exploited by foreign companies, generally passed by in the process of economic development and on the verge of being invaded by squatters.

In a quite fundamental sense the basic ambition of the Nemea Association was to withdraw from the larger political system, to secure its own boundaries, and to establish its authority within that area, and to do all this before independence.

In its formation and subsequent activities the Nemea Association was clearly influenced by the experience of other regionally based dissident groups, particularly the Mataungan Association and to a lesser extent Papua Besena, and it actively sought to extend its membership beyond the initial narrow scope of the Nemea villages; nevertheless it remained essentially a parochial movement drawing strength from its local, largely ethnic base. By 1978 it seems to have faded out of existence.

Paradoxically, its attempts to withdraw in fact brought the movement into closer contact with the central government. Its position in relation to the government, to which, despite its ideological isolationism, it looked for financial and other developmental assistance was initially ambivalent. But inevitably as its demands were not fulfilled the movement became increasingly hostile towards the government and increasingly inward looking. The demands which the Association made, and the expectations it apparently held, were often incoherent and irrational, and at
times the Association displayed a detachment from reality which bordered on cargo cultism.\footnote{Apart from demands listed above, such as the request for a grant of K9.5 million, and the claim made to local 'central' government, there was a rumour in the area at one stage that the Association had received several thousand dollars from U.S. President Nixon.} However there is little evidence that failure to achieve these demands was seen by Nemea followers as a failure on the part of the Association: the achievement of stated objectives seems to have been less important to the bulk of its members than the sense of identity which the Association created.
THE AHI VILLAGES AND ASSOCIATED MIGRANT SETTLEMENTS

Figure 7.1
Chapter 7

CITY AND VILLAGE: THE AHI RESPONSE*

R. Adams

The urban presence

The five peri-urban villages of Butibam, Ahi-Hengali, Kamkumun, Yanga and Wagan adjoin the city of Lae a little beyond the Bumbu river, a boundary purporting to divide village from town. Butibam (with a population in 1970 of 824)¹ and Kamkumun (282) both lie close to the eastern banks of the Bumbu, some two to three kilometres from the centre of the city, while Wagen (272) and Yanga (214) are located several kilometres further to the east. These Lae, or Ahi, villages, are closely bound by ties of kinship and common culture. They are of recent origin, being peopled first by the numerically preponderant Kawa from Bakaua, some fifty kilometres along the coast east from Lae, and towards the end of the 19th century by migrants from the middle and lower Markham valley who sought refuge with the Kawa settlers from the depredations of the warlike Laewombas. These recent migrants called themselves the Ahi (Lahe as rendered in Jabim and Kawa), and although they were a minority the term Lahe or Lae was used by Europeans to describe the collection of hamlets in the area of the present village settlements.²

Establishment of a European presence brought to the villagers, in the past as in the present, mixed blessings. The presence of a

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* An earlier draft of this paper was prepared during a sojourn at the IDS Sussex University and the author expresses appreciation to the IDS for the use of facilities. Acknowledgement is due also to John Ballard for beneficial comment and encouragement.

¹ Population figures are from a village census conducted by the (then) Lae sub-district office in August 1970.

² The history of the Ahi villages is recorded in detail in Willis (1974). See also articles by various authors in the Morobe Historical Society Journals.
Lutheran mission station in 1912 brought protection from the warring Laewombas and favoured access to education, employment and positions in the mission structure. However a cost of European contact was the resultant loss of land: some was made freely available to the mission for its Ampo station and Malahang plantation and some - 11,400 acres between the lower Markham and Bumbu river, much of which is now occupied by the city of Lae - was appropriated by the German Neu Guinea Kompagnie. The emergence of Lae in the period after the second world war as a fast growing industrial and commercial centre and Papua New Guinea's second largest city,\(^1\) brought an increasingly obtrusive presence, a presence that revealed to the villagers the costs as well as the benefits of the external influence.

Despite the remarkable changes which have taken place in recent years Lae still possesses to a noteworthy degree the characteristics of most colonial towns: a clear division between expatriate and indigene and marked inequalities of wealth and status. Village interests, along with those of the migrant labour drawn to the town, have (in the past) been clearly subordinated to the interests of the colonizers and their administrative and socio-economic systems. In earlier years the foreign presence was less pervasive and villagers were able to minimize its impact through co-operation with the foreign authorities and manipulation of the imposed systems to their own advantage. The rapidly expanding postwar urban presence and influence, however, brought severe pressures upon the traditionally oriented village systems, presenting a clear physical threat to the survival of village identity and autonomy. In response to these pressures the Ahi Association emerged as one of the most sophisticated and assertive political groups in Papua New Guinea.

Physical intrusion by the urban system has been most evident

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\(^1\) Lae gained city status in December 1972.
in the growth of migrant settlements upon village land. Butibam and Kamkumun villages being closest to the city have been least insulated from the impact of the rapidly growing city and have most visibly been affected by the intrusion. Growth of migrant settlements upon both government and village land has in the past tended to occur in an opportunistic manner without plan, direction or effective control. Settlement upon village land has taken place where permission has been gained from the relevant papa bilong grawn (the pidgin term for the person in whom authority over traditional land rights is vested) or where minimal opposition from such a person was manifested. Traditional hospitality conventions, particularly where a marriage, exchange, church or work relationship existed, and the attraction of regular rental income allowed footholds to be established on the edges of village land. Where a given site is favourably located in relation to employment and service facilities a continuing influx of further settlers may readily occur unless close supervision and control is exercised. This has been the experience of the Ahi villagers in regard to several such settlements and having lost a considerable proportion of their land as a consequence of early European contact, and subject to internal population pressures and widening commercial involvements, the Ahi felt themselves faced with the threat of further land loss to the migrant settlers.

The largest of these settlements and the greatest source of contention is the Buko settlement on the banks of the Bumbu river, wedged between Butibam village and the sea. Prior to 1963 the settlement was quite small. However a large number of migrants living across the river at 'Chinatown' were evicted at this time and being unable to meet town building regulations many moved across the river to Buko. From the migrants' viewpoint this has been a familiar experience. Though providing a large proportion of Lae's unskilled and semi skilled labour their accommodation

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1 *Buko* is a Butibam word meaning 'red water' (Willis 1974:48). The designation 'Bumbu Settlement' is perhaps more common.
problem has been recognized only by a few and the 'squatter settlements' generally seen as a refuge for undesirables and unemployed vagrants.

Proximity to the town centre and the main industrial area stimulated Buko's rapid growth despite overcrowding, poor drainage and absence of services. Though unmistakably Butibam land, there has been some disagreement as to its control and this has allowed settlers to consolidate and the situation to develop to almost unmanageable proportions. Gaiya Nomgul, a former Huon councillor, lives on the land, apart from the village, and as leader of the Tumata clan he claims authority in regard to the disposition of the land and has collected regular rentals from the settlers.

Butibam Progress Association - village and Administration

The Butibam Progress Association, the forerunner of the Ahi Association, was established in 1964 through the efforts of Stephen Ahi and Muttu Gware against a background of growing concern with these urban influences. Its establishment approximately coincided with the rapid industrial development of Lae which accompanied the construction of the Highlands Highway in the early 1960s. Ahi, who had been posted to the Butibam Primary 'T' School (he now works as a sales representative in Lae), and Gware, formerly the Post-Courier's advertising officer in Lae, conceived the idea of a village association as a means of strengthening village organization and solidarity and facilitating socio-economic development, particularly in view of the disintegrative influences of town life. These two represented the emergence of a new generation of aspiring village leaders, relatively well educated, anxious to use modern structures and practices to advantage but somewhat disdainful of the colonial institutions which had shaped relationships between preceding generations and the Administration. Broadly they sought

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1 Lae's total indigenous population in 1961 was estimated at between 7000 and 8000 but had grown to 19,664 in 1970 and 64,000 in 1975. Population of Buko was estimated as 400 in 1965 whilst in 1974 it exceeded 5000. (Rofe 1965; Lae City Council Annual Report 1974-75; W. Knoll, personal communication; and official sources.)
to develop structures and initiatives at the village level, facilitate effective adaptation to internal and external pressures and enable positive responses to the new circumstances with which they were faced. Assisted by their respective brothers they gained the support of village elders.

The Butibam Association structure follows established lines of formal organization: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and a general committee of twelve members which draws two representatives from each of the six village clans. The structuring of the general committee in this manner provides a link between traditional and modern, a link which is reinforced by the procedure of separate clan meetings prior to the full Association meeting each Thursday night. General village meetings are also held, usually each Sunday. Special subcommittees have been formed for local government, market and cultural centre, health, club, water reticulation and land, and official village spokesmen are appointed to provide formal contact with church and government. During the early years of the Association's operation (as indicated by the choice of local government as the first specialist subcommittee) the Association actively co-operated with the Huon Council; indeed several Butibam villagers have at different times served as Council president. Relative to other villagers the Butibam people have been well served in their relationship with the Council and the central government. Benefits they have received include a health clinic, primary school and vocational school all located adjacent to the village; a copra drier, street lighting and a K1000 Council contribution towards the Butibam market. Current efforts are directed towards the establishment,

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The Huon Council, which encompassed the narrow coastal lowlands on either side of Lae and the lower half of the Markham valley, was suspended in July 1974 because of financial and administrative problems and widespread loss of support. Currently the Council is in the process of reconstitution. Efforts were made in 1976 to establish two smaller councils, for Salamaua and Bukaua, and a Wompar Development Corporation, to assume responsibilities for the suspended Huon Council. The boundaries of the Lae City Council were drawn so as to exclude a large migrant settlement and the Ahi villages.
with central government assistance, of a Morobe cultural centre on village land adjacent to the Butibam market. On balance the villagers have been generous in making land available for these facilities which are widely used by other groups, and the Council benefited considerably from an earlier gravel lease arrangement with the Butibam people.

Benefits notwithstanding, relations between Council and Administration and the Butibam Progress Association progressively deteriorated. Land has been of paramount concern to the villagers and the greatest cause of friction. A land claim which villagers had persistently and peacefully pursued over a period of fifty years, with no evident sign of success (see Willis 1972), increasingly became a source of resentment and an issue around which the villagers could unite in opposition to external influences.

Absence of progress in the matter of the land claim was paralleled by the increased incursion of settlers upon village land and the inability of the Administration or Council to control this movement. The failure of the Huon Council to take the part of the villages in these issues was no surprise to younger Butibam people such as Muttu Gware and Stephen Ahi who saw the Council as an appendage of the colonial Administration, but the alleged attempt by the *kiap* to influence councillors and village elders against the younger village activists and the village bodies they now promoted caused anger and frustration. The rift was emphasised and further widened by disagreements with Administration staff and the Council concerning the siting of the Butibam health clinic and the terms of the Bumbu river gravel lease. The Butibam people subsequently withdrew the gravel lease from Council control and a valuable source of income for the Council was lost, further

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1 An earlier agreement gave the Council authority in respect to extraction of gravel from the Bumbu river adjacent to Butibam village. Disagreement over revenue sharing agreements between village and Council, and the increased friction between Butibam Association leaders and the Administration, led to cancellation of this agreement and the negotiation of a lease with Barclay Bros.
exacerbating the relationships.

Relations were allowed to deteriorate further with the preparation and publication in December 1971, without effective consultation with villagers, of the Lae Urban Development Study (Russell D. Taylor and Partners 1971). The proposals broadly argued that future urban growth should take place between the Busu and Bumbu rivers, despite earlier alleged Administration assurances to the contrary.¹ Such conclusions, however, were largely unavoidable. Future expansion of the town inevitably must occur principally in this direction as the Markham swamp and the Adzera range to the west leave only a very narrow corridor for expansion. Nevertheless, detailed and appropriately illustrated maps of the suggested land use format for the area, displayed at the time of the plan release, were seen to some understandably suspicious village minds as a clear blueprint for further land seizures since much of the proposed development concerned village land held under customary tenure. Village feelings were exacerbated by the proposal that an exchange of government land and the mission land at Malahang should take place to facilitate development plans. This was a further indication to the villagers of government machination, since this land - originally made available so that the mission could establish a plantation and thus prevent the loss of village labour to distant plantations - is considered rightfully theirs and to be returned.

Although the study was prepared by a private firm with limited knowledge of Lae politics the consultants were not unaware of the village land situation and it seems incredible that this fundamental

¹ Villagers state that they were given assurances by Administrator Hay that future development of Lae would be west towards the Markham and thus not involve village land. (Muttu Gware, personal communication 4 March 1972.)
issue was not given more attention. The Administration demonstrated a remarkable lack of sensitivity and forethought in not arranging proper discussions with the villagers and effectively involving villagers in the planning process. However, in view of the political circumstances and the accompanying tension prior to the 1972 elections, particularly the antipathy of several Administration officials towards 'radical' groups such as the Pangu Pati and the Ahi Association, this neglect may not have been so much an oversight as an absence of effective communication and an unwillingness to demonstrate unnecessary goodwill.

Anticipating problems with respect to village land the planners provided three alternative growth strategies as a short term solution to the customary land problem. However, this strategem served principally to allow deferral of the issue. The response reflects to some degree the subordinate role assigned to the villages in the town's development and the influence of a school of thought during this period which held that the passage of time would bring governments more willing to move against urban landowners who frustrated development plans and a breakdown of organized village opposition to such plans. There is some logic, if little morality, in this view but it was essentially a negative approach and one which eschewed the very positive initiatives which were required in the situation.

Motives aside, the presentation of the Urban Development

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1 Chapter 7 of the Study Report discusses the problem of customary land tenure but the problem is not given the emphasis one would expect given that the success of the plan depended upon the cooperation of the Ahi villagers. Nor do there appear to have been significant efforts to explain the situation to villagers before the release of the plan. No reflection whatsoever is intended here upon the integrity of the planning team which operated according to its brief and in an environment beyond its control. It should be realized that, with the emergence of the Pangu and Butibam political movements, divisions within the Lae Town Council and the approach of the 1972 elections, the situation prevailing in Lae was one of considerable tension.
Study provided major support for two closely related developments that preceded the public release of the plans: Stephen Ahi had determined to stand as a candidate for the Lae Open electorate in the 1972 national general election and the Ahi Association was formally established in November 1971 as a representative body embracing all the Ahi villages. It is difficult to disentangle the processes of cause and effect here. Political candidacy and the creation of an inter village association were mutually supportive and the land and planning issue certainly provided the major rallying call to action. The Ahi Association's establishment had been preceded by some six weeks of discussion between the villages but the Butibam people had knowledge of the planning study well before the public release through their own very effective intelligence system and limited contact with the planning team (the villagers were most indignant and considered this limited contact unsatisfactory but were unable to arrange a meeting between the planners and village leaders). Stephen Ahi's candidacy appears to have been motivated to a degree by personal ambition but there was a clear consensus favouring accelerated movement in this direction and he received full support for his nomination from the village congregation.

**Formation of the Ahi Association**

The Ahi Association was a logical extension of the Butibam Progress Association and broadly represented a widening of the Butibam response - a recognition that a combined effort was necessary in the pursuit of political power and public support and in the struggle against the continuing encroachment of the migrant settlers, and a recognition of a need for stronger and more direct action. The land claim being pressed through the Supreme Court and the High Court of Australia certainly required closer inter village cooperation and the Lae Urban Study had clearly demonstrated the need for unity in the fight against any Administration-imposed urban development. Reflecting the pressure of events, the Association was stated as having two
specific aims: 'firstly to press the present land claim through to a successful conclusion and secondly, to prevent the imposition of any of the town plan proposals which are contrary to the interests of the villages and likely to lead to further land alienation' (Stephen Ahi, personal communication February 28, 1972). The formation of the Ahi Association unmistakably marked a move towards confrontation and away from co-operation with institutions such as the Huon Council.

It should be emphasized that the Ahi Association, as formed and in its operations to date, primarily represents the collective interests of the five Ahi villages, acting on their behalf in matters of common concern and publicly promoting these common interests. It has co-ordinating functions but does not in itself possess great power or have command over significant resources of its own. The Association is primarily a growth from the Butibam Progress Association and is considerably dominated by the Butibam people as a consequence of their initiative and organization, their greater initial concern in these matters and their clear numerical dominance. Muttu Gware and Samson Ahi of Yanga initially were appointed president and vice president of the Association, with Stephen Ahi patron, and Butibam people occupied the majority of the remaining executive positions. Modest subscription fees are paid by the five villages for whom the Association acts as an umbrella organization. Meetings are generally held each month but may be held more frequently during periods of intense political activity.

Election to the House of Assembly of an Ahi Association candidate was expected to provide direct access to the machinery of government and access to the forums of the House of Assembly as a means of influencing public opinion in regard to the land claim and the associated problems of migrant settlement. It is a measure of village concern and the strength of sophistication of their response that a broad programme of direct political
participation, skilful use of the media and pressures upon
Administration and settlers has been pursued.

The Lae Open election campaign, 1972

Stephen Ahi's candidacy for the Lae Open electorate added
a further element to what became a most extraordinary campaign,
a campaign characterized by manoeuvres and manipulations by
sections of the business community and a small section of the
Administration to ensure election of an acceptable candidate and
in particular to prevent election of Pangu candidate Toni Ila.¹

Stephen Ahi conducted a well organized campaign second in
terms of organization and effort only to that of Pangu. He had
a number of factors operating in his advantage - he was a
Morobean (Ila was from Papua, a fact emphasized by some of his
opponents); he had extremely strong village support in his own
area, though - as returns later indicated - by no means complete
support from the smaller Ahi villages; his position was improved
by the strong campaign against Ila, and he was able to present a
favourable image to the general public as an ex-teacher,
insurance representative and member of Apex, the District
Education Board and the Papua New Guinea Central Banking Advisory
Committee of the Reserve Bank of Australia.

As against this Stephen Ahi was campaigning against a very
industrious and skilful organizer representing the Pangu Pati in

¹ Eki Vaki, a Papuan school teacher, was the most 'favoured'
candidate receiving strong Public Service Association support
and firm assistance from the business community. Brian Bogagu,
a Pangu Pati defector, was given similar support though on a
lesser scale. The Administration's neutrality was rather
stretched by the behaviour of several officers; Butibam and
Kamkumun villagers were asked by a senior Administration
official to stand against nominated candidates; Boyamo Sali
(standing for the regional seat) was pressured to stand as a
United Party candidate, and Pangu polling booth scrutineers
were continually excluded from the main polling booth. It is
noteworthy that one of the early moves of the Pangu Pati upon
gaining power concerned the removal of the incumbent Morobe
provincial commissioner.
the very heart of the strongest Pangu area of the country. Although Ila had developed a strong personal following, primarily he was able to identify his name with the Pangu Pati and organize a considerable turnout of people voting for a party and the changes and the values it represented to them. Pangu was unquestionably the predominant political movement in Lae and other parts of the Province, and expatriate opposition served to strengthen its influence. To a very great extent low income migrant settlers living in no covenant or low covenant areas constituted the core of Pangu strength in the city and a clear majority of the urban population. Stephen Ahi was operating from a much smaller base, essentially that of the minority village landowners, and his appeal did not reach sufficiently far to seriously challenge Toni Ila.

The election marked a firm split between Pangu and the Ahi Association and left a division that continues to mar Lae politics. Relations prior to the election had been reasonably close and the party had made some effort to maintain close links with the Ahi villagers. Muttu Gware in fact had served as a secretary to the party and was one of four candidates nominated in the Pangu pre-selection for the Lae seat, which went to a vote of the branch's members. He effectively withdrew when it became clear that Toni Ila would win the vote and moves for an independent Ahi candidate were in motion. Despite common ground and Pangu's strong land rights policy there was a basic division between the assertive Ahi Association leadership, pursuing business development and seeking strict control over migrant settlers, and Pangu's natural alliance with its migrant settler supporters.

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1 Tony Voutas, the previous Morobe Regional member and a major figure in the development of the Pati, was based in Lae until 1972, encouraging the establishment of a major grass roots movement throughout the Province. All but one of the nine Morobe seats were won by Pangu candidates. Toni Ila to some degree took over Voutas' mantle though his major concern with Worker's Association affairs and his Papuan origins have served to limit the spread of his influence beyond Lae.
Pre election disputes and friction engendered by the election campaign itself added to this division. Stephen Ahi, though a splendid 'strong man' in many ways, alienated some by his aggressive manner and it is alleged that the large Catholic Sepik community at Buko were threatened with removal if they did not support the Ahi candidate. The Ahi Association leaders for their part attest that Pangu promised to support settlers against the Association. There is no evidence of explicit promises in this direction by Toni Ila himself but general assistance was naturally promised and it is quite probable that people gave their own interpretations to these promises.

The formation of the Ahi Association, signalling as it did a much more assertive stance by the villagers, drew a negative response from sections of the Administration and the Huon Council. The Ahi Association was seen by some as a Mataungan-style organization operating as an alternative and competitive body to the Huon Council and therefore to be opposed. There was a wide gap between the values and assumptions underlying the new wave of political behaviour and those of the Administration officers and the traditional councillors helping to uphold the established order. Some of these councillors, including some from the Ahi villages, were persuaded that the Ahi Association was dangerous and its leaders irresponsible. The absence of meaningful communication between leaders and external authority during the early period of the Association's life exacerbated these differences and discouraged mutually beneficial co-operation.

Huon Council lost further support due to its inability to perform a positive role in these matters and to the extent to which the councillors and Council president were cast in the role of critics of the Ahi Association and apologists for the Administration. Despite shortcomings in other directions, the Council was placed at this juncture in a formidable position, quite beyond its capabilities, as a consequence of the impasse in
regard to Buko migrant settlers and the inability of the government effectively to come to terms with the new political movement.

**Migrant settlement**

A major source of friction between the Pangu Pati and Stephen Ahi and his supporters during the Lae Open election had been the extent to which Pangu had encouraged support from the settlers. In the post election period this problem was to assume more serious proportions and add to the difficulties of the Huon Council. The Ahi Association, having failed in its bid to gain political representation and obtaining no satisfaction through the courts in its land claim, now sought to exert pressure through the migrant settlers. A determined effort was mounted to remove unwelcome settlers; many migrants were served notices to quit and a number of gardens was destroyed.

The problem during this period had become increasingly difficult. An Administration survey of the migrant settlement situation indicated a total of 4090 migrant settlers on Butibam and Kamkumun land in 1966, and 12,826 in January 1973. Almost half of these were located at Buko, which constituted by far the most intractable problem. Many of the settlers had made regular rental payments to Gaiya Nomgul, the Butibam *papa bilong graun*, and many had erected quite substantial dwellings and were long established residents of the area. This notwithstanding, they were subject to pressures from two directions: pressure from Huon Council arising from non payment of personal tax, and the threats of eviction continually made against them by Butibam representatives of the Ahi Association. Since Butibam approval could not be obtained for any improvements to the settlement their principal return from past Council taxes had been a rough

1 A Supreme Court ruling in 1971 acknowledged the villagers' claims to land ownership but awarded compensation on the basis of values operating at the time of appropriation by the Australian Administration in 1927, a sum of K7200.

access road yet they were being continually summoned by the Council for non payment of taxes as the Council feared that exemption would encourage further non payment of taxes in the rural wards.

Butibam and Ahi Association opposition to the settlement stems from a number of interrelated developments. The emergence of the Butibam Progress Association coincided with the rapid growth of Buko adjacent to Butibam village. The Association was aggrieved by the loss of rental income from migrants and anxious to secure orderly development of the land under Progress Association control. Complaints of molestation of village women in their gardens and repeated incidents between Buko settlers and Butibam villagers following drinking sessions at the nearby 'native' Returned Servicemen's League further heightened tension. The establishment of a strong Roman Catholic presence, drawing support principally from the Sepik settlers and physically demonstrated by the construction of a church hall in the centre of the settlement, greatly inflamed Butibam Lutheran sensitivities. The close alliance between the migrant settlers and Pangu during the 1972 House of Assembly election campaign and the failure of the Ahi candidate served to harden the views of some villagers against the settlers and the Pangu Pati.

Increased pressure upon the settlers during the second quarter of 1972 brought a response in the House of Assembly from Toni Ila, the member for Lae Open, who asked the minister for lands, 'Is it a fact that people from Butibam, Kamkumun, Wagan and Yanga villages are constantly chasing squatters from their land and have now threatened to remove these squatters within six weeks? Is it also a fact that the villagers have destroyed

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1 It was proposed that part of the area be developed as an industrial estate.

2 See Post-Courier 2 June 1972.
any food grown by these squatters on their land?\textsuperscript{1} Muttu Gware, presenting the village case earlier, had stated, 'The Association was not trying to eject the squatters who had legitimate jobs. We want to get rid of the ones who come to town, find they can't get work and end up getting into trouble'.\textsuperscript{2} In pursuing this approach a list of 200 unemployed settlers was presented to the District Office for police action but no action resulted. Considering the explosive nature of the situation this inaction was not unwise.

Against a background of increasing friction a special visit to the area was made by Chief Minister Michael Somare, who was accompanied by Messrs. Kiki, Sali and Ila, on 8 July 1972. Meetings were held at Buko, Butibam and Kamkumun. At the Buko settlement the general sentiment of the settlers was against moving but the problem of some 'irresponsible troublemakers' was acknowledged. At Butibam, Stephen Ahi spoke strongly of the problems experienced by the villagers and townspeople from the unemployed settlers and stressed the value to the country of the commercial developments planned by the villagers and the need to support indigenous business development. Although no significant agreement came from these meetings they did enable an exchange of viewpoints, provide government members with a greater insight into the problem and enable some respite for the settlers from the pressure that was being applied to them.

A further development occurred with a meeting on 23 August 1972 of Huon Council representatives, District officials, Buko residents and representatives from Butibam village to consider the resistance of the Buko residents to the payment of tax, complaints over the lack of service and the call for access roads through the Buko settlement. The Buko residents angrily complained that they had paid personal tax for more than three years but the

\textsuperscript{1} HAD 3(4):311, 26-27 June 1972.
\textsuperscript{2} Post-Courier 2 June 1972.
only benefit provided by the Council had been a very rough access road worth no more than K300. Additional complaints were made regarding the contaminated Bumbu river water supply, the poor drainage and the lack of suitable access road in case of emergency. Muttu Gware in response stressed the difficulty of gaining permission for the construction of improved access roads since there are many claiming traditional land rights. Stephen Ahi was far less sympathetic, adamantly stressing that villagers must pay Council tax and accept the authority of the landowners (the Ahi Association). Approval in this instance, he stressed, would depend upon the plan being drawn up by the Ahi Association for the development of the area. Geibob Masawa, the Council president, and some of the Butibam elders adopted a somewhat more conciliatory line and indicated that this problem was beyond the means of the Council and must be solved by the government. Considerable tension prevailed at the meeting and to avoid further conflict the Council and government officials indicated at the end of the meeting that personal tax prosecutions would not be pursued while the Buko leaders for their part agreed to restrain their people from violence. A further meeting was held at which a somewhat less rigid attitude was expressed by the Butibam leaders but again no resolution of the conflict was achieved.

1973 brought more positive signs of progress in relation to the problem of migrant settlement. Development of new no convenant and low convenant areas was undertaken at Three Mile, Taraka and Boundary Road and discussion initiated in the early part of the year concerning the possible establishment of a mini council or some alternative structure to assume responsibility for the village and migrant settlement areas between the Busu and Bumbu rivers. For the Huon Council the proposed excision of the peri-urban areas provided the possibility of escape from its dilemma - pressure from the settlers for improvements which the Butibam people would not approve and migrant settler unwillingness to pay Council tax in the absence of improvements. For the
Provincial officials the proposed new structure promised possible relief from pressures for solution of a seemingly insoluble problem.

Positive moves towards the organization of a new administrative and political structure for the four Huon Council wards between the Busu and Bumbu rivers began in January 1973. Efforts were made to ascertain the attitude of the Council's constituent wards towards the excision of the four wards and following separation the villagers and migrant settlers in the excised area were presented with four alternative proposals:

1. the establishment of a new council to assume responsibility for the four wards, to be called Busu-Bumbu or some similar name;
2. the Ahi Association to operate under the local government ordinances and obtain power and responsibility for undertaking the work of local government in these four wards;
3. the four wards to merge with Lae City Council;
4. the establishment of an urban development corporation to undertake responsibility for this area and the work of local government.\(^1\)

Although these moves were far too late to reverse the deterioration in the Huon Council's position they did represent a judicious and constructive approach to the migrant settlement problem and the broader problems of the peri-urban area. The Busu-Bumbu mini council proposal, the most favoured alternative,\(^2\) as a small organizational structure and political body offered the means through which the problems of the area might be approached effectively. Settlers would have an accessible political forum as would the Ahi villagers and the numerical superiority of the settlers would be balanced by the power resting

\(^1\) Tok Save Bilong Huon Council I Laik Rausim Popela Ward Insait Long Erfa Bilong Council, Mimeo 1973. Lae sub-district office.

\(^2\) The mini council was considered to provide an intermediate step to incorporation with the Lae City Council.
with the Ahi Association as representatives of the landowners and a body directly concerned with the development of the area. For the government the suggested mini council offered the prospect of a political body able to concern itself with the exceedingly troublesome problems of the area and a channel of communication through which two way communication, so deficient in the past, might be obtained. Compromise would be the essence of such an arrangement and, whilst clear differences of interest were present, a community of interest also existed and an institutional arrangement favouring compromise could do much to narrow the divisions and allow the impasse to be broken. However some might consider that the conflict is too deep seated, reflecting emerging patterns of class conflict and divisions which will widen rather than diminish; the Buko settlement provides a convenient focus for such divisions.

However the proposed mini council did not meet with universal approval. Some of the settlers were fearful of the Ahi Association involvement, some attracted by the freedom from personal tax which membership of Lae City Council provided, and some were simply confused about the implications of the proposal. The Pangu Pati's Lae branch in particular, firmly opposed the mini council proposal. Considerable antipathy existed between Pangu and the Butibam people (see above) and there were some fears that the suggested arrangement would serve principally to strengthen the Ahi Association's hand against the settlers. Additionally, from the very beginning of the Lae City Council, Pangu policy favoured an enlarged urban council area; membership of the wider body would strengthen the party's position while
protecting settler interest and aiding their welfare.¹

Ila sought to introduce a motion in the Lae City Council proposing inclusion of the migrant settlement areas in the city area, arguing that those settlers who worked in the city should share the city services,² and Ila and other Pangu supporters strongly opposed the concept of the mini council at the July 1973 meeting of the steering committee formed to consider the establishment of the new council. The meeting produced no firm recommendations and the strong opposition from its critics (Ila walked out of the meeting) effectively negated moves towards the council's formation.

Achievement

Despite difficulties and defeats incurred in their political struggles the Ahi Association and its constituent village bodies have achieved a quite disproportionate level of political influence and have been instrumental in effecting considerable social and economic improvement for the benefit of the Ahi villages.

Although there has been no dramatic change in the migrant settlement situation the separate village groups have gained an awareness of the implications of uncontrolled settlement and the strong reaction by the village bodies to the encroachment of settlers and to the Urban Development Study proposals has brought

¹ Pressures by the business community and sections of the Administration had resulted in a quite unrealistic demarcation of the town's boundaries prior to the establishment of the Lae City Council. The inclusion of populous migrant settlements would obviously have favoured Pangu in the new council. (For further discussion see Adams 1973.) Pangu's concern for the migrant settlers extends beyond voting support, as indicated by Toni Ila's effort to gain the lease of the Jensen property on the western boundary of the town for migrant worker housing, but again there has been conflict with the Butibam people who sought this and other leases as a part of the land compensation parcel.

village opposition to these developments firmly to the notice of authorities and public.

A significant step in the protracted land dispute was made with the announcement in January 1974 that the Ahi Association had accepted K160,000 from the minister for lands, Thomas Kavali, as compensation for the longstanding claim. The compensation followed the guidelines set down by the Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters and was coupled with an undertaking to acquire the pastoral properties on the western fringes of the town for resettlement of squatters. The amount provided was less than that sought but substantially better than previous responses. Although the government's offer was said to be unequivocally 'the full and final settlement', the Ahi Association temporized claiming that the compensation was separate from the question of some 9000 acres of agricultural leases and non developed reserves on the boundaries of the town.

In the absence of an improved offer the Ahi Association sought to halt construction work on a high voltage power line for the Electricity Commission carrying power from the Ramu Hydro-electric Scheme to the city, the Association insisting that work must cease on land subject to ownership claim. Mr Kavali next was the principal object of Ahi Association spleen. Stephen Ahi was particularly bitter, accusing the minister of 'avoiding his responsibilities, lying, cheating and interfering with democratic government' and in February and March Post-Courier headlines reported these accusations. Despite this rhetoric, or perhaps

1 The initial offer by the minister was K150,000 but he accepted a counter offer by the villages of K160,000.
because of it, some progress was made towards the final settlement. The government indicated that it would resume, on behalf of the villagers, an area of undeveloped agricultural leases on the eastern outskirts of the city. Though the Ahi leaders again indicated that this was not enough, it now appears that the land dispute has been resolved after some fifty years of endeavour, a remarkable feat of perseverance by the villagers given the difficulties encountered.  

Although the Ahi Association has not received substantially more from its land claim than the Land Commission inquiry recommended, the villagers have obtained a measure of success in this matter and have been able to keep the issue very much alive despite rebuffs and defeats. In addition quite a number of intangible secondary benefits have accrued in their fight against government intransigence. Allied to this struggle the villagers have forced the government to recognize that the Urban Development Study plans cannot be imposed against the wishes of the villages, demonstrating a capability and determination to exercise a major control over the development of their land.

Some fifteen months after the government's release of the Lae urban plan in December 1971, the Butibam Progress Association, with a suitable show of secrecy, produced their own plans for the development of the area of land they now control. The plan, drawn by a Queensland planner, is in some regards an improvement

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1 The villagers received the K160,000 cheque and were additionally offered two parcels of land each with frontage on the two sides of the highlands highway near the Three Mile agricultural station. The land offer was rejected as being 'too small and only useless, swampy land'. (Muttu Gware, personal communication 5 September 1975.) More recently the Ahi Association has refused to accept a government offer of 1410 hectares of undeveloped land with the K160,000 compensation (Post-Courier 16 February 1977). It is understood that the original cheque held by the Butibam people was cancelled and a second cheque mislaid somewhere in the pipeline between the central government and the villagers.
upon the relevant sections of the Russell D. Taylor plan. Unquestionably the Butibam plan demonstrates commendable initiative and determination and capacity to produce a sophisticated plan for the development of village controlled land; nonetheless it has resulted in the ludicrous situation where the constituent village bodies are now moving to a position where they will each have their own separate development plans and to date there has been little effective effort to reconcile the Urban Development Study plan and the intended developments by the separate village bodies, and no effective mechanism for reconciling public and private interest has been effected.

Ahi Association political battles have attracted most headlines and engendered the strongest emotions, yet the past five years have seen substantial social and economic progress through the efforts of the Association and the constituent Progress Association. The Butibam Progress Association as the oldest and largest group has been the most successful of the individual associations. Favoured by income from the gravel lease and members with knowledge of procedures necessary to secure assistance through the local government system and other agencies,¹ the Association has been able to undertake a wide spectrum of social and economic activity aimed at advancing village welfare.

A most lucrative involvement has been that arising from a partnership established with Barclay Bros. (NG) Ltd in 1971 following cancellation of the Huon Council lease arrangement for the extraction of gravel from the Bumbu gravel beds. Royalty payments from this source have been in the order of K5000 per annum and have provided a most useful cash flow for the further

¹ A number of Butibam villagers hold positions with government departments and agencies, including Bojen Ahi, Stephen’s brother, employed with what in 1976 was the Division of Development Administration within the Prime Minister's Department.
activities of the Association. The relationship with Barclay Bros. culminated in the formation in October 1974 of a new company known as P.N.G. Contractors Pty Ltd, with a paid up capital of K91,000. The Butibam and Kamkumun Progress Associations jointly hold 45 per cent equity in the company and provision has been made for later inclusion of the remaining village bodies. Aided by a K1000 grant from the Huon Council and royalty payments from the gravel beds, the Butibam Society also has developed a modern market valued at an estimated K12,000 on village land between the village and the Buko settlement. The enclosed area comprises a large produce sale area and an adjoining block of five rooms to be rented as commercial outlets. Support for the market has gradually built up and although much smaller than the main city market it is now well established as a significant component of the city's fresh food marketing system. Stephen Ahi operates a general store in one of the market rooms and tenants have progressively filled the remaining blocks.

Following the initial 'settlement' of the land issue with the payment of K160,000 in 1975 the Butibam Association was able successfully to negotiate the purchase of a large building complex in Lae's commercial centre, comprising offices and commercial premises. Muttu Gware left the Post-Courier and became the managing director, with a 25 per cent shareholding, of Island Carvings, one of the nation's largest artifact dealers, whose shop is located in the building complex purchased by the Association.

Social development and the provision of a high level of community services and facilities through the efforts and initiative of the Progress Association has given the Butibam people a standard of living equalled by few village communities in the country. As noted above (see p.229) the Butibam leaders have over a period been able to profit from their relationship with the Huon Council and from their own resources they have installed a K16,000 water reticulation scheme, a small community
clubhouse, a basketball court and an office for the Association. The Association has encouraged a wide range of social and sporting activities particularly for the younger generation and the Butibam people field a number of basketball and Australian Rules football teams and dances are held fairly regularly; community consciousness undoubtedly has been strengthened by these activities. Conflict between the younger and the older generation in the village has also demonstrated the value of the Association as a mechanism through which group and individual disputes may be settled. A current project concerns the development of a cultural centre to be sited alongside the Butibam market. The venture has attracted a K20,000 government grant and plans envisage a large central amphitheatre for performance of traditional dances, a large multipurpose community hall, a traditional style hostel to accommodate visitors and a small village for traditional craftsmen.

Progress by other individual Ahi village Associations has been at a lower level than that of Butibam, partly as a consequence of their much shorter period of operation. They have been slow in forming and have not had to the same degree the benefit of driving, educated leadership, and they have not experienced the same extent of social and economic change. Nevertheless the Butibam model has provided a demonstration effect and the migrant-land crises have provided some encouragement for the acceleration of their development.

Kamkumun village has suffered more clearly from the disintegrative effects of urban influence than her small sister villages, particularly as evidenced by fission attending individual economic activities. However, since about mid 1973 the Kamkumun Progress Association has undertaken firm action aimed at arresting loss of corporate identity and securing organized communal development. An ambitious development plan is being implemented with a multi-purpose market/community centre facility being developed near
Tia's Omili Store (a clan concern). The planned development includes a market, general purpose community centre, ceremonial ground and recreational area. An associated project involves the installation of a water pump and reticulation system. The overall development is being undertaken with assistance from the University of Technology and includes a survey of village land to allow allocation of individual blocks and demarcation of land for development under the auspices of the Progress Association. The Kamkumun people have of course benefited from the land claim settlement and gravel is now being extracted from their section of the Bumbu river providing valuable cash flows with which to finance these new developments.

Insulated to a significant degree by distance from the mainstream of urban life and attendant physical intrusion, the Wagan and Yanga village response has not been as forceful as that evinced by Butibam. Yanga, being furthest removed, is least urban orientated and still retains strong kin and communal ties and communal co-operation is still highly valued. The newly formed Progress Association has taken responsibility for the village copra plantation and is now planning to undertake a group cattle project. Their principal commercial interest at this juncture derives from a joint shareholding with Watkins (Overseas) Co. in the Busu Theatre and a small but increasing income is obtained from migrant settler rentals. Wagan also has experienced a lower level of social and economic change and has been spared the more obvious physical pressures experienced by Butibam and Kamkumun; activity is correspondingly attenuated. The principal 'development' has been a public beach area, developed with assistance from Lae service clubs, the Wagan people having the dubious honour of possessing Lae's principal bathing area, with access through the main village.

Despite continued problems and the inexorable spread of urban growth and influence the Ahi villagers have demonstrated
considerable success in retarding the breakdown of village institutions and loss of corporate identity. Clearly it is not possible, nor perhaps desirable given the situation in which the villagers find themselves, to maintain without substantial modifications traditional values and institutions but it is still possible to maintain the collective structure and sense of identity sufficient to allow the villagers to adjust and adapt to the forces that impinge upon them. The Butibam people, though strongly affected by these change processes, have been able, through skilful and forceful leadership operating within the newly established institutions, to mitigate the more adverse effects of change. Corporate identity and group and individual sense of worth and integrity have been considerably enhanced and there has been a wide realization of the benefits of communal self help and co-operative effort in their relations with the external world and in the improvement of their own welfare. Institutions such as the Progress Association have been effectively incorporated into the village system and now provide a vehicle to promote village welfare and protect village interest.

Substantial material and significant social progress has clearly been achieved as a consequence of the initiatives and efforts of the Ahi Association and the individual Progress Associations, yet an effective political and administrative structure remains to be developed for the Busu-Bumbu area and a constructive relationship with external systems remains to be forged. The collapse of plans for a structure to replace the excised council wards not only meant the loss of an opportunity to devise such a structure but opened a further chapter in the history of political struggle. The most immediate outcome of the abortive mini council proposals was the establishment of a new political group, the Morobe District People's Association (MODIPE).

**MODIPE**

MODIPE emerged from an October 1973 meeting held at Butibam market and presided over by Bogen Ahi, Stephen's brother. The
meeting elected a steering committee and Bogen Ahi, in a press release, emphasized the group's objectives of 'stopping candidates who come from other districts becoming MHAs for the Morobe District ... to preserve Lae as a good and orderly city ... to see inter district permits introduced ... and to encourage the people outside of Lae to develop their village, to do something within the village instead of looking for wages in Lae'.

These aims reflect the Ahi Association leaders' pre-occupation with law and order issues and restrictions against the influx of migrants, but above all the move represented a calculated attack upon Toni Ila (the only non Morobean House of Assembly member in the Province) and the Lae branch of the Pangu Pati.

Support for the new association came from a small number of Morobe settlers closely associated with the Butibam people and from several of the young emerging Morobe elite anxious to exercise a significant influence in Morobe affairs. The partial vacuum created by the withdrawal of direct expatriate participation in political activity and the failure of Pangu to develop an ongoing system within which the emergent elite could advance, encouraged the emergence of a new generation of political aspirants with whom the Butibam people could form alliance. In addition, the widening influence exercised by Toni Ila as the de facto successor to Voutas, and the power derived from Ila's trade union base, have not been universally accepted. Some saw MODIPE as a possible counter to this power and influence.

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2 The reasons for Pangu's failure to attract younger and more articulate Morobans is not clear. There has been some effort made by the party to attract the better educated younger Morobans but success to date has not been encouraging. The University of Technology Politics Club was very much a Pangu club until 1972/73 though the Morobe students did not play a major role due to their limited numbers at this time.
The issue developed as something of a *cause célèbre* as a result of the involvement of Bonihi Sima, former provincial secretary to Boyamo Sali (member for the Morobe Regional electorate and minister in the 1972-77 coalition government). Sima, one of Sali's Bugandi High School colleagues, had left his employment with the Department of Forests to staff Sali's Lae office. Residence at the 'Garaina compound', which is on Butibam land, and the link through Sali to the government in Port Moresby brought Sima into close association with the Butibam people. Otherwise, however, the office position proved to be a sinecure and Sima found he was unable to participate directly in or influence the direction of Morobe affairs. The new political body promoted by the Butibam people therefore offered a strong attraction for Sima. Sali, for his part, though providing no overt support for Sima or for the formation of MODIPE, appeared not to be opposed to the development at this juncture.¹

Reactions by Ila and the Pangu Pati in Lae were predictably bitter. Bogen Ahi was accused of 'laying stepping stones for disunity'² and the City Council lord mayor and assistant secretary of the Pangu Pati in Lae, John Rodger, successfully moved a motion at the Council's November general meeting condemning the political group and asking that a letter be sent to Sali to ascertain his views regarding MODIPE. The counter attack culminated in Sima's expulsion from the Pangu Pati at the annual meeting of the Lae branch and following Ila's unopposed re-election as party president, Ila declared that some members of the House were 'losing their touch'.³ MODIPE responded with

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¹ The revival of MODIPE in late 1974 by student activists critical of Sali's alleged failings as the Regional member resulted in strong opposition by Sali to the group. Sima left Sali's employment in December 1974.

² *Post-Courier* 19 October 1973.

an accusation that the Pangu elections in Lae were 'just a farce' and that 'Ila had elected himself and his personal friends to the executive'. However, this was the final exchange in the newspaper war as efforts towards reconciliation undertaken by Moi Avei, the Pangu Pati national president, and Tom Moi, the national secretary, during a hurried visit in December, achieved agreement between the dissident factions.

Sima was readmitted to the Pangu Pati and Nathan Tali, MODIPE's president, expressed support for Pangu policy on national unity. In a joint press release the two groups pledged to work together for the development of the Province. The healing of the Pangu split and firm moves towards a settlement of the Ahi land claim (the initial offer of K150,000 was made some three weeks later) removed the main impetus for MODIPE's continued operation and following an extended period of inactivity the group was publicly disbanded in September 1974.

This was not the complete eclipse of MODIPE, however. Some twelve months after its creation MODIPE re-emerged to further enliven Lae politics. Student action in this instance provided the necessary stimulus for its revival and occasioned further Butibam involvement in Lae and Morobe politics. Morobe students from the two universities combined with the Ahi Association to hold a 'Morobe Peoples' Seminar' in early December 1974 to consider political and socio-economic development in the Province. Stephen Ahi, as chairman of the fund raising committee, was able to attract sufficient financial support from the business community.


2 It was suggested at the time that Stephen Ahi would be the People's Progress Party candidate for the House of Assembly elections in 1977. The party had been conducting a well organised drive for new recruits and received support from expatriate business interests in Lae which previously sought to promote the interests of the United Party.
to allow the transport to and accommodation at the seminar of a fair cross section of the Province's village leaders, many of them strong Pangu supporters. About 200 people attended. The combination of Ahi and student militancy produced an abundance of explosive rhetoric. The Ahi Association, and most particularly Stephen Ahi, contributed a strong leavening of anti Pangu sentiment and strong Morobean ethnocentrism. The student leaders, most notably Utula Samana, who produced a strong anti colonial supporting paper for the seminar, brought a level of radicalism to the Province's politics that, ironically, had only been equalled in the past by Toni Ila. MODIPE provided the perfect vessel for the mix of anti Pangu spleen and Morobean militancy, and was seized upon as the vehicle for this new political alignment. Uncompromising Morobean political power drawing upon grass roots village action groups was broadly seen by the seminar organizers as the means of mobilizing and transforming the pattern of development in the Province.

It is too early to ascertain the permanence or likely consequence of this new alignment in Morobe affairs though the seminar illustrates a continuing Butibam political preoccupation with issues extending well beyond local village interests. Also, though difficult to disentangle the web of individual and group ideals, interests and motivations from the broad scheme of Morobe ethnic consciousness and radical challenge to the established order, it is clear that the alignment has greatly altered the pattern of politics operating in the Province. The emergent elite has clearly aligned itself with regional micronationalist groups espousing anti colonial and anti central government sentiments and vigorously promoting regional ethnic loyalties against these external 'enemies'.

Conclusion

Whether judged in terms of its challenge to the colonial system, its success in drawing together member villagers against external threat, its assertive political posturing or its achieve-
ment of positive social and economic progress, the Ahi Association has emerged as one of the most politically significant village groupings in Papua New Guinea. Rapid urban growth of recent years has telescoped pressures generated by exogenous forces, the impact of which reaches back to the turn of the century, generating at this time of rapid political and socio-economic change a response characterized by distinctive departure from the hitherto established pattern of Morobe village politics.

The forceful and capable leadership provided by Muttu Gware and Stephen Ahi has been central to the development and organization of the Butibam and Ahi Associations. These leaders and their associates are the product of the new experiences, skills and education that members of the younger generation have gained from close association with the modernizing sector of the colonial system. Experience and connections forged from their modern sector ties have enabled them to demonstrate considerable skills in the introduction of new organizational structures and practices and in the manipulation of media, external organizations and associated persons. As well as being innovators in approaches to politics, institutional organization and socio-economic activity the Ahi Association leaders have been mediators between traditional and modern. ¹ Though supplanting the traditional patterns of leadership and co-operative involvement with colonial institutions, continuity has been maintained. They have benefited from favourable positions in the village order and have taken care to gain necessary support from the traditional big men and elders in promoting change, using the village councils to this end with marked effect.

¹ For convenience the terminological dichotomy between 'modern' and 'traditional' is maintained but the writer is cognizant of the over-simplification this involves and of the very considerable changes that have already occurred in the Ahi village system. The writer explicitly rejects the concept of a unilinear continuum between traditional and modern which occurs in much development literature, with the stated or implicit assumptions of evolutionary change to higher levels of western modernity.
External threat provided the necessary environment in which this leadership could mobilize support and operate effectively. The continued lack of success and resultant frustration in regard to the land claim, the crisis engendered by the presentation of the Lae Urban Development Study and the continued encroachment of migrant settlers served to unify the villagers in the search for new responses and new directions. Recognition of the threats to village identity and viability from these forces brought strength of purpose and resolve. The level of village political activity during the period of these developments has been quite extraordinary, demonstrating the concern and seriousness of purpose elicited by events.

Given the nature of colonial development, the interests of the peri-urban villagers have in the past been subordinated to the needs of an expanding urban presence, a situation redressed in some measure by a capacity for collaboration with the foreign power and more recently by a capacity for countervailing communal mobilization and determined political action. The Administration's failure to take early and positive action to resolve the matters of greatest concern to the villagers encouraged an increasingly aggressive village movement, compounding in some ways the problems of the present situation. The land issue was left unresolved despite persistent petition and patient negotiation. The situation was exacerbated by the absence until recent times of positive policies and effective procedures in respect to migrant settlement. Further, the slow development of integrative mechanisms and responsive, representative political institutions, through which the newly emergent political interests could be articulated and perhaps accommodated, encouraged and strengthened the cleavages now apparent.

The twin spectres of uncompensated land loss and migrant engulfment, the product of the colonial experience and rapid post
war urban development, galvanized the aggressive Ahi response. Location on the urban fringe has given greater awareness of political changes and procedures followed elsewhere and provided the Ahi Association with greater scope for the manipulation of political processes than that available to rural villages. Manifesting, as it has, strong nationalist sentiments and assertive postures, the Ahi response encountered an Administration unaccustomed and in some regards opposed to such movements. A few deliberately sought to oppose and suppress and there was an attitude of mind which held that the Pangu Pati and groups such as the Ahi Association are inimical to effective and orderly development. Some made quite sincere efforts to insulate institutions from political involvement and so encourage 'orderly development'. These attitudes account, to some extent, for the frailty of institutions such as the local government councils and the pressures for their overthrow. Not unnaturally in such circumstances, effective two way communication between political activists and those identifying with and concerned with upholding the established order has been severely constrained. More sympathetic attitudes have been manifested in recent years but ritualistic denunciations by some of the more outspoken political figures, manipulation of political antipathies for private purposes, and continued recalcitrance by a few out of sympathy with the nature and pace of change has retarded the establishment of more positive relationships. The process of decolonization in Morobe as elsewhere has not preceded without dislocation and discontinuity.

Processes observable in the Ahi experience reflect, albeit much magnified, significant aspects of the colonial relationship and the decolonization process, with the associated difficulty of establishing new relationships and the struggle for power and influence following the external power's withdrawal from direct participation in the political process. The legacy of the long festering land dispute; urban migration encouraged by rural-
urban discontinuities; the Huon Council's inability to deal with the Ahi-migrant issue; the Lae City Council wracked by divisions between Pangu and the expatriate business block and constrained by an unrealistic boundary dividing town from village; and a government accustomed to closely controlled 'development' and conditioned in the past to react negatively to deviant indigenous initiatives, and, more recently, the emergence of regional consciousness and antipathy towards the centre encouraged by tensions implicit in the ordering of new power relationships and perceived central government insensitivities and centrist preoccupations - all have provided the framework within which the imbroglio developed. With such a framework, and in response to the partial power void that has prevailed since 1972 and the associated failure to effect visible 'development progress', new political power patterns have begun to emerge. The Ahi Association, in this situation, has been, to use Geertz's term, as 'a pole around which parapolitical vortices tend to form' (Geertz 1963:126).

Difficulties facing the village organizations, particularly in the case of Butibam, which is now faced with major structural changes, must be given due weight in any assessment of future prospects. Despite demonstrated success in organizing the village structures and promoting village interests the path from crisis management and mobilization of collective energies to the control of ongoing large scale commercial and communal enterprises is beset with many pitfalls, as past records indicate. Failure to evolve satisfactory organizational structures suited to the scale of development may prejudice the commercial success of current and future activities despite present achievements.

These difficulties underline some of the fundamental issues now confronting the villages. Traditional patterns of
subsistence shifting cultivation and associated institutions are increasingly difficult to maintain given the pressures upon land for settlement and commercial development. Land has been and will continue to be lost to the city in one form or another. Successful organization of village institutions and investment of monies secured from land compensation, leases, sale, and rentals necessarily involve significant structural and value changes with greater social and economic differentiation and pressures towards incorporation of some elements of the village society into the political and socio-economic systems of the city. The city, as a creation of external politico-economic forces, is structured to a very considerable degree according to the western, individualistic, capitalist model and successful adaptation appears to require duplication, at least in part, of its patterns and values and concomitant erosion of traditional communalistic values. Changes in this direction have already occurred. Adaptation has generated and will generate internal stresses arising from resultant differentiation and reordering of relationships and values. One important division that has developed within and between villages is that which separates the older generation, which is reluctant to relinquish power and status, and the younger villagers, with their differing views on the nature of village society and its relationships with the external world. Further conflict with non-village members, particularly migrant settlers whose interests appear opposed to village needs, also appears likely in view of the pressures the Butibam village system is generating.

It would be an excessively simplistic view that saw the pressures of urbanization to which the Ahi villages are now so strongly exposed giving rise to familiar western models. Persisting, deep seated socio-cultural values and practices and the pluralism of Lae, with its marked economic divisions and
associated physical separation of races, have enabled retention in an urban environment of many aspects of rural village life. However, it would be equally shortsighted to ignore the far reaching socio-economic influences now affecting the Ahi villages, particularly Butibam. Continued collective socio-economic progress and communal unity engendered by the present struggles will serve to maintain cohesiveness but the clear processes of individualization and differentiation, with pressures upon leading elements from the village society to identify with an emerging elite strata and urban economic interests, represent new pressures upon the village system. Within the Morobe Province the Ahi villagers, and in particular the people of Butibam, are an elite, possessing political power and educational, occupational and economic advantages in greater measure than any other group in the Province. It remains to be seen to what extent the Butibam people are able to resist incorporation into the urban merchantilist system and to what extent they become a community of rentiers, entrepreneurs and public servants, assimilating associated bourgeois values.

Finally, where does the Ahi Association lie in the spectrum of micronationalist movements that emerged in the period prior to political independence and what has been the nature and level of its power and influence in a national context? The Association and its constituent societies have operated primarily as a pressure group concerned with the pursuit of individual interests rather than as a broad political movement. Circumstance has required firm organization based upon village membership and strong action directed towards amelioration of village welfare and resistance to external forces. However, despite past and present preoccupations with local village issues, the Ahi response is very much a product of the colonial experience and the reordering of power relationships which is now occurring. The Ahi Association must be seen in the context of the emergence of micronationalist
movements throughout the country, a response to common experiences, prompted by similar aspirations and each gaining strength from the example of others.

The Ahi Association's influence upon political groups and institutions has until recently been indirect and therefore difficult to measure. The Association has provided an alternative model to the institutions of the colonial administration; its successful challenge to the power of the government and substantial success in communal organization and self-help activity has undoubtedly provided a demonstration effect observed by different village bodies and political groups now appearing in the Province.

It remains for the future to determine the nature and extent of direct Ahi Association influence upon Morobe politics. Vocal leadership, growing economic power and strategic location at the Provincial centre provide the Association with a base from which to articulate Morobe nationalism and exert a decisive influence upon the Province's affairs. Butibam leaders have now experienced a widening of their horizons as demonstrated by their involvement in the Morobe Peoples' Seminar, and conflict with church, council and central government has engendered an assertive critical outlook consonant with the political pressures now present.

However, the exceedingly rapid change of the last few years presents a situation quite different to that prevailing earlier and it remains to be seen how selectively and judiciously the Ahi Association and other political groups respond to the new situation and to what extent private interest and elitist preoccupation coincide with the broader needs of the Province and its various communities. It may well be that conflict generated by current political developments will help lay the foundations for a stronger, more representative, more responsive and more firmly based political
order. There is unquestionably a number of younger educated Morobeans who hold firmly to nationalistic and egalitarian values and now seek radical transformation of the existing order. The appeal to regional identity promoted by MODIPE has elicited a sympathetic response, particularly among educated Morobeans, and the current debate appears to be encouraging a greater politicization of the Province's various institutions and village groupings and may well generate far reaching future changes.

The current political situation is dynamic and one might expect shifts in alignment between the various groups and individuals according to perceived interest and the forces of change. The Butibam people, together with the young educated Morobeans, have become the focus of present political change processes. The very considerable political power and skill which they exercise, their growing economic power and their firm identification with Morobean culture and ethnic identity give them a very significant influence on the affairs of the Province and the nation. Central to the Ahi villages' future and to the nature of their future political influence are the questions of migrant settlement and the expanding urban presence. At one extreme, developments may engender a bitter and divisive response with present village bodies serving principally as a vehicle for a village elite identified increasingly with the emerging indigenous business and bureaucratic strata and incorporated into a neo colonialist system closely identifying with external interests; alternatively the Butibam people and the educated elite may provide the catalytic influence necessary to achieve a new consensus, a mobilization of rural support and a widely supported programme of political and socio-economic change.
SELF-HELP DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENTS
Chapter 8

SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONFLICT AND
THE KABISAWALI MOVEMENT IN
THE TROBRIAND ISLANDS

Jerry W. Leach

This paper has three goals: to give a brief account of the socio-historical factors underlying the present political divisions in the Trobriand Islands; to present a short overview of the Kabisawali Movement and its opposition in those islands; and to discuss the controversial problem of how to interpret the leadership of that movement.

The data are drawn from sixteen months fieldwork and five months archival research between 1969 and 1974 when the author was resident in Port Moresby. The period focused on in this paper is January 1972 to September 1974, that is from the beginning of Kabisawali activities through to the end of the fieldwork period. The movement continued, however, as this article was being written.

Antecedent conditions

Historical factors

The roots of the recent deep political division in Trobriand society go back to the beginning of the colonial era in the islands (taken here to mean the decades between 1890 and 1910, though there was undoubtedly trading contact long before that period\(^1\)), and possibly even beyond.

In those early decades, the incoming colonial controllers and providers were primarily pearl traders, missionaries, and government officials. In all three cases they were faced with the same problem: how to have the most advantageous access to the internal resources they were after, be they pearls or people, and simultaneously have easy access to the outside world. The solutions, virtually the same for all

\(^1\) The earliest known record of trading contact indicates the trading of yams for iron hooping and can be found in *Nautical Magazine* 8:37-9 (1839).
Figure 8.1 Trobriand Islands
parties, were dictated by the ecology of the Trobriand atoll and the distribution of population over it. First, the main island, Kiriwina, contained the bulk of the inhabitants. Secondly, the atoll's lagoon provided the only (nearly) all-weather harbour facilities for European vessels. Thirdly, pearls were found only in the lagoon. These factors largely determined the location of early colonial institutions.

Primary establishments in the foundation period, as shown in the map on page 250, were (1) trading centre, (2) mission headquarters, school, harbour; (3) government station, hospital, harbour; (4) trading and pearling centre; (5) trading and pearling centre.

These new establishments became and have remained, with the exception of trading centre no. 5 in the south, valued sources of non-traditional services to the islanders. Through these centres have flowed money, employment, new consumer goods, medical benefits, new knowledge, entertainment, and the like. At the same time, Europeans acquired their pearls, converts, land, labour and supporters from among those receiving the greatest flow of these benefits. The character of the new colonial relationships was not therefore extractive but transactional\(^1\) - at least among the primary beneficiaries, from whom no significant protest at the basic changes occurring in their lives can be found in the historical records or in oral historical accounts.

The new establishments were largely stationary and, omitting trading centre no. 5, which disappeared before the second world war, all located in a very narrow zone. Seen as buildings the establishments were, of course, fixed in location but, more importantly, when seen transactionally as deliverers of new and valued benefits, they were

\(^1\) The lack of severe imbalance in the input-outtake relations of the early colonial period can be understood in light of the low rate of European settlement in the islands, the relative unattractiveness of the Trobriands for plantations (though small ones were later established), the relative lack of natural resources valued by Europeans, the paternally protective policies of the government, and the transactional-mindedness of Trobrianders.
centripetal in their influence. Those nearby gained the most. Despite patrols, most medical work was done at the mission or on the government station. Despite European buying expeditions, most food and copra were brought to the buyers. Despite trader-inspired pearling fleets, most pearls were brought to the new stores and houses for sale. Consumer goods were mostly obtained by going to get them. Early schooling was on the mission grounds as were the new mission festivals.¹

Differential access to the new non-traditional benefits was resented from the outset by those distant from these centres. This was especially true in the heavily populated villages of northern Kiriwina. These villagers were close enough to hear continually what was happening south of them yet the physical distance to those centres could be many walking kilometres through potentially hostile territory. Outer islanders, excepting Kitava, though physically further away could sail without danger into the primary zone and hence were socially closer to the new service centres. The greatest resentment to the new central zone has therefore always been in northern Kiriwina.

The lesser accessibility to the new non-traditional benefits of the central zone was felt as relative deprivation and seen as illegitimate favouritism by those of the new periphery. The deprivation was relative because nothing had been subtracted from 'periphery' villages that had not been subtracted from all villages alike. Primarily this was, of course, war-making power, which was effectively halted in 1900. The sense of illegitimate favouritism arose for two reasons: because the ecological and demographic factors motivating the placing of new establishments was never understood, and because the pattern of newly-added power and benefit in society was experienced as political support for chiefs and villages of the northern lagoon area in their age-old rivalries with competitors outwards from them in other districts.

¹ Lest the contrast depicted here seem too sharp, I hasten to add in qualification that (i) minor satellite mission outposts manned by Polynesian missionaries were established outside the central zone even in the foundation period, and (ii) since the foundation period, schools, stores and aidposts have been established and become minor service centres over a much wider area. Nevertheless, the minor centres have never approached the central zone in the magnitude and significance of the non-traditional benefits available through them.
Northern Kiriwinan inlanders and others of the new 'periphery' have signalled their resentment repeatedly since the beginning of the colonial period.

In the 1890s when the lagoon-area chiefs were the mainstays of government and mission support, inland chiefs were hostile and recalcitrant towards the new authorities. Prior to 1973, the only armed Kiriwinan attack on the government was an ambush of police in 1899 led by a militant inland chief. Following this unsuccessful venture, the lagoon villages were alive with rumours of impending war against the area and its new institutions, though these came to nothing.¹

Prior to the second world war, with government control firmly established throughout the islands, northern Kiriwinan chiefs were still considered administrative 'problems'. Their rivalries were thought disruptive of peace and their relations with their followers sometimes oppressive. Especially difficult were the prestigious 'paramount chiefs'² of Omarakana village who, despite special favours and emoluments, viewed the government as having undermined their position. Fifty years of government records reflect ambivalent relations with these key figures.

A minor index of the developing contrast between the greater and lesser receivers of the new non-traditional benefits occurred through the treatment of the introduced game of cricket. Begun by missionaries in the central zone in 1903, the game remained in that area until the 1950s, roughly the international version of cricket. However, from

¹ For confirmation see frames 445-50 of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau microfilm no. 601, being the papers of S.B. Fellows, first missionary in the Trobriands in 1894-1900.

² The title was a common one in colonial records and applied inappropriately in the Trobriands based on misconceptions of the political system. Malinowski later perpetuated the usage in his writings. There is no traditional Kiriwinan category to which the term 'paramount chief' could be considered a satisfactory translation. However, the English term, spelled correctly but pronounced *paramant stip* has been partially adopted into contemporary Kiriwinan.
about 1910 onwards, the 'cricket' of the non-central villages became so culturally transformed as to be entirely incompatible with the original version.¹ Trobriand oral history depicts the second as a reaction 'against' the first.

In 1942 another sign of the resentment against the central zone occurred dramatically. Under fear of Japanese invasion, the Trobriands were abandoned by all European residents. This evacuation triggered an assault led by two militarily prominent northern villages on abandoned property in the central zone. There was much theft and damage. Lagoon villages were threatened, many inhabitants even fleeing southwards, though only a few people were in fact injured. Military administrators, however, quickly restored order when they arrived.

The events of the second world war as a whole proved a temporary reversal, or at least a more balanced restructuring, of the pattern of non traditional benefits. The northern lagoon area, the central zone, received a military hospital and the head­quarters of the Trobriand military administration. Mission activities and schooling, however, were all but abandoned and the lagoon harbour was relatively inactive. In northern Kiriwina, by contrast, new roads were laid, camps and stores were everywhere, and two airfields were built. The military docks of the east shore and the northern coast dominated the in-flow of supplies. Under these conditions, northern Kiriwina experienced, temporarily, the centripetal pattern of receiving the greater, rather than lesser, share of non traditional benefits. To this day, the war is the high point of the colonial era to northern Kiriwinans. The subjective magnitude and significance of the war is clearly distinguishable in the oral historical accounts of the northern area, as opposed to lagoon dwellers, who view it as an interlude of less importance.

Following the war, the prewar pattern of central zone and periphery was reestablished. Military buildings and docks were

¹ Two ethnographic films, Harry A. Powell The Trobriand Islanders and Jerry W. Leach Trobriand Cricket: an ingenious response to colonialism, show the two different versions of the game.
dismantled. The airstrips fell into disuse. Supplies were reclaimed and removed. The civil administration, traders, and missionaries returned to the lagoon area and the old services were restored. In northern villages, this was experienced as a disheartening return to the former pattern of ill-distributed benefits.

Ironically, the main residual benefit of the war for the northern villages - the vastly expanded road system - produced in the postwar period a heightened sense of deprivation. By all expectation, the new road system should have increased contact between the central zone and the northern and eastern villages which it reached. In fact, it did not diminish walking time at all. The primary irony, however, is that government and medical patrols outwards from the central zone actually decreased despite the presence of roads and vehicles. This decrease occurred because of three factors: first, workloads at the centre increased, demanding more time; secondly, the national priorities in administration changed, de-emphasizing village level contact and emphasizing centralized stationary services, and thirdly, officials regarded the road system inappropriately as a sign of the increased ease with which villagers could have access to the centre. But for malaria eradication and elections, the government's services at village level declined while services in the central zone considerably expanded in the postwar period.¹

Another complex factor in the postwar centre-periphery contrast is tourism. Charter tours to the Trobriands began in 1962. The tourists stayed in a hotel on the lagoon shore. The hotel, plus a United Church store also on the lagoon, became the primary centres of artifact trading. As a response to these businesses

¹ Malaria eradication and elections were, in any case, viewed with ambivalence as one diminished the lifespan of roofs through spraying and the other was unclear as a source of benefit. It is also important to note that the government had given up support for its 'native plantations' scheme of the prewar era.
and the large annual flow-through of tourists, \(^1\) commercial carving spread rapidly and widely throughout the Trobriands, especially in northern and eastern Kiriwina. Carving was stimulated in the central zone villages as well but to a much lesser degree. Their greater access to monetary income through employment, working relatives nearby or abroad, and selling fish no doubt helps explain their lesser interest in carving. Interestingly, almost no Trobriander resident on the government or mission stations carved, some indicating it was not commensurate with their status.

From 1962-72 tourist carving and artifact sales provided the steadiest and largest monetary income the northern and eastern villages had ever had. \(^2\) This relative shift in the economic activity was, however, not without its social costs. In the second half of that decade especially, yam harvests, the mainstay of subsistence and of ceremonial exchange in Trobriand society, declined sharply. That decline had several important consequences: the social festivities which yam surpluses underpin diminished considerably; the main index of social status which northern villagers used to counter the prestige claims of lagoon dwellers due to their education, income, and sophistication were embarrassingly not in evidence, and the inland lagoon credit relationships which allowed long term reciprocities in exchanging fish for yams \(^3\) became almost entirely monetized and, as well, inflated by nationally rising prices and the increasing income of the inlanders. This transformation of formerly moral ties to short term and inflating monetary ones weakened the inland lagoon relationship considerably.

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\(^1\) The figure reached 2100 in 1971. See Leach (1973).

\(^2\) The gross Trobriand figure was approximately K9 per capita per year, though the Kiriwinan figure alone would probably be about K12.

\(^3\) See Malinowski (1935, vol.1:40-8) for an account of the inland lagoon exchange relations.
Another similar change in central zone-periphery relations came with regard to the prestigious ceremonial exchange system, the *kula.* In pre colonial and early colonial times many men of the central zone were prominent in the inland exchange system, linking northern and southern *kula* communities. Missionary influence, however, always strongest in the central zone, opposed the *kula* system as a waste of time and as conducive to immorality and dishonesty. Prior to the second world war, because of this opposition and because of changing interests, *kula* exchanging was diminishing in the central zone. In the 1970s almost no one but a few elderly inactive men remained 'in' the *kula*. Age old bonds had attenuated to insignificance, while northern and southern Kiriwinans, as well as outer islanders, continued their active participation in the system.

The introduction of the national system of local government councils into the Trobriands in 1966 also influenced the developing centre-periphery divide. Chiefs were denied any *ex officio* role in the early council. Several, nevertheless, were elected only, to their surprise, to be subordinate to educated councillors, especially the commoner and lagoon-dweller who was elected president. Numerous of the chiefly figures retired or were defeated in subsequent elections, departing with grievances against the fledgling institution.

The council grounds, temporarily located on the government station, were later moved to a permanent site just north of the station. Permanent buildings for the new grounds took up council resources for three and a half years and hence expected village level projects did not get substantially underway until the fourth and fifth years of the council's life. By then, taxes had been raised to more than double what they had been under pre council conditions. Most taxpayers therefore experienced little in relation to their development expectations of the council but, in their own view, saw their tax money disappearing into the council centre itself - or,

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1 See Malinowski (1922) for the classic account of the *kula* and see Chapters 19 and 21 for information on central zone participation.
better said, establishing another source of services and employment for those of the central zone. The council, too late, began to distribute its efforts more evenly throughout the villages.

Political factors: categorical contrast

The previous section has briefly sketched the historical development of a growing contrast in Trobriand society between a central zone and areas peripheral to it. Anthropologists customarily look for insights into significant social and political groupings such as these by examining the verbal categories in which such groupings are represented. Has the diachronic and cumulative process of centre-periphery division come to be represented in Kiriwanan verbal categories? The answer is that it has by interesting adaptations of old and new vocabulary.

In the 1890s the categoryLosuia referred to a named section of lagoon-front garden land owned and worked by people who lived about a half a kilometre north of the coast. The land was sold to the government and its name became the name of the government station. In contemporary usage**miLosuia**, meaning 'people of Losuia', has several referential ambiguities. Depending on context, it may mean (1) all people of Losuia proper; (2) all black people of Losuia, i.e. excluding whites; (3) all Trobrianders of Losuia, i.e. excluding whites and foreign blacks; and (4) all Trobrianders, villagers or otherwise, who live on or in the environs of, and hence under the influence of, the government station. Usage (4) is almost coterminous with the traditional category*Kulwnata*, a name referring collectively to all the villages of the northern lagoon shore. **MiLosuia** and **minakulwnata**, i.e. people of Kulumata, are often spoken of in contrast to **minakilivila**, i.e. people of Kilivila. **Kilivila** in its usage in early colonial times referred basically to a section of northern Kiriwina, rich in fertile soils and yams and the home of the prestigious 'paramount chief' of Omarakana village. This usage is still extant yet the term **minakilivila** has expanded referentially and now also can be taken as 'all people of northern Kiriwina' in contrast to **miLosuia** or **minakulwnata**.
The contrast set *miLosuia* and *minakilivila* is particularly potent semantically. On the surface the categories are simply territorial, indicating who lives where. At this level they are not value laden. Metaphorically, however, the categories represent different values resulting from changes and contradictions that have been emerging in Trobriand society over the last eighty years. These metaphorical usages can become semantic weapons in conflict situations.

*MiLosuia* can represent 'education, sophistication, the monetarily wealthy, those housed in permanent dwellings, people with fine European clothes (especially shoes), and people socially close to Europeans'. Inverted, the same category can metaphorically say 'people without yams or magic, people subservient to Europeans who live off the rubbish they throw away, bigheads, and people without traditional valuables'. All these pejorative usages appear in other categories which northern Kiriwinans use when discussing *miLosuia*. They say *miLosuia* are: *kaukuwa* or dogs, meaning servile animals who follow their masters and consume rubbish; *gala kasi* or yamless people; *tonanata* or nothing-man (from the English 'nought') meaning without magic or traditional valuables, and *biged* or bigheaded, meaning people arrogant over their education and acquired cultural sophistication. An interesting play on the 'rubbish' theme arises from the fact that a small portion of the physical place Losuia is actually called *Rabesi* from the English term 'rubbish'. The place was formerly a rubbish dump where now retired or non government people have built semi-traditional houses of their own. This section of Losuia is the brunt of many jokes and, in denigratory contexts, is made to stand for Losuia as a whole.

*Minakilivila*, like its contrast category, can represent 'people of the villages (especially northern), people of high traditional rank, people with yams and magic, people who *kula*, and people close to ancestral tradition'. Inverted, it may become 'ignorant people, people of the bush, people of darkness, or people of no account'. These pejorative connotations also appear when Losuians discuss non
Losuians as in: (1) dabasi gala or mindless people,\textsuperscript{1} (2) tomanibus and buekanaka from Pidgin and English meaning 'uncivilized or backward person', and (3) tolesi dudubile or 'people of dark times before Christian enlightenment arrived'.\textsuperscript{2}

An example of the semantic potency of the category Losuia and Kilivila occurred at the inception of the local government council in 1966. Prior to that date government officers, in consultation with high ranking chiefs, had decided that the new organization would be called the Kilivila Local Government Council. This was duly established by national ordinance. However, as the council began, it quickly became apparent that the name caused considerable dissatisfaction. Indeed, it was the main issue of council business in 1966-67. Led by lagoon dwellers, with support from southerners and outer islanders, the name was changed to Kiriwina Local Government Council, using the anglicized form of Kilivila as a less emotive substitute. The solution was not wholly satisfactory to anyone as the Trobriand group had never been called Kiriwina before. Nevertheless the sectionally evocative symbol was avoided. At the same time the council discussions publicly vented pejorative connotations of Kilivila which stung northern village leaders elected as councillors. The debate also generated the perception among those leaders that the council was dominated by non Kilivilans.

Finally, the categorical contrast between miLosuia and minakilivila primarily refers, of course, to conceptual and social divisions in the total north zone above the lagoon. The representation of centre-periphery distinction which sets miLosuia in opposition to all other Trobriand villagers resident in the islands is complex and only of recent prominence.

\textsuperscript{1} Under European influence, the Kiriwinan location of mind or intelligence has shifted from the stomach and throat to the head and the metonym used for it is daba or 'forehead'.

\textsuperscript{2} The primary use of latuta dudubile or 'dark times' is, however, to refer to all Trobrianders in pre-Christian times.
The category *tomota* means 'the people' in Kiriwinan. Like the term 'people' in other political vocabularies, *tomota* is enormously ambiguous. It may mean: (1) all human beings, as opposed to animals and all non-human things, (2) all black-skinned people, as opposed to whites, (3) all Trobrianders, as opposed to Europeans and foreign blacks, (4) all Trobriand villagers in relation to the government, or (5) all Trobriand villagers in relation to all non-traditional institutions and their supporters in the islands. Usages (4) and (5) are, of course, closely allied to one another. Usage (4) is by no means new and is found in historical records of discussions over taxes, medical services, government work-days and the like. Usage (5) is much more recent and appears in the political rhetoric of conflict in the late 1960s and 1970s. The newly emergent People's Kabisawali Government of 1972-73 employs the category *tomota* in usages (3), (4), or (5) depending on context.

**Political factors: chiefs over time**

This section will not review the anthropological controversy over how to classify and explain the traditional Trobriand system of political leadership.¹ In this paper, the Kiriwina category *guyau* is simply translated as 'chief'. A 'chief' is a village headman who is also the holder of upper-level status in the ascribed social ranking system which divides all Trobrianders into two categories, privileged and commoner. The status of such a privileged headman is marked by such attributes as house and yamhouse decoration, special personal adornment, rights to ritual deference from others, polygyny, and rights to certain kinds of tribute. Such headmen, whether privileged or not, are the primary organizers of large scale collective activities. This means *kula* journeys, harvest festivities, cricket matches, and in most cases the village gardening cycle. Formerly they were also the organizers of warfare.

¹ See Malinowski (1922: chapter 2) and (1935, vol.1: 33-40); Powell (1960) and Uberoi (1962).
Such headmen, especially the privileged ones, compete vigorously against each other for renown. The privileged headmen or chiefs are loosely inter-graded amongst themselves in ascriptive prestige terms. This fluid scaled model of precedence is not rigid, however, because it is conceptually interlinked with and supplemented by a second model of leadership based on open achievement of renown and name-building through prowess in gardening and ceremonial exchange, wisdom in decision-making and dispute-settlement, and skill in establishing alliances and political support. On these skeletal criteria there is a considerable number of chiefs in Trobriand society at any given point in time. Probably the range 10-25 would quantitatively cover the number of such position-holders at any one moment over the last eighty years.

The rivalry and competition among these key figures is very complex. At any given time some will be too young, too old, or too uninterested to compete openly and vigorously against their counterparts. The more competitive, on the other hand, do not, or at least have not historically, viewed the entire set of chiefs throughout all the islands as challengers. They have tended to see their field of competitors as those chiefs fairly close, rather than far distant. Northern Kiriwina has been the most concentrated arena for this kind of competitive orientation.

In the colonial foundation period, the chief of Omarakana in northeastern Kiriwina was clearly in the political ascendancy. In the 1890s he was recorded as having thirty-one wives drawn from numerous northern villages. Government authorities originally recognized his position as that of absolute supremacy but later came to take a more localized view of his influence, especially after his humiliating military defeat at the hands of a nearby rival in 1899.

From that time to the present, the colonial authorities have never had a clear or consistent policy vis-a-vis Trobriand chiefs. While always according the Omarakana chief precedence, the authorities have at various times viewed him as friend or oppressor, as the sole
spokesman of the people, as only a *prima inter pares*, as powerful or as powerless. Chiefs other than the Omarakana one have found themselves completely ignored or treated as important near-equals with the chief of precedence. The height of this inconsistency was reached when all chiefs were de-recognized at the inception of the new local government council in 1966 - only to find the Omarakana incumbent resurrected two years later as a powerless figurehead for the council. Needless to say, this inconsistent treatment has exacerbated internal rivalries between chiefs and has led to resentment of varying depths vis-a-vis national and local administrations.

From 1931-61 the Omarakanan incumbent was a forceful and cunning figure named Mitakata who maintained a sometime hostile and sometime co-operative relationship with the national government. During the earlier decades of his incumbency his pre-eminent prestige was not apparently challenged openly by rivals. In his waning years, however, a bitter dispute flared up among all Kiriwinan chiefs, focussed on the symbolic meaning of a special government medal awarded to Mitakata in his capacity as a village councillor. The dispute turned on whether the medal gave Mitakata authority over his rivals. In 1952 the government officer on the Trobriands skilfully defused the dispute by interpreting away the authority problem.

The last decade of Mitakata's period as chief of Omarakana was marked by vacillation over his successor. There were essentially two choices: Vanoi, his sister's seventh child but first son, and Waibadi, his sister's daughter's son. Though in theory a generation apart, these two men were in fact very nearly the same age. Each had weaknesses as a potential successor and as Mitakata weighed the relative merits of the two wave after wave of rumour ran through the Trobriands of the 1950s that now one, now the other was the chosen figure. Eventually Vanoi became the successor as his birth position made his claim stronger and as there were charges against his rival over alleged involvement with Mitakata's younger wives. It was, and still is, disputed, however, that Mitakata ever made a clear choice between them.
The result of this succession problem has been, in the 1960s and 1970s, an Omarakana chiefship weakened by internal rivalry and a division of the power base of the position. This division has opened up possibilities of public challenge and competition for renown among Trobriand chiefs which would have been difficult in an earlier period.

Kabisawali Movement and opposition

Beginnings of the movement

In 1967, Narabutau, chief of Yalumgwa village in northeastern Kiriwina, was defeated for re-election to the local government council. Disgruntled with the council over its functionlessness, he began a local development project, the breeding and selling of imported Australian pigs. The initial capital for this project came from fines imposed on those who broke his taboo on taking betelnut from local trees. A sum of over K100 was accumulated and banked at the nearby mission. The pigs arrived in 1969 and the project thereafter had a short life of limited success.

In December 1969 Narabutau's nephew and successor, John Kasaipwalova, returned to Papua New Guinea and the Trobriands following six years education in Australia. Kasaipwalova's five years of secondary schooling had been outstandingly successful. Numerous honours including the school captaincy came his way and his Queensland intermediate level exam results were very nearly perfect - among the best in the state. Back home, this news created a sensation - a Trobriander beating Europeans at their own game! The press cuttings were proudly pasted on the door of Kasaipwalova's father's house.

In 1969, however, Kasaipwalova participated so deeply in the New Left Movement at the University of Queensland that he failed to receive a scholarship to continue as a student. He returned home fired with ideas for radical change in the Trobriands. In early 1970 he unsuccessfully sought to mobilize village resentment against the raising of high school fees. The episode ended with admonishments from government officials and the Omarakana chiefs.
John Kasaipwalova addressing a Kabisawali meeting, 1973

(Photo courtesy Post-Courier)
In late 1971, during student vacation from the University of Papua New Guinea, Kasaipwalova demonstrated his educational assets before the Trobriand public. In December, the Omarakana chief's successor was jailed on charges of stealing from the Omarakana Co-operative Store where he worked as a secretary. Trobrianders feared a natural disaster brought on by the powerful magic of the arrested man's senior relatives. Indeed, it did rain 33 cm the day following the imprisonment, stimulating fears of worse to come. Kasaipwalova championed the arrested man's cause and through some knowledge of the law, plus personal contacts with Port Moresby lawyers, had the man quickly out on bail and his case ultimately quashed. The strategy meetings surrounding this case were also the initial planning sessions for the movement-to-be.

It was in these meetings that the name Kabisawali was born. The term means, at its simplest, 'to search'. It also carries the further connotations of searching for food in a time of hunger, searching absent mindedly or without a systematic plan, or searching when there is no certainty that the object of the search exists. The connotations of the term then are double edged. The negative connotations, however, came to be glossed over by the movement later and the name translated for outsiders as 'to search in a spirit of experimentation'.

In January 1972 the first political meetings under the name Kabisawali took place in northern Kiriwina. Kasaipwalova, Narabutau and Kasaipwalova's father were the prime movers behind these events. In these meetings Kasaipwalova, dressed theatrically in African nationalist style, gave his version of Trobriand history under colonial rule. He emphasized how the people had become 'dogs-on-a-leash' behind Europeans and how this could be different with new organization and confidence. He urged that Trobrianders could and should take control of their own affairs. As for positive programmes, he suggested without details Kabisawali-run trade stores, transportation services, a high school, and a tourist business. He also argued that the social depression in the islands should be attacked by restoring gardening to its old prominence.
Large crowds attended these meetings and their mood was ambivalent. No one questioned the view of colonial relations nor stated aspirations different from the speaker. Caution and disagreement were expressed over whether or not the people could achieve these things on their own initiative. Ultimately the argument that carried the day was that creative experimentation was the Trobriand way of doing things and so, even if the venture failed, it was a risk worth taking. With this agreed, symbolically important financial contributions flowed from numerous chiefs, including the Omarakana incumbent, and a Kabisawali fund was underway. Most local government councillors boycotted the meetings and the reception of the news in Losuia was hostile.

Early economic programmes

The earliest programme of the movement was a system of basic-commodity trade stores located in Kabisawali villages. The programme began in April 1972 and ended in May 1973.

The plan was to provide basic consumer goods such as tobacco, sugar, rice and kerosene from traditional material buildings constructed and manned by voluntary labour. The ventures were to be started by village collections of K100 as investment capital for the initial supplies. The Kabisawali central organization with its bulk store in Yalumgwa was to be overall supplier of the system. The first store opened in Yalumgwa in April 1972. The last half of 1972 saw the most rapid expansion of the system which ultimately included thirty-eight separate village outlets.

The store system was a popular idea but not an economic success. Most stores ceased operations six to nine months after opening. The causes of the collapse were numerous: in August 1972 the tourist hotel burned down, severely curtailing the flow of cash into Trobriand hands and therefore making consumer purchasing power unexpectedly weak; the reduced monetary income, plus the July-December drought of 1972, which diminished the food supply, created excessive credit and 'borrowing' from the stores; the store-system plan was
insufficiently comprehensive and rationalized to allow for unbought goods, natural wastage, overhead costs, and unexpected contingencies; the wholesale supplier cut off Kabisawali credit at a ceiling of K15,000 effectively halting the supply of goods.

There was hard work and real commitment behind the stores programme. Nevertheless the business skills to manage it were weak and the enterprise had the bad luck of an ill-timed climatic and tourist drought. An interesting feature of the collapse of the stores was that it did not immediately damage the political credit of the new movement and its leadership in the eyes of most of the movement's new followers. The reasons were, first, that the localized service aspect was novel and popular and, secondly, that many followers privately realized the stores failed because they themselves did not pay their bills. Those outside the movement, both government and Trobriand opposition, derided the project as unsound from the start. They charged that it was set up contrary to proven business principles, that the entire exercise was the action of a political 'con-man' bent on personal advancement, and that the Kabisawali leaders were cunningly duping people out of money for their own personal gain. While it was always hard for the observer to know what was happening to Kabisawali store funds, it can at least be said that there was no conspicuous consumption among the movement's leaders during that period or later - nor was there any known public or private complaint by Kabisawali followers about personal gain or consumption among the leaders.

Transportation was another early programme. The aims were to give people along the Kiriwinan road system cheap access to fairly regular transport and to encourage communally-owned village trucks. Until 1972 only one Trobriander had ever owned a vehicle personally. The irregular transportation services of the traders and the local government council were deemed expensive, insufficient in relation to demand, and in one case corrupt. The transportation programme began in 1972 with the borrowing of a dilapidated old utility from
an in-law of Kasaipwalova. The vehicle was called Mirailux, taunting the opposition who sarcastically called Kabisawali people 'men of Iwa' after the cargo cultists of the nearby island of Iwa.

In January 1973 the transportation programme moved on to a new plateau. A large white Toyota truck with KABISAWALI emblazoned on the sides was purchased through a Development Bank loan and financial contributions from six villages around Yalumgwa. A collective and competitive repayment scheme was started to pay off the loan. The truck stayed in seemingly constant motion taking women to mortuary exchanges, men to political meetings, copra to the buyers, and young people to the Saturday gathering in Losuia. It also ran constant errands on request by movement supporters. But for Saturdays, no consistent policy of charges for the use of the truck was made and, in all probability, the vehicle did not recover its fuel costs. In addition, the truck at times carried 80 or more passengers, so maintenance quickly became a problem. The truck was, nevertheless, to Kabisawali supporters a potent symbol of their new organization, proof that the movement could deliver non-traditional benefits to those who had felt disadvantaged for so long. However, unrecognized by the supporters, the loosely rationalized methods of using and maintaining the truck also signalled the weakness of the movement.

Another early programme, a minor one, was the building of a road through the northwestern Kiriwinan swamp. In the interior of the swamp lived some 800 people who had petitioned all authorities without success over the previous forty years about building such a road. It was for them the major issue of their area and they noted ruefully that the 1972 local government council road built to connect north and south Kiriwina had been put through swamps much worse than theirs. With an eye to potential support and to proving the communal efficacy of the new organization, Kabisawali leaders called out their followers en masse to raise the earth foundation of the potential road and to lay a corduroy surface across it. This was achieved but the road fell short of completion because of the costs of renting a bulldozer to lay the coral super-surface of the track.
An index of the mounting tension surrounding the Kabisawali Movement and what its intentions were came in October 1972 during the road work. Two Kabisawali villages came to loggerheads during the work and sticks were thrown, causing two minor injuries. The rumour process at government headquarters recorded this as a potential uprising and a special detachment of police was flown in in readiness.

To Kasaipwalova the early economic programmes were desirable in themselves as examples of what could be achieved by populist organization and new self-confidence. At the same time, he alone among the Kabisawali leadership saw these projects as building blocks for a new political organization.

People's Kabisawali Government

The idea for a counter organization to the local government council was first floated publicly by Kasaipwalova in November 1972. After innumerable meetings and discussions, the new name and idea became established in December. Before the usual issues of internal structure, policies, finance and the like were even discussable, however, the immediate problem of the new organization was how to arrange the various Kabisawali chiefs in relation to each other. The sensitivities of these former rivals was a delicate matter which required three months of public and private meetings to sort out. The main problem was Vanoi, the Omarakana chief, who had earlier supported the movement's economic efforts but vacillated over the new political move. At the same time other chiefs were reluctant to accord him precedence though Kabisawali supporters were not. Eventually Vanoi withdrew from the movement on the grounds of not wishing to offend the government, and a triumvirate of chiefs, openly acknowledging their 'equality' of rank, emerged as the principal senior decision-makers. They were Narabutau of Yalumgwa, Mweyoyu of Kabwaku, and Pulitala of Gumilababa. Kasaipwalova's university-educated brother-in-law Beona and, of course, Kasaipwalova himself were the remaining two who have, since that period, comprised the five main figures of the movement.
The emergence of this new organization, especially its name and the rumour that its leader (first Kasaipwalova, then Vanoi, then Kasaipwala again, and finally Mweyoyu) was to be called kini or king, dramatically increased the significance of the Kabisawali Movement in the eyes of its opposition and in government circles. From the outside, the activity was variously interpreted as a secessionist movement, a latter-day cargo cult, a localized revolution against established traditional and governmental authority, a skilful political campaign for parliament, a threat to European interests, and a Machiavellian confidence game. Interestingly, these interpretations, held with deep feeling and conviction, occurred before the new organization had any established policies at all. The reasons for this were essentially twofold: first, 1972-73 was a period of heightened uncertainty nationally due to the accelerating decolonization; secondly, Kasaipwalova had a personal reputation as an enfant terrible, a reputation generated by himself about himself in his speeches and actions in the national capital in 1970-72. As it turned out, the localized-revolution explanation was not wholly incorrect, though the concept needs careful cultural interpretation in order not to be misleading. In any case, no one, inside or outside of Kabisawali, noticed that the 1972 activities of the movement were entirely consistent with the new Papua New Guinean-dominated cabinet's much publicized Eight Point Plan for Development.

Throughout late 1972 and early 1973 the ideological cleavage in Trobriand society was deepening rapidly. Kabisawali was encouraging people to put their faith in the organization which would be more expressive of themselves and their culture. The stores project too was appearing to work. In addition, July-December 1972 was a period of severe drought which was openly claimed to have been brought on by Waibadi, the Omarakana chief's former (and still current) rival for 'paramountcy' and as well the president of the threatened local government council. Waibadi publicly acknowledged that his feared fertility magic was behind the drought. The drought was therefore pervasively accepted as a demonstration of his power.
However, there was among the villagers a surprising twist in the interpretation of this event. It was accepted that Waibadi had a legitimate grievance against the Kabisawali leaders, who were seen to be challenging his prestige. Hence his drought-making upon them was to be expected and was within the pragmatic rules of political competition and chiefly rivalry. But the drought was Trobriand-wide, even, in fact, nation-wide, as government posters and radio broadcasts indicated. This was arbitrary and unjust, beyond the legitimacy of punishing one’s enemies, so many villagers said.

The drought ended and the rains came again in January 1973. For a brief spell, tensions lessened. Nevertheless, within two weeks after the beginning of the rains, another scourge became apparent. The prolonged dryness had changed the growth cycle of the sweet potato hawkmoth. With the rains, a torrent of these pests was released on the only remaining crop for immediate sustenance, the sweet potato. Expectations of drought relief had been raised only to come crashing down again. Blame for the hawkmoth blight was privately assigned to Vanoi, the Omarakana chief, as he was thought to control the magic and also because he had only weeks before experienced humiliation in his withdrawal from Kabisawali.

Tempers were at a low ebb and a substantively trivial but symbolically significant event brought matters to a head. In February 1973 the newly-arrived Kabisawali Toyota was dented by a local government vehicle while parked in Losuia. The incident inflamed onlookers who hurled partisan invective at each other. Within hours the rumour spread that the Toyota had been hit, badly damaged, or smashed. Kabisawali villagers responded by donning war dress, stoning a council vehicle carrying Waibadi, and burning a council tractor and trailer. An attack on the council chambers advocated by Kabisawali chief Mweyoyu and his village was narrowly averted by Narabutau’s intervention. Kabisawali members justified their

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1 See Weiner (1976:223-5).
actions as retaliation against the 'attack' on their truck and against the blight and drought which had preceded it. The Trobriand opposition and the government, failing to understand the subjective symbolic significance of the truck, saw the damage as minute, which in objective terms it was, and therefore interpreted the event as a pretext being used by Kabisawali to stir up trouble against existing authority; the affair then was proof positive of Kabisawali intent and the lawlessness of its methods. Government officials had no idea that the blight and drought were culturally connected with the affair in the minds of the villagers.

Riot police were called in to arrest the arsonists and to prevent a possible civil war. At Kasaipwalova's instigation, a campaign of know-nothingism was adopted against the police, thwarting their ability to locate and identify the actual people whose names they had on lists of suspects. To counter this tactic, the police induced Waibadi, the council president and Kabisawali rival, to ride through Kabisawali territory covered in a sheet so as to identify suspects without being identified himself. The ruse was discovered, however, and shortly afterwards a government car carrying Waibadi and Vanoi to Losuia was ambushed with sticks and rocks. The attackers were driven off with tear gas.

The police strategy then changed on the assumption that to remove Kasaipwalova was to undermine the whole campaign of resistance. A five-month old charge against him for cursing a government official was reactivated and, in undergoing the necessary formalities for this, a second charge of 'insulting behaviour' was laid because Kasaipwalova spat on the arresting officer. Bail was arranged and some days passed before a third charge of 'laying hold' of a police officer at a roadblock was made. Kasaipwalova was then held in Losuia until late evening before bail was allowed. Before his release, however, Kabisawali villagers had massed along the main road in fury. They attacked the government station with the object of releasing Kasaipwalova and burning the government headquarters. The attack was repelled with tear gas without injury.
Plaque by Trobriand artist Vala'osi depicting the history of the Kabisawali Movement

(Photo R.J. May)
The attack achieved sensational headlines nationally\(^1\) and brought a stream of national leaders to the Trobriands to investigate. The chief minister's aides argued for a cooling-off period and a search for a political, not police, settlement. The police were withdrawn within a week. The entire affair has rankled government and council supporters ever since as lawlessness went unpunished. One European police officer resigned over the affair.

The departure of the police was followed by the two largest Kabisawali meetings to date. Ostensibly to make policy decisions about taxes, financial goals and village representatives, the meetings were also a show of strength against critics before the eyes of invited representatives of the chief minister and the national press. Kabisawali laplap-uniforms were handed out to village councillors and wooden tableaux were carved in celebration of recent events.

The charges against Kasaipwalova were not, however, dropped and in May 1973 he was tried by a specially-appointed Papua New Guinean magistrate. The results were 'innocent' on the cursing charge, 'no case to answer' for laying hold, and 'guilty' on the insulting behaviour charge. The sentence was three months at hard labour, suspended on a twelve-month good behaviour bond of K100. Physically, however, Kasaipwalova did not go to jail, a fact not unnoticed by the people who had understood little of the machinations of the trial process.

By mid-1973, the People's Kabisawali Government was a loose organization of three tiers: (i) the five central figures; (ii) over seventy village representatives from about two-thirds of the separate

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\(^1\) The entire affair was followed in detail in the pages of the Port Moresby newspaper *Post-Courier* during March 1973.
villages and settlements of the islands; and (iii) all the taxpayers or those symbolically allied to the movement, whose numbers were somewhat more than half the adult population.¹

The policies of the Kabisawali government were: (1) to collect taxes so as to undermine the local government council's taxation scheme; (2) to take control of the council by winning the 1973 council elections; (3) to revive gardening to its former heights; (4) to buy an inter-island trawler to aid outer islanders, copra marketing, and the kula, and (5) to start a village court system under the traditional chiefs.

The tax collection programme was implemented in April-June 1973. The rate was set at 50 toea for men and 20 toea for women, as opposed to council rates of K4 for men and 50 toea for women. In setting the rate no calculation was made of the potential sum total nor indeed was there any clear plan as to how the funds would be used. The final sum was in excess of K1100. Concomitantly, taxes to the council had virtually ceased, even from council supporters.

In June 1973 Kabisawali leaders, over considerable opposition from their supporters, persuaded the movement to enter candidates in their local wards for local government elections. The candidates were not hand picked or endorsed by the leaders but were local choices. The results were never announced in popular voting strength terms. In any case, the partisan affiliations of many candidates were unknown to the polling officials. The overt test of the results came therefore in the new council's election of officers. Kasaipwalova displaced Waibadi as president by a vote of 16-14 with two Kitava councillors absent. In turn, Waibadi was elected vice-president by an 18-12 vote over Kabisawali leader Beona. As could be expected,

¹ The seeming anomaly of two-thirds of settlements but somewhat more than half the adults is explained by the facts that Kabisawali had innumerable tiny villages and the opposition was strong in all the largest ones. These figures are from 1974 and should not be read into later periods.
Kabisawali claimed electoral victory, which the opposition vigorously denied. The meaning of this election has been bitterly disputed ever since.

Through Kabisawali's 'dominance', the new council collected no council tax in 1973-74 and lost its employees through lack of wages. In April 1974 a mass meeting mainly of Kabisawali supporters voted the council out of existence. The national government officially suspended the organization three months later. Kabisawali chief Pulitala sequestered the council centre as a home and meeting place during that period. He did so in the name of the new Kabisawali government and because the land, though sold to the national government in 1967, was by traditional land rights inalienably his own. Official liquidators have been trying to sort out this problem since August 1974.

Concerning gardening, Kabisawali chiefs exhorted the various villages of the movement to engage in gardening competitions called kayasa in 1973-74. In fact, only a few did so. Nevertheless, during the year the rains were good and the tourist trade down so the end result was, in fact, a better harvest in 1974 than had been the case since 1967. New yamhouses for all Kabisawali chiefs were built and filled, Narabutau's becoming the largest in the Trobriands.

A short note on yam politics and political credit is appropriate here. Vanoi, the Omarakana chief, had withdrawn from Kabisawali in early 1973. Despite the weak harvest of that year, Vanoi could have expected several hundred baskets of yams as support for his many wives (eight at the time) and affirmation of his affinal alliances. In fact, he received approximately twenty baskets in toto, mere tokens of his existence. The problem arose because his affinal alliances were with Kabisawali-supporting villages who had, without instructions from the movement, independently decided to signal their changed level of support for him. The outcome was further humiliation for Vanoi, who began disassociating himself from the Kabisawali opposition. He rejoined Kabisawali in April 1974 explaining to his colleagues in opposition that his purpose was
sorcery and subversion within. Back within the movement, he was an anomaly and both he and his Kabisawali counterparts were constantly wary of each other, especially when eating together.

An inter-island trawler affair was a serious miscalculation. The finances and methods of running such a service were far beyond the capabilities of the movement but this was only discovered after the commitment had been taken. A village court system was begun in July 1974 with the building of a small courthouse in Kabwaku village. The idea was that the chiefs were to sit on demand there to mediate or arbitrate disputes through customary law. In fact, village leaders had always handled most of the dispute settlement anyway, despite the presence of a local court magistrate, so all that was new was the name and the court centre.

From mid 1973, the national government had come to put a new interpretation on Kabisawali activities. As a result of fact-finding tours by ministerial aides and a visit to the chief minister by leaders of the movement and the opposition, cabinet policy shifted to neutrality between the two sides and the view was taken that the whole conflict was basically part of the traditional rivalries of the island chiefs. Government officials who had 'overinterpreted' the conflict in their reports and became too partisan in their positions were rotated out but not reprimanded. However, neither side got de jure recognition, which Kabisawali especially requested, though both sides had substantial de facto dealings with the national government even to the point of receiving subsidies.

Later economic programmes

By May 1973 the stores system had collapsed but business activities were not stilled. Kabisawali's media fame,¹ both in Papua New Guinea

¹ The Trobriand situation was followed closely by the newspapers and the Australian Broadcasting Commission made a current affairs television film on Kabisawali in 1973. In late 1973 Kasaipwalova read poetry at the opening of the Sydney Opera House and was again on television. In 1975 BBC-TV made a documentary on Kasaipwalova and the Trobriands called The Trobriand Experiment.
and Australia, attracted tourist agents. Kabisawali accepted offers to handle day charters. The agreement was to sponsor tours of Kiriwina, a locally prepared meal, traditional dancing, and occasions for artifacts trading. A large indigenous resthouse was built on a southeastern beach as the focal point of these tours. The tours were rather popular at the outset. Kabisawali earned about K230 per plane load and a further K350 on rough average went directly into the hands of villagers through artifacts sales.

To the close observer, however, the weaknesses in the tourist effort were apparent from the start. Kasaipwalova, the main local organizer, was ambivalent about tourism in the abstract. The income was essential but he inwardly disliked putting Trobrianders on display as exotica for the pleasure of outsiders. Furthermore, his anti bureaucratic attitudes expressed themselves in refusing to do the necessary paperwork associated with the business. Hence relations with tourist agents rapidly became strained and Kabisawali became labelled as an unpredictable local link for successful tours. As well, tourism did not have the popular appeal of the stores system. Tours were an infrequent, not everyday, service and were centred on only a few places. The old problem of distribution of benefit reappeared slowly in the organization of local tourism.

Coupled with organizational weaknesses in the new programme were two exogenous factors. First, in 1973-75 there was a substantial decrease in Europeans resident in Papua New Guinea, the primary population from which Trobriand tourists came, due to localization in the national public service with approaching independence and due to the ending of the labour-intensive construction phase of the nearby Bougainville copper mine. Coincidentally with this decrease in potential internal tourists was a decrease in tourists from Australia due to the international economic recession and very high national inflation.

All these factors meant Kabisawali's tourism efforts had a few months of considerable success followed by decline.
In April 1974, Kabisawali incorporated its economic activities under the national law governing company registration and limited liability. The result was constituted as the Kabisawali Village Development Corporation. The reasons for this move were: first, relations with the national government were ameliorating; secondly, registration seemed likely to increase access to potential government subsidies, and thirdly, Kasaipwalova, inexperienced in business affairs, had only recently come to understand that the movement's financial affairs conducted in his name left him personally vulnerable before the law and that limited liability was an easy way around this problem.

The main activity of the new 'corporation' was artifacts trading. Tourism was already declining but had demonstrated the money in selling carvings. Two buildings were leased to begin the enterprise, one an unused warehouse in Losuia and the other a retail shop in downtown Port Moresby. The plan was to buy at reasonable prices, preferably undercutting the nearby United Church artifacts store on Kiriwina, and to sell more cheaply and in a culturally distinctive manner in Port Moresby. Carvers, however, ignored the ideological arguments at the Kabisawali store and simply played the various buyers off against each other for the best price to themselves. Nevertheless, the system was established, despite teething pains, depending heavily on the idealism of educated young Kabisawali supporters for its impetus. In Port Moresby, its store, Arts Trobriand, was distinctive for its 24-hour-a-day trading and its character as a grass-roots development project.

Another programme of the new corporation was the building of a Trobriand-style tourist hotel, fine arts centre, and museum. The five main Kabisawali leaders spent a great deal of time considering the kind of tourism they wanted and the kind of hotel it should revolve around. Their basic decisions were that the hotel should look like a Trobriand village but should have what tourists wanted as amenities, that it should serve mostly local foods, that it should be run by Trobrianders, that villagers should have free
access to it so they could at least come and see films there, and
that it should be located at a considerable distance from the
villages so as to prevent favouritism by proximity and intrusion
of village privacy. The entire project was predicated on access to
a newly-established development fund in the Chief Minister's
Department. Kabisawali provided and cleared the land and was to
donate labour to the project. An imaginative architect's plan was
in existence before the end of the fieldwork period.1

Linked to the hotel scheme was a plan for an arts centre and
a museum. The arts centre idea was generated by a visit to the
Trobriands of a famous French ethnomusicologist. The plan was to
have a centre or retreat not far from the hotel site where Trobriand
artists could congregate for mutual stimulus and where outside artists -
sculptors, painters and musicians - could come and disseminate new
art forms. The Sopi Arts Centre was under construction on donated
Kabisawali land just over a coral ridge from the hotel site when
fieldwork ended.2 The local museum idea was generated by news that
the earliest collection of Trobriand artifacts, that of the first
missionary, Rev. S.B. Fellows, had recently been rediscovered and
sold to the Office of the Prime Minister of Australia with the
intention of returning it to Papua New Guinea. Kabisawali leaders
visited Canberra in 1974 to see the collection. The project went
forward for government consideration but the Kabisawali chiefs,
being not so enthusiastic about the collection on the grounds that
it was not very different from contemporary material, never put it
high on their list of priorities.

1 From secondary sources, it has been learned that the hotel plan
effectively died in 1975-76 with the government's waning confidence
in Kabisawali and with the effective opposition to the hotel grant
by the opposing movement.

2 The Sopi Arts Centre appears under construction in the BBC-TV film
The Trobriand Experiment 1975. The centre apparently fell into
disuse in 1976 and Kasaipwalova was convicted in 1977 of misusing
government subsidies for the centre and local tourist development.
Opposition

The Kabisawali Movement, as has been noted, faced opposition from varying sources at varying times. At its outset, even on its first day, it was seen as a threat by the people of the government station Losuia and the villagers of the northern lagoon shore (the central zone), and as well by the supporters of the council president Waibadi. Beyond these sources, secondary categories of opposition developed, but less immediately, among Vakuta Islanders, some members of the indigenous United Church pastorate, co-operative store officials, and peoples of various villages such as Kaduwaga on Kaileuna Island, Kumwagea on Kitava Island, and Sinakata in south Kiriwina. In addition, almost all Trobrianders working away from the islands, with the exception of students who were divided, came to oppose the movement. In broadest abstraction, ignoring for the moment some exceptions, the opposition tended to be the greater receivers of the non traditional benefits and services of colonial institutions past and present.

In 1972-73 the opposition did not develop into a counter organization but, nevertheless, as a loose congeries of leaders and groups, matched Kabisawali point-for-point in ideological debate. The main spokesmen in this debate were Waibadi, former parliamentarian Lepani Watson (then resident on Vakuta), Charles Lepani (senior civil servant in the national government), Elliott Elijah (senior civil servant), and various local civil servants, pastors and high-ranking councillors. Their arguments were that Kabisawali represented an illegitimate usurpation of traditional leadership privileges, that it endangered government-mission-medical-education-trading services, that the villagers had insufficient knowledge for running large-scale economic and political enterprises, and that Europeans could and should be co-operated with, not opposed. Kasaipwalova was despised as a political 'con-man' and the other chiefs, his 'followers', were considered fools and opportunistic usurpers. In 1972-73 the opposition was without concrete programmes, its major counter 'action' being Waibadi's drought.
In mid 1973 the opposition began to crystallize into a movement itself. The first step in this direction was the short-lived Tabalu Association. Then in early 1974 the Tonenei Kamokwita Movement emerged as an organized opposition with defined goals and proposed programme (see Chapter 9).

As has been mentioned, the national government was also a kind of opposition to Kabisawali, especially in 1972-73. Kasaipwalova's radical reputation and pre-existing personal enemies in high places were partly responsible for this. However, a second factor also counted. Unknown to themselves, the cabinet, police and senior Administration officials in Port Moresby received their formal and informal information about Kabisawali activities largely via partisan channels. Their search for 'Trobriand public opinion' and the 'real facts' was being fed from the other end of the information pipeline by opinion gathered on the government station or passed inwards to the centre informally by Trobriand civil servants. The process was not one of conscious deception or duplicity. All information-providers were genuine in their intentions; it was just that no one perceived the underlying structure of the conflict situation so as to know how to evaluate different reckonings of the problem. In any case, 'objective' facts are always more difficult to acquire in conflict situations, requiring infinitely more time and effort in cross-checking. It is probable that none of the government's information providers had had any training with regard to this problem. In any case, as noted earlier, government officials eventually opened up dual channels of information which led to a more detached and even-handed approach to the Trobriand conflict, a policy still extant at the end of fieldwork.

Finally, Kabisawali opposition was beginning to surface from within its own ranks in 1974. After the stores collapse, movement activities shifted centripetally and gradually into the core area.

1 The Tabalu are the highest ranking sub-clan of the Trobriands, the descent group of Vanoi and Waibadi and previous 'paramount chiefs'.
of northeastern Kiriwinan villages surrounding Yalumgwa. These villages outside the core area - in the south, in the northwest, on Kitava, on Kaileuna - were beginning to question the benefit of the movement to themselves. To them, the old system of a central area, servicing a few to the disadvantage of the distant, seemed possibly to be reemerging with a new locus. Some questioning and disillusionment was developing at the end of the field period.

Leadership

This section deals with the most controversial and divisive problem of interpreting the Kabisawali Movement, the nature of its leadership. It is primarily intended for readers inside Papua New Guinea.

One or many

For innumerable observers and even some Trobriand supporters of Kabisawali, the movement has been synonymous with the activities of its perceived initiator Kasaipwalova. The belief is, quite simply, that it exists because he created it, that it does what he says, and that it is what he stands for.

There can be little doubt that, despite anti council resentment and the latent greater receiver/less receiver division in Trobriand society, there would have been no organized movement without Kasaipwalova's catalytic role. There are several factors, however, which circumscribe this initiator's role. First, Narabutau began the pre-Kabisawali development activities and Narabutau named the movement. Secondly, Narabutau and Kasaipwalova's father managed all Kabisawali affairs, including the first store, during the first six months of the movement. Thirdly, Narabutau and several others attracted Kabisawali chief Mweyoyu into the movement. Fourthly, the Kabisawali chiefs and senior figures guided Kasaipwalova in 1972-73 to seek support where it would be found and to avoid villages and personalities who would be impossible to convert. Kasaipwalova was unsure where his opposition would come from at the
beginning of the movement and he was steered by others. Fifthly, Kasaipwalova and Kabisawali had the politician's sheer luck of a burned-down tourist hotel and a simultaneous drought, phenomena which drove supporters into the movement while seeming to result from the leader's influence alone. Sixthly, Kasaipwalova's role was magnified vis-a-vis the world outside Kabisawali, especially the national scene, because he almost alone was in control of the outward flow of information in English. Within these circumscriptions, Kasaipwalova was, nevertheless, the most vital figure in the movement in 1972-74. He was especially important to the pace, the novelty, and the confidence of the movement — while also being the creator and maintainer of an unnecessarily intense level of opposition to the entire activity.¹

Was the catalytic figure an unfettered voice in Kabisawali decision-making? It is true that he brought forth most of the new ideas which moved the movement: trucks and transportation, bank loans, charter tourism Trobriand-style, new political organization, silence to the riot police, art schools, the hotel, government grants, artifacts trading, standing in council elections, and the village court system. The qualification to this political creativity is, however, that these ideas were not imposed. Kabisawali was in action terms more than anything else a constant stream of meetings. During 33 months for which records were kept, over 100 formal meetings were held. Participation and debate was the pattern of decisions taken and almost every new proposal was altered by the process of group discussion, be that with the chiefs, the village leaders, or the people at large. A few ideas, such as an inter-island trading vessel and a headquarters, came from persons other

¹ Of the external models of Kabisawali-like activities, Kasaipwalova had an undetailed knowledge of Tanzanian ujamaa democratic socialism and a detailed knowledge of the Mataungan Association of the Tolai people of New Britain. Kasaipwalova is very close to John Kaputin, one of the Mataungan leaders. The particular conflict model of the Mataungan situation was unfortunately a mental 'charter' for Kasaipwalova's view of the Trobriands.
than Kasaipwalova, and other of his proposals, such as anti
mission and anti government activity, were dropped, mainly through
the influence of the Kabisawali chiefs.

Nor was Kabisawali ideology simply synonymous with
Kasaipwalova's central beliefs. Outside the movement this was the
appearance. The main aim of Kabisawali was to put control of
Trobriand affairs in Trobriand hands. This overarching goal, is,
of course, enormously ambiguous. Kasaipwalova's interpretation
was that this meant ultimately raising the level of confidence of
the people vis-a-vis Europeans and their institutions. The whole
exercise was about shedding the sense of inferiority in the modern
world and his prescription was simple: to stop feeling inferior
one must stop acting as if inferior and as if one accepted the
definition by others of one's inferiority. This was the heart of
the matter, an expressive before instrumental dialectic with
Europeans and their society. For other Kabisawali leaders and
followers, this was Kasaipwalova's private meaning for the movement,
a level of meaning which did not catch fire for them. To them,
Kabisawali was about new instrumental achievements and improved
distribution of real benefits. The dialectic was for them with the
local social order present and past. The raising-up to be done was
vis-a-vis other Trobrianders who had benefitted most from the new
socio-economic system emerging over the top of the traditional
one. Hence the aggressive anti European, sometime anti government,
message in Kasaipwalova's English-language version of Kabisawali
affairs was considerably at variance with the meaning that the
movement had for its supporters. The new non traditional benefits
were for them too valuable to risk driving away. The issues were
how not to be subordinated to their primary beneficiaries, the
greater receivers, and how to get a better distribution and an
increase of those services.

Finally, of the four figures who were with Kasaipwalova at the
centre of Kabisawali decision-making, none was there through
manipulation, threat, bribery, or the like. One came in, against Kasai pwalova's advice, because of idealism, frustration at university and disillusionment with his church. A second joined because of a sense of injustice against the council, the co-operative system, the national government which ignored him, and ancient rivalry with opposition leaders. A third joined after a religious vision commanding him to do so, backed up by a land grievance against the government and a perceived chance to restore his standing in relation to other chiefs. A fourth was there because of grievances against an ignoring government and an 'ineffective' council, but was also contemptuous of those who called him 'bush kanaka' because of his lack of education while he was pre-eminent in the kula.

Literary versus political creativity

Kasaipwalova is Papua New Guinea's foremost writer. To date, his productions include articles, plays, and poems, at least one of which has won minor international recognition.¹ His closest friends include artistically creative people as well as political radicals. Kasaipwalova's creative *modus operandi* is one of immense egocentric spontaneity. He gathers his material from his own experiences, relying little on reading or thoughtful seclusion for his inspiration; though aloof interactionally, his mind is continuously alive to the dramatic literary possibilities of his milieu. Inwardly, he generates innumerable potential literary productions, very few of which ever get written. When production does take place, it happens rapidly and intensely - soon to be forgotten in the throes of new possibilities.

This generativity has, in Kasaipwalova's eyes, foundations in both major domains of his life. His western education has led him to admire the artistic creations of Europeans more than anything else they are or do. At the same time, chartering his own self-image is the fact that as a baby he received by ritual ingestion

¹ See 'Reluctant Flame' in Stevens (1972).
a highly valued form of carving magic from his uncle, which he interprets philosophically as a kind of creativity magic.\footnote{See Kasaipwalova (1975).}

Unfortunately, this kind of literary and dramatic orientation to experience is not easily compatible with the necessities of practical politics. Few successful politicians of this century have been simultaneously successful writers of fiction, drama and poetry.\footnote{Lest the reader think instantaneously of Mao Tse-tung as an exception, it should be noted that \textit{Mao Tse-tung on Literature and Art} (1967) is written throughout with the assumption that revolutionary writers and revolutionary politicians must necessarily be different sets of people.} This is not to say that politics lacks creativity only that it comes out in a very different environment and in relation to very different problems and situations.

The literary orientation is a bad bedfellow in politics for several reasons. First, the process of literary creation has no necessary or immediate adversary. Compared with political problems, necessarily involving other people in relations of opposition or co-operation, it is thought in a vacuum. The writer does not have to calculate the real moves of real players and face the consequences of his own calculations. A politician knows that his calculations count, that his credit partially rests on his decisions, and that mistakes can be painful for himself and others, especially in large-scale arenas.

Secondly, large-arena politics has low tolerance limits for experimentation. Experimental political initiatives create expectations in supporters and in all participants in a political system. Too many initiatives too fast, especially if rapidly abandoned, are not conducive of creditworthiness because of the gyration effect on expectations. The writer, however, may throw up idea after idea to test for its dramatic potential. This usually happens privately, of course, and not in the public domain. In any case, were such experimentation public, by definition the
fictional creation would not involve large-scale economic and political interests. Writing fiction therefore tolerates innumerable proposals, false starts, and incomplete efforts at little cost to anyone, except possibly the writer himself.

Thirdly, large-scale practical politics involves mathematical-like, even if non-numerical, instrumental thinking. Calculations, planning, timing, cost-benefit analysis, and accomplishability are aspects of a practical politician's mentality no matter how deeply committed ideologically he may be to certain values. The writer has far less need of this mathematical-like approach primarily because he has much more control over the fictional world he creates.

Fourthly, the writer in his craft uses intensification as a method of putting vast portions of life into small packages so as to bring out messages in sharp relief. A writer then seeks out and creates intensity as a method of entertainment and instruction. Politics, though with some theatrical attributes and intensity, equally needs the attribute of de-intensification primarily because it deals in live (non-playful) conflict which must be contained.

These four points, deliberately without ad hominem detail, speak of the weaknesses of Kabisawali leadership. They also seek to explain why all parties to the Kabisawali affair - supporters, opposition, government, and observers - have found the movement so bewildering when approached and interpreted through its central personality.

**Conclusion**

Despite the leadership section above, this paper does not agree with government officials, some Trobrianders, and various outside observers who see the contemporary Trobriand conflict as a clash of (flawed) personalities in a framework of traditional rivalries. This is the most superficial, though salient, model of the situation. Underlying it is the age-old question of who gets what in society. For over eighty years, a set of islands made up of relatively or potentially self-sufficient units without overall
organization or a socio-economic centre have been undergoing uneven centralization. Newly-added non-traditional benefits have been organized to the considerable disadvantage of many. Protests about this went unheeded and unrecognized by the governing authorities, though not the prime beneficiaries. The Kabisawali Movement, through its catalytic leader and programmes, made the latent division in society manifest. Personalities were and are only the surface of the situation.

*Editor's Note*

Leach's account of the Kabisawali Movement focusses on the period 1972-74. Since 1974 there have been important developments within the movement which merit at least brief mention.

Reference has been made above to Kabisawali's later business enterprises in the fields of tourism and artifact marketing. During the period 1974-76 there was a notable expansion in Kabisawali's business activities. The movement bought an expatriate owned trade store on Kiriwina, established a trade store and a take-away food business in suburban Port Moresby, bought into a Port Moresby restaurant (which had been established by the wife of one of Kasaipwalova's former expatriate university teachers), acquired real estate in Port Moresby and purchased a small coastal trading vessel. There was an abortive attempt to establish an international commodity exchange in Port Moresby. Kabisawali also acquired the Air Niugini agency in Losula, though this was subsequently withdrawn following complaints that the agency was discriminating against non Kabisawali passengers. During 1976 the Arts Trobriand shop in Port Moresby was closed and converted into a fashion shop. Subsequently another artifact business in Port Moresby was purchased (though the former owner, a Papua New Guinean, never received more than the initial down-payment). Gordon Central Agency was established in Port Moresby to provide centralized office services for Kabisawali, and eventually other groups. There were also plans for setting up a bank and a computer service (in August 1975 it was announced that
the movement had acquired a K35,000 computer), for participating in the construction of an international hotel in Port Moresby, and for taking over Chinese owned supermarkets in Port Moresby and Alotau.

The initiative for this business expansion seems to have come from Kasaipwalova, though he was, during this period, receiving advice from an expatriate former employee of the central government, Michael Worsley. (Worsley, who had been dismissed from the Department of Finance, was subsequently refused a new entry permit and forced to leave the country.) Many of Kabisawali's more informed sympathizers expressed doubts about the movement's new business ambitions, especially in view of its meagre capital and limited managerial capacity. There were also criticisms that the movement's centre of gravity seemed to be shifting from Yalumgwa to Port Moresby, where Kasaipwalova seemed to be spending an increasing amount of time, and indeed in June 1975 it was decided to shift the movement's head office to Port Moresby.

In July 1976 Kasaipwalova was charged with stealing funds, amounting to K20,000, allocated by the National Cultural Council for the construction of a cultural centre and arts school. In January 1977 he was convicted of stealing K14,000 of the government grant and was sentenced to two years gaol. After serving nine months he won an appeal and was released. Another charge of stealing K6000 allocated by the Milne Bay Area Authority for village water reticulation systems was adjourned in October 1976 pending hearing of the earlier charges.

Shortly after the January 1977 decision the Ocean Trading Company Pty Ltd gave notice of a creditor's petition for the winding up of the Kabisawali Village Development Corporation.

In 1980 Kasaipwalova was residing in Lae and the Kabisawali Movement appeared to be moribund.
The local social and political divisions against which the Kabisawali Movement emerged have been outlined in the previous chapter by Leach.

Early opposition to Kabisawali in the Trobriands reflected a mixture of local political factors, distrust of Kabisawali ideology and of Kasaipwalova's personal leadership, and a scepticism about Kabisawali's promises of development. Increasingly, also, opposition to Kabisawali was galvanized by a feeling of resentment that Kabisawali's opposition to established authority, and particularly to the Kiriwina Local Government Council, were not only being tolerated by the central government but were yielding benefits to the movement which were not available to those seeking development through more orthodox channels. Somare, for example, records (1975: 123, 127) that 'John Kasaipwalova asked me to assist his movement in the legal work of incorporation, so I made one of my top lawyers available' and that 'It was his [Kasaipwalova's] application that caused me to take a major new policy step. I obtained cabinet approval to set aside budget money to be used as direct grants to groups or councils to assist them in carrying out village-level commercial activities'. Kasaipwalova also obtained two grants for the establishment of a cultural centre. And when in 1973 Somare's special representative, Alexis Sarei, visited the Trobriands in an attempt to reconcile the two groups, his conciliatory attitude towards Kabisawali's opposition to the Kiriwina Council (the first major concession to the opponents of local government councils) was seen by the pro-council forces as a sell-out on the part of the government.
Establishment and organization

The opposition to Kabisawali was concentrated in the central zone and Vakuta (Leach, pers. comm.) and the main activists were Waibadi, Lepani Watson and Watson's son, Charles Lepani. Lepani Watson, who was ministerial member for business development in the 1968-72 House of Assembly, and Charles Lepani, who in 1976 became director of the National Planning Office, were particularly sceptical of Kabisawali's capacity to fulfil its promises of business development and critical of what they believed was an undiscriminating support by the central government.

In mid 1973 Kabisawali opponents formed the Tabalu Association, the principal objectives of which were to support the Kiriwina Council, to reestablish the traditional leadership and to promote local businesses. The Tabalu Association was shortlived, however; its membership base was too narrow, drought affected the leader's standing with potential members (see p. 271) and there were squabbles over rank among Tabalu members (Leach, pers. comm.).

Subsequently, largely on the initiative of Lepani Watson and Waibadi, the Tonenei Kamokwita (TK) Movement was established. A manifesto was drawn up which stated as the movement's guiding principles:

1. KAMAYABA. Respect for the integrity and dignity of the individual, society, and culture must be paramount to sustain the continuity of social, political, and economic action for the common good. Strength in action is the result of the people's real understanding and knowledge of their actions. The integration of the individual in his society and culture provides the grassroots basis of this understanding and knowledge.

2. KAMOKWITA. The search for truth implies that social, political and economic action must inevitably result in the achievement of greater social justice.

3. TABU KENAKUSI. You cannot harvest a garden without first planting it. Promises of prosperity and the raising of the people's expectations without the prerequisite action based on sound realistic planning are actions destructive to the people's search for truth and self-dignity in their economic, social and political actions.
A general meeting was convened in June 1974 and an executive elected. Lepani Watson was chosen as chairman.

Structurally, the movement consists of a village-level organization and a central working committee and central fund. Each member village has elected a committee and established a village fund; the committee is responsible for carrying out economic development proposals decided on within the village. The village committees are represented on the central working committee, which is presided over by village and clan chiefs 'on an honorary basis only'; decisions of the central committee require endorsement by two out of the representative of the chiefs and the president and secretary treasurer of the central committee. The central committee is responsible for intervillage development activity and for projects which are too large for individual villages to undertake. It maintains a central fund to which member villages contribute by way of shareholdings. By October 1974 each village had raised K1500. Subsequently, TK branches were established in Port Moresby and Alotau.

In 1976, following the example of other movements such as the Mataungan Association and Kabisawali, the TK movement was incorporated as the TK Development Corporation Pty Ltd. Among the objectives listed in its memorandum of association were the promotion and encouragement of development activities and businesses, through a variety of means including equity participation, sponsoring students and advancing adult education, sponsoring artists and craftsmen, and acting as agent for government bodies; and carrying on business and other activities amongst which were specified kula exchange, welfare services, retail and wholesale trade, industry, tourism, agriculture (with particular emphasis on improving subsistence production) and artistic and cultural activities. Nominal share capital was set at K200,000 in K1 shares with restrictions on the right of transfer.
The Kiriwina Council issue

Not surprisingly, in view of the circumstances from which it emerged, one of TK's early preoccupations was with the fate of the Kiriwina Local Government Council.

Following his election as president of the Kiriwina Council, Kasaipwalova called three meetings. At the first of these a finance executive committee was appointed; the committee, which according to TK sources was nominated by Kasaipwalova, excluded Kasaipwalova's political opponent Waibadi, who as council vice-president was a signatory to the council's bank accounts, and this became a major source of grievance among the pro council group. The second was a meeting of taxpayers to discuss the council tax issue and to elect a representative to attend Area Authority meetings. Council supporters declared this meeting out of order (properly, the Area Authority representative should have been elected by the councillors, not the taxpayers) and staged a walk-out. Finally, at a meeting in October in the pro-Kabisawali village of Kabwaku, which non-Kabisawali councillors refused to attend, it was resolved to dissolve the council and arrangements were made for the takeover of some of the council's assets, including some shares in Bougainville Copper Pty Ltd, by the Kabisawali Movement. No further meetings of the council were held, though there appear to have been some meetings of the Kabisawali dominated finance executive committee, and in June 1974 the commissioner for local government confirmed suspension of the council and acceded to its 'request for the voluntary winding-up of the affairs of the council'.¹ The pro-council group had regarded the dissolution of the council as unconstitutional and, not entirely without cause, felt that they had been betrayed by the central government.

¹ Papua New Guinea Government Gazette No. 52, 1 August 1974, p.11.
One of the first acts of the TK movement was the presentation of a submission addressed to the liquidator of the Kiriwina Council. While disputing the suspension of the council, the submission recommended that the property and buildings of the council be taken over by the central government with a view to the establishment of a high school and that all financial assets and accounts of the council be closely examined (there were suggestions that council funds had been spent on Kabisawali projects). The submission proposed that if it eventuated that Kabisawali had appropriated council funds for its own projects the TK movement should be compensated from either central government or Kabisawali funds. The submission also noted that a Kabisawali chief, from whom had been purchased the land on which the council chambers were built, had taken up occupancy of the council chambers; it threatened that if no action were taken against him by the central government, 'then the Tonenei Kamokwita Group will have no option but to expropriate all crown land in the Trobriand Islands which belongs to clans and tribes of the Trobriand people who are members of the Tonenei Kamokwita Group'. Further representations along these lines were made during 1975 and 1976 but by the end of 1976 the liquidator's report had not been received and in 1980 the issue of the council's finances was still not resolved. However, the TK movement did receive, in 1975, an assurance from the central government that, provided adequate project plans were submitted, whatever assistance was provided to the Kabisawali movement by the central government would be matched by similar assistance to TK.

In 1974 and 1975 several attempts were made to reconcile the two groups. Kasaipwalova and Charles Lepani played an active part in these moves, which were initiated by the central government. In 1975, following a visit by two senior public servants, Jack Karukuru and Rabbie Namaliu, a working group was established by the central government to 'discuss unity and look at the possibility of setting up a political structure acceptable to all groups on the island'.¹ In November 1975

¹ Post-Courier 28 January 1975.
it was announced that Kabisawali and TK chiefs had agreed to the formation of a council of chiefs, which 'would work with the Central Government in looking after all the people leaving the TK and Kabisawali to continue only business activities',¹ but nothing appears to have come of this.

Business

Next to the council issue, TK's primary concern was with the establishment of business enterprises. Business was seen not only as a means of generating cash income but also of involving village people more closely in the process of development, and particularly in the takeover by local people of existing expatriate enterprises, and of helping stem the outflow of educated young people to urban centres.

Shortly after its establishment the TK movement presented a submission to the central government requesting a grant of K56,000 from the Village Development Fund for two development projects. The first was to acquire equity in Muwo Plantation, a copra plantation under expatriate ownership but on TK village land, with a view to the eventual takeover of the plantation. The second was for the purchase of Trobriand Fisheries, an expatriate business² which as well as trading in fish and other marine products, processed copra and held the agency for the Shell Oil Company. In 1975, with the assistance of a loan from the Papua New Guinea Development Bank, TK acquired Trobriand Fisheries. The former owners agreed to stay on as managers of the business until a suitable Trobriand manager was found.

¹ Post-Courier 5 November 1975.

² The owners of this business, Frank and Jill Holland, also had a trade store and ran the Air Nuigini agency. These were acquired by Kabisawali in 1975.
Other business ventures have included small amounts of produce marketing and artifact sales and the Port Moresby branch has operated a passenger motor vehicle, but none of these has amounted to much. There has been occasional talk of organizing tourism in the Trobriands (in competition with Kabisawali)ⁱ and of establishing a bakery in Alotau.

Culture

Although its primary focus seems to have been economic, TK has sought to match Kabisawali in its concern for Trobriand culture. In the TK Development Corporation's memorandum of association some prominence was given to the movement's commitment to promoting artistic and cultural activities.

In 1974, after the Kabisawali movement had received through the National Cultural Council financial support for its proposed Sopi Arts Centre, it was agreed also to allocate an initial sum of K5000 for the establishment of a TK cultural centre.² However the proposed centre has never got beyond the planning stages. TK followers also took delight in attacking Kabisawali over an alleged sale of artifacts. An undated press release, signed by Chiefs Waibadi and Vivilua, supported a call by a group of university students for the prevention of sale of kula armshells and necklaces to people outside the kula system and went on to say:

The two Chiefs further call on the national museum to investigate the recent sale of a kula canoe to a Japanese Group and a pending sale of armshells and necklaces by the Kabisawali Group .... (the Chiefs) said today that recent political and economic changes in the Trobriand Islands have confused the minds of the Trobriand people and that they are concerned that Kabisawali Group has exploited such confusion to devalue the worth of their culture.

¹ At one stage there was discussion of possible central government assistance to Kabisawali for the purchase of the Guest House on Kiriwina. The expatriate-run Guest House is on land owned by TK supporters, who opposed the sale and formulated counter plans for a tourist development which would not require government assistance.

Conclusion: response and reaction

One cannot account for the development of the TK movement without regard both to the widespread concern with regional development which emerged throughout the country during the early 1970s and to the historical basis of the situation which developed in the Trobriands at that time (see pp.254-264). Nevertheless it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that had it not been for the establishment and early successes of the Kabisawali movement TK would not have been created.¹ It came into being primarily in response to Kabisawali's capture and dissolution of the Kiriwina Council and as a means of balancing the demands which Kabisawali had so successfully pressed on a central government strongly committed to encouraging local developmental and cultural initiatives. As early as 1974 Charles Lepani pointed out the danger, given the government's undertaking to treat the two groups equally and given the small part which the Trobriand Islands play in the national economy, that government assistance to the islands would be seen as privileged treatment and could cause a reaction which would leave both groups worse off; but without TK there seemed little doubt that what benefits were available would go to those villages for whom Kabisawali spoke.

Ideologically the two movements do not appear to be a long way apart. Both are primarily concerned with mobilizing local resources to improve living standards and achieve a greater degree of self-sufficiency in the village, though both seem to accept, at least for a transitional period, joint enterprises with existing expatriate businesses. Both place particular importance on traditional culture and on traditional social and economic activities (though both object to the term 'cultural preservation'). With respect to political ideology, both seem to support a blend of village socialism with a

¹ Though it is perhaps a little unfair to describe TK, as a Papua New Guinean journalist did in 1975, as 'the flip side of the Kabisawali Movement' (Biga Lebasi, Post-Courier 13 June 1975).
strengthening of the political role of traditional chiefs, though in practice of course the two movements have been sharply divided on their attitudes to existing institutions. TK, however, sees itself differentiated from Kabisawali primarily in the realism and practicality of its approach to development. This is reflected in the second and third of TK's guiding principles - kamokwita, the search for truth, and tabu kenakusi, 'you cannot harvest a garden without first planting it' - which were clearly intended as a jibe at Kabisawali. Kabisawali, TK leaders argue, has deceived the people with false hopes and ill conceived projects; TK will show people the true way to self-sufficient development. 1

Although TK has made only limited progress towards achieving its broader social, economic and political ambitions, clearly it has succeeded in providing an effective counterweight to Kabisawali in Trobriand, and national politics. In so doing TK has not only helped to channel regional hostility to Kabisawali leaders away from direct confrontation but has in effect enabled TK supporters, especially in their dealings with the central government, to capitalize on Kabisawali's initiative.

With the reversal in Kasaipwalova's fortunes (see p.289) it seemed possible that TK might attract some support from former Kabisawali villages. 2 However it is unlikely, given the historical basis of the division between the two groups, that there will be any substantial shift of loyalties, and it is doubtful whether the bulk of TK followers would welcome such a shift.

The development of the TK movement provides an interesting example of the way in which micronationalism may spread through the reaction of one group to another. Kabisawali emerged in response

1 For an early statement along these lines see Charles Lepani's letter to the Post-Courier 22 March 1974.

2 Some shift of support occurred even before this, notably on the part of Chief Vivilua, who left Kabisawali alleging distortion of the traditional chieftainship system.
to a feeling of relative deprivation. Although in practice it later benefitted substantially from central government support, in principle it sought to promote self-sufficient development and in doing so to challenge the structures imposed by colonial rule and to assert the identity of the member villages. The TK response might be explained in part as the reaction of those who for various reasons supported the existing institutions; certainly the division between Kabisawali and TK is based to some extent on tradition enmities. Moreover, there is no doubt that one object of the establishment of TK was to counteract Kabisawali influence over the allocation of central government resources in the Trobriands. But it represents more than this. Like Kabisawali, TK is a movement of change. TK leaders are sceptical of the capacity of Kabisawali leaders (particularly Kasaipwalova) to achieve their objectives and anxious to succeed where Kabisawali might fail. What is at stake, therefore, is partly a competition for moral leadership in modern Trobriand society. Although this competition has taken place in an almost wholly non-traditional context its relation to traditional forms of competitive assertion of group identity is clear enough.
Figure 10.1  Milne Bay Province
Chapter 10

THE POLITICS OF AMBITION: DAMUNI, FROM MICRONATIONALISM TO A PRESSURE GROUP*

Rolf Gerritsen

Introduction

The Damuni ('Ebb Tide') Association began as a protest movement that tried to give voice to a 'micronationalist' resentment at the deprived economic status of the Milne Bay Province. It was an elite-created association which emerged from the Provincial Local Government Councils' Conference. Subsequently Damuni evolved into a loosely organized pressure group, closely connected with the political ambitions of certain individuals who utilized it to serve their own interests. In the process Damuni underwent substantial changes away from its original form: an evolution which in the long run ensured its demise as a popular force.

In common with other Milne Bay political organizations such as the local government councils, or even demi-political organizations like co-operatives and village agricultural clubs, Damuni's development was intimately connected with recent socio-economic change. Political success resides in the ability to manipulate the concomitants of that change to the advantage of the select.

In the past, geographic, economic and social factors, with their resultant inequities, combined to create preconditions favourable to the emergence of movements like Damuni. These inequities are not uniform; the topography of the Province, for example, ensured that agricultural development was concentrated on certain islands and the mainland littoral. Indeed felt disadvantage by some localities vis-a-vis others was a factor in the rapid spread of Damuni.

In the creation of these preconditions the continuing

* Unless otherwise stated, the material on which this paper is based has been drawn from personal interviews and official files.
geographical component has been that of isolation. Traditionally there have been certain trade linkages within the Province such as the *kula* and secondary interlocking trade rings in the southern Massim (Malinowski 1922; Belshaw 1955). While not denigrating these\(^1\) — since they created a certain wider consciousness and in 'modern' politics have a limited significance\(^2\) — they have not formed the basis of any concerted or formal political endeavours. In importance they are on a par with informal interpersonal relationships based upon consanguinity,\(^3\) religion or education. However, because these traditional linkages are relationships based upon traditional mores, the active participants are often not the people who are involved in 'modern' politics. Isolation meant that prior to the advent of the Provincial Local Government Councils' Conference, there was little indigenous political activity (with the qualified exception of that which took place through the churches) extending beyond the immediate locality of those involved. Transportation difficulties and the dominant subsistence orientation of the economies of the Milne Bay peoples have intensified this lack of interaction (Scott and Co. 1973:36).

Isolation and history created inequities which made Province-wide co-ordination difficult. Thus the Esa'ala and Losuia districts are conspicuous for their lack of indigenous entrepreneurs, whereas the Samarai area and to a lesser extent the adjacent southern Massim had a virtual monopoly of indigenous commercial enterprise — this disparity being due to the combination of Samarai's commercial importance and the activities of the Kwato Extension Association.

The desire for economic 'development' was universal. A feeling that the Province was being neglected in that regard was harnessed by Damuni in 1969/70 to create a rapid expansion of membership. Yet these

\(^1\) I would not describe the southern Massim trading as merely 'roving', as does Grosart (1965:323).

\(^2\) Ex-MHA Lepani Watson used *kula* contacts for his political campaigning. (See Fink 1965:297-98.)

\(^3\) For example Dennis Young has a tenuous relationship, through his wife, with Lawrence Iaubihi of the Aioma Association on Goodenough Island. This led to a limited level of political co-operation between the two.
economic desires have been confused, multi-faceted and at best ambivalent (Moulik 1973). There have been elements of unrealistic expectations (seen below in some of the recruitment to Damuni) which have led too often to disappointment and apathy. This was an important consequence of the failure of the Milne Bay Development Company (Healy 1961).

The isolation and polyfurcation of the Province led to the evolution of a multitude of associations, most of them with similar aims though different strategies. Contemporaneous with the formation of Damuni was an attempt to start a Damuni-style nucleus cattle project at Watalumla on Goodenough island. Groups as diverse as the Kabisawali Movement on the Trobriand islands and the Nimoa Fishing Association in the Calvados chain, sought development for their areas. The Damuni Association was just one of a number of associational responses to this desire for economic betterment. It was *sui generis* only in that it gained a geographically wider influence, a result of its mode of formation through the local government councils rather than any intrinsic excellence in its organization or programme.

The connection between the development of cash cropping and the political evolution of the Province is pertinent. The relationship between cash cropping and political organization is not an economically deterministic one. The introduction of new cash crops coincided with the introduction of new institutions, thereby providing a connection between the two in the popular mind.

Copra is the major cash crop of the Milne Bay Province. The expansion of indigenous copra production was interrelated with an 'accommodation-with-the-colonial-administration' phase of indigenous political development. In more recent years copra production remained static even though there was extensive, if uneven, replanting of coconuts. This was partly due to various social factors. But the fact that the level of exploitation of existing coconut palm resources was the lowest of any Province in Papua New Guinea (EIU 1972:112) reflected disillusionment with the government-cum-expatriate road to development and its parapoltical concomitants, the co-operatives, the missions and expatriate plantations.
Coffee also disappointed great expectations in the southern Massim in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This had vitiating consequences for organizations like the village agricultural committees. Recent expansion of coffee production has been in the hilly areas inland from the northeast coast, an expansion which became linked with a predisposition to support Damuni in those areas.

The latest cash crop development has been smallholder cattle projects introduced through Development Bank loans. The introduction of cattle had critical relevance to the contemporary socio-political evolution of Milne Bay. Starting from 50 indigenous owned cattle in the whole Province, the smallholder projects begun in 1969 proliferated to the point where, by mid 1974, there were over 100, each holding between 6 and 12 cattle. This growth of cattle projects paralleled a revival of village agricultural clubs and the incipient big peasant class fostered by these. Thus at a Basima Agricultural Association meeting (on Fergusson island) the clubs, whilst reporting on their activities, listed individuals who had obtained bank loans.

Although economic development is regarded with general approbation, the acceptance of the monetary economy has been associated with social and socio-psychological tension (Moulik 1973). These are not new phenomena (Armstrong 1921; Williams 1933). One group who in the past would perhaps have been assiduous in the traditional methods of achieving prestige and power has resolved this conflict between what is loosely termed the 'traditional' and the 'modern' by seeking power and prestige through the local government system. Damuni is largely the story of these men. This elite provided the Association's leadership, and their followers its membership.

The emergence of this Council elite from the cash cropping big peasants was an important social development in creating the preconditions that allowed the rise of Damuni. The general process varied in minor ways from locality to locality. The Tavara and Ealaba census divisions around the shores of Milne Bay will illustrate this point.
In these census divisions the elite's emergence was related to the cash cropping developments and the expansion of pan-village political organization. The missions' influence will not be considered because there they had more pronounced effects than in any other part of the Province. The first development salient to our consideration—apart from the establishment of the Milne Bay Local Government Council—was the creation in the 1950s by Mr Cottrell-Dorman (an agricultural officer) of village agricultural committees. Membership of these was based upon clans, with strong accompaniments of traditional leadership. Their rapid expansion coincided with an initial flush of enthusiasm for coffee, which was planted in the period 1958-63. During 1963-68, due to disappointed expectations with regard to coffee and for a variety of organizational reasons not relevant here, the committees became moribund.

It was during this latter period that, with the encouragement of the (then) Department of Agriculture Stock and Fisheries (DASF) a big peasant class began to emerge. This social change, with its perceptible if qualified emergent individualism, coincided with DASF policy of encouraging progressive individuals rather than group endeavours. As one field officer reported in 1968:

> For some time we concentrated our extension activities and resources on those interested individuals and occasional small groups. The majority of Village Agricultural Committees were inoperative so I left them alone. (Emphasis added.)

The emergence of this new class (advantaged through being more enterprising and more forthcoming in making demands of agriculture officers than their fellows) had profound implications for the development of the area. The incipient big peasants were reorganized after 1968 into village agricultural clubs, with a voluntaristic style of membership based upon activity and interest rather than recruiting through traditional social structures (such as clans). Members were those who felt like being members. These village agricultural clubs were organized
by DASF into pan-village agricultural associations — in our area the Tavara Agricultural Association. The Tavara, Weraura, Misima and Basima Agricultural Associations were the most active in the Province. Significantly these were the areas of greatest support for Damuni.

The big peasant class, represented through the clubs and associations, was irrefutably the originator of activity on a broad scale, if of fluctuating persistence. By no means an atypical example was the report MacLaren, the Divara Village Agricultural Club leader, gave of that club's activities to a Tavara Agricultural Association meeting. In 1967-69 the Association's thirteen members had planted 5072 teak trees, 860 new coconuts, and 166 cashew nut trees; had helped clean the Anglican mission station at Ukaka, repair the church, and build a club and a meeting house; had helped build the medical orderly's house, and helped the co-operative store work ramming copra.

The fact that total copra production in the Province was static in the late 1960s suggests that the big peasant activists, even if they were not efficiently exploiting their trees, were gaining a greater proportion of potential (if not actual) cash assets through their tree planting.

It has been claimed that leadership in this area was a compound of traditional and mission involvement. Moulik (1973:29-30) saw Kwato-trained elders, who were clan headmen, as a self-conscious elite, holding their positions through a combination of knowledge of clan history, customs and magic, and wealth, represented by pigs and garden foods rather than cash or 'modern' assets.

There is no doubt that leadership here is of the 'diffuse' type (Belshaw 1955:19), restraining both too great a tendency to command and too great an accumulation of wealth. Implicitly social restraints like sorcery see to that. But there has been a functional separation of leadership roles. There is 'traditional' leadership but there are also other types of leadership, such as church and 'political'. The political leader is often a leader in voluntary association activities (such as village agricultural clubs) or in local government — where
the leadership attributes are not necessarily counted in traditional terms. Often he is not a traditional 'big man' but usually is closely related to them. Thus Mahuru Mark, past president of the Milne Bay Local Government Council, is a 'big man', widely respected for his knowledge of tradition, especially land matters (he is a Land Titles Commission adjudicator). Lebasi Mark, his half-brother, is a political leader; as an educated man (education being a vital criterion of political leadership) he plays a substantial role in the Milne Bay Local Government Council and the Tavara Agricultural Association and was prominent in the early mobilizational phase of Damuni's history.

Though representative of the big peasants, the agricultural associations have played only a limited political role. They exert pressure on the Department of Primary Industry (DPI - formerly DASF) and their members monopolize agricultural extension officers' time. When it is felt necessary they put pressure on the government to retain DPI officers of whom they approve. Politicians attempt to sway these groups in a bid to recruit influential supporters. Dennis Young (MHA for the Milne Bay Regional electorate, 1972-77) often attended Tavara Agricultural Association meetings. Prior to his election in 1972 John Fifita (MHA for Kula) was involved with the Misima Agricultural Association. Yet these groups have not been able to branch out directly into developmental efforts as groups. Mutual jealousies, rivalries and the inhibiting example of the co-operatives' fiscal problems ensure this. DPI has also discouraged the associations from collecting money, investing, or buying machinery. Other organizations have had to cater for the developmental leadership aspirations of the newly emerged big peasants. Damuni was able to capitalize on that situation. Being an association and so to a certain extent communal, it was able to reconcile the desires for advancement by the ambitious with the types of social restraint (jealousy, social disharmony, sorcery) which act against too overtly individualistic advancement.

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1 The early years of local government saw traditional 'big men' as council leaders. After this formative period, for a variety of reasons including the growing functional specialization of political roles, they have retired into the background.
The political impact of the agricultural associations, apart from initially catering for this nascent class, was in providing a training ground for councillors in a system complementary to the local government councils. As a 1964 field report said:

It is agreed that where a council is now active in an Association area an attempt should be made to incorporate the Association activities into the council structure. It is apparent that those previously active in association affairs are now prominent in the Council.

For example, Lebasi Mark, elected in 1968 as a councillor of the Milne Bay Local Government Council, largely for his work in reorganizing the Unabahe Association of Nauru village, signalled his portending rise to the presidency of the council by defeating Gilipasi for chairmanship of a village agricultural club leaders' meeting at Bubuleta in 1969.

By the late 1960s there were in the Province, as in much of Papua New Guinea, substantial political pressures due to a mass consciousness of economic inequalities and a consequent desire for rapid change. A political elite had emerged from the growing big peasants. This elite was ready to direct the pressures for economic development. Bureaucratic and institutional-cum-legal restrictions ensured that these ambitions could not be realized within the framework of co-operatives, producers' associations, agricultural associations or local government councils. Damuni was able to reap this legacy.

The formation of Damuni

During the 1960s the whole of the Milne Bay Province came under local government councils, the first Province in Papua to do so. More than any other influence, with the limited exception of the missions, the councils 'created a general awareness of public issues wider than the village' (Gostin 1971:94). This awareness was institutionalized in the Provincial Local Government Councils' Conference, established to provide a forum for leading councillors to discuss their councils' problems. It brought together leading council politicians from all over the Province: people such as Vernon Guise of Maramatana Local
Government Council; Kingsford Dibela and John Solomon of Weraura
Local Government Council; Michael Dindillo of Bwabwana Local
Government Council; Billy Tanby of Milne Bay Local Government Council;
Roi Kaitolele of Goodenough Local Government Council; B. Somale of
Dobu Local Government Council; Sote Kankan of Louisiade Local Government
Council, and Dennis Young, himself a Milne Bay Local Government Council
councillor. These meetings provided opportunities for creating an
esprit de corps among this group. Hitherto they had been parochial
influentials; now they were part of a Province-wide institution. The
opportunity was thereby provided for an enlarged scope of political
activity. A few of their number realized the potential this created
and began to utilize the resultant opportunities.

In 1968 the conference established an economic development
committee comprising Vernon Guise as chairman and Young, Solomon,
Somale and Dindillo. It was failure to attract a reply to this committee's
report that was the 'Sarajevo' that created Damuni. The report, in
itself quite unexceptional, reflected the dominance of Young's expertise
in economic matters. Its interest lies in its foreshadowing later
Damuni projects in recommending, among other things, that cattle had
commercial possibilities when combined with copra production. It also
advocated the establishment of an investment company, suggesting that
the idea for a 'Damuni' had already begun to take shape - probably
with Young.

The government's failure to reply to the report (cf Stephen
1972:140) allowed a coterie within the conference to help the members,
as a group, decide to form one sort of developmental association. This

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1 All these prominent councillors later joined Damuni, together with
Waibadi Caleb, president of the Kiriwina Local Government Council
(not formed until 1966). Young claims that at one stage twelve of
the fifteen local government council presidents were members.

2 Report of the Milne Bay District Councils Conference on Economic
inner circle consisted of Vernon Guise, Billy Tanby and Kingsford Dibela, with Dennis Young in the background. By 1969 the former three had formed a steering committee and, with the (then) MHA for Alotau, John (now Sir John) Guise as patron, the Damuni Association was born.

John Guise's influence over these developments is hard to gauge. As the active elder statesman of the area he customarily kept (and still keeps) a close eye on developments in the electorate.\(^1\) This scrutiny extended to dominating many of such organizations.\(^2\) It is true also that later a certain tension arose between John Guise on the one hand and Young and Dibela on the other, a tension to do with their apparently differing conceptions of the political role of Damuni. But no development such as Damuni could have eventuated without the active and informed concurrence of John Guise.

The formation of the Damuni Association excited considerable interest. Their stated principles were soon elaborated: multi-racial egalitarianism -

Firstly Damuni believes that this Country and its wealth rightly belongs to the indigenous peoples. Damuni will not accept the current position where the indigenous people are considered as subservient second-class citizens. The future of this Country will be in equality - social, political and economic for all peoples.

and peasant populism -

Damuni comes from the village people. The village people are not angry but they are not content. They are respectful but not subservient. They want no big changes but this is their Country and they want such changes as will ensure their equality in their Country.\(^3\)

These opinions seem unexceptional today but in the late 1960s

\(^1\) Guise's career is outlined in Bettison et al. (1965), and Epstein et al. (1971).

\(^2\) For example he controlled the Milne Bay Workers Association from its inception.

(the University, the Mataungans and Napidakoe Navitu excepted) such expressions were very radical. To define a group's attitude to the government - 'advice and assistance can be sought from the Administration but decisions, policy and planning must be made by the indigenous peoples themselves' - was then very daring; so daring in fact that Young claims it was felt in the Province that he was in danger of deportation as a communist! Generally then Damuni's ideology could be categorized as 'early independence' nationalism.

The Damuni economic manifesto also followed these lines, clearly illustrating the influence of Young. It is interesting mainly for point seven of its proposals: that Damuni would 'assist in such joint indigenous/expatriate enterprises as the Corporation shall consider fit provided that the indigenous equity is at least 50 per cent and there is real participation by indigenous peoples at all levels'.

This clearly presaged Damuni's involvement with Young's business enterprises. The establishment of a Damuni Economic Corporation was another Young idea. He traded on hostility towards co-operatives to convince his confederates of the necessity for such a company.

The Damuni Association was established with Dibela as president, Vernon Guise and Billy Tanby as vice presidents, Levai George (Paneate Island Primary School headmaster) and Young as joint secretaries and Kaitolele and Kankan as executive committee members. The foundation directors of the Economic Corporation consisted of the Association executive together with Dindillo and Waibadi Caleb, the president of the Kiriwina Local Government Council.

The membership of the Association was shaped around this local government council-centred elite. But it also included prominent expatriates such as Chris Abel (Development Bank representative in Alotau), Rev. Fr Moore and Rev. Grey - the latter two important for

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making Damuni respectable in the eyes of both the government and a
mission-oriented indigenous population. Also leaders of the mixed race
community like Aloysius Gorogo and the Cadigans were included.

The prestige of these people, together with the indigenous
influentials, provided the impetus for a rapid growth in membership.
By 1971 over 1000 people had paid their K2.00 admission fee (Stephen
1972:139). A year later approximately 2000 people had joined
membership records are scattered and incomplete). Branches were
established at Weraura, Maramatana, Milne Bay, Misima and Bwanabwana —
significantly following local government council divisions. In other
areas, people like Waibadi Caleb on Kiriwina island and Roi Kaitolele
on Goodenough island, fostered large numbers of members even though
there was no formal establishment of branches. A branch was also
established in Port Moresby though it proved inactive. At Misima a
leader of Damuni was John Fifita, a protege of John Guise, who
utilized his Damuni eminence, together with his Workers' Association
activities, as a springboard for the 1972 elections.

Attitudes towards this acquisition of membership were ambivalent.
Young felt that it served little purpose. His conception of Damuni
was of a nucleus, encouraging enterprise by its own successful example
of business management. The indigenous leaders viewed Damuni as
a mobilizational exercise: sheer numbers were an affirmation of
a popular will for development. Also the size of an area's member­
ship was seen as indicating the influence of the Damuni leader in
that locality.

At the grassroots level people joined Damuni for a variety
of reasons. Joining was often an articulation of an individual's
desire to appear informed and of some consequence. Recruitment
occasionally became intertwined with parochial village or clan politics.
For example at Iapoa No. 2 village in the Maramatana area, recruitment
was confused with rivalry between Tilaka, a Seventh Day Adventist
deacon and councillor, and Duncan Dirome who was collecting money for
a village boat. This rivalry occurred in the context of some confusion

1 The monies so collected were used to buy Bougainville Copper Pty Ltd
shares and then later used as capital when the Damuni Economic
Corporation bought shares in Gili Gili Pty Ltd.
over the claims put forward by some labourers from Agaun for a K5000 profit to be realized from a K2.00 investment in a chain letter which was then circulating. Councillor Tilaka spoke of large profits to be made by investment in Damuni to counter the other proposals. In this village a large proportion of the Association's membership came from the families of Nopeki Kalipara, Sidini Manabore, Maria Ana and Dumorowi Hamarei. This emulated the general pattern with figures of some authority bringing their supporters in with themselves.

The Damuni leaders

The development of Damuni after 1972 revolved about Young and Dibela. John Guise had never taken an active interest and after 1972-73 his position altered to one of opposition. The other leaders faded into the background as the day to day decision making increasingly came to revolve around Young and Dibela.

Kingsford Dibela, though only one of a group of leaders in 1969, had by 1973 emerged as the leading indigenous figure in Damuni. His background was typical of a certain type of Papua New Guinean politician. Head of the Manibolanai segment of the Bouni clan he had 'traditional' status which, coupled with his education, provided an ideal springboard for political ambition. In his mid forties, he was educated during the war at Dogura Anglican Mission on the plateau overlooking Wedau, his home. From 1948 to 1963 he taught at the mission school, in 1956 achieving a 'B' certificate. During this period he was twice chairman of the church guild and in 1966 attended church conferences in Suva and Noumea. In 1963 he was elected a councillor in the newly-formed Weraura Council and largely due to his mission-attained eminence, became inaugural president. From 1965 to 1973 he was a member of the District Advisory Council and after 1970 became vice chairman of the District Education Board.

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1 This misunderstanding of Damuni's intentions was not unique. The 1970/71 narrative report for the Province states, 'Damuni did not publicize very well and as a result attracted some unfavourable publicity based upon suppositions'. Annual Narrative Report 1970/71 Milne Bay District, p.21.
Dibela has utilized such institutions as existed to realize his political ambitions. In 1968 he was a member of Pangu. In 1971 he received a setback when Gerald Cornish, manager of Dogura mission, defeated him in the Wedau ward of the Weraura Council elections. Dibela's behaviour had become remiss from the viewpoint of some mission affiliates. He learned the lesson and in 1972 was re-elected for the Coastal (Regional) ward,¹ the boundaries of the new ward reducing the necessity for full Dogura support. Dibela became the inaugural chairman of the Milne Bay Area Authority in 1973, thereby confirming his growing importance. His involvement with Damuni can be seen as but another step on the ladder to political eminence. The logical next step was to contest the Alotau Open electorate. Following the appointment of Sir John Guise as Papua New Guinea's first governor general on the granting of independence in September 1975, Dibela duly won the by-election for the vacant Alotau electorate.

Young, an Englishman, came to Papua New Guinea in the early 1960s from Irian Jaya. In 1966 he purchased Hihila plantation and later Giligili plantation. In 1967 he started a trade store in Alotau (which prospered as the Provincial headquarters was shifted there from Samarai soon afterwards) and became a councillor in the Milne Bay Local Government Council. In 1968 he contested the Milne Bay Regional seat in the House of Assembly elections, coming last in the field though making a good showing for a relative newcomer.

In 1969 Young became chairman of the Provincial Local Government Councils' Conference. Later in the year he lost his Milne Bay Local Government Council seat, through government intervention, and became instead the Conference's executive officer. His involvement in the Conference gave him a set of proteges and also a power base for a renewed, this time successful, assault on the Regional seat in 1972. Young's involvement in Damuni was politically convenient for making his name known around the Province.

¹ Defeating ex-MHA for Huon, Michael Kaniniba, by an overwhelming plurality.
His involvement with Damuni also indicated a certain change of ideological heart. Prior to the formation of Damuni Young had been quite conservative. During the 1968 election campaign he was reported as saying:

Now there are two very important points to this election. The first one is: do you want Home Rule and Independence? Or are you afraid of this and do you want to go slowly? If you want it quickly then you should vote for Cecil or for Elliot. And if you are frightened, and you want to go slowly, vote for John Stuntz or for myself. And the second question is do you want United Nations or do you want Australia to look after you? If you want U.N. you should vote for Cecil and Elliot. If you, like myself, prefer to trust Australia, you should vote for me. (Gostin 1971:124.)

Politicians are creatures of the fashions of their time and it may be unwise to infer too much from these sentiments. But this campaign revealed another, more durable, clue to Young's style in the way that he strove to use leaders, believing that they could deliver the vote (Gostin 1971:123). This was a portent of the elitist style of Damuni and Young's later indifference towards the mobilization of a mass membership.

In explaining Young's role in Damuni it is pertinent to consider his business affairs. These have undoubtedly had some influence upon his actions. Young, seemingly, has regarded his business activities as subordinate, though important, to his political activities. In 1967 he offered a 50 per cent interest in his trade store to the Milne Bay Local Government Council, while shortly thereafter expressing an interest in converting the store into a co-operative. This apparent, and repeated, inconsistency can be resolved by realizing that Young was looking for an institution to which to attach his business interests — to be charitable both for reasons of principle and for long term enlightened self-interest.

The period 1967-72 saw Young endeavouring to involve the Milne Bay Local Government Council in his business enterprises. His July

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1 Young wrote to the Commissioner for Local Government in 1968 stressing the necessity for councils to find revenue through business ventures.
1967 proposal, that the Milne Bay Local Government Council enter into partnership with him, only failed because it was blocked by government action.

This episode caused a bureaucratic flurry. The provincial commissioner opposed the scheme, arguing that the financial involvement of some councillors was not clear and that conflicts of interest could arise. A disagreement occurred when the provincial commissioner accused the Alotau district staff of proselytizing the scheme - a charge hotly denied by the officer-in-charge. Business Development and DPI supported the scheme. Initially it appeared that the commissioner for local government and senior officers in Port Moresby were sympathetic. Eventually opposition from headquarters of the then Division of District Administration (DDA) prevailed and the scheme was blocked.

Late in 1971 Young repeated the process with the Milne Bay Local Government Council attempting to purchase Hihila plantation from him. This new scheme founderd on the local government commissioner's opposition, a victory for the proposal's DDA opponents over its DPI supporters. This reverse coincided with a deterioration of Young's business fortunes. The plan to sell Hihila to the Milne Bay Local Government Council can be considered in the light both of a consistent Young policy and of a particular fiscal exigency. These attempts to involve the Council in Young's operations were thwarted and are important only for the clue they give to Damuni's actions once it was formed. Councils and co-operatives were subject to statutory limitations upon their actions; companies were not so bound. So Damuni formed a company and in 1972 entered into partnership with Young in his Giligili plantation.

The government and Damuni

Governmental reaction to the Damuni Association was at first reserved. 1969 saw the beginning of an anti colonial upsurge in many areas of Papua New Guinea and the government probably felt that Damuni was a related phenomenon. Young's involvement also created suspicion, he being seen as an initiator of confusion and problems with which the
bureaucrats would eventually have to contend. The suspicion of Damuni was more pronounced on the national headquarters level than it was on the local level, where the district office was mildly favourable.

Public service anxiety about Damuni's political implications was not altogether unfounded, as could be seen from the 1971 Damuni Economic Corporation Memorandum of Registration. The memorandum allowed a wide range of economic and charitable activities but also asserted the right to 'obtain support or oppose an Act of Parliament or other statutory enactments, rule, order, instrument, licence, privilege, exemption or authority as may seem to the directors to be expedient in the interests of the company'. This in an age when to the official mind politics were an anathema!

After 1972 official attitudes to Damuni became more blase and revolved mainly about interdepartmental rivalries. This reflected the results of a struggle that had taken place within Damuni during the 1970-72 period. The principal antagonists were John Guise on the one hand and Young and Dibela on the other. Guise wanted Damuni to assume a 'militant' stand and to attack the government over the lack of development in the Province, a conception of Damuni's role close to the populist pressures in its formation. The others saw Damuni as gaining very little from confrontation with the government; the Association was to be primarily an organization to create development and to serve as an exemplar in this regard. Therefore if governmental assistance was forthcoming it was welcome. By 1972 Young and Dibela had won their point and the militant aspect of Damuni disappeared. It was a power struggle with important consequences for its combatants' (and Damuni's) futures.

Of all the government departments DDA was generally least enthusiastic about Damuni. This was primarily because of uncertainty about the political designs of the Association's leadership. In contrast, the Development Bank and DPI lent some support. From being cautiously favourable in 1970, the provincial rural development officer, D.J. Underwood, became actively involved in Damuni. He supported the
Damuni Economic Corporation's acquisition of a 40 per cent share in Gili Gili Pty Ltd, served on the steering committee of the Baniara Development Corporation (a Damuni northeast coast project) and became an honorary director on the board of Gili Gili Pty. Ltd. The Development Bank showed its support, in 1972, by granting Damuni a K69,000 loan for the purchase of a 40 per cent share in Gili Gili Pty Ltd. This gave Damuni 17.6 per cent of the total loan allocation for the Province, the remainder being shared by the 240 other loans granted in Milne Bay that year. The Giligili slaughter house also got a free weekly meat inspection, a response to Young's complaints about the high prices for this service.

The support has not been unequivocal. A certain rivalry has always existed between Damuni and DPI over the promotion of smallholder cattle, due to the tendency for Damuni to get popular credit for the introduction of this scheme. Young claimed to this writer (interview, March 1974) that Damuni had over 80 cattle projects when in actual fact, at that time, only two such projects - Dibela's and that of Lui Boiuma of Siri Siri village - could be so described, the rest being DPI/Development Bank sponsored projects. This rivalry has been expressed in DPI/Development Bank resistance to Young's 'cattle loan' ideas in favour of their own cash loan format; at a meeting at Naura in 1970 Underwood managed to convince the gathering of the superiority of this method over the Young proposal. In 1971-72 Young had ambitions to open up various areas of Fergusson island to cattle. Partly to pre-empt this, DPI started some smallholder projects there. After John Guise became minister for primary industry in 1974 DPI moved into a position of covert opposition to Damuni.

1 In this matter attitudes were substantially influenced by the favourable report Dr Kestevan, a consultant to the Development Bank, gave of the Giligili scheme upon an inspection visit in 1969.

2 Further loans of K3500 and K7000 were granted in 1973.

3 A process of connection between economic change and its seemingly concomitant institutions as described in the introduction. This confusion has not been confined to indigenous peasants - the W.D. Scott report also identifies Damuni with the DPI/Development Bank cattle projects. (Scott and Co. 1973:35.)
The Damuni Association also enjoyed the support of an informal group of 'respectable' (defined in terms of sobriety and piety) amongst the expatriates in Alotau. This led to tensions, with some government officers complaining that certain public servants carried their support so far as to have acquired a private shareholding in Gili Gili Pty. Ltd. (in actual fact these shareholdings were so small as to be almost token; their only import being that they slightly affected the indigenous-expatriate ratio of shareholding).

**Damuni's economic activities**

Damuni began as an economic protest group. After the defeat of John Guise's attempt to render it more politically oriented the primacy of the Young-inspired economic focus was confirmed. The 1971 establishment of the Damuni Economic Corporation, a subsidiary of the Association, provided the framework for this emphasis.

The objectives of the Corporation were threefold:

(i) To assist indigenous peoples to establish themselves in primary, secondary or service industry.

(ii) To assist in, or invest in, the establishment of such facilities as would provide firm foundations for the establishment of industry within the Province.

(iii) To join with Councils, Co-operatives, or other indigenous bodies to further development in the Province.

Development was to be directed through individuals and to 'be based on maximum involvement of indigenous peoples in a self-employed capacity'; 'the greater the stake an individual has in a project the greater its chance of success'.\(^1\) This emphasis upon the individual made Damuni attractive to the emergent big peasant class described above, especially as it was associated with the new cattle projects which (unavoidably, given their bureaucratic concomitants) assumed an individualistic bias.

At its inception the Corporation stated aspirations for involvement

in fishing, tourism, the development of alienated land, investments, and secondary and service industries. But it was in cattle, directly through its interest in Gili Gili Pty Ltd and indirectly through its association in the public view with the smallholder projects, that Damuni was most active. Its economic philosophy had been largely Young's. He had ambitions after the Giligili involvement to extend cattle projects throughout the Province. His cattle leasing scheme, from its first promulgation in 1967, ran into sustained opposition from DPI.

Young retained a paternalistic attitude towards development. He told this writer (interview March 1974) that 'the people do not understand development' and that 'they just trust you to do the right thing by them'. His part in the creation of Damuni thus involved making a point about how economic development should be organized. Therefore Damuni was, in a certain sense, from Young's perspective an accident. Young was prepared to try his philosophy through the councils (he was a prime mover in Vernon Guise's Maramatana Local Government Council acquiring Puni Puni plantation) but this was frustrated by the institutional restraints inherent in the Local Government Ordinance. An association, with a subsidiary company, was a means of evading these inhibitions.

Up to 1975 the only concrete expression of Damuni's activity

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1 This involved Giligili lending four cows to each participant and receiving five cows back after five years; the client keeping the surplus he had managed to produce. This method of cattle development pre-dated Damuni. Young proposed to a meeting of Weraura, Daga and Makamaka Local Government Council representatives in 1968 that he would donate four cows each to Siri Siri and Wedau villages for local government council cattle projects. His later choice of Lui Boiuma of Siri Siri and Dibela of Wedau for the first Damuni projects can be seen as related to this failed proposal. Similarly in 1974 he proposed five 'cattle leasing' projects on land near Giligili, a proposition obviously designed to prove the viability of his approach in the face of 'expert' scepticism. His own followers, however, remained apathetic to this schema, which correspondingly reduced the pressure Young could apply to have it officially adopted.
was its purchase in 1971-72 of the 40 per cent equity in Young's Giligili plantation. The new company, Gili Gili Pty Ltd, also took over an outstanding Development Bank Loan from Hihila Pty Ltd (Young's personal company). The financial details of this arrangement are beyond the competence of this writer to assess. Suffice it to say that the purchase price of the plantation was less than the valuer general's estimate and that Young's annual salary as manager was a considerably more modest sum than some such contracts in Papua New Guinea.

Very much a theme of Gili Gili Pty. Ltd's operations was its emphasis upon its supposed indigenous majority shareholding; this being made up of the 40 per cent Damuni shareholding and a 20 per cent 'local' shareholding. The local shareholding included some of the Damuni leadership: Dibela, Vernon Guise, Lebasi Mark and Billy Tanby, as well as church councils (Daio and Ladava) and various school-associated groups such as the parents and citizens committees of the two local high schools. But the Young family and some expatriate public servants and their wives also had 'local' shares. The board of Gili Gili Pty. Ltd., was expatriate-dominated. Young and his brother represented Hihila Pty. Ltd.; the Rev. Canon Bodger and Mr Strange, Cameron High School headmaster, represented the 'local' shareholders; and Dibela (the chairman) and Vernon Guise, the Damuni Economic Corporation shareholding. Vernon Guise, however, seldom, if ever, attended board meetings, being preoccupied, he claimed, with National Education Board meetings. In fact he was probably tacitly supporting his brother's hostility to Damuni.

The 'local-majority-ownership' image was important to Young for political reasons. In 1974, to anticipate future criticism, Young intended to transfer his personal shareholding to his wife, a Papua New Guinean national, and to increase local equity by making a one-for-one cash issue to Papua New Guinean shareholders. The board claimed that this share issue would increase indigenous equity to 75 per cent but this fallaciously assumed that all the 20 per cent 'local' shareholding was indigenous.¹ In 1974 the announcement of a K30,000 trading

¹ See Kingsford Dibe la's report of the Board of Directors, Post-Courier 14 August 1974.
profit and the payment of a 10 per cent dividend was accompanied by a promise that all members' contributions to Damuni would be converted into shares in Gili Gili Pty Ltd. Dividends accruing to the Damuni Economic Corporation would be put into a trust fund and used to assist groups of individuals (the initial idea was for scholarships) in the Province. Young and Dibela obviously hoped that these actions would gain them political kudos.

The decline of Damuni: the Baniara Development Corporation

The connection with Young was at the base of many Damuni difficulties. Suspicion was aroused by his undoubted influence over some indigenous leaders and his critical attitude to the bureaucracy aroused resentment. On occasions Young publicly opposed government officers' explanations of 'departmental' policies. The resultant hostility to Young surfaced during the 1969 Milne Bay Local Government elections when the government nullified Young's election for the Alotau ward on the ground that he was not residentially qualified. A subsequent inquiry by the chief electoral officer revealed that this was incorrect but it caused Young to lose his seat on the local government council (he deferred to Mahuru Mark and did not contest the by-election). Most indigenous opposition to Young in the Bay area was covert, as revealed by his failing to carry the area in the 1972 elections. This opposition was for a variety of reasons: resentment at the closure of his village trade store outlets; jealousy at the success of the Alotau Tea Shop, with which he was perhaps unfairly linked; and for personal reasons (as with a former local government council clerk who had been ambitious to be appointed clerk to Damuni). It would become significant only if Young and Damuni faltered.

The reverse 'bandwagon' effect was why the defeat of Damuni's proposed Baniara Development Corporation is so seminal to any consideration of Damuni.

The Baniara proposal grew out of a generalized pressure for development on the northeast coast. This was expressed in the late
1960s by demands for producer societies to handle the marketing of cash crops (coffee and later chillies) in the area. Then in late 1972 Kingsford Dibela proposed a nucleus Gilgili-style cattle project, using a large block of clan land at Gawanaki. ¹ His scheme originally was for the three councils in the area, Weraura, Daga and Makamaka, to have a joint project. Significantly, the proposal was made at a Provincial Councils' Conference and thus had wider implications than if it had just been a parochial affair. Shortly afterwards Dibela claimed that Damuni could help in this Ruaba project and would provide a cattle barge for the northeast coast. It must have been about this time that the alliance between Young and Dibela crystallized.

The scene was set at a meeting held in April 1973. Upon Young's persuasion this meeting decided to establish an area development company, the Baniara Development Corporation, rather than a producers' society. The Corporation was to have 50 per cent participation by the Weraura and Daga councils and the remaining shares were to be held by the clan whose land was involved. Subsidiary producers' societies were to be established to collect a levy on coffee (money was already being collected) in order to provide capital. Dibela, John Solomon and Abraham Rogirogi were to be the directors of the Corporation. Young was authorized to hold discussions with appropriate persons on matters relating to the Corporation's formation, a decision with significant consequences.

At first the reaction of the bureaucracy was sympathetic. At a meeting of the local government councils after the Corporation steering committee meeting, Young revealed that the Development Bank was considering the project and that the minister for lands ² had empowered a surveyor to delineate the boundaries. Provincial agriculture officials,

¹ This became known as the Ruaba project, notwithstanding that Ruaba is some distance from Gawanaki.

² Thomas Kavali, whose friendship (according to widespread belief) led Young to join the National Party.
while originally entertaining reservations, soon promised support. It was only when John Guise became minister for primary industry and made his opposition to the Baniara Development Corporation explicit that the argument was advanced that there was no need for a nucleus estate in the area as the Province could achieve self-sufficiency in cattle supplies by 1975. DDA was initially cautiously pessimistic, fearful of possible management inadequacy, but eventually the provincial commissioner blocked the councils' participation because 'instructions' had been received to keep away from cattle company projects.

The turning point came in early 1974 when Guise's transfer from the interior to the primary industry portfolio enabled him to halt the scheme. He instructed that there was to be no connection between the producers' associations and any other form of political development in the area, in particular the Gawanaki cattle project. This interdiction proved vital. The minister for business development, who came to Alotau to see what assistance his department could render the Corporation, hastily withdrew upon realizing the political implications. Guise's opposition was ostensibly based upon his not favouring the tying up of land (the scheme proposed a twenty year lease by the Corporation) and his concern that the people would lose their clan lands if the Bank loans were not repaid. But it is hard to avoid the conclusion that a political hostility to Young (and Dibela) was involved.

Guise's interference was not restricted to administrative intervention. He made two flying visits to Agaun and Biniguni and persuaded the people that three separate producers' societies were the best means of developing their areas. Inter group rivalries were adroitly utilized — the Agaun people noted that they had collected more money than the Wedau and Rabaraba groups and therefore decided to avoid delay and form their own society. Rivalries, especially between the inland and the coastal people, were easy to capitalize upon, the inland people long feeling that they were neglected in favour of the coastal. Also, ineptitude on the part of the advocates of the Baniara Development Corporation contributed to the ease with which these tensions came to the fore. It was not until February 1974 that
DPI was asked to collect a levy on chillies (grown mostly in the coastal areas). For the previous eighteen months only levies on coffee, grown mainly in the hinterland, had been collected, to the understandable resentment of the inland group who felt that they were providing all the capital for the Corporation.

The Agaun group's actions spelt the death knell of the Baniara Development Corporation. Rabaraba hinterland and the Wedau hinterland peoples then formed two other separate societies. Even though Dibela was able to get the Weraura Local Government Council to reaffirm their support for the scheme, DDA opposition rendered this no more than a futile gesture of protest.

Conclusion

The split between Young and Dibela on the one hand and John Guise on the other was to Damuni's disadvantage. Initially Young and Guise had co-operated politically and in their plans for the development of Milne Bay Province. However they were never personally close and in the 1968 elections campaign Young travelled with Guise's opponents (Gostin et al. 1971:96). An uneasy collaboration was maintained until 1972 when they rapidly fell out as Guise felt threatened by Damuni slipping from his into Young's control. Differences over the Kabisawali Movement in the Trobriand islands accelerated this tendency. But the final step was taken when the April 1974 meeting of the Baniara Development Corporation empowered Young to act for the Corporation in its dealings with the government. Following this affront Guise administered a sharp lesson in the realities of political power. Dibela also inevitably aroused Guise's suspicion by his close association with Young, his administering of a public rebuke to Guise during debate of the independence constitution at a Milne Bay Area Authority meeting in November 1973, and his obvious ambition to succeed Guise as MHA for Alotau. This latter element explains much of the maneuvering that occurred around the Baniara Development Corporation as the northeast and south coast areas had provided most of Guise's votes in the past. Dibela with extensive northeast support was obviously a formidable potential opponent for Guise.
Damuni's problems were also associated with its inability to remain aloof from intra Provincial conflicts. Through his friendship with Waibadi Caleb, ex-Kiriwina Local Government Council president and Damuni Economic Corporation director, Young became embroiled in controversy with John Kasaipwalova, the leader of the Kabisawali movement. Young carried this dispute further than was useful by utilizing his parliamentary position to attack Kabisawali.¹ Young's interest in this matter was possibly personal; in 1972 he had obtained a decisive majority of the votes from Kiriwina. Nevertheless the contention did not contribute positively to Damuni's activities.

The skilful use of Gili Gili Pty Ltd profits could have reactivated popular support for the Association. But the nature of the formation of and the recruitment to Damuni rendered this difficult. Damuni was built upon 'influentials' and the supporters these attracted. It had thus two weaknesses: that there was no real mobilization of people in any activity (other than joining) and thus no broadly-based developmental endeavour, and, secondly, 'influentials' tend to fade away. Damuni was built on a local government council-created elite. The political careers of most of the Damuni 'activists' in this elite tapered off and new influentials were not cultivated.

The emphasis upon an elite as the basis for political organization degenerated into the Association's becoming a machine for the interests of Young and Dibela. This development naturally attracted the fatal opposition of John Guise, the most powerful and seasoned politician in the Milne Bay Province. Therein lay the roots of Damuni's decline as a popular force.²

¹ *HAD* III (28):3667-8, 25 April 1974. Young also suggested that the people were worried about the government's favourable response to 'militant' groups, an indirect attack upon Kabisawali (House of Assembly, Economic Development Committee, Report No. 5, mimeo., March 1974, p.2). This campaign eventually led to a heated clash between Young and Kasaipwalova at an Area Authority meeting in September 1974. As a result Kasaipwalova called for Young's resignation. (See *Post-Courier* 9 September 1974.)

² Nevertheless, in the 1977 elections Dibela was re-elected and became speaker in the National Parliament. Young was defeated by his nemesis, John Guise, who contested the Provincial seat upon retiring as governor general. Dibela had adroitly used Damuni (and his chairmanship of the Area Authority) to create a reputation for himself. His connection with Damuni had undoubtedly been to his political advantage.
REGIONAL SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS
PAPUA BESENA AND PAPUAN SEPARATISM

Bob McKillop

Papua New Guinea gained independence on 16 September 1975. In the period leading up to independence forces of political disaggregation rather than of national unity appeared to be in the ascendancy. A spontaneous form of political decentralization made its appearance in many areas in the form of micronationalist organizations (May 1975). Among these organizations was a number with the declared aim of establishing a Papuan state independent from New Guinea.

The Papuan separatist movements are founded on a belief among educated Papuans in their 'Papuaness'. Josephine Abaijah, widely regarded as the leader of the best known movement, Papua Besena, has stated (Steinbauer 1974:42):

I am a Papuan. That makes me different from other people. I feel I have a nationality, a name, and a common future with Papuan people.

Some Papuans have gone so far as to assert that they are culturally different from New Guineans. This orientation is evident in the emphasis given to the maintenance of traditional cultural values by Papua Besena. The primordial base for Papuan ethnonationalism is a weak one. The region consists of small economically self-sufficient communities, many speaking mutually unintelligible languages. Attempts to stimulate Papuan group solidarity by invoking contrasting stereotypes held by Papuans of New Guineans are based on serious distortion of widely accepted facts (Premdas 1977:270-71). Unfortunately for Papuan nationalism, coastal people tend to apply the stereotypes to all inland people, thus excluding the majority of Papuans from their Papuan cultural stereotype.

The sense of Papuan identity has its origins in recent historical experience. Papua Besena leaders have stressed the
different colonial histories of Papua and New Guinea, particularly the separate legal status of the Australian Territory of Papua.¹

The issue of the status of Papuans as Australian citizens, which became important during the second House of Assembly (1968–72), served to give many of the Papuan elite the hope that they had a special status which gave them privileges over New Guineans.²

There were characteristics of Australian administration in Papua prior to 1942 which served to develop a sense of Papuan identity. The most significant of these was the development after 1910 of an embryonic Papuan civil service. The advent of a joint Administration after the second world war was a cause of dissatisfaction among the Papuan elite, for the influx of low-skilled European workers into Port Moresby resulted in the relegation of some Papuan workers to lower ranks (Griffin 1975a).

Two central themes dominate the emergence of separatist movements from this general sense of Papuan identity: a belief that Papua was being neglected in the area of economic development, and a reaction against migration from New Guinea to Port Moresby. Both issues are complex; a deeper analysis is necessary as an initial step in the explanation of the separatist movements.

**Equal development.**

Papuan separatists claim that Papua has been neglected by the colonial Administration and a recurring demand has been for more development funds for Papua. Abaijah (1975:8) has claimed:

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¹ See, for example, Abaijah (1975).

² For more detailed accounts of Papuan separatism before 1972, see Nelson (1972), Griffin (1973a, 1973b, 1975a) and Daro (1976).
The role of Papua, under the joint administration, is to be a baby farm to provide temporary labour for the economic and political development of New Guinea. Up to the present day, Australia's story has been a continuation of the story of Australia's neglect and disinterest in Papua with emphasis on the destruction of Papuan economic and political self reliance.

Although a belief in government neglect of Papua is now widely held by Papuans the claims by Abaijah, that Australia deliberately neglected Papua, do not stand up to objective examination.

The long history of attempts by the Australian Administration to develop Papua are not widely known, no doubt because colonial administrations tend not to publicize their failures. The history of agricultural development in Papua has been a story of constant striving for new projects, ranging from cotton, sisal and tobacco industries in the 1920s, the Sangara sugar industry in the 1930s, the native plantation phase, and the Northern Province resettlement schemes, through to the eight Mekeo Rice Schemes over the past fifty years (McKillop 1976b). In mining there were large and costly projects in the 1920s and their spectacular collapse had a dampening effect on subsequent enthusiasm for investment in Papuan development. The fact that practically every one of these projects proved to be a costly failure is not a condemnation of Australian neglect of Papua. Rather it suggests that there are special features of the Papuan environment which necessitate more than the allocation of funds and enthusiasm to achieve 'development'. For example, more finance and effort have been expended on coffee extension work in the Milne Bay Province than in the Chimbu Province, yet the Chimbu produces over fifty times more coffee than Milne Bay. Recent attempts to establish a sugar industry in the Central Province were cancelled after the Rigo people refused to make sufficient land available, and the government's attempts to promote development along the Hiritano Highway have been rewarded by claims by the villages involved for substantial compensation for damage to gardens.

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1 See *Papuan Annual Reports* 1922 to 1928.
In 1978 the minister for primary industry, Julius Chan, directly blamed lack of support by Papuan people for the difficulties faced by Papuan projects.  

Papuan separatists are concerned that current expenditure on development is biased against Papua. They point to the stated development strategies of the 1960s when, following a report by the World Bank (IBRD 1965), there was support for the strategy of directing funds to the areas of greatest potential. Because of the lack of objective data, the things people talked about doing, rather than the things they did, were often accepted as fact. It was not until 1975 that any attempt was made to develop measures which would enable a comparison of socio-economic development between the different areas of Papua New Guinea. In that year R. Kent Wilson published a socio-economic index based on the Papua New Guinea villagers' concept of development (Wilson 1975). The index, although limited by the accuracy of statistics, enables a classification of districts according to levels of socio-economic development, thus providing a useful base for assessing Papuan claims of neglect. Port Moresby district had the highest index in the country, reflecting the range of services offered in the country's largest city, and three other Papuan districts (Alotau, Daru and Samarai) fell into the top group. Overall, 38 per cent of Papuan districts fell into the top three groups, compared with 54 per cent of the New Guinean districts—suggesting that Papua is, to some extent, less developed than New Guinea. However, of the eleven most disadvantaged districts in the country (group 6) only one (Nomad) is located in Papua. On these grounds the charge of colonial neglect may be applied equally to parts of New Guinea.

An objective comparison of development between areas, however, fails to recognize the nature of Papuan claims of underdevelopment. The Papuan separatist movements gain their greatest support from the Central Province, especially the areas around Port Moresby. In other

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1 Post-Courier 22 March 1978.

2 At the time Wilson's paper was written Provinces and districts were known, respectively, as Districts and sub-districts. Here we have used the current terminology.
words it is the people from the most developed areas who speak most loudly about lack of development. They are the people who have had the closest contact with the colonial masters, the people whose culture and traditions have been most dramatically undermined, and the people who have lived closest to the inequality between themselves and the foreigners who have come to dominate them. Port Moresby represents the greatest concentration of foreign wealth in the country - foreign administrators, diplomats, company executives and academics form a dominant international community which exhibits a material wealth and life style which generates envy among the indigenous majority. Abaijah (1975:6) expresses their feeling of underdevelopment thus:

The story of my parents is the story of Papua under the Australian administration. Basically they were taught and believe that Papuans were inferior to other people, that Papua was poorer in resources than other countries, and that Papuans could never govern their own country or control its development. The white man and other people were superior in every material way to Papuans and the basic colonial philosophy was Papuans, on their own, would starve to death and blood instead of honey would flow in the land.

New Guinean migration

Behind much of the rhetoric of Papuan separatist leaders, especially Josephine Abaijah, lies a fear of domination by New Guinean immigrants to Port Moresby.

Port Moresby now has a population of 115,000 which is increasing at seven per cent per annum. The city is rapidly taking on the appearance of a typical Third World city. Expatriates and the country's elite live in material comfort in exclusive 'high covenant' suburbs; public servants and semi-skilled workers live in 'low covenant' suburbs; recent immigrants to the city live in the numerous squatter settlements which ring the planned suburbs. An additional settlement pattern is provided by the five Motuan villages within the city boundary. With the rapid rate of migration and limited employment opportunities social problems are acute. Street brawls and crime are prevalent and the urban elite live in constant fear of threats to their material wealth through break and entry. The media regularly expresses the elite's fear of crime, which is usually attributed to unemployed immigrants in the city. To the Papuans who regard Port Moresby as their city and who constitute the majority of the indigenous elite,
the immigrants who flock to the city are a disturbing factor they
would prefer to eliminate. As many of the immigrants are from New
Guinean provinces it is easy for the Papuan separatists to use New
Guinean immigrants, and especially those from the Highlands, as a
scapegoat for the city's problems.

The Papuan fear of New Guinean immigrants was crystallized in
the Papua vs. New Guinea football riot of 1973. Prior to the annual
inter territory football match the seeds for conflict had been sown.
The lord mayor of Port Moresby, a Motuan, had said that the urban
unemployed should be deported back to their home areas. Josephine
Abaijah addressed a number of meetings where she referred to attacks
on Papuan women by New Guineans and the desire of New Guineans for
Papuan land. At one meeting she said that New Guineans spoke a kanaka
language, were violent primitives and that Papuans were not safe with
them around (Standish 1973b). A number of observers has claimed that
these inflammatory speeches were a basic cause of the rioting which
followed. On the other hand Papua Besena supporters point to a
similar riot in 1968 which occurred without the benefit of Abaijah's
speeches (Daro 1976). However, all observers agree that the result
of the riot was a dramatic increase in the fear of highlanders among
Port Moresby Papuans and because of this an increase in their support
for Papuan separatists. To Abaijah and many Papuans the riots
confirmed their fears of the primitive savagery of New Guineans.
Many leading Papuans publicly called for unemployed New Guineans to
be shipped out of Port Moresby and for strict controls to be placed
on migration (Standish 1973b).

On closer examination the issue is not a particularly useful
one for the separatist cause. Many of the despised highlanders were
in fact Papuans. The Southern Highlands Province accounts for some
200,000 of Papua's 700,000 people, though their ethnic, linguistic
and communications links are with the people of the highlands valleys
to the north of the colonial border. Even within the Central Province
the people of the Goilala district are a mountain warrior people much
feared by the coastal Motuans and during the 1973 riots the Mountain
Koiari Papuans are reported to have fought the coastals (Standish 1973d).
Some of the largest migrant camps in Port Moresby are settled by
Goilala and Kerema people from Papua and it is these groups, rather
than the much maligned highlanders, who represent a large proportion of the court convictions in Port Moresby. Moreover research shows that the best organized groups amongst Port Moresby's criminals are Papuan (Po'o 1975).

One further fact needs to be considered in analysing the apparent fears of New Guineans amongst Papuans: the over-representation of Papuans in the public service, a bias which is most apparent for the Central Province. A Public Service Commission review of staffing of senior positions by province of origin in 1976 showed that people from the Central Province, which had less than five per cent of the population, held 40 per cent of the executive positions (class 9 and above) in the public service, the same proportion as all New Guinean provinces, which had 72 per cent of the population. Milne Bay, Northern and Gulf Provinces are also over-represented at the top of the public service, but the Southern Highlands, with 7.5 per cent of the population, held only one per cent of the executive positions (all class 9 'token' appointments). To appreciate the significance of these figures one has to consider the dominance of the public bureaucracy in Papua New Guinea. In 1973 some 85 per cent of the professional and semi professional manpower and 66 per cent of the technical manpower were employed in the public sector (Manpower Planning Unit 1973). Two international consultants, advising the central government and the Constitutional Planning Committee early in 1974, reported that

... in our experience of political systems in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, we have not come across an administrative system so highly centralised and dominated by its bureaucracy (Tordoff and Watts 1974: 2/2).

Papuans then, particularly those from the Central Province, are currently in a unique position of power and authority. However, they can expect from other areas increasing demands for more equal representation in positions of power. They are in a vulnerable position and it is a natural reaction to seek safeguards to protect their privilege.
Formation of Papua Besena.

As observed above, a sense of Papuan identity had emerged before the second world war and during the second House of Assembly a number of Papuan MHAs were advocating a separate destiny for Papua. In the 1972 elections Josephine Abaijah became the only female member of the House when she was elected on a campaign 'for Papua, for its land, and for its culture and life' (Daro 1976).

Abaijah's campaign was closely connected with two expatriate identities - Dr Eric Wright, the assistant director of health education, who was patron to Abaijah's former career in the public health department (she was heir apparent to his position)\(^1\), and Percy Chatterton, a well known missionary and former MHA. By late 1972 Abaijah openly advocated a secessionist line, embracing the view that Wright had put forward some years previously at the University of Papua New Guinea (Griffin 1975a:11). Chatterton publicly dissociated himself from Abaijah's policies, leaving Wright to exert what many observers saw as a powerful influence over her.

On 3 June 1973 the Papua Besena Movement was formed by what was described as a council comprising villagers, councillors, professional people, tradesmen and other citizens\(^2\). The Motu name means 'Papua Tribe' according to Chatterton, who is credited with having helped to choose it (Daro 1976), and 'Papua Nation' or 'Papuan nationalism' according to Abaijah (1975). The movement claims to have conducted about one hundred formal meetings in the first year of its existence, most of these held in Abaijah's office in Hohola, a suburb of Port Moresby.

In November 1974 a policy document was issued under Abaijah's name. The document, which is reproduced at the end of this chapter, set out as the aim of Papua Besena:

\begin{itemize}
    \item To make Papua a free, independent nation and
    \item make the Papuans free people and masters of their own lands, their own resources, their immigration and their own lives.
\end{itemize}

\(^1\) See *National Times* 11 August 1975, 'Dr Eric Wright: A man defeated by his war' (Chris Ashton).

Papua Besena was to be a peaceful, non violent, anti colonial movement. It sought to achieve its aim 'by freeing the minds of the Papuan people, lifting from the Papuan people the slave mentality of colonialism, and destroying the colonial myth in Papua'.

The claim of Papua Besena to be an anti colonial movement was undermined by contradictory strategies. Sometimes there were attacks on Australian colonialism, particularly for 'past neglect' of Papua; paragraph 26 of the basic policy document concludes:

Because of the great harm that Australia has done and continues to do to Papua while we were helpless under its colonial rule, Papua Besena strongly supports the confiscation of all Australian owned properties in Papua and their free return to the Papuan people.

On the other hand, until well into 1975 Abaijah continued to demand that Papua remain an Australian territory and that Papuans retain Australian citizenship. She made several trips to Australia to seek support for Papua Besena and eventually retreated there in 1977, ostensibly to write a book. An undated leaflet produced by Abaijah shows her holding a koala and carries the message 'Papua is a natural trading partner of Australia'. Such contradictions have enabled Papua Besena's opponents to label it a colonial movement which wants to reintroduce a colonial border.

Although Papua Besena's leadership is centred in Port Moresby and its meetings are held there the movement claims to be village based. It has sought to gain support among village people and has frequently taken up local grievances on behalf of rural communities.

One of the first campaigns of this nature was Abaijah's assumption of the role of spokesman for the Koiari people from the Sogeri area near Port Moresby. The Koiari people had been included in the large Hiri Local Government Council and their initial concern

1 Reproduced in Davis (1974).
was for a separate Sogeri Local Government Council. Abaijah came to their aid during 1973; she claimed that the Koiari people should have their own council because they had suffered as a result of economic development (plantations and the Port Moresby hydro electric scheme) on their lands.\(^1\)

A year later Abaijah and seven Koiari representatives presented a petition listing twelve demands to the Electricity Commissioner. The demands included a K10,000 annual royalty for 'the electricity generated from the resources of the Koiari's land', a road, school, village water supply and electrification, and the return of some plantations.\(^2\) At the same time the Koiari set up a road block denying Electricity Commission vehicles access to the Sirinumu dam. The government soon agreed that a road should be built to the village area. In June 1976 the Koiari people were granted their own council to represent the 2000 people of the area.

The Somare government granted K2000 towards its establishment and the prime minister, deputy prime minister and governor general were all present at the official opening ceremony (Daro 1976). A pattern of action had been set for subsequent Papua Besena campaigns. The Somare government refused to be drawn into repressive measures and eventually was able to take much of the credit for the establishment of the Sogeri Local Government Council.

A more heated, urban based campaign was the women's demonstration against the high cost of living in Port Moresby in 1974. Again Abaijah played a central role, leading a number of marches by women in support of demands for more money for their husbands, a price freeze and for cuts in politicians' salaries. In successive days of demonstrations angry women, led by Abaijah and inflamed by her numerous speeches, laid siege to the chief minister's office, rampaged through a conference room, attacked the chief minister and the minister for foreign relations and their advisors, threw stones, caused damage

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\(^1\) *Post-Courier* 19 April 1973 and 1 June 1973.

\(^2\) *Post-Courier* 17 May 1974.
to both the main stadium and the airport terminal, and tried to prevent the chief minister from boarding an aircraft. Chief minister Somare later said that he felt 'as though Papua Besena were trying to use street politics and inflation to bring my government down' (Somare 1975:133). Abaijah, for her part, did not seem concerned at the violence of her supporters.

The Somare government again responded to the demonstrations. Within a week cuts on import levies and profit margins for staple foods were announced after an all day cabinet meeting. The following day an increase in the urban minimum wage was announced. As a longer term measure the government also announced the expansion of the Fresh Food Market - an expensive and heavily subsidized marketing organization which was aimed at bringing cheaper vegetables to urban areas by encouraging large producers at the expense of small indigenous farmers (McKillop 1981). Somare also responded with a frank open letter to Abaijah 'explaining' the government's stand on the issues raised by the women.

A third instance of Abaijah's utilization of local issues occurred when, during June 1976, unseasonal heavy rains brought widespread flooding to the Central Province. With only a little prompting from Abaijah the government announced that it would provide relief food for villages in the Hula-Marshall Lagoon area. One hundred and eighty bags of rice and an equal number of bundles of sago were sent in a convoy of trucks which was led by Abaijah and James Mopio, the leader of the Papuan Liberation Movement. The incident emphasized the dominance of the central government in Papua New Guinea and the dependence of all individuals, communities and organizations on handouts from the bureaucracy. Abaijah's presence

1 Post-Courier 13, 14 June 1974.
at the head of the convoy symbolized her acceptance of this
dependence and her powerlessness to offer an alternative to the
present government.

Another strategy employed by Papua Besena, and by Mopio, was
the use of symbolic gestures as a tactic of social action. Mopio
developed plans to pull down Papua New Guinea flags everywhere in
Papua and replace them with the flag of Papua Besena.¹ He envisaged
police intervention and planned to capitalize on any overreaction
on their part.

Little has been heard of these plans, but a Mopio strategy
for a unilateral declaration of Papuan independence was carried out.
On 16 March 1975 a unilateral declaration of independence was made
by Papua Besena at Baruni village near Port Moresby.² At dawn
Abaijah lowered the Australian flag and raised the Papua Besena
flag. At her feet were symbolic replicas of gifts which Australia
had made to tribal elders of the Port Moresby area when Papua was
annexed in 1884. Somare was quick to point out that the declaration
was limited to only six villages.³

Organisation.

Papua Besena lacks a formal organizational structure. Although
Abaijah was initially regarded as the leader of Papua Besena she
has maintained that leadership is open to anybody who wants to be a
leader.⁴ Papua Besena claims to be a mass movement which works through
other institutions and organizations which support its aims. Thus
it has become closely associated with a number of political movements,
many of which have conflicting interests. They include:

¹ National Times 3 March 1975, 'Papuan Independence: An unreal
Papua New Guinea concept, but not for Mopio' (Chris Ashton).
² Post-Courier 17 March 1975.
³ Post-Courier 19 March 1975.
⁴ See Abaijah's article on 'Papua Besena Policy', Post-Courier
Josephine Abaijah making a unilateral declaration of Papuan independence, March 1975 (see p. 340)

(Photo courtesy Post-Courier)
The Social Workers Party of Papua New Guinea which was formed in May 1973 to fight for a strong and viable socialist Papua New Guinea. The Party's leaders were all Papuans and in July 1973 the secretary Peter Kawo said that the SWP 'most strongly supported the principles of the Papua Movement'. The SWP was an uncertain ally, however, and the president, Laki Laya, subsequently planned a protest march against Papua Besena (Daro 1976).

The Papuan Black Power Liberation Movement was formed in September 1973. The movement's objectives included the protection of the freedom, rights, history, prestige and identity of the Papuan people (Daro 1976). The first president, Leo Charles Kavaua, subsequently became an advisor to Abaijah.

The Papuan Liberation Movement was formed as a breakaway group of the Papuan Black Power Movement, with James Eki Mopio as president and Paterson Kila as secretary. Mopio, a former extension officer of the Department of Primary Industry, president of the Mekeo Local Government Council and businessman, was elected to the National Parliament in the Central Provincial by-election of 1976.

The Papua Group was formed by a group of successful candidates for the Port Moresby City Council following the 1974 council elections. The group was able to control the council and it set out as general objectives an immediate provincial state government for Papua, legal aid from Australia, and financial assistance from the Papua New Guinea government (Daro 1976). The Papua Group elected a central executive of ten councillors and subsequently added a working committee comprising the executive committee and some prominent Papuans from outside the council, including James Mopio. Subsequently it was announced that 'the Papua Group consists of Papua Besena, the Social Workers' Party, some members of the Port Moresby City council, the Papuan Black Liberation Movement, village and church leaders' (Daro 1976).

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The Port Moresby City Council became a vocal source of support for Papuan separatism and it passed a series of motions calling for a separate independent Papua.¹ But though the council became a source of irritation to the central government, the actions of the Papua Group councillors did little to assist the separatist cause. The councillors seemed more interested in their personal comfort, and accusations of political patronage became common in the government-oriented national press. In May 1975 the council voted K10,000 to send eleven councillors on a 'goodwill visit' to the Philippines just one week after the council had sacked forty-eight labourers because there were insufficient funds to pay them;² the national newspaper had some lighthearted fun at the councillors' expense over the nature of unpaid bills the group left behind in Manila.³ The political activities of the councillors were not popular with executive staff and four key officers resigned over a twelve month period.⁴ The central government threatened to abolish the council following allegations of waste of public funds and political patronage. Charges that the city councillors were granting tenders for council work to their own companies were widely circulated in Port Moresby and in 1978 a Workers Pressure Group was formed to contest the council elections in opposition to the Papua Group. The group claimed to be 'an alliance of village leaders, workers and students' and nominated eighteen candidates.⁵ Campaigning against the 'wantok system' of the council, the group was successful in winning control of the council with the support of independents.⁶

The Papuan Republican Fighters' Army was a more bizarre group. The 'Army' was formed by Simon Kaumi following his suspension from the public service for political activities against the government in 1974.⁷ In January 1975 the PRFA seized

¹ Post-Courier 6 November 1974.
² Post-Courier 22 May 1975.
³ Post-Courier 3 July 1975.
⁴ Post-Courier 4 July 1975.
⁵ Post-Courier 2 May 1978.
⁶ Subsequently Papua Besena was successful in placing its candidate in the Lord Mayor's position while the Workers Pressure Group incumbent was overseas.
a run-down plantation near Popondetta, an act which Abaijah heralded as a peaceful coup for Papuan liberation from colonialism.\(^1\) In February 1975 Abaijah issued a press release to announce that Kaumi had been appointed 'provisional Chief Minister for the Republic of Papua'.\(^2\)

**Papua Besena and the media.**

With its strong urban base, the Papua Besena movement is well placed to obtain a wide media coverage and there is evidence that the leaders have sought to exploit this potential. Abaijah regularly issues press statements and is well known for her long letters to the *Post-Courier*. Her ability to sensationalize issues has made her attractive to the media and she has become one of the most widely known Papua New Guineans within Australia.

However, the use of the mass media by political movements can be a difficult strategy to pursue over a long period. There is little doubt that the media coverage of the 1974 Port Moresby women's riot, for example, was a factor in the rapid government response to the grievances of the urban people, but the long-term benefit to Papua Besena is not so obvious.

Part of the problem facing Papua Besena in its media campaign for Papuan independence was to identify a target audience. In the period before independence the power to grant a separate independence lay with the Australian government, but there was a number of potential sources of opinion which might have influenced its decision, including the Papua New Guinea government, the Australian public and the United Nations. Papua Besena made some attempt to appeal to the Australian government through the Australian people. Abaijah frequently wrote letters to the Australian press explaining her cause\(^3\) and, in company with Wright, she made a number of

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\(^1\) Abaijah press release 11 February 1975.

\(^2\) *Post-Courier* 7 February 1975.

\(^3\) For example, see *Sydney Morning Herald* 10 August 1973.
publicity visits to Australia which were widely reported. However, the usefulness of these visits is open to doubt, as Australian reporters concentrated on her inability to present coherent programmes for the development of an independent Papua and on the influence of Wright in formulating her policies. She was evasive on these issues. When chances came to present her case to Australian decision makers her behaviour was often difficult to follow. In 1973 she was granted two appointments to see Bill Morrison, the Australian minister for territories, but on both occasions she elected not to appear. Afterwards she rationalized that Morrison had 'only one thing in mind and that is to dump us' (Membrey 1974).

The media campaign created a long term problem for Papua Besena which was eventually to undermine its objectives and isolate the movement as an urban oriented splinter group. In order to gain the support of the majority of Papuans a secessionist movement would need to gain the support of the village people who constitute the bulk of the population. However, the mass media in Papua New Guinea is almost exclusively urban in both its orientation and contact. Thus the more energy Papua Besena directed to media publicity the more it isolated itself from the rural people. Eventually Abaijah became better known in Australia than among the Papuan people and the movement has not been able to take up any significant cause outside of Central Province.

The media also served to highlight the basic weakness of the Papua Besena strategy. The rhetoric of Papua Besena has been rich in visionary references to the development of Papua's resources of copper, oil, timber, gas and copra. Abaijah has referred frequently to the 'golden triangle' of Papua, formed by the Ok Tedi copper deposit, the Purari hydro electric scheme, and the agricultural potential of the Southern Highlands. However the vision is based

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1 See Pacific Islands Monthly September 1973.

on a material development model, which views development in terms of roads, airports, schools, better houses and the material comforts of Western society. In Papua New Guinea these things have always been provided by the government. Its near monopoly in the provision of the material forms of development and the villagers' desire for these forms constitute the basis of the power of the central government bureaucracy. Thus a strategy which emphasises material goods is a strategy of increased dependence on the central government and ultimately on Australian aid. On the other hand a non violent strategy is one which mobilizes the public to deny the source of the government's power by non co-operation and disobedience. In the Papua New Guinea context this would involve a denial of the government-development model; a rejection of government-built roads, the government education system and the aspiration for highly paid positions in the public service. While these issues remain central to the protesters' aspirations the government retains enormous power simply from the threat to redirect development funds unless the group co-operates with the government. This presents a central dilemma to the Papuan cause. While protest action by Papuan separatists has resulted in significant redirection of government resources toward the well-off groups of Port Moresby and its hinterland, this is hardly a challenge to the private interests of the decision-making elite of the public bureaucracy. Where the protest went too far and offered the prospect of a separate power base to the central elite, such as the case of the Port Moresby City Council, it required only a threat to withdraw the support of the central government to bring the protest to heel. An excellent example of the dependency of the Papuan separatists on the central government is offered in Papua Besena's decision to send a delegation of ten on an extensive overseas tour to publicize Papuan independence; when it came to funding the operation, Abaijah led a delegation to the minister for finance to ask for a K20,000 grant to pay for the trip.1

1 Post-Courier 31 July 1975.
The decline of Papuan separatism.

The early years of Papua Besena were marked by exaggerated claims of support among Papuans. In 1973 Abaijah made several promotional tours to Papuan provinces and by the end of the year she claimed to have the support of eighty per cent of Papuans.\(^1\) At this time the movement was identified with opposition to independence and much of the apparent support from villages may be attributed to this opposition (Daro 1976).

However, while Papua Besena promoted itself under a secessionist banner it was obliged to show some results if it was to maintain support. The most significant action to this end was the unilateral declaration of independence in March 1975. Apart from some light-hearted reporting in the media the act caused scarcely a ripple in Papua New Guinea. It was summed up by Griffin (1975b:123) as pathetic in both senses: moving and ineffectual.

The 'non event' of unilateral declaration marked a turning point in Papua Besena's development. From that moment Papuan secession was dead and Papua Besena gradually adapted to reality and organized itself into a political group intent on gaining a greater share of resources for its supporters within the framework of the Papua New Guinea state. The change was gradual and it took some time for people to realize that it had occurred.

In January 1976 Mopio won a by-election for the Central Province and joined Abaijah in the National Parliament. In April, as parliamentary leader of Papua Besena, Mopio announced that a Papua Party had been formed and would soon formulate policy.\(^2\) In June an advertisement in the *Post-Courier* announced that the Papua Party aimed at good and stable government through democratic principles, national self-determination and abolition of old colonial influences.\(^3\)

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1 *Post-Courier* 2 January 1974.
2 *Post-Courier* 8 April 1976.
3 *Post-Courier* 4 June 1976.
Emphasis shifted to gaining a Papuan provincial government, following a model already established by the North Solomons and the Eastern Highlands, but the concept apparently had little support outside Central Province. The reaction of other Papuan areas was summed up by a spokesman for Boda Togelu, an Esa'ala (Milne Bay) group, who said, 'The Papua government, if agreed, would ideally favour the power hungry minority to manipulate and take advantage of other Papuan provinces to suit its own ends'.

By August the Papua Party had declared its hand as an interest group out to protect the entrenched power position of the Papuan elite. In response to rumours of shifts for senior Papuan public servants and the announcement that the chairman of the Public Service Commission, Sere Pitoi, was to be replaced by a Tolai, the Papua Party called a meeting to 'discuss recent developments in public service appointments'. Papuan departmental heads and politicians were asked to attend. A prominent Papuan supporter and former head of the Teaching Service Commission said that 'he was aware that axes had been laid at the feet of senior Papuan public servants'.

In 1977 the commander-in-chief of the Defence Force, Brigadier General Diro, a Papuan, was reprimanded by the government for an unauthorised meeting with Irianese rebel leaders. This too brought an outburst from Abaijah who claimed that the government was conducting a smear campaign over the Diro affair; she added, 'it was based on Government fears and insecurity when dealing with Papuans'.

In early 1977 the Papuan factions moved to amalgamate into a single political group to contest the forthcoming national elections. The various splinter groups of the Papuan movement, including the Papuan Black Power Movement, the Papuan Liberation Front, the Papua Party and the Port Moresby City Council, joined with Papua Besena to form the Papua Besena Organisation under the initial chairmanship of Oala Oala Rarua, the former Papua New Guinea high commissioner in

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1 Post-Courier 26 August 1976.
2 Post-Courier 26 August 1976.
3 Post-Courier 26 August 1976.
4 Post-Courier 12 October 1977.
Australia.  

Oala Rarua was quietly removed from the Organisation the following week, but the group went on to develop a party platform. Papua Besena's policies, announced in May 1977, emphasized integrity, justice and equal development. The policy platform marked the formal end of Papuan secession and its replacement with a policy according to which 'regional administration should be encouraged'. An emerging issue in Papua New Guinea at this time was alleged corruption among government ministers and officials, and the Papua Besena policies indicated that the movement's leaders saw political advantage in this issue. Abaijah spoke of the misuse of power by politicians in an article in the Post-Courier the following month. Papua Besena, she wrote, stood for reform of the parliamentary system in order to limit corruption and bring the government closer to the people. This would be achieved by a system in which all politicians were on equal pay, with equal status and authority. The policy sought to limit the power of politicians, the majority of whom come from New Guinea, and thus leave the administrators, who are predominantly Papuan, with greater power in decision making.

The emergence of the Papua Besena Organisation coincided with the apparent eclipse of Josephine Abaijah as the Papua Besena leader. On his election to parliament in 1976 Mopio soon began to act as a Papua Besena spokesman - often an independent one, which has placed him in conflict with other leaders of the Papuan movement. After the 1977 elections Papua Besena found itself with five seats in the National Parliament and this was increased to eight in subsequent

1 Post-Courier 7 February 1977.
2 Post-Courier 26 May 1977. The policy was featured in a full page advertisement on 27 May 1977.
4 In July 1978 Papua Besena politicians passed a vote of no confidence in Mopio's leadership (Post-Courier 19 July 1978).
by-elections to give Papua Besena a clean sweep of the Central Province and National Capital seats. Abaijah was re-elected but was granted extended leave from the house and over the next two years she spent most of her time in Australia. Her main political activity during that time has consisted of writing long letters to the Post-Courier defending herself against increasing attacks on Papua Besena's lack of action and her own absence from Papua New Guinea. Traditional Papuan prejudice against women is probably an important factor in Abaijah's decline as a Papua Besena leader, though she herself claims she has grown tired from her efforts on behalf of Papua and the lack of support she has received.\(^1\) In November 1978 she announced plans to sell off her business interests and to concentrate on writing.\(^2\)

Papua Besena's electoral success in 1977 posed a question about its role in parliament. In the jockeying for power which followed the election, Mopio committed Papua Besena to an alliance with the highlands dominated United Party.\(^3\) Following a United Party split in 1978 Papua Besena formed an alliance with Iambakey Okuk's National Party and the Papua Besena leader became deputy leader of the opposition, thus placing Papua Besena in a position to share in political power. The contradiction between this alliance and the origins of Papua Besena was not lost on many Papuans.\(^4\)

Papua Besena policy was further refined when, in a by-election in 1978, a lawyer, Joseph Aoae, won the Kairuku-Hiri seat for Papua Besena. Aoae presented a paper to the Waigani Seminar in 1978 (Aoae 1979), which argued for a federal system with states representing broad regional interests. He argued that Papua had been neglected by Australia and that the constitutional amendment

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and Organic Law on Provincial Government were 'fully contrived pieces of legislation'. Papua Besena, he said, rejected provincial government as fanciful and inconsequential and favoured a federal system of states which would 'guarantee Papuan political security from outside domination, complete control over land and resources; complete control over priorities of economic development, and all residual powers'.

Ironically the electoral success of Papua Besena has tended to isolate the movement further as an interest group of the coastal elite of Port Moresby and the Central Province. The new parliamentarians have been obliged to promote the issues of their constituents. Both Mahuru Rarua Rarua and Dr Goasa Damena have taken up the demands of the Koitabu and Motu villagers in Port Moresby; these include the removal of squatters from their land. As the squatters are mostly from the Gulf Province, in settlements which in many cases date from before the second world war, Papua Besena has done little to enhance its support in the Gulf Province. During 1978 the *Post-Courier* carried an increasing number of letters from previous supporters who had become disillusioned at Papua Besena's failure to match its rhetoric with positive action and Abaijah for her continued absence in Australia.¹

In April 1979 elections were held for the Central Provincial government. Despite Papua Besena's announced opposition to provincial government the movement had no hesitation in endorsing candidates, frequently a number for each electorate. On the basis of the author's field observations, Papua Besena received strong support in coastal electorates but inland villages were openly hostile to the movement. Papua Besena candidates in the Rigo West Coast electorate felt that the movement stood for more economic development in Papua and they rejected an independent Papua.²


² Personal communication, Malaga Malaga and Gima Kalogo, Tauruba village, 26-30 April 1979.
development they meant large projects for the Rigo District rather than other areas of Papua. In the Rigo Inland electorate there was open hostility to Papua Besena candidates on the grounds that 'Papua Besena is a party of the coastal people and coastal people never know our problems'. Papua Besena claimed that a majority of the elected members were supporters of the movement, but the allocation of executive positions in the provincial government was made on the basis of area of representation rather than party lines.

Response to Papua Besena

To assess the response of Papua New Guinea's elite to Papuan separatist movements, a small survey was conducted among junior and middle level public servants and police attending training courses in Australia during 1976. Seventy-five questionnaires were distributed and fifty replies received. The survey included attitudinal questions which enabled a measurement of support for Papuan separatist movements on a seven point scale. The level of support according to ethnic background is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin of respondent</th>
<th>Opposed</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Supporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Guinea</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Half the Papuans in the sample showed sympathy for the Papuan movements; perhaps more importantly, a fifth had fairly neutral attitudes towards them.

The survey also included a number of open-ended questions. One asked about reasons for the development of the movements. Inequality of development between Papua and New Guinea was the most frequent response.

1 Personal communication, Kene Kone, Tauruba village, 27 April 1979.
(seventeen respondents); eight respondents nominated Papuan fear of domination by New Guineans; six saw the movements as a means of getting control of the public service for Papuans, and six replies suggested that the cause was a disaffected elite. More interesting were the replies to a question asking why the movements had not been more successful in achieving their aims. Half the respondents simply said that it was because the movements did not have support among Papuans. The remainder offered more useful comments: a number thought the movements were too elitist, either because the leaders were too far removed from village people or because they were based only in the Port Moresby area; another group nominated poor strategy, such as unrealistic or vague aims, attempts to move too quickly, threats of violence, the apparent influence of Europeans in the movement, and differences between leaders; others suggested that the opponents of Papuan separatism had been too effective, either by removing the causes of dissatisfaction (for example by pay rises and localization)\(^1\) or by their influence in the village. The principal opponent was seen to be the central government, but missions were also mentioned as was the Australian government.

**Assessment**

It is apparent from this review that as a secessionist movement Papua Besena has failed. However, to focus on the separatist cause is to overlook the basic impact of the Papua movement - the reallocation of development projects to the Central Province and the protection of the over-representation of the Central Province among Papua New Guinea's elite. As we have seen, the government has shown a willingness to capitulate to many of the demands of the various protest causes which Papua Besena has championed. Indeed, on the unilateral declaration of independence for Papua the deputy chief minister, Dr (now Sir John) Guise, saw cause to make a detailed statement on the development projects which the government had carried out and would be undertaking in the Papuan Provinces and to publish it as an advertisement in the *Post-Courier*.\(^2\) The most substantial of these projects, including roads, agricultural settlement schemes, and a sugar industry,

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1 It is interesting that the responses did not see this as a victory for Papua Besena, but as an action by the government to reduce Papua Besena's support.

2 *Post-Courier* 13 March 1975.
were to be located in the Central Province. Thus in its response to largely urban protests the government capitulated to demands for more development in the most developed areas.

A more fundamental but less obvious shift in the allocation of development resources towards more favoured areas has occurred as a result of attempts to make the bureaucracy more responsive to rural people. Such attempts have been in response to a general dissatisfaction among Melanesians with the apparent insensitivity and rigidity of foreign bureaucratic organizations. They feel that the large bureaucracies they have inherited contain built-in obstacles which make it difficult for applicants to get the service they want. The Somare government created special institutions such as the Village Development Task Force and channelled funds through the Rural Improvement Programme and the Village Economic Development Fund in an attempt to bypass bureaucratic channels of access between village groups and the central government (Ballard 1976c). But within the inherited bureaucracy new informal networks developed to bypass the normal information channels. The villager who wanted access to government services soon found that the most effective way to obtain this service was through a friend or wantok rather than waiting for a response through official channels, with all their red tape. As Ballard (1976a:12) has put it, 'Blessed is he who has an educated wantok; even more blessed is he who has a wantok in high office'. The people most likely to have a wantok in high office are those who have had a long history of education. Of all such groups those with the most wantok in high places are the coastal villagers of the Central Province. Thus the process of localization has increased the potential of urban Papuan groups and villages in the Central Province to obtain access to government services and funds. The impact of the Papuan separatists has been to activate this potential. By claiming that the government has neglected Papua, the separatists have mobilized village people in their area of influence around Port Moresby to demand more government services; this in turn has sharpened the concern of senior Papuan public servants to do something tangible for their village people. The redirection of development resources toward the most favoured areas has been masked by the slogans of the government's new developmental policies, especially the emphasis on 'self-help'.

Prompted by Papua Besena publicity and guided by their own interpretation of 'self-help', many senior Papuan public servants have developed links back to their own villages. These links have a strong
emphasis on the establishment of development projects. Ballard (1976a:15) points to the involvement of a group of senior public servants in the development of Hood Lagoon as a good example of this trend. The author has interviewed a number of senior Papuan public servants on this topic. Most point with pride to their own 'self-help' project back in their village. Investigation of such projects reveals a heavy reliance on privileged access to important decision making areas in order to make the project possible at all. Through this communication channel, government services such as plans, technical advice and marketing are obtained, and preparation and consideration of applications for development grants and loans are facilitated. The people involved speak openly of 'cutting red tape' and 'bypassing the bureaucracy', factors which they consider to have been important in the 'success' of their projects. That people from remote areas without senior public servants or educated politicians to help them in this way are thus being cut out of the development process is a fact that receives rather less emphasis.

The impact of the Papuan movement needs to be viewed in relation to other groups in Papua New Guinea. While it has cemented the determination of the Papuan elite to maintain national unity it has increased the potential for other areas - the Highlands, the Sepik, Western Province - to splinter off or to react in some other way to the increased domination of Port Moresby. Thus the Papuan separatists have both served the interest of the Papuan elite and they have dramatically increased the potential for future conflict. Far from developing a successful strategy of secession they achieved their moderate success because their subgoals coalesced with those of a powerful sector of the government. Such a similarity of interest virtually precluded a repressive reaction by the government, and this in turn made it difficult for the separatist leaders to mobilize support for their goal of Papuan independence. In this situation the Papuan separatists and their supporters became more firmly tied to dependency on government funds and services, making Papuan independence increasingly unrealistic.

As a political party, the movement was constantly faced with the dilemmas and frustrations of being an opposition ginger group. During 1977 it appeared that Abaijah might develop the movement into a 'conscience of the nation' to lessen excesses of ministerial power, but electoral success soon changed that and in a bid for political office the new parliamentary members threw their principles aside and formed an alliance
with the highlanders. In doing so the Papua Besena parliamentary wing denied the origins of the movement, as an expression of Papuan fears of highland domination, in the quest for national political power. Whether such a strategy can be justified to those electors who believed they had voted for Papuan separatism remains to be seen.
Appendix to Chapter 11

BASIC DOCUMENT ON PAPUA BESENA POLICY

1. Papua Besena is an anti-colonial movement.
2. Papua Besena is not a political party.
3. I am the founder and spokesman of Papua Besena but Papua Besena does not appoint any leaders or create any particular structures.
4. Papua Besena leaders may arise but they are not appointed.
5. Papua Besena supporters are in almost every village in Papua, among the highest and lowest public servants, in the police force and the army. Papua Besena supporters come from every walk of life but I do not appoint anyone of them as a leader.
6. A Papua Besena supporter is known entirely by his acts and his attitudes. A Papua Besena leader is known entirely by his acts, his attitudes, his followers or the leadership role that he assumes in the Papua Besena anti-colonial movement. Nobody appoints him or her.
7. This is a very important concept in Papua Besena because we expect all Papuans will support Papua Besena or Papuan Nationalism. We are not trying to create a new society with new structures and leaders but we are freeing the minds of the Papuan people which is the first step to making a free independent nation and Papuans free people.
8. Papua Besena belongs to the Papuan people. It belongs equally to the poor and the rich, to rural people and the town people, to the village farmer and the professional worker alike. All are equal.
9. Papua Besena has only one aim:

TO MAKE PAPUA A FREE, INDEPENDENT NATION AND MAKE THE PAPUANS FREE PEOPLE AND MASTERS OF THEIR OWN LANDS, THEIR OWN RESOURCES, THEIR IMMIGRATION AND THEIR OWN LIVES.

10. Papua Besena will achieve this aim or objective by freeing the minds of the Papuan people, lifting from the Papuan people the slave mentality of colonialism, and destroying the colonial myth in Papua.
11. Papua Besena strongly criticised the role that Australia played in Papua. Australia, instead of developing Papuan resources, Papuan independence and Papuan freedom of mind and spirit has given us the rotten lies of the colonial myth:
   A. Papuans are inferior to all other foreigners and cannot do anything properly.
   B. Papuans are timid, non-aggressive people and can easily be controlled by colonial masters.
   C. Papua is poor and has no resources.
D. Papuan lands will be much safer and Papua will be much better protected if they are dominated by New Guinea than if they controlled their own land, resources and lives themselves.

12. The colonial myth of foreign superiority and Papuan poverty and hopelessness was first implanted in the minds of Papuans by the Australian colonials but it is now being carried on by other foreigners and New Guineans, particularly in the Tertiary Education institutions where Papuans are being brainwashed to follow a certain colonial line instead of developing freedom to think and make up their own minds.

13. Papua Besena will free the minds of the Papuan people from the dependent slave mentality of colonialism but the Papuans themselves must gain their own freedom in their own way.

14. Papua Besena follows along the lines of such movements as peaceful, non-violent, anti-colonial movements in other parts of the world which obtained their objectives by freeing the minds of the people from the evils implanted by colonial indoctrination.

15. Papua Besena has developed policy papers and structures for an independent Papua but it has only done this under pressure as Papua Besena does not see that Papua Besena has a functional role in the Government of Papua after Papua becomes an independent nation free from Australia and free from New Guinea. The papers are for discussion purposes only.

16. Papua Besena strongly opposes the idea of Papua as a state in a combined country of Papua-New Guinea. If this occurs as an interim step then that is O.K. but it has got nothing to do with the aims of Papua Besena.

17. Papua Besena supports all Area Authorities and other Papuan groups who oppose state government for Papua in Papua New Guinea.

18. Papua Besena wants strong autonomous District (Provincial) and Community Government in a free, independent Papua.

19. The Western District, Gulf District, Southern Highlands, Northern District, Milne Bay District and Central District should all have strong autonomous District Government.

20. Each District in Papua should be largely responsible for controlling its own lands, resources and immigration.

21. The entry of New Guineans and other foreigners into Papua will be strictly controlled.

22. Large towns should be developed in the Gulf District to serve the vast resources of the area and a large town developed in the Marshall Lagoon/Abau area to serve the link with the Northern District and Milne Bay.
23. Port Moresby should be decentralised to Bereina and Kwikila and each of these towns should become district capitals.

24. There is not limit to the number of structured organisations that can arise in Papua but these are not the Papua Besena anti-colonial movement. Papua Besena will affect every structure and every organisation that develops in Papua.

25. The Districts of Papua should be called *states*. Additional STATES or larger STATES can be created if necessary. This is entirely a matter for the Papuan people. At present the Papuan states would be, but no doubt some of the names would be changed:

   WESTERN STATE
   PAPUAN HIGHLANDS STATE
   GULF STATE
   CENTRAL STATE
   NORTHERN STATE
   MILNE BAY STATE

   A federation of these states would form the FEDERATION OF PAPUA or the REPUBLIC OF PAPUA.

26. Because of the great harm that Australia has done and continues to do to Papua while we were helpless under its colonial rule, Papua Besena strongly supports the confiscation of all Australian owned properties in Papua and their free return to the Papuan people. Australia can thus compensate its own people and make up for its disgraceful disregard and neglect during the period of its colonial rule in Papua.

   J.M. Abaijah, MHA
   Papua Besena Leader
   25th November, 1974
The Highlands Liberation Front (HLF) was a transitory phenomenon in the decolonizing period. Despite the revolutionary connotations of its name the HLF was an elite manifestation of Highlands consciousness, and a Highlands manifestation of elitehood.

The story of the HLF clearly illustrates certain important aspects of political change in Papua New Guinea, particularly the problems of political mobilization by elites on the scale of a whole region. The movement was most active on the adjoining campuses of the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) and the government's Administrative College at Waigani over about six months in 1972-73. But while its history reflects the feeling of campus discussion at the time, more importantly it points to continuing elements in the politics of an emerging state with deep ethnic and geographic divisions.

*This study, undertaken in retrospect, focussed on those activities of the HLF known to the writer, whose interest in the movement in 1972-73 was only peripheral. The emphasis will no doubt differ from that of insiders - whose own emphasis has changed since 1972. Particular thanks go to Michael Mel of Mount Hagen, Theodore Banda of Gemboil, Philip Kaman of Minj and Barri Keviame of Mendi for their help in piecing together this account. The late Paul Kup Ogut of Mount Hagen and Vincent Aisinufa of Kainantu also assisted. I am grateful to all those friends who endured its preparation and improved the draft (especially to Dr Marie Reay) and to the University of Papua New Guinea and the Australian National University for financial support.

1 In Papua New Guinea 'region' usually implies a large unit. In the past, four regions have been distinguished for administrative and statistical purposes: Northern Coastal (formerly New Guinea Coastal); (New Guinea) Islands; Highlands (including the Southern Highlands) and Southern Coastal (formerly Papua). The former 'regional' electorates, however, were in fact the equivalent of the present provincial electorates.
Figure 12.1  The Highlands Provinces
The region

Centrally located in the Papua New Guinea mainland, the Highlands constitute a distinct geographical region which spreads across the former land border between New Guinea (the Trust Territory) and Papua (the Australian colony). This rugged area of 68,400 square kilometres now supports about 900,000 people, most of whom live in the 1500-1800 metre altitudinal range of the central cordillera. In some places population densities reach Papua New Guinea's highest levels; in these parts land pressures were acute even in precolonial times. The existence of these people was discovered by outsiders only in the 1930s, when Australian patrol officers (kiap) and gold miners first entered the area. This contrasts with the colonial experience of many coastal peoples, which extends back for more than a century. The processes of 'contact' and 'pacification' in the Highlands were slowed by the Pacific War of 1942-45. Modern economic development did not penetrate the village people's lives in the Eastern Highlands till the late 1940s and in areas further west, such as the Enga and Southern Highlands, not until the 1960s. In the last two decades there has been a surge of highway building and economic development based mainly on plantation and smallholder coffee, and a slow spread and intensification of educational and health services. The area has proved a fertile hunting ground for numerous competing Christian sects, with over twenty missions in the Southern Highlands alone and up to eight in a single district of that Province. The various colonial influences have partially alienated many of the youth from their elders, whose cultures have in turn been directly assaulted by the dual processes of pacification and the new religions (Kerpi 1976).

While ecologically and culturally the Highlands societies display a degree of uniformity unique on such a scale in Papua New Guinea, they are not homogeneous. There are over fifty languages most of which can be classified into five families (Wurm 1961). Within the spread of a single dialect the people usually divide themselves into clan formations and some-
times tribes. In the precolonial era, geographic mobility was very restricted and the small political and social segments were arrayed in constantly shifting patterns of alliance and enmity, lacking any overall political structures. Their fissiparous tendencies are still expressed in clan warfare, a cultural expression which has indeed seen something of a renaissance in recent years (Papua New Guinea 1973; Standish 1973c; Kerpi 1976).

The colonial phase brought new means of communication - aircraft and the car - but with increased political participation in the pre independence decade the prospects for regional unity seemed to be declining. In 1972 there were four Highlands districts (after 1974 five, with the separation of the Enga from Western Highlands), and at independence these became Provinces. No provincial border divides a large language group and most Provinces have a sound linguistic base (Lang 1976:9). However there have been intermittent moves to change the colonial boundaries and create new Provinces from within the old.1

Both within and between the Provinces, tok pisin is the usual lingua franca. English is the language of formal education and is used in official documents, but is rarely heard except in expatriate and senior official circles. While tok pisin is virtually essential for participation in the introduced political institutions (local government councils, Provincial level bodies and the National Parliament), the use of English antagonizes many uneducated highlanders and - as elsewhere - serves to create a social distance between the educated elite and the rural and urban majority (cf. Anderson 1966; Mazrui 1973).

1 The main ones have been the Wahgi Tuale movement of the Wahgi/ Jimi division (a linguistic entity) which seeks to leave the Western Highlands; intermittent pushes from some Kainantu politicians seeking to break from the Eastern Highlands, and recent (1976) moves by Huli speakers from the Tari area wanting to secede from the Southern Highlands. In addition, there are frequently breakaway drives within local government council areas.
Political background

The absence in Papua New Guinea of a single overweening anti colonial movement acting to integrate the state has long been recognized (Rowley 1969; Somare 1970), as has the strength of various regional and locally based movements (Nelson 1971; May 1975). Some critics have seen the expatriate emphasis on internal divisions as a colonial divide-and-rule tactic. Yet both the colonial and transitional governments have been centralist. The Administration in the colonial territory was centralized - many would say not on Port Moresby but on Canberra (Ballard 1976c) - and those Papua New Guinea radicals who sought to alter the power structure became decentralizers (Standish 1974b; 1975a). In its years of 'loyal opposition', from 1967 to 1972, Pangu Pati took seriously Australian prime minister Gorton's words in July 1970 suggesting piecemeal decentralization in response to growing pressures for autonomy on the Gazelle peninsula and Bougainville.¹ In the 1970 debate over setting up the largely advisory bodies called Area Authorities at Provincial level, Pangu pressed for real devolution. It has since vacillated on the degree of power it will allow Provinces (Standish 1975b; 1976a; Conyers 1976), but it never sought a structure based upon large regions or even semi-autonomous states. Separate regions have for years been advocated by Papuan politicians, including the then deputy chief minister Dr (now Sir) John Guise (Guise 1973; Chatterton 1970), so regionalism is not new in Papua New Guinea.

Precolonial divisions of culture and topography were reinforced by the uneven spread of material benefits under colonial rule. From 1964, resentment of uneven development was often expressed in the House of Assembly, which, though a colonial creation, was the only official body above the level of Province with any affective political power.²

¹ Post-Courier 13 July 1970.

² The intermittent conferences of regional councillors had no legal status.
A Highlands bloc emerged early in the first house (1964-68). Highlands politicians, with white settler encouragement and sometimes even leadership (Wolfers 1968), have for over a decade eloquently reiterated that their past isolation and abbreviated colonial experience have caused their relative lack of the modern infrastructure - roads, schools and hospitals, and economic development - which they crave. Thus they sought to postpone self-government and independence until their youth could 'catch up' with the coastal people and receive sufficient education to gain their share of politically influential and rewarding positions in the bureaucracy. Anton Parao, then secretary of the dominant United Party (UP), made this point in a letter to Highlands schools in late 1971. Pangu used the letter in raising a matter of public importance (spreading misleading political information), and accused the UP of regionalism. While the UP was embarrassed, Parao's points were endorsed by the party's deputy leader Sinake Giregire (MHA for the Daulo Open electorate). 1 Highlanders often see themselves as being in a 'dark age' compared to the sophisticated from developed areas around Port Moresby and Rabaul. 2 In the hope that time would bring equalization, led by the UP they resisted the push of those whom they saw as coastal radicals eager for rapid constitutional change. The hostility to political decolonization, however, was not universal, some Highlands groups supporting change because they perceived local advantage with a national government (Standish 1973c). There were also a few Highlands students at UPNG who resented their

1 HAD II(20):5309-16, 19 November 1971.

2 These colonial capitals were centres of intensive economic activity, long known to Highlands migrant labourers who (along with their politician and educated elite kinsmen) tend to generalize the level of development around these towns to the coastal regions as a whole, and then contrast this with the less developed Highlands (again, taken as a whole). Some coastal areas (especially the West Sepik Province) are as badly off as the Highlands. The Highlands, however, form the lowest rating region by most development indicators (Wilson 1975; Standish 1976b).
elders' expressions of dependency. They took a frankly pro-
Pangu stance for early self-government. In late 1970 these
students had enlisted Thomas Kavali (Jimi) to be parliamentary
leader of their newly formed Niugini National Party (Standish
1976c). Amongst their number was a Chimbu law student from
Gembogl, Theodore Banda, who in early 1972 campaigned for a
radical candidate for the Chimbu Regional seat in parliament.

The UP highlanders lost their delaying action. Their
tactic, sometimes described as 'conservative' (Wolfers 1968:40),
was undermined by the 1971 decision of the second house to
endorse preparation for 'internal self-government' in the
anticipated life of the next parliament, 1972-1977. In the
1972 election campaign very few Highlands candidates espoused
early self-government (Stone 1976). The UP was confident of
victory and indeed won the greatest number of seats, forty-two.
But after a month of brilliant negotiation, in April Michael
Somare put together his tripartite Pangu-Peoples' Progress-
National Party national coalition. It had a broad regional
base, but included under the National Party banner only eight
of the thirty-eight Highlands members. Four of these eight
became ministers, but many highlanders felt left out. On
20 April, the opening day of the new parliament, a Mt Hagen
law student, Michael Mel, a strong UP supporter and friend of
Anton Parao, wore traditional dress around campus, bare-chested
and with a frontal apron below. In the alien urban coastal
context it was a dramatic statement: 'I am a Highlander!'.
Parao and others sought to deny the legitimacy of the new
government (Standish 1972).

In early July Somare toured the Highlands, promoting his
target of 1 December 1973 for self-government. He won a great
deal of generalized (and personal) support on this tour
(Standish 1973a) but the UP fought a long and emotional rear-
guard action for their policy of delaying self-government.
Anton Parao (subsequently the member for Western Highlands
Regional) accused Somare, during the self-government debate,
of instituting a 'guided democracy',¹ and his manner displayed

¹ HAD III(7):692, 19 September 1972.
extreme agitation. But, on the night of 19 September 1972, what had been foreseeable since April occurred. The house accepted by fifty-two votes to thirty-four Somare's proposed date for self-government.¹ Highlands politics would never be the same again, although another delaying action was yet to be fought over independence dates. UP coherence declined (Loveday 1975) and its politicians and their educated elite supporters saw an urgent need to find effective political channels for their people.

The formation of the HLF

The HLF was formed on 21 September 1972. Anton Parao was its patron and Theodore Banda its spokesman. The Front had started informally at UPNG on the evening of Sunday 17 September in the context of considerable social conflict on campus. Tolai-highlander tensions (and occasionally bloody fights) were not uncommon at UPNG at the time. They echoed closely the occasionally fatal clashes in the Tolai homeland on the Gazelle (where many highlanders are plantation labourers) or in land resettlement schemes such as the oil palm project at Cape Hoskins in West New Britain.² Tolai on the Gazelle sometimes fear highlanders and highlanders sometimes resent the better educated Tolai population with their relative affluence and occasionally superior attitudes. These resentments are often muted and there are friendships between individuals from the two areas, but for several months in mid 1972 feelings were high after clashes at Kokopo on the Gazelle. The emotions which had flared on campus were part of a longstanding difference between students from the two areas which for some went back to school days. Increased interaction arising from modernization, as well as competition with other groups also seeking upwards mobility, had heightened the ethnic consciousness

¹ Ibid. 709.

² Following the deaths of a Tolai and a Chimbu at Kimbe in September 1976 a Tolai student was hospitalized with head injuries received in a brawl at UPNG. On at least one occasion in the early 1970s Theodore Banda received injuries requiring hospitalization after a similar fight.
of elite highlanders. This experience, also noted in Nigeria, directly contradicts those social theorists who argue that modernization brings communal barriers down and hence promotes national integration (cf. Melson and Wolpe 1971:7-14; Ake 1974). In the conflict situation in which they found themselves, and as the recipients of occasional expressions of contempt, the UPNG Highlands students felt the need metaphorically to 'walk tall' along with students from other areas.

They set about organizing themselves with a will. About half the Highlands students on campus at the time attended the first HLF meeting. They had frequently discussed and analysed their people's situation and their own role as an elite. They decided to form a 'pressure group like ... the Mataungan Association and Napidakoe Navitu which ... would exert some sort of influence or pressure on the government, in order to try to obtain some of the things they were claiming' (Keviame 1974). They formed a central committee with representatives from each Province and drew up a 'Manifesto' (which is appended here). They voted explicitly against having a constitution (Keviame 1974). The avoidance of formal constitutions may have resulted from political caution and fear of oppression, or from a dislike of formalities. But according to one committee member this decision confused (and perhaps antagonized) some Highlands students (ibid). The activists' main goals were obviously political and maybe symbolic, and they saw no need for a tight organization. Nonetheless, the Manifesto contains seven organizational points (Points 10, 17, 25-6, 31-3). While Parao spoke of about fifty 'supporters' at UPNG and I was told early in 1973 that there was no formal membership, the Manifesto does include provision for membership. It was an optimistic document. For example, Point 17 stated, 'The Front will establish its own newspaper', but none ever appeared even in mimeograph from. Some funds were collected, and HLF T-shirts manufactured but rarely worn.

1 Post-Courier 22 September 1972.

2 They were to be seen more frequently in the Highlands than in Port Moresby, and worn by non-students. The $A60 earned by sales was later transferred to the Olu Bus project, of which more below.
The Front brought together under a common name a group of students who, when in the capital, had a great deal in common. They were the educated elite of a group which in Port Moresby was an alien minority,¹ most of whom had little education (Oram 1976:115) and whose jobs were often unskilled.² They have a violent image and low status amongst Papuan coastal people (Latukefu 1978), reinforced by Papuan parental indoctrination inculcating contempt, fear and loathing.³

Often, in an alien situation, communal identity is defined for the individual by others, and he accepts their label. As Mead (1956), Wallerstein (1960), Geertz (1963) and Connor (1973) have noted, an ethnic group can in part be other-defined, and achieve its common identity at least initially from the perceptions of others. Thus highlanders are commonly known collectively as 'Chimbu', after one Highlands Province, and frequently accept this label. Especially in towns, these diverse people are often seen as a coherent minority. Yet if they are numerous, they themselves may be acutely aware of their internal differentiations.⁴

¹ In the 1971 census, the enumerated proportion of highlanders in Port Moresby's 76,507 population was 10.1 per cent (having been 4.4 per cent in 1966). It continued to grow rapidly for several years (Oram 1976:106), but appears more recently to have tapered off (Richard Curtain, personal communication, 1976).

² Mt Hagen workers in Port Moresby do not necessarily express concern over the status of their employment, having a conception of themselves as independent agents only temporarily resident in town (Strathern 1975:305-6). But for an eloquent plea for ending the indignities they suffer see the speech of Traimya Kambipi (MHA for Komplam-Baiyer): 'Our role is that of lackey. Is this to continue? Must we always be the diggers of ditches, the cleaners of toilets, and the washers of saucepans? This is not fair' (HAD III(10):1293, 24 November 1972).

³ Boio Daro, verbal presentation at Australasian Political Studies Association Conference, King's Cross, August 1976.

⁴ Thus even during Port Moresby's New Guinea versus Papua riots of July 1973, members of two Gumine clans fought each other at the six mile rubbish dump settlement, requiring police mobile (riot) squad attention, and different Papuan groups also fought each other there. But traditional feuding partners like the Tolai were allowed by highlanders to pass without hindrance, because they were New Guinean. Thus ethnicity can be situational, dependent on context (cf. Uchendu 1975:266, 269). In Moresby a man may be a 'highlander', in the Highlands a 'Chimbu', in Chimbu Province a 'Kerowagi', in Kerowagi District a 'Kup', and in Kup census division a Kumai clansman.
Certainly, the few highlanders on campus were readily identifiable, and perhaps because they were united on campus the HLF leaders never felt the need to define their social base. This was assumed. Explaining on the radio why they had not worked through existing parties, Philip Kaman came closest to explaining their feelings. He said:

Political parties [are] concerned with the national basis. We as Highlanders we feel that we got a particular, you know, interest, a particular history and background (ABC 1972b:2).

But this commonality is less clear when viewed from the high valleys in the central cordillera, the students' home region.

Aims

The Manifesto declared as the Front's first aim 'To liberate the people of the Highlands from white and coastal domination in the public service and in private enterprise as well as the armed forces' (Point 1). Its second aim was 'to build a Highlands' unity and then to stand to identify ourselves with the rest of Papua New Guinea on the basis of equality' (Point 2). It thus sought to develop a regional communal identity and to promote the interests of the people of that region.

Apart from asserting the need to wipe out neo-colonialism and liberate the people of the Highlands, the goals of the HLF, as embodied in the Manifesto, fall into five categories. These were

1. promoting Highlanders' pride, dignity and identity;
2. political and administrative decentralization and autonomy (with occasional references to separatism);

Papua New Guinea residents almost automatically try to locate the origin of almost everyone they see, judging by physical characteristics (cf. Uchendu 1975:272-3). Of 751 indigenous students at UPNG in 1972, only 108 (14 per cent) were highlanders (UPNG n.d.: Table 7). Highlanders were a visible minority. Given that most lived in the rather isolated Waigani campus, they had a sense of regional identity perhaps stronger than that of other highlanders in the city who lived mostly in large settlements and labour barrack, which were internally fairly homogeneous (cf. Oram 1976:156).
rural and urban community development and education;
local control of business and increased economic
development; and
advanced promotion for highlanders in public
employment.

Implicit in much of the document was the belief that the
highlanders form the country's human as well as topographic
'backbone'. They had provided, and would continue to provide,
the bulk of the population, workforce and human energy, as well
as political weight. This belief was thus one of pride and
potential menace, in effect asserting that the Highlands are
essential to the survival of the Port Moresby regime. The
Manifesto emphasized the obligation of the educated elite to
repay their privileges by serving the people. This was the
paternalist theme of leadership by virtue of education with
which this first generation of educated youths had been
indoctrinated ad nauseam from high school days, but it was
also an article of faith which served to legitimate their
political role. The Front's various themes will be discussed
separately, but first it is necessary to describe briefly the
peculiar intellectual context at the university in late 1972.

This was the year in which Economics Professor Clunies
Ross wrote a plea for a socialist state with Tanzania as model,
and a paper called 'Secession without Tears' (Clunies Ross and
Langmore 1973:228-53, 131-8). Following what the vice chancellor
Professor Inglis called the 'electrifying' performances at the
Sixth Waigani Seminar of the international key speakers, Lloyd

\[1\] For representative statements illustrating this theme see Young
1976b. Awareness of elitism was heightened by Bougainville
graduate Leo Hannett's condemnation of it on the ABC 'Kivung'
programme on 11 October 1972. In this programme, Fr John Momis
(MHA, Bougainville Regional) accepted the inevitability of the
creation of an elite which 'in itself is a very good thing,
because before you can have any movement you must have somebody to
inject new ideas and to spearhead it' (ABC 1972a:11). The
HLF ideology of leadership by the educated was obviously some­
thing that had to be expressed, and Momis articulated it in
terms similar to the HLF's (see Chapter 13).
Best, René Dumont and Ivan Illich (May 1973), there was general consensus among the student body on the need for decentralization and self-reliance and on the rejection of a national bourgeoisie role, which echoed Fanon (Fanon 1966; Staniland 1969). In May the Students Representative Council president (John Kasaipwalova) proposed a student vegetable and pig farm to promote self-reliance and healthy manual work in the Melanesian manner. Much to the students' amusement, this suggestion provoked an interchange of heated memoranda between expatriate teaching staff on such a farm's potential to prevent growing elitism. But a committee was formed and a few students did make gardens, including Theodore Banda and Barunke Kaman, a Chimbu Economics student from Kundiawa who was then national secretary of the National Party.

In June 1972 Somare tabled a parliamentary paper stressing the need for village improvement as a condition for national unity and called for debate on development priorities. The Australian colonial strategy of maximizing growth by concentrating on most profitable enclaves was discredited. A visiting United Nations Development Programme team rejected large scale capital intensive foreign investment and industrialization and condemned aid-based development, rapid urbanization and increasing social stratification (Overseas Development Group 1973; Hart 1974). Many of these ideas caught the imagination of UPNG student activists, their expatriate friends and staff alike, and the rhetoric of decentralizing populist egalitarian self-reliance became common. The end of the year saw the chief minister announcing his 'Eight Aims for Improvement', thus officially endorsing the new intellectual trend.¹ By then certain key members of the HLF had already caught this intellectual wave, which had been visible in the 1970 programme of the National Party.

 Concern for Highlands pride was central to the Front members' goals of liberation from domination, exploitation and oppression. Their general aims carried political, economic and

psychological implications (Points 28 and 2). They called for Highlands unity, pride and equality (Points 2, 20, 23 and 30). They sought the abolition of the Highlands Labour Scheme, under which tens of thousands of highlanders were contracted for unskilled work on plantations, which are mostly on the coast. Their preoccupation with status is clearly shown in the students' comment about highlanders being 'puppets' for the white tourist business in the annual Highland shows, in which the performances of competing dance groups in traditional finery are nonetheless enjoyed by many thousands of Highlands people. Philip Kaman said on the radio 'We feel our people are being fooled, merely fooled, to play up like cats or dogs so that the minority of small whites there could pack up all the money ...' (ABC 1972c). These concerns with dignity are especially important to new elites, who to some extent have been desocialized from their own society but not yet become integrated into another.

The aim of autonomy proved controversial. The HLF's concept was that Highlands unity and common identity should first be built up, 'then to stand to identify ourselves with the rest of Papua New Guinea on the basis of equality' (Point 2). This has been labelled the 'building block' theory of national integration, although it is usually envisaged as applicable with provincial units. On 21 September Banda was asked in a radio interview whether he was prepared to sacrifice national unity for this regional goal and replied, 'Yes, we will stand for the Highlands no matter what, whether it splits the country or not'. It was the Front's only public secessionist noise but was to have wide repercussions. Another strongly separatist measure was the call for revenues raised in the Highlands to be spent in the region (Point 5). In fact most Papua New Guinea revenues are collected on urban incomes, imports and mineral

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1 The expression is that of E. P. Wolfers. The doctrine appears to have influenced the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) in its recommendations for district level provincial governments. The CPC was concerned at the intensity of both Highlands and Papuan regionalism (CPC 1973:4/27).

2 Age 23 September 1972.
exports, and with (until recently) no export tax on coffee the Highlands revenue base has been miniscule. (Indeed, if applied to Bougainville, the 'derivation principle' of returning all revenues to their sources would impoverish the rest of the country.) At a lower level again the Front wanted increased autonomy for local government councils (Point 4), which lacked judicial powers and were both largely dependent upon central government funds and closely supervised by *kiap*. The HLF also wanted to establish its own effective links with villages and with councils (Point 10). The attaching of importance to local government councils was unusual amongst students of the time who mostly saw councils as parasitical colonial puppets.

The community development ideology of the Front was expressed in seven of the thirty-five Manifesto points and merges with the thrust for pride in Highlands identity. In mid 1972 Theodore Banda had worked with his then girlfriend Evelyn Hogan (an Australian fellow student) in undertaking a study of conditions in highlander settlements and labourers' compounds in Port Moresby. They concentrated on the Gumine people from the south of Chimbu (whose language differs from Banda's). Highlands students are generally on the periphery of the urban lives of their immigrant kinsmen (see, for example, Strathern 1975:11), but this close contact with the Gumine settlers was a profound experience for Banda, who sought to improve their conditions and spoke out publicly on the matter. The study contributed directly to the Front's later policy for the establishment of social venues in urban areas (Points 11, 20) aimed at facilitating informal contact between highlanders without the risk of the fights with coastal people that often develop in hotels and taverns. (There may also have been the hope that highlanders would not fight each other).

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1 To their horror they found only sixteen women in the six mile rubbish dump settlement and discovered that two thirds of the 450 residents were unemployed. (Australian National University, New Guinea Research Unit Seminar, 24 August 1972).
At the rural end, the HLF sought to promote home industries, practical learning for school dropouts, and adult learning centres (Points 20, 27, 18) all current in Waigani discussions at the time (May 1973: Section IV). They wanted social institutions to be created "through the mobilisation of the Highland masses" so that "the benefits of modernisation may reach the grass roots", and reappraisal of the education system 'with the view to preparing people for the realities of their agricultural existence' (Points 6 and 7). Here, they obviously faced the danger, given the demand for academic education as a ladder to white-collar affluence (McKinnon 1973), that they could be seen by rural dwellers as seeking to pull that same ladder up behind themselves. Their economic policies may have served to allay such fears.

The desire for expanding Highlands economic activity contained some apparent contradictions with some of the community development goals (which envisage small-scale activities), and also led to charges of socialism and divisions within the Front. Anton Parao spoke of the need for expatriates to share economic development. "It should be fifty-fifty, and if they don't agree they go", he said in his first statement on the Front. Perhaps because of ensuing controversy, such a figure never appeared in the HLF's Manifesto. Home industries and the tourist trade, cited above, and the road haulage industry were to come under a Highlands Development Corporation (Point 12) following the Mataungan Association's New Guinea Development Corporation model (Kaputin 1970). This enterprise was to be governed by 'Melanesian business practice and style', and company laws should be amended to suit Melanesian society. Motels and hotels in the region would 'be bought off by the people through the proposed corporation', as would foreign plantations (Point 13). Plantations, and alienated land

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1 Ms Hogan, an education student, says these points were consciously borrowed from Nyerere (1968) and Freire (1973). (Personal communication 1976).

2 Post-Courier 22 September 1972.
generally, are highly sensitive topics in the Highlands, where race relations have sometimes been extremely bad, even since independence. Mt Hagen law student Michael Mel, who was prominent in the HLF, argued in April 1973 that the best agricultural land, then being held by 'a few parasites', should be returned to the people with minimum (improvements only) compensation. 'It is time they retired', he said. High profits were not important and villagers would earn enough even if plantations were divided into smaller blocks (Mel 1975:81-2). Philip Kaman and Anton Parao in other contexts sought allocation of urban land and assistance for commercial developments to people from the local area.

University students were very conscious in the early 1970s of the advances being made by their contemporaries in the public service, and even those on public service cadetships were not themselves eligible for promotion whilst studying. The Front's concern with the public service was thus natural, especially in a country where colonial inputs and neo-colonial aid were so high that government was by far the biggest industry. In 1973 some 85 per cent of the professional and semi-professional manpower, and 60 per cent of the technical manpower, were employed in the public sector (Manpower Planning Unit 1973). The Manifesto envisaged a simple, decentralized public service (Point 1) in tune with the needs of the people, with highlanders promoted into decision making positions (Point 8), and it sought equality for highlanders (Point 20). Banda spoke of putting Highlands public servants into the Highlands, so they could build their own unity, and also remarked that the HLF was strongly against bureaucracy.

1 Cf. Kup (1972), Reay (1974). The Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters recommended government purchase of freehold alienated land (which is mostly in coastal areas), and the return of some to Papua New Guinea nationals. It added that in this situation, with its potential for violence, continued delay would be irresponsible (Post-Courier 18 August 1973).


3 Post-Courier 28 November 1972.
Mel was more specific on the radio, calling for rapid promotion for highlanders with relevant educational and practical backgrounds, giving them preference over coastal people and Europeans. If a highlander had the education but no experience, Mel said, he should receive on-the-job training (ABC 1972c:2). Philip Kaman said highlanders had failed to achieve promotions and could not understand the reason. He thought it was 'because they think we highlanders are inferior, not capable of taking high positions'. Without accelerated promotion, he said, it might be 'too late' to catch up, given the wantok system (of helping one's own communal group members) which he alleged existed in the public service (and to which Ashton 1973 and Keviame 1974 also alluded). Kaman explained that under HLF policy preference would be given to a coastal fellow if a coastal fellow is boss of that particular department. So this is the time we should be quickly promoted to get jobs so we can get a fair representation in the Public Service. Now this does not mean we want any stupid highlander to be promoted. There are a number of good educated highlanders (ABC 1972c:2–3).

Parao had expressed to the house the highlanders' desire for accelerated promotion and said 'the fear of being dominated, perhaps repressed' by people newly appointed to positions of authority had given rise to the HLF. He called for a review of the Public Service Board (PSB) legislation, and for the immediate appointment of highlanders to recruitment and promotions boards. This would encourage a feeling of participation and avoid discrimination by those with better opportunities. The HLF, he said, wanted a committee to enquire into appointments to responsible positions in the public service to ensure equity, specifically in relation to their proportion of the total population of Papua New Guinea.¹

From 1970 onwards, when it was clear that Australia had finally moved towards the 'sooner rather than later' position verbalized by prime minister Menzies in 1960, there was a rush to localize the public service, using whatever manpower was

¹ *HAD* III(8):1010, 29 September 1972.
available. The question of regional balance was not mentioned in official published documents in the early 1970s, apparently in order to avoid controversy such as Parao had stirred up in 1971 and the HLF was to raise in 1972. The tactic has not entirely succeeded, as Highlands MHAs often ask about representation in the bureaucracy of people from their region. When appropriate, the government released limited information on the origin of public servants. It was known that the number of highlanders at senior levels is very low indeed, especially as their homelands contain nearly forty per cent of the country's population. The reason for their low representation in public employment lay initially in the late arrival of modern education and employment in the Highlands - as Somare himself told the house in March 1975.

The chief minister said on that occasion that in the long run the national public service would try to provide positions for people from all districts but that promotion was based on seniority. Later, in a more considered reply to a question upon notice, he said that the government was concerned to achieve

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1 See for example, PSB Annual Reports 1969-1974, and its 1972 information submission for the House of Assembly (PSB 1972); also McKinnon and Daloz (1971). Chief Minister Somare mentioned the rubric 'wantok system' in his 1973 address (Somare 1973:4) but did not enlarge on the point.

2 Thus in answer to allegations from a retired Papuan educationalist of a plan to replace Papuans with New Guineans, the Department of Education released figures showing that of forty-nine positions at Class 9 or above, twenty-eight (57 per cent) were held by Papuans. Twenty-one (43 per cent) were from the Central Province (which has 7.2 per cent of Papua New Guinea's population), and nine (18 per cent) were from East New Britain (4.4 per cent of Papua New Guinea's people). (Papua New Guinea Press Release 1676, 9 September 1976).

3 In 1972 there was only one highlander among thirty-two men in the Senior Executive Programme (PSB 1972:Appendix 4), and he was still the only one there when the programme's numbers subsequently doubled.

a more even regional representation, particularly at the senior levels, but this was impossible under existing legislation. Promotion was on the basis of relative efficiency, with relative seniority being considered only in the event of equal efficiency. He said the PSB had been directed to undertake a survey on the degree of regional imbalance and to recommend on ways it could be corrected. The house would then be informed of the recommendations.¹

Thus the existence of the problem was openly admitted but the figures remained confidential until 1976. The results of a survey such as Somare mentioned were noted in 1974, along with a political warning of the undesirable consequences of regional imbalance and a strong recommendation to allow preferential promotion for its reduction (Austin 1975:383-4). I understand that this survey – which may have been the one mentioned to parliament by Ron Neville (Southern Highlands Regional) in November 1975² was commenced before the HLF started its campaign. Official data collated in June 1973 shows serious regional imbalances in public sector employment, highlighting the entrenched position of Papuans and the advantage held by New Guinea islanders compared to the people from the Highlands and Northern coastal areas. In the public service overall, highlanders had less than thirty per cent of their hypothetical 'share' of positions (calculated on their proportion of the population). In the middle management and higher levels they held less than one fifth of their share. No other region was so badly disadvantaged, although the Northern coastal areas also occupied less than their share of positions. Papuans, on the other hand, held more than twice their proportional representation.³ A similar pattern occurs in other public authorities, including the police. Any attempt at equalization would involve a reduction in influence for Papua

¹ HAD III(44):5794, 10-12 April 1975.
³ A full tabulation of public service employment by province highlights the disparities most dramatically (Welch 1976:270).
and the Islands, and arouse predictable resistance from organized bodies with entrenched interests, such as Papua Besena (see Chapter 11).

As Somare noted, the origins of the imbalance are clearly seen in the education system. Particularly at higher levels, this problem is likely to prove very tenacious, although a conscious recruitment programme at the lower levels might reduce the imbalance. The Highlands Provinces provided only twelve per cent of students in higher education from 1971 to 1974, a third of their hypothetical proportional share, while some other areas had up to three times their hypothetical share (Welch 1975). These figures relate to the two universities and the Goroka (secondary) Teachers College; even starker figures are available from the Administrative College, of officers in training for higher positions (Austin 1975:482-4). There are some signs of possible future improvement in this imbalance, but it will take a long time indeed to equalize regional proportions within the bureaucracy once the first wave of localization has filled the places of departing expatriates, even assuming that there is no negative discrimination against presently under-represented areas. The HLF could not have spotlighted a more sensitive issue.

Responses: general

The Front's initial impact relied on the English-language media, which immediately narrowed its audience to fellow members of the educated elite. HLF discussions and all its conceptualization used the English language, which made for eloquent press releases, but did not reach the mass of the Highlands public. Publicity is easily obtained in Papua New Guinea, with journalists often accepting 'news' rather than finding it themselves. For the first two months the media gave the Front wide exposure, not least through letters to the editor. From these it became clear that there were divisions over the HLF amongst elite highlanders in Port Moresby. The Front's capacity to mobilize in the Highlands was not to be tested until the Christmas vacation.

1 Thus in 1972, highlanders numbered 24 per cent of preliminary year students at UPNG as against 11 per cent of other indigenous students (UPNG n.d.: table 7). UPNG selection procedures were based on merit, with no specific emphasis on the area of origin of students (K.Inglis, personal communication).
Banda's first Contact interview broaching secession created a shockwave amongst the educated elite of Papua New Guinea. Although in private correspondence he denied secessionism (Banda n.d.) as did Keviame (1974:8), the damage was done. Parao's first statement claimed fifty supporters on campus with many more telephoning him support. Ten days later Philip Kaman claimed over one thousand supporters in Port Moresby alone. In early 1973 an activist claimed that chapters of the Front had been set up amongst students at tertiary institutions in four centres around the country (Standish 1973a). Kaman unilaterally volunteered his subclan's self-help resettlement project involving about two hundred people at Olu Bus near Minj as Highlands Liberation Front Demonstration Village No. 1. Banda's file indicates that a few supportive requests for information came in.

People asking for further details received a letter dated 23 September 1972, setting out the Front's goal of 'communal effort in a socialist society', mentioning the Highlands Development Corporation and adding that third world experience, especially that of 'China and Tanzania, is more relevant than the Western World' (Banda n.d.).

Responses: parliamentary

Anton Parao's role guaranteed continued controversy for the HLF. One of few educated highlanders in the UP, he was the opposition's shadow minister for labor. In 1970 he had sought to turn the (Four Forgotten) Brothers Club at Goroka Teachers College into a pan-Highlands political movement. In this he was partly rebuffed by fellow students but was taken up by expatriate politician businessmen keen to form what first became Compass and later UP. The students who started the HLF

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1 Post-Courier 2 October 1972.

2 Post-Courier 29 October 1972. This project is described by its founder in Kaman (1975) and by Reay (1979).

3 See Standish (1976c:319, 335) and references cited therein; also Steinbauer (1974:31-5).
were a different group, but the ideas were much the same, Parao said in late 1972 (ABC 1972b). His early statements had been strongly pro planter and, despite his long-term tactic of mobilizing highlanders, Parao had said unity was a prerequisite to self-government (Steinbauer 1974:33, 35). Hence when his role in the HLF became known the National Party parliamentary executive rejected its secessionist tendencies but immediately and gleefully issued a statement designed to split Parao from the UP, 1 saying it was pleased to see

his change of attitude about expatriate businessmen, in particular planters who have been exploiting the Highlands labourers for a long time. Pressure certainly needs to be applied to liberate the people of Papua New Guinea ... and at last Parao realised this, as every educated Papua New Guinean should. 2

Parao had been brought to lunch at UPNG on 20 September by Michael Mel and a few others, presented with an already agreed platform, and asked if he would be parliamentary sponsor. Despite some reservations on the matter of local equity in investment projects, he agreed to become patron. When questioned later about the inconsistencies between UP and HLF policies, Parao accepted that the UP stood for a united Papua New Guinea under a central government and said his first duty was as a UP member to his electorate. Yet as a pressure group the Front sought some of his goals, and he asked 'Why should I step out of the thing that is there to be used?' (ABC 1972b:5). He modified the Front's investment stance in public statements (reducing it to the obligation on foreigners to try to obtain local equity) but spoke emotively about suppression of highlanders in the bureaucracy (ibid). Late in the Front's second week of existence Parao made a personal explanation to the house about it, saying in part that he had not consulted his party before joining. 3 But neither had all the members of the Front been consulted on his role, and Parao's presence

1 J. Kaupa, personal communication.
2 Post-Courier 22 and 25 September 1972.
antagonized many National Party sympathizers on campus who strongly resented what they saw as his earlier ties with expatriate interests. Informally the Front members sought to win over their parliamentarians. Initially they received some support (Keviame 1974). At least two meetings were conducted at night on the UPNG campus, attended in at least one case by UP deputy leader Tei (now Sir Tei) Abal (Wabag), and John Kaupa (Chuave) amongst others. One meeting divided over the issue of discontinuing the Highland Labour Scheme (which subsequently occurred). On this issue Kaupa sided with the students against Abal and other UP members present who came from remote areas. Their electors depended on the scheme to get to the coast and earn some money, despite the low pay and bad conditions. Their concerns obviously differed markedly from the prestige-conscious students, and the parliamentarians particularly rejected any taint of secessionism. These meetings proved a failure with a conflict of both policy preoccupation and interest always implicit between the parliamentarians and the younger men. The students (despite their expressed desire to help with such matters as research) were perceived as potential electoral rivals by the professional politicians. So the meetings lapsed, though individual students kept up their contacts with parliamentarians separately.

Publicly, both National and United Parties shunned the HLF, the latter 'having difficulty enough making credible its claim that it is more than just a Highlands party' (Ashton 1973). Parao lost favour with Front leaders, allegedly for his lack of effort in representing the huge Western Highlands area (which still included the Enga Division), but the National Party leaders Thomas Kavali (Jimi, Lands Minister) and Iambakey Okuk (Chimbu, Agriculture Minister), and Kaupa all maintained close liaison with Front members. If the initiative for these contacts belonged to the students, their reasons may have related to their individual projects in their

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1 M. Mel, personal communication and writer's personal observation; both refute Keviame's criticism of the Front for not organizing a meeting with Highlands politicians (Keviame 1974).

2 Kaupa is young to be a parliamentarian. His ties with UPNG students were close when the National Party was formed in 1970.
home areas rather than the Front's overall objectives. If it also came from the parliamentarians it was a pointer to the regionalism these men were later to display (Standish 1976b).

The parliamentarians' public attacks continued. As a result, Philip Kaman quickly dissociated the Front from any political party, saying no support was being sought and 'we cannot be manipulated by any party politics or ideology. But individual MHAs should have the guts to support the Front'. The National Party soon changed its 'support' for the Front to 'sympathy'. Kavali spoke against promoting regional movements, adding that in representing the Highlands his party wanted 'true national development'. Then Pangu backbencher Toni Ila (Lae) on 24 November led an urgency motion about the Front, and against Parao's role in stirring up regionalism, repeating the events of the previous year. He read into Hansard most of the Front's letter of 23 September to potential supporters, repeatedly challenging Parao to explain himself. He argued that the HLF's name reminded him of the 'devastation and misery' in Vietnam and Algeria. He managed to mention in his speech the scare words 'terrorism' and 'socialist' and said he would 'hesitate to borrow technology from China because if we do we cannot be sure that we do not unintentionally borrow its ideology as well'. He claimed that the ultimate objective of the letter's writer was 'the complete destruction of the existing political, social and economic order, and to install in its place a very destructive dictatorial system'. He asked for Parao's assurance that he was not a 'communist'.

Not surprisingly Parao sought to play the matter down, rereading his earlier statement including the remarks:

Technically white colonial inhabitants of the Highlands are not such to reflect the worst aspects of colonialism. They are in effect quite innocuous, but we are afraid that in its place is rising a black neo-colonialism ....

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1 *Post-Courier* 2 October 1972.
John Kaupa deplored the Front's narrow-minded approach and said that its 'trickery and lying' only 'confuses the older members from the Highlands'. He believed its socialism would destroy the government. UP frontbencher Traimya Kambipi (Kompiam-Baiyer) made a strong speech endorsing most of the Front's analysis and aims but added his 'personal opinion ... that various men and women in this Front are organizing it and trying to use it to introduce communism'. Enga MHA Waitea Magnolius (Lagaip) agreed with the HLF on public employment. But he, too, sought to dissociate himself from the Front, to deprecate its significance, and moved to throw out the motion. Its purpose achieved, and it being late in the afternoon, the house agreed to do this without a division and adjourned. ¹ If Anton Parao had sought to manipulate the HLF (Ashton 1973), it had surely blown up in his face.

Responses: the executive

Somare's reaction to the HLF was one of tolerance, not oppression. He told a press conference, after mentioning Theodore Banda's radio interview a few days previously, that 'The Highlands students are impatient - I sympathize because so was I'. He said that the highlanders had shown a great capacity to advance to prominent roles and he announced the appointments (which had already been decided) of two Western Highlands men to senior positions. But he firmly rejected the creation of 'artificial divisions' by making appointments on a 'racial basis'. ²

PSB Chairman Sere Pitoi's reaction was testier: he said that claims for favoured treatment would encourage nepotism, more so than if promotion continued on merit. He rejected Banda's claim that expatriates and coastals were being preferred and refused to speculate on predictions of resulting instability. He argued that Highlands tertiary students had a better chance than others with lower qualifications and said any amendments to the legislation (to favour highlanders) would be a political matter. ³

¹ Ibid:1292-5.
² Post-Courier 25 September 1972.
³ Post-Courier 4 October 1972.
A 'Concerned Highlander' wrote to the editor of the Post-Courier that public service promotion was based on efficiency and it was groundless to allege that highlanders were not being promoted. He claimed that a new problem had been set up, creating a stumbling block to national unity, where previously none existed. He attacked the students as being blinded by their books, 'ethnocentric and egotistic', and begged them to reconsider, to work to solve and not create problems.¹ Thus at least one 'in-system' highlander feared a coastal backlash.

His argument was reinforced by controversy over top positions within the police force.² Indigenous officers threatened to resign if kiap Joseph Nombri from Kundiawa was groomed for the Commissioner's position, while nominally in competition with a career policeman. The Police Association spokesman said that a meeting of four hundred men opposed the appointment of Nombri (who had been a founding member of Pangu Pati), and claimed that there were serving officers better fitted for the job. Opposition leader Matthias Toliman (Gazelle) said the projected move was a political payoff to put the police under Pangu control. Police officers emotionally accused Somare of having closed his mind on the subject. The police and courts had long been a concern of Theodore Banda, and not without cause given their poor performance in both urban and rural contexts.³ Predictably, therefore, he brought the HLF into the row over the police commissioner with a statement that the Front welcomed such a political appointment, adding that no one had complained at the political appointment of a Tolai as Reserve Bank manager.⁴

¹ Post-Courier 31 October 1972.
² Post-Courier 24-26 October 1972.
³ Banda was of course a law student; his HLF papers indicate a strong concern over the relevance of western law and the role of the police force. Police incompetence, arbitrariness and indiscipline have been frequent (Standish 1973b; 1976a; Oram 1976:228-9). Oram says 'There is ample evidence of people being arrested without cause and that members of certain tribal groups, including those from the Goilala sub-district and from the Highlands, are arrested by the police because they belong to those groups'.
⁴ Post-Courier 26 October 1972.
Nombri's appointment as assistant commissioner was never made, and he may have had grounds for wishing his wantok had left well alone.

Somare, long a nationalist, has usually been accessible to regionalists, or has approached them himself. In the first days of the coalition it was evident that he would seek to bring more highlanders into government (Standish 1972:9). Thus when Theodore Banda as a public service cadet wrote on 29 September 1972 seeking permission to work in Chimbu at the grass-roots level over the coming Christmas, his wishes were granted after lengthy personal discussions with the PSB chairman and the chief minister himself. His application to Somare mentioned several community development projects upon which he wanted to work. While he may have been warned at this time against making inflammatory statements, he spent some of the vacation period on full pay as a political education officer in the Gumine area. After graduation early in 1974 he worked in the chief minister's own office; subsequently he had several senior headquarters posts in the Department of Natural Resources in Port Moresby. At least one other HLF supporter reached assistant secretary status within a few years of graduation.

The new government's emphasis on self-reliance, its increased allocations to both rural improvement funds and village economic development schemes and also its land repurchasing activities enabled further tactical flexibility in dealing with rebellious rural 'self-help' movements.

Somare had been instantly impressed by the Olu Bus communal resettlement project at Minj on his July 1972 Highlands tour. Since then, aided by kiap intervention in a December 1972 council meeting, Kaman's project has been allocated rural improvement funds by the council for road building and other works and has had special assistance from the national government in the form of grants for capital works and staff appointments to small industries and intermediate technology projects. Monetary aid from both sources totals over K25,000, with official estimates of additional invisible aid in the form of salaries,
transport and so on of the same order. Kaman received this help despite some conflict with jealous neighbouring groups and the Wahgi Council, whose grader he 'borrowed' in December 1972 to force some action on roadworks he wanted done. His written and public verbal attacks on agricultural officers and expatriates around Minj similarly did not stop the flow of outside assistance. In 1973 Philip Kaman travelled to Singapore and Taiwan to survey rural industries and received government assistance for the trip. In 1973 Somare was able to cite his aid to Olu Bus when challenged as to what help his government was giving to self-help movements.¹

Michael Mel's people at Wurup near Mt Hagen joined with other traditional allies and formed a neo-tribe covering many fragmented groups in the Medipa language area, which they called the Pibl ika Association. By manipulating inter-clan competitiveness they slowly gathered about K16,000, K11,000 of which was used in 1975 as a deposit on a large expatriate plantation. A combination of sometimes crude, sometimes subtle pressure on Highlands expatriates,² as well as Mel's direct access to the chief minister's advisers through university contacts, helped overcome any ministerial or bureaucratic blockages to the government's acquisition for K367,000 of two large coffee plantations from a retiring Australian businessman. The government provided easy credit to enable local groups to buy these properties, with Wurup going to the Pibl ika group who come from that area. At the handover ceremony in 1975, which was attended by three ministers, opposition leader Tei Abal said the sale was an act of free enterprise, the sort of thing that should continue in Papua New Guinea, and justice minister Ebia Olewale

¹ For example, after his address to the UPNG Economics Students' Association on the Eight Point Plan, 19 March 1973.

² Michael Mel, personal communication, Mark (1975) and Post-Courier 2 May 1975. While concentrating his Port Moresby activities on negotiating the Wurup deal, Mel was largely inactive in student politics. He was, however, president of the Catholic Students Society at UPNG, and making every post a winner he was helped by the University Chaplain in the campaign for Wurup.
said the transaction was visible proof of the Eight Point Plan in action.\(^1\)

Continuing controversy

The government's mellow reaction to the HLF was not matched on campus nor in the correspondence columns of the newspaper. Several bitter exchanges between Highlands students and others variously alleged political bandwagonning, isolationism and hypocrisy, and even that one writer was a brainwashed colonial 'pet'.\(^2\) Separatists from other areas of Papua New Guinea welcomed the formation of the Front because they thought it strengthened their own cause,\(^3\) but the regionalist issue clearly divided highlanders on campus (Keviame 1974). Students Representative Council president Peter Paypool from Ialibu in the Southern Highlands, and National Party activist Barunke Kaman were two prominent highlanders particularly hostile to the HLF.

In late September 1972 a threat of famine developed in the Highlands, following widespread frosts which destroyed subsistence food crops. This led to a massive food relief operation which used both air and surface transport. The government perhaps over-reacted to the crisis (Waddell 1974). Its motivation was probably partly political: the dramatic operation served to contradict charges of central government neglect of the region and allowed the public to demonstrate their national solidarity by contributing K0.9 million cash to the K2.25 million campaign. The dependence of the highlanders on other areas, so clearly shown in this episode, was duly stressed by highlanders opposed to the HLF.\(^4\) The Front was thus partly on the defensive from the very beginning.

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2. See Letters to the Editor, *Post-Courier* 11, 16, 23 and 31 October and 1, 2, 9 and 17 November 1972.
3. Standish (1973a) and *Post-Courier* 1 November 1972.
4. For example, see *Post-Courier* 9 November 1972.
The Front itself displayed internal contradictions arising from its multifarious aims.\(^1\) Thus Michael Mel and Philip Kaman, in their radio interview (ABC 1972c:2), gave first priority to the goal of public employment and barely mentioned community development. Theodore Banda in response to a newspaper article admitted to a friend that the public service imbalance problem was a temporary problem which could be overcome, but said the public servants were pressuring the Front to take its strong stand (Banda n.d.). Whilst the Front in part was regionalist and even separatist, it was also seeking a place in the centralist sun. Some members sought top jobs (to help the people), but Banda was anti-bureaucratic and condemned western education as a 'cargo cult'. He wrote that 'The education system has given us false hopes of getting good jobs, big money, European houses and big cars'.\(^2\)

Banda himself was not without his critics, not only because he had a white girlfriend but also because she attended HLF meetings. It has been said that Ms Hogan may have encouraged Banda's 'socialism' but not his regionalism (Neilsen 1973), and she feared the Front's potential extremism.\(^3\) Strong expatriate influence was widely assumed by outsiders, who on one occasion even identified an academic opponent of the movement as its principal manipulator! (Mel's accompanying statement rather cryptically indicates a willingness to work closely with chosen expatriates.) The socialist jargon was seen by various expatriate journalists as Marxist, and one even saw the Manifesto as both Maoist and a 'Mein Kampf'.\(^4\) 'Highlands Socialism' was rejected by 'Concerned Highlander', who admitted communal elements in Highlands society such as group land owner-

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\(^1\) The contrast is most easily shown by the priority given to the points in the Manifesto by the different activities. (See notes to Appendix.)

\(^2\) Post-Courier 16 November 1972.

\(^3\) Ms Hogan was quoted as saying 'It could be so wonderful. But it could be so dangerous. It is so emotional and irrational' (Ashton 1973).

\(^4\) Ashton (1973) and Post-Courier 2 February 1973.
ship and work parties but denied that all aspects of Highlands societies were socialist. He further argued that the traditional competitive 'big man' leadership system was capitalist and sought to clinch his case by mentioning individual ownership of that contrary animal, the pig.\footnote{Post-Courier 2 November 1972.} Given that individuals have very strong usufructural rights to land within a system of group ownership, he had a very strong case indeed, and his argument was to be used against the Front in the Highlands later that year.

HLF members in advocating communal ownership were dedicated ideologists but poor social theorists. There are some instances of development enterprises which started as group schemes continuing to run in a communal form in the Highlands. But Olu Bus now appears to have failed as a group project,\footnote{By the end of 1976 the Olu Bus village was physically quite run down. An adult education scheme had founded. A Canadian volunteer had left in despair of obtaining cooperation from the community which increasingly refused to work for the young leadership. An uncompleted integrated pig waste digester project, as first advertised in Papua New Guinea by university lecturer George Chan (1975), lay in inoperative ruin. A few pigs were kept by individuals in a building intended for this communal enterprise and Philip Kaman himself was buying coffee for his own family business. Several other schemes using intermediate technology were moribund. Kaman's house was surrounded by a high wire fence of doubtful effectiveness but great symbolic potency. All that remained of the 1972 hopes for a micro-scale social revolution was a water reticulation scheme paid for by the central government.} and the Piblika Association in early 1977 had hired an outside person of mixed descent as managing director and was moving into large scale urban investment away from any sort of communal base. Indeed, communal rivalries may have started to act as a limiting
factor in its expansion. Many other group projects have rapidly become individualized by their principal organizers (Finney 1973; Gerritsen 1975). This occurs because bank lending policies require individual title to projects (McKillop 1976a) and because of the neo-colonial economic structure as a whole in a dependent peripheral state, but also it develops as an amplification of precolonial patterns of inequality (Standish 1976d). Thus it can be argued that some of the Front's emphases were misplaced and were indicative of foreign ideological influences upon the group's elite membership; indeed some were manifestations of the students' alienation from their own societies.

In the Highlands: Christmas 1972

Back home, perspectives seem to have changed. With their English language skills and modern knowledge, senior students are sometimes seen by villagers and even their close kin as being aloof. While highly eligible, and kept busy by village girls and female cohorts from other colleges, they may not yet have status by any traditional criteria. Potential leaders in the outside world, they are untried in their own

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1 By 31 December 1976 the government loan of K212,000 had been fully repaid after fifteen months of extraordinarily high coffee prices, and the group was planning to expand into coffee buying and processing (to use excess capacity in their factory available when a neighbouring Wurup group decided to take their coffee elsewhere following a dispute). Piblika had also bought a Mt Hagen motel for K225,000 (with K65,000 cash down payment and no need for government Development Bank assistance). Again, expatriate management was being used initially and attempts were being made to sponsor professional trainees who would later work for the group's enterprises. A dividend of one hundred per cent had been paid to the Association's 4,000 members. Mel, its secretary, said its next step would be to buy into urban real estate to effectively utilize the group's large cash surplus. All these activities, he said, were practical applications of the HLF's aims (personal communication, 1977). However, inter clan tensions involving Piblika members and embroiling the Wurup area had developed in 1976 and could disrupt the smooth operation of the Association's businesses. Attempts were being made to block the group's expansion into Mt Hagen town property ownership and local jealousies seemed to have been aroused by the Association's windfall successes. By mid 1977 the Wurup estates had been divided into separate units comprising different clan groups.
society and to prove themselves they must work at home for a long time or else have a position of clear status in a prominent institution such as church or state. Sometimes students do make this necessary investment of time and effort, and succeed, but it takes years of dedicated work.  

The material I have collected on Chimbu Province village level perceptions of educated elite members contrasts strongly with the rather naive self-perceptions of themselves as leaders reported by Young, as indeed does observed student behaviour back home. Yet, a quarter of Young's 568 respondents boldly said they would take a guiding role even in 'traditional' village affairs (1976b:29). The fact that so many students spend their vacations lounging around the towns talking to each other is indicative of their cultural isolation. To ask them about their actual or potential leadership roles is an instructive exercise, but does not necessarily achieve valid results. Young says he is inclined to agree to an extent with an informant's assessment of university students as receiving respect back home. He quotes one saying, 'They will think of them more than the big man in the village' (respondent's emphasis). In a footnote he acknowledges that villagers (and particularly 'bigmen') may not agree, adding that long term acceptance may well depend on success in bringing home the development bacon (1976b:28). In fact, of course, the two categories of men are judged according to different criteria. Older 'bigmen' are known for their wealth, oratory and generosity, with exchange relationships built up over many years. While the educated men's knowledge of the modern world is recognized, their maturity, wisdom and awareness of the ancient lore are all belittled. The kinds of attitudes Young reported, and which had also been expressed by HLF members, were a self-imposed handicap the young political activists had to overcome during the Christmas 1972 vacation.

1 Standish (1976c). Barunke Kaman has, since 1974, made his mark in the Chimbu, most recently as executive officer of the Interim Provincial Government. Philip Kaman's six year programme at Olu Bus is also instructive, as is Mel's four years' work at Wurup.
Olu Bus, HLF Demonstration Village No. 1

(Photo R.J. May)
When seeking to mobilize people politically in the Papua New Guinea Highlands, the politicians' principal handicaps (and weapons) are the interlocking clan rivalries and loyalties. If these are well mobilized, elections can be won (Kuabaal 1976), but they can also just as easily erupt in clan warfare or provoke divisive jealousies. Young students are usually not part of the exchange network that big men use to create obligations and increase their influence. However, while some flatly refuse to partake in ceremonial dances and gift exchanges, others deliberately graft themselves onto their fathers' partnership networks in a small way. Until they reach positions in which they can dispense patronage, they can only exploit their skills as brokers (Boissevain 1974) between the village and the modern world in order to gain influence at home in their own right. They are, nevertheless, often perceived by local councillors and parliamentarians as potential rivals and are frequently belittled in their absence or rudely brushed aside when present. It was in this inhospitable local level context that the HLF sought to mobilize the Highlands.

The only group activity was a seminar held at the YMCA in Mt Hagen ten days before Christmas 1972. About fifty people, mostly students and public servants, attended. Anton Parao was there, but very few local councillors and village elders. There was considerable division about the Front's foreign investment policy and the attendance and response was disappointing to the organizers. As noted earlier in this chapter, two individual students had more success with their own projects. Mel started his work with Piblika in earnest that year, heavily promoted by his uncle who was then leading the infant group, and slowly he began to gain the confidence of the membership. The Olu Bus project was probably at its zenith over that Christmas. The assistant district commissioner in Minj attended the opening ceremony for the newly built village, at which a Papua New Guinea flag was raised next to Philip Kaman's home, adding to the impression it gave of being a kiap's house. (The gardens were decorated with ancient ferns and pigs' jaws, symbols of clan wisdom and fertility) Kaman spoke at the Minj market and sought to organize marches on the district office
in the township in January, but at least two planned demonstrations on matters contained in the HLF platform did not occur. Nonetheless, Kaman seemed to this observer to have got his message across well to some younger people from the Minj area. But the special attention the project received from the government has aroused considerable jealousy amongst neighbouring sub-clans and also other UPNG students from the area.

Banda sought to spread the word in Chimbu. At a Catholic students' seminar at Minggende mission near Kundiawa on 21 December he outlined the Front's programmes to an audience of secondary students, teachers and various mission workers. His emphasis was on community involvement, with local councils or corporations taking over expatriate business and profits going back to the people in the form of public works, welfare and community development programmes. (It is unfortunate that in his own area a young man collecting for just such a corporation absconded to Port Moresby with the funds he had collected. Yet such occurrences are not unusual and help explain the lack of trust of the ordinary villager if his own money is involved.) Banda expressed his view that the HLF's public sector employment policies were secondary, adding that they were designed to prevent a 'Nigerian situation' arising (that is, of regionalism leading to civil war) because of one region's dominance in the bureaucracy. He met considerable criticism from a high school teacher clan 'brother' on the whole question of communalism. Furthermore, his fundamental critique of the education system appeared incomprehensible to this particular audience. (This is not surprising, given their common interest in the existing system and the usual conservatism of high school students.) Banda said later that he experienced considerable difficulty in attempting to persuade the Gumine people to accept self-government on 1 December 1973 and reported that in fact he spent most of his time merely conveying basic information on the political system rather than mobilizing opinion to change it. He felt he had been rejected in Gumine (which is eighty kilometres from his home area) because he was a university student.

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Disturbances in the Highlands became a focus of national concern around Christmas 1972. Many large scale tribal fights had erupted earlier in the year and in mid December the chief minister appointed a committee to inquire into the problem, with two highlanders amongst the five members.¹ Then, on Christmas eve, two Bougainvillean senior public servants were murdered near Goroka after their car fatally injured a young girl, an event which helped to catalyze Bougainvillean secessionism after a period of quiescence. Michael Mel commented that such instant 'payback' would probably have occurred even if the car driver had been a highlander, and that the incident should not be played up (as the media was doing) as a Highlands/coastal conflict. He said coastal public servants working in the Highlands were worrying needlessly for their safety.

Mel argued that there was less fighting now than in the colonial days, but that the people were now frustrated because of confusion over western ideas and rapid changes. (For a socio-political interpretation of clan warfare see Standish 1973c.) Mel said that teachers, doctors and the Public Service Association (whose members are mostly coastal people) were all expressing fears about serving in the Highlands region. Highlanders back home wanted their services, and were embarrassed by the occasional harassment they received. Mel expressed their concern well, even though it contradicted Banda's policies for a regionalized bureaucracy. In 1972 there simply were not enough highlanders to man their own infrastructure and the government, sharing the highlanders' concern at the expressions of fear from coastal officials, seized upon Mel's statement, issuing it as an official press release.² Overall, then, the HLF seems to have had a chastening experience back home in the Highlands that vacation.

Denouement 1973

It is difficult to specify the time of the HLF's demise given its lack of a formal structure and the fact that individual

members in 1975 could say they were still carrying on its ideals by themselves in their home areas. Theodore Banda ceased making public statements in 1973, which following his earlier frequent method of politics by press release gave the impression that the Front was moribund. On 2 November 1973, though, following a statement by UP frontbencher Sinake Giregire, calling upon the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) to recommend a state government to cover the whole Highlands (within a tri-partite federation), Banda quickly organized a similar submission to the CPC. The petition carried the HLF's name and sixty signatures. It protested against early self-government and independence, and also about rapid localization and the regional imbalance in the public service. This was the last echo of Banda's intricate concept of building a stronger nation on a 'concrete foundation' rather than what he saw as its existing 'artificial' base.

But earlier in July, Banda himself had been persuaded to join the committee of the Melanesian Action Group (or 'Front'). This new body, also shortlived, was dedicated to Papua New Guinea national integration and self-reliance. It came into prominence following the Papua versus New Guinea 'football' riots.

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1 Banda's role had been crucial. Keviame noted (1974:9) that Banda had entered the public service and was 'under the Chief's eye which implies that his direct activities with the Front will now be very limited and diminish greatly'.

2 The submission, which contained ideas which Banda had developed over time (Banda n.d.), envisaged a state government for the whole Highlands, which would control the work of all central government departments in the area, while the central government would control all taxes and finances. The central government's executive would comprise three men, one each from Papua, the Highlands and New Guinea coastal areas. One of these three would be elected prime minister by the parliament, with the other two becoming presidents. The people in the districts and states could draw up their own constitutions, with central government approval required (HLF n.d.). See also Post-Courier 5 November 1973. As noted above, all submissions seeking regional government were rejected by the CPC.

3 Post-Courier 16 October 1972.

4 Kuamin (1973a) and Standish (1973b). The Melanesian Action Group's ideology had much the same intellectual pedigree as the programme of the HLF (Kuamin 1973b).
As self-government approached, secessionism flourished in Papua New Guinea severely testing the degree of people's commitment to the Port Moresby regime. Various regional movements sought to exploit Australia's 'lame-duck' colonial status and achieve their goals before the Port Moresby regime firmly established itself as the controller of all arms of government, with all the international status and internal coercive power and patronage which would follow independence. In June 1973, Josephine Abaijah (MHA for Central Regional) started the Papua Besena movement she had explicitly foreshadowed a year before. In provocative speeches around the Port Moresby area, she and other Papuan politicians spoke of expelling New Guineans, she disparaged highlanders within the hearing of some Highlands people and spoke of assaults on Papuan women, land-grabbing, and so on. Somare asked highlanders to forbear from carrying out what would be their normal cultural response to such provocation. But on Sunday 22 July (after Papua beat New Guinea at a football match) the anti Papuan rioting which had been rumoured for weeks spread quickly throughout the city. The rioters shouted 'You cannot break the country, you cannot expel us', even while they divided the city into well defined and defended sectors. The name of Miss Abaijah was on many highlanders' lips in different parts of the city as they (and others) attacked. While some elite New Guineans were assaulted at the roadblock manned by highlanders at Waigani, Tolai and other coastal New Guineans reported that they passed through freely, giving a 'black power' salute. This action was a recognition of territory-wide identity on the part of the rioters, although there were also some overtones of class conflict.

The next day, the Melanesian Action Front under Barunke Kaman's leadership inspired a march for peace and unity by UPNG

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1 *Age* 3 April 1972.


3 Standish (1973b); interview with Eastern Highlands rioter broadcast by Australian Broadcasting Commission and taped by writer, and letter by Enga student Kopii Kepore to *Post-Courier* 24 August 1973.

students. Mixed ranks of Papuans and New Guineans paraded through the deserted streets of the tense city. Michael Mel, apparently still feeling the emotions of the previous day, had argued in the university forum against the march and refused to participate when it went ahead. Several other HLF activists, however, took prominent roles. They may have been displaying the capacity of individuals simultaneously to hold apparently contradictory communal and national loyalties (cf. Klineberg and Zavalloni 1969:59, 76) on African students), but it appeared in this instance to reflect a conscious policy decision after a serious debate by these students.

Highlands students (including Mel), along with the Melanesian Action Group, moved out to make contact with their wantok in settlements around the city during the following weeks. They thereby put into practice their ideology of public service, seeking to quell the fears of the still nervous population. They explained the political background to the crisis and extolled the government's capacity to handle matters. Various ministers' personal staff took an active role in organizing this campaign and encouraging the new body, although the initial action of the students seems to have been spontaneous. Indeed they marched against the wishes of the police, but pressured Somare in a face-to-face confrontation to be allowed to continue. Slowly people returned to work and eventually to the city's markets which are always flashpoints of communal interaction. The whole country had experienced a major shock, but - as after the similar riots in 1968 - scar tissue grew slowly over the deep and painful wounds. The loyalty of the Highlands students and the rioters to the Port Moresby regime was ultimately reinforced. A similar response also could be detected amongst highlanders over Bougainville's 1975 breakaway moves. When the chips were down, the Highlands Liberation Front members were Papua New Guinean nationalists (cf. Emerson 1962:95).

Subsequent events and assessments

The HLF leaders did not cease political activity when their movement faded, although some dropped the political ambitions they had previously expressed. Philip Kaman in 1974 became active in
the Wahgi Tuale Association, the Middle Wahgi valley group seeking to separate the Wahgi-Jimi areas from the Western Highlands. This would create a new provincial infrastructure, and hence more jobs and increased capacity to exert pressure for government inputs. In June 1975, without graduating from UPNG, Kaman finally moved back to Minj after four years of frequent commuting between Moresby and Olu Bus. This time he worked as a government liaison officer ('political educator') in the Wahgi-Jimi division: a job which potential candidates have seen as tailor-made for their particular purposes. In June 1975 he was appointed to the board of the Papua New Guinea Development Bank.

Michael Mel had to stay on in Port Moresby and whilst there helped Raphael Doa (a Hagen businessman and local politician) to obtain a grant to help stage the Mt Hagen show in August. Doa later exploited this success as a sign of his political skills. The Piblika group performed at the 1975 Hagen Show and charged handsomely when acting as photographic models for tourists. When he graduated at the end of the year, Mel also moved back home. Despite occasional claims to the contrary, very few UPNG graduates have returned to stay 'in the village' for any length of time. While we can only speculate on the reasons (such as demands from kinsmen upon their resources, or that they now work for the years of sacrifice by their kin), their actual record reflects student unwillingness to work in their home area. ¹ By the time Kaman and Mel returned home they had

¹ R. G. Ward and Herbert Weinand surveyed 702 first year tertiary students around Papua New Guinea in 1971 and found that nationally 32 per cent expressed a desire to work in a district other than their home district upon graduation. The overall pattern was followed fairly closely in Western and Southern Highlands, but the desire to avoid their own district was markedly stronger than the national average for Chimbu and the Eastern Highlands students. In 1975, when 166 preliminary year students at UPNG were surveyed, there was expressed a desire to work in the rural areas, which had not been present in 1971. The government's propaganda in the interim on the Eight Aims may have influenced these statements of intention, which of course have yet to be put to the test in practice (Herbert Weinand, personal communication 1976).
used their role in an anti government organization to extract considerable financial assistance from the central government, which should have boosted their local political potential.

In June 1975 Michael Mel wrote to the Post-Courier about his experiences, and particularly the help received from ministers:

We, the university students, have tremendous enthusiasm for progress and solving all the world's problems, but regrettably little practical experience ... As one of the 'cross young men', I have learnt during the last twelve months that I can achieve much more by sitting down and watching the enemy's tactics and talking to him, than by throwing small stones and only getting him annoyed, without achieving my aims (Post-Courier 11 June 1975).

Having made such a great shift towards the government and incidentally benefitting their groups by utilizing the national political system, Kaman and Mel both stood in the Western Highlands Regional by-election of January-February 1976. Mel was a People's Progress Party candidate but Kaman remained independent. Any chance of a united Wahgi/Jimi vote was effectively split when several candidates from these areas stood. The UP campaigned hard on economic issues, emphasizing inflation and promising to control it. The two former HLF leaders were soundly beaten in the poll, as was University of Technology graduate Sandy Kelly Kagl. Raphael Doa won clearly for UP and two other men from UP took second and third places. While not a direct test of the appeal of the HLF, the by-election was indicative of the difficulties faced by young men seeking to build up a large popular base.

From 1974 onwards, internal Highlands' troubles had pre-occupied politically active students on the Waigani campus.

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1 Post-Courier 9, 10 February 1976.

2 Indeed, regionalism subsided as a political issue through most of 1974 when the constitutional debates were at their peak. UPNG students decided that the best means of social control were district associations, and thenceforth these bodies provided the basis of selection to the Students Representative Council (Ballard 1976b).
Two examples will suffice for this discussion. Education minister Reuben Taureka in August 1974 warned that harassment of coastal teachers and tribal fighting might lead to a situation in which Highlands schools would have to close for lack of staff willing to serve in the region. Some Chimbu members immediately exploded with anger and John Kaupa sought unsuccessfully to use the incident to set up a pan Highlands movement (Standish 1976b). A different tack was taken by the Chimbu students, who obtained government help to send an investigating team around the Province to assess the views of both villagers and teachers. They produced a dispassionate and constructive report (Kambu 1974). In the second instance, fighting at Kup (close to Chimbu's western border near Minj), which had been endemic for eighteen months, led to a concerted peace drive from students acting together but also working within their own separate clans. They took part in several attempts at negotiation and promoted rural development as one outlet for the clans' competitive instincts (Kerpi 1976). With government help they brought the leaders of the feuding groups to Port Moresby to meet government and police leaders and to attempt reconciliation on neutral ground. Tacit interdependence grew up between the students and certain government officers, with the police commissioner and senior *kiap* freely opening their doors for consultations. Things had certainly changed since the antagonisms of 1972.

In assessing the HLF, it is useful to quote at some length the words of an 'insider', Barri Keviame (1974:8):

> There has been considerable support all over the country by highlanders for the Front but the organisational ability of the students is lacking .... However much the Front has attempted to drive its grievances home to the government ... the political implications have not really been significant .... [The Front] has not genuinely advocated the desire to break away.

> While the direct impact of the Front as such is difficult if not impossible to evaluate, Keviame was wrong if he was suggesting that none of its aims has been realized in any way. The government has adopted policies of decentralization and rural
improvement, provided credit for group enterprises through rural improvement and village economic funds, and so on. Obviously, much more than the HLF was behind these major public policy shifts, and implementing them is infinitely harder than merely mouthing them.

It is more difficult to see if there has been any shift in public service personnel practice, and if so for what reason. However, in March 1974 a private meeting of Pangu and National Party ministers decided to appoint Joseph Nombri (by then Southern Highlands district commissioner) to an acting position on the PSB itself, and also resolved that Fr Ignatius Kilage should become a permanent member as from June 1973. Kilage, from the Gembogl area, was an unsuccessful candidate in the 1972 Chimbu Regional election. He was a close friend of both Somare and the lands minister Sir Maori Kiki. In his rapid political advance he had a combination of two special advantages: he was a highlander, and he was trusted by Pangu (Standish 1976c:330-4). Kilage led an influential investigation into reforming the public service structure in line with the Eight Aims and emphasizing decentralization, which was largely accepted in early 1976. In December 1975 he was appointed chairman of the new Ombudsman Commission. Nombri subsequently replaced him permanently on the PSB. These men are not satisfied with merely playing symbolic roles.

Keviame in 1974 mentioned the HLF students' internal conflicts and strongly criticized the Front for making 'little or no attempt at all in trying to mobilize the village people and gain their support - after all these are the people the Front claims it wants to assist most' (1974:13). He contrasted this with the Mataungans and Napidakoe Navitu. Keviame did not make explicit the relevant points that both the Tolai and Bougainville movements started in the rural areas initially, and were subsequently 'captured' by tertiary educated elite members. The HLF, by contrast, started in the capital and then sought to develop a grass roots base, which is a much more difficult sequence to complete successfully. But Keviame added bluntly 'I can't see the HLF becoming a strong pressure group unless it
seeks the support of the village people rapidly and reorganises themselves to hit and hit out at the government at every available opportunity' (ibid). He argued that it may be true that the highlanders will eventually control the country (and so have no need to 'cry out' at this time), but concluded 'Nevertheless it is thoughtful to make some concessions now' (ibid).

Any attempt to assess the Front's impact on government raises problems. No doubt the media coverage and Somare's early responses were psychologically rewarding and encouraged the HLF campaign, but there were no continuing rewards for the membership. In fact, by dealing with the government, the Front's leaders may have lost some legitimacy with the bulk of their supporters (cf. Lipsky 1968). The government has shown an acute awareness of questions of a regional nature since its inception (Standish 1972). Its initial acceptance of provincial government in 1974, and again in 1976 after a period of rejection in 1975-1976, are other signs of its willingness to concede to potential secessionists like Bougainville. It has done this without strengthening those forces operating on a regional scale such as the various Papua movements. The occasional Highlands thrusts for autonomy, along with Papuan separatism, might indeed be greatly weakened once local politicians become entrenched in the different provincial governments and start competing with each other for scarce resources. Divide, and you may indeed rule. It has been obvious for a decade that most Highlands politicians see their role as that of delegates carrying requests but not demands (Meller 1968). They are supplicants from the periphery seeking favours in a 'concentric political system dominated by the capital' such as Staniland found in Africa (1969:25). The Highlands, as an impoverished region needed the centre more than they were needed by the centre, so long as the income from coffee remained low. With no obvious benefits to be gained from Highlands separatism, then, it is not surprising that few Highlands people at any level were mobilized by the HLF.
The Front's fanciful organizational jargon and lack of rigorous analysis are two indicators that the students were playing a form of shadow politics, and as Keviamé implies it is therefore not surprising that they were unable to exert real pressure upon the National Coalition. Indeed, the criticisms made by public servants of Papua Besena in McKillop's survey (see Chapter 11, p. 352) were also applicable here: vague goals, poor strategy, remoteness from the village, moving too quickly, being thought too close to Europeans, all compounded by extreme threats made in sometimes vigorous language.

The students' main problem surely lies in the nature of the socio-political structure, with its emphasis on modern bureaucratic values in a highly centralized and dependent state, and their own role in it. Consciousness of potential vertical mobility in the modern society is heightened both for themselves and their kinfolk because they are the first generation of modernizers. To a certain extent the students have been educated out of their society. The antagonizing effect of their use of the English language has already been mentioned. Elitism and paternalism were predominant attitudes found in a 1973 survey of 528 secondary and tertiary students in Papua New Guinea, with elitism strongest amongst highlanders (Young 1976a). Thus the HLF which, by its reiterated stress upon public service positions, had downgraded its rarely mentioned egalitarian goals, basically conformed within the mainstream of student opinion. It will be some years before there can be an effective test in the form of actual life patterns of the egalitarian policies officially promoted as from December 1972 through the Eight Aims, but present prospects indeed seem bleak. Nonetheless the HLF did to an extent popularize amongst Highlands students the ideas which were behind the Eight Aims. Perhaps this could only have been done by fellow highlanders and so the HLF was useful to the government at the time. The self-reliance rhetoric served to dilute many regional demands for foreign investment and (to a lesser degree) for increased governmental inputs.
The HLF students were members of the country's best-educated group and by definition were potential members of a political elite in the politico-bureaucratic system. As a small regional group on campus they were fairly coherent. But they could not mobilize a shared sense of ethnicity in the larger society off campus either in Port Moresby or in the Highlands. As noted earlier, the Highlands population is composed of many 'micro' units (if that means the smallest political groups to which men owe allegiance in any context). It can even be argued that the true 'micronational' or primordial groups are the clans. But collectively the highlanders are not micronationalists until they see themselves as forming a 'nation', defined as a single culturo-political entity (Connor 1973). Even in Port Moresby, highlanders tend to confine their social contacts to close kin although educated ones tend to socialize with similarly educated coastal people from both Papua and New Guinea (Whiteman 1973:95,100). I have observed the campus integration of elites break down rapidly on graduation and 'dropping out' as new ties are made and social demands are met.

While Highlands people may in certain situations identify themselves collectively as 'highlanders', using Connor's terminology again they do not at present perceive themselves as a 'nation', although they might be called 'pre-nationalists'. Their 'supreme loyalty' (Kohn 1944) is not to a Highlands nation. Hence the Highlands regionalism the HLF students worked for in 1972 was, in this instance, a case of communalism amongst educated elite members from a fairly wide region.

This analysis should not be seen as denying the importance of Highlands pride, and the intensity of the emotions which continue to be felt strongly. Thus in June 1975 a correspondent to the newspaper complained of 'coastalization' of the public service.¹ Important politicians such as Giregire, Okuk, Kavali and others were involved in an attempt both before and after

¹ *Post-Courier* 9 June 1975.
Independence Day (16 September 1975) to realign the whole regional balance of the party structure and the ministry. They were seeking to control the capital, and dominate the state, but not, however, to destroy or leave it. Significantly, these drives have come from men deposed from power and seeking to regain it (Standish 1976b). They failed to cohere on these occasions, but their intense feelings at exclusion from power and status remain and are widely shared in the Highlands. Further unsuccessful Highlands pushes were attempted in late 1976. Thus the HLF succeeded in broadcasting sentiments which are not only strong but also tenacious. They have outlived the HLF.

**Conclusion**

Geertz wrote (1963:129) of new states that, being

imitative, poorly organized, eclectic, subject to fads, ill-defined, uncertain, they are extremely difficult to order typologically, either in classical categories or invented ones.

His words apply neatly to the HLF, as does his subsequent point that the recalcitrant issues of primordial identity can also serve to produce innovation in politics. Geertz recommended that rather than pretending these tensions do not exist, the governments of the new states should 'domesticate' them, reconciling them

with the unfolding civil order with respect to government authority, by neutralising the apparatus of state in relationship to them, and by channelling discontent arising out of their dislocation into properly political rather than parapolitical forms of expression (ibid:128).

All these techniques have been applied by the Somare government, not just to the Highlands but also to other separatist areas. The government's professions of even-handedness and apparent sense of calm in the vortex of the national whirlpool have partially disarmed several mutually reinforcing and politically fragmentary movements. This does not mean that in incorporating the rebellious HLF youth Somare greatly changed his government's course, or even that he led these activists to
opportunistically 'sell out' their causes. Regarding government employment, for instance, the country was so short of trained manpower in the early 1970s that most graduates received several offers of positions, all with good promotion prospects. More importantly for this case study, the HLF leaders were seeking for themselves a greater allocation of resources and a greater role within the new state. Basically, then, they were never outside the national system (despite some desire to modify it), and so did not have to be bribed (back) into it.

If nationalists out of power are typically populists (Weiner 1971:653), so too are many Papua New Guineans on the fringes of power also regionalist (Standish 1974b; 1975a). The flexibility shown by these men can be quite astounding (Standish 1976b). A call to ethnicity is the most tempting tactical option open in the quest to build up support or to exert pressure for a target, even when the pressure comes via the response of third parties (Lipsky 1968). Given that the resources available in the form of expatriate jobs to be localized are rapidly depleting, and given also the static nature of foreign aid and investment sources in the foreseeable future, and hence the probability that not all 'self-help' movements can receive government aid on a large scale, then the possibility of ethnic factions with modern elite leadership competing between themselves becomes very strong indeed. The capacity for restraint of elite members from the especially disadvantaged areas (and also those areas with a strong bargaining hand in the form of valued resources) will become even more crucial to the survival of the Papua New Guinea state as we now know it.

Is regionalism, as epitomized by the HLF, Papua New Guinea's most serious political problem? Fears of Papua New Guinea's bureaucratic elite acting as a self-serving quasi-wantok group have been expressed by one observer with Nigerian experience (Ballard 1976a). (The idea is not unlike the 1960s concern that the old Pacific Islands Regiment might become a 'super-tribe'.) Ballard managed to be optimistic about regional
manifestations of the 'wantok system' (Ballard 1976a:17). The fears expressed by the HLF may indeed be self-reinforcing prophecies, and their existence has been known but ignored for many years. By provoking a defensive response amongst privileged groups the HLF might perhaps have worsened the long-term prospects for equity on a state-wide scale. Yet by articulating sensitive issues more dramatically than had been done previously, the Front certainly brought these matters to consciousness and thus (it could be argued) performed a valuable function as a start towards deliberate action aimed at reversing existing trends. If so, the Front may indirectly have increased the ultimate resilience of the state. Even if hard decisions are taken immediately, and can be implemented without stirring regional movements in the more privileged areas, the results of these decisions will take many years to show. Only with time, then, can a verdict be made on the Highlands Liberation Front and its ultimate impact.

Postscript

A new body, the 'non-partisan' Highlands United Front (HUF), was formed at UPNG in June 1977 after an evening meeting addressed by Theodore Banda. Student members of this group were active in the lobbying to form a new government after the 1977 national elections, with the aim of ensuring that the Highlands was adequately represented. The new government did include more highlanders than previously, partly because of a conscious decision to appoint at least one minister from each province and partly because of the successful penetration of the Highlands by Pangu and the People's Progress Party (PPP), at the expense of the UP (Standish 1977).

Iambakey Okuk, returned for Chimbu Provincial in 1977, sought to use the HUF in moves to discredit the new coalition for allegedly under-representing the highlanders. A seminar was held by the HUF in Mt Hagen over Christmas 1977 to discuss tribal fighting and other matters, but attendance was low and its impact apparently negligible. Nonetheless the HUF

1 Post-Courier 10 January 1978.
President, Malipu Balakau, from Enga, emulated Banda's flair for grabbing headlines. In October 1978 Balakau was elected president of the Students Representative Council at UPNG. He deplored the divisions amongst Highlands MPs which occurred when Okuk unseated UP leader Sir Tei Abal as opposition leader in May 1978, but displayed close links with Okuk during a student strike in May 1978, a time when Okuk was attempting to unseat the Somare government. Okuk had formed a new body, the People's United Front, in an attempt to bring together UP members and Papuans into a coherent opposition coalition, but this never really gained much momentum. When PPP left the Somare coalition in November 1978, and the bulk of UP crossed the floor and joined Somare, Okuk abandoned the People's United Front and resuscitated the moribund National Party, with Michael Mel as its president. Perhaps to win Papuan support, Okuk demanded the removal of the provincial government system in favour of regions. He continued to cultivate Highlands sentiment (he was once greeted with a poster proclaiming him the 'Supreme Leader of the Highlands') and argued that the next prime minister should be a highlander.

Okuk's sustained attack on Somare was rewarded when the weary and accident prone government eventually split, brought down - ironically enough - by the CPC's main advocates of provincial government, Fr John Momis and John Kaputin. On 11 March 1980 Okuk successfully moved that Sir Julius Chan (PPP) replace Somare, with the support of PPP, National Party, half of UP, and almost all Papua Besena. Michael Mel said in May 1980 that 'You can see in this government that the HLF is still going. Iambakey still wants regional government and he says so occasionally just to keep the point in the public eye. It's officially our party's policy, too, but we're not pushing for it. There are so many people involved in it now, it's here to stay'. Although committed to regions, Okuk in May 1980 agreed that provinces would probably stay, and said that the need therefore was to get the system working with proper controls.

1 Post-Courier 24 May 1978.
But was the HLF conception still alive? Certainly highlanders occupied more of the higher positions, but as political appointees were vulnerable. In mid 1980 Banda was using a posting as Lands Officer in Kundiawa as launching pad for an intended parliamentary career, Mel was a businessman/politician in Mount Hagen, and Phillip Kaman the same in Minj. Much of the idealism of the old HLF had gone, as shown by Mel's remark concerning the various provincial elections in the Highlands:

In Hagen and in Enga it's been a very expensive campaign. We have asked for, and got, a lot of help from expatriate business here in the Western Highlands. You have to give away a lot of beer and spend a lot to be elected.

The young Highlands elite continued to mobilize communal identity, but on a lower scale than the region, and - quite apart from coastal fears - competitive jealousy among the highlanders may well deny Okuk's ambition of a highlander prime minister. Mel was quite right in his concluding comment, which will be my last word, too: 'Politics is really hot here, now. Everything is politics'.
APPENDIX

HIGHLANDS LIBERATION FRONT MANIFESTO*

1. To liberate the people of the Highlands from white and coastal domination in the Public Service and in private enterprise as well as in the armed forces. This is not to say that we shall maintain the present colonial setup, but we want a simple and decentralised public service.

2. To build a Highlands identity, Highlands unity and then to stand to identify ourselves with the rest of Papua New Guinea on the basis of equality.

3. That educated Highlanders repay the privilege of their education by dedicated service to the mass of the people.

4. That a high degree of autonomy at the local government level be written into the Constitution.

5. Under a high degree of regional autonomy revenue from any form of taxation should be used for development within the Highlands Region.

6. That through the mobilisation of the Highland masses social institutions are created through which the benefits of modernisation may reach the grass roots.

7. Re-appraise the present education system with the view to preparing people for the realities of their agricultural existence.

8. Decentralisation of the Public Service, intuned (sic) with the needs of the mass of the people, to be promoted into decision making positions.

9. Abolition of the Highlands Labour Scheme. That each Highlander lives in dignity and is respected by his fellow human beings.

10. That an effective communications network is established between the Central Committee, the Local Government Councils and the villages.

* Mimeograph copy provided by Philip Kaman February 1973.

Banda's 1972 typescript listed these points in the following order: 3, 2, 4, 5/7, 6, 9-12. His handwritten notes then added 13-35. Keviame (1974) listed the points in the order 1, 8, 4, 7, 12 and 13, also mentioning 5.

Mel's 1975 HLF manuscript listed the points in the order 8/20, 2/1, 9, 30, 21, 19, 14-15, 23-4, 9, 7, 28, 31-35.
11. Social life in urban centres - That a network of meeting places be established, social clubs, coffee shops and beer bars.

12. Highlands Development Corporation - (a) Tourism, (b) small home industries, (c) trucking company.

13. The proposed Highlands Development Corporation shall be governed by Melanesian business practice and style.

14. Laws governing companies, corporations, associations and cooperatives should be changed to suit the Highlands Melanesian society.

15. Existing foreign business in the highlands, plantations, hotels and motels etc., are to be bought off by the people through the proposed corporation.

16. The front will maintain and promote our cultures and traditions.

17. The front will have its own newspaper.

18. The front will set up centres of learning for adults throughout the Highlands.

19. The front has respect for blackman's property - neocolonialism will be wiped out completely.

20. The front will fight for equality in the public service and for the Highlanders in the public service. (a) For highlanders in urban areas, the front will provide Highlands coffee bars and social clubs. (b) small home industries for people in the villages.

21. Fines imposed by the courts on any blackman must be proportionate to his earnings and capacity or capability to pay.

22. The famous Highlands Show to be controlled - it will be a show of the people for the people themselves - tourists will only be allowed if they live and travel in our future tourist facilities. At present our people are treated like puppets to attract tourists for white tourists business.

23. The front will make every Highlander proud of what he is, and what he can do with what he has.

24. Foreign investments in the Highlands are to comply with our terms and conditions.

25. The HLF shall have a Savings Account, - deposits and withdrawals shall accompany signatures of two of the committee members.

26. The HLF shall have its Headquarters in a central position in the Highlands.
27. To set up practical learning centres for school dropouts.

28. To liberate the masses at the grass roots from ignorance, discrimination and all forms of oppression.

29. The H.L.F.'s fundamental objective is to liberate the masses of the grass roots level from whites and black elites' exploitation.

30. To have one class of proud people with human dignity and self respect.

31. The annual membership fee of the front will be 50 cents to Two dollars.

32. There shall be four executive members in every branch of the H.L.F. in P.N.G. - Out of the four members of the Executive one will be elected Chairman of the general meeting of the members and supporters.

33. It is in the interest of the Front that there should be Branches wherever there are Highlanders in the Territory.

34. The success of the front's objectives depends on your moral and financial support.

35. The Front invites every Highlands man and woman to fight for the Liberation of the people of the Highlands.
Chapter 13

HIGHLANDS LIBERATION FRONT: AN INSIDER'S STATEMENT*

Michael Mel

In any country, especially a developing country like Papua New Guinea, educated people have been known for playing a vital role in the good government of their country. By doing so they contribute something very few people have, and which few can experience in their lifetime. There is a great need for educated people in this country to unite themselves into an organization with similar ideas on how to aid our people who very much need our help now.

The Highlands people are great people. The village people back home are quick to adapt themselves to new ideas. But they need the educated people to help them effectively take their proper stand in the development of this country of ours. We the educated Highlanders have an obligation towards our people to help them to adapt themselves to our changing environment. To do this we cannot deny our culture, because it is through our culture that we educated Highlanders can effectively use our traditional style of communication to achieve our aims. Our aim is to help our people in both traditional and modern ways.

The Highlands Liberation Front has been functioning effectively for some time. The main aim was to liberate the masses of the people at the grassroot level from exploitation by whites and by black elites, including even Highlanders who might be exploiters.

The word 'liberation' has caused confusion among some of our supporters, and also among our sympathizers. The word 'liberation' does not imply a group of people using arms and

*This paper was written between mid 1974 and early 1975, when Mr Mel was a law student at the University of Papua New Guinea.
ammunition to achieve their aims. The word 'liberation', to us Highlanders, simply means 'freedom from', 'freedom to' and 'freedom for'.

We want to be 'free from' being exploited by either black or white men economically, socially, religiously, culturally or educationally.

When we are free from these then we can be 'free to' create a society which would be more suitable for the Highlands people, a society in which we Highlanders through our culture create an economic structure which would be most beneficial to all Highlanders. We then can be free to help create a Church and Education which will suit our environment. We want to be free from Injustice to educated Highlanders in the public service so that we may take our fair share in running this country.

The Highlands Liberation Front wants 'freedom for' the Highlands, but not at the expense of (or with exploitation of) others, and not so as to degrade other brothers of ours in Papua New Guinea.

We the educated people and the leaders are the spearhead, and it is our duty to help our people constructively and effectively to help themselves.

To strive for development, progress, dignity and equality for our people, we must mobilize our best resources and make our people aware that they can also find opportunities to advance themselves in their own rural areas. This can be achieved in a most peaceful way if we the spearheads work together to lead the way.

To bring our people up to date with the changing world, we must act together to make our people become aware of the problems around them, to take an interest in the world, to desire to solve the problems, to try practical solutions and to adapt their practices. When we finally achieve satisfaction, only then are we on the road. That is the way development can take place.
For the Highlands to be free of white and black exploitation, we must win through non-violence. This must come not only through lip-service but from young men and women and leaders who perfect and purify themselves through action. Action means work with truth to provide goals and directions amongst our people so that speedy and effective development and progress can be achieved in the Highlands.

At the time the students of the University of Papua New Guinea formed what then was called the Highlands Liberation Front, we got publicity and we had great support. What we the students had hoped to do was to enlighten our politicians to see the real issues involved, concerning the welfare of our people, and therefore to work as a group to recommend to the government how best they could help our people in the Highlands. We got good responses from the politicians but not to the extent that they would themselves spend some hours doing practical work. Most of them could not spend time with students from their districts to do research in their electorate and learn about economic strategies which could help their people. Some of us students could see the big gap of understanding existing between ourselves and the politicians.

The best thing we could have done at that time was to get an expatriate who had lived in the Highlands for a long time, and was then living overseas, but was interested in advising the Highlands politicians about what best they could do for the people and Papua New Guinea. Of course that man would not have had any personal interest for himself in the Highlands. Only then some politicians might have seen the need for cooperating with the Highlands Liberation Front to work for the best interests of the Highlands people and consequently for the best interests of the government and Papua New Guinea. They failed to see this, and therefore they failed to help their people with the resources that were available at the particular time.

What we the students hoped to do was to create an understanding of the Highlands, of certain basic problems of all kinds
that we had, and of the need to organize ourselves to help our people in the best way we could.

Other similar groups which have emerged in Papua New Guinea might have achieved something, but whether HLF did achieve something for the Highland people is a question which only other people who observed the progress of the movement can say.

The biggest achievement we have made for the Highlands people and the country is the fact that the movement has induced its members to be more aware of their standing in the society and of how best they can help their people. So we believe that with our Manifesto we have produced educated people who are now willing to work and have shown an active interest in the affairs of the rural areas. They have accepted the challenge of living in the village and more effectively implementing the government's Eight Point Rural Improvement Plan at the grassroot level, which is very important. One can implement the Eight Point Plan at the grassroot level at a lesser cost than one could working from district headquarters. A government officer would not take enough of the time required to explain things and practically to bring about the programme which the government wishes to be implemented. After all, the government officers are only trained to preach - but their preaching lacks practicality, and their bible is superficial.

The ideologies of the Front go on: therefore while to some liberation ideals remain living beliefs, and the problems still exist, those people who believe in a Highlander becoming a full man doing a full job will live for ever and ever.

A full man will do a full day's job. A government with many full men doing many full days' work, will in the eyes of the international community feel proud, and a feeling of deep satisfaction will run through the people's blood with every heart beat.
CONCLUSION
Chapter 14

MICRONATIONALISM: WHAT, WHEN AND WHY?

R.J. May

The preceding chapters illustrate, selectively but in some detail, the range and pattern of micronationalist activity in Papua New Guinea in the 1960s and 1970s. They show micronationalism as a diverse reaction to political, social and economic circumstances of the time; yet the convergence in objectives and organizational style, which we have remarked in chapter 1, is unmistakable. In the following paragraphs, before attempting to explain the proliferation of micronationalist movements and to assess their place in the process of political and social change, an attempt is made to draw together, from the data presented in the preceding studies, some of the broad characteristics of the movements: to present an anatomy of micronationalism. This will be done under three headings: objectives; leadership and organization; strategies and achievements.

An anatomy of micronationalism

Objectives. The objectives of micronationalist movements reflect the circumstances of their origins. For the most part they are broad, ambitious and ill-defined. This is only slightly less true of the comparatively sophisticated movements whose objectives have been spelt out in corporate charters than it is of the marginal cargo cults, and it is a generalization which applies both to village level organizations and to regional movements like the HLF and Papua Besena. Nearly all the movements discussed in this volume are 'universalistic', embracing a package of political, economic, social and cultural objectives. Even those such as the Mataungan Association,

1 This section draws on material presented in a preliminary form in May (1975, 1979).
Napidakoe Navitu, and Wahgi Tuale, which began with fairly narrowly political aims soon acquired economic and cultural objectives; and the majority of those, like Damuni and Piblika, which see themselves in narrow economic terms have a clear political aspect.¹

If one can distinguish a common primary objective it is that of material improvement through the mobilization of local resources. In those movements with a more coherent ideology (principally those with young educated leadership) there is a general emphasis on improving subsistence living, but most movements have aspired to take over expatriate plantations and businesses and most have been quick to take advantage of government assistance through financial and technical support; indeed probably the most stable of the movements are those, like the Mataungans, Ahi, and perhaps Damuni, which have managed to invest in fairly large-scale capitalist enterprises.

The demand for material returns, however, cannot be interpreted in simple economic terms. The desire for improvements in subsistence living and for success in modern business is motivated also by considerations of status: micronationalist groups are anxious to demonstrate that they can achieve for themselves what government has failed to provide for them, and the takeover of foreign-owned plantations and businesses is probably as much a symbolic assertion of independence as an attempt to secure monetary returns.² Indeed it is perhaps only in these terms that one can account for the continued existence of movements whose performance, in material terms, has been so poor.

¹ McSwain (1977:183) makes the general comment on the people of Karkar: 'One of the important differences [between the Karkar and Europeans] was the Karkar merging of economic, political and educational institutions into one generalized social system oriented towards the traditional value of local communalism as against European specialization and compartmentalism'.

² For an interesting critique of the materialist interpretation, from the viewpoint of a missionary discussing cargo cults, see Heuter (1974).
Among social objectives special importance has frequently been attached to education, including adult education, and to providing useful occupations for the already large and potentially politically significant group of school leavers, though few seem to have achieved much in this regard.

Although all the movements described in this volume are essentially modernizing in their outlook, most have also emphasized traditional values and some, such as Kabisawali and Komge Oro, actively seek to maintain traditional social and cultural forms.¹ In this they differ fairly sharply from most of the earlier postwar movements. In part the emphasis on traditional values and forms is a symptom of withdrawal² and in part it reflects a genuine desire to cull the best from both traditional and western cultures; but also it represents a manipulation, conscious or unconscious, of traditional cultural symbols to legitimize the activities of movements whose main objectives and organization are foreign to the traditional culture and whose leaders frequently lack status within the traditional social framework.³

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¹ Adas, in his study of 'millenarian protest movements', observes similarly that 'prophetic ideologies are normally eclectic both temporally and culturally' (1979:114).

² Compare Jarvie's comment, in relation to the revival of old customs by cargo cults: '... the revived culture is a symbol reminding people of a time of freedom or happiness when there were no frustrations' (Jarvie 1963:12). Similarly Smith (1979:176-179) sees 'ethnic nationalism' as a romantic reaction to the centralized, modernizing state.

³ In his analysis of the leadership of millenarian protest movements Adas (1979:112-119) distinguishes between, at one pole of a continuum, 'displaced indigenous leaders', who 'emerge as defenders of the customary, precontact cultural order' and respond to well-established models of behaviour, and, at the other, 'men of low birth' who have no established place in either the precolonial or the colonial order but whose exposure to both allows them to act as 'cultural brokers' and who draw on both for their ideologies, leadership styles, and modes of organization.
In this context, it should be observed that the various participants in a movement may interpret the objectives of the movement quite differently. The studies of Peli and Pitenamu (chapters 2 and 3 above) illustrate how spokesmen for movements can exploit ambiguity in their pronouncements, presenting the movements for the most part in modern, secular terms but at the same time tapping the rich vein of magico-religious explanation which moves many of their followers. Griffin suggests (p.135) that Lapun may have acted similarly. Leach (pp.284-285) also comments on the differences between Kasaipwalova, and other Kabisawali leaders and followers in the interpretation of that movement's broad aims.¹

Leadership and organization. In the majority of the movements described in this volume, initiative and leadership have come mostly from the younger, better educated and more sophisticated members of the community, though in several cases their main function has been to help articulate demands already expressed by village leaders and to provide the organizational impetus of the movement. Just as in the immediate postwar period new movements were frequently initiated by men whose outlooks had been widened by their wartime experiences, so in the late 1960s and 1970s several micronationalist movements were launched by university students or recent graduates who returned to their village or district to work with their people. This educated group brought with them a mild radicalism and an ideology which placed emphasis on self-help and political decentralization. Frequently, too, (self-help notwithstanding) they brought a greater awareness of the possibilities of government assistance and a knowledge of the means by which access is gained to it. Young men like Kasaipwalova, Kaman, Mel, Avei, and Waiko owed their leadership largely to their effectiveness as brokers between village people and a central government anxious to encourage local development initiative. (Compare Enloe 1973:162.)

¹ Lawrence comments similarly on the Yali movement (1964:255): '... in 1945, when Yali tried to introduce a programme that did not include ritual activity .... the people distorted his propaganda .... It had to be made consistent not only with their economic and socio-political aspirations but also with their intellectual assumptions'.

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There may also be something of relevance to Papua New Guinea in the observation of Ake (1967:97) that in the social transformation brought about by modernization, 'Those obliged to leave their folk culture may become lonely and insecure and inclined to doubt the meaning of their new life', and that such loneliness and insecurity 'tend to breed alienation extremist political movements'. Though micronationalism in Melanesia has seldom taken the form of 'extremist political movements', for the educated elite, participation in micronationalist movements has probably been motivated often by a felt need to justify themselves to themselves and to their village peers.

The outstanding exceptions to the generalization of youthful, educated or sophisticated leadership are those movements like Peli and Pitenamu, which we have categorized as marginal cargo cults. In these, as in earlier cult movements, leadership has usually been vested in personal charisma or believed 'special powers' rather than in education qualifications, experience of introduced institutions, or leadership within a traditional social context, which have generally been slight. And in the Peli case, at least, there is an illustration of the division, observed by several students of cargo cults (for example Thrupp 1962, Talmon 1966), between a prophet-leader (Yaliwan) and an organizer-lieutenant (Hawina).

Sometimes, as in the case of the Mataungan Association, Kabisawali, Komge Oro and Wahgi Tuale, the initiative of young people has resulted in clashes between the younger activists and traditional leaders. In no case, however, can a movement be explained simply in terms of a conflict between young radicals and old conservatives; while the Mataungan case study provides perhaps the best illustration of the general complexity, all movements have found some support amongst the older people (frequently

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1 Pye (1962:22) argues that 'sharp differences in the political orientation of the generations' are typical of 'transitional politics'. In the Papua New Guinea context Townsend (1980) posits 'difference in the attitudes of the generations' as explanation for the contrasting post-colonial reactions of 'disengagement' and 'incorporation'.

deliberate efforts have been made to involve traditional leaders in the movements' activities) and many have found opponents amongst the young.

With regard to the general membership, a common characteristic of the movements is the looseness of their organizational structure. Most have some sort of executive, though the members of this seem more often to 'emerge' or to be self-appointed or chosen by the leader or patron of the movement than to be the product of a formal election. Commonly these executives are dominated by one or two individuals who act as spokesmen for the movement. The majority of movements have a formal membership core defined by fee paying or shareholding, but records are not always rigorously maintained and non-contributors are not necessarily excluded from the movement's general activities. Papua Besena, in fact, specifically rejected any idea of formal membership or organizational structure and deliberately keeps no records. In some instances a broader membership is defined by ethnic or regional boundaries: in a loose sense all Piblika people are regarded (or at least, at the outset were regarded) as 'members' of the Piblika Association, all Koiari are regarded as 'members' of the Koiari Association and all Papuans as 'members' of Papua Besena. But movements are seldom overtly exclusive and even those which appear to have a distinct ethnic basis may admit outsiders, even, occasionally, Europeans.

In most cases the movements draw most of their energy from a small number of activists, usually recruited by the founder and sometimes, as in the Pitenamu case, held together by preexisting interpersonal ties. Next to these is a larger group of members with a fairly strong psychological and sometimes financial commitment to the movement. In most movements, and especially in the marginal cargo cults, there is then a still larger group of 'supporters', who may or may not be fee paying members, whose attachment to the movement is tenuous; they are there either through communal pressures to conform or because, while not really expecting much of the movement, they do not want to miss out if it does somehow succeed - as many Peli supporters expressed it, 'mipela train tasol' ('we are just giving it a go').\(^1\) These floating supporters have

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\(^1\) Compare Bailey's (1969:chapter 3) distinction between 'core', bound to a leader through multiplex ('moral') relationships, and 'following' whose attachment is transactional.
accounted for a large part of the membership claimed by movements at their peak (and in the cases of Peli and Pitenamu the numbers were considerable) but they have been quick to let their membership lapse when it appeared that the material returns were not quickly forthcoming, and this largely accounts for the apparent instability of so many of the movements.

What does not emerge from these case studies is a clear picture of who joins and who does not join micronationalist movements. Worsley (1957) and others have commented on the strong integrative aspect of popular mass movements in Melanesia. Morauta (1974) on the other hand argues that such movements may link people across villages but divide them within villages. Walter (1981) takes this latter view further, seeing cult movements, and by extension 'community development associations' (roughly equivalent to our micronationalist movements) as movements of small men against traditional leaders. The data provided by the studies in the foregoing chapters suggest that both Worsley's and Walter's interpretations oversimplify. Micronationalist movements - even those with a specifically ethnic base - have seldom if ever united all of the people within the group, and many, like the Mataungan Association, Kabisawali and Nemea, have been highly divisive. Nor is there conclusive evidence for the view that micronationalist movements have been revolutionary within their own smaller societies: not only have many micronationalist movements made deliberate efforts to involve traditional leaders (Kabisawali and TK actually coming together in their support for establishing a council of chiefs), frequently leadership has come from people who either possessed status in traditional terms by virtue of 'special knowledge' or 'powers', or (like educated elites) had other avenues to status achievement.

Finally with respect to organization, micronationalism in Papua New Guinea is overwhelmingly a non-urban phenomenon. The urban ethnic associations which have been so prominent in Africa, Asia and Latin America, have had some counterpart in Papua New Guinea (Skeldon 1976); but, with the possible exception of the Mungkas Association (an organization created by young North Solomons people living outside their province), their social and political significance has been slight. Apart from these, nearly all
the movements have been rurally based. The obvious exception is the Ahi Association, which however represents the interests of peri urban villages against urban intrusion. Possible exceptions, also, are the two regional separatist movements. Papua Besena, while seeking a rural base, draws much of its support from an urban elite and from villages close to Port Moresby; similarly, although the HLF earnestly sought a rural base, it remained, by Standish's account (chapter 12), a movement of the urban-based elite.

**Strategies and achievements.** It is more difficult to generalize about the strategies by which micronationalist movements have pursued their broad objectives, and about their achievements, than it is to generalize about other characteristics. In part this reflects a fundamental contradiction inherent in the concept of withdrawal from the political system: the more positively movements 'withdraw' from the larger system the more inevitable it becomes that they will attract the attention of government. Sometimes this has led to confrontation (see below), but more often since 1972 it has attracted the sympathetic concern of the central government - a concern which few micronationalist leaders seem willing to reject. Thus, paradoxically, the ultimate effect of withdrawal has often been to foster accommodation between the movement and the state and eventually to bring about a degree of incorporation. With these qualifications in mind, some common patterns may be discerned.

As we have noted above, the philosophy of micronationalism, while fundamentally a revolutionary philosophy, is one of withdrawal or disengagement rather than of active confrontation. Consequently, the movements discussed here typically have tended to reject the institutions of the imposed system - government, mission and, to a lesser extent, private business - rather than seek to capture them (possible exceptions here are, again, the HLF and Papua Besena) or deliberately enter into conflict

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1 Compare Pye's comment (1962:24), that the 'functionally diffuse character' of groupings in the transitional political process 'tends to force each group to develop its own ends and means of political action, and the relationship of means to ends tends to be more organic than rational or functional'.

with them. Some confrontation, however, has been inevitable, especially in the early years of the period when the colonial government often regarded such deviant behaviour, particularly refusal to pay local government council taxes, as a threat to its authority and responded repressively. The histories of Hahalis, the Mataungan Association and Kabisawali all contain instances of violent clashes with central government, and in the mid 1970s clashes with Papua Besena and the Eriwo Association were avoided only by considerable tolerance on the part of the central government.

A particular aspect of the micronationalist withdrawal is the general antipathy, and occasional open hostility, which movements have shown towards local government councils. In a few instances such antipathy has been bound up with, or has become bound up with, local political differences; Kabisawali provides the most obvious example. More often it has been a fundamental aspect of the micronationalist outlook. It is clear that local government councils are commonly seen more as survivals of colonial administration and agents of a distant and impersonal central government than as custodians of village interests. To many village people they have been the most tangible element of an imposed system which has undermined traditional social and political structures and, having imposed taxes, has failed to deliver the hoped-for material benefits of development.

In several instances micronationalist leaders have sought to use their local support base to gain election to the national parliament - though, as the Peli case illustrates, without necessarily accepting the rules of the parliamentary game. Mataungan Association leaders stood successfully as Mataungan candidates in the national elections of 1972 and 1977 and in the East New Britain provincial elections of 1977, and unsuccessfully in the 1981 provincial elections. Papua Besena leader Abaijah became a member of the House of Assembly in 1972 and, as McKillop describes in chapter 11, the movement subsequently mobilized support in Central Province provincial elections and scored a notable success in the 1977 national elections, which however it exploited in an unlikely coalition with Highlands dominated parties. Prominent members of Napidakoe Navitu, Peli and Damuni also contested elections successfully, and some others - notably Stephen Ahi and some of the 'young radicals' of the early 1970s - did so unsuccessfully. Apart from these, the HLF claimed support from the
United Party and the National Party; the Nemea Association and Pitenamu both identified themselves with the Pangu Pati, and in 1973 the short-lived Social Workers Party listed among its objectives 'support for the Free Papua Movement and for the liberation struggles of the Mataungan Association and Kabisawali People's Government'. There was even an idea, which seems to have had some currency among educated spokesmen for movements in the early 1970s, that micronationalism might be used as a basis for political action at the national level (as recently as 1977 John Kaputin was quoted as saying that, 'Development groups and not political parties should organize Papua New Guinea's Government'). For the most part, however, micronationalist movements have chosen to operate outside existing formal political institutions and independently of political parties, and where micronationalist spokesmen have been elected to parliament the tendency (with Peli the notable exception) has been for them to become incorporated into the larger system and to act largely independently of their micronationalist origins.

On the economic front most movements have been ambivalent. Despite the common ideological emphasis on self-sufficiency and subsistence, movements have been active seekers of financial and other assistance from government and many of them have taken over expatriate plantations and businesses; on the other hand the frequent commercial failure of trade stores, trucks and other businesses can be largely attributed to a lack of commitment to orthodox business methods.

Measurement of the achievements of micronationalist movements, apart from the conceptual problems raised above (p. 428), is made difficult both by lack of information and by the fact that the generality in which most movements have described their aims makes it difficult to evaluate the extent of their successes even in terms of their own stated objectives (and this itself is a dubious criterion). Nevertheless a few generalizations can be offered.

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1 Post-Courier 16 March 1977. A similar view was expressed to me by John Kasaipwalova in 1975. Also see the comment by Nemea leaders in 1974 (quoted p.183 above).
The first is that micronationalist movements have been remarkably successful in quickly bringing together groups of people as members and supporters, groups which in many instances have extended across tribal and linguistic divisions and have prevailed over traditional enmities. They have also been notably successful in raising funds from supporters and in many cases have pursued successful applications for financial (and in a few instances technical) assistance from the Development Bank, VEDF, Plantation Redistribution Scheme, and other sources. As against these achievements, in the majority of cases the initial enthusiasm has been shortlived; few self-help movements seem to have been able to sustain the active interest of members for more than three or four years. Of the eight movements studied in detail in this volume, for example, only two—the Mataungan Association and Papua Besena—appear to be reasonably active, and both those at a level well below their earlier peak. The difficulty of tracing a number of other groups which attracted public attention in roughly the same period, or which were early applicants for VEDF grants, suggests that this picture holds for a wide range of movements (May 1979).

The apparent falling away of support for the movements might be explained by several factors. In most cases, it would seem, support has declined because the movements have failed to fulfil the expectations which they generated; this will be discussed in more detail below. A more fundamental failure is suggested by Gerritsen's comment (p. 326, above), made in relation to Damuni but applicable, eventually, to several movements: '... there was no real mobilization of people in any activity (other than joining) and thus no broadly-based developmental endeavour'. Paradoxically, another major reason for decline in support has been the early success of some movements in achieving limited objectives. This applies particularly to the smaller, more recent self-help groups whose immediate objectives have centred on, for example, buying a truck or boat or freezer, or taking over a local plantation: once the immediate objective of the group has been achieved, enthusiasm has waned and the commitment necessary to keep the project going has proved difficult to sustain. Other reasons for decline (which relate to the common importance of individual leadership)

1 Compare this observation with the comments of Wilson (1972) on the performance of village industries.
have been departure of the initiators of the movement and loss of momentum through internal dissention. Interestingly, considering the history of cooperatives (Singh 1974), misuse of funds by movement leaders does not seem to have affected movements on a large scale.

The achievement of micronationalist movements in relation to broad social and cultural objectives appears to have been modest. A few have initiated adult education programmes, though the impact of these is difficult to assess. Some may have encouraged an interest in their traditional cultures but of three proposed cultural centres for which government funds were allocated to self-help movements (Kabisawali, TK and Ahi) none has materialized.¹

Few of the movements have admitted political objectives. Of those which have, Kabisawali and the Nemea Landowners' Association both proposed to establish their own autonomous 'governments' and both did (after a fashion), though neither seems to have been very effective. Several, like the Mataungan Association, Napidakoe Navitu, the Ahi Association and Komge Oro, were concerned to protest particular local issues, and seem to have been fairly successful in persuading the first Somare government to accommodate their demands. Where micronationalist leaders have attempted to use the movement as a support base in seeking election to the national parliament the results have been mixed (see pp. 429-430); whether, as the Constitutional Planning Committee (1974:10/3) suggested, provincial government provides a more effective stage for micronationalist politics remains to be seen.

We have suggested above that a major reason for decline in micronationalist movements has been their failure to fulfil the expectations which they have generated. Often the expectations of supporters have been unrealistic; they have expected radical transformations in village economy and society when, by their nature, the most that the movements could offer was a modest improvement in village conditions. But equally, few movements

¹ This is perhaps not quite fair in the case of Ahi. Recently a Morobe Cultural Centre has been established in Lae - but only with substantial initiative from sources outside the Ahi Association.
have returned to their supporters, in terms of continuing material benefits, as much as their supporters have been encouraged to expect.

Concern for improving subsistence living (including the introduction of appropriate technologies) has generally produced more rhetoric than action. Komge Oro, which placed particular emphasis on this aspect, planned village pig and poultry breeding centres and sought to organize village youth clubs to clear and plant communal gardens, but these projects do not seem to have made much progress. Olu Bus established a pig-breeding waste-digester project but the project was heavily dependent on the encouragement of a Canadian volunteer and when he left the project ran down.

Business ventures, especially takeovers of expatriate enterprises, have probably been more successful; however most seem to have suffered from deficiencies in managerial competence, due in part to the inexperience of local managers and in part, as we have already suggested, to ambivalence about pursuing development through orthodox western methods (Kabisawali providing an instructive case study). Where existing outside management has been retained (as, for example, in the case of TK and Piblika) the record seems to have been better, but even then (as recent developments within Piblika suggest) performance can be disrupted by conflicts over the direction of control. In the specific instance of plantation takeovers, poor performance by local groups has threatened the viability of the government's Plantation Redistribution Scheme, which was suspended in 1980.

An alternative 'development' strategy has been investment outside the group (for example in real estate or company shares). In general this has yielded steady but unspectactacular returns; but while it has proved a useful way of generating income, especially for groups (like Napidakoe Navitu, the Mataungans and Ahi) close to urban centres, it is a dubious form of self-help.

It might be argued that outside observers are prone to overestimate the importance of material returns, that for most village people what has been important is the demonstration of their ability to organize a coherent
movement, and that the takeover of foreign-owned plantations and businesses is, as we have suggested above (p. 422), as much a symbolic assertion of independence as an attempt to secure monetary returns. There is obviously a good deal of force in this argument, though it will provide little consolation either for those who have been responsible for distributing government resources to micronationalist movements or for a number of sympathetic observers who have regarded such movements as potential vehicles for social change in accord with the government's eight aims and five national goals and directive principles.

At a more abstract level (not reflected in movements' own definitions of their objectives) it might be argued that substantial positive achievements of micronationalist movements lie in their contribution to a shift in development initiative from the centre to the village, their influence in the move towards political decentralization (see, for example, Constitutional Planning Committee 1973:4/4) and in helping to bridge the growing gap between a largely urban-based elite and the predominantly rural masses.¹

**Explaining the micronationalist phenomenon**

Granted both the similarities and the differences which are discernible in the movements which proliferated in the 1960s and 1970s, two important questions which this survey poses are: why did the movements emerge on this scale when they did, and how are they to be placed in the broad process of political and social change in Papua New Guinea?

**The question of timing**

We have already suggested (pp.5-9) that the movements which sprang up in the late 1960s and early 1970s have precursors among the spontaneous local movements which have appeared from time to time throughout Melanesia

¹ On the last point compare Walterstein (1960) and Ake (1967).
since European colonization (and perhaps before), but that the increase in what we have termed 'micronationalist' activity coincided with a marked increase in the pace of modernization and of political development directed towards the establishment of a unified, and unitary, independent state.

It was inevitable that modernization, and especially the indigenization of the political and (to a lesser extent) the economic system, should stimulate the growth of political, social and economic organizations. And the great diversity of traditional cultures and the lack of obvious major social or economic divisions at the national level provide strong reasons why such mobilization should have taken place predominantly at the local level. Further, the fact that Papua New Guinea achieved independence without significant resistance from the colonial power probably acted against the growth of strong nationalist movements, and tended to direct energies towards more parochial concerns. Even at the height of nationalist feeling at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), for example, it was reported (Morgan, quoted in Davis 1970:291) that

Integration has been surprisingly poor. No genuine attempt has been shown in learning about and understanding a person from another area.... Tribal bias and snobbishness is prevalent.

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1 For an interesting discussion of the effects of 'size' on political activity, see Dahl and Tufte (1974, especially chapter 3).

2 Cf. Mazrui (1970:56): 'Until the recent interest in large scale mining enterprise, Australian indifference denied New Guineans even the advantage of a shared anti-colonial resentment'.

3 Six years after Davis wrote, of thirty-one student groups affiliated with the University's Student Representative Council eleven were University-wide sporting clubs, fourteen were provincial associations (Central Province Students Association, East Sepik Students Society, etc.) and five represented sub-provincial regional groups; the remaining group was an association of (non Papua New Guinea) Pacific Islands students. Ballard (1976b) has also commented on student parochialism at UPNG.
It was equally inevitable that the increased pace of development would leave some groups feeling relatively disadvantaged, frustrated or threatened; for these groups the formation of movements with ethnic or regional boundaries and emphasizing group identity and self-determination was a natural, and a historical, reaction.

The variety of responses in the 1970s compared with earlier periods can probably be explained in terms of greater complexity of the society in the 1960s and 1970s, increased involvement of Papua New Guineans in government and the cash economy, and growing sophistication among both rural villagers and an educated elite which has been able to act as broker between the village and the centre.

Hegarty (1973:440), following Geertz (1963:120), has suggested a more specific explanation of the surge of micronationalism in the early 1970s:

One of the characteristics of the period of transition to independence is the rapid formation of political groups and movements. An awareness of the imminent withdrawal of the colonial power develops, movements - some with formal organisation, some without - begin to make demands of government on a wide range of issues. Communal groups with only vague and unspecified economic objectives tend to proliferate. Minorities fearful of their vulnerability at independence seek constitution or political safeguards....

Certainly the well publicized approach of self-government and independence must have sharpened the sensitivities of groups which felt disadvantaged, frustrated or threatened. The Nemea Association, and on a rather larger scale Papua Besena and the HLF, were specifically concerned to define their rights and secure their positions before the departure of the colonial government; in several instances (including Napidakoe Navitu, the Ahi Association, MODIPE, Papua Besena, the Nemea Association, the Purari Action Group and the West New Britain Action Group) fears of large scale immigration were a particular source of insecurity and a stimulus to ethnic or regional solidarity.

In looking for more particular reasons for the growth of these movements, another factor of obvious importance is the intellectual climate
of the period. Already in the latter part of the 1960s there was some questioning in Papua New Guinea of the dominant development strategy, endorsed in 1964 by a visiting World Bank team, of concentrating resources in areas of expected greatest short term productivity, and at the University of Papua New Guinea (created in 1966) students were being introduced to critiques of capitalist, urban-oriented development and to theories of small scale socialist development with Tanzania and China as models. There is some evidence of a growing concern with self-reliance and decentralization in papers presented to the fifth Waigani Seminar, on rural development, in Port Moresby in 1971 (Ward 1972) but at the following year's seminar, which was dominated by the presence of Lloyd Best, René Dumont and Ivan Illich, these principles were swept forward on a wave of popular enthusiasm. (See May 1973.) After the seminar the Students' Representative Council endorsed a proposal by its president, John Kasaipwalova, to set up a student vegetable garden and pig farm beside the campus (a garden project was commenced but it was shortlived) and in 1972 and later years, encouraged by their university supervisors (who gave course credits for 'action research' in rural areas during vacations), a number of students returned to their villages to initiate or assist local development projects. In 1973, as an outcome of a workshop of students, staff and recent graduates of UPNG, the Melanesian Action Front was established, with a manifesto which emphasized equality, self-reliance and village development. The following year a joint staff-student Development Investigatory Group was established at UPNG with a view to supporting student involvement in village development projects. Many of these efforts produced more enthusiasm than action but they exercised a lasting general influence over village development in a number of areas.¹ Somewhat ironically these 'radical' influences were complemented by the propaganda of the retiring colonial administration, which emphasized the importance of self-reliance as a precondition of effective political independence (Parker 1971).

The principles of small scale development and self-reliance were further endorsed in 1972 by a visiting UNDP-sponsored team which reported

¹ For a more detailed description of the mood of this period, see Ballard (1976b) and Standish (chapter 12 below).
on development strategies for Papua New Guinea (Overseas Development Group 1973) and following this, in December 1972, chief minister Somare announced his government's 'Eight Aims for Improvement', which included decentralization of economic activity and (national) self-reliance.

It may be argued that the announcement of the Eight Aims, and subsequently the embodiment in the Constitution of a sympathetic 'Five National Goals and Directive Principles', merely gave official recognition to already prevalent sentiments and provided no clear basis for action. However Somare recognized the potential importance of local self-help movements as a means of implementing the Eight Aims and in a number of policy decisions his government gave positive encouragement to them (see pp.26-27 above).

Finally, the apparent success of some of the early movements encouraged the growth of others. This happened in two ways. On the one hand, groups in one part of the country emulated movements which appeared to have succeeded elsewhere. Thus, for example, in the early 1970s a number of the young radicals were strongly influenced by the example of the Mataungan Association: Kasaipwalova's Kabisawali Village Development Corporation was closely modelled on Kaputin's New Guinea Development Corporation, as was Avei's Hiri Village Development Corporation, Waiko's Komge Oro, the (Goodenough) Island Development Corporation and a number of other village self-help charters. In a more general way, the Mataungan example also influenced the leaders of both the Nemea Association and the HLF (and possibly others) and there were various supportive contacts between all these movements, and between Papua Besena and the Koiaari, Eriwo and Nemea Associations. On the other hand, the success of one group - especially in gaining access to government assistance - sometimes prompted a competitive (one might even say defensive) reaction from other groups in the area. The outstanding instance of this is the TK reaction to Kabisawali (see chapter 9); the establishment of the Wake and Ganai Associations in the Abau area (see chapter 6) and the proliferation of local ethnically-based movements in Manus (Pokawin 1976) provide others.
We have already observed (pp. 6-7 above) that several commentators saw in the movements which emerged in the early postwar years a shift from cargo cult to secular development movement. This view received 'official' endorsement when in 1972 the Administrator of Papua New Guinea, Mr L.W. Johnson, went so far as to suggest that cargo cults might be dying out and being replaced by economic development associations.\(^1\) Some, more specific, saw the postwar movements in political terms as evidence of an emerging anti-colonial nationalism.

Such comments suggest two, related, questions: first, what sort of a link is there between micronationalist movements and cargo cults? Secondly, does micronationalism represent a passing historical phase, an element perhaps of transition from colonial to new-state politics, or is it a reflection of more fundamental aspects of Papua New Guinea's changing society?

(i) *The cargo cult connection.* The data presented in this volume leaves little doubt that there is some continuity between the movements we have described as micronationalist and those earlier movements (and some contemporary movements) loosely referred to as cargo cults.\(^2\) The link is most obvious in cases like Peli, Pitenamu and TIA where there is a direct historical connection between prophet-led millenarian movements promising some form of *kago* and more recent secular movements pursuing 'development' through more or less conventional means. But even in the more obviously 'modern' movements, with educated leadership and impressive corporate

\(^1\) *Post-Courier* 14 January 1972.

\(^2\) A definition of 'cargo cults', and a comment on the usage of the term, is offered in note 3, page 3. Also noted is Walter's (1981) objection to the term. It is not our intention here to debate the semantics of the cargo cult literature; however, as Strelan (1977:11) argues, cargo is an inadequate translation of the Pidgin term *kago*, and in the following discussion we will use the term in the broad sense elaborated by Strelan (*ibid.*): 'Cargo cults have to do with Melanesian concepts of power, status, wealth, and the good life'.

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*Rot bilong developmen*

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charters, there are clear similarities of objective, organization and strategy with the more 'primitive' cult movements.¹

These similarities of form reflect fundamental similarities in the nature of the movements. In a recent review of the literature on cult movements, for example, Lanternari distinguishes four aspects of 'nativistic and socio-religious movements': religion; search for cultural self-identity; acculturation, and the psychological aspect (the last being expressed in such terms as 'deprivation' and 'crisis') (Lanternari 1974:487).² All but the first of these is equally pertinent to micronationalism, and in the more recent movements 'development', or more narrowly bisnis, has in effect become a substitute for religion. The basis of this coincidence has been suggested by several writers who have seen cargo cults, rightly, as a particular form of a more general class of revolutionary social movement. Hobsbawm (1959), for example, places 'millenarian movements' in the middle of a hierarchy of social movements ranked 'in order of increasing ambition', but observes (ibid.:57):

The essence of millenarianism, the hope of a complete and radical change, in the world ... is not confined to primitivism. It is present almost by definition, in all revolutionary movements of whatever kind ....³

¹ Gerritsen similarly sees his 'dynamic communal associations' as 'the spiritual if not the lineal descendants of the cargo cults', even to the point of describing the Mataungan Association as 'the heir to earlier cargo cults' (1975:8-9, 14, 18).

² Comparable lists of the 'characteristics' of cargo cults are presented and discussed in Stanner (1953), Hogbin (1958), Hobsbawm (1959), Mead (1964), Jarvie (1964), Brown (1966), Talmon (1966), and elsewhere.

³ Hobsbawm suggests three main characteristics of the 'typical old-fashioned millenarian movement in Europe': 'First, a profound and total rejection of the present, evil world.... Second, a fairly standardized "ideology" of the chiliastic type.... Third ... a fundamental vagueness about the actual way in which the new society will be brought about' (1959:57-58). Being essentially revolutionary, however, millenarian movements are easily modernized or absorbed into modern social movements. Once so transformed or absorbed, Hobsbawm argues, they normally retain the first of these characteristics (rejection of the present order); abandon the second at least to some extent, substituting a modern, generally secular, ideology; and add a superstructure of modern revolutionary politics (ibid.:59). In the Papua New Guinea case, it might be argued that in the 1970s political responsibility was already
In an otherwise not particularly illuminating paper on the explanation of cargo cults, Inglis (1957) also hints at the continuity between cults and modern development movements when she suggests that cults might be arranged on a scale according to degree of sophistication, 'And by sophistication, in this context, I mean the capacity of the natives to understand what kind of effort will enable them to gain their ends' (ibid.:249-250). Similarly Brown (1966) distinguishes between cults and secular movements but observes that cults may alternate with secular movements and that 'Movements which are practical both in their ends and in their means may incorporate the sort of false beliefs which are common in cults' (ibid.: 161). (See also Wallace 1956; Brookfield 1972; Stephen 1977; Adas 1979.)

At the risk of oversimplifying an extensive and often subtle body of scholarly writing, one might summarize the relationship: both cargo cults and micronationalist movements have their origins, at least in part, in a sense of relative deprivation, whether in terms of material goods, status, or political power; both seem to occur with greatest frequency in periods of rapid change; and both, in seeking ultimately to remove the blockages which prevent their supporters from enjoying those things of which they believe themselves to be deprived, do so, in varying forms and to differing degrees, through 'withdrawal' or 'disengagement', redrawing the world, as it were, within their own perspective and on their own scale.

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1 The concept of relative deprivation is explored in Aberle (1962). Note, however, Aberle's warning that analysis in terms of deprivation does have 'a certain excessive flexibility. It is always possible after the fact to find deprivations' (1962:213).

2 Compare Aberle (1962:214): '... the deprivations which form the background for the [millenarian] movement not only involve the sense of blockage ... but also the sense of a social order which cannot be reconstituted to yield the satisfactions desired. The millenarian ideology justifies the removal of the participants from that social order .... [It] justifies withdrawal, and that is its functional significance'.
With regard to modern movements, it is this tendency to withdrawal which principally distinguishes micronationalist movements from, for example, pressure groups or political parties.

Within this framework, what differentiates micronationalist movements from cargo cults is essentially their reliance on a secular rather than a magico-religious world view and their use of 'modern' means over ritual. This is not, however, to draw too sharp a distinction. As we have already implied by the use of the term 'marginal cargo cult' (pp.10-12), and as will have become clear from the detailed studies above, the dividing line is not always precise. Moreover, it requires a certain amount of ethnocentricity to believe that because the behaviour of recent movements corresponds more closely than that of cults to economic and political norms familiar to Western trained observers, there is necessarily a greater 'rationality' on the part of the mass of supporters, to whom the rituals of business organization and parliamentary politics may be no less exotic than those of 'money houses' and 'memorial gardens', and for whom expectations about material returns may be no less unrealistic.

Nor do we support the view that cargo cults are on the verge of extinction. With increasing sophistication among village people it is to be expected that economic development associations, self-help movements, and suchlike 'modern' organizations will be seen as more potent, more officially acceptable and more fashionable than movements which begin from a magico-religious world view (even the leaders of Peli and Pitenamu vigorously denied charges of cargo cultism). But the magico-religious world view is a persistent one. Lawrence wrote in 1964 that 'many natives in the southern Madang District seem to have accepted development as a potentially satisfactory alternative to cargo cult' (1964:274); in a preface to McSwain (1977), however, he acknowledged that cargo belief had not

1 Stent (1973b:2), in proposing a definition of cargo cults, has some interesting comments on what, in the Papua New Guinea context, is and what is not a cargo cult.

disappeared with economic and sociopolitical development, adding that 'cults as such are relatively unimportant. What is important is the general condition of cargoism, which is interwoven with everyday events .... the distinction between religious and secular may have little meaning for [Papua New Guineans]' (McSwain 1977:xii-xiii). Moreover, whether or not we can expect some decline in magico-religious thinking, both cargo cults and micronationalism derive from similar feelings of deprivation, frustration and insecurity, and so long as the underlying social and economic forces which generate these feelings continue to operate, such movements will continue to appear.

(ii) Nationalism and micronationalism. This brings us to the second of the two questions posed above (p. 439) namely that concerning the relationship between the movements which proliferated in the 1960s and 1970s and the emergence of a broadly based nationalism.

Among those who saw a transformation in cargo cultism in the early postwar years, many interpreted the change in terms of a shift from cult to political movement. Worsley, for example, wrote:

... we have seen a general trend in the development of the cults away from apocalyptic mysticism towards secular political organization, a trend from religious cult to political party and cooperative .... We are, in fact, witnessing the early stages of formation of national groupings in Melanesia (Worsley 1957: 231, 254).

Worsley referred to such groupings as "proto-nationalist" formations of a transitional kind', endorsing Guiart's earlier description of postwar

1 Lawrence has further elaborated his 1977 comments in Lawrence (forthcoming). Similarly see Strelan (1977:10): 'Cargoism in Melanesia is endemic; it exists even when and where there is no overt cargo movement or cargo activity'. McSwain (1977) and Stephen (1977) are among others who have recently documented the coexistence of cultic and secular beliefs and social action.

2 Similarly, see Gerritsen (1975:8-9).
movements as 'forerunners of Melanesian nationalism' (Guiart 1951b; Worsley 1957:255). Similarly, Lawrence (1955:20; 1964) referred to cargo cult as 'an embryonic nationalist movement', and Mead (1964:197) commented that 'Whereas cargo cults had become endemic in the New Guinea area, political movements were epidemic in the immediate postwar atmosphere'. This interpretation of events was shared by such other prominent and enlightened observers of the Papua New Guinea scene as Belshaw (1950), Bodrogi (1951), Hogbin (1958), Rowley (1965), and Brown (1966). Indeed Hogbin (1958:232) warned that 'The governments of Melanesia may in the future find themselves confronted with a Mau-Mau cult or ... with a serious attempt to obtain political independence', while Rowley optimistically saw 'The solution ... being worked out largely through the extension of the Local Government Councils' (1965:186, italics added).

Developments in Papua New Guinea in the 1970s could have been interpreted as supporting such a viewpoint: at a superficial level, micronationalist movements proliferated in the period leading up to independence, and in at least some respects (the emphasis on communal self-help, local political autonomy, and traditional values, for example) most did express an emerging Melanesian nationalism. More specifically, in several instances movements confronted the colonial government or had prominent members contest elections. There was even the suggestion (see pp. 430) that micronationalist movements might provide a basis for political action at the national level, which suggests that some people within micronationalist politics saw the movements in 'proto-nationalist' terms, and in 1973 the Pangu Pati, the leading nationalist political movement in the country, invited representatives of movements to the Pangu Pati Congress. Thus, within this volume, Grosart argues (pp.174, 149) that Mataunganism was both a nationalist and a micronationalist movement, Adams attributes to the Ahi Association 'strong nationalist sentiments' (p.240), and Gerritsen describes the ideology of Damuni as "early independence" nationalism' (pp.311).

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1 It was not, however, universally accepted; see, for example, Stanner (1958) and Jarvie (1964:61). A more recent critic of the hypothesis is Smith (1979:chapter 2).

2 David Hegarty, personal communication, 1976.
As against this, however: first, the spread of micronationalist movements, and the form they took, can be explained (as we have attempted above) in other terms, relating more to 'primordial' differentiation in the period leading up to, and in the period following, independence than to an emerging pre-independence nationalism; secondly, rather than metamorphose into segments of a fully-fledged nationalist movement, the tendency has been for micronationalist movements simply to lose their initial impetus and dissipate their support. The possible significant exceptions to this latter generalization are the Mataungan Association and Papua Besena, both of which have participated successfully in national politics; but even these two movements have remained essentially local or regional in their orientation. And the idea of a pan micronationalist group in national politics was never made operational, and was effectively rejected in 1974 by the Constitutional Planning Committee, of which the North Solomons' John Momis and the Mataungan Association's John Kaputin were prominent members (see p.27 above). Thus without denying that an emerging broader Melanesian nationalism may have been one element of the micronationalist phenomenon in the 1970s, and bearing in mind also that a period of colonial struggle might have brought micronationalist movements together in a more concrete way than in fact occurred (cf. Adams's comment p.73 above), the general conclusion must be that micronationalism in Papua New Guinea cannot be seen simply as a transitional phase of 'nation-building', but rather reflects the continuing strength of localism, regionalism, and ethnicity in Papua New Guinean society. To the extent that micronationalism in Papua New Guinea has been a revolutionary force, in other words, the micronationalists have sought their new order not so much in the overthrow or capture of the colonial regime, as Worsley and others seem to have anticipated, as in withdrawal from it.

Going from the particular to the general, in retrospect the view expressed by Worsley and others might be seen as belonging to a more general school of thought, dominant in much of the 'development' literature of the 1950s and 1960s, which saw political and social change as an evolutionary process in which particularisms like micronationalism and ethnicity inevitably gave way in the face of emerging nationalism, and in which (in some formulations) social class superseded ethnic and local
divisions as a fundamental basis for political organization.¹ But the tendency to regard micronationalist and similar movements as a feature of transition, by aggregation, from tribal societies to an integrated nation-state underrated the persistence of ethnic and regional divisions, not only in the new states but in the longer established states of Europe and North America as well. In Africa, Asia and Latin America micronationalist-type movements have not disappeared, despite the frequent efforts of independent governments to eliminate them, and in Europe and North America there has been a resurgence of what Birch (1978:331-332) refers to as 'minority nationalist movements'.²

Reflecting the historical facts, from the 1960s a number of scholars rejected the evolutionist idea of 'nation-building'³, arguing not only that (in the words of Melson and Wolpe 1970:112) 'communalism may ... be a persistent feature of social change', but that

To ask whether new national identities will replace or be built upon existing "primordial" identities is to miss the point that these "primordial" identities are themselves in the process of being created. For many of the same factors generating national identities ... are generating sub-national identities as well (Weiner 1973:253).

This view was well elaborated by Heeger (1974). In non-Western societies, Heeger argued (ibid.:5), 'Social change, far from being inevitable and ultimately modernizing, is sporadic, erratic and unpredictable in its consequences'. In much the same terms as Shils (1963) had employed a decade earlier, Heeger characterized 'underdeveloped societies' as highly segmentary ('segmented by region, community, kinship and the pace of social change', ibid.:23) and their politics as amorphous and inherently

¹ For a recent formulation of such an 'evolutionary' viewpoint, with specific reference to Papua New Guinea, see Townsend (1980). Townsend sees 'the present disengagement in some rural areas' as 'a transitory phase' (ibid.:16), preceding eventual incorporation into the world system.

² Also see Smith (1979) and Gourewitch (1979).

unstable, being held together at the centre by a tenuous cohesion of political elites.

Much of the 'post-evolutionist' writing on political and social change in new states has drawn on experiences in Asia and Africa, and this has influenced the respective emphases which different authors place on such questions as ethnicity, stability and the role of elites. But the general emphasis on the persistence of segmentary elements in the political process, and on the importance of understanding these elements if one is to comprehend the nature of political and social change, has an obvious relevance for Papua New Guinea (and one which Papua New Guineans have not been slow to realize).

Conclusion

What, then, is the likely future of micronationalism? If the analysis of Heeger and others is broadly correct - and I believe it is - then we may expect to see movements of this type playing a continuing role in the expression of regional, communal and ethnic elements in Papua New Guinean society. Obviously their future form and activities will depend largely on the way in which the country's political and social institutions develop. Of particular importance will be the institution of provincial government: in part at least, the introduction of provincial government was seen by its proponents as a means of containing the centrifugal tendencies which micronationalism seemed to present; in fact, however, provincial government may provide a favourable environment for micronationalist movements - especially in view of the decision in several provinces 'not to have' political parties in provincial elections.

It must remain a strong possibility that micronationalist movements will turn increasingly to more conventional methods of political and economic activity and thus be gradually incorporated within the system, at the provincial if not at the national level. Equally plausible, however,

1 See, for example, Somare (1970).

2 For one thing, it helps explain the non-development of a coherent national political party system.
is that micronationalist movements (and also perhaps cultic movements) will continue to emerge, sporadically, as a form of protest among groups who consider themselves relatively deprived, slighted or threatened.

For the country's political leaders the central problem will continue to be much as it has been over the past decade or so, namely one of minimizing the unproductively disruptive effects of movements locally while maximizing their undoubted potential as innovative indigenous responses to political and social change.
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Conclusion

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