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‘The last few weeks have been strange and exciting’

In April 1954, Theodore Schwartz wrote to Margaret Mead in New York City from Bunai village, Manus District, Territory of Papua and New Guinea. He was reporting on the remarkable events Lenora Shargo (his wife at the time) and he were witnessing. He began his letter: ‘The last few weeks have been strange and exciting’, and he was not exaggerating. He and Shargo were Mead’s research assistants on her second trip to the Admiralty Islands, which today comprise the Manus Province of the independent country of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Mead had conducted research there in 1928 with New Zealand-born anthropologist Reo Fortune, her husband at the time. When Schwartz became her assistant in 1953, she was already famous for writing *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) and *Growing Up in New Guinea* (1930), the latter based on her 1928 research in the Admiralties. Schwartz was a graduate student in anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, Shargo was an art student, and neither she nor Schwartz had ever been outside the United States or even west of the Mississippi. The party of three arrived in New Guinea in June 1953. Mead returned to the United States in December, as planned. Schwartz and Shargo stayed on for another eight months, to collect more data for Mead and complete their independent work. By the time Mead left they were taking in stride much that at first had been

arrestingly exotic. But they had yet to encounter the revelation that would force them to reconsider their earlier impressions and draw Schwartz into a lifetime research project.¹

In 1953, Schwartz and Shargo lived in Bunai village and Mead lived in Pere village, about 1.5 miles west of Bunai. Both Bunai and Pere are on the south coast of the largest land mass in the Admiralties, Manus Island, a name derived from that of one of the principal ethnic groups in the Admiralties, the Manus. Under the Australian administration, Manus District comprised the Admiralty Islands; the district became Manus Province after PNG gained independence in 1975 (from Australia, which was then governing PNG as a United Nations Trust Territory, having accepted responsibility for preparing the Territory for independence after World War II).

From here on, when we mean the Manus as an ethnic group within the larger population of Manus Province, we will refer to them by the name of the language they share; we will call them the Titan (pronounced, approximately, tee-tun, emphasising the first syllable). Anthropologists generally distinguish two other groups within the indigenous population of Manus: the Usiai (who, in precolonial times, lived exclusively in the island's mountainous interior) and the Matankor (who inhabited offshore islands, but were not as thoroughly amphibious as the lagoon-dwelling Titan). Although, like the Titan, the Usiai and Matankor inhabited distinct ecological niches, unlike the Titan neither group shared a single language. When we need to refer to all the indigenous peoples of the Admiralties, we will lump them together as Manus people.²

1 Schwartz was not Mead's student. He was a student of A.I. Hallowell at the University of Pennsylvania, preparing to do his doctoral thesis research in Africa. Seeking an assistant for her 1953 trip to Manus, Mead contacted several anthropology departments with strong graduate programs. Hallowell urged Schwartz, who hadn't yet secured funding for his proposed research in Africa, to apply for the position. Mead wanted not only a well-trained young anthropologist but also someone with expertise in still and motion picture photography and able to repair photographic equipment. Schwartz was a competent amateur photographer and after Mead offered him the position he took a crash course in photographic equipment repair. Mead agreed to hire Shargo as well, assuming she could learn to do ethnographic research, which she did quickly. Mead also thought that travelling and working with a married couple rather than an apparently unattached young man would raise fewer eyebrows in the conservative white colonial society of the Territory. Among their other tasks, Schwartz and Shargo did all the photography for the team.

2 Carrier and Carrier (1989: 35–36) note a number of complexities in this three-part division of the population. Mead (2002 [1934]: 5) called it a reflection of the Titan point of view, that is: 'a reflection of the typical sea-dwellers' point of view towards people landbound and wholly without canoes, the Usiai, and those who live on land but who also use canoes with more or less frequency, the Matankor. As a matter of fact, those Matankor who live near the Manus [i.e. the Titan] use canoes very infrequently, while the Matankor of the north coast seem to be as habitual and fearless sailors as are the Manus [Titan] themselves'. At least since the 1980s, and perhaps earlier, some Usiai have rejected the Usiai moniker. We know that members of one 'Usiai' language group, Nali speakers, prefer to be known as Nali rather than Usiai.



Figure 1.1: Schwartz films while Mead takes notes, 1953.

Theodore Schwartz and Lenora Shargo did all the still and motion picture photography for Margaret Mead when Mead returned to Manus in 1953 for the first time since her sojourn there with Reo Fortune in 1928. Here, Schwartz, photographed by Shargo, films a public event in the centre of Pere village while Mead takes notes.

Source: Lenora Shargo, from the collection of Theodore Schwartz.

Schwartz and Shargo often walked to Pere to confer with Mead, taking a well-used path along the shoreline and across a wide river mouth they could wade at low tide, but to stay in more regular contact they engaged villagers to carry written notes back and forth.³ Such a life was the height of novelty for them, but on first arriving in Pere, Schwartz could not suppress a pang of disappointment. He had read Mead's *Growing Up in New Guinea* (2001 [1930]), her more technical treatises on Titan culture and society, and Reo Fortune's *Manus Religion* (1965 [1935]), with its detailed descriptions of seances in which Titan people communicated with the ghosts of their dead through spirit mediums.⁴ He had also seen Fortune's photographs of Pere in 1928, the thatched houses set above the water on timber posts, people making their way from house to house by canoe, women in skirts made of plant fibre (so-called grass skirts), men in breechcloths (which would have been made of beaten bark in earlier times), widows with shaved heads, and both men and women sporting ornaments of dogs' teeth. But Pere and its inhabitants looked nothing like this in 1953.

Even when Mead and Fortune first arrived in Manus in 1928, the region was not isolated from the Western world. Alvaro de Saavedra, a Spanish trader, was the first European to record a sighting of the Admiralties, in 1528. Dutch explorers Willem Schouten and Jacob LeMaire noted them again in 1616, as did the English buccaneer and explorer William Dampier in 1686. In 1767, Philip Carteret—exploring with the support of the British Admiralty (which administered the Royal Navy)—named the group the Admiralty Islands, in honour of his sponsor.⁵ European powers began to take proprietary interests in the region, including the Admiralties, in the nineteenth century. The Netherlands, Germany, and Great Britain each claimed a portion of what is still known geographically as the island of New Guinea. The Netherlands appropriated the entire western half as part of the Dutch East Indies, and Germany claimed the northern half of what was left, which became known as German New Guinea. Great Britain claimed the southern remainder as British New Guinea. This it placed

3 Evelyn Waugh (1938: 58–60) speaks of using cleft sticks to convey such correspondence, but Mead, Shargo, and Schwartz did not find this necessary.

4 Mead's principal academic works based on the 1928 research are her well-known paper 'An investigation of the thought of primitive children, with special reference to animism' (1932) and her treatise 'Kinship in the Admiralty Islands' (2002 [1934]).

5 For this information and other details in this paragraph we draw on Bogen (n.d.: 61) and the following Princeton University webpage: lib-dbserver.princeton.edu/visual_materials/maps/websites/pacific/wallis-carteret/wallis-carteret.html.

under Australian administration in 1906, and Australia rechristened it the Territory of Papua. At the beginning of World War I, Australia took control of German New Guinea, merging it with Papua following the war to govern under a League of Nations mandate as the Territory of Papua and New Guinea (the Territory). Throughout the colonial era, Christian missionaries of several stripes proselytised in the region.⁶

Such incursions, though, were minor compared to the upheaval of World War II. In 1944, an American military invasion, including a smaller Australian force, ousted the Japanese forces that had occupied the Admiralties with the larger aim of sweeping south to invade Australia. The Americans established a massive air and naval base on Los Negros Island, the detached eastern tail of Manus Island, separated from it by a narrow strait. After the war, the military hoards disappeared as quickly as they had arrived, but they left behind an indelible impression of apparently limitless material wealth and coordinated human effort on a scale utterly unknown in indigenous New Guinea.

Meeting the Paliu Movement in its Sunday clothes

Mead returned to Manus in 1953, primarily to document what she had heard was a spontaneous effort by the people of the south coast and smaller southern islands to discard their old ways and adopt what they understood from their experience of colonial government and wartime occupation as the way of life of 'white' people. They saw American military forces as especially impressive representatives of the white way of life. Although black American soldiers were segregated in construction units, many indigenous people saw their very presence, and their mastery of powerful machines, as evidence that black New Guineans, too, could attain all the benefits of white life.

By 1953, most of the people of Manus spoke not only one or more of the several indigenous languages of the Admiralties, but also the lingua franca of the Territory. In the form spoken today, this is called Tok Pisin. Mead and many other anthropologists of her era called this language

⁶ Moore (2003) provides an excellent and compact history of New Guinea, from prehistory to the present era. Gavin Souter's *New Guinea: The Last Unknown* (1963) remains very worthwhile.

Neo-Melanesian, invoking a still-common division of the Pacific Islands into three geographic and cultural regions: Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia.⁷ In the Tok Pisin of the 1950s, people of the Admiralties called the new pattern of life of which Mead had heard the *Nufela Fasin*, which translates as the New Way. The New Way was the program of what soon came to be called the Paliau Movement, after its founder and leader, Paliau Maloat.⁸

Under the influence of the New Way, many Manus people—mostly Titan, but also some Usiai and Matankor (Paliau himself was Matankor)—had publicly repudiated many of their longstanding customs and were trying to appropriate as much as they could of the way of life, as they understood it, of the Americans and other Western foreigners who had descended on them—often literally, at the Los Negros air base—during the war. So, in 1953, rather than the lagoon villages of 1928, Mead's party found villages built on land in orderly rows, like military bases or colonial towns. People wore whatever Western-style clothing they had and there were few signs of traditional music, dance, ceremonies, wood carving, personal decoration, or the seances Fortune had witnessed. New Way leaders summoned people twice daily to gatherings in the New Way's own Christian church, in which they practised a version of Catholicism revised to support the New Way. The New Way's effort to organise all aspects of village life entailed what sometimes seemed incessant mandatory gatherings of all men, women, and children to discuss, and settle by a show of hands, matters as diverse as scheduling fishing expeditions, responsibility for cutting the village grass, and standards of child care.

When Mead, Schwartz, and Shargo first arrived in Pere by outrigger canoe from Lorengau—the district's only town in 1953, as it remains today—the first man stepping forward to greet them as they came ashore wore

7 The lines on a map showing this tri-part division suggest neat boundaries. It is more accurate to say that there are contrasting social and cultural tendencies in the Pacific Islands that correspond roughly with geographic areas. The contemporary political entities included in Melanesia with the least quibbling are PNG, the Indonesian province of Papua (adjacent to PNG and formerly part of the Dutch East Indies), Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and the French colony of New Caledonia. The governments of several contiguous countries of the south-west Pacific have adopted the collective label Melanesia to pursue shared geopolitical interests, as in the Melanesian Spearhead Group, established in 1986. Today, if you can speak Tok Pisin, you can quickly master the analogous creoles of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Moore (2003: 1–14) provides a useful discussion of the origins and current significance of the Melanesian label.

8 Stephen Pokawin (1983b) distinguishes the Paliau Church from the Paliau Movement, and places both under the rubric Paliau Phenomenon. The Paliau Movement is a multifaceted phenomenon, but to emphasise the integral relationship among its different dimensions we do not follow Pokawin's practice.

white pants, a white dress shirt, a necktie, and leather shoes, all store-bought. Schwartz and Shargo, however, eventually found that things had not changed quite as drastically as this costume portended. Beneath the surface of the New Way an apparently very different kind of effort to transform life was gaining momentum. Schwartz's interest in seeing something more exotic than people trying to live like Americans would not be disappointed.

Proponents of the New Way advocated collective efforts to amass money for new economic ventures; greater equality between young and old, men and women, and those of different indigenous hereditary ranks; abandoning the indigenous marriage system, which required exchanges of large quantities of material wealth between the families of the bride and groom; and abandoning the indigenous obsession with the spirits of the dead. Catholic missionaries had been discouraging the latter since establishing themselves in Manus in the 1930s, having first arrived in New Guinea late in the German era. But several months after Mead's departure, Schwartz and Shargo found that the ancestral ghosts were back in a dramatic new role.

Stumbling on a cargo cult

In the 1920s, as Reo Fortune (1965 [1935]) documented, the Titan believed that spirits of the dead punished wrongdoing with illness. (Spirits of the dead played a similar role among the Usiai and Matankor, although we have no detailed accounts of these practices like those Fortune provides for the Titan.)⁹ To diagnose serious illness and explain other kinds of misfortune, the Titan consulted the ghosts to find out who had committed what offending impropriety. The ghosts were especially strict regarding economic and sexual behaviour. In early 1954, Schwartz and Shargo discovered that many Bunai villagers, whom they thought they knew well, were consulting the ghosts almost every night, but keeping this secret from them. The villagers were not, however, trying to cure illness. They were trying to open a way for the dead to return, bringing with them virtually unlimited quantities of Western manufactured goods, from

9 We are sceptical of recently published descriptions of indigenous Usiai belief in a 'supreme deity and creator' similar to 'the Christian Triune God' (Minol et al. 2014: 10–12). Minol et al. (2014: 12–16) also note the importance of spirits of the dead, which they describe as less 'aloof' (p. 15) in everyday Usiai life than other categories of non-human beings.

food and clothing to construction materials and machinery. Schwartz and Shargo knew that something similar—called the Noise (in Tok Pisin, *Nois*)—had happened in 1947, but they had been led to believe that it was defunct. Anthropologists used to routinely call this kind of thing a cargo cult. Some now object to this term (a topic to which we return below and in Chapter 2), but it was the label that first sprang to mind for what Schwartz and Shargo found in Bunai. This was a chance discovery, but far from distracting them from their study of the Paliau Movement, it led them deeper into it.

Distinctive features of our approach

Our approach in this book is distinctive in several ways. Perhaps most distinctive is the breadth and depth of our data. They are especially rich in comparison with the data available to most studies of millenarian movements—that is, studies of efforts to achieve not merely a better world, but a perfect world, either gradually or through sudden miraculous transformation. The cargo cults within the Paliau Movement were of the apocalyptic variety of millenarianism. By apocalyptic we mean simply that the transformation sought or expected is dramatically abrupt; we do not mean that it necessarily entails, as in the Christian Bible's Book of Revelations, the world's destruction.¹⁰ Most scholarly accounts of millenarian movements of all kinds rely primarily on data collected after the movements have already failed or lost all but a rump following.¹¹ To the best of our knowledge, our account is unusual because it apprehends a millenarian movement in action close to its inception and follows it to the present.

That we recognise the strong millenarian tendencies within the Paliau Movement does not mean that we must call it a religious phenomenon, for millenarianism also comes in secular varieties. In any event, we find the term 'religion' vague in the extreme and we will use it sparingly. Further, our data incline us to part company with those who have tried to tease apart what they see as distinct religious and political dimensions of the Paliau Movement and Paliau Maloat the man. We also part

10 Landes (2011: 31–6) identifies several types of apocalyptic millenarianism. Recognising a single general type, however, suffices for our purposes.

11 Landes emphasises this point throughout his 2011 work *Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience*; see especially pages 60–1 and 144–5.

company with views of cargo cults—a characteristically Melanesian form of millenarianism—many anthropologists currently take for granted. We expand on these features of our approach and note their principal advantages in what follows.

Drawing on decades of observation and intimate access

Schwartz observed the Paliau Movement for several decades—an unusual feat of what anthropologists call longitudinal ethnography. His long intimacy with Movement people and events helped him obtain exceptionally detailed data on many dimensions of the Movement. Within a few years of the Movement's birth, Schwartz and Shargo collected from many participants and bystanders firsthand accounts of how it began and spread. Schwartz continued to observe the Movement periodically over more than 40 years.

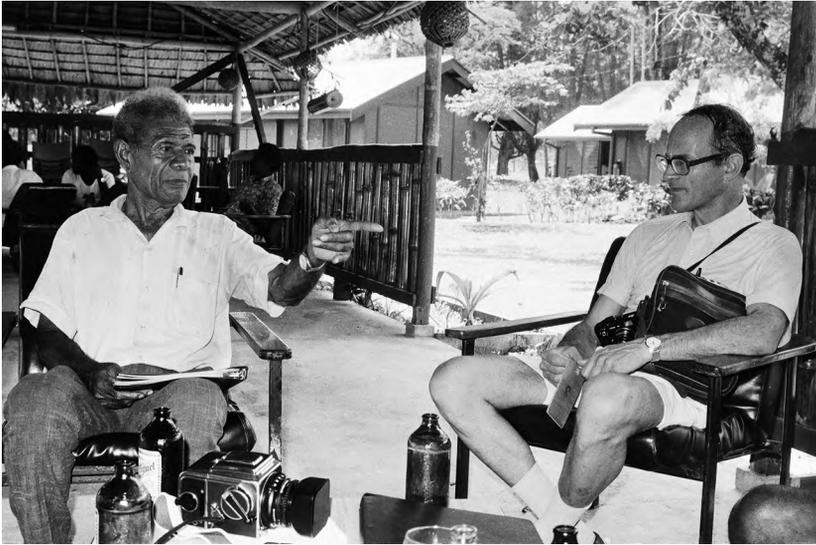


Figure 1.2: Schwartz and Paliau in Lorengau, late 1980s.

Schwartz first met Paliau in 1953 and subsequently discussed developments in the Movement with him on visits to Manus spanning more than 40 years. Here, Schwartz and Paliau chat at a pub in Manus's only town, Lorengau, in the late 1980s.

Source: An unidentified colleague of Paliau's took this picture with Schwartz's camera.

We emphasise the years from 1953 through 1995, for which we can rely primarily on Schwartz's firsthand observations from about seven years of field research spread among some dozen visits. Schwartz last saw Paliau the year before the latter's death in 1991, and he last visited Manus in 1995. Several other anthropologists began research pertaining to Paliau and the Movement in the 1980s. Their work helps us extend the Paliau story into the current millennium. Ton Otto began his research in Manus in 1986. His work—including his doctoral thesis (1991) and a series of later articles—is especially valuable. Other anthropologists who have observed aspects of the Paliau Movement include Alexander Wanek (1996), who conducted research in Manus in the middle to late 1980s, Berit Gustafsson (1992), who conducted research in the early 1990s, and Steffen Dalsgaard, whose 2009 volume is based on research conducted post-2000. Smith worked with Schwartz in Manus for three months in 1973 as one of three assistants. He conducted research in PNG's East Sepik Province in succeeding decades and returned to Manus briefly in 2015 to talk with leaders and rank-and-file members of the current incarnation of the Paliau Movement, Wind Nation (in Tok Pisin, *Win Neisen*) in Pere village and on Baluan Island, where Paliau is buried.

Explaining the details of movement and cult distribution

The depth in time of Schwartz's research and his intimate access to events allow us to describe in detail how, in 1946, Paliau's call to action spread from place to place. We know who carried the news and how people in different villages received it. As in other social movements, the power of the message was not necessarily enough in itself to draw followers, and we can identify reasons why Paliau's message took root in some places and not in others. Schwartz and Shargo were able to obtain similarly detailed accounts of the cargo cult—the Noise—that emerged within the Movement in 1947. And they were on the scene in 1953–54 for a second cargo cult episode, observing events kept hidden even from Manus people who stayed outside the cult, and seeing firsthand what enabled or impeded its spread.

Including a full (and shifting) cast of characters

Our chronicle of the Movement over the years draws heavily on Paliau's own commentary and conversations with both long-time adherents and new generations of Movement members and leaders. But Schwartz also took pains to obtain the perspectives of opponents of the Movement, apostates, and rivals. Studies of social change movements in general and

millenarian movements in particular tend to fixate on their adherents. But such movements seldom sweep all before them and their participants are often a shifting cast. Those who stand aloof or drop out along the way are part of the full picture, and we include some of this variety in our account.¹²

Illuminating the irreducible complexity of a charismatic leader

Paliau was a protean figure, melding politician and prophet, moving smoothly between creating revolving loan funds and reinterpreting the Bible in a Melanesian idiom. Seeing him at only one point in his career or in relation to only one of the many groups with which his career brought him into contact could not reveal his complexity. Our data transcend these limitations. Further, we can glean insights from Paliau's many private conversations with Schwartz over the years.

Efforts to understand Paliau the man by distinguishing secular from non-secular aspects of his identity are especially problematic. From the beginning of his career, many of Paliau's followers believed he was inspired by God. Paliau gave his followers a mythic explanation, featuring the Christian God, for their relative poverty and powerlessness, but he also gave them programs with this-worldly rationales for change through this-worldly action. At times, the Movement has shown a primarily secular face, while at other times a focus on supernatural forces has been more visible. At no time, however, have all Movement adherents clustered densely at one pole or the other. Paliau's natural aptitude for inspirational ambiguity helped him appeal to people with many, often contrasting proclivities. Whether he did so with conscious intent must remain an open question. He was a keen judge of an audience and skilled in the kind of multilayered speech common in indigenous Melanesian oratory, a skill that allowed

12 This is the minimum required by what Schwartz calls a distributive model of culture, a topic he addresses in other publications (Schwartz 1978a, 1978b; Schwartz and Mead 1961). Ulf Hannerz (1992: 14) describes the major implications of a distributional model. It is not, he writes, 'just some nit-picking reminder that individuals are not all alike, but [rather] that people must deal with other people's meanings ... At times, perhaps, one can just ignore them. Often enough, however, one may comment on them, object to them, feel stimulated by them, take them over for oneself, defer to them, or take them into account ... They may be understood or misunderstood. And as these responses occur, or even in anticipation of them, [others] may respond to them'. Thus, the lack of uniformity of culture in a population also contributes to constant cultural change. Hannerz (1992: 12–14, 271–2) discusses the history of models of culture that emphasise diversity rather than sharing, including Schwartz's work. Edwin Hutchins, a member of Schwartz's research team in Manus in 1973, discusses this tradition and its place in his work in cognitive science (1995: 176–7).

people—including outside observers—to find in his words what they wanted to find. Also, at different points in his career, he turned different facets of a complex personality more to the light than others. The most stable, although not necessarily the ‘deepest’, aspect of his character was probably his steadfast determination to be recognised as a leader. We find it impossible, however, to reduce Paliau to politician, prophet, or even a consciously canny manipulator of complementary roles.

Emphasising the human penchant for millenarianism

The term ‘millenarian’ comes from passages in the Christian Bible (principally, the Book of Revelation) predicting Christ’s Second Coming and his subsequent 1,000-year reign of peace and justice (the Millennium).¹³ But some millenarian movements have been Christian, some non-Christian (such as the late nineteenth-century Ghost Dance among Native Americans, and some varieties of Islam) and some anti-Christian (e.g. the Boxer Rebellion of c. 1899–1900 in China). Christian millenarianism itself may have roots not only in Judaism but also in Zoroastrianism (Hall 2009; Hunt 2001: 2, citing Cohn 1970). There were also movements seeking to realise a vision of a perfect world substantially before the time of Christ. Richard Landes (2011: 149–84) provides an example in his discussion of what he calls the ‘imperialist millennialism’ of Pharaoh Akhenaten (1360–1347 BCE). Common in human history throughout the world, millenarianism, as Kenelm Burridge (1995 [1960]: xvii) puts it, ‘seems to be a universal human proclivity’.

We use the term millenarian in the same sense as Landes (2011), who observes that millenarianism as used by scholars ‘designates the belief that at some point in the future *the world that we live in will be radically transformed into one of perfection*—of peace, justice, fellowship, and plenty’ (p. 20). Some utopian doctrines verge on millenarianism without invoking the supernatural, but they usually argue that abstract forces

13 The most familiar of these passages is Revelation 20:4 (King James Version): ‘And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years’. The 1,000-year reign is followed by the Last Judgment, an element of biblical doctrine that is less popular.

of some kind—such as the progress of reason or justice—shape history. A telos—a purpose or preordained end—takes the place of supernatural powers, but it is no less metaphysical.¹⁴

Christianity has made critical contributions to the Paliu Movement, in particular its apocalyptic millenarian tendencies. Catholic missionaries were the major conduit of Christian ideas to Manus people in the Movement's formative period. As has happened frequently in the history of the Catholic Church, its teachings helped inspire people to expect an imminent world transformation despite the church's efforts, at least since St Augustine (354–430 CE), to expunge from doctrine the idea of an impending Second Coming for fear of exactly the kind of events that transpired in Manus.¹⁵ Paliu's version of Christianity was clearly heretical, but he had something essential in common with defenders of church orthodoxy. To maintain a stable institution he too had to walk the fine line between instilling hope and committing to impossible promises, as our chronicle of his career will show.¹⁶

The Movement spread rapidly at first—'like fire', as a Movement slogan of later years proclaims—but it ultimately remained confined to Manus. Yet it persists, as do its deep millenarian tendencies. Whether trying to unite mutually hostile villages for economic self-help; waiting for the dead to rise, bringing unlimited material wealth; backing candidates for the national parliament; or cultivating ties with international conservation organisations, many Movement adherents have held fast to the hope that perfecting their world is possible and that perfection is almost within their reach.

Garry Trompf wisely advises against assuming that everything that someone calls a cargo cult is necessarily a millenarian effort. He writes: 'one should ... be cautious about the varying degrees to which the cults reflect so-called millenarist features' (1991: 193–6). His extensive review of documented cases illustrates that not all cargo-centric ritual efforts or movements have necessarily sought a total, final transformation of the

14 See Landes (2011: xviii, 20–21, 292ff.) on secular millenarianism.

15 This is a commonplace in the literature on Christian millenarianism. For instance, many of the chapters in Hunt (2001) note this point. See in particular Watt (2001: 91) and Hamilton (2001: 21). See also Landes (2011: 48–9).

16 Regarding millenarianism and heresy, Hunt (2001: 2) writes: 'The millennium dream is therefore at the center of the faith and consistent with its principal dogmas. It is the *preoccupation* with the millennium to come ... which separates the fanatics and the heretics from the rest of Christendom'.

world—an aim that many definitions of millenarianism require. It is also likely that *within* any ritual quest for cargo, participants may well differ in the degree to which they seek cargo as part of a total, final world transformation as opposed to seeking primarily the material goods. This seems to have been true of the Noise and the second cult episode, which we call the Cemetery Cult. The strongest proponents of these efforts, however, were fervent millenarians.

That proviso aside, it appears that anthropological interest in cargo cults as instances of a more widespread phenomenon has declined over the years. Peter Worsley's *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia* was first published in 1957. Kenelm Burridge's major study of a particular cargo cult, *Mambu: A Melanesian Millennium*, first appeared in 1960, and his study of millenarianism in general, *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities*, first appeared in 1969. We should add to the list of anthropological works giving millenarianism its due in the matter of cargo cults Weston La Barre's 1970 volume *The Ghost Dance: The Origins of Religion*. But the closer one gets to the present, the harder it is to find anthropological works on cargo cults that attend to millenarianism in general for more than a sentence or two. Landes (2011: 145) draws a similar conclusion in a review of anthropological writings on cargo cults: 'Aside from Garry Trompf ... most recent anthropologists working on cargo cults seem to know far less about non-Melanesian millenarianism than did Peter Worsley'.¹⁷ Landes also gives Kenelm Burridge credit for such a wider view.

Aletta Biersack (2013: 110–12) advocates eloquently for 'de-exoticizing' cargo cults by recognising their kinship with Western millenarianism, citing the work of Andrew Lattas (1992) and Joel Robbins (2004b) in support of her argument.¹⁸ We are not, then, breaking a new trail, but the road we will take is still a road less travelled. Anthropological works that at least recognise the millenarian nature of cargo cults often fail to use that fact to elucidate their subject. Lamont Lindstrom (1993a, 1993b) notes literature that identifies the kinship of cargo cults with millenarianism in general, but he discards this avenue of analysis as unimportant.¹⁹

17 See Worsley (1968 [1957]) and Trompf (1994, 1991: 155–281).

18 Anthropologists have also produced a number of valuable studies of instances of Melanesian millenarianism that are not cargo-centric, among them Biersack (2013, 2011a, 2011b, 1991), Robbins (2004a), and Schmid (1999).

19 In the process, Lindstrom (1993a: 51) seriously misconstrues Schwartz's thoughts on cargo cults and millenarianism.

Nancy McDowell (2000: 378) almost grasps the point, but she lets it slip through her fingers: 'Melanesians may ... long for the cargo, but their behaviour and desires are no more cult-like than the fervent Christian's belief in and preparation for the Rapture'. Unfortunately, McDowell takes this insight as a point of departure for questioning the existence of cargo cults rather than as a clue to understanding both cargo cults and the Rapture better. But McDowell is only one among many contemporary anthropologists who cannot look at cargo cults in such a larger context because they are preoccupied with dipping the concept in what Lindstrom (1993a: 42) calls the 'acid baths of deconstructionism'—principally, finding in the concept residues of colonialism that distort or pervert understanding of Melanesian reality.

Our reasons for bringing millenarianism in general into our discussion are simple.²⁰ First, it is beyond debate that many cargo cults are indeed instances of millenarianism. In fact, some of the over-extension of the cargo cult concept that concerns Lindstrom and others may flow from the fact that, in Landes's words (2011: 130), 'cargo cults illustrated so many of the dynamics characteristic of millennial movements that they soon became for some scholars the epitome' of millenarian phenomena. Second, we acknowledge that some people regard cargo cult as a stigmatising label, but we think that recognising the pan-human features of cargo cults helps remove this stigma. It demonstrates clearly that they are not a fringe form of human naivety. Rather, cargo cults are instances of a deep and wide human tendency, a tendency that does not lose its attraction in societies possessing greater scientific knowledge and more sophisticated technology than those of indigenous Melanesia. Third, keeping millenarianism in the discussion may help us understand cargo cults better by allowing us to distinguish common features of millenarian thought and action from those that are characteristically Melanesian. Finally, millenarianism—not necessarily of the explicitly cargo variety—is a potent force today in PNG, as it is in the world in general. It is not necessarily either benign or dangerous. But it may be easier to assess its influence on events if we can see it in a larger historical and cultural context.

20 We do not intend, however, a point-by-point comparison from which to derive theoretical conclusions.

Eschewing ‘religion’: Almost terminally amorphous

Both indigenous cosmology and Christianity influenced the Paliu Movement. Even so, many treatments of the Paliu Movement either regard as incidental or deliberately diminish aspects that do not look like secular politics; that is, politics focused on changing people’s circumstances ‘within the world of time and history’ (Landes 2011: 21) with little or no supernatural assistance. Some observers of the Movement try to distinguish its political from its religious aspects, but this oversimplifies it. It also raises a more fundamental problem.

Anthropologists generally agree that politics has to do with obtaining and using power and that politics exists in virtually all spheres of life, even where it is not overt. But there is no consensus on even a broad definition of religion. Anthropological literature generally either fails to define the term or stretches it to baggy uselessness. Even anthropologists who are admirably subtle in treating religion and politics as at least analytically distinct, as is Roger Keesing, have found it, in Keesing’s words, ‘a difficult anthropological balancing act’ (1982: 246). We prefer to avoid this precarious situation as much as possible. Fortunately, we can describe most of the aspects of the Paliu Movement that have been called religious more precisely as manifestations of what Schwartz calls a cosmology of animate and personal causation, a topic we return to in Chapters 2 and 3.

Recognising cargo cults: Because they exist and they are about cargo

Millenarian movements throughout Melanesia have often made access to unlimited quantities of material goods a centrepiece of a vision of a perfect world. Many indigenous millenarian movements in Melanesia have focused on obtaining—through ritual appeals to the Christian deities, the spirits of ancestors, or other indigenous supernatural powers—the kinds of goods that white colonial populations could call up, without obvious physical effort, as deliveries of ‘cargo’ (in Tok Pisin, *kago*) by ship and/or aeroplane. Hence, white colonials dubbed these indigenous Melanesian efforts to transform the world ‘cargo cults’.²¹

21 Lamont Lindstrom (1993a) provides what is probably the most thorough history of the term cargo cult.

The name cargo cult stuck, but many anthropologists have promoted interpretations of the phenomenon that de-emphasise the overt obsession with material goods. Preferring to hypothesise about long-term political significance, Peter Worsley (1968 [1957]: 193) famously labelled the Paliau Movement, among others, as 'proto-nationalist'. Similarly, R.J. May (1982: 7) identified it as one among many 'micronationalist' movements in PNG. BurrIDGE, in the introduction to a more recent edition of his classic *Mambu: A Melanesian Millennium* (1995 [1960]: xvi), notes numerous adjectives—most now fallen from use—scholars have attached to such Melanesian movements, among them acculturative, adaptive, nativistic, and revitalisation. Each involves a different focus of interpretation, although all tend to draw attention away from the participants' apparent focus on cargo.

More recently, some anthropologists object that the term cargo cult is inherently pejorative. A less ideological objection is that cargo is primarily a symbol of more complex, less concrete aims. We can speak with full confidence only of the cargo cult episodes within the Paliau Movement, but the facts of the Paliau Movement case suggest that discounting too vigorously participants' interest in material cargo—from canned goods to automobiles—seriously distorts participants' own understanding of their aims. The material wealth Paliau's followers sought *was* fraught with meaning for them. We think that easy access to the cargo meant restoring the self-worth of which their colonial situation deprived them and relieving deep anxieties characteristic of precolonial indigenous life. Cargo cult participants knew that white ascendancy rested in large part on material superiority (in manufacturing, transport, communication, and armaments), and many of the core anxieties of indigenous life flowed from the highly competitive struggle to excel in trading, producing, and exchanging material goods. Yet, as we discuss further in Chapter 2, the broader hopes of most participants in the Noise and the Cemetery Cult were indistinct. There is a case for interpreting the more specific object of their yearnings—material goods—as a symbol. But our data indicate that material goods in themselves were critical. In a phrase anthropologist Paula Levin suggests (personal communication, July 2017), material cargo was sufficient for some cult participants and necessary for all.

In 1976, generalising about cargo cults from the case he knew best, Schwartz wrote that when people said 'It's not the cargo—it's the principle', he replied, 'it's the cargo' (1976a: 177; cf. Otto 2004: 222–3). We would not draw quite such a crisp line between cargo and more abstract things

today. But we still insist that, whatever else they may have sought, cargo was fundamental to the visions of a perfect world that moved participants in the cults we will describe. Many who joined them hoped they would bring not only cargo but also reunification with their ancestors. But, as Schwartz has also observed, if the dead had returned as prophesied, cult adherents would have given a chilly reception to any who returned without cargo. And if the returning dead had somehow purged the islands of white colonial domination, cult adherents would have been aghast if white colonial cargo had also disappeared.

When the adherents of today's most visible version of the Paliu Movement, Wind Nation, talk about their organisation, many strongly deny that it is a cargo cult. Through Wind Nation, they say, they will someday find 'true freedom' (in Tok Pisin, *tru fridom*). This does sound 'more profound and less tangible than European goods themselves', to use Garry Trompf's phrase (1994: 160). But to Wind Nation adherents, this freedom comprises very tangible things: it is freedom from hard work, illness, old age, and death. This is clearly a millenarian aim. But could one call Wind Nation a cargo cult? We will return to this question in Chapter 15.

Preview of the chapters to come

In Chapter 2, we give more detailed attention to the issues broached above—the futility of trying to separate politics from religion in the Paliu Movement, or of separating the identities of politician and prophet in Paliu the man; the need for a less shapeless concept to describe what is often glossed as religion in Melanesia and elsewhere; and the case for keeping cargo cult in our professional vocabulary and recognising the importance of material goods in understanding cargo cults. Keeping faith with our data on the Paliu Movement helps drive our concern with these matters. In critiquing some trends in anthropological analysis of cargo cults, we also urge our colleagues not to ignore the ubiquitous human propensity for irrationality.

In Chapter 3, we show why forging even fragile unity among dozens of villages in the Paliu Movement was a remarkable accomplishment and illuminate the cultural and historical circumstances that gave Paliu's call for radical change its appeal. We also dwell on the nature of a pervasive cosmology of animate and personal causation, because

it is of the Movement's essence, not simply its context or background. The latter discussion would be incomplete without pointing out that although understanding this aspect of the indigenous Manus world is critical to understanding the Paliau case, cosmologies of animate and personal causation—and their dark side, which informs what Schwartz has christened a paranoid ethos—also flourish in the modern West. Everywhere they occur, they contribute to the strength of millenarianism, including its deep implication in current events of international political importance. We return to this fact and the questions it raises in our final chapter. Chapter 4 summarises European contact and colonialism in Manus, the dramatic events of World War II in the Admiralties, and early efforts by indigenous innovators to make fundamental changes in Manus society inspired by the resonance of visions stirred by the European presence with chronic problems of indigenous life.

In Chapters 5 through 11, with the help of data Schwartz collected from the 1960s to the 1990s, we cast new light on the events of the 1940s and 1950s that Schwartz first described in his 1962 monograph, 'The Paliau Movement in the Admiralty Islands, 1946–1954'. Chapter 5 takes us from Paliau's early life through the Movement's beginning. Chapter 6 tells of the irruption of the Noise in 1947 and its failure. Chapter 7 describes the period of drift in the Movement after the Noise subsided, during which (in 1953–54) Mead, Schwartz, and Shargo arrived to document the Movement. It was not apparent at first that the Movement was foundering. But as this became more visible, and after Mead's departure, Schwartz and Shargo became witnesses to a second cult episode, which interrupted the Movement's apparent turn away from the Noise. Chapter 8 describes how Schwartz and Shargo finally became aware of the cult. Schwartz wrote to Mead of these 'strange and exciting' events, but this news did not please her. In an exchange of letters she questioned him closely about his report, suggesting that he and Shargo might be mistaken. She even speculated that exposure to the nervous imaginings of members of the tiny white colonial community on Manus might have led Schwartz and Shargo astray. Mead might also have found it galling that she had failed to notice such dramatic goings on, or that Pere villagers had kept them from her. There is no doubt, however, that she would have preferred there simply had been no cargo cult. Schwartz (1983: 928) later recalled: 'Before we left for the field Mead told me that if Manus turned out to be another cultural shambles—a slum culture, undermined and demoralised as a result of the drastic culture contact and change they had experienced—

she would not write about it. What the world needed was a success story'. In Mead's view, success did not include abandoning what she portrayed as a systematic modernisation program to turn to petitioning Jesus for immediate salvation. Mead herself was an ardent Christian, but many Manus people clearly did not interpret the Christian message as did Mead, an Episcopalian. Fortunately, Schwartz and Shargo persisted, and their observations of this second cult, presented in Chapter 9, are perhaps the most powerful argument that material wealth was a defining objective of the Manus cults.

Schwartz dubbed the second cult the Cemetery Cult because it required building new cemeteries constructed according to the instructions of the cult's tutelary ghosts. Comparing the Noise with the Cemetery Cult, as we do in Chapter 10, gives us the rare opportunity to see how a history of millenarian thought and action can influence a particular instance. In the Manus case, our knowledge of what was the relatively recent and spectacular failure of the Noise casts light on many features of the Cemetery Cult that distinguish it dramatically from its predecessor. Schwartz's detailed observations also allow us to understand why within a single population people took radically different attitudes towards the cults.

It was especially important to the course of the Movement that some Cemetery Cult adherents began to see it as an alternative to Paliu's program, not—as in the Noise—as its fulfilment. Keenly aware of this, Paliu took dramatic steps—described in Chapter 11—to end the Cemetery Cult before it inevitably failed on its own. Here we also see Paliu at the height of his powers. He was a charismatic leader, but his charisma was not some ineffable aura. His sway over people rested to a great extent on rhetorical skill, remarkable physical energy, and perhaps overweening self-confidence, as well as on people's belief in his occult knowledge and power.

Paliu stopped the Cemetery Cult at a time when the Australian administration was accelerating its efforts to introduce new political and economic institutions in Manus. He quickly grasped the import of these efforts, and—as described in Chapter 12—he pursued secular Movement goals through participating in the Territory's emerging electoral political system. But as Paliu's star rose in secular spheres, morale declined among those of his followers who still hoped for a sudden supernatural transformation of their lives. Nevertheless, Paliu was elected first

president of the new regional Native Government Council he had pressed the administration to create, and in 1964 and 1968 he won four-year terms as Member for Manus District in the first Territory-wide House of Assembly, the precursor of independent PNG's parliament. But his political fortunes declined rapidly after he lost his 1972 bid for a third term in the House.

Chapter 13 begins with Schwartz (accompanied this time by Smith, Edwin Hutchins, and Geoffrey White) returning to Manus in 1973 after several years' absence. They found Paliau in retreat on Baluan Island, despondent and in poor health. Paliau told Schwartz that this visit, lasting several weeks, reinvigorated him. But he was already pondering reviving the Movement on a more explicitly mystical footing. Paliau soon attracted a small but enthusiastic band of new followers, including university-educated members of younger generations. Schwartz watched Paliau and this new core of adherents create a new version of the Movement that combined a new theology with cultural pseudo-revival and a theocratic political ideology chronically opposed to independent PNG's provincial and national governments. Under its current name—Wind Nation—this iteration of the Movement has enjoyed limited success in the electoral sphere, but it remains to this day vitally interested in metaphysical knowledge that will banish hard work, want, illness, ageing, and death.

By the time the Movement morphed into Wind Nation, Paliau had been made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (PNG is a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations) in honour of his worldly accomplishments. He had also proclaimed himself the Last Prophet of the World. By the end of his life, his followers had begun to identify him with Jesus. We cannot claim to know how Paliau regarded himself at this point. When, in 1953, Paliau first spoke to Schwartz about the development of his ideas for the Movement, he refrained from telling of a dream in which he had received a revelation from Jesus. But Schwartz, having already heard of this from Paliau's followers, wanted to hear it directly from Paliau. Paliau demurred, saying 'Who am I that God should talk to me?' But he finally responded to Schwartz's prodding. He may have been reluctant to do so at first because he expected Schwartz, as a white, to be openly sceptical, even scornful. But he came to understand that Schwartz was merely deeply interested. Schwartz visited Paliau for the last time in 1990, the year before Paliau's death. He had heard that Paliau had told his followers that he (i.e. Paliau) was Jesus. Schwartz asked him bluntly if he had done so. Paliau's reply was equivocal, perhaps studiously

so, perhaps not. Paliau told Schwartz: ‘I said to them, who else in the world has such good things to say? It’s Jesus! He is a man with good things to say. I said: I’m your Jesus. I’m your Jesus, I told them.’²² Paliau added that he had told his followers that he was merely Paliau Maloat, but that he got his teachings from Jesus.²³ He then turned to Schwartz and said: ‘So, what do you think?’²⁴ Rather than give an opinion, Schwartz prompted Paliau to expand on his prior remarks, but Paliau either would not or could not offer a glimpse into a neater self-understanding. In 2015, some Wind Nation adherents were firmly convinced that Paliau had not only said he was Jesus, he indeed was—in a sense—Jesus. But we will argue that while Paliau may have dissembled in his conversation with Schwartz, he was not a fraud.

As described in Chapter 14, Smith found in 2015 that some aspects of Paliau’s life and teachings were in dispute, but Wind Nation endured. There is no accurate count of current participation in Wind Nation and, as far as we know, there is no formal membership status. Some activists claim that Wind Nation still has members in all 33 villages Schwartz identified as participating in the Movement in the 1950s. In Pere, a Movement stronghold since the 1950s, Wind Nation adherents still gather regularly at the spacious meeting house they maintain in the centre of the village, adjacent to ‘Margaret Mead’s Resource Center’.²⁵ But they face increasing competition for attention and allegiance in Pere and in Manus Province. There is even danger of schism within Wind Nation. Even so, on Baluan Island, the Nation’s official leadership was overseeing construction, to an architect’s specifications, of Freedom House, a small but impressive octagonal structure intended as the focal point of Wind Nation International.

In Chapter 15, the final chapter, we observe that to many of the people of Manus Paliau still represents communitarian values and a spirit of self-help. But some also see him as the prophet of something grander.

22 In Tok Pisin (the lingua franca in which the conversation took place, which we describe in Chapter 2): *Mi tokim tok olsem, na husat moa i ken mekim gutpela toktok long olgeta man long worl? Em Yesus tasol! Em i man bilong gutpela toktok. Mi tok, mi, mi Yesus bilong yupela. Mi Yesus bilong yupela mi tokim ol.*

23 In Tok Pisin: *Mi tok long maus bilong mi olsem, ‘Mi Paliau Maloat, tasol mi kisim olgeta toktok olsem long Yesus’.*

24 In Tok Pisin: *Na yu ting wanem?*

25 This is a spacious, multi-room structure of manufactured materials, built in part with funds provided by American friends of Mead.

Earlier generations of Movement participants could not have imagined obtaining today's material comforts without supernatural aid: mobile phones and wristwatches (that function) are common and many Manus villagers enjoy reliable electric lights in their homes, powered by movable solar panels that charge lightweight batteries (even though many village houses are still made from forest timbers and palm-leaf thatch). But the attachment to the millenarian face of Paliau's doctrines many maintain indicates they would like something more. In the last stage of his career, Paliau held out the possibility of attaining a perfect world through the favour of a supreme being (but not the Christian God). But he gave no detailed formula for achieving it. Nor did he promise when it would arrive; he only spoke cryptically of signs for which people should watch. His last teachings and prophecies may have drawn new participants and reinvigorated some of the old guard, but we know that they also alienated some second- and third-generation Paliau admirers. Some Wind Nation adherents appear to be settling in for a long wait, but the possibility of a millenarian transformation is still Wind Nation doctrine.

It is hard to see allegiance to Wind Nation today as a reaction to the inequality and powerlessness of direct colonial rule. Many adherents of Wind Nation were either very young when PNG achieved independence—in 1975, 40 years had passed since that event—or born thereafter. They know nothing of the open racism and both the legal and de facto segregation of the colonial era. Anthropologists familiar with PNG before and in the years just following independence know that the racial climate changed only gradually as Papua New Guineans took over running the country and assumed more prominent roles in business and civic institutions. Changes in relations between indigenes and whites are sometimes most dramatically apparent in mundane situations. Smith recalls that in the early decades of independence, when he travelled from his research site on Kairiru Island to Wewak, the principal town in East Sepik Province, he often stayed at one of Wewak's few small hotels, most of which resembled rather spartan versions of what Americans call motels. The staff of these hostelrys—even if they were Papua New Guineans—often looked askance at the barefoot, shabbily dressed villagers from Kairiru who accompanied Smith and helped him with his baggage. And members of Smith's escort—the older ones in particular—often felt uneasy, and hovered near the doors of the small lobbies.

Things have changed a lot since then. When Smith arrived in Wewak after several weeks on Kairiru in 2015, the desk clerk at the Airport Lodge was unperturbed when he asked for a double room for him and his barefoot companion, Stephen Umari. A junior hotel manager, Charlie Numbos, born and raised on Kairiru and now studying the hospitality business, came out to greet them warmly. A few weeks later, Smith was returning to Lorengau after a stay in Pere village. Three mature Pere men accompanied him, managed his baggage from the open boat up a steep, muddy bank, and helped hoist it into the back of a truck, already crammed with passengers, for the trip to town. Arriving at the Harbourside Hotel, the security guards at the gate in the chain link fence surrounding the hotel grounds waved the entire party through. Inside, the desk clerk gave the Pere elders no more than a glance as they waited for Smith to check in and then saw him to his room. When they got there, one stretched out on the bed and pronounced it worthy of a nap. Another checked the contents of the small refrigerator and helped himself to iced water. And the third disappeared into the bathroom for a long sojourn from which he emerged looking refreshed. (In Pere, people still have to fetch fresh water from inland sources by canoe, and toilets are thatched structures reached by log bridges over the lagoon.) These may seem like small things. But if you remember the past, they feel like big changes.²⁶

As we also discuss in Chapter 15, such changes in PNG and considerable scholarly literature incline us to recommend reducing the widespread emphasis on oppression and deprivation in explaining both particular instances of millenarianism and the larger phenomenon. We propose that to understand people's *susceptibility* to millenarianism as a response to suffering—which is universal, whereas millenarianism is not—anthropologists should probe more critically two near-universal human tendencies: people's difficulty accepting the role of chance or impersonal forces in shaping events (that is, the tendency to personify causation), and people's tendency to imagine that they are the focus of malign or benign attention, from the local level to the cosmic.

This view is at odds with tendencies to romanticise millenarianism, wherever it occurs. As we point out, millenarianism in the United States also provides excellent current examples of its highly problematic potential. Conspiracy theories, many of them noxious, are more than just

26 We should add that such changes also make life more pleasant for anthropologists. It is maddening to watch one's companions treated as inferiors or, worse, see them appear to accept that role.

millenarianism's frequent companions. Millenarianism and conspiracy thinking are, as political scientist Michael Barkun (2006 [2003]: 10) points out, symbiotic: 'Conspiracy theories locate and describe evil, while millennialism explains the mechanism for its ultimate defeat.' And both rest on a cosmology of animate and personal causation and what Schwartz calls a paranoid ethos and Barkun calls a 'conspiracist worldview'. Like a paranoid ethos, a conspiracist worldview assumes 'a universe governed by design rather than by randomness' and 'a world based on intentionality, from which accident and coincidence have been removed' (Barkun 2006 [2003]: 3–4). Hence, millenarianism can have unfortunate tendencies. For instance, the passion for 'spiritual warfare' of Pentecostal and other millenarian Christian sects in PNG today makes them aggressively less humane than the Paliu Movement in any of its phases.

Why we wrote this book

We have the privilege of adding something to the world's historical record from somewhere—PNG—that gets little attention, unless it is the site of a disaster or gets pulled into the affairs of more prominent nations. We also have the unusual opportunity to chronicle a substantial portion of the life of a charismatic leader and the evolution of his social and metaphysical doctrines from the standpoint of people who are not disciples or apostles. An anthropologist or journalist watching at close range the life of Jesus of Nazareth, chatting with him behind the scenes, and interviewing both his close associates and his detractors, probably would have produced an account rather different from that found in the New Testament.²⁷

Parts of the Paliu story are forever beyond recovery, but we can fill many gaps. Current followers and critics of Paliu, many too young to have witnessed the events of which they speak, are already busy filling in gaps with their own versions of the past, often shaped by their present interests. This includes describing well-known events in new ways. No one today denies that in 1947 people threw their valuables into the sea in an effort to

27 Wind Nation adherents have already found fault with Schwartz's 1962 account of the Movement. Kakak Kais (1998: Chapter 1) writes that Schwartz 'denies Paliu's reasoning capacity and his ability to plan', apparently because Schwartz reported Paliu's own accounts of knowledge received in dreams. But Paliu himself deemed his dreams important in the development of his thought. A more careful reading of Schwartz's 1962 account clearly shows his admiration for Paliu's skill in planning and organisation.

bring the cargo. In 2015, however, some Movement members described this as an act of ‘repentance’—using the English word—a description never conveyed to Schwartz in the 1950s or in subsequent decades.²⁸

In addition, the value of considering the Paliu Movement as a case study in millenarianism extends beyond PNG. Barkun describes the current era in the United States as marked by ‘a dramatic proliferation of millenarian schemata, both in terms of the number of competing visions and ... their diversity’ (2006 [2003]: 21). Millenarianism embraces both fear—usually of evil conspiracies—and hope, often inspired by utopian visions. But the hopes as well as the fears fatten on the human willingness—even eagerness—to believe what is founded only in imagination and to deny reality. Although millenarian hopes date from ancient times, they thrive in what we have recently learned to call a ‘post-truth’ era and they nurture it.²⁹ This should give us pause.

28 A similar but more trivial case: In 2015, some Pere villagers told Smith that Margaret Mead chose Schwartz’s first wife, Lenora Shargo, for him. She did not. Nor did Mead have a hand in selecting his subsequent wives.

29 Oxford Dictionaries chose ‘post-truth’ as Word of the Year for 2016 (languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/). It is defined as an adjective ‘relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief’.

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