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The Paliau Movement begins

By the time Schwartz and Shargo met Paliau in 1953, he had cast off any trace of subservience to whites he may ever have felt. He assumed equality and expected mutual respect. Some government officers liked him, some gave him grudging respect, many disliked or distrusted him, and some hated him. But none could bully him, and all had to deal with him as an equal. Some missionaries considered him the Antichrist, and some Catholic missionaries thought him a Protestant, at best. Many Manus people, too, kept their distance, preferring to remain with one of the missions. But many others found Paliau a compelling figure. The best way to begin conveying a sense of who he was is to present his life story as he told it to Schwartz in 1954.

Paliau tells the story of his life

First, some background. Paliau was born in Lipan, one of the half dozen Matankor villages on Baluan Island. Baluan is a rocky but lushly forested volcanic cone not more than three miles long and a mile wide. On a clear day, Manus Island is easily visible about 25 miles to the north. In culture and language, the people of Baluan are most closely related to those of the islands of Pwam and Lou, and slightly more distantly to the Matankor people of Rambutjo. In the 1950s, other Manus people claimed to be able to distinguish the people of Baluan by their lighter skin colour, although this was never apparent to Schwartz or Smith. The indigenous people of Baluan were primarily gardeners, growing sweet potatoes, taro, and various fruits. They were not seafarers like the Titan, but they built canoes

and they fished. They also traded for fish with the Titan living in houses built over the water at the edge of the small island of Mok, less than a mile from Baluan at the nearest point.

According to Paliau, in the indigenous system he would have been recognised as an important leader, by virtue of his descent from Lolokai, one of the best-known Baluan leaders of some five generations before. Otto (1998: 86n), on the basis of genealogical accounts he compiled in the 1980s, concluded that Paliau would have belonged to ‘a junior and less-prestigious line descending from a younger son’. This, however, is not how Paliau construed his heritage.

The account below is a condensed version of a close translation of an autobiographical sketch that Paliau dictated to Schwartz. It begins with his childhood and continues through his return to Manus after the war. It is remarkable in that Paliau delivered it as an almost unbroken narrative. Schwartz had simply said that he wanted a detailed story of his life, and that Paliau could relate it at any length he wished. In what follows, ellipses indicate places where we have deleted repetitive or less informative sections. We have clarified some items in brackets. The translation from the Tok Pisin original is quite literal in order to maintain the simplicity of Paliau’s style, a simplicity typical of storytelling in Tok Pisin. A few Tok Pisin terms that do not translate easily into English have been kept in the text, with notes on translation in brackets.

Paliau’s youth

When I was born to my mother and father, they were still *kranki*. [This Tok Pisin term can mean ‘confused’ or ‘foolish’, but in this context it means ‘backward’.] They couldn’t tell me the time or the month in which I was born. I was the same as John here [Paliau gestured towards his son, then aged seven] when my mother died first, and my father died next. It was only a short time. I was still John’s age. I cannot see [that is, remember] their faces at all. Then I just drifted around. They did not bear me a brother. They had one daughter, who died; then they had me. Soon after, they died. It is the same today, I am just one. When they died I didn’t stay just with one person. I was not looked after properly then. I was midway between them all [that is, I belonged fully to no one’s household]. I was in the middle between Joseph Pati and Ninow Namei. The latter and my mother had the same mother and father. Joseph Pati [a member of Paliau’s father’s clan, whom—within the Baluan kinship system—Paliau treated

as a brother]¹ is a man and Ninow Namei is a woman. I was in the middle between the two. But I wasn't properly cared for. Why? My parents were dead. Later when I was a little older Joseph lived in his own house and Ninow lived in hers. After my father died Ninow took me. She took care of me. But even as a child I didn't stay put. The two of them quarrelled over me. Joseph Pati angrily told Ninow she would have to let me stay with him sometimes. Both of them were right, but it was my way as a child not to stay put with either of them. I stayed here and there among all of the men now. Then I left the two of them altogether and stayed with Kalowin, an old man of Lipan. He was kin to my father and I stayed on my father's land. He looked after me. Later there was a quarrel between him and Joseph Pati ... Later I used to play with other children. When we finished playing, I would follow them. I went to their mothers and fathers for meals. When their parents gave them food I took some too. I ate the food of everyone around the village.

While I was still young my eyes saw clearly all the big feasts they used to make. They made big feasts with pigs, gathered all the yams and sweet potatoes and heaped them together.² They could get as many as 100 or 200 pigs. Then they made a feast. Their money was dogs' teeth and shell beads. When they made the big feasts, they didn't just do it for nothing. One man would talk, saying he was the most important man on Baluan. Then he would hold a meeting of his men to make the feast. When it was time for the feast they beat the *garamut* [large logs hollowed out through a narrow longitudinal opening, used as drums, usually decorated with elaborate carving, sometimes called slit gongs in English] and danced to them. Each man would get a shell from the ocean, a white [cowrie] shell.

1 For non-anthropologists, we note that terms for kin in all the languages of the Admiralty Islands combine kin differently from standard Anglo-American terminology. Hence, in the Titan language, a man would describe (but not address) a male biological sibling, male children of his father's brothers, and, on occasion, almost any male kin of approximately his own age using the same term, *ndriasin* (Mead 2002 [1934]: 34). Describing people with the same term implies similar social expectations. Such systems are sometimes called classificatory, as opposed to descriptive, kinship systems. One can translate *ndriasin* loosely as brother, with the understanding that it covers a wider variety of male kin than the English term. When speaking Tok Pisin, Manus people are likely to use the Tok Pisin terms that translate roughly as brother and sister in a similarly classificatory sense. In translating people's accounts of events, we use loose English translations of the indigenous and Tok Pisin kin terms and do not try to distinguish people to whom they refer using standard Anglo-American kin terminology.

2 Like the Titan, the Baluan Matankor expended a great deal of time and energy on ceremonial exchange and displays of wealth in connection with marriage, although similar practices were also attached to death and mourning observances for important men. Otto (1991: 51–8) discusses the Baluan mortuary feasts as described to him in the 1980s by middle-aged men and women who had observed them conducted by members of their parents' generation.

They would put it on their penises and they would dance with them. Not the women though, they put on new grass skirts to dance. When they dressed up they adorned themselves with shell beads. The meaning of this dance was that they rejoiced in this feast that they made that everyone came to look at. Another meaning it had when all the men put on shells and went to dance was 'I am a man of know-how; I have a great deal of wealth; I have dogs' teeth and shell beads; the rest of you are just rubbish [that is, worthless] in the village; you are not accustomed to doing this dance'. It is like this. If I am 'rubbish' in having no dogs' teeth, no food and no pigs, then I can't make this dance. This is the mark of men who have much wealth, who raise many pigs, and who make large gardens. All of us children were schooled in this custom. Some learned and some didn't. I didn't learn. Why? Because I knew it was no good. I tried it once. This attempt was not my idea, it was Joseph's. He made what we call a *sinai* [a narrow wooden beam, carved and painted, on which this dance is done]. They put it on two posts. He sent me onto it. He told me to go up on it for the first time. Then I was to come down on the beam with one of my legs on one side and with my other leg on the other side. Then I return to the middle and make a speech, the speech Joseph had taught me. I came back to the middle and wanted to make my speech on top of this wooden beam. I wanted to speak but my mouth mixed it up. I don't know what I said. I was confused. I babbled. I jumped down and turned my back on all the men who were watching the dance. When I jumped down, I didn't go straight to a house. I collapsed onto the grass, along with all the decoration on my body, dogs' teeth, shell beads. They had put red paint in my hair and marked my eyes with red paint. I collapsed on the grass. I was extremely sick ... It wasn't an hour till I became sick; I think it was only two minutes until I became sick. No one knew about me, no one saw me. Why? Because I fell down in the tall grass. When the feast was over late in the afternoon my body was a little strong then, I got up. I went home; then I was all right.

An old man, the aged father of Paliau [an older brother of Paliau's grandfather who was also named Paliau] whom Joseph Pati had called to this feast that Joseph was making for a woman [as an affinal payment to the old man] was there. The feast lasted two weeks. When it was over the old man for whom the feast was made died. When I was sick, if I had died, I think this old man would not have died. [Paliau did not explain this reasoning.] When my sickness was finished, I was all right, and then this man died. I knew this feast had been for him ... He received it along

with these pigs and distributed it among his clan. Then he died. Now my mind was decided like this. This custom was no good. I was through with it now. When they made big feasts I didn't go. I could hear them, I could see them when they were made but I wouldn't try it any more myself. When they made the feasts and when the feast was over a strong sickness used to break out in the village. When a feast was finished and the sickness occurred it used to kill 20 or 30 men. Later they used to say that spirits, *tambaran*, kill us. The meaning of *tambaran* was this: if one man dies first, his ghost takes all of us. The ghost of one goes and kills another ... [Here, Paliau uses the Tok Pisin word *tambaran* for spirits of the dead. It was and still is used in many parts of New Guinea for both the supernatural patron of a men's ritual society and ancestral spirits.]

When a big feast is finished, there is a famine on Baluan. Why? If they make big gardens and then the gardens are ready, the man who is to make a feast sends word all over Baluan. Everyone digs up all the food to make a big feast. I considered it and I thought it wasn't right ...

By the time I was a little older I found that all my age mates had died from this way of life. If an older man pulled them into it later they died from it. When one died many more in the village followed them. They all had to die. But I didn't believe this talk about the spirits of the dead. Why didn't I believe it? It was the way of children; they are ignorant. When I was a child my parents died. I never used to conform properly to any belief. Times when there was much sickness, the time of rain, darkness, thunder, and lightning, all the kin of my father and mother would be cross with me. They would scold me like this, 'When it is a bad time, when a man has died, when spirits of the dead roam about, you must sit down properly, you can't run about'. I wouldn't listen, I wouldn't stay put. If there was a big rain and they spoke to me, I would go out in the rain. Why? It is the way of children. They are ignorant. They can't be afraid. That's how it is that when I was older I didn't believe in *tambaran*. I said this talk of *tambaran* is a lie.

Going away to work

Time passed; then I was more grown up. I think I was about 15 years old when they put me down for government tax. I wasn't finished with all of these ideas. What ideas? The idea that I wouldn't accept the talk of the important men who said there were ghosts in the village and my thoughts about all the big feasts. Now that I was older I realised that

these feasts caused the loss of many men of Baluan. This continued to stay in my mind. Now, at this time I didn't travel by canoe. I didn't go to the big place [Manus Island]; I just stayed with the men of the island [i.e. Baluan]. Just once, when I was younger, I heard the name Lorengau, and I thought it was one of the big places of the white men. Then once I was taken in a canoe. We went to Lorengau. When I arrived, I saw it was just another place like our own. I was not familiar with Mbukei, I hadn't gone there. I had gone to Lou; I had gone to Pwam. As for Mok [the Titan village adjacent to Mok Island], all the old men of before had said that I had an ancestor there. When I was still small my father used to take me to Mok. It is the way of children. If their father goes they cry to go with him. They used to go to a small islet here, Takumai [about one-tenth of a mile, or 150 metres, offshore from Baluan]. My Titan grandfather of whom they had spoken was named Sangol. He belonged to the same clan as Pwankiau, who is still alive. He is the old man here in the house over the lagoon. Following this line of relationship through this ancestor, my father used to take me to the house of Pwankiau. I also follow this story and I have taken this old man Pwankiau to live with me here. I associated only with the young men of Baluan. In Mok I just went straight to Pwankiau. When my father was still alive he used to send all sorts of food to Pwankiau. I only went around with the children of Pwankiau. And almost until I was 15 I just stayed in the village. Then I was marked to pay taxes to the government.

I heard this from the patrol officer who collected the tax. I stood up before his eyes and he said, 'Next year you will pay tax, now you cannot'. Then I thought, 'I am not a fully grown man yet, and they have marked me to be taxed'. Then I thought about finding money. I started working for a Chinese named Leu. I worked for two years. I didn't have whiskers yet. I was a young boy, not a young man. This Chinese looked at me and said I wasn't capable of hard work; I was just capable of cooking. He said I was too small. He wanted to send me back, but I was persistent. Why? Because the patrol officer had said I was to be taxed. I wouldn't have any money. This Chinese for whom I cooked, Leu, had a business collecting and marketing trochus shell.³ Later he brought another Chinese to help him in this work. This Chinese who assisted was Akan ... This Chinese Akan didn't have a servant. Soon Leu dismissed me as his cook and sent me to Akan. I worked as cook for him for two years. During this time that I cooked for him I received two

3 The nacre or mother-of-pearl of trochus shells is used for making buttons.

shillings a month, one length of cloth per month, and two sticks of tobacco, a few matches, and a little soap each week. When I finished, I was given £5 for these two years. When I finished my work I was angry; while I was at work I was also angry. My anger was for this reason; these two Chinese didn't pay well. I was angry, but I didn't quarrel with them. I wasn't lazy about work. I just kept it to myself. When I had finished the two years I divided the £5. For £2 10s [20 shillings = £1] I bought myself some things in the store. The other £2 10s I brought to the village. I gave it to Joseph Pati and all the kin of my father and mother. When they saw that I had come back, and they came to see me, they all cried. The meaning of their crying was this. I was lost for two years when their eyes couldn't see me. When I came back they all looked with recognition at my face that was like the face of my father who had died. They all saw that I looked like my mother who had died. Because of this all the kin of my father and mother came to cry over me. When Joseph Pati saw all these people he opened my box that I had bought at the store. He took all the small things that I had brought along with this £2 10s and he divided them among all these relatives of my father and mother who had come.

What I have just told is the same for all the men of Manus. The first time that I went to work I saw that this was not right. Why did I see it wasn't right? I went to find money for the government tax, so that I wouldn't go to jail over it. I had also bought a few little things such as *laplap* [Tok Pisin for lengths of cloth worn by both men and women like wrap-around skirts from waist to knees—a form of dress for indigenes introduced by colonial Europeans] and some other things from the store also. Then Joseph Pati divided it up among all these people, and I am again rubbish. This sort of thing didn't just happen to me; it happened to all the men of Baluan and Manus Island together. Others who had gone among the white men previously had come and received the same treatment also. They couldn't hold on to a single thing. They all thought it was all right. But I understood now, and I thought it was wrong. It made nothing of me. Why was this? They all valued all this money from before that belonged to our ancestors, the dogs' teeth and shell beads. They all valued all the ornaments of the past, the grass skirts and the leaves used for adornment. The women used leaves. The men pounded the bark of a tree and wore it [as a breechclout]. They all thought about all these things; then when they went to work for the white man and came back they threw away all their money on their kin. Now I was poor. Now what?

I was angry in my mind, but I didn't express anger with my mouth. Soon the *kiap* [*kiap* is a Tok Pisin term for an Australian government officer] would come for money and I had none.

I thought again of going to ask this Chinese if I could work for him. I went with him again for another two years. I went and stayed with this Chinese, Akan, who was still in the same business. I got my pay just as before. The monthly rate was the same. When the two years were up I received again £5 ... I sent the money on to the village, but I didn't go. Another Chinese wanted me again. He was named Akim. He wanted me to go shoot pigeons for him with a shotgun. I cooked, too. I stayed with him for six months. Then he beat me. He wanted me to herd the goats of the doctor into the house. I refused to obey. I said, 'These goats are not mine, they are the doctor's'. Then he beat me. I pushed his arm away. He went to get his gun to shoot me with it, but I ran away into the bush. Later I went to the government officer and told him. He said, 'Never mind; go back to the village. That's the way Chinese are. You two will always be cross and they don't think. Eventually he will really shoot you'.

I went back to my village. My money was gone. They had already divided it up among all the brothers, sisters, and other relatives of my mother.

The colonial police

I had no money. Now I wanted to go to work as a policeman. I joined for two years the first time. When I went away to the police I still did not have whiskers. I wasn't able to have the full outfit of a policeman. I just went with the *kiap*. After one year I was given the full equipment of a policeman. I worked in the bush [anywhere in the interior of the New Guinea mainland that was distant from the few European settlements on the mainland coast]. I worked at finding a *masta* that they [i.e. people in the interior] had killed, Master Bom. He was looking for gold and was killed by the natives of the bush. We went to right this wrong. We caught the natives, many of whom went to jail. They were not jailed to be killed but to teach them the ways of the white man and of the coast. [In this era, coastal New Guineans generally considered themselves more sophisticated than people of the interior.] When they had learned, we brought them back to tell those who were in the bush. The men of the interior had no knowledge of the coastal area. The white men called them

the Kukakuka.⁴ When they saw us they wanted to kill us, too. I worked in this part of the interior teaching them and stopping their fighting for two years. During these two years the Kukakuka killed two *kiap* and another white man who were on patrol [that is, seeking out indigenous communities to bring them under control of the Territory law]. They also killed a line [that is, a patrolling group] of native police and their sergeant, Hanis of Madang. I had finished two years now, and I returned to my village. While I worked as a policeman I was paid the same as when I had worked for the Chinese. When I was finished, I spent all this money on buying things. My box was full. I brought it all to Baluan. There was no difference. It was just the same. All the relatives came, and the old man Joseph opened my box and gave out everything. Joseph had taken the place of my dead father. All the Baluans are alike in this custom, should Joseph be different? He was the same as the rest. The Titan of the sea were the same. The Moks, too, are the same.

When they divide up everything, then they make a big feast just as in the past. If they get two cases of tobacco they will break open all the cases and string the tobacco along a line with all the other things of the white men that had come. Then they dance. The man who makes this will boast to all the other men of Manus that they are not up to doing this, bringing together so many things of the white men that they have all come to see. Some who looked at all this thought it was all right. Why is it that I knew it was wrong? I knew it was wrong, but I couldn't express my anger over it, I just thought it to myself.

I stayed in Manus for two years at this time. I just hung around. I went along with anyone who was going anywhere, just coming and going. If they made a big feast on Lou, I went along to observe. When they made a feast, I ate with them all. That in my mind I knew it all to be wrong, this I kept to myself ...

I went to see every part of Manus. For what reason did I go around observing like this? I thought that this practice of letting everything of value be dispersed among everyone, does it exist only in Baluan or is it everywhere in Manus? I didn't speak out about it, I just thought about it like this. This way of doing things cannot help us. The way of our

4 Sometimes called the Kukukuku, they speak an Angan language. Their traditional territory is in a mountainous area where today Gulf, Eastern Highlands, and Morobe provinces converge. We thank Don Niles of the Institute for Papua New Guinea Studies for this information.

distant ancestors is still with us. It was becoming clearer in my mind. The white man has long been in our midst. Always he puts us to some task. When the patrol officer comes among us and one man isn't clean, the officer will be angry. If the government sends word to clean the road, and if they do not clean it, they will go to jail. With houses, too, if they don't build their houses well, they can go to jail. If they don't have money for taxes they go to jail. If there is no house *kiap* [a rest house for government officers] or no latrine, there will be jail. Many of us have been in jail. But they don't learn. They persist in all these ways of the past that I have already mentioned. I saw that everywhere in Manus people were the same as in Baluan.

When two years had passed I joined the police again for another two years. This time I went to Rabaul. As policeman I was sent out to work among the natives of the bush. Everything about the natives around Rabaul was no different from Manus. It was the same. All the specific customs were somewhat different, but as far as making big feasts and losing money as if it were something of no value, this was the same as in Manus. When I went back to work as a policeman, I didn't do it for nothing. I did it from anger at the natives of Manus. This was in my mind. When I left I thought that I would never go back to Baluan. I found that I didn't like the way of life of Manus. I could never go back. But when I went to Rabaul it was the same as in Manus. I left Rabaul and went to Salamau [a town on the mainland coast]. It was the same there. I went as policeman to Madang [a town on the mainland coast]. I took in all the ways of the natives of Madang. It was just the same. I went to Finschhafen [a town on the mainland coast] and observed the customs of the natives there. It was again the same. Lae [a town on the mainland coast] also, and Kavieng [a town on the coast of the island of New Ireland] were the same. Then I thought, our ways are only of one kind. Now where does this leave me? Well, I just stayed at work as policeman. I stayed for 12 years altogether. If I saw a man from Baluan I asked him, 'The ways of the old men of Baluan, do they still exist or are they finished?' And he would say, 'They still exist and what is wrong with this? It is still our way'. [After Paliu had been away three years, he took leave to visit Baluan again.] After three years I wasn't just taking a break. I came to look again at the Baluan culture and I came to bring a little money.

Prewar beginnings of the Paliau Movement

Always I received two shillings for one month. I didn't waste it, I put it away securely. I bought a case of tobacco that I sent ahead of me back to the village. It was sent to Joseph Pati with this message: 'You have wasted plenty of things of mine in the past but this case of tobacco you cannot touch. If you forget what I say I will come and I will be extremely angry'. This time he followed my instructions. This case of tobacco that I sent brought £15 [when divided and sold to villagers]. When I came back on leave after these three years I had £15 more in addition. Five pounds more was from the two shillings that I received each month that I saved. There was £20 altogether. I didn't buy anything. I just took this £20 and went to look over the Baluan way of life. This £20 along with the £15 that Joseph Pati had gotten for the case of tobacco made £35. I came and asked Joseph where the money for the tobacco was. He got it and now there was £35. I told him: 'This £35 does not belong to you, it is mine. I tell you this clearly. I have something to say about it. I want to talk to the *kukerai* [another Tok Pisin term for the government-appointed headman or *luluai*]. He has the hat given to him by the government. [A *luluai* received a military-style hat as a symbol of his office.] I want the *kukerai* and the *tultul* [the government-appointed interpreter, a lesser official]. I want to talk about this £35'. I told them, 'I want you to call together all your men, all the men and women of Lipan' ... When everyone had gathered I took this £35 and I showed it to them all ... 'These seven strings of shillings [Territorial shillings, made with holes in their centres, were typically strung together in £5 groups] is to stay with the *kukerai*. *Kukerai*, you take care of it. It is to look after all the men and women of Lipan. But it is not your money, it is mine. I give it to you for you to look after your people. The purpose of this money is this. Each year when the *kiap* comes to collect the tax, whoever does not have his tax money or is short on it, you must pay the tax for him. If you give a man ten shillings to pay the tax, you must write the name of this man; then, when the *kiap* has left, this man is to pay back the money. Why must he return the money? If it is returned to you, you can take care of everyone for all the years to come behind. I am showing you a good road, by which all your men can avoid going to jail. Why should they pay back the money? It would be no good if the money were used up. Now your men can stay in the village with you. This is the reason I left Baluan. I didn't have tax money when the *kiap* called me. If you get into trouble over these seven strings, if the *kiap* dismisses you and another boss is put in your place, you

must turn this money over to him. The new boss can look after his men with it. Why? Because this is not your money, it is mine. I give it to you to look after the men over whom you are boss. And you can't just ignore a man of another *luluai* and another clan of Baluan if his man does not have money, you must send the money to him; later he will pay it back to you. You must help Lou and Pwam ... When the *kiap* goes to collect the tax, you must go along with him to take care of whomever does not have tax money'. I said this. Then I put the seven strings into the hands of the boss, the *luluai*.

The *luluai* followed my instructions and paid tax for the men of Baluan, Mok, Pwam, and Lou. Then the *kiap* found out about this man who went around paying the tax on Baluan, Mok, Pwam, and Lou. I had previously instructed the *luluai* that if he is found out by the *kiap* he is not to mention my name, he must say that it is his money. When the *kiap* found out, he wrote the names of the men taxed on small slips of paper. These he gave to the *luluai* saying, 'If this man doesn't return your money, send me word and he will be jailed'. The *kiap* asked him whose money it was. He said that it was his own.

All this work was done quietly, just the way that I have told you. Everyone heard about it and supported the *luluai's* work. When the six months of my leave had finished, I went back to Rabaul. I was still a policeman. I finished another year. I took my £15, which I had saved out of my monthly two-shilling pay. I signed on again as a policeman and then took my leave to go home. I came, and with these three new strings of shillings there was now £50. The £35 from before was still there. The *luluai* paid the tax and then was paid back. I called for everyone to come together ... [Paliau called a meeting and asked the people of Baluan if the money had been used properly and if they approved of his plan. They said yes.] 'You look. I am putting three more strings to go with the seven from before. Now if you think that this has been a good thing, you should put what you have with it to help'. They all thought about it, then they said: 'This road that you are making for us is clear to us. We will no longer go to jail'. Now I silenced them. I said: 'You keep quiet. This is the work of the *luluai*. It is not my work. You can't name me'. All right, they were all for it now. All of them put in their money. These were only the people of Lipan. The *luluai* was Ngï Asinkiau and the *tultul* was Lipamu. Everyone in Lipan put in £5 each until there was £500. The money was in the care of the *luluai*. I advised him. I told him: 'You cannot make court against a man of another boss. You can't be angry at them. Take care of all men

from Lou, Pwam, and Mok. Look out for whatever trouble might arise among them. If they are angry, you must go quickly into their midst and stop it. If the men of another village come and fight with some of the men of your village, you can't seek revenge. You can't be too angry. You must do only what is good. All of these big feasts that are given on Baluan, sometimes you should think about them. If you get rid of a few of them, you won't regret it. They cause sickness, and many of our people of Lipan die'.

I told them this, then I went back. My leave was finished ... As for this money, they saved more and more until they had £2,000.

Paliau in World War II

We break off the verbatim version of Paliau's autobiography at this point. His account of the war years is highly detailed. Much of this is extremely interesting, but it is tangential to the story of how Paliau came to found the Movement. The following is distilled from his longer account.

By the time the war started, Paliau had been promoted to sergeant major in the police and placed in charge of the 280 indigenous police stationed in Rabaul. The majority of Australians in Rabaul evacuated before the Japanese arrived in 1942, but many indigenous police remained. They fled to the bush with the Australian commander and a few remaining Europeans. Paliau and five other policemen stayed in Rabaul long enough to bury the police rifles and ammunition, making their escape at the last minute. The Australian military had told the police to hide in the bush and that they would return before long to drive out the Japanese.

Most of the local indigenous communities near Rabaul cooperated with the Japanese, for they had no choice. Some police gave themselves up to the Japanese and named Paliau as their leader, so the Japanese made a special effort to find him. Paliau said that the people of the local communities were afraid to harbour him and his men and reported him to a missionary. The missionary sent word to the Japanese, who came in two trucks to the house in which Paliau was staying. They fired at him as he fled into the bush, but he escaped. Finally, in August of 1943—feeling that he would soon be captured, weary of fugitive life in the bush, and short of food—Paliau gave himself up to the Japanese administration in Rabaul.

The Japanese asked him if he had hidden any Australians in the bush. He said that he had not and that he had had no contact with the Australians for over a year. Finally, the Japanese told him that he had to work for them as a police officer in charge of the indigenous population in Rabaul. Paliau feared that if he did not obey the Japanese they would cut his throat. He remembered also that the departing Australians had told the remaining police that if the Japanese captured them they were to obey to save their lives.

The Japanese made Paliau responsible for overseeing the New Guineans from all parts of the Territory, including many from Manus, who had been working in Rabaul and were now trapped there. He gathered them in groups according to their places of origin and assigned a policeman to supervise each group. He had them plant gardens to grow their own food while they worked for the Japanese. He judged disputes among members of this disparate community and brought their complaints about the actions of Japanese soldiers to the attention of the Japanese administration. He told Schwartz that when he reported an offence against local people by a Japanese soldier, the soldier was punished. He emphasised that he had nothing to do with the Japanese treatment of Australians or with Japanese executions of New Guineans.

When the Americans began bombing Rabaul in 1944, Paliau was wounded in the leg, but he was able to get out and find refuge in a Manus settlement outside the town. He stayed with this group of men from Admiralty Islands villages until the fighting was over in 1945. Among this group was Karol Matawai of Patusi (who was mentioned in Bonyalo's story in connection with the Pere local movement). When news came that an American warship was in Rabaul harbour and that the Australians had re-established their control, Paliau put on his old police uniform and presented himself to the government officer. He was sent back to bring in the other men from Manus. Many more Manus police returned to Rabaul with the Australians and they were overjoyed at finding Paliau alive. The Australian administration put the Manus to work clearing Rabaul of the war wreckage and building housing.

A group of police from the Sepik region of mainland New Guinea, however, wanted to kill Paliau, accusing him of helping the Japanese. They called him the *kia* of the Japanese. Although the departing Australians had told the remaining police to obey the Japanese, on their return some of them suspected Paliau of collaboration because the Japanese had given

Paliau a position of considerable responsibility. Paliau was brought to court and tried for alleged war crimes. The rest of the Manus police were returned home, but Paliau was kept in Rabaul for a year while his trial continued intermittently. When he was not in court, he was put to work. At night he slept in the jail. But the Australian court could prove no willing collaboration.

In 1945, Paliau sent a letter from Rabaul to the *luluai* of the Baluan Island villages of Mok and Lipan, calling on the people of the two islands to build a large meeting house at the place in Lipan called Saponparunbui to prepare for his return. When he arrived they were to assemble to hear his message. Adherents of the later Paliau Movement speak of this letter as the beginning of everything; it is the starting point of modern history for them.

The *luluai* of the several villages of the two islands decided to wait until Paliau's return before carrying out his instructions. According to Paliau they reasoned that he might yet be imprisoned or executed. Finally, in October 1946, the trials of New Guineans suspected of war crimes ended. Paliau was told he was free and would be assigned to a ship to return to Manus. But many ships came and went and he was kept waiting. He told Schwartz of going from one Australian official to another seeking a pass to board a ship, but with no success. It was clear to Schwartz that he was still bitter. 'If I had done anything wrong', he said, 'they had ample opportunity to convict me, but they didn't. They released me. Why did their anger persist?' The fact that he was not judged a collaborator did not sooth Paliau's resentment that the Australians—alongside whom he had served and fought—had treated him with suspicion.

The Manus people who had been in Rabaul with Paliau considered him a martyr and he had great prestige among them for his work on their behalf. He had organised the settlement of the heterogeneous mass of indigenous internees in Rabaul, taking it on himself to manage their internal affairs, calling meetings and holding courts. Many Admiralties people spent the war in a refugee settlement at Talasea, New Britain, some distance from Rabaul. Those with whom Schwartz spoke years later said that Paliau had acted on their behalf as well. Among other things, he had circulated a letter warning them to save their lives by obeying the Japanese and to bide their time, essentially what the departing Australians had told them.

Paliau felt that the Australian administration's treatment of him negated his many years with the police and the high rank he had reached. He decided to put this part of his life behind him. His sole interest now, he said, was leading a transformation of indigenous society. When he returned to Manus in 1946, he immediately began to gather a following from villages on the south coast.

By the time Schwartz came to know him, Paliau saw himself in the light of the Movement that bore his name, though not quite as his followers saw him. He gave Schwartz an introspective account of his thoughts and activities, asking aloud at several points, 'Why did I see that all this was wrong when the rest of them didn't?'

These are the points Paliau emphasised in answering his own question. First, he put great weight on losing his parents early in life. Among the Matankor people of Baluan there was probably a close relationship between father and son similar to that among the Titan. Having neither a brother nor sister, he felt that he belonged to no one after he was orphaned. He felt that he had been alone all his life and an outsider to his natal culture even before he knew any other. He associated his natal culture with his foster father, Joseph Pati, who had frequently caused him shame and anger. His disastrous attempt to dance on and speak from the *sinai* was probably a crucial point in his rejection of indigenous Matankor ways. And Paliau's emphasis on his relationship to the lagoon-dwelling Titan of Mok presages his later strong identification with Titan speakers.

Paliau also emphasised his expanding experience of the world beyond his home island. He travelled very little until his late teens. But he felt that his break with his natal culture preceded his travels. He dates his disbelief in the spirits of the dead, a nuclear belief in Manus, to his childhood. Paliau attributed his own scepticism to the fearless autonomy of a child too ignorant to be afraid of the ghosts that play such a large role in the adult world. This is consistent with Mead's assertion that Titan children were sceptical about adult beliefs (Mead 2001 [1930], see particularly Chapters 4 and 8). Although Paliau was ethnically Matankor, in his account of his early life there are more than echoes of Mead's discussion of the marked discontinuity in Titan socialisation. Titan adults, she observed, did little to prepare their children for adult responsibilities until they were suddenly required to accept them in their entirety. But unlike the Titan children

of the 1920s whom Mead observed, Paliau was not suddenly and roughly initiated into a rigid adult role. Instead, to the extent possible, he struck out on his own.

Paliau rejected the adult explanation that a series of deaths following a feast was caused by spirits of the dead. Rather, he connected the deaths with a fault in the culture. People died because the feasts and dances required strenuous preparation, entailed too much eating and dancing, and used up all the food. But this was only part of his reasoning. He also thought that these events brought death because in some way, as yet undefined, they were wrong. They were wrong just as the dissipation of a returning worker's hard-won pay was wrong. No one achieved anything. Life was an endless round of work and dissipation of the rewards, which compelled people simply to return to work. His conviction that this was wrong showed the extent to which he had not internalised the value system of the old culture.

Paliau described his travels as opportunities to compare cultures. He had decided not to return to Baluan, but he found nothing better anywhere in other New Guinea societies. He abstracted from his experiences the basic similarity of the cultures he encountered. And he saw that New Guineans from many backgrounds who went to work for the whites found that when they returned their elders appropriated the wealth they had gained. Dissatisfied, some who returned remained aloof from their home cultures or, finding nothing desirable in their villages, returned to the European world to work.

Paliau's account of his attempt to change the culture of Baluan is also of great importance. Schwartz was able to check his story with enough people to confirm that he had indeed led local efforts as early as 1937. Paliau mentioned frequently, however, that as his ideas were developing he initially said nothing. He was too young, without prestige, and without a plan of action beyond abandoning the old culture in which his elders still participated. His earliest major project, however, made him known as a leader. As described above, he recruited others to help amass a sum of money larger than any single person could have, creating a fund that helped many people pay their taxes and remain out of jail. (The amount he named, £2,000, however, seems improbable for the prewar years. Others with whom Schwartz spoke who knew of the fund said they did not know its precise amount.)

Even on his last return to Baluan before the war, four years or more after he initiated the revolving tax fund, he felt that he was not ready to call for a general break with the old culture. It was on his last leave from Rabaul before the war that he first mentioned his plan to build a meeting house on Baluan. Then, during his service and his detention in Rabaul, he cultivated men from many different Manus villages. Those Schwartz spoke with later said that Paliau had told them of his plans for transforming Manus when he went back.

In the 1950s, Schwartz usually felt that Paliau was speaking with him openly and freely, but he noted at least one significant exception: Paliau omitted almost any spontaneous mention of Christianity in his dictated autobiography. He spoke of his ideas about Christianity only when Schwartz questioned him. Paliau then said that Christianity had come slowly to Baluan. People who seemed about to die were baptised. If they recovered, they remained Christians. The Catholic Mission had been established while Paliau was away, working for Akim. Paliau was never baptised and was one of the few people Schwartz and Shargo encountered in Manus who had no baptismal name. When asked about his religion, he said he was a Catholic, and he had apparently acquired knowledge of mission Christianity from many different sources. In Rabaul and elsewhere during his years in the police force, he had occasionally attended mission worship services, usually Catholic. But he did not attend a mission school. He learned to read and write Tok Pisin from his peers. John Murphy, with whom Paliau served as a police constable in the Kukakuka area early in his career as a policeman, told Schwartz that Paliau kept to himself more than was usual among the police, and that he tried to learn anything he could, even trying to teach himself English from books.

When in the 1950s Paliau did speak to Schwartz of Christianity, he indicated that he accepted Christianity as true, validated by the obvious power and superiority of the whites who espoused it, and he accepted the reality of the God and Christ of the missions. We have seen, however, that in later years he expressed scepticism of the 'truth' of any religion or, in Tok Pisin, *lotu*. And even early in his career he revised much of the content of mission teaching, departing widely from orthodox Catholic doctrine and questioning the truth of the Bible as presented to New Guineans. He had rejected his natal culture before having intensive contact with Christianity, and he and others describe his local prewar movement in completely secular terms. During the war and just after it, however, his program became infused with his understanding of Christianity, an

aspect of his story he did not share with Schwartz at first. But it was well known to his followers. Many people told Schwartz of a revelatory dream—recounted below—they attributed to Paliau, long before Paliau told Schwartz his own version. And only just before Schwartz and Shargo left the field in 1954 did Paliau tell them of how he had recounted this dream in his early meetings on Baluan.

When Paliau finally filled in this dimension of his chronicle, he told Schwartz of how, as he renewed his efforts after the war, he presented his program as having come to him full blown in dream and vision, directly from the mind of Jesus. He presented himself not merely as a man with a program, but a man whose program was the latest chapter in the history of the relationship between man and God, a history revealed to him by a higher power.

In this mode, Paliau spoke of the war as a trial sent by God, a trial that would force open the minds of the New Guineans like a bomb striking a concrete building. He told of how, while he and his companions hid from the Japanese in the bush, he had dreamt several times that Japanese patrols had found them. Each time, he told the others of his dream and persuaded them to flee just in time to escape. He also told of how, during the American bombing, he had another dream that predicted the arrival of American bombers the next day and a bomb that would destroy the house in which he and his companions were staying. This dream also came true, but they had already fled the house. In another dream he predicted that 208 planes would appear the next afternoon. The next day, he said, 208 planes flew overhead. He held that dreams that prove accurate are sent from God and that he was being specifically favoured.

These dreams, however, came only after his crucial revelation: a dream in which a messenger, whom he usually identified as Jesus, appeared to him in the form of an ox, which then transformed into the figure of a white-skinned man. By the time Schwartz, Shargo, and Mead arrived in 1953, the story of this encounter was well known throughout large parts of Manus. Schwartz and Shargo collected versions of it from Europeans, from local people hostile to the Movement, and from many of Paliau's closest adherents. We will present below the version Paliau finally shared with Schwartz, but the varied versions that circulated spontaneously helped make Paliau's reputation. Most of those who told the story related it as if the events had had physical form. Some, however, described it as a dream that came in natural sleep; still others, as a vision that came to

Paliau as a kind of possession by Jesus. The accounts varied in their details, but despite this there can be little doubt that at least some narrators had heard the story directly from Paliau. Schwartz composed the following version of the story by combining the points of agreement among versions provided by several members of the Movement.

The revelatory dream

Jesus had sent the Americans to end the war and to act as his agents in bringing the truth to the natives. Jesus himself also came to select the native who would lead all the rest. He went to Manus but could find no one who was fit to lead. When Jesus saw how the Titan lived, landless, like fish in water, he felt great compassion for them. Jesus finally found Paliau in Rabaul. He was the only man capable of the task that Jesus had for him. Jesus came in a plane marked with a cross. When the plane appeared, Paliau was hiding, afraid that he would be hit by the Americans' bombs. Jesus appeared to him in the form of an ox. The thought came into Paliau's mind that he should not be afraid. The ox turned into a tall white-skinned man with a beard. The link between Paliau and this man was between their minds; they communicated without speaking. They went into a house together. The bearded white-skinned man sat down in one chair and bade Paliau sit down in another. The house was filled with a bright light that could be seen at a great distance. They also seemed to be surrounded by clouds of smoke. Jesus showed Paliau a book. It was the original *Buk Tambu*—the true Bible. [In Admiralties Tok Pisin of the 1950s, the Bible was *Buk Tambu*. This translates loosely as the powerful or sacred book. Forbidden Book is a possible translation, but things are forbidden—tabooed or, in Tok Pisin, *tambu*—because they are powerful or dangerous, not the other way around. Today, Tok Pisin speakers simply say *Baibel*. As we will see next, Paliau taught that the whites had concealed the true Bible from New Guineans.]⁵ It had been encased in concrete and the book itself was half metal, half stone. No one could open it and no hacksaw could have made an impression on the metal. Such was the knowledge that had been concealed from the natives. Now Paliau was given part of this knowledge, and he sometimes said that all the content

5 The Tok Pisin word *tambu* is closely related to terms from Polynesian languages, such as the Tongan *tapu* and the Hawaiian *kapu*, both meaning roughly set apart, potent, or—in more theological terms—sacred.

of the early meetings was revealed to him at this time. He was told that he and the rest of Manus people would be delivered safely to their homes. Paliau was to go straight to the people of Mok, who were singled out as an exemplar of the poverty of all natives. The Moks were the rubbish people who were to be the first to share this revelation. After this visitation, Paliau told his companions of his contact with Christ and implied that he continued to be inspired and empowered by his role as the chosen spokesman of Jesus.

When Schwartz first asked Paliau about this and other revelatory dreams of which Schwartz had heard from others, Paliau denied them, saying: 'Who am I that Jesus should come to me?' Later, when Schwartz pressed him again, he admitted to having had a dream that was the source of these stories. Here is the substance of the dream in which Jesus appeared to Paliau as an ox as Paliau himself finally recounted it to Schwartz:

When he was being held in Rabaul by the Australians during the war crimes trials, Paliau was afraid that he would be imprisoned or executed. A friend who was still serving in the colonial police told Paliau that he would try to collect money to 'pay the court', which usually meant to pay a fine, though there was no question of a penalty as light as a fine. That night Paliau dreamt about the ox. He was frightened at first; later he was no longer afraid. The ox became a white-skinned man who told Paliau not to worry about the trial; Paliau would not have to 'pay'. He, the 'Master', would pay. Paliau was reassured. He understood the dream as a sign that he was favoured by God. He explained to Schwartz that all such dreams come from God; they are his way of communicating with men. He said that the men who conducted his trial wanted to punish him; that they did not do so confirmed his dream.

Some popular versions held that Paliau received his revelation while hiding in the bush, rather than while imprisoned. Most also added that, as a result of his encounter with Jesus, Paliau was able to prevail in interrogations by the Japanese and the Australians by mentioning the name of 'King Berra' at a crucial point in each trial. At the mention of this name, both the Japanese and the Australians were thrown into confusion. Not daring to kill Paliau, they released him. Schwartz first heard of King Berra in connection with these stories, but he later learned that the name appeared in cargo cult lore in various parts of what is now Papua New Guinea. It is

apparently a distortion of the name Canberra, the capital of Australia. In Paliau's own account of his trial for war crimes, he told of how, after almost a year of intermittent court sessions, word came from Canberra, which he knew to be the capital of Australia, that all unconcluded war crimes trials against natives were to be discontinued.

Paliau knew of the various versions of his dreams circulating, and sometimes when speaking with Schwartz he called them distortions and exaggerations of what he had actually said. But publicly he accepted the legendary status that they underwrote. The more heroic versions of the history of his life became a part of the 'Long Story of God', which he related at the early meetings and which we will present later in this chapter.

Paliau's return to Manus

Paliau arrived at Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) headquarters, near Lorengau, on 10 October 1946. As we have seen, at this time numbers of indigenous people were advocating change in their villages, but the local movements had all encountered intractable older generations. Some indigenous critics of the prevailing order were also saying that New Guineans should demand from employers a pound a day as a minimum wage. About the time of, or just before, Paliau's return to Manus, a paramount *luluai* from the north coast organised a movement to ask the Americans to take over Manus and a delegation presented a petition written in Tok Pisin to officers in charge of the American base. Nothing, of course, came of it. ANGAU was very unpopular among Manus people, who saw it as a barrier between themselves and the Americans. Paliau, however, had little interest in calling on the Americans to advance Manus society. His plan called for unifying Manus people and moving independently towards an approximation of their understanding of white life.

Paliau rejected others' schemes for Manus advancement brusquely, as he rejected William Matbe's plans to start a store. He had returned to Manus from Rabaul on the same ship that brought Matbe and other Manus men home. He had spoken to Matbe but could not enlist him in his own efforts. He described Matbe to Schwartz as an individualist and a gambler with little interest in becoming part of a larger endeavour. Paliau went to the store when it opened and predicted its failure within five months. The store was 'wrong' he said. The men who organised it were interested

only in their own advancement, he told people, while they allowed their own villages to follow the old ways. In any event, such a small group had too little strength to make any appreciable change in indigenous society. Paliau's prediction that the store would fail proved correct.⁶

From Lorengau, Paliau sent word to Baluan, announcing his impending return and calling on people to build a large meeting house. Three days later he arrived in Baluan. It was impossible to trace all his activities during this initial period of organisation of the Movement. But before presenting the content of Paliau's talks to his rapidly growing group of followers, we will describe Paliau's recruiting method.

Paliau knew how to dramatise himself and his ideas. We noted his attempt to recruit Bonyalo in Chapter 4. Paliau's speech to Bonyalo—as Bonyalo recounted it—illustrates his initial approach. He came to see Bonyalo by canoe. He went straight to Bonyalo without attempting to speak to anyone else in Pere. When Bonyalo asked him why he had come, Paliau showed him his canoe. 'Do you see any cargo on it?' Paliau said. There was none. 'You see', said Paliau, 'I have not come to trade, I have come to talk'. This conversation made such an impression on Bonyalo that he recalled it—or some version of it—when Schwartz spoke with him seven years later. The empty canoe distinguished this visit from the visits of all other Matankor canoes to Manus villages. Having failed to persuade Bonyalo not to leave the village, Paliau invited the people of Pere to come to the meetings on Baluan. But despite Paliau's eloquence, Bonyalo did not promote the event and no one from Pere attended the early Movement meetings.

Napo of Mbukei, who had reached a stalemate in his own village, was ready to join anyone who had a plan that might succeed where his had failed. The men of Mbukei knew that Paliau had returned. They knew he had important plans; but, when they questioned the men of Mok who had already joined Paliau, the Moks would tell them nothing. Paliau had instructed them not to reveal the content of the Baluan meetings. But Napo saw that the Moks no longer wore *laplap* or grass skirts. Subsequently, 30 men of Mbukei went to Baluan in three canoes to try to learn more.

6 Indeed, as of 1954 no attempts at small group or private local business enterprise in Manus had succeeded.

Paliau attracted Lungat of Ndriol in the same way. As Lungat told the story, he had visited friends on the islands of Pak and Tong, hoping to find a person with ideas he could use. He had returned to Rambutjo disappointed. Later, a man from Pak who was on his way to Baluan told him, in strictest confidence, that he was going to help build a meeting house in which all men from all villages would gather to discuss the condition of the people of New Guinea. Lungat kept this information to himself until a canoe from Mok arrived one day, seeking sago palm leaves for thatching the new meeting house. Meetings had been going on since Paliau's return, but Lungat could learn nothing specific of the content. He asked one of the crew, who replied, 'I am unable to tell you'. Then Lungat said, 'I think this talk which you are all making at the meetings is the talk of God'. The other, seeing that he knew the truth, replied: 'That is it. It is nothing else. But I cannot tell you more. Whether you come or do not come, it is up to you'. Lungat thought of his two deceased brothers and of how they had appeared to him in a dream and one had made the mark of the cross on his shoulder. He approached another clan brother, Alois Ndreje, who agreed to accompany him to Baluan. They borrowed a canoe and, with their wives and another Ndriol man, Lukas Pomileu, started for Baluan. They took with them an aged woman who wanted to see her relatives. A headwind came up, driving them back to Rambutjo, which they reached just as the canoe was about to sink. Lungat reasoned that the old woman had been thinking about exchanges in which she and her kin were involved and that these thoughts of the old ways had brought the canoe to grief.

That night Lungat's clan brothers returned from Manus Island with their father's big canoe. With this added crew and the larger canoe, and without the old woman and her dangerous thoughts, they set out the next morning. This time there were the five clan brothers: Lungat, Ndreje, Muli, Pomileu, and Wapei, with three of their wives. A strong crosswind brought them to Baluan the following morning. They poled their canoe through shallow waters to Mok, where they tied it to the posts of Lungat's father-in-law's house. Paliau was in Mok, where he was holding meetings on the *arakeu* (a Titan word for the artificial island that served as a platform for work, displaying wealth during ceremonial exchanges, feasting, and dancing). The next morning Lungat went to find Paliau, but he met Paliau coming to him. That morning Paliau had met with Mok's leaders to ask about these men from Rambutjo, who were unknown to him. He asked the Moks who among the men of Ndriol could speak for

them and, according to Lungat, they named him. Lungat was pleased. In his account, Lungat enumerated all the other men from Rambutjo who could have been named, most of whom were older. Paliau asked Lungat, 'Why did you come here to Baluan?' Lungat said: 'Yes, Paliau, I didn't come here to find food. I didn't come about the work of our ancestors. I came because I heard of this house you are building. We have come to hear the talk that you will make in this house'. Paliau replied:

Your thought is a good one. This house belongs to all of us. I intended that it be built only by those who were here in Mok and Baluan, but he who comes from another place by his own volition can come inside. Now that you have come, I will tell you. You know that in the past all the white men have lied to us. All the missionaries have lied to us. They brought the name of Jesus and of his church. They told of his coming to earth, of his work, and of his death for our redemption. But the true talk of Jesus, this they didn't tell us. The inner meaning of the work of Jesus they didn't tell us. But now I have found this. I, myself, have found it.

According to Lungat, Paliau went on to say that the talk Jesus brought when he came among the white men had created great dissension among them. The white men had decided to conceal his message to keep it from reaching black people. It was as if they had wrapped it up, tied it, and encased it in cement. Then the war came and broke open this cement. He was glad that the men of Ndriol had come to hear the truth that he would soon reveal in the meeting house.

Kisakiu of Tawi village, on an islet just off the south coast, gave Schwartz an account of this period that illustrates other aspects of Paliau's recruiting. Kisakiu of Tawi and Manoi of Loitja, a south coast village, were young men. They were not leaders in their villages. They came to Mok in connection with preparations for a feast in Tawi. Mok was already in the Movement. The mood there was conspicuously excited, but the Moks were not talking. One of Kisakiu's mother's brothers told him that Paliau had taught them something, but they were not allowed to reveal it. Kisakiu responded, as Napo and Lungat had, by seeking to join in.

He and Manoi went across to Baluan where they saw the meeting house being built. They decided to see Paliau. Paliau shook hands with them, brought them to his private house, and told his wife to bring them food. Then they sat around a table and talked. Paliau told them that he knew who they were. Then he told them that what he had to say was absolute

truth, but that they must want to hear it. They had to join voluntarily, knowing that a great deal of trouble would result from what Paliau would say. Without further explanation, he told them that they might not succeed; but, if they did, they would be all right. That is, they would achieve the envied condition of the whites. Paliau spoke at length to these two young men. Then he asked them if they would help in the 'work'. They agreed and were told: 'You, Manoi, will go look after the people of Loitja. The *luluai* is for the work of the government, whereas your work is to spread this talk [of the Movement] to all the men and women. You, Kisakiu, will be in charge of Tawi'.

Kisakiu and Manoi then returned to Tawi, appointed by Paliau as what were called in the Movement the local *pesman*, a Tok Pisin term translating literally as 'face men' and meaning spokespersons or representatives. (We note again that nouns have no distinct plural form in Tok Pisin. Plurals are formed by adding a modifier. Hence, we will use *pesman* as both singular and plural.) They were to relay Paliau's ideas and lead the Movement within their villages. In Paliau's name they urged discarding the ways of the past. The elders of their villages were unimpressed. Among the younger men, too, some answered that they did not want any change. Kisakiu and Manoi became angry, but others told them that until the government spoke, they would not listen. Kisakiu said he was angry for two months, but his arguments had no further success. Then he and Napo of Mbukey each received a letter from Paliau. Hearing of this, the people of Loitja asked Kisakiu to read his letter to them, but he said that it was addressed to Tawi and could not be read in any other place. In Tawi he waited until after church service on Sunday. The *luluai*, who had opposed Kisakiu, permitted him to read the letter to the village. It said that the meetings had begun and invited Tawi to send people to hear them.

The Tawi people did not want to remain outside now that the meetings were actually happening. The villagers agreed to hasten to complete a big feast that was already scheduled. They reasoned that they could not abandon an event that had been the centre of village activities for almost a year, but they could say that it was to be the last. This would satisfy the old men whose entrepreneurial exchange activities were to culminate in this event. Under similar circumstances twenty years previously Pere had planned the last big feast to include the phallic dancing (in which men swung and twirled the white cowrie shells they wore on their penises) of which the mission strongly disapproved. This done, they had called in the missionaries. Similarly, Napo in Mbukey had brought his local

movement to a point at which the village promised to set a date before which all obligations derived from the old system would be met. But Tawi became preoccupied with making its final feast and did not send anyone to the meetings on Baluan. (And the feast was never properly completed, because the Noise broke out before preparations were finished, as described in Chapter 6.)

Only two men from Bunai went to Baluan to attend the meetings: Akustin Tjamilo and his brother Alois Posanau. Paliau invited Samol and anyone else interested from Bunai to come to the meetings, but Samol and most of the other villagers were sceptical. Tjamilo said that Paliau shook slightly when he spoke and that he spoke with great intensity, which impressed him. So when Paliau returned to Baluan, Tjamilo and Posanau followed. Tjamilo described his experience there as the most important in his life. As he saw it, he became a man during the weeks that followed.

The content of the early meetings

Schwartz and Shargo found much agreement on the content of these early meetings among the many people with whom they spoke, down to quite specific details. Most of what follows, however, is derived from conversations with three men who witnessed the meetings and whose accounts were the most complete and detailed: Paliau himself, Lukas of Mok, and Tjamilo of Bunai. Others' accounts confirm that the accounts of these three were either depictions of actual occurrences or widely shared standardised versions.

The meetings started in mid-October 1946. The meeting house planned for Lipan had not yet been built so people gathered on the *arakeu* (the meeting ground) of Mok village. Even after the meeting house in Lipan was nearly completed, many people from Baluan, Mok, and Pwam still gathered at night on Mok. During this early period Paliau travelled from village to village in search of support. Early in November, the talk in the meetings on Mok turned to building the Lipan meeting house. Paliau told of how he had dreamt of such a meeting house when he was in Baluan on his last visit before the war:

I dreamt of something that rose up almost to the sky. It was very long. There were two things that projected down from the top. They looked like megaphones that are used for shouting. They

started at the top and came down. It [i.e. this building] was very red. It looked red at the top. It came down, down, down straight upon this piece of ground here near the store [in the centre of Lipan village]. When it came down and reached the ground it looked like a cloth surrounding us. It had taken the form of a building. We were inside and its door was shut. It was a house with a door. I wanted to open the door to go outside, but the door was stuck. I pushed the door three times, but it was as if a man, though it was no man, pushed back. That was all. I found an image here according to which I could make a house.

In a meeting on 6 November 1946, Paliau began by describing his dream and talking about the importance of building the meeting house. God, he said, had sent this dream as he sends all good dreams. We give below a close translation of his speech as Paliau remembered it and as confirmed by Lukas and Tjamilo. It is full of what is called in Tok Pisin *tok piksa*—literally, picture talk—a term that covers parables, extended analogies, and metaphors. Paliau was considered a master of this form of speech. It was occasionally intended to refer indirectly to material well known to insiders in order to conceal the speaker's meaning from outsiders. It could occasionally be used to criticise or accuse a person or group present at a meeting, dramatising the content of the criticism but reducing overt incitement to conflict. Most often, parables were used to make a speech more striking, more memorable, and more convincing. The following account of his speech illustrates Paliau's style of speaking in parables. It also introduces part of the initial ideology of the *Nufela Fasin* (in English, the New Way).

I pictured a house. I said this house is a good thing. As for the function of this house I said, 'Look at the framework of this house, all these timbers are the bones of this house; they are like the bones of human beings. This beam that rests at the top of the house is like our backbone. These, which form the sides, are like our ribs. The bones of the side are attached to the backbone. The floor inside the house is like the abdomen of men. The part of the house that has the front ladder is like the head of a man. There is a door in the other part that is like the anus of a man. The windows of this house are like the ears and nose by which a man gets his breath. The posts that support the house are like the legs and arms of a man. Everything that is inside the house is like all the organs and the heart of a man. Why is it that everything in the house is just like everything in a man? The part of the house that is like the anus of a man has another door that leads to the cook house.

The door near the house ladder is like the mouth of a man; as it leads back to the door of the cook house, it is like the bowels of a man. All the fastenings that bind the house together are like the muscles, ligaments, tendons, and blood vessels of our bodies’.

Everything for building a good house is needed also for making a good man. Who does this building? It is God himself who builds men. He knows that you and I, who are men, cannot sleep unprotected on the ground or the sea; we must sleep in houses. His building is to build the souls of we men that sleep within our bodies, which are their houses. If our bodies are broken, our souls have no houses and must go back to God, our father. Why? The breath of the souls of men is the breath of his mouth. While our souls are inside our bodies, these are their houses. But where are our bodies to sleep? The house is like the skin of the body. If our bodies had no house, we couldn’t sleep. Would our bodies sleep under stones? No! Would they sleep on the water or on the ground? No! They must stay in houses, to protect them from the rain, to hide them from the sun. That is why we live in houses. When we talk, do we talk under a stone or do we sit down to talk on the water, or do we just sit on the ground? No, we must make a house in which men can talk. We must go inside to discuss what good way of life there is for us to follow that will make us and our villages all right. If we want to talk about anything on earth, if there is a place where we can talk, to straighten out the ways of our villages, this is good. But if one village does not have a meeting house, but talks round and about in every part of the lagoon or in the bush, this is not right. This place cannot be made all right. Why? Because all men and everything on the earth are, as I have said in this story about a house, all are only the buildings of God, the father of all.

The pattern for our work already exists on earth in the bodies of men. If we think intensely about God, our father, if all of our ways that are no good are thrown out, he is one who will have compassion on us, his children. He can make our heads become clear with good thoughts. With these good thoughts that will come to us, we can find good work and a good way of life. Only the meeting house will make us all right. It was like this with Jesus, whose name we have heard over and over, when he was on earth and went from place to place talking; sometimes he spoke here and there in the open, and sometimes he went inside a house to make some important talk to all men. He taught that that which is no good must be cast aside and not practised by us. He said we must think about and follow that which is good. He showed us

that he was God, father of all of us. It is the same now. We must make a meeting house. We must think in it, we must meet in it. All of our ways that are no good, we must cast aside.

Paliau continued proclaiming the necessity of breaking with the ways of the ancestors. He argued that they had learned much from the whites. The government taught about the ways of the body and of the law and the word of God dealt with the spirit. But, said Paliau, if we combine the ways of the whites with those of our ancestors only death and ruination can result: 'The talk of God is like a sorcery charm. If you speak the word of God and you think good thoughts and do good things with it, that is all right. But if you mix the words of God with the evil ways of your ancestors, this will ruin you'.

To clarify Paliau's comparison of God's word as a sorcery charm: successfully performing many kinds of magic in the Admiralties required (and still requires) refraining from particular kinds of behaviour. The magic does good as long as people avoid the proscribed behaviour; otherwise it can result in death. So, people were unable to unleash the power of Christianity to make them 'all right' because they mixed it with the remnants of the old culture. Paliau frequently emphasised this idea and a large number of his followers often acted as though mixing Christianity with the old culture was not only ineffective but lethally wrong.

All who told Schwartz and Shargo of the meetings agreed that a central idea was that the first task for the Movement was thoroughly revising Christianity as taught by the missions. In the early meetings, Paliau expounded for the first time a story aiming to do this. He called this the 'Long Story of God'. Otto (1992a: 63) aptly calls this a historical cosmology—a description we will use again—that 'integrates cosmology and history'. Each new recruit to the Movement was told to learn it. Some learned it virtually verbatim simply by hearing it over and over again. Those who were literate wrote it out in the school exercise books that were the staple village stationery of the period.

The 'Long Story of God'

Tjamilo arrived in Lipan when the meeting house was almost completed and he attended the first meeting there. There was a platform in the middle of the floor on which Paliau stood when he spoke. Six of his

more important followers sat behind him on a bench on the platform. As Tjamilo recalled, Paliau began his first rendition of the ‘Long Story of God’ as follows:

A very long time ago God existed in the mists. [In Tok Pisin, this is ‘*God i stap insait long sno*’. *Sno*, pronounced like the English ‘snow’, denotes clouds that are indistinct or the mist that obscures a distant island.] We know of no mother or father for him. Heaven and earth did not yet exist. God was one and alone. The mists in which he stayed were cold. Then God thought. When he thought, the heavens opened up. When the heavens were made, he thought and brought the sun. Second, he thought and brought the moon. Third, he thought and the stars came. Now he created all the angels. All these angels were incorporeal. [We translate the Tok Pisin term *win nating*, that is, nothing but air or wind—as incorporeal.] They were the same as God. They stayed with him in Heaven. Then God thought and created the earth. First, he made stone. Then he made the ground. Then he made the grass. The grass was for firm ground. He made trees that were good. They grew unattended. The ground was brown. He put all the fish in the sea. Then he made the birds. He made cows and pigs. He also made the seas. When all this was ready, God thought and created Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve came down into Paradise. They were not human yet. One slept in one place and the other slept in another place. Their bodies were not fixed to their bones yet. Now God made the flesh to go on their bones. But they were still not human yet. They slept on the ground. God blew a little of his breath into their mouths and told them to rise.

At this point Lukas of Mok’s version has God speak as follows:

This is an order to you people of the earth. You two represent all people. I made you two first as the parents of all the people of earth. If you two are all right, all people will be all right. If you are wrong, all people must be wrong. Now I bring all the prophets upon the earth. The prophets cannot be born of the womb of a woman. They come from the strength of God. Now God spoke to Adam and Eve: ‘You two live under my first order. You, Adam, you must stay at a distance. You, Eve, you must stay at a distance. Your house is ready. You two must go into the house. The rain can wash and the sun can burn everything in Paradise, but you two must live in a house. Still you must keep your distance from one another. You Adam, you stay to this side; you, Eve, you stay to this side. If you think, your thought will come to me, God, your

father. You have only to think and a child can appear to you. You, Adam, if you want a son, a son can appear. You, Eve, if you want a daughter, a daughter can appear. But you two must stay apart. If your belief is in me, God your father, you can have children. Food also can appear. Now you are living according to my first order. Now, for all the prophets that are created at the same time as you, you two are the face for all of them. Just as you two can think, so they can think, and whatever they desire can appear out of nothing for them. All right, you two stay here and I will go back to Heaven’.

Adam and Eve stayed in Paradise. Whatever they desired appeared for them. It was the same for the prophets. They lived in accordance with God’s law. But after a short time some of the angels were envious of God. The First Angel thought: ‘Why do we have to obey the talk of God? What is he and what are we? He is pure spirit; we are also pure spirit’.

One can say the close equivalent of ‘he is pure spirit’ in several ways in Tok Pisin. Paliau’s followers used the following phrases most often: *em i no got mit* (*mit* is pronounced like the English meat; *em i no got mit* means ‘he has no flesh’), or *em i win nating* (he is nothing but wind/breath/air), or *em i tingting tasol*. The Tok Pisin word *tingting* can be a verb meaning to think as well as a noun meaning roughly thought, mind, or spirit. Paliau and his adherents used *tingting* to convey all these, as well as such Movement concepts as the creative power of mind.

[The angels thought] ‘when he [i.e. God] thinks, everything that he thinks of comes up through the power of his thought. It is the same with us also. Then why should we obey him?’ God was not in their company. He was in another part of Heaven. But God is a true God. Why? Because he created all of them. He could perceive their thoughts. He asked them: ‘Why do you speak ill of me among yourselves? It is true that you are incorporeal and I, too, am incorporeal. But you are angels and I am the one who created you. Now that you have envied me, I must divide you’. Then he divided them into two halves [one led by the rebellious angel, Lucifer, and the other led by the loyal Michael]. God said: ‘All of you who are in Lucifer’s group, get out. You who are in Michael’s group, you must cast out all these angels who aren’t good. They shall wander about in all places. Now all of you who belong to Michael’s line will remain in Heaven. You will stay with me. You are my true followers’.

Shortly after this, one of the bad angels whom God had cast out came down to Adam and Eve.

Lukas's version differs from Tjamilo's here. Whereas Tjamilo, whose version we are following, gives a 'bad angel' the task of tempting Adam and Eve, Lukas gives this job to a snake or serpent, as does the Bible.

He came to tempt them. He said: 'Now you two live under God's first order. Now today, if you listen to me you can be a spirit just like God. If you do not listen to me you will be in the wrong'. While he was still at a distance he projected these thoughts. Why? Because God had not taken away his power of mind [which was like that of God's thought] ... [The bad angel] looked into their minds and said: 'Adam has a better mind; Eve has a lesser mind. If I approach Eve, I will succeed, but if I try Adam I won't. He is a man and has the stronger mind'. Then he came to Eve, and he said: 'You two must lie together and copulate, then you will be like God. If you don't listen to me, I think you will not succeed in becoming like God'.

Eve heard the talk of the evil angel. She aroused the desires of Adam who came to her. Adam could not resist because his desires were one with hers. He consented. The angel shouted in exultation from a distance. Adam went on top of Eve and the angel exulted because they had sinned. God already knew this. He came and called to them. They had run away and hidden. God called to them. They came. God spoke: 'Now you two have sinned. Now I retract my first order to you. You have followed the talk of Satan. You are his now. You have lost my favour. Now the First Order of things is revoked. All the prophets and the earth, too, are in the wrong. You two stood for all people of the world. Now that you are wrong, they are wrong with you. Now you will have hard work all the time. You, Eve, you belong to Adam. He will come to you. You two must work hard to have children. You, Eve, you must cry out and you must suffer pain as well. The child will be in your womb; you will cry and you will know pain'.⁷

⁷ According to the 'Long Story', maintaining the paradisiacal First Order of God required sexual abstinence. This is not, of course, the orthodox Christian interpretation of the original sin, the cause of humankind's fall from grace. Rather, the original sin was disobedience to God. The 'Long Story', however, states explicitly that intercourse was the sin and it elaborates on this theme. This is consistent with strict indigenous Manus sexual morality, but sexual intercourse as the original sin is also an idea common among Anglo-American Christians. Paliau could easily have absorbed it from contact with members of the white colonial population, including Catholic missionaries.

Note that 'first order' appears to have two closely related meanings: God's first instructions to Adam and Eve and the paradisiacal state of things before Adam and Eve disobeyed those instructions. The second meaning, however, rapidly became dominant in the Movement.

Again, Lukas's version contains a detail not in Tjamilo's. He includes an interaction between God and Eve, as follows, that is the beginning of shame. Following Adam's and Eve's sinning, God called to Eve, but she said she could not respond because she had no grass skirt. God asked her who told her about grass skirts. 'The snake', Eve said. Then God banished the snake from Paradise to live in the unsanctified bush. But shame had come among men and women. We now continue with Tjamilo's version.

'You, Adam [God said], now I will tell you what your work is to be. You must find food. If you work hard and long in your gardens you will have food. Now, you two get out. I no longer want to see you'. Before there was sin on earth, God would appear to the prophets. He would speak to them and they could speak to God. They knew all about the heavens above because they could talk to God. Now God was hidden from them. Everything was wrong on the earth now. All the prophets, who had been created with the earth, fought and quarrelled among themselves now. They could not know God their father now. He had hidden himself. The prophets scattered over the earth. Each went to stay in a place of his own. Each said that he was king of his territory. Everyone made war everywhere in the world. The world was completely wrong now.

Lukas, in his account, elaborated on the period after the Fall, equating it with the condition of the people of New Guinea before the coming of the whites. There was incessant warfare and great hardship. Men no longer knew God, as they had in the First Order. They worshipped many idols and devils. They thought that they had originated in stones, or trees, or animals. In Tjamilo's version, there follows a brief reference to the story of Cain and Abel; how Cain slew his brother Abel, after which God smeared Cain's forehead with the blood of Abel and condemned him to roam the world in misery. In Tjamilo's version, death in the world originated in this fratricide. In other versions, death is one of the results of the sin of Adam and Eve. Tjamilo's account continues the story:

Now God saw that the earth was full of evil ... God sent a flood to all places. God told Noah: 'You must make a big ark. Then you must gather together your brothers, your fowls and pigeons.

My word is with you. If people do not listen to your message, you must go into this ark and you must go far away. All these other people will remain'. Now God sent the great flood upon them. Some people clung to the branches of trees. Some stayed on the ground and died. Those who climbed trees were struck by the tidal wave and fell. Now God watched. He thought of the world. He said: 'What will I do? I wanted to put an end to the world, but after all, who is it that created these men? No, I think I will send Jesus down'.

Now Jesus was given the power of his father. He came to earth together with 12 of his angels. These 12 angels were his councillors. They surrounded Jesus, who was their chairman. [In telling the story in the 1950s, Tjamilo used terms for positions of authority—councillors and chairman—that were not used in Manus in 1946.] He sent the angel Gabriel who went ahead to Maria. Maria was a German white woman. [The idea that Maria was a German is found only in Tjamilo's account. Others identify Maria simply as a white woman—a *misis*; that is, a Mrs, as New Guineans of the day had been taught to address white women in Tok Pisin.] The angels came down to Maria in Germany. Gabriel spoke to her, 'Maria, soon you will give birth to Jesus Redeemer, who will bring order to the earth'. Maria answered: 'I have no husband. How am I to give birth to Jesus?' Gabriel replied, 'It is through the power of God that you will give birth to Jesus Redeemer'. Maria consented: 'It is all right. I am just a woman. If it is the will of God to give him to me, that is good. But I am unworthy'. Now Jesus came down into the womb of Maria. Then everyone said to Joseph, 'Joseph, you brought this child into the womb of Maria'. Joseph denied it: 'We were not lovers. Why do you lie about me?' Then Joseph watched Maria. Maria took her ladle to fetch water from the well. Joseph followed her. He carried an axe to kill her. Then Gabriel appeared. He laid his hand on the handle of the axe saying, 'You cannot kill Maria and the child that is in her womb'. The angel threw down the axe from Joseph's hand: 'This child in the womb of Maria is not yours, Joseph. It belongs to God. Its name is Jesus Redeemer. He is to save the world which is full of evil. This child Jesus, you must watch over him. You must take care of Maria and the child that is in her. You two are not to marry. It is not your child. It is a sign to all the people of the earth. You must watch over him'. When the child was big in Maria and her time was finished an angel came to them telling them to take the child, Jesus, and go to a stable for sheep. Maria obeyed and brought Jesus to the house of the sheep. She laid Jesus on the half-

shell from which the sheep usually ate, but first she covered it with a cloth. [Shells of giant clams (*Tridacna*) are sometimes used as containers in Manus.] While Jesus slept all the people who cared for the sheep came to worship him. An angel talked to all people saying: 'All of you go quickly. Maria has already given birth to Jesus the Redeemer. Everyone must go to see him and shake hands with him'. Some people worshipped him truly and knelt. Some people walked by on the road and scoffed. They said: 'He is small and insignificant. Why do you men come to obey him? You and I are already the kings of the earth, but he, what did he come for?' But the men who knelt said, 'He is the true child of God'. Their belief told them that he was the Son of God. He is the Redeemer to teach all men of the world.

In telling the story both Lukas and Paliau explain at this point why Jesus chose to come to earth via being born to Maria: it was to demonstrate to all people the dual nature of their being. All people are both *tingting* and *mit*; that is, all are both mind/thought and flesh, God and man.

Tjamilo's account continues:

When Jesus was a little older and stronger, Maria and Joseph brought him to the house of worship in Jerusalem. They showed Jesus to Simeon and Anna. [The Gospel of Luke tells of how Simeon and Anna each recognised Jesus as the Messiah when he was still a child. Here, Tjamilo gives his version of Paliau's version of this portion of the New Testament.] All the other prophets who had lived on the earth had died. The name of Christ had preceded him [to Jerusalem]. Johannes [that is, John the Baptist] had brought it. When people asked Johannes, he would tell them: 'I am just a man who cries out in the wilderness. Christ is yet to come. I am not Christ'. Now Simeon and Anna heard this from Johannes. They said that they wanted to see Christ before they died. They waited and waited. Finally, Maria and Joseph carried Jesus to Jerusalem. Now Anna and Simeon said to Jesus: 'We have seen you, Christ. We are very old; our eyes are nearly blind. We have looked upon you; we shake hands with you; now we can die'. Soon they died. When Jesus was in the house of worship in Jerusalem, he raised two of his fingers and said: 'I am God and I am man. All the men of the earth are God and man. My mind comes from God, my father. The minds of you people of the earth come also from God, our father. My body came from the womb of Maria. It is the same as your bodies which come from the

wombs of your mothers'.⁸ Jesus did not say this with his mouth. He was not old enough yet. He thought these words. Jesus stayed in Jerusalem for 30 years. When he was a man he did the work of a carpenter. He took a plank. Joseph gave him a saw. He sawed the plank saying, 'I have come first as a carpenter; I will be carpenter to all the people of the world'.

When his 30 years were finished and he had become a fully grown man, he travelled around to all the places of the Jews. [Tjamilo would have had only a murky notion of who the Jews were.] He took with him this big book the Bible. With his 12 apostles he went among the Jews. When Jesus spoke in a place, what did he say? Jesus said people should not be angry. They should not quarrel and fight. 'I am Jesus. I have come down because of all these ways of men. Everyone must listen and obey. All the ways of your ancestors from the past, now, at this time, you must be rid of them. I, Jesus, have come to take the lead in this. I, Jesus, I am like a dividing line; the sin of Adam and Eve lies behind me. I have come to the fore. All people must follow me, Jesus alone. The wrongs of Adam and of the angels lie behind me. I have come forward to teach all men. There must be no more dissension, no more fighting, no more struggle over land. It is because of things of this sort that I have come.' Whatever Jesus did or said in any place, his apostles wrote down. Jesus continued to work among the Jews. He taught continually and worked hard, very hard.

In describing some of the events in the life of Jesus, Lukas gives particular emphasis to curing the sick. Jesus accomplished this by sending his thoughts to God. Jesus said, 'You too, if you send your thoughts to God to cure the sickness of another man, you can succeed'. Lukas compares the work of Jesus to gardening: Jesus went from place to place clearing the ground and planting a garden. By the time he finished work at the next place, the previous place would be overgrown. The people of that place would have abandoned the good ways that he had shown them and returned to the ways of their ancestors. Tjamilo's account continues:

When Jesus had finished his work, he looked over the world at the thinking of people everywhere. Some places were all right, some were not all right yet. Jesus knew that soon he would be killed. How did he know? Because he was both God and man. He knew

⁸ Aletta Biersack (personal communication) points out the clear identification here of men with mind (sacred), and of women with flesh (profane). Variations of the notion that women are dangerous to men's health and men's magical power are common in Melanesia.

that his day was near. He said, ‘These parts that are not all right yet, when I die I can pay for them’. [Tjamilo used the Tok Pisin verb *paim*, which can mean both to pay and to buy. In this context, redeem would also be a plausible translation.] All the men of Juda caught Jesus now. [Tjamilo’s recital betrays a murky conception of the meaning of Juda—the people of Judah, as we would write it in English today—that was common in Manus at the time. It was often used to refer to the people of a country called Judah, but there are contexts in which people extended its meaning to whites generally, and to white government functionaries specifically. It was not necessarily used as a synonym for Jews.] They pulled him along the road. They beat him. They said to him: ‘What are you now? You are nothing but a boy. There are already mighty men in the world. Now you who come later, do you think that you will be king of the world?’ They mocked him. They spit in his eye. But Jesus was not angry. He didn’t return their talk. Jesus delivered himself into the hands of the policemen. They had made ready a cross of wood. Now they bound John Brown at the left hand of Jesus. [Paliau or his followers may have heard from American soldiers about John Brown, depicted as a martyr to the cause of abolishing slavery in America in the song ‘John Brown’s Body’. We know that many Manus people were familiar with the song.] Jesus was on the right. They put Jesus onto the cross on top of the mountain, Korokata [that is, Golgotha]. They put two nails in his arms and two nails in his legs. They bound thorny vines around his head. The leader of the police cried out loudly: ‘Nail him to the wooden cross! Nail him to the wooden cross!’ Then they put a spear into his breast. Maria and Joseph were nearby under the cross. Maria brought water to him, but the police threw it out. Jesus hung now from the cross. At three o’clock he died. He cried out to God, his father: ‘My power is finished now. I have given my spirit and my body’. Then he died.

They put Jesus into his grave and stationed guards to watch over it. They were afraid that Maria and her women would steal his body and then spread the lie that Jesus had arisen from the grave. The guards stood watch. When Jesus was still alive, he had said, ‘After three days I will arise again’. The men who had killed him scoffed. They said: ‘What kind of talk is this? The prophets of old died and did not arise again. What man can die and then return?’ When three days had passed, Jesus arose again from his grave. His light appeared and the earth shook. Now all the police near the grave were thrown down. When they got up, each said, ‘Jesus is my

God, my master'. But Jesus answered them, saying: 'Why, when you saw me before, did you seize me? You said that I lied. Now I don't believe you'.

Then Jesus called for Thomas. 'Come touch the place of the nails and of the spear.' Thomas came close to him. He touched the wounds made by the nails and the spear. Then he spoke: 'It is true, it is true, my God, my master. Now I see you and I believe'. But Thomas had been one of Jesus's men. When pressure was brought against Jesus, the Jews had asked Thomas, 'Are you or are you not a follower of Jesus?' Thomas had answered that he was not one of Jesus's men. This was his lie. Now that he saw Jesus had risen from the grave, he believed. But Jesus was both God and man. He understood all this. He said, 'If I do not die, I think my word will last only until the sun goes down'. Jesus knew the intentions of the Jews. They wanted to confine his message to the house of worship in Jerusalem. They said, 'We must kill him together with his teachings, which must not be allowed to get out to all parts of the world'. But Jesus was God and he was man. He knew. At this time the advent of the law of Jesus was near. He told his apostles, all 12 of them: 'Bring my word everywhere from sunup to sundown. [Sunup and sundown are meant not only in the temporal sense but also in the spatial sense, in which the phrase means the entire world. In the 1950s, many Manus people thought of the sun coming up in the east among the whites and setting somewhere just west of Manus. Many also still thought of the world as a kind of inverted bowl, with islands scattered around an expanse of water enclosed by the dome of the sky.] Bring it to every place where God, my father, put people'. The apostles heard this from Jesus. Then Jesus left them to return to his father in Heaven. Now all the apostles wanted to bring the word of Jesus to us. But all the Juda they blocked this talk. The government said: 'You cannot bring this message to the native. If you do, we will cut your throats. Why? Because we have police and soldiers, you must obey us. You cannot spread these ideas. Wait, you must submit these laws of Jesus to an assembly. You must alter the book. The real talk of Jesus must be omitted. Instead, you must use talk picture. For the sake of deception, this must be made into a different book. You missionaries can take with you another book, but the true Bible must remain here. This book that changes the talk of Jesus will be passed off on the New Guineans'.

The 'Long Story of God' depicts events in the life of Jesus as happening in a distant land ruled by the Judah, the identity of whom, as noted above, is not clear. (Tjamilo, Lukas, and many other followers of Paliau equated the Judah with the authorities who killed Jesus.) Subsequently, the missionaries were either prevented from or unwilling to fulfil Jesus's intentions by proffering his teaching to New Guineans. Therefore, since the death of Jesus—an event many of Paliau's followers and other Manus people placed from three to six generations in the past—New Guineans had remained isolated, without access to the true teachings of Jesus, suffering the hard life that had been their lot since the sin of Adam and Eve. Some of Paliau's followers thought that with the coming of Jesus the whites had returned to the First Order of God, sometimes called the Number One Order, but this idea does not appear in the 'Long Story of God'.

The Long Story does not stop with the death of Jesus but continues into the present. Paliau told his listeners that God now felt compassion for the native again. He sent the sailing ships from Europe, Germany, and England. Captain Cook went from island to island leaving the markers of the government. (Paliau knew Cook to be English; Tjamilo called him German.) Then God sent the Germans, who brought law and government. They set up *luluai* in each village, with military-style hats and special sticks as their badges of office. The Germans banned warfare. They used the natives to clear plantations and work copra. With them came the Christian missionaries, but Tjamilo, in his telling of the 'Long Story of God', gave them little credit for improving New Guineans' lives. He continued:

The Germans taught us nothing. They were here for many years. Now God said: 'They must get out. They must go back. They have used men as if they were trucks. Men are men'. All right, now he turned his thoughts towards Australia. Australia came and replaced Germany. They went on and on but didn't teach the native anything. The Australians treated the natives like oxen. Now God said that they must get out. Then God considered Japan. Now the Japanese came in the war and took Manus. The Japanese did not show us the road; instead they killed many people. God told them to clear out. 'All right', God thought, 'Each country that I tried was inadequate. They didn't show people the real road to me, God. Why? Because all the people of earth are only human. I made three loaves of bread. One was brown, one was white, and one was black. The pay for two of the loaves has come. I have seen

it. The pay for the black bread has not arrived ... Did they throw it into a hole or what?' Now the man who made the bread [that is, God] thought about it. 'I will go take a look. Did the bread all burn up, or is some of it left?' All right, the man who was boss over this bread saw that a part of it still remained. Part had fallen upon America. Now Jesus said: 'You must go. I want to try you, America. I have already tried all other countries. Take my flag, take all this food and all these ships and go. Never mind Japan; you can defeat them. This flag of mine is the flag of the black men, you will fight under it'.

Japan came now to fight, but America came later. Jesus came ahead of them. He came as lightning and as an aeroplane marked with a cross. Now he came to Paliau in Rabaul. He had searched all over Manus without finding a single man whose mind was straight. He came down now to Paliau in Rabaul. America came after Jesus. America wanted to bring all these things straight to us, the natives of Manus. America wanted to show us the road that would make us all right. They kept in mind the words of Jesus. But the Australians blocked them. They put sentries along the road. They said to us, 'You cannot go to the Americans, stay at a distance'. Now the Americans did not speak to us. They returned to their own country. Everything they left, the Australians took. America did not forget the talk of Jesus, but the Australians kept them from us. Now God watched. These men who are with us now [the Australians], will they help us or not? We are watching. If they do not help us but continue to keep us down, then there will be another country that will come. Why? Because God has not forgotten the Territory of New Guinea. Soon he will get rid of them all.

The preceding account gives the 'Long Story of God' as Paliau presented it in the first meetings on Baluan in 1946, as recalled in 1953 by principal figures in the Movement (although parts of it seem to relate too closely to later phases of the Movement to have been part of the story in 1946). Tjamilo, on whose memory Schwartz relied heavily, was the main promulgator of the content of the Baluan meetings along the south coast. Whatever his particular distortions may be, they became the accepted version for a large part of the area affected by the Movement. His version also coincides very closely, and in many places exactly, with Lukas of Mok's version. What is given above is skeletal. Adherents of the Movement could add to it many other stories taken from mission teachings and additional twists and interpretations. Most of the adults who believed in the revision

of Christian doctrine purveyed by the Movement (beginning with the 'Long Story of God') were also able to give the orthodox Catholic or Lutheran versions. They regarded these as the *tok piksa* of the mission, designed after the death of Christ to keep the truth of the Christian revelation from New Guineans. But Paliau had now upended the missionary effort to conceal the truth. Angered by the continued failure of the white men to share his teachings with New Guineans, Jesus had come directly to Paliau.

The Movement interpretation of Christianity

The 'Long Story of God' tells of a conspiracy between Christian missions and the colonial government to keep the natives ignorant of the truth of God and Christ.⁹ Worse yet, the missionaries were teaching partial truths and false beliefs. The Bible the missionaries gave to New Guineans was not the true Bible but one in which the truth was disguised.¹⁰ Hence, New Guineans often failed to discard old ways that were incompatible with true Christianity, which led to disease and death. Christianity in error is portrayed as more dangerous than unadulterated pre-Christian ways. To reveal the truth of the Bible, Paliau had to see past the teachings of the missionaries.

Paliau and his principal followers said the teachings of the mission were filled with lies and unexplained talk picture. Here, paraphrased, is one of the more important purported missionary lies and the Movement response: what did the missionaries mean when they said that the door of Heaven was closed, some Movement adherents asked. The missionaries never explained and we never questioned them, began the Movement reply. Now we have found its meaning. The closed door means that humans beings were barred from knowledge. But there is no actual door. But now Paliau is helping us to know the truth. When the angels and the

9 Otto (1992c: 442), following Gramsci (1971), describes the 'Long Story of God' as 'structured by a series of negations: It is anti-tradition, anti-mission and anti-government'. The latter two negations stand out most dramatically, but regarding the Long Story's anti-tradition character, Otto clarifies that 'the traditional indigenous culture is equated with the situation of all humankind after the fall'.

10 Such ideas were common among indigenous people in much of the Territory at the time. A full catalogue of relevant ethnography would fill many pages.

first humans were arrogant and thought they were equal to God, he made their *tingting* insufficient. People lived in ignorance of one another and of God. The white men had been given knowledge, but they continued to withhold this knowledge from the native. That was the meaning of ‘the door of Heaven is closed’. This applies also to the key to Heaven that God put into the hand of Petrus (that is, St Peter). What kind of key is this that the missionary speaks of? It is not a key. It is the human mind. As long as men cling to the ways of the past and follow all of the bad ways of their fathers, their minds are closed and this key remains unturned in the lock. But now we have found the meaning of the key. Our minds must be cleared of the ways of Lucifer. We must think of God, then our minds will open. We will be all right. Now this key is in the hand of Paliau. It is just like the key that God gave to Petrus, but it is not a real key, it is knowledge. Paliau has gone ahead in finding knowledge. He holds the key that will open the door for us.

Paliau and his followers re-examined all mission teaching and practice in this manner. Followers of the Movement also rejected the need for confession to Catholic priests. They argued that confession could not purge people of their sins; therefore, purporting that it did led to natives dying for their unpurged sins. The only effective procedure when you have committed a wrong against another man, said Paliau, was to resolve it and to shake hands. Only this could prevent illness and death.¹¹

Paliau did not overtly advocate breaking with the mission in the early days of the Movement, but his criticism of missionary teachings amounted to virtually the same thing. Nor did he advise his followers not to attend Catholic services. Yet when Paliau and others spoke of the lies of the missionaries, Schwartz and Shargo could hear the anger in their voices. This anger, however, cohabited with profound attachment to Christianity more broadly conceived. Paliau and his followers believed that the truth of Christianity had enabled the whites to rise to their present status. But if accepting Christianity and adhering to one or another of the local missions for decades had not brought them appreciably nearer to the condition of the whites, then it must be because they had not been given

11 Belief that unresolved anger or social conflict can cause illness is common in Melanesia, although even within a single community people may have different ideas of how this works. Whereas in Paliau's version, God or the spirit of a dead ancestor may punish anger with illness, Smith (1994) illustrates with case studies a belief common in Kragur village, East Sepik Province, in the 1970s, that the ghosts of a person's dead ancestors may act as agents of his or her anger, making the object of the anger ill.

the real thing. Death and sickness resulted from a defective relationship with God. Yet, Manus people said, the arrival of the missions had not led to fewer deaths; in fact, many claimed that more people were dying. It was thus clear that the missionaries were deliberately withholding true Christianity.

One of his followers attributed to Paliu the belief that the multiplicity of missions was also part of the conspiracy to maintain the backwardness of New Guineans. Why were there three different missions in Manus and still others elsewhere in Melanesia? Why did the Catholics denounce the Seventh-day Adventists as enemies of Christ, while the Seventh-day Adventists called the Catholics 'the beasts of Rome'? Obviously, there could be only one truth, but the missions divided the truth among them so that no indigenous member of any one mission could learn the whole truth. In their own land, this critic speculated, the whites must have only one church.

In practice, most of the doctrinal differences among the missions meant little to the people of Manus. They had generally affiliated with whichever mission arrived first in their vicinity, or they had chosen one that taught in Tok Pisin rather than in the local vernacular, or they had chosen one that taught in the local vernacular rather than in Tok Pisin. Most of Paliu's early adherents (of which the majority were Titan) had been nominally Catholic before joining the Movement, and many continued to regard themselves as such, despite the conviction that the missionaries were hiding the true faith from them. Hence, they regarded the motives of the missionary representatives of the Catholic and other Christian faiths with deep suspicion. Why would a missionary leave a comfortable home in Germany, Ireland, or America to spend six to eight years at an isolated mission station? Paliu declared in the early Movement meetings that 'the native is the copra of the missionary'. He suggested that missionaries got paid according to the number of converts they made or how many natives were under their supervision.

But there was another possibility, not necessarily contradictory. Some reasoned that Christ had established the missions to bring his word to the natives. The colonial government, however, prevented the missionaries from doing so. The government, they reasoned, was the lineal descendant of the men who had killed Christ and all the apostles, and it threatened the missionaries with a similar fate if they brought the real Bible to New Guineans. Even the Americans who had been sent to bring the truth

had failed the New Guineans. There was no other channel now for the truth of Christianity; they would have to rely on direct revelation and experimentation. Paliau had brought the beginnings of knowledge. Once they got rid of the vestiges of the old culture, still more would be opened up to them.

An important aspect of the effort to find the truth of Christianity was developing the concept of the *tingting* in a way that joined the metaphysical and the material. The *tingting*, Movement thinkers determined, derives from God. It is God in each person; in this sense, all people are like Jesus, both God and man. The body is the house of the *tingting*. In death the body is like an uninhabited house and it is left to decay. In life the house must be a suitable residence for the *tingting*, so it must be kept in good condition. As in Paliau's parable, the house is like the body. Its front door is the mouth, its back door is the anus. Its windows are the eyes, ears, and nose. Paliau emphasised that anger—either overt or covert hostility—disturbed the equilibrium of the *tingting*. Lukas of Mok recalled Paliau's discourse on the subject:

If you had no mouth or no anus, when your ears admitted something that provoked you, anger would remain within you. How could it get out? When you are angry inside, your mouth has to express it, it must get it out. Then the wind of this anger will escape. But if you keep your mouth fastened, the anger remains in your thoughts. This makes you sick. It is the same as with your body, if you eat a great deal your stomach will be filled up. If the road to your anus is blocked, this food cannot get out. You will become sick. If it goes out, you will be all right. God made everything to work this way. If you block the path of your thoughts, if your mind is clogged by bad thoughts, and if you don't talk it out, you will be sick and you will die ... Mind cannot win over the body, body cannot win over the mind. The two are different, but inseparable. The *tingting* can go to another island, but the body is heavy, it cannot follow.

Health and life thus depend on the care of body and the *tingting*. People sometimes spoke of the relationship between sickness and the *tingting* as if disturbance in the latter automatically produced the sickness. At other times they made the more complex statement that when a person thinks or acts in bad ways, God is immediately aware and, in his anger, produces the body's illness. Those who either cleave to the good or who straighten out their *tingting* when they go wrong can live to be old. When their backs

are bent, their eyes are blind, and their teeth are gone, then they can die, their age testifying to their virtue. If someone dies young, a wrong that has not been corrected is involved. A child, not yet responsible for its own *tingting*, can suffer sickness or death for its parents' sins.

Such concepts of the *tingting* were to ramify widely throughout Paliau's design of a new culture. The old life was permeated with bad ways. The laws of the new society were like a series of rules for a healthy life. The relationship between sickness and the state of the *tingting* was to be one of the main sanctions of the new society. But *tingting* was even broader in its meaning. It was also knowledge and understanding. Paliau did not say that his knowledge was complete and final. From the beginning of the Movement, he spoke of the need to find and to try new *tingting*. Even so, Paliau's ideas mixing metaphysics and mental hygiene were only one part of the guide to building a new way of life he offered.

The plan for reorganising society

Immediately on returning to Manus after the war, Paliau began to establish a new political structure, hoping to unite all the people of Manus. He had little precedent on which to draw. In the old world, Titan, Matankor, and Usiai were sharply divided, though their ecological differentiation made them economically interdependent (an interdependence which, we have seen, they elaborated through economic specialisation). Further, neither Usiai nor Matankor were united by a shared language, as the Titan-speaking lagoon dwellers were. Few villages of any ethnicity had populations of more than 300, and even the smallest villages rarely acted collectively. Within a village, the patrilineal clans had considerable scope for autonomous action. But there were virtually no enduring political institutions above the village level. The ability of important men to exert influence depended in part on hereditary rank, but it depended even more on constantly validating status through success in trade, feasting, and exchange. Economic relations between villages of different linguistic groups followed the lines of traditional trade partnerships, or occasionally the lines of marriages between people of different linguistic groups, although such marriages violated the generally preferred practice of linguistic group endogamy.

Sometimes more prominent *luluai* exerted influence on villages other than their own, but only informally. The Australian administration saw a need for native officials who had superior authority over village *luluai* and who could arbitrate inter-village disputes. In postwar Manus, there were two such paramount *luluai*, Sebaso on the north coast and Kisekup on the south coast. These *luluai* mediated between the many small and dispersed villages and the centralised administration, but without fundamentally altering the horizontal relationships among villages.

Paliau sought to build new, larger units. He tried to reverse the process of schism that maintained the settlement pattern described in Chapter 3. He attacked all the dividing lines of native society as inimical to a life similar to that of Europeans. ‘Although the bodies of men have many parents’, he said, ‘the *tingting* of all men have only one source in God’. The meeting house symbolised the new unity. He himself was a Matankor of Lipan village, but he identified strongly with the Titan-speaking Manus and was particularly anxious to gain their support. Paliau said that since his youth he had deplored the division of the Manus people and the attendant mutual contempt and hostility. He preached that all indigenous New Guineans were alike in their condition and in the broad outlines of their ways of life. Their differences were to be of no importance to those who would follow him. These differences derived from the past and would be abandoned with it. The names Usiai and Matankor were no longer to be used. All people of the Admiralty Islands should call themselves Manus, after the fashion of the Europeans who applied the term Manus to the many islands of the Admiralties and all their peoples.

Usiai were largely uninvolved in the initial phase of the Paliau Movement. According to Paliau, Usiai leaders would have been welcomed, but his single attempt to enlist William Matbe and his followers had failed. Both Matankor and Titan participated in the early Movement meetings but from the first the Titan were the mainstay. In this early phase, Paliau leaned most heavily on the Titan of Mok, to whom, he said, Jesus had directed him to give priority. The Mok people were his emissaries. Their canoes gathered the building materials for the meeting house. The conspicuous secrecy about their doings that they maintained as they travelled on behalf of the Movement, their more European-like clothing, and the altered bearing they had adopted attracted many listeners to the early meetings. There was already a plan for the Mok people to move on to the land, where they would build a new village adjacent to Lipan. From

the beginning of the Movement, Paliau urged the other Titan villages to abandon their lagoon homes, ‘fit only for fish’, in favour of new villages built on the nearby beaches.

Paliau appointed a *pesman* in each village represented at the early Movement meetings. His task—the *pesman* were always male—was to bring the program of the Movement to his own village. These were young men, upstarts by the standards of the old culture. All those who took these positions in this early phase had presented themselves to Paliau, seeking active roles in the Movement. For a while, some villages had both a *luluai* and a Movement *pesman*, the one representing the Australian administration, the other representing the New Way.

Within each village there was to be a new order of life. Paliau wanted to weld the people of each village into a community capable of working in unison. The old clans were to have no explicitly recognised role in the new village structures. Paliau called a clan a *bani*, a Tok Pisin word still used in other contexts to mean fence or a fenced area.¹² In condemning the past, he pictured the clans as ‘each pulling in its own direction’. The *pesman* of the village was to be a leader for all its people, regardless of clan membership. He was to be impartial, not yielding to the pressures of kin and clan. Paliau also proscribed the two-rank system. He said that there was only one *lapan* (man of high rank) and that was God; all men were his ‘boys’—echoing the colonial terminology that reflected the subordination of indigenous people to whites—and all were rubbish compared with God. This was consistent with the democratic tone that ran through Paliau’s ideas about the ideal society.

Paliau also enjoined Movement members not to leave the village to work for white men, but to stay at home, at least for the time required to launch the new society. Such a plan would rule out the many possibilities for individuation and differentiation of personal experience migrant workers found in their explorations of the wider world. The men of the older generation also were to stop organising the exchanges that made them eminent among their age mates. The Movement strove to eliminate much that had socially differentiated child from adult, male from female, the older men from the younger men, entrepreneur from dependent, higher

12 Paliau used the term *bani* in place of the Tok Pisin term more commonly used for clan in Manus, *liklik ples*, meaning small place. The Tok Pisin term applied to clans or clan hamlets within villages. Paliau’s choice of terms emphasised the clan as a mechanism of division, while the other term, ‘small place’, emphasised its social and territorial coherence.

from lower rank, migrant worker from villager, clan from clan, village from village, linguistic group from linguistic group, one sect of Christians from another, and native from European. Paliau's program, calling for brotherhood and de-emphasising the differences among individuals and groups, aimed at extending cooperation—in space and time—beyond that which individual strivers and local kin groups could muster.

Drawing on his observations of the Movement on Baluan years later as well as Schwartz's work, Ton Otto (1992c: 448) describes the major elements of Paliau's plan for reforming social relationships as embodying a 'logic of oppositional transformation'. He summarises the key transformations as 'communalism versus particularism; centralism versus particularism; equality versus inequality; unification versus differentiation'. Our descriptions of the Movement and the cargo cults that arose within it, however, will show that many of the differences between social groups in the old system still had a place in the new, although they were profoundly modified.

Paliau stressed the principle of 'hearing the talk' (in Tok Pisin, *harim tok*) to foster the larger, more solidary social and political groupings the Movement sought. Hearing the talk meant discipline and obedience. Adam and Eve did not hear the talk of God. The conditions after the Fall were the result. After the coming of Jesus, the white men were 'all right' because they knew and obeyed the laws of God. They had leaders who had real authority. White men could make a group decision and carry it out.¹³ The natives also had to find and follow the laws of God. They would have to obey the leaders they chose. Eventually when they had their flag and government they would have jails and police to punish those who would not hear the talk.

But what was the talk? It was the word of God, transmitted through men whose ideas conformed or added to the New Way. It was the decisions reached through discussion at meetings or by a court trial. Such group decisions became the talk that Movement members must hear. In private life, hearing the talk meant not letting anger disrupt interpersonal relations. Hearing the talk of God and the community nourished and strengthened the *tingting*. Food and medicine were to the body what the talk was to

13 Similar perceptions of whites as cooperative and harmonious have long been widespread in Papua New Guinea. Smith (1994) discusses such perceptions, their genesis, and their implications in Kragur village, East Sepik Province, in the 1970s.

a *tingting* weakened by ignorance, sickened by sin, rendered immobile by obsession, or disrupted by anger. Not 'hearing the talk' by refusing to express a grievance so that it might be settled, or refusing to confess to a wrong, broke communication between members of a community and endangered the lives of individuals and the unity of the group.¹⁴

Paliau also stressed related dicta. Trouble within the group must be prevented, if possible, and contained when it occurred. He proposed 'laws' (in Tok Pisin, *lo*) against boasting to the disparagement of others, spreading malicious gossip, being suspicious or angry without definite proof of a wrong, taking sides in quarrels (even in cases in which close relatives quarrelled with non-relatives), and deliberately or carelessly provoking others to anger. The *pesman* and the community were responsible for seeking and hearing confession of unacceptable thoughts or acts, exposing grievances, and effecting reconciliations.

Paliau also spoke of physical causes of disease, such as dirt on the body or on food. He also believed that hard work and inferior food shortened people's lives. But sickness was primarily a disorder of the *tingting*, and death was the *tingting* returning to God. Paliau did not reject European medicine, but he argued that it could not in itself cure many sicknesses because the *tingting* had not been rectified. Only when the *tingting* had been rectified could medicine succeed.

These powerful moral sanctions were to be built into the new culture. Paliau offered his program as literally vital—a new way of life on which life itself depended. It clearly addressed a concern that lay close to the surface. The interval between funerals was short in Manus villages in the 1950s. People loved their children intensely, but the infant mortality rate was high.

Had Paliau succeeded in winning wide support during this early phase and had he been able to carry out those parts of his program that could have been realised in short order, the resulting way of life would have been a marked departure from the mixture of indigenous and introduced elements in the prevailing culture. But it would still have been far removed from the European way of life. Achieving some of the ultimate goals of the Movement obviously depended on mastering the wealth, technology, and

14 Again, this bears resemblance to conceptions of the importance of social harmony to human health and general material abundance found in many parts of Melanesia.

material culture of the European. Paliau understood this and considered improving people's economic condition crucial. This, however, was an even more intractable problem than instituting new ways of controlling anger and conflict.

Funding the Movement

The various accounts of the meetings during the initial phase of the Movement that Schwartz and Shargo collected agree on the details of Paliau's views of the economics of the new culture. He did not speak of achieving equivalence with the whites through supernatural means; rather, he spoke as a man trying to formulate a program for changing an entire way of life primarily through human effort and on human scale. His metaphysical ideas, however, were critical to his program. They placed the Movement in history, they explained the disparity between native and European, and they provided sanctions reinforcing the dicta of the New Way. They also gave the program God's blessing and cast Paliau as God's accomplice. God's support was a necessary but not a sufficient means to the Movement's ends.

Economic change had been a central point in a number of the local movements that preceded Paliau's return. They variously called for setting up stores or locally owned businesses and plantations, supplying all the labour for a white-owned plantation, and completing the transition to a cash economy by abandoning the remaining uses of indigenous wealth objects. But the few efforts that had gone beyond talk had not been part of comprehensive programs that recognised connections among all aspects of indigenous life.

Paliau presented an integrated economic plan. He offered a series of first steps based on his analysis of existing economic potential. In Tok Pisin, people often referred to the discussions in these early meetings that dealt with economic plans as *toktok bilong mani*, that is, talk of money. Paliau elaborated on his prewar idea of setting up as large a cash fund as possible for collective purposes. It was no longer necessary to keep such a fund to help people pay the colonial head tax, which the postwar government had not reinstated. The new fund was to provide capital for Movement endeavours. But from where was the cash to come? This problem was acute, because Paliau also said that the young men should not go away to

work for the whites. Their labour would be needed to rebuild the villages along new lines. Staying at home, however, would cut off the main source of people's cash income.

During this early stage of the Movement, Paliau announced that the Australian government was going to compensate indigenous people for losses of life and property resulting from the war. Manus people said in 1953 that they first heard of the coming payments of war damages from Paliau, who had heard of this in Rabaul. In 1945, the Australian government made surveys of the extent of war damage to New Guinean property and in 1946 it began to make payments. The announced purpose was to help rehabilitate communities and provide them with capital, but this was done in part in the hope that it would lessen New Guineans' postwar discontent. But the plan did little to increase indigenous traction in the commercial economy, because recipients spent much of the money on minor purchases from trade stores. Observing this, some Australian commentators criticised the Native Compensation Plan for making payments to individuals (Stanner 1953: 118ff.) rather than to groups, although the latter course would have been far from simple.

Even before war damages were paid, many Admiralties people had more money than before the war. Much of this was in American currency, earned from working on the American airbase or from selling souvenirs (such as wood carvings or traditional ornaments) and food to the Americans. Paliau wanted to prevent the dispersion of this wealth and he called for all the villages joining the Movement to collect as much of it as they could. On Baluan and Mok, Movement leaders immediately started funds, recording the names of all those who contributed and the amounts they gave. The money itself was kept in a locked box in Paliau's house. The *pesman* in each village was in charge of making the collections and trying to get a Movement cut of money coming into the village from other sources. The general idea was not new. In the past, returning wage workers had frequently pooled their wages, each one in his turn collecting the pool. Or a small group might pool wages to purchase a jointly owned guitar or phonograph. But few people had confidence in their ability to save their small wages or, if they did, to protect their savings from the requests of their kin. The government had established banking facilities for New Guineans but few of the south coast people used them. In the villages of Pere and Bunai, with a combined population of around 1,000, only one man had a bank book. But people accepted the idea of creating Movement funds enthusiastically.

Paliau's approach appealed to and elaborated on what seemed a generally accepted New Guinean economic theory at the time. New ways of obtaining money must be found and money must be amassed and concentrated. By acquiring and saving money, New Guineans could purchase ships, trucks, and galvanised metal sheets for building houses. They could set up and stock their own stores and companies. Paliau realised that any appreciable advance depended on finding new sources of money income. He spoke of Manus people starting their own plantations, having their own stores, and transporting their cargo with their own ships. All these Movement objectives were to be attained in the near future, but people had to wait until the first steps in organising the new society were completed.

The initial plan for economic change included abandoning old economic practices. The endless cycle of ceremonial exchange that persisted from the old culture would no longer drive production. People were to cease the feasts and exchanges and stop working to accumulate shell beads and dogs' teeth. Groom-side marriage payments were to be fixed at a single, small cash sum. The new economy would stress organising work at the village level. The collective work would focus on the immediate aims of the Movement, such as combining small, scattered, single-ethnicity villages into larger, multi-ethnic villages governed through communal decision making. Decisions concerning village work were to be made in meetings of its residents. Trade between villages or within villages was to be collectivised and conducted in a non-competitive spirit. Land rights were to be treated similarly. This communalisation was to be a general principle for all economic activity, a principle consistent with the emphasis on a new, solidary social and political life.

Paliau's plan for economic change demanded great effort of his followers. Yet, even if they could succeed in these first steps, they would still have travelled only a fraction of the distance to the condition to which they aspired. Paliau understood this, but he was primarily concerned at this point with getting the Movement started. He offered a program of planned change that would give its followers some parts of a new way of life immediately, a coherent new ordering of society that would be a vehicle for continued change in the direction of the ultimate goal—a way of life modelled after European society. Paliau called what he was offering a 'road' (in Tok Pisin, *rot*). This translates literally as road, but is probably

best understood as way or direction. He could not map out the entire course of this road, but he could put the people of Manus on it, describe the end, and try to maintain people's belief that it was attainable.

From his base in Mok and his new meeting house Paliau's ideas spread with surprising speed over a wide area. Though he had recruited few entire villages, he had attracted and enlisted a significant number of men as energetic leaders. They carried Paliau's message—in part intact, in part transformed or reinterpreted—to their own villages and beyond, where it often thinned out into rumour. At the periphery, however, a different vision for transforming the Manus world arose in the form of the Noise. This would alter the course of the Movement drastically.

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