

# 11

## **Paliau ends the Cemetery Cult**

Paliau was angry when he first heard of the Cemetery Cult, but for many months he left it alone except for some indirect and ambiguous criticism. In early 1954, however, the Australian administration was ready to expand the Baluan Native Government Council to include the south coast. This put pressure on Paliau, for he knew an active cargo cult would not count in the south coast's favour. When Paliau did act he showed his powers of persuasion in full. Among these powers were extraordinary skills in satire, bullying, and self-aggrandisement. Paliau might have acquired some of his ability for rough-handling his followers from his years as a sergeant major. But Paliau's style also brings to mind the behaviour of indigenous male leaders in many parts of Melanesia. Their often blistering public oratory, however, is not necessarily effective. The rank and file may put up with being harangued and shamed, but they do not necessarily comply nor do so without resentment. Paliau, however, also knew how to keep an audience off balance and he had an unusually strong hold on his followers.

His personal powers aside, Paliau had something concrete to offer people in the place of a cargo cult: an expanded official council. And Paliau undoubtedly understood that Cemeterians who harboured doubts about the cult's prospects might question the wisdom of putting something comparatively tangible and nearly within their grasp at risk for the sake of something that was more exciting but much more unpredictable. When Paliau finally declared his opposition to the cult, he also used the occasion to restore his own weakening prestige. He shamed the cargoists without mercy and they capitulated. Many did so sullenly, but they did

so. True, some maintained private convictions that their time would yet come. And others chose to understand Paliau's anger as his reaction to the discord within the Movement the cult activities had stirred up rather than as criticism of the doctrines and aims of the cult. They regarded abandoning the cult now as a necessary but temporary concession. This would do, however, to show the administration that the south coast was ready to join the Baluan Council.

## **Paliau's grip weakens**

A burst of energetic Movement activity followed the failure of the Noise in 1947 (as described in Chapter 7). Although some participants incorporated ritualistic elements of the Noise into their subsequent versions of the Movement, Paliau ignored this and devoted himself to the nuts-and-bolts task of promoting composite villages in which people would collectively put the New Way into practice. Cooperation among what had been fiercely independent, often mutually hostile villages was, of course, a fundamental New Way principle. But Paliau was not fixated on a specific way of accomplishing this. As soon as he grasped the idea of councils and cooperatives he instituted his versions of them as elements of the Movement well in advance of government action. He also kept people aware of his efforts to press the administration for an official council. Thus, when the Baluan Council came, Movement members felt that Paliau and the Movement had forced the government to grant it. A council that did not embrace the entire Movement area was less than what they sought, but it was more concrete than anything the Movement had accomplished so far.

Nevertheless, leading the Baluan Council left Paliau less time for duties as Movement leader, especially on the south coast. On his visits to Bunai from Baluan he would exhort people to maintain New Way practices and at least temporarily boost their morale. For example, in Bunai in 1953, there was constant discussion of rebuilding all the village houses, which after nearly six years of use were getting run-down. But talk was not yielding action. Paliau took up this cause on a visit in July 1953. He shamed and cheered villagers out of their inertia, inspiring them to begin rebuilding all the village houses. But he could not stay in Bunai. In his absence, the work slowed down and as people's morale declined it dragged their allegiance to Paliau down with it.

On Baluan and among Mok villagers, Paliau's earliest supporters, it seemed like many began seeing Paliau as more a bureaucrat than a visionary. People clearly respected him, but more it seemed for his effectiveness as leader of the Baluan Council than as a source of visionary inspiration. And those with grievances against Paliau began to speak of them more openly, as if he were like any other leader whose authority was merely secular.

Some Manus people, both within the council area and on the south coast, were also losing patience with Paliau on a matter with a long history—the use of the Movement's funds. Paliau wanted to release Movement participants from their commitment to let him use the money as he saw fit. Such a commitment, Paliau felt, was not appropriate to the new institutions emerging and the kind of leadership appropriate to them. But many did not want this freedom. Tjamilo nursed the hope that Paliau would spend the money on a ship that—rather than carry people and goods back and forth to Lorengau—would sail straight to the centre of the world, whence came all good material things, thus preventing the deceitful Australians from controlling the flow of cargo. But Paliau told people that they should do as they saw fit with the money, thus disappointing everyone who looked to him to tell them what to do.

Many adherents of the Cemetery Cult seemed to feel they were showing their independence from Paliau. Before the Noise, Jesus had dealt with mortals almost exclusively through Paliau, but now Thomas was allegedly receiving messages directly from Jesus. The *kaunsil* of Johnston Island, one of Thomas's interlocutors, had no particular prestige within the Movement; he could not have seriously challenged Paliau's authority. But people respected the ghost of Thomas, and preferred to believe that the *kaunsil* of Johnston Island had little to do with the ghost's pronouncements. Some even said aloud that the work of the cemetery had nothing to do with Paliau; they were acting on God's word, directly available to every village through its ghostly teacher.

There were nevertheless Cemeterians who hoped Paliau would eventually support them, showing what they hoped were his true colours. They continued to see him as a man directly inspired by Jesus—the man who had seen the iron-bound book of secrets, the man to whom had been revealed the 'Long Story of God'. For people like Tjamilo and Pita Tapo this was Paliau's real self; the rest was a facade. Whatever Paliau might say that sounded new, they clung to the conviction that beneath it was the prophetic voice of 1946. They did their best to believe that when the right time came, Paliau would break his silence and step in to lead them to the cargo.

## Paliau's oracular obscurity

From at least the latter part of 1953, some Cemetery Cult adherents began trying to ascertain Paliau's position on their activities. Rumours had been circulating for some time, but they were contradictory, leaving the way open for both cult adherents and opponents to claim Paliau's support, neither being truly certain where he stood.

By early 1953, the people of Johnston Island and Tawi were already working on their new cemeteries. Reports of this vexed Paliau mightily and when Johnston Islanders heard of Paliau's anger they reacted defiantly. They asserted that their activities had nothing to do with Paliau and that they would persevere. Paliau in turn did not try to explain why he was angry. When leaders in other locales asked his permission to introduce the Cemetery Cult in their villages, Paliau's standard reply gave them no clear direction: 'Why are you asking me now about building good cemeteries when I have been telling you to do so for six years and yet you haven't done it?' But they were asking him about cemeteries and implying the cult, while Paliau was speaking about cemeteries and leaving them to wonder what he thought about the cult.

Prenis Tjolai's experience illustrates how Paliau handled people who asked him to confirm their belief in the cult. The *kaunsil* of Johnston Island had told Prenis that Paliau approved of the cult. He even told Prenis that the ghost of Thomas had spoken to Paliau. Prenis did not take the *kaunsil*'s words at face value and so, when he next saw Paliau, he asked him if it was all right to do what the Johnston Islanders were doing. Paliau asked Prenis how many times he had to tell them to build good cemeteries. He had told them this repeatedly, Paliau lectured, yet they asked again and again. Prenis replied, 'Yes, but there is all this work that goes with it, plenty of places are doing it'. Paliau's reply in Tok Pisin was superbly ambiguous: '*Mi ken tokim yu wanem? Em i wanpela tok hia*'. The first phrase is amply clear. It means 'What can I say to you?' But the second phrase is subject to several interpretations. A literal translation is: 'There is only one talk here'. But this could mean, among many other things, 'I am saying the same thing', or 'I have only one thing to say', or 'There is only one thing to say'.

Prenis reported to Schwartz that Paliau then told him: 'There are plenty of bad ways in your village'. That is, in Pere village. This is the conversation that inspired Prenis and Pokanau to start a campaign to break up marriages involving divorces. Then, according to Prenis, Paliau added: 'You go lay

out good ground and put a cemetery on it. Clear a place, keep it well, line up the dead properly in it. But about the way of the work of this cemetery, I can't tell you about this. Your village has plenty of men in it who spy. That's all. I cannot talk to you clearly about this work. You just go and work and if you find yourself short of ideas, you can come back, you can ask me about it'. This left Prenis almost as uncertain as he was before. Paliau had implied that there was much more to the cemetery 'work' than he could speak of openly, but that he, Paliau, knew all about it, of course. Schwartz observes that Paliau sometimes ran into difficulties because people assumed that he knew everything that was going on. Paliau knew they thought this and he preferred them to credit him with omniscience. But this meant that people often did not bother to explain what they were asking him in any detail, and—to preserve the fiction that he already knew everything—Paliau often did not question them. At times, this left him in the dark.

As the Cemetery Cult continued to develop, Paliau continued to answer questions about it with oracular obscurity. The story that Paliau had communed with Thomas continued to spread. But so, too, did reports that Paliau had denounced the people of Johnston Island, warning them that what they were doing was dangerous. On one occasion, Tjamilo asked Paliau to speak definitively for or against the truth of the cult. Paliau replied that it was better if he said nothing. If he said anything, Paliau argued, when trouble resulted from the cult, as it would, the trouble would come back to him. He then reiterated that he had always told them to build a good cemetery and they had never done it. What did they want him to tell them now?

People seeking Paliau's opinion might have taken a clue from the fact that neither Paliau's own village of Lipan nor the contiguous village of Mok were building new cemeteries or collecting the remains of the dead. The Mok people had made their position clear. Lukas of Mok visited Bunai in April 1954, while Paliau was in jail, and told Samol that he wanted to bring Pondis, Pantret, and the other Cemeterian leaders to Baluan to stand trial before the Native Government Council (NGC) and the assistant district officer. Samol, however, headed him off. He argued that if the court went against them, the Usiai might leave the Movement. Hearing this, Lukas agreed to allow Samol more time to control the situation in Bunai.

Although Paliau had refused to commit himself when asked, towards the end of March 1954 he went to Rambutjo and told people that it was all right to build new cemeteries but they should not get involved with all that went with it elsewhere. He had planned to go to Johnston Island next and then to villages on the south coast, but before he could make these voyages he was jailed for beating his daughter (as described in Chapter 9).

## Debating the cult in Paliau's absence

The antagonism between Cemeterians and their opponents reached its height in Bunai in April 1954. Samol had gone to Lorengau to meet Paliau on his release from jail. While he was gone, Simion Kilepak and Markus Pwatjumel, both Titan residents of Bunai, called a meeting for 30 April to which they summoned the Bunai Usiai. They wanted the Usiai cult adherents to tell the whole village about the cult. They had held two such meetings already but Schwartz was not able to attend them. Judging from the proceedings of the 30 April meeting, however, Titan opponents of the cult hadn't found the results of the previous meetings satisfactory.

Simion Kilepak—a man about 30 years old—held no official position in the village, but he took every opportunity to act as a leader. He usually appointed himself supervisor of any communal work to which he was assigned and he spoke at every public meeting. He had taken it on himself to support Samol's leadership of the village. Thus, he took Samol's place as Tjamilo's adversary in matters pertaining to the cult.

Pwatjumel had been strongly inclined towards the cult. He had dreamed of the gate to the cemetery and built one on that model. But he was Samol's brother-in-law, younger than Samol, and he generally deferred to Samol's leadership. Also, the solemnity and puritanism of the Usiai cargoists annoyed him. The Titan of Johnston Island and Tawi kept playing cards for money in the midst of their cult, but the Bunai Usiai tabooed gambling, whistling, playing guitars and ukuleles, non-religious singing, and dancing. A number of Titan young men could not resist ridiculing this face of the cult. On one occasion Pwatjumel joined a group who marched through the Usiai cult hamlets in single file, imitating the Cemeterians stiff gait and rigid, straight-ahead gaze. This infuriated cult adherents and marked Pwatjumel indelibly as their opponent.

Only three Usiai—all from Lowaya—turned out for Simion and Pwatjumel's meeting. But a few Titan cult adherents also attended, so Simion had an audience for his criticism. He began by accusing the cargoists of reverting to the doctrines of Wapei, the prophet of Rambutjo, rather than joining the rest of the community on the path to the NGC. He then presented a string of more specific accusations. The Cemeterians, he charged, had 'lost shame' and revived mixed nude bathing; they also excluded people from Yiru hamlet or Titan residents of Bunai from their meetings, posting lookouts to warn of their approach; they had spent all their money on luxury foods, cult uniforms, and cosmetics for the dead; and Malei people had told a Bunai Titan woman who brought fish to trade that Malei people didn't need things produced by hard work anymore.

Tjamilo—a Titan of Bunai—spoke in reply, providing a pattern for the other cult sympathisers. He said that he agreed with everything Simion had said. The Usiai must stop doing what they were doing. Then he broke precedent. He mentioned cargo (*kago*) in an open meeting. The cemetery was an end in itself, he said, something to make the village look better; it had nothing to do with cargo. One of the Lowaya men, Petrus Popu, supported him, as follows: 'We aren't working on the cemeteries [in Lowaya] so cargo will come. We think that it is all right for all the hamlets of Bunai to have one big cemetery, but it is hard work to carry the dead to the old graveyard. And it is hard work to punt a canoe there'. (The old cemetery was about a quarter of a mile past Lowaya. The body, with the chief mourners, was usually taken there by canoe while the rest of the village walked.) He protested further: 'I worship only God. We do not worship a piece of wood, or a stone, or a fish'. No one had accused the cult adherents of idolatry or fish worship, but some had begun to take affront at such an accusation anyway. Responding to the accusation of squandering money, he said that they had withheld money from the Movement because the leaders weren't managing it properly.

Although Tjamilo had protested that the cemeteries weren't about cargo, the vehemence of Petrus Popu's similar disclaimer clearly disturbed him. Tjamilo rose to warn Petrus not to talk loosely. They must be ready for what is to come, he warned; they must be ready for the Last Day. Simion let this remark pass, although he could have taken it as open acknowledgement of millenarian activity. Instead, he made further accusations pertaining to marching, nudity, and other more superficial matters. Petrus Popu and others agreed that the Usiai should, in fact, stop doing certain things and denied that they were doing others. Speakers batted back and forth

many more grievances against the cult adherents, but no one mentioned cargo or the Last Day again. Finally, the meeting ended, all the speakers exchanging the usual assurances that they were not angry with each other. It was the most open discussion of the cult Schwartz had yet seen in Bunai, but it ended entirely inconclusively despite Tjamilo's mention of the Last Day. Perhaps Simion and others felt that to preserve a semblance of unity they could not react overtly to a cult reference. It would remain for Paliau to be more direct.

At the request of the district officer, Paliau and Samol lingered in Lorengau after Paliau's release from jail to attend the opening of a cooperative store near town. The administration still wanted Paliau's support for its program and curried his favour when it could. With Paliau still absent, Simion Kilepak took the opportunity to call another meeting. On 2 May, several men from Malei represented the Usiai cult hamlets. Simion approached the subject of the new cemeteries with great caution at first. He said that they were too close to the houses. The sun would heat the ground, sickness would come up as smoke, and the sickness would get into people's food. Then he became bolder. He asked what the meaning of these new cemeteries was. If its meaning was like that of 1946, he said, it was something already proven wrong. He then veered away from outright opposition and reproached the Usiai for excluding the Titan. The Titan had brought the Usiai down to the beach, he said, and it was wrong for them now to turn them away. When Jesus had held a meeting, he added, he had excluded no one.

Someone then rose to blame the Titan for causing the present discord by spying on and ridiculing the Usiai. Several Bunai Titan then spoke in succession. Each raised a new accusation against the Usiai or a new argument against their activities. Only after this series of speeches did one of the men from Malei reply. Pondis, the Malei *kaunsil*, admitted they had ejected from their meetings a Pere Titan woman who had married into Malei, and he admitted that they had spent their money in the store. But he said that the cemetery work was their own idea, their own affair, and if others in Bunai didn't like it, Malei would clear out and go somewhere else. As usual, the threat of withdrawing from the village drew assurances that no one wanted this. Tjamilo said that it was not the way of God for one man to cast out another, for God had brought them together. Using a mangled biblical image, he said that the cemetery work could coexist with the NGC: 'The council is one road, the cooperative is another. There must be one more. It must be like the Trinity'. This, of course, also

mangled the nature of the NGC and the cooperatives, both of which were part of the overall administration program, the program Paliau had now made the centrepiece of the Movement.

This conciliatory note turned the meeting in a new direction. Several speakers urged that they should all keep news of the cult from the whites. (Schwartz and Shargo were present, taking notes as usual, so the speakers clearly meant the Australians.) Someone even argued that if only a few villages backed the cult, the government could stop it, but if all 33 villages in the Movement backed it, the government could not suppress it. Hence, he argued, the cult adherents should explain to everyone what they were doing and keep it secret only from the whites. But some were still not sanguine about the cult and argued that the Usiai should stop whatever it was they were doing before they got them all in trouble. One speaker likened the cult to overripe fruit which had begun to stink.

But T'jamilo still wanted the cult and he wanted to be its leader. He made one more impassioned appeal—albeit packed in ambiguous metaphors—to identify the aims of the cult with those of the Movement and to identify himself as a stalwart of the Movement. He reminded people that he had been known for his defiance of the white man during the Movement's early days and he still was not afraid of the white government: 'When the white man pounds on the table', he declared, 'you will not be adequate. Now you think that you are, but then you will shake'. But the Usiai cargoists responded neither to him nor to the others who urged them to either abandon the cult or invite others in. The men from Malei, in fact, said virtually nothing at this meeting. While oratory swirled around them, they waited quietly for the meeting to adjourn. It ended inconclusively, as had the previous meeting, but it was to reconvene that evening.

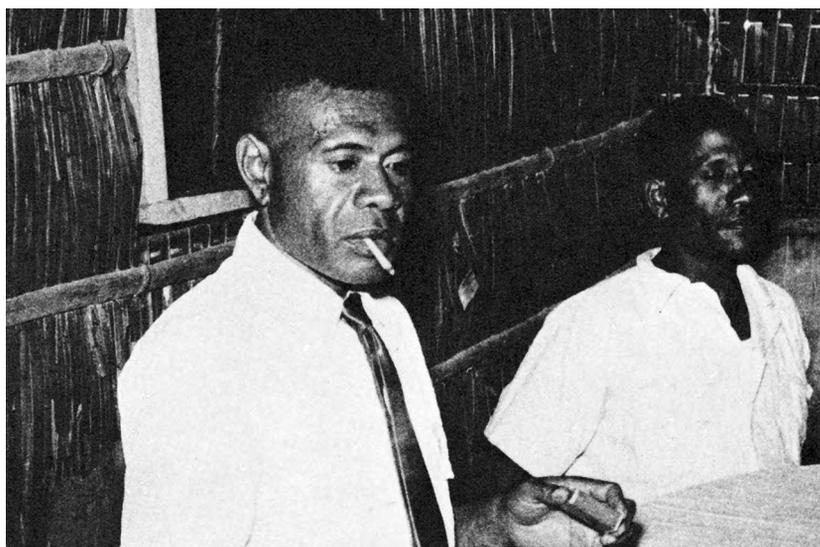
## **Paliau enters the arena**

Paliau and Samol arrived in Bunai from Lorengau on 2 May, between the end of the daylight meeting and its scheduled evening revival. During the canoe trip from Lorengau, Samol had described to Paliau, from his point of view, all that had happened in Bunai in Paliau's absence, except the meetings during Samol's own absence. On Paliau's return to Bunai he was in low spirits. He told Schwartz that he had seen him pass by the jail yard in Lorengau but out of shame he had hidden behind the other prisoners. Paliau thought the Baluan and Mok councillors should have

prevented his daughter from eloping until he had returned from travelling on Baluan Council business. He then might not have flown into a violent rage. In any case, he felt he had received too harsh a sentence. Above all, he feared the assistant district officer on Baluan now might not allow him to continue as the chairman of the council just when he was about to realise his aim of making the council coterminous with the Movement area, for he had learned in Lorengau that the administration had decided that the south coast was to become part of the Baluan Council very soon.

Paliau stayed in Samol's house in Bunai. The men most concerned about the cult, pro and con, came to him there and hung on his words, intent on finding out where he stood. But Paliau managed to converse with them for several hours without giving them any hints. Later that night he visited Schwartz and Shargo. He sat for some time going through a pile of *Life* magazines, asking questions about each picture. He was particularly fascinated with an issue on Africa and African leaders, with whom he immediately identified. The leaders of Malei joined Schwartz and Shargo a little after Paliau arrived, sitting silently, not wanting to interrupt. Finally, Paliau mentioned the cult and how it was creating discord in Bunai. For the first time he sounded like he intended to do something about it. By now it was well after dark (which, so near the equator, would have been complete not long after six o'clock), when evening meetings usually started, and the bell calling people to come had begun to sound. But one of the Malei leaders informed Paliau that the people of Malei had prepared a party—that is, an elaborate meal, probably with speeches—for him, celebrating his return from jail. Demonstrating impeccable manners, Paliau and Samol went to eat in Malei, so the meeting didn't begin until 10 o'clock.

Samol started the meeting dramatically by saying that Malei was going to leave Bunai. Malei's leaders responded that they had only said this in reaction to Titan hostility. Samol continued to complain of how the cult was splitting the village. When leaders came from cult villages like Kapo or Nuang, he said, they no longer came first to him. They went instead to Tjamilo's house, as if he and not Samol were *kaunsil*. He then charged that Tjamilo had declared himself uninterested in the NGC and the cooperative, which Tjamilo immediately denied. He demanded to know when he had made such a statement, although he and everyone else knew he had made it several times. (In fact, he couldn't make up his mind. Sometimes he thought the council and cooperative were sops from the whites; at other times he thought they might have been established by God, but they were the hard work of the Second Order of God, not a path to the First Order.)



**Figure 11.1: Paliau looked thoughtful before the meeting in Bunai at which he ended the Cemetery Cult.**

Source: Theodore Schwartz.

Samol let that pass, for he and Tjamilo had many other bones to pick with each other and they began to pick them one by one. Paliau, however, was having none of this. He was used to spending much of his time at meetings trying to maintain the focus of the discussion. He broke into Samol's and Tjamilo's exchange. The discussion, Paliau said, had gone amiss, 'like a fire that runs only over the bark of a tree while the inside is untouched'. Where was the real issue before this meeting, he asked?

Nakwam, the *kaunsil* of Kapo, had come to the meeting with the cult leader from Nuang. (Recall that Kapo and Nuang were distinct Usiai villages, not hamlets of Bunai.) The trouble, Nakwam said, was that Malei and Lowaya were ashamed before Samol. Nakwam had instructed the people of Malei and Lowaya months before in the doctrines of the cult, but he now adopted a pose of complete innocence and asked the Malei and Lowaya leaders present what they had been doing that they were ashamed of before Samol? This was an invitation to them to plead their own innocence and they immediately did so. Pantret of Lowaya said that he had independently come to realise how decadent his village had become. No one paid any attention to the leaders any more. The place was full of every sin defined by the New Way. Everyone quarrelled with everyone else. When not quarrelling, people were apathetic. This situation

had inspired him to return to the ways of 1946. The cemetery was simply part of this—an effort to make a decent burial ground as the law required and as the Americans had done. The trouble was all with the Bunai Titan who spied on them, called them crazy, and spread rumours.

Paliau asked what the cemetery had to do with 1946. Pantret recited all the features of the early New Way that had either lapsed entirely or were now only casually employed, such as the twice-daily bathing in the sea, dressing up for morning and evening church services, and a nine o'clock curfew. These practices were not new, he said; in Lowaya they had simply begun to follow them again.

Paliau replied that so much was true. He had started all these things and many others, which he proceeded to list, that had never been properly carried out. Then he asked Pantret about the cemetery again. Pantret replied: 'Although we have made a little general progress we have neglected our graveyards. It is not like this with the white men. Even if the white men will not instruct us, we must do as they do. Making new cemeteries is just fixing up the village in preparation for the council'.

Paliau was not having any of this either. He told Pantret he was not describing the true situation, the real basis for the trouble. He warned that if people continued to hide their real concerns it would ruin them completely. If everything was as Pantret depicted it, Paliau argued, Bunai people would not be at odds with each other.

Pokanau, another Usiai cult leader from Nuang, then repeated most of what Pantret had said. Then Nakwam of Kapo rose again to make a highly emotional speech in a high-pitched, ranting voice. Although dripping with colourful metaphors describing himself as like a father to the people of Kapo, who came crying to him for direction, and invoking his concern for the welfare of Nuang's people, he was unable to pacify Paliau.

No one pursued the themes on Nakwam's speech. Paliau sat silent, but clearly listening intently. Simion Kilepak then rose to accuse the cult hamlets of myriad forms of immorality. This excited an angry rebuttal from Tjamilo, ending with a confused and idiosyncratic account of how the cooperatives might open the road to the cargo. When another speaker rose, Paliau cut him off abruptly. There was more to this than building cemeteries, he said. There is obviously trouble here but no one will speak of it. Then, for the first time he stated a clear position on the Cemetery

Cult: ‘This thing which has come from Johnston Island is wrong. I want it to finish. It will destroy you. You have already seen it and you already know it. I have already told you. You have lost the road’.

He then listed all the projects that they should have been working on when they were indulging in feuds and factions and secrets and rumours. They should have been building a good meeting house and building a church; and yes, even building better cemeteries, which he had always urged, but not for gathering the bones of the previously interred. All this talk about cargo, about the dead arising, and about the cemetery was all wrong. He had seen it in many places. They would have avoided all the division and ugliness if people had brought their ideas to an open meeting of the entire village. And if all they wanted to do was to return to the practices of 1946, then they should have brought that up at such a meeting instead of working in secret in individual hamlets.

Nakwam followed Paliau with another highly emotional speech full of mixed metaphors about the ways of 1946 and the condition of man in Paradise. Paliau cut him off as well. There was no point in talking about returning to 1946, he said, because they had never carried out most of the program he had given them then. Giving example after example, Paliau told people that the idea of reviving the ways of 1946 was based on a fantasy. But now they were dragging Bunai down and he wanted to know what they were going to do about it. ‘Talk is like wind’, Paliau said, ‘it will go everywhere. It will go to the whites and they will come asking questions. When the *kiap* comes, he will not arrest you, he will arrest me. You don’t work on the beginning of the road. All the time you keep trying to leap ahead’. Tjamilo began to speak, trying to absolve himself from having said anything about cargo, but Paliau cut him off and closed the meeting. It was midnight. Paliau said they would continue the next day.

Paliau did not sleep that night. He spent the night in the Usiai hamlets. He went alone, without Samol, the Bunai council, and without Schwartz. This made Samol uneasy and disappointed Schwartz, who didn’t want to miss anything. From what Paliau told Schwartz later and what he said in subsequent public meetings, however, it appeared that he had questioned people in the hamlets closely about the cult and had been candid in his disapproval.

Paliau spoke with Schwartz about the cult before the meeting reconvened the following evening. He implied that only he and Schwartz really understood things like the cult. He spoke of the burial practices and the belief in ghosts in the pre-Christian Admiralty Islands. He said the cult was repeating the Noise of 1946 when, on Mok, the people marched to the cemetery and stood vigil, expecting the dead to arise. The Noise, he said, had almost ruined the Movement. Again he said that Wapei had started it. Now the Cemeterians were repeating what Wapei had started years ago.

That evening, the meeting, which was to be held outdoors, was postponed because of rain. Lowaya had prepared a party for Paliau, as Malei had done the preceding night. The meal had been laid out indoors, so Paliau and Schwartz, who was also invited, went. The Lowaya people were very ingratiating in a nervous way. They served their guests the European foods they had bought for their Cemeterian feast. Kekes, the only surviving adult male of the village of Lesei and the father of Joseph Nanei, the adolescent cult leader of Lowaya, made a long speech explaining that Paliau was his brother. He recited a genealogy that derived the *lapan* line of Lipan from an Usiai of Lesei who had drifted to Lipan many generations ago. Paliau was willing to accept this and the explanation that Kekes, his 'brother', was giving a party to celebrate his release from jail. Paliau had brought Samol and Kisekup with him and now he brought them to the head of the table, along with Samol's children, one of whom sat on Paliau's lap. Joseph Nanei, Pantret, and Pongo (the latter two had served as Nanei's apostles) served the meal with strict formality, moving clockwise in a full circle around the table to serve each guest.

It looked like the rain was not going to stop, so Paliau ordered that a house be prepared for the meeting. There was an unfinished house in Bunai, lacking only its walls, and a group of men covered the openings with canoe sails. At nine o'clock in the evening, people started to gather, mostly male leaders and no women or children. The atmosphere was tense. The Cemeterians and the opposition clustered on opposite sides of the floor. Paliau arrived last, as was his usual practice. He began by discussing a current land dispute between two non-Movement villages regarding which the government had called on old Kisekup as an expert. Paliau asked what the government would do if Kisekup were to die, dig him up again? A few men chuckled softly. Kisekup was not among them.

Paliau then launched abruptly into a long censorious speech about the previous night's meeting. No one, he said, had been willing to take responsibility for the trouble in Bunai. They had blamed one another. No one had suggested a way to remedy the situation. The fault lay with the leaders, he said, not with the women and children who had acted as mediums for the dead. The *kaunsil* should have silenced them. They had all lost the way; they were all crazy; the truth was hidden from them. Then he asked who had any ideas for rectifying the situation.

Pantret of Lowaya began by saying that he would repeat what he had said yesterday. His people would not drop this thing. If they did, the hamlet would revert to its previous bad ways. All his people would be insubordinate again. He said that he was trying to straighten out everyone's *tingting* before the official council was inaugurated. If the council came while people were still angry and quarrelling, they would all be in court constantly. He had not quarrelled with Bunai. It would be better if he said nothing at all about the things he heard yesterday (referring to Simion Kilepak's accusations). However, he began, if someone were to name the person from whom they heard these things ... But Paliau cut him off abruptly in mid-sentence with the following denunciation:

Your speech is wrong. You are unable to extricate yourself from this trouble you are in. If you see a road that is no good, that has spears, bottles, and bombs in it, you can't follow it. This talk of yours is already wrong. You cannot go on this road. The broken bottles have already cut you. You are already in trouble. You want to fight. You want to split up. You are at an impasse. The mouth of the road that will make you all right is hidden from you.<sup>1</sup> I can't let you ruin yourselves. Pantret stood up to speak and he has already gone astray. He didn't get up to find a way out. This thing has already brought trouble; now what? Should we let it continue? You will be ruined. If I walk onto a place that is stony, should I walk on it until the time I die? This thing already has brought trouble. It is about to break up your village. It has brought strife among you. Don't you see this?

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1 When people speak non-metaphorically of the 'mouth' of a 'road' in rural Papua New Guinea they are usually referring to the beginning of a trail, such as an opening in the forest or in tall grass.

Prenis Tjolai of Pere made the next attempt to speak:

There are two kinds of work. Some of us worked, and it resulted in trouble. Some men wanted to work on all the ways of 1946. And some wanted to make a cemetery. These things are good. Then what produced the quarrels and the talk? You see, I have a head. If I see something is not right, my head must steer my body clear of it. This thing that you tell about is good, so what causes the trouble? When his *kaunsil* sends for a man who wants to do the work of the cemetery, he will not listen. He doesn't come to speak openly about it at a meeting, but he follows his own liking. When the *kaunsil* speaks, sometimes he comes and sometimes he doesn't. I think this is where our error lies.

Paliau interrupted to say that Prenis was also wrong. This was just as it was last night. What must be done to straighten things out?

Recognising himself in Prenis's statement about the source of the trouble, Tjamilo spoke. He repeated part of Prenis's speech, saying that in itself the cemetery was not wrong and that the ideas of 1946 were not wrong, yet there was trouble. Tjamilo confessed that he built one of the new cemeteries on his own. He said he knew it would be useless to ask Samol because he knew that Samol would be opposed. He tried to continue, but Paliau interrupted him.

So far, Paliau had abruptly silenced all the speakers. And each man had sat back down immediately. Most men at the meeting were sitting on the floor. Their backs were bowed. Many had rested their heads on their drawn-up knees, concealing their faces. Everyone was grave and quiet. They did not speak among themselves.

Paliau continued to berate them, seemingly trying to get them to say something that he already had in mind:

You men, look, listen. I have already said it. Your heads are unable to hear anything. Each one blames the other. You aren't following what I said. You keep letting all sorts of bad ways come into your villages; when they cause trouble your heads are full of these bad ways that you have let in. You seem unable to find the mouth of the road. You don't want to listen to the one work, the one road that I have spoken of. You always distort it. And when it results in trouble you are incapable of putting it straight.

Paliau said repeatedly that everything was already wrong; the cemetery work had already made trouble. Now what were they going to do about it? 'I can't straighten out your *tingting*', he declared. 'I work on making it straight and you work on distorting it'. (This was also Paliau's near-constant complaint to Schwartz when he spoke to him about the travails of being a leader: 'Whatever I say, they distort'.)

Manoi, the council of Loitja, who had been closely associated with Kisakiu of Tawi in the Noise and in the Cemetery Cult, now rose to speak:

Yes, I want to speak a little. Paliau did not show us all these bad ways. He showed us the way of God. We heard all the talk of God from Paliau only. Then everyone went back to their villages and changed what he had said. Now it has gone wrong. We started on something new again, something from Johnston Island. It is true that we all had already heard about cemeteries. But now it has come up wrong and we can't follow it. We must follow this new talk, this talk we heard in 1946 about just making it in order to have a decent burial place. We have forgotten all the work of 1946 and this is no good.

Then he repeated several of Paliau's figures of speech about roads covered with broken glass and spears and stones. Paliau allowed him to finish, the first time he allowed this that evening. And he commented without the anger he had shown at the other speakers:

This talk also is wrong. In 1946 did you see us, the men of Baluan, at the cemetery? [It was the Mok people and the mainland Titan visitors who had gone to the cemetery. Paliau had withdrawn to Baluan, where people had a much less intense experience of the Noise than on Mok.] At the meeting house, was there anything said about the cemetery at these meetings? Who heard this in November of 1946, or in 1947, '48, '49, '50, '51, '52, '53, or '54? Who on Baluan has started a cemetery? You have it wrong. Did this cemetery idea come up in Baluan in 1946 or not? Yes? If it did, why haven't I built a cemetery? It was I who gave you the ideas of 1946. I said nothing about any cemetery. Right?

Tjamilo responded:

I was there in the Noise, too. But we see cemeteries among the white men. They do it right. They clean them well. But cargo doesn't appear from this. In 1946 you didn't say build cemeteries and cargo will come from them. So now why do we keep saying 1946?

Paliau allowed him to finish, and replied:

This trouble that came from Rambutjo in 1946 has come to you now. Change things a little, change them a little more, and soon someone kills someone. This is close to you now. You distort things too much here. It is already wrong. Now where is the road to make things all right?

Kisekup, the old south coast paramount *luluai*, then spoke for the first time:

This way of ours, the whites opposed us because of it for a long time. We were strong but now that our way is clear and there is the road of the council and the cooperative, we ourselves are ruining it. Where is there another road?

Paliau allowed Kisekup this short speech, then he continued scolding, asking what should be done to repair the damage. Pondis, the *kaunsil* of Malei, who had been sitting dejectedly, started to speak for the first time, saying 'The source of this trouble is in two villages'. Paliau silenced him with an angry shout, 'Stop! That's enough of that'. Pondis sat down and said nothing for the rest of the night. Paliau continued to shout. He said that they were all talking just as they had the night before. No one was offering a solution. 'You keep saying, cemetery, 1946, cemetery, 1946, cemetery, 1946!'

Kametan of Bunai addressed the Cemeterians, telling them that if they would stop what they had been doing they could all get back together again; if not, they could not work together. Then Petrus Pomat of Pere tried a new approach:

It is like this. All the talk of the past and of today has brought trouble. We can no longer think of these things. Now the [official] council will get started among us. What work will the council do? The council has knowledge of what is not right. It can make it right later. It is like what we are talking about now. We keep throwing it back and forth at each other. We'd be better off keeping quiet. This work will come up later, the council can do it. When we are in the council, what kind of work will we do? Houses, land, cemetery, whatever the council sees that is not straight it can order people to correct. But it can't just do it. It has to come up first in the meeting house. If we want to do this work, it can't be just one village, but every village and every man. When one village doesn't want to tell another village about something, this leads to trouble.

Paliau interrupted and said:

You say the name council, council, council. If you don't straighten out this thing now, today, I will go back to Baluan and you won't get the council. I will put it to the meeting that in Bunai, they are all completely crazy. Do you think I can't? This is why you can't find good *tingting* after I have taught you for all these years, you keep changing things about.

Samol tried to discover what Paliau wanted someone to say. He began to talk about the need to bring everything up at meetings, as Paliau had said the night before. He said that he was wrong, too, that he doesn't always do this. Paliau interrupted him as if he hadn't heard him, continuing his threat about keeping them out of the NGC:

Mister Landman [the assistant district officer in charge of the Baluan Council] is coming. I think he hasn't heard about this thing. If he had heard, he wouldn't have set the day for starting the council. You are in serious trouble. This quarrel of yours is like a stink, but there has been no wind to carry it. Mister Landman set the day without knowing about this trouble here. I am extremely angry at you. It is not as if you were not already in trouble that you can fight back and forth like this.

Pokanau, *kaunsil* of Nuang, said that they were willing to hear about the work of the official council, but as far as the cemetery was concerned, they had already finished theirs. They could not take it away. Paliau broke in angrily again, saying that this had already led to trouble. Whoever continued it would go to jail and they would not be admitted to the NGC. 'You have gone wrong in your work on the cemetery. Find a way to set this straight.'

Paliau kept hammering these points. The effect was hypnotic. Most of the men sat staring at the floor, as if Paliau's words were striking their heads. He had treated all of them like bad and stupid children who could not learn a simple fact. He continued to berate them: 'No more of your bloody twisting things around! Why didn't you do it according to the law? The law concerning the cemetery, you have forgotten. The trouble started in March 1954. Now it is time to find a way to set it straight to finish the quarrel within your village so that it can't ruin you. Come on, come on, come on, come on!'

He continued to scold. He said that meetings were for airing dissension. They were the proper place for quarrelling, not on the paths of the village. Suddenly he changed his tone. He said quietly that the wind from the east, which was then shaking the house, was almost as strong as the usual wind from the west. Schwartz could see the men relax, some of the tension go out of their bodies. Several had the temerity to agree with Paliau; yes, the east wind was unusually strong. Several of the men spoke quietly with each other.

After a few moments of this calm, Petrus Popu of Lowaya spoke. Lowaya, he said, was ashamed because they had been accused of nude bathing. He said this indignantly. Yet he had seemed to admit to the accusation in a meeting several days before. He said that they were also angry because Samol had taken money entrusted to him and had lost it in gambling. That was why they had spent the rest of their money in the store; the *kaunsil* would only lose the rest of it if they turned it in. He spoke as if this were the cause of the quarrel in the village.

Paliau berated Popu for introducing another subject when still no one had offered a solution for the whole situation. He threatened to go to bed and to leave for Baluan in the morning, unless someone offered a solution soon. He told Popu: 'So you have been shamed. You want to go back to the bush? You can live in the bush for the rest of your life if you wish'. Here Paliau was probably referring not simply to living in a way that was materially backward; he was likely invoking a common criticism of the cult. That is, that its emphasis on the ghosts of the dead was a throwback to the indigenous way of life they should be trying to leave behind; rather than a way forward, the cult was little more than a revival of an aspect of indigenous culture—the constant monitoring by harsh and capricious ghosts—for which many were anything but nostalgic.

Simion Kilepak then tried to offer a solution. They would all admit that they were wrong and make no further mention of what had happened, but in the future they would bring to a public meeting anything like the cemetery work, and everyone would have to agree or it could not proceed. Paliau made no comment.

Prenis Tjolai reminded Paliau that he had asked him earlier about the cemetery work. Paliau had warned that the cult would lead to trouble, and now, he, Prenis, would obey Paliau and forget about it. Prenis was the only one of the Cemeterians who reminded Paliau that they had previously

asked him about the cult, at which time, some of them claimed, he had not discouraged them or had even encouraged them. Paliau's reply cast some light on those curious conversations:

It is true that all of you asked me and I told you yes. It was as if I were shooing off a dog. You kept asking and asking and asking. 'You can do it. You have your own mind', I said. Now I told you because you kept asking me, asking me, asking me. But you didn't stick to making a cemetery, and now it has gone wrong. You have twisted it around in your heads. But Manoi [of Loitja] also asked me and I told him straight. 'You can't do it.' He said they had it on Johnston Island and I said it was wrong. Soon Johnston Island would be ruined by it.

Schwartz had not heard of these events before, but apparently at least some others had. In July 1953, almost a year before the present meeting, on Manoi's insistence the *luluai* of Loitja had come to Bunai in a Johnston Island canoe to hear what Paliau had to say about the Johnston Island cult. Paliau told Manoi, the *luluai*, and the Johnston Island group that Johnston Island was heading for trouble. Paliau now said that this showed he had been opposed to the cemetery work from the start. He also admitted that he had told most of them to go ahead and build their cemeteries; but he did so because he had grown tired of their pestering so he gave them the answer they kept asking for.

In a long speech which repeated several of his favourite analogies, Paliau continued to emphasise that they were destroying themselves. He concluded by threatening again to report to the administration that they were all crazy, unworthy of the official council.

One or two others then tried to speak, but Paliau silenced them, saying that he had had enough, he was going to bed now; no one had offered any ideas for ending the trouble. He was going back to Samol's house and he did not want anyone to seek him out there. He was finished. He was angry. As far as the south coast was concerned, he said, the council has been ruined: 'I am going to have you all put in jail. I am going to Mister Landman. You will all be jailed, if not, the work of the council will be ruined completely. You will not win out. I try to straighten you out, but you are unwilling'. He himself had just been released from jail, to which Landman had sentenced him. He was also worried that he might be dismissed as chairman of the Baluan Council. Yet now he resorted to

the threat of turning people over to the government. He was using every tactic available to reassert his leadership and—perhaps—to keep people off their guard.

Having announced angrily that he had had enough, Paliau then made no move to leave. After a pause, others began to speak again. Kisekup suggested that stopping the cemetery work would end the trouble in the village. Manoi of Loitja added a new thought: he compared the present quarrel to the way quarrels had constantly broken up villages in the days of their ancestors. Their ancestors, he said, made hot-headed threats to leave every time there was a disagreement. Now, Manoi called for turning their backs on those days, a general shaking of hands, forgetting the cult, and renewing their unity in an expanded official council.

Paliau made no direct comment on either Kisekup's or Manoi's contributions. Instead, he spoke as follows, asserting his dominance:

You men think that you have knowledge now. Or you think that you will test me on these ideas. But you can't take the lead. If you try it, you will be ruined. You are not the ones who did it. I am. I showed you all these roads. Now you want to make trouble, but you can't win out. It was not you who started this work in Manus in 1946. I raised you up with my ideas. Now you distort them. Who gave you these ideas? Who showed you? All of you are wearing trousers and shirts, who gave this to you? Was it you who showed the way? You would like to beat down all my ideas. You think that you are now equal to it. I can talk, and you can oppose me. I can talk, and you can change what I say. If you are not equal to it, why have you taken this trouble upon yourselves? Who showed you? You tell me! I will shut up while you show me. I want to ask you, I too want to build a cemetery in Lipan-Mok. You tell me how to do this work. You, Pokanau, should I put a rail around it or should I put a door, or what? Come, you show me, what are these ideas? Go on, I am asking you, I want to build one in my own village.

Pokanau of Nuang began hesitantly, 'All of us must speak'. But Paliau broke in with words replete with condescension:

I am the one who taught you and now you say, never mind me. You go ahead of me. I think you can show me? All right, show me now. I have told you plenty and you have continually distorted it. I think that you have plenty of know-how. All right, show me now.

Pokanau sat down, finally perceiving that no answer was really wanted. The room fell silent. Paliau sat back and waited. Obviously, he was using this occasion not merely to end the cult, but to reaffirm the absolute leadership that had been slipping away from him in recent years. He was answering the claim some had made in a number of recent meetings: 'Before, we were like children, now we are men. We have our own minds'. Paliau wanted them to admit their incapacity and to put themselves into his hands. Although never very explicit, there had been an anti-Paliau tendency in the Cemetery Cult, and he was determined to stop this.

Paliau finally continued:

This quarrel among you is finished, but what you have done to me is not. If you think I have not shown you your ideas and your ways, then you show me. You don't stop to think that I am your leader. I will win because I will put you all in trouble to keep you from spoiling the council. Who showed you the way? If you know that I am the source of all this, then why have you tried to throw me down? There is not one thing in what I have ever told you that has been wrong. Hey, you! It's soon daylight.

He shouted the last words at the stunned men sitting all around him. There was a pause, during which some on the pro-cult side of the room began to whisper among themselves. Paliau interrupted them sarcastically:

You don't have to ask one another. Each of you is a man of knowledge. Tell me. Everywhere in Manus there is no other place that is getting the council except you. I think you are all pretty good to have done this. Your heads are superior to mine. Now you can throw out my teachings. Now you can teach me.

Pokanau of Nuang rose to make a long speech in a subdued tone, lacking his earlier defiance. None of them, he said, knew anything at all except what Paliau had taught them. Tjamilo rose immediately after Pokanau and started to confess his errors, also in a quiet, humble tone: 'I am the cause of all this trouble. And Johnston Island, too, they are more than a little wrong'. He started to detail how he had gone to Johnston Island, how he had been told to build a cemetery, how he had tried in Bunai, how he had taken ten men and cut the coconut palms on the old cemetery.

Paliau interrupted him saying: 'No one asked you for this talk. If the old cemetery was no good there were normal channels for doing this as village work'. Now, Paliau said, they should admit their incapacity. They should

say either that they could lead him or that he should lead them. He said they constantly made trouble because they didn't stop to think that they might be making others angry. He explained to them at length that he interrupted them because he could see that they were saying, or were going to say, things that would merely prolong the quarrel.

The men on the pro-cult side of the room now sat as if dazed. For the time being at least, and for the first time, they seemed stripped of their defiance and their stiff righteousness. Suddenly Paliau relaxed. He called for matches, joking that if they couldn't find any, they would have to use a fire plough.<sup>2</sup>

Nakwam, the council of Kapo, spoke now, echoing the tone of Pokanau's speech:

I have listened, and I think it is like pulling a rope, five brothers on one side and five on the other. Five think their father will help them, and the other five think their father will help them. Each wants him. Now our father has spoken clearly to us. He said, 'While I am still here you must hurry up to straighten this out'. What talk does he have for us to make this straight? He has listened to these ten men. If he leaves, this trouble will remain among us. Our minds and thoughts are not adequate, now what thoughts does our father have? It is true; our father has made all these things. Today I see my father and I cry to him, 'What is your idea?'. If he leaves, there will be ruination.

Paliau had been working towards speeches like Pokanau's and Nakwam's throughout the night—cult leaders admitting their inadequacy and accepting their complete subordination. He had been refusing to hear explanations, accusations, defences, or attempted solutions. Here was what he wanted. Nakwam had entered these meetings attempting to identify with Paliau by speaking of himself as a father to the people of his village, who were children who came crying to him. Now Paliau was the father and they were all his repentant children asking him to set them right and forgive their presumption. After Nakwam's speech, Paliau asked: 'What are you waiting for? He is finished talking. Who is next?'

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2 To start a fire with a fire plough you rapidly drive the end of a stick back and forth in a groove in another piece of wood until the heat ignites tinder. The anachronism of Paliau's suggestion is the joke. It's unlikely that anyone in Manus had used a fire plough for decades. In the 1950s, Manus people who didn't have wooden matches or metal lighters (of the pre-disposable type) typically lit cigarettes, ready-made or hand-rolled, with a brand from a fire. If the household fire went out, people often borrowed a brand from a neighbour to reignite it.

Pantret was next:

My father has spoken. This is not something for us to quarrel about. We wanted to do this work, and now it is wrong. We are not adequate. If I do anything that is not right, you can speak and set it straight. We thought that we were strong a little, but we weren't. There is nothing that we are able to do. What shall we do? We started this work on our own. Now that it has led to anger and trouble we are not capable of carrying it through. That is all.

Now Paliau was satisfied that he had the situation entirely in his hands and that the assembled men were ready to do whatever he said. He then spoke for almost an hour. Here are paraphrased summaries (except where quotation marks indicate otherwise) of the final speeches of the meeting, which did not end until four o'clock in the morning.

Paliau began:

Now I will answer you. You aren't saying the things that you are saying now out of your own good thoughts. My anger has frightened you. If it weren't for my anger, for my strong talk, you wouldn't say this. You still don't understand me clearly. If you really understood, you would have said what Nakwam said long ago, that I am the only one who has brought you to where you are now and that I am the only one who can keep you straight. In some countries, if the leaders are men with good ideas who give their ideas to the rest, the others obey them. People listen to whatever they say and do it. I took pity on you seeing that you were heading for trouble. My words are like the knife that cuts away your trouble. Had I merely reasoned with you, offering you good talk, you wouldn't have listened. Now that you saw my anger you abandoned what you were holding on to.

Then Paliau told the men what he wanted them to do. They were to end their disputes without further discussion, accusations, or shaming of anyone. In itself there was nothing wrong with making a good cemetery, he said, but this was to be done only as they would keep the trails in repair or the village clean and in good order. They could work on a cemetery later; but they were to wait until it had lost its association with the cult. He repeated that each hamlet was not to have its own cemetery; rather, there was to be a single cemetery for the whole village, because cemeteries were not like gardens in the bush, with one for every three or four people.

Paliau listed all the village projects that needed work, he criticised people for moving too slowly to rebuild their houses, and he put a two-month deadline on completing this task.

He told the men to make more use of the meeting house they had built and to hold regular meetings of the whole village every Thursday. There, they should discuss anything that anyone wanted to do for his hamlet. He explained that if the cemetery had been discussed, there would have been no trouble: 'For every man who does not think straight, there is one who does who can correct him'.

Paliau continued at length about how they call too much on the name of God while they continue to behave in the same bad ways. They speak of God and then they beat their wives, or steal, or lie. Then they return to talking about God. This was dangerous. He spoke about the idea of the cemetery as a means to get cargo, how occasionally someone would say that if they did this or that there would be a reward for their work. All that they desire would materialise. Paliau asked them: 'What do you expect? That you will win out over the store? That the things of the white men will appear for you? Or that sago will come to you in your house, or fish? If the people don't use their strength to work for food they will die'. He told them to forget these ideas, but he warned the cult opponents not to ridicule the former Cemeterians. There was to be no more anger and shame and ridicule or talk about breaking up the village. They were to laugh and play with each other again.

Then Paliau again changed his tone abruptly. He awakened the old council of Pwam, telling him, to his confusion, that Schwartz had just written in his book that the *kaunsil* was asleep during this important meeting. The assembly relaxed a little.

Pantret then recited what he would report to his hamlet the next day—that they were all wrong and that they must come to shake hands with the people of Bunai. Paliau then asked the cult hamlet leaders what they would say about the threats to break up the village. Pantret said that this had been Malei's idea. Pondis denied that Malei really intended to do it. Talimelion of Bunai said that the Titan had no quarrel with Malei or Lowaya; they wanted only unity. Paliau did not like the direction this was taking. He said that the hamlet leaders should not go back and speak to their people right away. Rather, in the morning they should bring them all to the square in Bunai and he would speak to them personally and put

an end to their thinking about the cult. If he permitted the *kaunsil* to do it in their individual hamlets they would just do it wrong and make more trouble. Also, if they informed their own people of the end of the cult, those who got angry would direct their anger at their own leaders. Instead, he, Paliau, would take their anger.

Paliau lectured them again about the Movement they had neglected. He denounced the way each village and hamlet had been asserting itself independently. (Paliau never missed a chance to speak against thinking in terms of the smaller group; he stressed thinking on a village and Movement level.) Finally, he asked all those who considered the dissension ended to raise their hands, warning those who still entertained bad feelings towards others to keep their hands down. All hands went up. Then, as a last word, he added: 'This talk about cargo, about ghosts. I banish it now, it is finished'. He said that this sort of talk would be blamed on him, like the time Pita Tapo said that Paliau was King. The *kiap* confronted Paliau with this as if he had said it. That was the end of this meeting, which had run for seven hours without a break, during most of which time Paliau had held the floor.

The next day's village-wide meeting began promptly—an unusual occurrence—at nine that same morning. The people of Lowaya (but not Malei) came marching the length of the village in a perfect line, according to size, following the pattern established during the cult. It was a final show of defiance on the part of the leaders, who were willing to be humble before Paliau but not before the Titan. Before he spoke, Paliau met briefly with the leaders. They assured him that they had told people nothing about what they were going to hear. Then Paliau spoke to the assembled village for an hour. No one reacted visibly to the news that the cult was over. Paliau touched on the doctrines and promise of the cult only obliquely, but his meaning was amply clear. He emphasised the error and danger of the dissension in the village and urged a return to unity and friendship. He told people of the work they must now do to make their village better and to support the official council, which would be established within a week. Then he sent them back to their hamlets and homes, saying their leaders would explain his talk further to them.

## Shutting off belief

After the meeting, Schwartz sat with Paliau while he talked with the leaders of the cult. He explained that he had spoken obliquely to avoid shaming the Usiai cult hamlets in the presence of the other villagers. There was enough of that already. Before adjourning the gathering, Paliau told the cult leaders that they should tell Schwartz everything about their experiences in the cult, to compensate, Paliau said, for the fact that they had disrupted Schwartz's work for the past three months. Then Schwartz would judge their work in the cult and explain it to them. Paliau's order brought Pantret, Pondis, Joseph Nanei, and Namu to Schwartz several times over the next few days for extensive discussions of things they had been unwilling to talk about since March, filling in the picture and confirming much of what he had learned indirectly.

More important, these discussions gave Schwartz an opportunity to try to explore the effect of Paliau's opposition on these cult leaders' beliefs. To what extent could Paliau simply shut off the cult in this way, and what would be the effects on those who had invested themselves in it for months if not years, those who had let it lift their millenarian hopes and raise them as individuals to new prominence in the village? What would happen to the hamlets where the cult had raised morale, instilled new discipline, and strengthened leadership? Would people be angry at their leaders, as Paliau feared?

But the almost immediate inauguration of the expanded NGC quickly grabbed most people's attention and revived what had been flagging interest in the Movement. This must have modulated considerably the reaction of most cult adherents to the end of the cult. Some raw feelings, however, did show through. While watching the Lowaya villagers march to and from the meeting ground where Paliau made his public statement on the cult, Schwartz wondered if, in spite of their abject submission to Paliau the preceding night, the Lowaya people might go ahead with the cult as before. He watched Pita Tapo sitting dejectedly, again holding his children on his lap, at the morning meeting. Tapo had not attended the meeting the night before. Surely, Schwartz thought, this was hard on him. The collapse of the Noise, in which he had blossomed into a prophet, had left him empty. The subsequent growth of the Movement which was so absorbing to others, like Kampo, left Tapo feeling useless and ignored. The Cemetery Cult had reawakened in him hope and a zest for activity. He had made pilgrimages to

other cult villages. People had heard his voice again in meetings. But now, within a few days, his role had disappeared. In the excitement over the new council, he became inert again, unimportant, without office. He was, in fact, an embarrassment to the Movement, for people still linked his name with the most troublesome aspects of the Noise.

The immediate change Paliau's action on the cult wrought in Malei was remarkable. Everything stopped. Pondis was most affected. His influence disappeared completely. He became confused and depressed. He was shamed. For almost two months—until just before Schwartz and Shargo left to return home—he remained depressed. He stopped dressing in European clothing. He went unshaved and unkempt. He stayed in his hut on the beach much of the time.

It was different with Pantret of Lowaya. He was determined to retain the gains he had made through the cult. Men—such as Joseph Nanei, Nasei, and Pongo—with whom he had led the cult, receded into the background, but Pantret remained the Lowaya *kaunsil*. Pantret was able to retain the relationship Lowaya had formed with Malei during the cult. In the NGC elections, Malei and Lowaya asked to be regarded as a single political unit within Bunai with a single councillor, Pantret. The two hamlets even planned to build their houses together at Lowaya's end of the village. But in both hamlets the seances stopped.

In Lowaya, the cult left a few residues. The children kept marching. The adults, too, continued to march to church, although less regularly. Most of the men still wore their uniforms, the short trousers and undershirts dyed blue. But these were the only articles of European clothing many men owned. And everyone continued to adopt an air of defiance towards the Titan. But many people also relaxed visibly. They resumed going about their own affairs in their own time. They had neglected their gardens during the cult. Many had spent all their money on store foods—biscuits, tea, sugar, and canned meat. But many had been hungry, even though children and young boys had been doing more fishing to compensate for adults neglecting the gardens. Some men immediately dropped the discipline of the cult, especially those on the 'minstrel' fringe. They picked up their guitars again. Some, embarrassed by their fruitless involvement with the cult, left Lowaya to work for wages. Petrus Popu and his son, Seliu, were the only ones Schwartz knew who turned against Pantret. They had suppressed their hostility towards him temporarily, but now they blamed him for the cult.

In the Titan section of Bunai, Tjamilo's cemetery stood as an accomplished fact against Paliu's decree that Bunai was to have only one cemetery for the entire village. The cemetery was there, unoccupied, newly cleared, and newly painted. On 25 May, following the NGC elections, during a quiet period when Samol was again out of the village on council business, Tjamilo began to fill his cemetery. He still had all the crosses he had prepared, each painted with white coral lime. Then, while Schwartz was working in Pere, Tjamilo sent a note asking him to make a movie of a mass reburial. Schwartz couldn't leave his work in Pere, so he sent word for Tjamilo to proceed without him. Schwartz returned to Bunai three days later to find that Tjamilo had postponed the burial until his return. He was especially anxious to have Schwartz photograph the event because he had introduced some variations of his own on past processions and also because he believed that the anthropologists' presence would help normalise the procedure, removing the cult aura. He had persuaded most of the village to participate, although the event was weighted with his supporters.

Samol returned soon after the event, but he let it pass without comment. He may have reasoned that the cemetery symbolised Tjamilo's investment in the community and his years of concern with its morals in the name of the New Way. His reward for this dedication had been bitter. The first six graves in the cemetery contained his children, all of whom had died before reaching the age of two, despite Tjamilo's strenuous dedication to maintaining the moral purity of his *tingting*. In the seventh grave he reburied the skeleton of his father. Ten of Tjamilo's Titan kin and supporters were also reburied. About 100 adults and children took part in the procession, their numbers cutting across the lines of cult adherents and opponents in the Titan section.

Unfortunately, because Schwartz and Shargo had to leave for home in July, they did not find out what happened on Johnston Island or what happened to the ghost of Thomas. They did ascertain that Kisakiu's teacher did not reappear in Tawi. Between Paliu's declaration of the end of the cult and Schwartz and Shargo's departure, the affairs of the new NGC filled village life in Bunai, Pere, and nearby villages. Amiable relations seemed restored between the Titan and the Usiai, although the Titan dominated the new council.

What was the status of the cult beliefs after Paliau declared them invalid? Schwartz interviewed Pantret, Pondis, Joseph Nanei, Pita Tapo, Popu, Tjamilo, and Prenis Tjolai. As Paliau had requested, Schwartz did not hesitate to offer his own views, but only after long discussions in which the erstwhile Cemeterians elaborated their understanding of what had transpired. All these men were uncertain just what they were no longer supposed to believe. They had been moved by the strongest desire to believe in the cult. What Schwartz had learned from months of association with them before he became aware of the cult made this unsurprising, except regarding Pondis and Pantret. They had seemed more attuned to the secular program of the Movement, and they hadn't displayed the moralising and self-righteousness of many others whom Schwartz later learned were involved in the cult. But now they all told Schwartz much the same thing—the cult had failed only because people had spied on it and ridiculed it and spread rumours about it and shamed them for it. This, they said, had produced the schism in the village, and that was the trouble Paliau had been talking about. They had been wrong, to some extent, in not submitting their plans to a meeting of the whole village, but they might have done so if they had not been shamed.

What Paliau really meant, they said, was that once the council was organised, they would all discuss the cemetery project in a full village meeting and then everyone would carry it out. This was what had gone wrong. There was nothing wrong with the cult beliefs. In 1946, Wapei had spoiled the chances of the cult. Then the government had suppressed it. Now it had failed because of spying and envy. Had there been unanimity, all would have been well. Now that the cult was over, they would devote their energies, for a while, to the council and the cooperative, just as in after the Noise ended in 1947 they had turned back to the Movement program, to the Second Order of God. They repeated all the rationalisations that had been advanced for the failure of the Noise. They had never repudiated the Noise; it had simply not worked out. They recalled that when the ghost of Ponau appeared to Nasei in Lowaya, he had asked if they had received all the cargo the ghosts had sent earlier. When they said they had not, Ponau's ghost was angry and said it had been stolen by the Australians.

When Schwartz asked Tapo what had happened to the cargo, Tapo replied with a parable. He related how, when he had worked for the Japanese in Kavieng, where the war had caught him, Japanese supplies had run low. Then they received a wireless message that a cargo ship was on its way. The cargo ship approached within a few miles of the shore.

The Japanese rejoiced. But another country had intercepted this wireless. They sent a submarine, thinking 'Let the cargo get close first. Let them rejoice over it'. Then they torpedoed it near the shore. 'That is how it was with our cargo', said Tapo.

Tjamilo also said the cult failed only because Samol's group had ridiculed it. He reasserted his belief in everything pertaining to the cult. Schwartz pointed out to him that Paliau had said several times that the idea of cargo was mistaken, that there must be no further talk of the return of the dead. Tjamilo said that Paliau was very clever, more than anyone else, except maybe some white men. He had said all these things for the benefit of the spies in their midst, who would report what he said to the government. But he did not suspect Schwartz and Shargo of such perfidy. By this time, Tjamilo was accustomed to speaking freely to Schwartz about cult matters. Earlier, he had been wary of Schwartz and had even doubted that he was an American as he claimed. This lasted until Schwartz received a carton of Lucky Strike cigarettes his father sent from America. Tjamilo and others associated this brand in particular with the American soldiers on Manus during the war. As Schwartz went about his work, everyone who saw the Lucky Strikes was remarkably impressed and immediately nostalgic. Tapo carried away an empty pack as a souvenir. When Schwartz first offered one to Tjamilo and told him his father had sent them, Tjamilo immediately assumed that Schwartz's father was dead and his doubts that Schwartz was a true American were dispelled. Discussion of cult belief could have no effect on him.

It was clear in Schwartz's discussions with these men that it had not occurred to any of them that Paliau meant that the cult beliefs themselves were wrong. Only the circumstances had spoiled the cult. They allowed that the cult might never work out, because they did not know enough or they could not purify their thoughts enough. But they all felt that Paliau had promised that later, when the council was installed, they could turn again to the way of the cemetery, and that next time it would be done properly.<sup>3</sup>

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3 This is a common explanation for the failure of all magical performances in Melanesia and other places where magic is commonplace; that is, the causal theory is correct, but the procedure was not performed properly.

## Keeping up the pressure

Paliau pushed the Cemetery Cult into the shadows, but he couldn't quash the millenarian hopes that drove it. He doubtless kept an eye out for any signs of its resurrection. He also had to keep an eye on other possible threats that millenarian activity might disrupt efforts to establish an official council and move on with a substantially secular agenda. People from several villages continued to report hearing ghostly whistles long after the end of the Noise. Up through the 1960s, Joseph Nanei of Lowaya persisted in occasionally producing small sums of money or small bits of 'cargo', like watches, and claiming that he got them from the dead, as proof that he and the other Cemeterians hadn't been deluded. He didn't succeed in building a following, but he did irritate Paliau, who told Schwartz that Nanei was a fraud, but a fraud who probably fooled himself as much or more than he fooled others. Muli kept up a remnant of the Noise on Rambutjo, and Sua maintained a small group of followers. Paliau knew of their activities, but he didn't feel it was necessary to suppress these local prophets because they showed no signs of attracting additional adherents. He could now turn his attention to the possibilities for Manus people—and for himself—that an expanded official council offered.

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