Given the limitations of the school system (in 1980, 79.5 percent of that age-group was not at school), the restricted employment opportunities within the province, the apparently declining demand for labor in traditional out-migration destinations, and the tendency for young people to drift into town, this poses significant problems for social planners in the East Sepik as elsewhere. Problems of youth are perhaps best considered under several broader headings (e.g., economic opportunities, social stratification, law and order), but the evidence of the national government's priorities (in 1980 a National Youth Movement Program was established; youth development was deemed to be a decentralized function) suggests that at least we need a baseline study of youth in the East Sepik. (A Youth Coordination Centre has been established in the East Sepik, though at the end of 1982 the province had received less in NYMP grants than any other province. There is now an Urban Youth Program in Wewak, in which some thirty groups [two thousand persons] were involved in early 1983.)

Some Big Questions

Before the 1970s, most political scientists writing about "political development" or "modernization" had in mind an essentially evolutionary model of change. In regarding development as a progression through historically determined phases, modernization theorists shared a Eurocentric intellectual tradition with Marx and with anthropologists of an earlier generation (cf. Hogbin 1958:15). The demise of evolutionary models, both of the right and of the left, has made analysis of change a more complex task. To avoid complexity, some recent commentators on Papua New Guinea have adopted what amounts to a *devolutionary* model, seeing the country as having been in a state of steady decline since independence; in support of this view they cite declining agricultural productivity, reduction in the level of provision of government services, increasing lawlessness, and a widening gap between a privileged few in the modern sector and the rural masses.

Most fieldworkers would probably acknowledge some elements of such a picture, but it is obviously not acceptable as a general description. In fact what we are now witnessing, in the East Sepik as elsewhere, is a complex process of change and adjustment in which developments set in train during the colonial period are working themselves out in relation to traditional cultural patterns and within the context of an independent Melanesian state. Colonialism had a profound impact on most Sepik societies: it destroyed institutions and patterns of behavior, some irrevocably, and it established new patterns of behavior, some irreversibly, and introduced new institutions. It is well to remember, however, that for most people the period of intense contact with the colonial regime was fairly short and its values and behavior patterns only poorly absorbed. Moreover, the level of activity sustained in the later preindependence and early postindependence days depended on a high level of external funding unlikely to last forever (especially considering the present climate of opinion on Australian aid to the region).

Whether the East Sepik is in, or approaching, what Howlett (1973) described for the Goroka Valley as "terminal development," "the infinite pause"; whether the conditions of village people will improve, as is envisaged by the ADB; or whether conditions will steadily deteriorate, as is suggested by some prophets of doom (within the village as well as beyond)— these are big questions. There are not likely to be any simple answers, but if Sepik research is indeed to be relevant to modern Papua New Guinea they are questions that must be addressed.

14/ The Importance of Being Equal: The Colonial and Postcolonial Experience in the Torricelli Foothills

Bryant Allen

Less than a hundred years ago a foreigner, probably a Javanese bird-shooter, crossed the Torricelli Mountains and encountered Kombio- and Wam-speaking peoples living along the northern edge of a strip of densely settled country on the southern fall of the coastal range. To the west his compatriots had for some years been penetrating deep into the Yellow, Sand, Horden, and North River catchments through the Bewani Mountains from Jayapura, camping for some months and shooting bird of paradise (Cheesman [n.d. (?1938)] and Aitape Patrol Report no. 3, 1932–33, South Wapi extending to the Sepik River, August to October 1932 [Commonwealth Archives AS13/26, Item 21]). By 1900 Chinese were established at Aitape, trading in competition with the Neu Guinea Kompagnie and "prepared to risk their necks trading well outside the competence of the law" (Rowley 1958:74). They were well known south of the coastal ranges; Loa, of Sambu village (Kombio), reports:

> When the Chinese, and later the white men, came here everyone ran away into the forest. They went and hid in various places in the forest. They said, "Shut up! Hide well and no talking. Quiet! No talking whatsoever! Hide!" When they came, if they heard us talking, they came into the forest and chased us. They chased the older men away and grabbed women and raped them, and held young boys to take them to the government station. They caught me like this.

Loa, then about eleven years old, was taken to Aitape and sent to sweep the streets of Rabaul.[1] The Chinese were followed over the Torricellis by the botanist Rudolf von Schlechter (1903) and by German recruiters, including two, Stendel and Kommling, who were killed in the Kombio area. This led to a bungled Australian-led punitive expedition in 1918 that resulted in the deaths of at least twelve villagers and the destruction of two villages (Brig. G. J. Johnson to the Secretary, Department of Defense, Ex-German New Guinea, Miscellaneous Reports, May-June 1918, January-March 1919, Australian War Memorial, Canberra; interview, Dosalai, Tong village [Kombio] 1972). These events sent a wave of fear rippling through villages to the south, as Kombio-speakers fled south and sought shelter with Urat. Urat-speakers in turn established substantial hamlets off the main ridges, which remained occupied until very recently. The last of a generation alive or born during this period of early colonial contact have died, and their children, preferring life in the larger villages, abandoned the former refuges and moved back to the main ridge in 1980.

These were experiences of such magnitude that I find it extremely difficult to imagine what they meant to the adults alive at the time and what effects they have had on subsequent generations. In the Sepik, until very recently, inadequate recognition has been given to the manner in which the colonial experience transformed traditional patterns of behavior and continues to influence the way in which the present generation confronts a world in which, from almost every viewpoint, the terms of exchange are unequal. Ethnographies justly renowned for their depth and richness of detail have concentrated on traditional life and passed over the colonial experience in a few pages, almost as if it were but a slight disruption of the normal train of events.[2] On the other hand, increasing numbers of Sepik researchers are incorporating modern historical perspectives. Gewertz (1983) has produced an excellent example of such a study, and a number of the articles in this volume discuss the influence of colonialism and rapid change on Sepik societies (e.g., Scaglion, Roscoe, Josephides, Lutkehaus, Errington and Gewertz, Smith, Dye, and Schindlbeck).

I wish to argue in this paper that colonialism is a critical explanatory variable in any attempt to understand modern village life, including contemporary "traditional" activities. I am using the

term "colonialism" in the broadest possible sense to encompass all foreign intervention in local affairs, including the penetration of the market economy and the neocolonialism inherent in modern Papua New Guinea development.

The characterization of all Papua New Guinea societies as variants of Sahlins's (1962–63) "big-man" model has never sat comfortably on Sepik societies (Forge 1970*a*), and the characterization of them as falling along a continuum from "egalitarian" to "hierarchical" (Mitchell 1978) is not particularly satisfying. There is little doubt, however, that the foothills societies of the Sepik were deeply concerned with equality and balance between men and groups of men and with inequality and imbalance between men and women. From the Umeda in the west (Gell 1975) to Kairiru Island in the east (Smith 1978 and in this volume) and including the Wape (Mitchell 1978 and in this volume), the Urat (Allen 1976), the Ilahita Arapesh (Tuzin 1980 and in this volume), and the Abelam (Forge 1970*a* and in this volume, Scaglion 1981 and in this volume, Huber-Greub in this volume), village societies exhibited features of duality in which hypothetically identical groups were ritually opposed in exchanges and in many cases the men of one group were responsible for the initiation of the sons of the other. Theoretically, the exchanges between individuals within each group and between groups were to be equal and balanced; if the relationship was inherently always unbalanced, the superior-inferior positions were to be regularly passed back and forth between the groups. Within this pattern the struggle for leadership was often fierce and unrelenting, with no individual having any greater right than any other to positions of power and influence. On the other hand, men in all these societies were concerned with maintaining a superior position over women, many of them claiming that men had usurped the power that women once held over men.

While there are undoubtedly many exceptions to this general pattern (see, e.g., Lewis 1980), they are insignificant when compared with the attitudes and behavior of the foreigners with whom these societies came into contact as a result of colonization. Foreigners refused to enter into balanced and equal relationships and instead maintained, commonly by force, a superior and dominating position. This situation set in train a series of practical and intellectual crises in Sepik societies that continue into the present, when inequalities which first became apparent in the early 1900s have become entrenched and are worsening. The history of the Sepik foothills from 1920 on is largely the history of individuals and groups attempting to meet these crises or take advantage of the opportunities they seemed to offer to redress the imbalances and inequalities created. It is important to understand how Sepik communities responded, which institutions were most vulnerable and which most resilient, and to seek in the historical pattern explanations of the reactions of Sepik people today to the policies and plans of their own provincial and national governments. To do this would certainly be to study Sepik cultures in and for a modern Papua New Guinea.

In an attempt to demonstrate the significance of the colonial experience, I will provide a description of events from immediately preceding and following colonization to the present and examine some responses to them in village communities of the Dreikikir District, on the western boundary of the East Sepik Province, with some minor forays into the surrounding region. Strathern (1982) studies this process in the Western Highlands by examining social inequalities between men and other men, between men and women, and between groups in precolonial times and then investigating to what extent colonialism resulted in changes. I will, with much less competence, examine the inequalities between villages and, within villages, between groups of men, men and other men, and men and women. I will do this in a historical context beginning with the immediately precolonial period.

Colonial contact across the coastal ranges was uneven in time and space, but in general it began along the crest of the ranges in the early 1900s and spread south. Well before face-to-face contact with foreigners occurred in the inland villages, however, quite radical changes took place. For example, it is almost certain that in the late 1800s smallpox spread inland. It is reported from Aitape in 1890 by Parkinson (Swadling 1979:43), and oral histories from Rauit (Lewis 1975 and personal communication) and from the Urat villages west of Dreikikir (Allen 1983) appear to be describing the disease. At Rauit it is said to have caused the abandonment of one hamlet and the scattering of some clans to other villages. In the Urat villages into which it spread it is credited with killing more than half of the people.[3] Such a disease must have had quite radical effects on village populations, social organization, and land use and settlement patterns.

In the Dreikikir area, another portent of the changes to come was the appearance of small

pieces of sharpened steel, porcelain rings, and "dogs'" teeth. These were traded inland from the coast and gave coastal and mountain peoples increased influence over those to the south, bringing about a reversal of the existing situation. Prior to colonialism, most trade took place along an east-west axis inland of the ranges, and most small mountain communities, similar to that described by Mead in 1932, were peripheral to the trading and ceremonial exchanges centered on the more powerful and resource-rich Urat, Wam, Bumbita, and Muhiang villages located along the foothills at around two to four hundred meters above sea level (Allen 1976). This new north-south pattern was to become even more important following the imposition of colonial rule and was to remain in place until the end of World War II.

Another aspect of the increased influence of coastal communities over the inland area was blackbirding raids by Chinese, using coastal men armed with firearms. Young boys, properly speaking children, were taken by force by small parties of coastal men who held off anguished parents with shotguns. Girls were also taken and were married to men in the mountain and coastal villages or, in two cases, to Chinese. Whole villages scattered into bush hamlets and in at least one case were never reestablished (cf. Scaglion in this volume).

By 1912 German colonial control extended only to the crest of the coastal range, but young men from the uncontrolled southern villages who had been taken by raiding parties and who had worked on a plantation for three years and learned Tok Pisin were appointed *tultul* (interpreters) of their villages and sent home to spread the word about the power of the German empire. Some must have been less than twenty years old. Their appointment was the beginning of thirty years of struggle between individuals seeking power by taking advantage of opportunities generated by colonial intrusion and individuals who gained power through customary channels. In this immediate precolonial period, many traditional leaders were unable to comprehend the dimensions of the forces which they were confronting, and many accounts of contacts between villagers and Chinese and German recruiters contain descriptions of young tultul preventing and explaining the futility of a physical attack, acting as mediators between the two groups and gaining considerable prestige in doing so. Other accounts describe traditional leaders withdrawing totally from all contact with the intruders to avoid having to acknowledge the influence and power of the young upstarts. Other young men from the crest of the range were taught by Chinese how to use shotguns and returned home to shoot bird of paradise. "Hired" in a manner similar to sorcerers, they also used their guns on people. One, Mahetei of Arisili, later became a paramount *luluai* or *weitpus* (appointed local government official) and was described in 1950 as an outstanding traditional leader who "holds great sway" (Dreikikir Patrol Report, 5/6/50–13/6/50). He was in fact one of a new generation of leaders who were able to mediate between the village and the outside world and who, if shrewd and bold enough, were able to gain power well beyond the sphere of influence of leaders prior to colonial contact.

A village became officially "controlled" and part of the colony when its inhabitants were "lined," their names written into a census book, and officials appointed as representatives of the colonial power. Mahanung of Ngahmbole village recalls, "Thompson was a big man, fat with a beard. He took our names. He had police with him. They shot at that coconut there, you can still see the hole they made. The *kiap* [government officer] said, 'Don't try to fight us. We are too strong.'" Colonial "control" spread south from the crest of the range to reach all Urat villages by 1926, Urim and the two northernmost Kwanga villages by 1929, and all but the southernmost Kwanga villages by 1941. Today Urat men have two methods of describing their villages. The first, gradually disappearing as the old men who grew up with it die, refers to the precolonial village clusters; the second refers to the colonial pattern, which continues to be followed in all government activities such as censuses, tax collection, and elections.

The matter of "lining" and name taking goes deeper than is apparent at first glance. At the very first census, people did not understand what was occurring. They were lined up by police using an interpreter (one of the men discussed above) from a village to the north. The form of the line was set by the Australian patrol officer, and the interpreter and police pushed, shoved, and cuffed people into some semblance of what was required. Apart from the violence done to the villagers themselves, which previously no family leader would have accepted without retaliation, "lining" also did violence to the actual pattern of human life in the village, similar in many ways perhaps to the violence we do to it when we try and force it into some structuralist-functionalist model or other. The officer wanted biological families, and so men, women, and children,

some of whom were now resident in other villages, had to come back and "line" with their "proper" families. Binghoiye of Ngahmbole village gives a good account of these happenings:

> My father had died and I had gone to Musingwik to live with another father. . . . They called out. They wanted us to line. I wanted to give my name on top [at Musingwik] but Hautart from Whaleng [the paramount luluai responsible for all of the Urat at this time, a speaker of Yambes, Kombio, Urat, and Wam, resident at Whaleng] spoke. He said, "I think, child, you cannot stay here with your brothers and mother. You must go back to your father's village." Hautart had been to work at the coast. Now he came with the kiap. So they chased me out and I came back here. . . . We lined up. We were naked. Even our fathers and mothers stood there with their genitals exposed.

And what did the taking of names signify? Which names were given and why? Why did this apparently extremely powerful foreigner wish the names to be called at all? Even today, some people speak in esoteric ways about the names of the ancestors and their own names, which are held in "The Book." How does the knowledge that his name is written in the government book influence the behavior of a modern Sepik villager? I do not know, but I believe these are not unimportant questions. I have witnessed a small group of villagers angry that their names had been badly distorted during transcription to the electoral roll, but I could not later find the reason underlying their concern. They seemed, however, to have a quite mystical view of the purpose of the roll and the recording of names.

During the 1930s patrols from Aitape visited villages about once every three years, but even then the visits were unwelcome and people cooperated only because they had no alternative. Officers tried to settle disputes and enforce colonial regulations relating to housing, burial practices, and village hygiene. The "law" as it became known, was ill-understood. The Tok Pisin word *loa* now has connotations far beyond that of legislation and is commonly used in a mystical sense to refer to a body of revelatory knowledge in the possession of foreigners. People rebuilt houses and constructed latrines when required, but they went to some lengths to avoid burying their dead in deep trenches. Exposure of the body on an easily observable platform gave way to placing of the dead in shallow, open graves inside houses (Allen 1983). Punishment for this practice was destruction of the house by fire, and the last house was burned for this offense in the Urat in 1953.

Close behind, or not uncommonly before, the kiap came the labor recruiter, now licensed and controlled. Boys and men volunteered to go see the world beyond the horizon, and others were "volunteered" by their elders. It was an act that took great courage. Ted Fulton, a gold miner on the Maprik field, went recruiting in the Wape in 1938 and knew better than to leave his new recruits alone at night to abscond, their courage evaporated (E. Fulton Papers, PMB Microfilm):

> Monday 25th (Anzac Day) . . . 2 pm. Boys returned with 12 boys (5 from Wisa, 4 Koam, 1 Moonambil, 2 Muku). Fitted laplaps and completed purchase. Great excitement and many relatives accompanying. No signs of tears this time and villagers seem satisfied at seeing others return.
>
> Tuesday 26th. Kept boys in house under supervision. 2 am went to inspect and guards Karti and Mangini fast asleep. . . . Rather a strain getting up at night to watch boys.

But even in 1937, on the fringes of controlled territory, men were prepared to face shotguns to prevent their children from being taken, as Charles Gough's death near Ilahita demonstrates.

A third group of foreigners to enter the arena during this period were German missionaries who visited temporary camps (see Taylor Huber in this volume). It is difficult to generalize about their behavior; while one raided ceremonial houses and pulled out secret paraphernalia and showed them to women, beat people, and burned houses, another is remembered as a quiet, nonviolent man. Again, I do not know what people perceived in the missionaries' activities. Some sent their children to the bible schools, but lessons were conducted in Tok Pisin, and the cane was used frequently enough to drive many children away after a few days. The missionaries selected and trained pastors whom they put back into the field to supervise the camps and run bible schools, thus creating another position with status and prestige outside of the traditional system of leadership.

A fourth group of foreigners who came into close contact with villagers during this period were the members of geological field survey parties employed by Oil Search Limited. Between 1934 and 1939 they surveyed an area from Matapau along the ranges north of Maprik and then south and west through the Wam, Kombio, Urat, and Wapi to Maimai. Although they also used local labor for their supply lines and purchased food from village people, they were interested neither in trying to enforce colonial regulations nor in buying and selling people. They were better-educated and more aware of their prejudices. Writing recently from his diaries of that time, Jack Fryer (personal communication) says, "It was humbling to realise that our new friends [carriers and laborers] had little or no vice, greed and lust, and no shame as we know it. Fear and anger, yes. What I particularly liked was their sense of humour." But men working for Oil Search were sometimes caned for offenses, and minor physical assaults occurred, not with any regularity but often enough for there to be no doubt over which group considered itself the superior.

Men who were indentured as laborers usually worked on either the Gazelle Peninsula plantations or the Morobe goldfields. During the period of their indenture they experienced a totally new form of social organization, worked to a clock (see also Smith 1982*a*), and learned a wide range of new skills. The great wealth of the foreigners, their numbers, and their links to sources of wealth overseas became apparent. The position of laborers at the very bottom of the colonial hierarchy was deeply impressed upon them; Misiaiyai (Anton) of Moseng village reports, "When I came out of the bush, I was like an idiot. When I saw how the Europeans lived my head spun. I saw their houses from the outside. Then, I became a servant and saw inside their houses. I saw their beds, their chairs and their tables. Their food and clothes. I thought these things were good. I saw the stores too. I was amazed at the things in them."

This period up until 1945 reinforced and deepened changes which had begun in the early 1900s. Coastal and mountain villages became more powerful, village officials gained more power, and, as old men died, the offices of village leader and appointed village official resided increasingly with the same men. Villagers seem to have selected men to be luluai who they believed would not become authoritarian and dictatorial, but the power of the office sometimes went to a man's head. The positions were semipermanent, and the kiap would change a luluai only with reluctance. A formerly fluid leadership situation became increasingly rigid; younger men challenging the rule of the luluai were challenging the rule of the colonial government. Physical challenges became outlawed. Ambitious young men commonly took repeated labor contracts and sought their fortunes elsewhere.

Little information exists about the effects on initiation and exchange of the loss of young men to the labor trade. Some men returned home between contracts to discharge their ritual obligations and to get married; others left and never returned. At Tumam their land and their positions in the ritual structures are still held for them in case they should return. An initiation I observed in 1978 at Kwatengisi, a Kwanga village, was interrupted when the elders of those being initiated protested that men who had not "seen the *tambaran* [spirits]" were assisting the initiators. This was unprecedented, but after some discussion it was decided that there was no alternative. The initiating group was so depleted by absentees and the elders so aged that the labor of uninitiated men was needed to continue the ceremony. Presumably other pragmatic adjustments were made to the pre-1945 traditions. The effect of changes on women during this period also remains a matter for speculation. It is likely that they were required to contribute more labor to subsistence production, and the loss of young men to the plantations almost certainly imposed stresses on mothers and sisters.

While individual communities faced their own crises and made accommodations in the period up to 1942, the war years of 1942–45 focused the crisis of colonialism for all communities. Although it was a uniquely horrifying event, it was in many ways merely the extreme extension and application of forces that had long been in play. People could no longer avoid facing the questions posed by colonial intrusion. What were the sources of the foreigners' power? Why did they refuse to engage in relationships based on equality? Was the superior-inferior relationship a permanent one? What could be done about it?

The way in which these questions were posed and explored by individuals and communities during the war is poorly researched and understood. Even at the superficial level of events, our knowledge is poor. We do know, for example, that Aitape was looted and coastal men came inland and terrorized villagers. Two priests were killed near But, and a European recruiter, Hook, was killed by coastal men near Dreikikir. This response to the withdrawal of Australian colonial control was not found elsewhere in Papua New Guinea, except in Oro Province. Australian officers blamed disruptions to village life on the mis-

sions (D. M. Fienberg [Fenbury], Aitape Patrol Report no. 4, 1944). Two years later local men who were involved were executed by firing squad before the assembled populations of all the nearby villages. Armed men attached to an intelligence-gathering operation abducted a number of southern Kwanga women, and when men tried to prevent another's being taken eight men were shot and killed. In 1943 dysentery caused declines in West Sepik village populations of up to 30 percent, and in battle zones sharp falls in populations occurred. Over fourteen hundred people died in the Urim and Urat census divisions alone between 1941 and 1945 (Allen 1983).

Elsewhere, Sepik indentured laborers trapped by the war on the Gazelle Peninsula were taken to Buna by the Japanese to work for them as carriers in their disastrous Kokoda Trail campaign. Others fought in the Papua and New Guinean Infantry Battalions. They were trained to use modern weapons to kill Japanese and took part in "disturbances" which resulted in proper uniforms and better pay rates; they saw inexperienced Australian troops fail their baptism by fire, mixed with Australian, American, and Japanese troops and with Papua New Guineans from all parts of the country, and experienced the military organization of large bodies of men and the massive amounts of ordnance which the war brought to Papua New Guinea (Nelson 1980).

The overall impact of the war in the Sepik is by no means clear. Wartime events suggest that people at first tried to gain the greatest advantage from an uncertain situation and then, when caught in the crossfire between two modern armies, tried to avoid, as much as possible, contact with either side. The psychological impact was considerable; at Dreikikir men still hyperbolize in speeches about the government by saying they will not yield on some point or another "even if they shoot us, like they did in the war." On the other hand, some men gained from their experiences. The war sharpened the differences between the generations that had developed before the war. Men who had achieved established positions of leadership before 1942 were confronted after the war by a group of young men with different experiences and ideas, determined to challenge the prewar patterns. Ex-servicemen and ex-policemen in particular refused to settle back under the old regime. They built new coastal-style houses on sites away from the main villages and almost immediately came into conflict with village officials and young Australian officers. They argued that the old traditions were no longer relevant and that the power of the foreigners lay not in the old New Guinea spirits but in something known as *bisnis*. It was possible, they said, to produce commodities from village lands that could be exchanged for money. This was a source of the foreigners' power. If they did this successfully, they would achieve the respect of the foreigners who had formerly treated them like the "bush kanakas" they were.

The main commodity in question was rice. The full story of rice in the Sepik, too long to relate here, begins in the Northern Province and can be traced through the mixing of Sepik men and Papuans in the police and army. The driving force behind it was Pita Simogun of Dagau, a war hero and sergeant major of police who during the war had urged Sepik policemen to resign and return home to develop their village communities when the war was over. He sent information through a network of ex-policemen which spread from Dagau to Angoram, Ambunti, Lumi, and beyond.[4] At Supari another ex-policeman, Augen of Womsis, who was married to a woman from Wareli, started a small rice-growing enterprise with guidance from Simogun. He was assisted by Nalowas, an Albinama man.[5] The Dreikikir *bisnis-bois*, as they were known, established their own hierarchies, which spread well beyond their own villages. Anton of Moseng village recalls,

> I looked for smart men in each village I visited. I told them, "I want a man who can withstand the scrutiny of everyone. Who can work, work hard. Who can speak well and who is intelligent. I am not concerned about flash clothes or a nice shiny skin. I want a good brain!" I looked for that sort of man and when I saw one I told him, "You are the committee man for this village. You organise them here. Organise rice growing."

Similarly, Kokomo of Emul village reports,

> We went around holding meetings and telling people about rice. I appointed committee-men in the Urat, Wam, and Bumbita areas. I didn't take rice around with me. I told them to go to Supari for that. I told them it was a good thing; that the government approved; that they should not listen to the luluais who did not like rice.

Within five years from 1950, all except the most distant mountain Anomakei villages had planted a crop of rice (Allen 1977). People were keen to challenge their village officials and the government, and many were just as pleased to reject, at least temporarily, all of the old ways.

Some younger officers supported the village officials and threatened the rice leaders with jail, but their superiors gave quiet encouragement to the new movement, together with warnings to stay within the law. According to Anton,

> Many of the big men were afraid of rice. They said it was bad. "What if this rice destroys our food gardens, the tambaran, the yam exchanges? Get rid of it, quickly." But we would not; so they ran to the kiap and told him, "It is bad, it is wrong. We will lose the ways of our ancestors." They were good men, but they were "stone-knives," men of the old ways.

Said Mwalhiyer of Ngahmbole village,

> I told them, "Listen to me. Now you are angry. But later you will be happy. If you don't listen now, later you will be sorry. You will remain as your mother and father lived. Stop these exchanges. Stop these initiations. Stop following the ways of our ancestors. That way is no longer any good. Now we must follow the way of the white men. That way we will become strong and rich." These were my own ideas. We had to stop the old ways and establish bisnis of our own if we were to succeed. . . . I was just a kanaka. I had never been away. But I could see what was happening.

Rice was the first crop cultivated solely for sale. New factors of access and location, which had begun to make their presence felt with the establishment of colonial control, became critical. Maprik, inland and to the east, had replaced Aitape as the administrative center, and a jeep road had been roughly pushed from Maprik to Dreikikir. The axis of trade and communications swung back to its precolonial orientation. The northern villages lost their positions as gateways to the coast and slipped into peripheral obscurity, while villages near the new road, which led to the rice-buying points and hullers, were advantaged in terms of marketing their rice. With no traditional sanctions or taboos to stop them, women as well as men became heavily involved in planting rice. Women were particularly important because only they could carry sufficient amounts of the harvest to the places where hullers had been set up by the fledgling cooperatives, the government's belated attempt to formalize the rice-growing activities.

Although some of the older generation joined the rice movement, many totally rejected it and, it is said, mounted a full-scale attack using sorcery on the rice leaders. The most important rice leaders hired their own *glasman* (clairvoyant) to sniff out the magical assaults before they could do any damage. The rice movement was brought down, however, not by the supernatural but by the laws of economics and marketing. The scale of production was minuscule and the marketing arrangements chaotic. Many gardens were planted communally by large numbers of people who received almost nothing when the harvest was sold and the proceeds divided among them. Finally, in many villages the women brought rice planting to a stop by refusing to carry the harvest to the buying points.

There is no doubt whatsoever that people had expected to transform their lives with this activity, and their disappointment was extreme. The appearance and rapid spread in 1956 of a spectacular millenarian movement involving mass hysteria, frenetic dancing, marching, the raising of the recently dead, and attempts to communicate with those already in the cemetery cannot have been solely fortuitous. Rice growing had caused people, particularly women, to travel farther from home than normal and mix more with people from other areas when camping around buying points. The leaders of the millenarian movement had been involved in the rice movement, some giving protection to the rice leaders, and their message was rapidly spread across the area. The source of most of the ideas in this movement, Wahute, of Selni village, had accompanied an Oil Search geologist-turned-guerrilla during the war and traveled widely in the Sepik. He had also come into conflict with the Catholic mission:

> The priest did not like me. I had argued with him before. He did not teach the children properly. He taught no English, only Pidgin. And hymn singing. He was stopping us from progressing. I threw the blackboard out the door. The father wrote to the kiap. He said I had told him I had died and had been resurrected. That was not true. God's spirit entered me at times, that was all. Then my eyes were clear. Now they are not.

Wahute also heard voices and had seizures, and these behaviors were contagious. People who did not spontaneously shake, collapse, and see visions could be induced to do so by jumping, deep breathing, and having leaves waved before their eyes. Customary sexual divisions did not apply. Women were deeply involved in all aspects of the movement. They proved more susceptible than

men to hypnosis, and many of them saw visions. Only women were "raised from the dead." Some men and women experimented for a short time with sexual promiscuity in association with rituals, but they remain very secretive about this today. All bones, skulls, magical paraphernalia, and bodily decoration were supposed to be destroyed, but many men buried small durable items such as shells. Dreikikir Patrol Post was unmanned, and the activities were kept secret from the Evangelical missionaries who had established themselves at Dreikikir in 1952. Only when men at Bongos tried to kill the Catholic priest, who they believed was interfering in their attempts to contact the dead, did the movement come to the attention of the government. It was then swiftly put down, and the instigators were imprisoned for up to three years. A number of them served their sentences by extending the Telefomin airstrip. On their return from prison they had to walk from Maprik to Dreikikir. The journey coincided with a sudden outbreak of millenarian activity in villages all along their route, including Ilahita, where it took a government patrol to put a stop to things (Dreikikir Patrol Report no. 1, 1958–59).

After the suppression of the millenarian movement there appears to have been a period of adjustment and accommodation, almost as if the expenditure of energy first in rice, then in millenarianism had exhausted people. The leaders of both movements had failed publicly. The rice leaders had argued that Europeans had revealed the secret of their power and wealth in payment of the great debt of suffering created during the defeat of the Japanese, but most people now believed that the foreigners had deceived them. The millenarian leaders claimed that they had supernaturally had revealed to them the foreigners' secrets, but people now believed that either the revelations were wrong or the foreigners had acted quickly to suppress rituals which, if carried to their conclusions, would have been successful. During this period village officials regained some of their lost power through the enforcement of a program of road and bridge building which required the compulsory labor of all able-bodied adults. Some traditional activities were taken up again, but there was a significant increase in labor migration in the late 1950s, with many villages reported to be overrecruited.

It was decisions in Washington and Canberra that restored much lost prestige to the former rice leaders. On the recommendation of the World Bank, robusta coffee was introduced to lowland Papua New Guinea as a smallholder crop in 1964. Government extension officers rejuvenated the failed rural progress societies of the 1950s, and the bisnis leaders, now with full government backing, began to organize the planting of coffee. Rural progress societies became amalgamated into the Sepik Producers' Co-operative Association (SPCA), one of the most successful marketing cooperatives in the country, and the former bisnisbois became the directors.

By 1971 coffee sales were providing an estimated 60 percent of cash incomes in the East Sepik. Other sources of cash at that time were road work, gold mining, trading, food marketing, airstrip maintenance, and the sale of building materials (Weinand, Young, and Lea 1972). Because all coffee is sold to one of two cooperatives, it is possible fairly reliably to attribute coffee sales (and hence cash incomes from coffee) to villages in the Maprik Sub-Province (table 1, fig. 1). In 1971 and 1972 the highest per capita production of coffee was concentrated west of Maprik astride the Sepik Highway. Even then people in this area were receiving incomes from coffee fifty times greater than those in the areas of lowest production. In the ten years to 1981 this pattern of inequality intensified. Production increased three times in the highest-producing villages but fell in the lowest-producing ones, so that in 1981 the former were receiving per capita incomes from coffee three hundred times larger than the latter. While a recent increased interest in cacao may account for some of the decline in coffee production from some villages, areas such as Kaboibus, Tamaui, and the North Wosera were not heavily involved in cacao planting in 1981.

Despite the apparent success of coffee in some areas between Maprik and Dreikikir, per capita incomes remain low. The average per capita income from coffee in the top five coffee-producing census divisions in 1981 was around K29 (A$37). The rural minimum wage for 1981 was approximately K1,352 (A$1,750). Even if we assume that a rural laborer supported eight persons on his wage, per capita income in his family was still six times what a coffee producer in the highest-producing villages in the East Sepik received in 1981. In addition, coffee prices, and hence incomes, fluctuate with the market price. For much of 1980 coffee growers received over K1.10 per kilogram, but by August 1981 the price had fallen to 0.64 toea, about half that of the previous year.

Although the wage laborer must purchase food for his family from his wages, the village coffee

TABLE 1
PER CAPITA COFFEE PRODUCTION (KG) BY CENSUS DIVISION, 1971–72, 1981

1971–72		1981	
Albiges	26.5	Albiges	78.4
Muhiang		Wam	
Wam		Urat	
Urat		Mamblep	
Wora		Muhiang	
Mamblep	14.5	Yangoru	24.3
Maprik		Kumun	
Yangoru		Kombio	
Gawanga		South Wosera	
South Wosera		Wingei	
North Wosera	6.8	Wora	9.2
Kombio		Urim	
Yamil		Yamil	
Tamaui		Nindepolye	
Kumun		Gawanga	
Urim	3.5	Maprik	3.6
Nindepolye		North Wosera	
Kaboibus		Tamaui	
Wingei	0.5	Kaboibus	0.2

SOURCE: Weinand, Young, and Lea (1972); Sepik Producers' Co-operative Association receipt books, 1972; SPCA computer records, 1981.

producer makes a direct comparison between the minimum wage received by a laborer and the income he receives from a cash crop. He also compares himself with other wage and salary earners, including government officers. As the Tumam councillor observed, unprompted,

> In the days before independence, there was one kiap at Dreikikir and two policemen. They used to patrol everywhere and do all the work. Now there are three kiaps and twelve police and we never see them. The kiap has a house and a car given to him by the government and he gets paid. For doing what? We should get paid for building our own houses and growing our own food.

The fluctuations of the market are beyond the comprehension of most producers, and the suspicion that outsiders, including SPCA coffee buyers, Port Moresby bureaucrats, and Chinese businessmen, are exploiting them is widespread and deep-rooted among village people.

This situation of apparently permanent and deepening inequality between villages and the outside world, in communities where a very strong ethic of equality exists, goes a long way toward explaining why so many people became emotionally and financially involved with the Peli Association between 1972 and 1978. The late Kokomo Ulia, policeman, rice leader, councillor, SPCA director, and Member of Parliament, observed in 1975 that it was the loss of control over the affairs of the SPCA, which he and others had been instrumental in starting, that finally led him to reject bisnis after thirty years of involvement and lead his people into the Peli Association.

Peli created yet another niche for aspiring leaders. Few of the now aging bisnis leaders were as agile as Kokomo, and most defended the coffee industry and cash as the only means to major social and economic change. Old cargo leaders were rejected because the mass hysteria of the 1956 movement had frightened many people. Peli was not a "cargo cult," they said, but something different. The Evangelical mission rejected the movement as the "the Devil working through native spirits" and lost 80 percent of its adherents overnight; physical scuffles occurred between those who left and those who stayed. Some councillors quietly joined and helped their villages' Peli *komiti*, but others, often at the urging of government officers, resisted, to the point of near nervous breakdown. Coffee had given women ac-

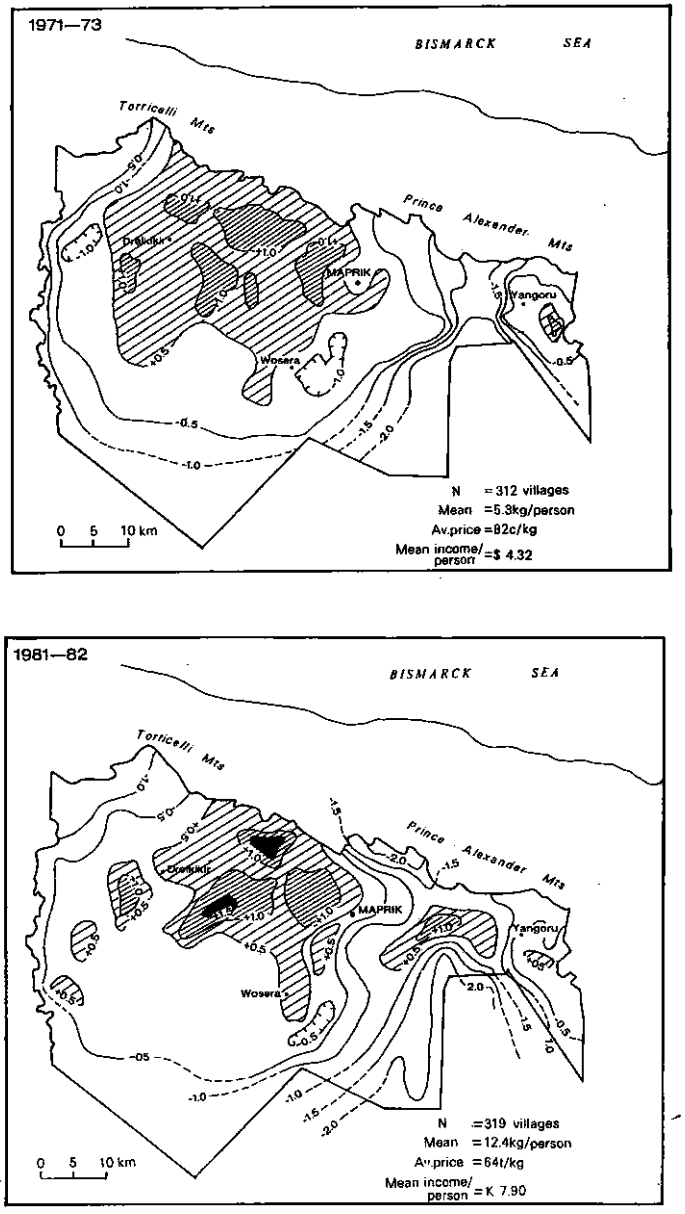

FIG. 1. Village coffee production in the Maprik District, 1971-73 and 1981-82, expressed as standard deviation scores from the district mean (Weinand, Young, and Lea 1972 and Sepik Producers' Co-operative Association records).

cess to cash, many keeping the money they received for coffee picked and processed for themselves. Peli gave the young a special place, as the money to be created in the "power houses" was literally in the hands of young unmarried females and their adolescent consorts. They took their jobs very seriously. At that time coffee production and membership in the Peli Association were highest in those villages with the best access to the Sepik Highway. Villagers were still not distinguishing between the "work" of marketing export crops and the "work" of bringing about the millennium. The goals were similar in the two cases, and, as in the previous case of rice and the 1956 cargo movement, people followed those who claimed they had the knowledge to achieve them.

Although the Peli Association and other movements which grew out of it were opposed by the national government, they were not suppressed by police action as other cargo movements had been in the past. The Peli Association painfully died away as increasing numbers of supporters lost faith. The "power houses" were slowly reclaimed by the forest, the "flowers" and "workers" returned to everyday life.

Then in late 1977, at Daihungai village, in the middle of the night, the slit-gongs boomed out. Men came hurriedly out of their houses to find the old bisnis leader Haptas with a huge dead cassowary at his feet. He made a speech in which he accused his ritual opponents of being like women who had been hurried back into their houses. Blithely ignoring the fact that for thirty years he had vigorously discouraged traditional activities in favor of bisnis, he told the men that he had been waiting for a long time for them to repay the debt his father had created. If they couldn't kill their own cassowaries, here was one for them. Within weeks other villages had announced plans for the staging of an exchange or an initiation. Flutes were again heard in the area, the spectacular masts with their cane rigging went up, and moiety leaders urged greater garden production from their followers.

It seemed to me at the time that a full circle had been turned. Men born in the late 1930s and now in their fifties had participated in these rituals as youths, but they had also experienced World War II, worked on plantations and in mines, planted rice and coffee, and participated in two major efforts to bring about the millennium. Their overarching goal had been to create a situation in which they would be able to meet with and enter into relationships with outsiders on an equal footing. At the same time men and women had continued to try to better their individual positions. Some had been successful, but the major communal goal had never been reached. Did the revival of the old ways indicate a withdrawal, an admission of defeat in the face of a vastly superior force?

Some men suggested that this was the case. Had not Prime Minister Somare himself said *kastom* (tradition) was of value? The origin of their traditions and their rituals was their ancestors, who had given the traditions directly to them. In contrast to bisnis and kago, nobody could come and tell them how to carry out the rituals. Nobody in the whole world knew better than they how to paint the decorations, sing the songs, carry out the ceremonies. Government extension officers excused the failure of the programs by saying that the people were interested only in kastom.[6] Indeed, this seemed like the final rejection of the modern world, at least by the last of the prewar generation who had been so radically innovative during their lives. Since Independence they have shown a marked reluctance to accept information or advice from government agents, and the return to kastom might be interpreted as part of that rejection.

But as always, matters are not as simple as they first appear. Late last year I made a brief visit to the area. There were no plans for further ceremonies. Land was being cleared in many villages along the Maprik road for twenty-hectare cacao and coffee blocks. Kastom was good, but it was hard work, harder than growing coffee, and it didn't bring in money; it was no longer possible to live without money. The Lus Corporation[7] was helping to plan the large coffee blocks and was planning a wet-processing factory on the Arnuk River. At Tumam the men had decided that they had to maintain their membership with the SPCA, so all the women in the village had become members of the Lus Corporation. The SPCA had employed an extension worker who was working *in* villages. Many people were talking about planting cacao so that if the price of coffee fell, they could sell cacao, and vice versa. Meanwhile everyone was producing coffee. After two years of traditional activities they were short of money, they said. Less than halfway through the season 1983 production had surpassed that of 1982. Young men trapped in their villages by the recession, who had said a year earlier that the first chance they got they were leaving for the cities, were now marrying, having children, and appar-

ently settling down to life in rural Papua New Guinea. The old men, having discharged their responsibilities to their fathers, seemed prepared to retire from public life. If not the turning of a full circle, it was surely the end of an era.

One could employ a range of approaches to the study of colonial history in the Sepik. These days one pays one's money and takes one's choice. A neo-Marxist analysis, even given the problems which remain in applying concepts such as "articulation" (see, e.g., Foster-Carter 1978), would seem to offer great scope and has been attempted elsewhere in Papua New Guinea by Godelier (1982*b*) and Modjeska (1982). Goulet's (1971) arguments, however, have more appeal for me. To him "development is no abstraction, but a historical reality situated in time and place" (p. 13). The "context and matrix" within which change occurs must be identified. His analysis rests on two points: "vulnerability" (the exposure to forces one cannot control) and "existence rationality" (the strategies employed by societies to process information and make practical choices designed to ensure survival and satisfy the need, according to Goulet universal, for esteem and freedom). Thus we can observe the Dreikikir village communities attempting to employ strategies which will at once free them from outside domination of all kinds (even benevolent domination), provide them with a material standard of living equivalent to those enjoyed by outsiders, and allow them to enter into equal and balanced relationships with them. Yet their goals contain within them fundamental contradictions. Their first set of strategies, cash crop production, brings about increased outside domination and lack of control over their own affairs (in the form of extension workers, cooperative managers, and fluctuating world markets) and increased reliance on world commodity markets, which is equivalent to increased vulnerability. The other set of strategies, millenarianism, does not work but has a powerful psychological attraction when the contradictions of the first set periodically became too painfully obvious.

Sepik villagers live in a country that is becoming increasingly reliant on the export of minerals and agricultural commodities to support a top-heavy and expensive bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is unlikely to redistribute power as it was forced to do in 1977 with decentralization and will probably become entrenched in urban areas. Services to rural areas are unlikely to improve. If we are to contribute in a way which will assist Sepik villagers to come to terms with such a world and to make the least cruel of a number of possible cruel choices, I believe we must use our skills to analyze how Sepik villagers have handled change in the past and how they are dealing with their present situations. To do otherwise will be to become increasingly irrelevant to a modern Papua New Guinea.

Notes

1. Loa says he was "recruited" by Ah Sing. This is probably Ning Sing, the father of Una Ning-foo, now of Brisbane, and the adoptive father of Sangu Leong of Madang. In 1983 they told me that Ning Sing was himself an indentured laborer who left his Canton homeland because the Germans promised that every step in New Guinea left one's boots covered with gold dust.
2. Perhaps such a sweeping generalization is unfair, but studies by, for example, Gell (1975) and Tuzin (1976, 1980) do not, in my opinion, give enough emphasis to the changes which have occurred since colonial contact.
3. In Tau village, south of Tumam, Brigit Obrist (personal communication) has heard an oral account of a pre-European epidemic which killed many people and had symptoms described as being "like scabies."
4. For example, Numbuk Kapok, who began the Erap Mechanical Farming Project in the Markham Valley, was a policeman serving under Simogun in the Sepik from 1945 to 1951 (Hogbin 1963).
5. Nalowas had been taken by blackbirders and sent to Rabaul at such a young age that he did not know the name of his village. He had to stay there for ten years until laborers from his home area recognized him and told where he came from.
6. Some measure of the failure of agricultural extension work in the East Sepik is provided by the ignorance among Urat villagers of the East Sepik Integrated Rural Development Project. This project was, among other things, supposed to have rejuvenated tree crops in the province. Although staff has been appointed, houses built, and vehicles purchased, very little village-level work seems to have been accomplished.
7. The Lus Corporation is not owned by Sir Pita Lus; it is a locally based cooperative now being largely managed by young Sepik university graduates. Its membership is concentrated west of Maprik but is spreading.

15/ The Bishops' Progress: Representations of Missionary Experience on the Sepik Frontier

Mary Taylor Huber

> The singularity of a "vocation" is never better displayed than when it is contradicted—but not denied, far from it—by a prosaic incarnation: this is an old trick of all hagiography. [Barthes 1972:31]

A careful reading of the papers in this volume will uncover many allusions to aspects of modern village life which attest to the impact of Christian mission activity in the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea but few which deal directly with missionaries themselves. The issue of missionary impact, however, like that of government impact, raises many elusive questions, some of which can be addressed by turning the problem around. What aspects of *missionary* work have been affected by the missionaries' experience in the Sepik? What changes have appeared problematic to missionaries, and how have they managed the dilemmas which these changes posed? I have chosen to discuss the Catholic missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word because they have been working in the region since 1896 and because they still comprise the large majority of priests, including the bishop, in the Diocese of Wewak in the East Sepik Province today.[1]

Recent attention to the problem of "law and order" in Papua New Guinea has encouraged some researchers to ask about the "social arrangements" that appear to have made the colonial *kiap* (government officer) system so effective in its time (see Gordon 1983). As any reader of the memoirs of the quintessential Sepik kiap, G. W. L. Townsend, will recognize, however, the very system that made the kiap "an organization of one" in the field (Gordon 1983:220) also pitted him against the "powers that were" in the colonial capital, be it Port Moresby (after World War II) or Rabaul (before). Like kiaps and many of the other emissaries of change who have traveled through Sepik history, Catholic missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word have also had to manage the often conflicting requirements of working effectively in local circumstances while maintaining the authenticity of their project, i.e., its relation to official or ideal forms (cf. Burridge 1960, 1978). I suggest that by looking at the ways in which such agents have represented their experience we can come some way to understanding the historical processes by which some of the Sepik's most important regional institutions have taken on the character which they have today.

While this paper is intended as a contribution to Sepik history, I follow Beidelman (1982) in my conviction that mission studies are relevant to other issues in colonial culture and society as well. Certainly, few Europeans who have come to New Guinea have been able to represent their experience without contrasting it to Western models in order to render the place and the people intelligible to themselves and to those back home. This may have been especially so for missionaries and others who were enmeshed in large organizations which exercise control over their agents by upholding these models as goals for their activity and as measures of their success. The problem of justifying the inevitable detours that conditions forced on their projects could be especially critical for agents who had internalized the goals of their sending agencies, and it is no surprise that their memoirs and reports are frequently cast in an ironic mode. Catholic missionaries who have worked in the Sepik are no exception, for they have been well aware of the fact that to be effective, their work had to take directions which appeared to contrast with authentic forms.

The ironic expressions through which so many colonists have represented their experience have had political import as well as literary effect. In the words of a young American priest who had recently joined the Catholic mission in the mid-1930s, New Guinea was "a land of the unex-