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Rise and fall

Paliau was now embarked on the most active and varied period in his public career. He involved himself in nearly every kind of social, economic, and political institution open to him. His reputation as founder and leader of the Movement and the attendant aura of occult knowledge and power undoubtedly abetted his success in electoral politics in some sectors of his growing constituency, and he may have traded on it shamelessly on some occasions. But the persona he presented outside Manus was heavily secular. Yet as the scope of his activity and authority widened, it became more difficult to satisfy the expectations of the full range of his constituents. From the initiation of the first Baluan Council in 1950 until Paliau lost his last position in official civil government in mid-1973, Paliau had persistently shaken the status quo in Manus and the Territory. But eventually—even as nimble as he was—he could not adapt fast enough to a social and political ground that was shifting with increasing speed.

The expanded council arrives and Paliau takes charge

Within weeks of the forced end of the Cemetery Cult, in mid-1954, the long-awaited inauguration of the expanded council took place and official elections were held. The newly elected councillors on the south coast were men who had been leaders in the Movement since 1946. Still, the council structure barely tapped the superabundance of potential leadership. Individuals who held the Movement rank of *komiti* under Paliau's pre-emptive Movement version of the council had no official

place within the new system. The new councillors were impressive and proud, although they did not consistently remember to call themselves councillors, as the Australian administration desired; they continued to call themselves *kaunsil* (although we will call them councillors). Paliau lectured them on the importance of their positions and on the need to maintain themselves in every aspect of their lives as models for their villages. They should purchase and wear good European clothing, he said. They should build the best possible houses and maintain them well as an example to others. Their families, too, were to be models. Now, as many had never done before, they were to associate with their wives in public and eat at the tables they had built years before rather than sit on the floor around the cooking fire. And they should bear in mind that their enviable offices were subject to yearly re-election. Later, Paliau told them, they would discuss at least nominal salaries.

Under pressure from the many people who needed money to buy shares in the cooperatives and to pay taxes, money collected during the early phases of the Paliau Movement was finally redistributed. In addition to the contributions many made to the Movement, all Manus people had been paying an annual 10 shilling tax to the colonial government for years. Now, those within the new council area still paid taxes but they paid them to their own council to provide for schools, medical aid posts, and new buildings for council functions.

Although some people were slow to emerge from their post-cult depression, excitement about the council's expansion was a more common feeling. Groups from all villages within the Movement attended a celebration in Bunai. The guests of honour were James and Marjorie Landman. James Landman was the assistant district officer who had supervised the Baluan Council since 1950 and was now in charge of extending it to the south coast, and Marjorie Landman had conducted the first government-sponsored council school on Baluan. The first meetings of all the village councillors were held in Bunai, for the council now had two centres, one in Baluan and one in Bunai.

Opposition to the cult had brought the Movement closer to the government. Some Cemeterians had infused their millenarian hopes with hostility towards the government. Even Paliau, when fresh out of jail, and the Mok leaders who campaigned against the cult had used calling in the government only as a threat of last resort. But now, with the cult

over—or at least submerged for the time being—the newly extended council brought the Movement program into a closer relationship with the program of the administration.

Despite this, the program and goals of the Movement and of the government were still far from identical. To the Movement, the council was merely a component of the New Way. Movement participants and many people outside the Movement regarded establishing the council as administration recognition of the Movement and validation of Paliau's program rather than as a Movement concession to the administration. Several villages within the Movement were not yet included within the official council. The Movement villages, however, treated them as though, for all intents and purposes, they were under the official council umbrella.

After the rapid spread of the Movement in the aftermath of the Noise, it expanded beyond the villages that had welcomed it initially only to the villages of Sou and Lowa in the north and a segment of Papitalai (on Los Negros Island). But the advent of the official council caused some Manus people who had rejected the Movement to look on it more favourably. Encouraged by Kampo of Lahan, people from several inland Usiai villages that had refrained from joining the Movement began to visit Bunai frequently to attend Movement meetings. Those Usiai people who were already involved with the Movement were gratified. For years non-Movement Usiai people had mocked them as cargoists and imitators of the Titan sea people, but now they were early adopters.

The council expands again and Paliau maintains his hold

In 1962 a separate official council was established on the north coast. Paliau was considerably less popular there than in southern Manus. A large portion of Manus people on the north coast and in western Manus had remained loyal to the Catholic and Evangelical missions. Many of these northerners were suspicious of the administration's council program because they identified it with Paliau, the outspoken iconoclast. Also, as we noted in Chapter 10, enmity born of north coast memory of south coast raiding might also have been in play. Nevertheless, in 1962 the administration finally established a council embracing the north coast and the rest of Manus not included in the Baluan Council. A few years later, the administration

sought to combine the two councils (Otto 1991: 186). By January 1966, all the villages to be included had agreed to the plan—not always, however, with unmitigated enthusiasm (Otto 1991: 186–7).

Paliau was elected president of this new council, one that comprised the entire Manus District. Otto (1991: 169–81), Dalsgaard (2009), and Rasmussen (2015) all provide details of the political manoeuvrings surrounding this election. It was undoubtedly critical that even though Paliau's reputation outside the Movement area was mixed, he probably enjoyed more name recognition than other candidates for the post. For our purposes it is enough to know that despite this Paliau had to navigate choppy political waters, but he did so successfully. The geographic sphere of his official authority now stretched far beyond the bounds of the Movement and he would soon augment his authority again.

Paliau in the House of Assembly

Australia's trusteeship agreement with the United Nations required it to move Papua and New Guinea towards independence as a single nation but it provided no timetable. In the event, the Territory moved relatively rapidly and peacefully towards the independence achieved in 1975.¹ Steps along the way included creating, in 1951, a legislative body embracing the entire Territory. The Legislative Council, as it was called, included three indigenous members appointed by the government, but non-indigenous members (elected or appointed from among Australian residents in the Territory) predominated. An expanded Legislative Council, instituted in 1961, included a larger number of indigenous members (seven, three of whom were elected), but non-indigenous members still held the reins (Griffin et al. 1979: 131).

The majority of the Territory's indigenous population was in no hurry for independence. There was widespread fear that Australia would withdraw all material assistance and that an indigenous government would be unable to prevent a return to the omnidirectional warfare and raiding of the indigenous past; that people would 'go back to the spear', as some indigenes put it. Schwartz found cautious optimism among

1 In the account of the political context of Paliau's advance to the House of Assembly that follows, we rely on Griffin et al. (1979), which is still the best concise history of early political development in PNG.

most Manus people, but among some who held fast to millenarian hopes there was wishful speculation that independence would somehow move the people of the Territory one step closer to the coming of the cargo. But neither people's fears nor their millenarian hopes moderated the activism of the growing number of well-educated Papuans and New Guineans who felt ready to take on the responsibility of independence. This small indigenous elite kept steady pressure on Australia to hasten independence, and Australian domestic political contingencies and the continuing scrutiny of the United Nations magnified the influence of pro-independence activists.²

In 1964, the Australian administration held a Territory-wide election for four-year terms in a House of Assembly. This body would replace the Legislative Council and wield greater authority. All Territory residents aged over 21 years were eligible to vote. The voters returned indigenous representatives from most of the numerous electorates. *The Members of the House of Assembly*, a booklet issued in August 1964 by the Territory Department of Information and Extension Services, lists 38 indigenous members and 26 non-indigenous members. Ten of the latter occupied 'Special' seats, reserved for non-indigenous candidates, and 10 were 'Official' members, appointed by the administration. Colin Hughes (1965: 36–7) records that during planning the structure of the House, the majority of indigenous people interviewed by a government planning committee said they wanted Australian members in the body. They gave a variety of reasons, but the most common was (as summarised by the planning committee): 'non-indigenes, by nature of their greater experience and higher education, can act as a source of information and advice and guidance for indigenous members, more especially in economic development, trade and business matters'.

Some, both indigenes and outside observers, found the move to a House of Assembly premature. Griffin et al. (1979: 134) observe that 'few of the Papua New Guinean elected members had any formal education beyond primary school, some were illiterate, and most were not fluent in English'. But Australia and the international monitors of its United Nations Trusteeship found a slower pace unacceptable. There were in fact many men of considerable energy and accomplishment among the indigenous members, even if national government was new to them. Several would

2 See Griffin et al. (1979) for an extended discussion of the complexities of PNG's path to independence. See also John Waiko (2007), *A Short History of Papua New Guinea*.

go on to play major roles in Papua New Guinea (PNG) politics up to and after independence.³ (Although women were not barred from seeking office, all the members of the first House were men.)

Paliau defeated five other candidates for Member for the Manus Open Electorate and took his seat in the first House in 1964. He was one of the oldest indigenous members and among several with little or no formal education and limited command of English, but he could boast many accomplishments. One would not learn this, however, from his biographical paragraph in *The Members of the House of Assembly*. He is described as follows: ‘Reads Pidgin. [As English speakers called Tok Pisin in the 1960s.] A subsistence farmer who for some years has been deeply involved in local government. President Baluan Local Government Council 1955–63. [By this time, the Native Government Councils had been rechristened Local Government Councils.] Member District Advisory Council 1955–63. Active supporter of Girl Guides, Scouting and Women’s Clubs movements at Lorengau. Has been very active promoting development in all forms in the Council area.’⁴

This is a pale reflection of the Paliau readers have met in these pages. There is no mention of his high rank in the police. Perhaps Paliau associated this period in his life with the ignominy of his trial for war crimes. Neither is there any mention of the Paliau Movement, let alone Margaret Mead’s 1956 book celebrating the Movement and its founder. These latter parts of his past, of course, might not have endeared him to some Australian members or even to some indigenous members. But it is impossible to know if Paliau deliberately bowdlerised his biography or if someone else simply did a poor job of reporting.

We have limited information on Paliau’s activity during his first term in the House of Assembly, but what we know indicates that he was more engaged than most of his indigenous peers. Paul van der Veur’s (1965) detailed account of the first two meetings of the House, in June and September 1964, indicates that Paliau participated actively and articulately in a number of debates. Van der Veur (1965: 483–5) provides the following

3 Among them, Paul Lapun, Pita Lus, Lepani Watson, Sinake Giregire, John Guise, Matthias Toliman, and Peter Simogen.

4 District Advisory Councils, chaired by district commissioners, were instituted in the 1940s. Commissioners selected the advisory council members. Initially, members were selected from among districts’ non-indigenous residents, but indigenous residents became eligible in the mid-1950s. Indigenous members dominated the councils by the mid-1960s (Moore 2003: 197). Curiously, to the best of our knowledge, Paliau seldom if ever mentioned his membership of this body in public.

example: John Pasquarelli, Member for the Angoram Open Electorate (and an Australian resident of the Territory), spoke at some length against giving mission-owned commercial enterprises tax exemptions. He also ‘charged that there was a serious discrepancy between the money earned and spent by some of the missions in the Territory’. This aroused heated responses to the effect that Pasquarelli was attacking the missions in general and the Catholic Mission in particular and that he had failed to take into account the beneficial work of the missions. Van der Veur observes that ‘only Paliau Maloat reflected a different opinion’ and reports this exchange between Paliau, who displays great aplomb, and an Australian member (Donald Barrett, Special Member—that is, occupant of a seat reserved for non-indigenes—for West Gazelle), who displays no aplomb:

MR. PALIAU MALOAT: I think that some members have misinterpreted what he [Pasquarelli] said.

INTERJECTION (speaker not identified): Hear, hear!

MR. PALIAU MALOAT: I did not hear him say that the missions in this Territory should be done away with or that they are not doing good work.

MR. BARRETT: You were not listening!

MR. PALIAU MALOAT: (continuing) I heard what he said. He spoke about finding another way to raise extra revenue for Papua and New Guinea. He said that all the men and women and all the companies and businesses in this Territory should be subject to taxation. He asked why the missions are not paying tax, but I do not think that he said anything against the work of the missions. All he did was to ask that question and if his speech was misinterpreted, a great deal of trouble could result.

Van der Veur then comments: ‘It is hoped that the foregoing account has provided some indication of Member participation in the Budget debate. Only a relatively small number of Papuan-New Guinean Members have been referred to and this reflects the fact that the others limited their comments mainly or exclusively to parochial requests’.

In 1964, Schwartz heard Paliau speak to the people of Bunai about his early days in the House. Paliau told villagers about arriving in Port Moresby and being taken to stay in a hotel, where he and other members shared bath and toilet facilities down the hall. And he reveals a humbling experience in a House session. He had complained in a speech that other

places in the Territory were getting money for roads and boats but Manus was receiving nothing. How could Manus people get their copra and other crops to market without roads or boat service, he asked? But he then told with great candour how, in reply, another member asked him how many tons of copra or other products Manus people were ready to transport to Lorengau. Paliau told villagers that he had to concede that member's point, for he knew that Manus people were producing very little for the market. But from this interval of humility in front of his constituents Paliau segues to a more familiar hectoring mode, admonishing his listeners to get moving and start planting cash crops so they can demonstrate the need for roads and sea transport.⁵

In his conversations with Schwartz at the time, Paliau seemed very knowledgeable about the rules and procedures of the House and the structure of the government, offering coherent opinions on their pros and cons. He also made virtually no mention of theological issues. Regarding policy, Paliau appeared preoccupied with schools, medical aid posts, and economic development—as he put it, ‘making money; in English they call it the economy’ (in Paliau’s Tok Pisin: ‘*rot bilong mani; long Inglis ol i kolim ikonomi*’).

Paliau did not abandon his church during these years, but he generally refrained from saying anything that might imply that the work of secular government conflicted with the work of God. We know that at times he spoke of them as separate endeavours. At a village worship service during the House recess prior to Christmas in 1964, Paliau showed irritation with the tax-exempt status of the foreign missions, declaring: ‘Jesus didn’t say “Oh, I am the son of God, I don’t need to pay taxes”’. And a few minutes later he opined that opposing the government was not the way of God: ‘Satan ruined Adam and Eve and hence all of us. It is Satan who incites us to revolt against governments and kings’.

Paliau ran for president of the district-wide Manus Council again in 1967, midway through his first term in the House. But now he was competing with members of a new generation who had lived lives very different from his. Michael Pondros, a south coast man about half Paliau’s age, won the seat. Pondros held a minor clerical job with the administration in Lorengau, but he had completed several years of schooling, served in the

5 Of course, there is a common rural development dilemma here. An ideal but difficult to implement policy would coordinate increases in production or productive capacity (such as planting crops that need time to mature) with commensurate improvements in market access.

Australian Navy for some 10 years, and been president of the still-new Manus Workers Association. Indigenous candidates for the second House were generally more highly educated than the candidates for the first House. This kind of political competition was a sign of things to come; but they hadn't arrived quite yet for Paliau. He kept his seat in the House in the 1968 election with a 'comfortable majority' (Otto 1991: 189).

Candidates for the second House not only tended to be better educated, they purveyed more specific policy ideas. Prior to the election for the second House—which was seated in 1968—another new dimension also entered Territory politics: political parties. The members of the first House had not run on party platforms and once elected they concerned themselves mostly with obtaining better economic and social infrastructure for their constituencies rather than with national policies. In 1967, an alliance of Australian House members, indigenous House members, and indigenous members of the public service—the latter including future prime minister Michael Somare—formed PNG's first political party: the Pangu (an acronym for Papua and New Guinea Union) Pati. It had a lean but comparatively radical platform in which pushing for more rapid progress towards 'home rule' was the main item (cf. Griffin et al. 1979: 134). According to Stephen Pokawin (1976: 407), Paliau's position was that the Territory should move towards 'self-government' as quickly as possible so that its people would have time to learn how to govern themselves before full independence. This was, in fact, the route taken. The Territory became self-governing in 1973, two years before independence; that is, Australia ceded government of internal affairs to the House of Assembly, while maintaining control of foreign policy.

But in 1967 Pangu was considered radical. Initially, Paliau hesitated to declare himself. Discussing Territory politics with Schwartz, he spoke of Pangu with enthusiasm, but he also told Schwartz that some Australian members had been pressuring him and other indigenous members to reject not only Pangu but also the whole idea of party politics in the House.

Ultimately, Paliau resisted such pressure and became known as a Pangu adherent (Pokawin 1976: 407). In 1973, reflecting on his years in the House, he spoke proudly to Schwartz of his affiliation with this pioneering party: 'I was a strong supporter of Pangu ... [In the House] I supported whatever Pangu proposed'. (In Paliau's Tok Pisin: *'Mi nambawan tru strongpela man tru bilong dispela Pangu Pati ... mi save sapotim wanem*

samting sapos Pangu em i tok longen’).⁶ Paliau also claimed close association with Michael Somare, noting that he worked with Somare on developing standards for citizenship in the new nation-to-be.

We know nothing else significant about Paliau’s activities in the House of Assembly during his second term. We do know that he was receiving substantial recognition outside both the House and even the Territory. The Territory being part of the British Commonwealth, Paliau was awarded an OBE—that is, he was granted the title Officer of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire—in April 1970, with the citation: ‘Former president Baluan Local Government Council, for service to local government’ (Otto 1991: 291n38). He was invited to speak in May 1970 at the Fourth Waigani Seminar, a conference at the University of Papua New Guinea (established in 1965 in Waigani, a suburb of Port Moresby) where some 50 PNG public figures and scholars from a number of countries discussed ‘The Politics of Melanesia’. In his contribution, as reported in the massive proceedings of the event (Ward et al. 1970: 144–61), Paliau presents a picture of his career and his present political stance apparently crafted especially for the Waigani audience. The account of his life is much the same as that he first gave Schwartz, with some additional details about his police service, but he does not mention his dream experiences during the war. He does not omit his trial for collaboration with the Japanese, but he treats it as a minor affair. What he says of the period we call the early Movement includes an account of building a meeting house on Baluan and gathering people to hear him speak about how heeding his teachings and honouring God will help bring PNG the proper kind of government.⁷

6 Otto (1991: 237) cites Tony Voutas, an Australian member of the House of Assembly from 1966 to 1972 and one of three Australians among the founders of Pangu, to the effect that Paliau was not at the centre of Pangu activities although he did attend many Pangu meetings.

7 He also speaks of collecting a substantial amount of money from Manus people in the ‘Paliau Maloat Fund’ in 1947—funds he says eventually underwrote the Local Government Council, schools, and so forth. This may be the money from war damage payments made to Manus people that Paliau encouraged them to pool. On occasion Paliau spoke of the pooled war damage payments as the basis for what he called the TENK Pati, an effort on his part (that appears to have been rather half-hearted or incompletely conceived) to form a political party associated with the Movement and the Baluan Native Christian Church. He explained to Schwartz that the name was taken from the first letters of the common names of four groups in Manus. The T stood for Titan, and the N stood for Nali, one of the Usiai groups sharing a distinct language, from which Paliau had drawn considerable support. Unfortunately, our only record of this conversation is an audio tape in which the terms from which the E and the K in TENK are inaudible. All we know of the activity of the TENK Pati is that on its behalf Paliau encouraged people in each Manus village to pool money from war damage payments. Paliau never registered the TENK Pati officially and we don’t believe that Paliau ever identified himself as a TENK Pati member in any electoral campaign.

Four other documents are appended to the text of Paliau's presentation without editorial comment: a letter of uncertain date and without a specified audience announcing that he has founded the Baluan Christian Church 'to bring the good life to the people of Manus by teaching them to channel their thoughts about God to God'; a second such letter announcing, among other things, that the aim of the early Movement was to lead the people of Manus to become an 'independent state' with 'internal democratic government'; a statement addressed to the House of Assembly, dated 1966, requesting that the Manus Local Government Council be put in charge of all funds allocated to the Manus District and permitted to take over the work of the district administration; and a 1970 statement—with no specified audience—that the Manus people strongly supported the advent by 1972 of 'home rule and Self Government' for PNG.

In 1970, Paliau was on a roll. Having addressed the gathering at the University of Papua New Guinea in May, in June he travelled to Santa Cruz, California, United States, where he had been invited to take part in a scholarly conference on the Bismarck Archipelago (an area in the Bismarck Sea encompassing most of the PNG islands north-east of the PNG mainland, including the Admiralty Islands) organised by the university's Centre for South Pacific Studies. Of the 20-some participants, all aside from Paliau were scholars from American, Australian, Canadian, and European universities and the University of Papua New Guinea.⁸ Schwartz (then on the faculty at the University of California, San Diego) was invited as an expert on the Admiralties. Although a number of the invited scholars spoke Tok Pisin, Schwartz—the only attendee personally acquainted with Paliau—also served as Paliau's interpreter. (How Paliau's invitation came about is lost to memory at this point. Schwartz recalls only that he did not issue the invitation.)⁹

8 According to the newsletter of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, IV, November 1970, the other invited participants were Dorothy Billings, Wichita State University; Ann Chowning, University of Papua New Guinea; David Counts, University of Waterloo; Dorothy Counts, University of Waterloo; Philip J.C. Dark, Southern Illinois University; A.L. Epstein, Australian National University; T.S. Epstein, Australian National University; Frederick Errington, Cornell University; Michael Freedman, Syracuse University; Adrian Gerbrands, Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden; Thomas Harding, University of California, Santa Barbara; Jane Goodale, Bryn Mawr College; Ward Goodenough, University of Pennsylvania; Peter Lomas, Simon Fraser University; Michael Panoff, Australian National University; Francoise Panoff, Australian National University; Richard Salisbury, McGill University; James Specht, Australian National University; and Peter White, University of California, Berkeley.

9 We are not sure why Paliau was the lone Melanesian attending, although his connection with Margaret Mead—albeit a slight one, barring her description of him in *New Lives for Old*—may have been involved.

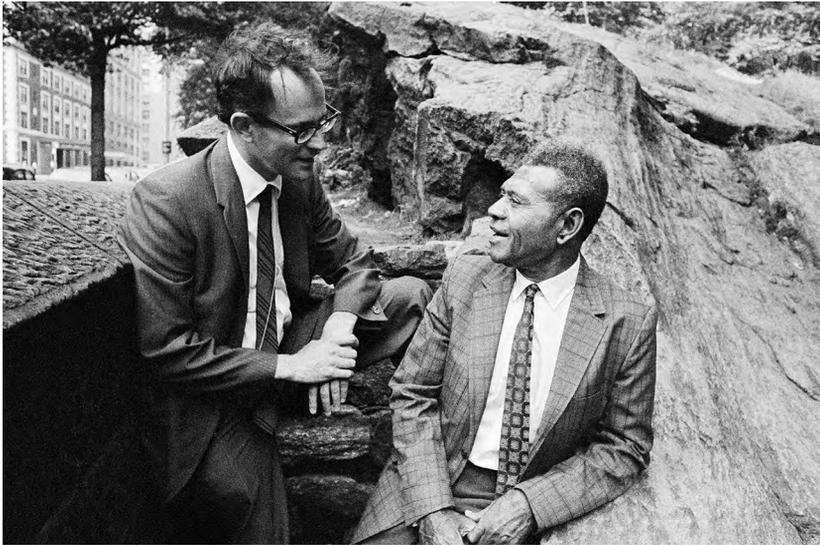


Figure 12.1: In 1970, Paliau spoke at a conference on the anthropology of the Bismarck Archipelago at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

After the conference he and Schwartz visited New York City, where Schwartz showed Paliau the sights and they relaxed in Central Park.

Source: Schwartz recruited an unidentified passer-by to take this photo with Schwartz's camera. Digital copy courtesy of the Archive for Melanesian Anthropology, University of California, San Diego.

At the conference Paliau again described his career and responded to questions, including queries about his opinions on the future of PNG. His answers were measured and in keeping with his role as a member of the House and a secular representative of his country. At conference social events he spoke at length with the other participants who were fluent in Tok Pisin. Schwartz recalls that Paliau seemed perfectly at ease. Following the five-day conference, Schwartz and Paliau travelled to New York City. Again, the genesis and sponsorship of this excursion are lost to memory.¹⁰ Schwartz and Paliau lunched with Margaret Mead at the American Museum of Natural History and Mead took them on a short tour of the exhibits. But Schwartz and Paliau spent most of their time touring the city, with which Schwartz was familiar. Strolling the streets in neat sportscoats, slacks, white shirts, and neckties, Paliau and Schwartz looked

¹⁰ We know that Schwartz didn't pay for this trip, and it seems unlikely that Mead was so eager to see Paliau again that she would have done so, for they spent little time together in New York. It's possible that Barbara and Fred Roll, friends of Mead's who underwrote and took part in some of her work in Manus, footed the bill.

like two well-groomed members of the city's professional class taking a long spring lunch break. They visited the United Nations building and the New York Public Library and they idled in Central Park.

Paliau was curious and intrigued by much that he saw, but if he was greatly impressed he kept it to himself. Straggling, dusty, low-rise Port Moresby was not the limit of his previous urban experience. He had also visited Canberra, Australia, where new House members were taken for parliamentary education. In New York, Schwartz recalls that Paliau reacted most strongly to the dense throngs of people hurrying up into the daylight from subway exits: Paliau shook his head and remarked that it was too bad people had to live so tightly packed together.

Paliau's experiences in California and New York did not seem to affect his views on politics, society, and the larger nature of things in the deep way that his experiences had as a young man working for colonial foreigners, serving in the police, and surviving the war. We will see, however, that he was preparing to make use of them. If in New York Paliau was blasé, on returning to Manus he told his stories of the journey over and over again, with mixed effects, as described below.

Disputes and discontent

Paliau clearly enjoyed his international recognition but it did nothing to sustain the new way of living Paliau and the Movement were promoting in Manus. True, some novel institutions for which Paliau legitimately claimed Movement credit had been established, among them the producers and consumers cooperatives. Paliau had begun advocating cooperatives as early as 1953, before the administration began energetically promoting them. By the mid-1960s, fourteen had been established in Manus, most of them in Movement areas (Schwartz 1966–67: 36). But the cooperatives did not thrive. Carrier and Carrier (1989: 84) cite a 1972 report of a Committee of Inquiry on Cooperatives in Papua New Guinea that documents a decline in copra production and the failure of many Manus cooperatives throughout the 1960s. This was in part the result of increasing competition from individual traders in copra and shell, as well as an increase in the number of producers bypassing their local cooperatives to sell directly to the Copra Marketing Board (Otto 1991: 200). In analysing Manus cooperatives' striking rate of failure, Schwartz (1966–67) observes that the latter kind of individual endeavour

probably appealed to the indigenous emphasis on status seeking but, he argues, despite this appeal, granting easy credit, failing to collect debts, and theft brought many cooperatives down.¹¹

Money was coming into Manus villages in the 1960s, but the most conspicuous amounts came from young people—principally, young men—employed in PNG towns. Schwartz observed that, contrary to New Way principles, in Pere and other mostly Titan villages the largest part of such money was financing an efflorescence of affinal exchange.¹² Now, however, the valuables the groom's side gave were not made of shell, dogs' teeth, and beads. Rather, they were things that cost money, such as outboard motors, or money itself. The social significance of the exchanges had changed, too (Schwartz 1993: 526–7; cf. Schwartz 1976b; Otto 1991: 224–32).¹³ But from the standpoint of the original aims of the Movement, the important and disappointing thing was that they took place at all, let alone frequently and extravagantly.

Some Manus people had charged Paliau with trying to use his position as council president to promote his Baluan Christian Church. But on returning to Manus in the 1960s, Schwartz found that absent Paliau's close attention, in many villages few people were attending services and many people had defected to foreign mission churches.

Such departures from the New Way did not necessarily mean people were disillusioned with Paliau the man, but some were angry with him. A major controversy concerning a boat owned by the council—intended for transport to and from Lorengau—erupted in the mid-1960s. The several accounts Schwartz received defy easy summary, but the essence was the charge that Paliau was chronically appropriating the boat for his own purposes. A second controversy also alienated some of Paliau's erstwhile strong supporters. This concerned land near Bunai to which Paliau claimed rights on the basis of a kinship tie, a claim which some influential

11 Otto (1991: 201–3) notes that while the Australian administration's economic development policy immediately after the war had stressed communal endeavours, by the late 1950s emphasis had shifted to encouraging 'individual' endeavours. He also observes correctly that 'the opposition between individual versus communal ownership grossly simplifies and even obscures the social reality of Manus land tenure', a misunderstanding on which many cash-cropping initiatives elsewhere in PNG have foundered.

12 Schwartz (1993: 526) describes the pressures on young men to contribute to these events.

13 People often substituted cash for indigenous valuables and construed exchanges as opportunities for those contributing consumable items to obtain large amounts of cash, even though much of this had to be redistributed to those who helped amass the consumables (Schwartz 1993: 527–8).

people contested vehemently. But, whatever his detractors' complaints, it would be hasty to conclude that Paliau was taking advantage of his position for material benefit. Schwartz saw that Paliau was living very simply, at least when he was on the Manus mainland. He had a single house on the south coast, in Bunai, but its floor was collapsing and it was not fit for habitation. Paliau and his wife, Teresia, lived nearby in two thatched shacks built directly on the ground (one probably reserved for cooking). The administration provided living quarters for members of the House in Port Moresby, but Paliau eschewed these, preferring to live in what were essentially the servants' quarters of the house of an Australian acquaintance from his days with the police force.

Only a few indigenous people were now nearer than Paliau to the heart of political authority in the Territory, but—like international recognition—it was not doing him much good at home. Nor did it give him much scope to *do* good at home in the short run. During his first term in the House, Paliau was among many members—indigenous and non-indigenous—who complained of the amount of money the government was spending in Port Moresby, at the expense, they charged, of the rural majority.¹⁴ Speaking in a debate on this issue, Paliau opined: 'When we come to Port Moresby we are filled with dismay when we realize what a large amount of the money must be spent here ... Does Port Moresby get everything in order that visitors from other countries may be impressed?' (van der Veur 1965: 481). His constituents would have applauded these words, but his constituents were prone to blame Paliau, not the central government, for neglecting their rural needs. Some years later (in 1975), explaining his defection from Paliau, one of his strongest early supporters was bitter: '[Paliau] said he should be the one to go to the House of Assembly and he'd be able to raise up all of Manus. But no, he deceived us!' Paliau may well have promised much more than he could deliver, but members of the House from poor rural areas faced entrenched problems not of their making. John Connell (1997: 222–6) observes that neglect of rural areas began in the colonial era. Australian rule left the indigenous economy largely intact, a circumstance that continues to contribute to the welfare of the rural majority who rely mostly on subsistence production. But the indigenous economy remained intact partly because the administration did little to extend modern infrastructure into rural areas. Granted, there were immense challenges to doing so. But Connell confirms that, as members

14 Rural Papua New Guineans make the same complaint today, usually with good reason.

of the House complained in 1964, the Australian administration concentrated public investment in urban and more accessible rural areas and directed development programs to regions and individuals already having greater success in the changing economy.

Failure to finesse

However plausible or implausible Paliau may have found the doctrines of the Noise or other cargo cults, he had wisely kept his distance from prophecies of imminent fulfilment. It was probably harder for him to exercise equal finesse as he sought a role in the emerging indigenous government of the Territory. People's expectations of approaching self-government and independence were mixed, but those seeking office would have had to promise that these changes would improve people's lives. As described above, however, it is hard to see how any member of the House could have come close to fulfilling people's more optimistic hopes.

In seeking to bolster his image in Manus, although he stayed clear of promises of imminent supernatural transformation, Paliau at times leaned on his reputation for chumminess with occult powers. During their visit to New York City, Schwartz photographed Paliau on the steps of the grand old New York Public Library, showing in the background the elevated frieze of elegant, classically draped female figures. Back in Manus in later years, a number of people told Schwartz that Paliau had shown them the picture and told them that the figures were angels, and that they had only appeared in the picture when Schwartz developed it. Lungat of Ndriol, still a Paliau loyalist, insisted to Schwartz that Paliau had shown people the picture but some viewers had drawn their own fantastic conclusions. A number of others, however, contradicted Lungat's account, and a few reported that Paliau had made other fantastic claims about events during the trip. For instance, some told Schwartz that Paliau had said that in America he had met with the Queen of England, the Pope, and Jesus. While some allegedly believed him and concluded that—as one debunker put it—'*God i stap tru longen*' (that is, God is truly with Paliau), others would have no truck with such claims. Prenis Paliau told Schwartz that many people thought Paliau was lying and lost their faith in his credentials as a holy person. Prenis Paliau certainly did, for it was in the early 1970s that he left Paliau's church, affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and helped form an Evangelical congregation in Bunai.

Paliau's ability to subtly integrate wholly temporal leadership with leadership claiming a sanction more exalted than the ballot box seemed to be slipping. In 1975, Tjolai of Mok told Schwartz of an incident that had helped turn him against Paliau. Tjolai said that he too had been thinking of running for a seat in the first House of Assembly and he had made no secret of it. But Paliau invoked divine authority to discourage him. Said Tjolai: 'One day I mentioned this, and the next day Paliau came to see me. He said that Jesus himself had come to him and told him that Tjolai shouldn't run. And [Paliau said] that God had said he wanted Paliau to run'. Tjolai found this way too self-serving and improbable. 'It made me angry. You understand?', he told Schwartz. 'Now I really saw his bullshit. I thought he was a liar and that some of the things he'd told us before weren't true either.' Soon thereafter, Tjolai joined Prenis Paliau in defecting to the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

But although Tjolai wondered aloud if Paliau had never been trustworthy, in other remarks both he and Prenis Paliau said in effect that the real problem was that Paliau had abandoned his own early teachings. In the 1970s, these men and a number of others began speaking to Schwartz more openly than they previously had of their perceptions of the relationship between the Noise and the Movement's secular program. A common theme was that Paliau had always advocated pursuing 'two roads'. One was '*wok bilong skin*'—that is, 'work of the body' or projects to improve people's material welfare using secular means. The other was the work of restoring the Paradise of the First Order of God, aka the Number One Order. This latter called for, among other things, taking good care of cemeteries and their occupants (in Tok Pisin, *lukautim gut ol matmat ... nau ol man i dai*). Paliau, they said, instructed people that they could reveal only the former, secular activities to representatives of the administration. This is not to say that Paliau instigated the Noise—which our data suggest was not the case—but it was consonant with Paliau's habit of keeping all options open as long as possible.

To the disgust of apostates like Prenis Paliau, Paliau Maloat had turned his back on the two roads policy and devoted himself entirely to business and electoral politics. Others also, said Prenis, had followed Paliau's example; only a few were left who truly sought the First Order. This blighted the present as well as the future, they lamented, for in the days of the early Movement—both before and after the Noise—people had both felt and seen the First Order's nearness. In those days, people said, Paliau could control the wind and the rain, but that wasn't all. God's blessings flowed

for everyone when they kept their minds right. As Lukas of Mok told Schwartz in 1954 (also quoted in Chapter 6): ‘We tried to live with only good *tingting*. At this time, when we worked according to good *tingting* exclusively, the Noise had not come yet, but everything came easy for us’.

Nostalgia for that time of wonder was still very much alive in some Manus circles in the 1970s. Paliau had told them, some people recalled wistfully, that if they all concentrated on God and didn’t let their minds wander, life would be easy. But Paliau had changed; he no longer seemed to care about the First Order and life was once more difficult. Tjolai of Mok said to Schwartz: ‘Ah, Ted! I saw it. It was true. But when we got the council and began to change things, when we turned away from talk of God and took up the work of the government instead, everything went wrong.’¹⁵

Losing an election

As the election for the third House approached many people had reasons to be disappointed with Paliau. Some thought he could be making better use of his secular power to improve their material welfare and some thought he had sacrificed extra-human assistance in bringing about a better world by relying too much on secular power. But at this time, even if he wasn’t above claiming God’s endorsement to discourage competition, Paliau was deeply committed to making the most of his position in the new political system. This was where he invested his energy and this is the public image he cultivated most avidly. Schwartz observed that when back in Manus after the close of the first House, Paliau always appeared in public with a briefcase—something rarely seen even today in rural PNG. And he was always accompanied by an assistant—a Baluan man—who carried the briefcase for him, sitting silently behind Paliau during meetings.

It is hard to isolate the reasons any candidate loses any close election. Six candidates vied for Member for the Manus Open Electorate in 1972, but only Michael Pondros, Peter Pomat, and Paliau proved serious contenders. Pondros won, with Pomat a close second, and Paliau trailing somewhat behind them both. Did Paliau squander his advantage as an incumbent? As noted above, it appears that he did his best to represent Manus in the House, but he could not satisfy what may have been exaggerated

15 We’ll see in the next chapter that Paliau’s extra-human powers and the former Days of Wonder are potent themes in the ideology of Wind Nation.

expectations. He may also have neglected to keep his constituents in touch with his efforts to do so. Otto (1991: 188) cites Manus District annual reports (submitted to the Territory administration by the Manus District administration) to the effect that Paliau strove to represent all parts of Manus and when the House was in recess he returned to tour his district. But Pokawin (1976: 407) states that after the 1964 election Paliau visited only the villages that had supported him since 1946, thus neglecting some three-quarters of Manus villages, and established no mechanism for communicating with all of Manus.

Paliau also drew organised opposition. He had antagonised the Catholic Mission from the beginning of his career: he was worse than a heretic, he was a successful heretic. Most of his followers were former Catholics, 3,500 of whom the church excommunicated in the late 1940s (Otto 1991: 175). Naturally, many mission personnel spoke against him at every opportunity. According to Lola Romanucci-Ross (1985: 137), during the 1964 election, Catholic missionaries ‘openly excoriated Paliau and ... asked the North Coast, at least, to vote against him’. Doubtless, mission personnel exerted their influence against him among their loyalists in 1972 as well. Paliau also drew sectarian opposition from another quarter. Pokawin (1976: 408) reports that in Paliau’s 1972 campaign he emphasised his connection with the Baluan Native Christian Church, which many people at that time were more likely to call the Paliau Church. This may have hurt him in some areas but—ironically—in others, there were voters who thought he had neglected this connection too much. Pita Tapo of Lahan was marginal to the secular aspect of the Movement, but he had remained a strong adherent of its millenarian tendencies and outgrowths. Trompf (1991: 223–4) reports that at the time of the campaign for seats in the third House, Tapo had several hundred followers in south-east Manus and he sought to turn them against Paliau by accusing him of turning his back on his (that is, Paliau’s) own creation, the Baluan Native Christian Church.

When in 1973 Schwartz discussed the 1972 election with him, Paliau knew whence in Manus the various candidates had drawn most of their support. He knew that his solid following had split, even within villages; he speculated that the number of candidates might have split voting blocs that might have supported him; and he said that Pondros had drawn much of the Catholic vote. Paliau also probably understood that the many changes in Manus secular politics in his lifetime—to which he had contributed—were leaving him behind. Up through the

establishment of the official councils, Paliau had been almost synonymous with indigenous Manus efforts to take greater control of their own lives, and—as the first member representing Manus—he had managed to put his mark on the House of Assembly as well. But by 1972, as Otto (1991: 190) puts it: ‘The government institutions he had helped to create were strongly established and were no longer dependent on his prestige’.

Another hard blow

Paliau was to suffer one more blow to his career in secular politics: establishment of a new level of political organisation between the local government councils and the district governments.¹⁶ In every district—except tiny Manus—there was more than one council (each overseeing a number of villages, each with its own village councillor). In 1972, groups of councils in each district were combined under Area Authorities intended to coordinate the councils’ activities. Because Manus had only one council its duties overlapped with those of the Area Authority. This was confusing.¹⁷ But it gave Paliau an opportunity. Recall that in 1967, he had lost his position as president of the Manus Local Government Council (expanded successor to the Baluan Native Government Council).¹⁸ But he remained the councillor of his home village, Lipan-Mok, and as such he was eligible for a role in the Area Authority. He obviously still had political resources, for his fellow village councillors chose him as one of eight of their number to serve on the Area Authority and these councillors then supported Paliau’s successful bid to become first chairperson of the Area Authority.

Paliau told Schwartz in 1975 that he had argued that the Area Authority and the council should work more closely together, perhaps even combine. This doesn’t seem unreasonable in a one-council district. But other members of the Area Authority may have seen Paliau as simply trying to enhance his own authority. Whatever the reason, a majority of the Area Authority voted in 1973 to remove Paliau as both chair and member of

16 We rely on Otto (1991: 188–90) for our information on this development.

17 Otto (1991: 189n5, 189n6) quotes Territory government statements that attempted to untangle this awkward situation, but failed.

18 The 1963 Local Government Ordinance permitted non-indigenous residents to stand for seats on district councils. By 1999, 111 of the 142 councils in the Territory were ‘multiracial’ in practice. This had no effect we know of on Paliau’s career, but it stirred controversy in other parts of the Territory (Moore 2003: 197).

the body. Otto (1991: 189–90) cites a letter from Paliau’s successor as chair of the Baluan Council, Mr J. Maiah, regarding this development: ‘The only reason [for Paliau’s ouster] is that most councilors said that Mr. Maloat used his position as Chairman of the Area Authority to convince the village people that he is the only big boss in the district and [he] also interfered with other councilors’ wards’.¹⁹ It is not surprising that Paliau, as he later confided to Schwartz, didn’t agree with this assessment. The most he would say about this event was that the ringleaders of the coup acted out of their envy of Paliau’s status.

Paliau was ousted from the Area Authority in June 1973. Within the month, Schwartz arrived in Manus again, where—on Baluan—he would find Paliau beaten down by circumstances in a way Schwartz had never seen before. Yet even now, at the nadir of his public career, Paliau was contemplating a new way to employ his abilities.

19 Technically, local councillors represent not villages but wards, and a ward can embrace more than one named and populated place within a village or only a part of such a place. This helps adjust for the fact that in PNG in general people do not always consider a named residential locale, even one that looks geographically distinct to an outsider, as a separate village, and some places recognised as single villages are dispersed geographically and are exceptionally large.

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