COPRA CAME BEFORE COPPER: THE NASIOI OF BOUGAINVILLE AND PLANTATION COLONIALISM, 1902-1964

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For more than sixty years before a giant copper mine was developed on their land, the Nasioi of Bougainville lived in a colonial situation dominated by a copra plantation economy. This form of colonialism was imposed upon an indigenous sociocultural system characterized by political atomism and a strong belief in dependence on supernatural forces. As the colonial situation developed under specific historical conditions over decades, the Nasioi attempted unsuccessfully to find a more satisfactory adjustment to changed circumstances. The article argues that knowledge of this cultural and historical background provides greater insight into the dramatic developments in Bougainville during the last twenty years.

VIOLENCE THAT INITIALLY FOCUSED on the Bougainville Copper mine in North Solomons Province, Papua New Guinea, erupted in 1988. This soon escalated into demands for secession and ongoing warfare between a self-styled Bougainville Revolutionary Army and the central government of Papua New Guinea. These tragic events have provoked a wide variety of publications, scholarly, journalistic and polemic.[1] Amidst all this attention, relatively little has been written about the particular history of Nasioi-speakers, who are not only the traditional landholders of the site of the copper mine but who have also constituted the core of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and produced its most prominent spokesmen, Francis Ona and Samuel Kauona. This article aims to amplify the discussion by providing an account of the more than sixty years of Nasioi history that preceded the exploration

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and establishment of the copper mine, and to emphasize that the current dilemma has long roots in a particular kind of colonial situation, based on a copra plantation economy.

More than forty years ago, Georges Balandier offered anthropologists a way to look at colonialism that was broader than a narrow focus on political or economic issues. To paraphrase him slightly, the characteristics he listed of a "colonial situation" were domination by a " 'racially' and culturally distinct" minority over a technologically inferior indigenous majority "in the name of a dogmatically asserted racial . . . and cultural superiority"; the "antagonistic" relationship between the two societies, owing to the fact that "the subject society is condemned" to serve the dominant minority; and "the need for the dominant society, if it is to maintain its position, to rely not only upon 'force', but also upon a whole range of pseudo-justifications and stereotyped patterns of behaviour."[2] "Plantation colonialism" as it developed among the Nasioi demonstrates these characteristics in historically specific forms.

The Cultural Background

A spate of criticism has made students of Melanesian history and ethnology cautious about describing villagers' lives in an "ethnographic present" that seems to immobilize vital activities like an insect preserved in amber, denying possibilities of change.[3] However, by combining early European accounts with Nasioi memories it is possible to produce a plausible description of cultural patterns operative at the time colonizers first began living on Nasioi land.[4] Development of a particular colonial situation is best understood against the background of these patterns.

The Nasioi cultural system was one of many variations on practices common in this part of the South Pacific. Swidden gardening provided a subsistence base, with a division of labor based on gender. Men did the heavy but intermittent work of clearing forests, building houses, and fencing gardens, while women engaged in the steady production of garden food for both humans and small herds of pigs. Apparently land was plentiful relative to population, and villages were small and scattered. Within the village, the household of husband, wife, and immature children was the basic unit of everyday life.

However, Nasioi also recognized as major elements of social life matrilineal exogamous clans. These clans were not the localized, politically important units described for parts of Highland New Guinea, but clan membership, along with residence and exchange, had a significant effect on rights to

garden land.[5] The fact that women were responsible for both the continuity of the clan and the bulk of subsistence is reflected in relations between the sexes, which tended more toward complementarity than hierarchy (for example, women had control over the products of their labor to the extent that a husband needed his wife's permission even to enter the garden).

Indeed, hierarchy appears to have been notably lacking in Nasioi social life at the time of contact. Although the Siwai of Bougainville provided the classic example of Melanesian "big-man" leadership, among the Nasioi big-men were comparatively small in social stature.[6] Such influence as they had over their fellows was based on feast giving, in turn associated with certain personal characteristics of generosity, wisdom, and industry Should a big-man ***(oboring,*** plural ***obontu)*** press his fellow villagers too hard for assistance in pig raising, house building, or feasting, they might simply move to vacant land to begin a new settlement.[7] The ideal of maintaining balance in social life appears to have been a basic principle governing interpersonal relations, not only between the sexes but with other groups as well. Thus, balanced reciprocity was the norm in arranging marriages (often the responsibility of older women): not only was the exchange of food and such other valuables as strings of shells at marriage supposed to balance, but a preferred pairing was between bilateral cross-cousins.[8] Even though not always realized in these terms of European genealogy, marriage tended to link two matrilineal clans in a balanced relationship over generations.

Relations between living Nasioi and the spirits of the dead ***(ma'naari)*** were different, however, because the former were regarded as profoundly dependent upon the latter. Descriptions by early observers were confirmed by informants in the 1960s: ***ma'naari*** controlled all benefits, particularly the supply of food. Hard work and skill in such activities as gardening, hunting, or pig raising were regarded by Nasioi as necessary, but not sufficient, for success. Whatever the endeavor, Nasioi sought the support of the spirits by making regular offerings of pork and other valued foods in small household shrines. As an older man said in 1963, "If you didn't give those food offerings, you would become just skin and bones."[9]

These were key aspects of a sociocultural system upon which European colonizers imposed themselves. As the Comaroffs have written about colonialism elsewhere, the invaders and their own cultural attitudes "might establish themselves at the expense of prior forms, but they seldom succeed in totally supplanting what was there before" as the colonized continue "contesting [colonizer] presence and the explicit content of its world view."[10] The contest was especially visible as the Europeans attempted to create a new economic system on Nasioi land, with Nasioi labor,

The Development of Plantation Colonialism

Although Bougainville became part of German New Guinea after negotiations ending in 1899, colonizers were slow to occupy the island. The first Europeans to settle on Nasioi land were Roman Catholic missionaries of the Society of Mary, They, like later arrivals, were attracted to the natural harbor at Kieta, where they purchased land in 1902 (see Figure 1). Although the missionaries were more likely to seek martyrdom than profit, they inevitably became part of the developing colonial situation. Their presence was encouraged by the German administration, which could imagine missionization as an inexpensive means of pacification.[11]

Nasioi attitudes of dependence upon ancestral spirits were oddly congruent with the particular theology and church structure the Marists brought to Bougainville. As Hugh Laracy makes clear, the missionaries had no intention of dismissing ancestral spirits out of hand. On the contrary, they acknowledged them as ever present, but evil and certainly inferior in power to the Christian pantheon. Therefore, it does not seem unreasonable to describe Nasioi conversion as a simple shift from worshiping ***ma'naari*** to submission to Christ, the Virgin, and the saints, leaving an earlier worldview largely intact.[12] In such a context, a whole range of Marist practices--including the particular veneration of Mary, described in translation as ***Niuko paninko,*** "Mother of us all in heaven"--must have had a resonance for the Nasioi of which missionaries could hardly have been aware.[13] At the same time, both the hierarchical structure of Catholicism and the attitudes toward other races that the missionaries inevitably brought with them from Germany and France promoted social relations that were, at best, patriarchal in more than one sense. Priests treated all their flock as children but, as in nineteenth-century Europe, women were clearly regarded as inferior to men--the first blow struck, however unintentionally, by colonialism against Nasioi women's traditional status.

Whatever contribution missionaries made to pacification, the process was not a difficult one, at least in comparison to other parts of German New Guinea. Lacking any centralized political organization or notable military tradition, the Nasioi resisted only sporadically By 1915, ten years after the German administrative headquarters had been established at Kieta, only villagers in the more remote mountain areas were relatively free of a colonial yoke. Indeed, at the outbreak of World War I, German administration was probably effective over a wider area of Nasioi land than the subsequent Australian rule would be for the next twenty years. However, traditional political atomism among the Nasioi hampered German plans for orderly governance, as the administration's annual report for 1905-1906 complains:

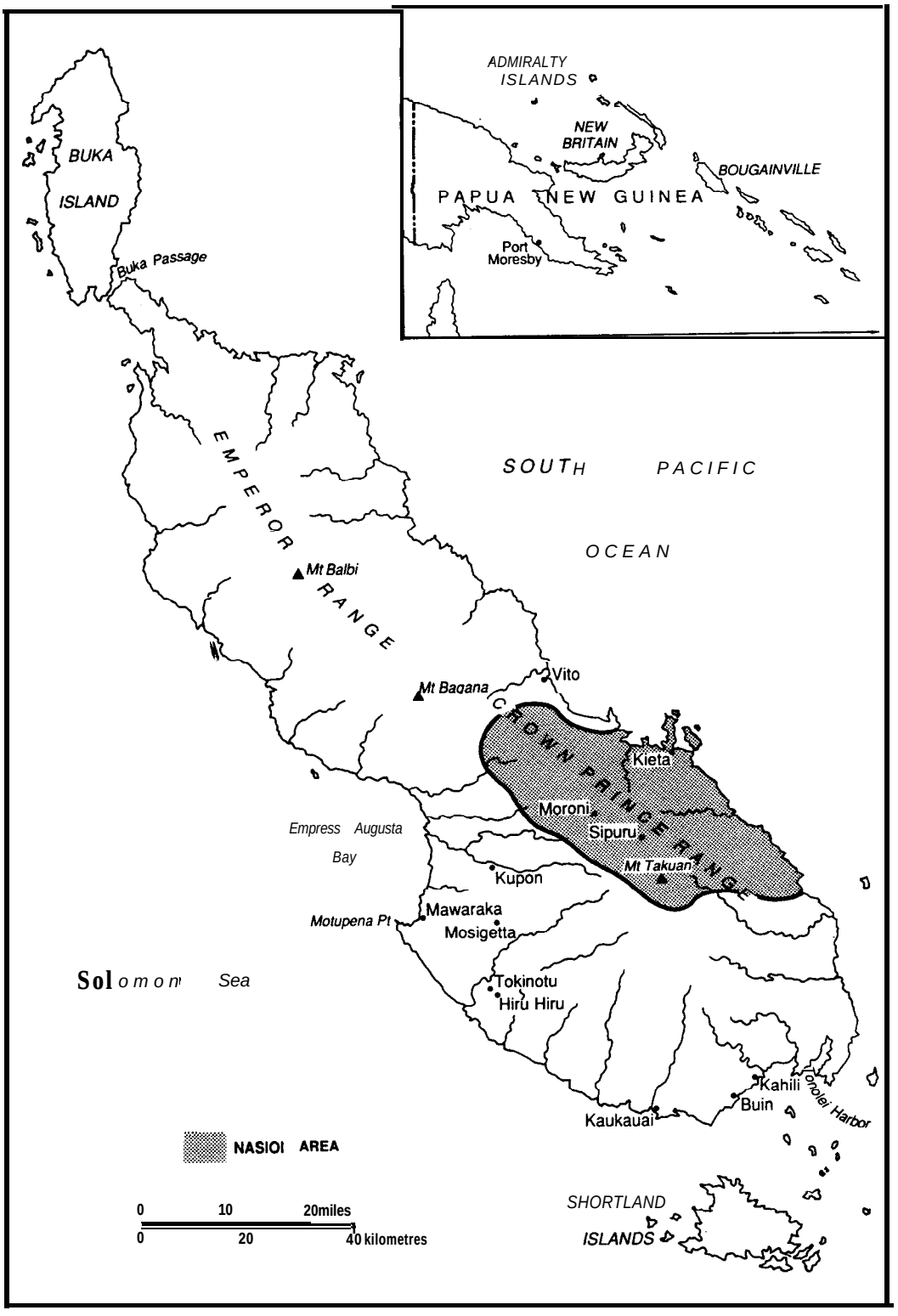

FIGURE 1. Bougainville Island, Papua New Guinea, showing Nasioi lands.

"Here the work of organization is made even more difficult because the idea of a tribal chief was completely foreign to the natives."[14]

The establishment of order was only a means to the real end of German policy--financial gain. Land in the Nasioi area was particularly attractive to colonizers seeking wealth because of the Kieta harbor. "Purchasing" land could not have the same meaning for Europeans as for the Nasioi, whose concepts of land rights did not include permanent alienation beyond the local or kinship group.[15] Nevertheless, the acquisition of land was not the greatest obstacle to the colonizers' economic ambitions.

A distinctive feature of colonialism in Melanesia was the relative ease of land alienation compared to the difficulties of ensuring a labor supply.[16] Several factors were involved. New Guinea certainly never attracted the European settlers the metropolitan powers had initially anticipated; endemic malaria was only one discouraging element. With scattered exceptions (as in east New Britain), land acquisition did not usually deprive villagers of an adequate subsistence base. Indeed, the village subsistence system had to remain intact so that the colonizers did not have to bear the costs of reproducing the labor supply.[17] Finally, neither Germany nor any other European power was willing to pay for the military or police resources necessary to maintain a forced labor system. Only the desire for trade goods and the need for a small amount of cash to pay head tax provided incentives to plantation labor.

The closest approximation to a solution to the labor problem that colonizers in this part of the Pacific achieved is effectively summarized by a "leading planter spokesman" for the British Solomons during the period between the world wars:

> We could grow anything. . . in the Solomons . . . and most of us tried our hand at growing different tropical products--rubber, para-rubber, vanilla, sisal, cocoa . . . practically anything. We could grow the bloody lot. But . . . we had a chronic cancer, and that was . . . labour. We never had all the labour we wanted, we were always short of labour. And as copra is the least labour intensive of all the tropical products, that is why we were forced willy-nilly into copra production.[18]

By settling for a one-crop plantation system that required no more than unskilled labor, and in which planting and harvesting could be interrupted at any time without disastrous financial loss, planters on Nasioi land--together with missionaries and administrators--also shaped a sociocultural system with distinctive features.[19] It is, therefore, worth recapitulating the technical

aspects of copra production to underline this argument. Compared with many other kinds of tropical agriculture, making copra is an extraordinarily nonmodern enterprise. An informative contrast can be drawn with the sugar plantations begun in Hawai‘i and Fiji decades before planters entered Bougainville.

Even in the 1860s sugar plantations in Hawai‘i required an elaborate irrigation system, demanding intensive labor and regular maintenance. Machinery was necessary to grind sugarcane and separate crystals from molasses. Harvesting had to follow a regular sequence, or the whole crop might be lost. The varied tasks demanded careful timing, so that sugar plantations are among those agricultural enterprises that are reasonably called “factories in the field,” demanding absolute control over the labor force.[20]

Nothing could be less like a factory than the kind of copra plantations established in Bougainville before World War I. Land was cleared by chopping down vegetation and burning it off, just as the Nasioi had been doing in their gardens for centuries. Once the sprouting coconuts were planted, all that was required was regular grass cutting, to keep vegetation from covering up the immature trees. Coconuts simply drop from the tree when ripe. They do not mature all at once, nor can human ingenuity affect the maturation process. Production of copra involves nothing more than splitting open fallen coconuts and drying the meat, which requires only sunlight, though it can be done somewhat more efficiently with simple mechanical devices for hot-air drying. Thus there is no urgency to the production process, no need for careful time management, no incentive to make technological improvements to increase production, and no reason to improve the skills of the work force.[21]

The inefficiencies of this kind of production are clear. What is relevant to the present argument is the kind of attitudes and behaviors that plantation colonialism fostered among colonizers and Nasioi. A planter (most plantations were managed by a single male, and “planter” is used here synonymously with “manager”) hardly had to worry about labor relations in the modern sense.[22] Rather, he was more likely to deal with his worker “as a recalcitrant child.”[23] Corporal punishment as a method of control was standard practice in German New Guinea. When the succeeding Australian administration attempted to forbid this in 1915, protests from planters (and missionaries) forced its restoration within a few months, and such power of punishment remained legal until 1922.[24]

Copra plantations made a perfect venue for colonizers to impress laborers with their claim to racial superiority and political dominance. As Balandier points out, if colonizers are to maintain their position, they must rely not only upon force but on a “whole range of pseudo-justifications and

stereotyped patterns of behavior."[25] On a copra plantation, there was no reason to increase workers' knowledge, since to do so would not significantly improve productivity but might rather threaten the planters prestige, which, along with physical violence, was thought to constitute a "labour incentive."[26] If dissatisfied workers deserted, and operations were temporarily shut down, no permanent damage was done, nor would new laborers require much training. Thus the planter was free to be as paternalistic and condescending or as authoritarian and brutal in his racism as his individual personality dictated. Peter Sack goes as far as to say, "To become a planter was not a means to an economic end, but the kind of life they wanted to lead. The point was to be the master, rather than to be rich, and the point of being the master was to be able to tell other people what to do."[27]

"Queen" Emma Forsayth and her associates had been purchasing (by their Western standards) land on Bougainville before 1900; however, development of real plantations in the Nasioi area came after the administrative headquarters was established in Kieta. The largest of these plantations, Aropa, encompassed five thousand acres south of Kieta, and portions remained unplanted as late as 1960. Worth noting for this article's argument is that the original intent was to develop the property as a rubber plantation, but practical considerations of labor supply meant coconuts became the primary crop.[28] Other plantations, of varying sizes and histories, were created both north and south of Kieta, providing ample opportunity for the Nasioi to work close to home.[29]

Working on these new enterprises fostered mixed feelings of dependence and inferiority among the Nasioi employed there. Rowley is among those who have written of the "dreary routine" of plantation life. Certainly tasks like clearing land taught no new skills. Wages were not only low but often paid in cloth, tobacco, and other items, which the Nasioi seemed to have perceived in terms of their own practices of nurturing children or other dependents.[30] On the other hand, Nasioi laborers were exposed to the sight of planters enjoying such things as kerosene lanterns (later electric generators), metal tools (later motor vehicles and other machinery), tinned (later frozen) foods--all of them imported, though from what source the worker had no way of knowing. Such material wealth was thus both mysterious and symbolic of the colonizer's claim to innate superiority

Plantation colonialism thus disrupted Nasioi lives without modernizing them. Since planters were interested only in male labor, by ignoring women they (like administrators and missionaries in different ways) further damaged the complementarity that earlier had characterized gender relations. More significantly, the material conditions and social relations of copra production could be described as ideal for creating dependent attitudes and

behavior on the part of the Nasioi. These dependent attitudes built upon earlier traditions that governed relations between living Nasioi and ancestral spirits, but could not be sustained in anything like the same form with foreigners who had quite different agendas. In their strategy for dealing with foreigners, Nasioi might be willing to act as obedient children, but planters and other colonizers could only be stern and ultimately ungenerous parents.[31]

Australia took over what had been German New Guinea as a Mandated Territory in the aftermath of World War I, but the copra plantation economy remained essentially unchanged until World War II. Expropriation of German-owned property was proclaimed 1 September 1920, and Australians--generally returned soldiers--took over as owners and managers.[32] Robert Stuart, who came to seek his fortune in that postwar era, has provided a notably unselfconscious portrait of his career. Among other things, his memoir demonstrates the continuity between German and Australian relations with laborers and other Bougainvilleans during the interwar period.[33]

Stuart managed and ultimately owned plantations north of the Nasioi area. He also recruited labor and dealt in trochus shell elsewhere in Bougainville, and inevitably pursued both business and pleasure in the administrative headquarters at Kieta. He is at pains to contrast his greater efficiency with the slapdash methods of other managers but is clear about the limits of applying technology to copra production.[34] If laborers were disorderly, "a few cracks with the stock whip" could remedy the situation, although his "usual method of punishing a boy was either to confiscate his tobacco issue" or increase his task assignments.[35] Throughout his description of a planter's life from the 1920s until World War II, the themes of adventure, physical violence, attitudes that can only be described as paternalist and racist by present-day standards, and heavy drinking are prominent.[36] In other words, with Australians now in charge of plantations, copra production remained "business as usual" in terms of its power to shape the world of the colonized.

As for everyday colonial administration by Australians, Rowley has mounted the sternest criticism. To paraphrase his arguments: the best aspects of German policy toward the colonized (for example, in education) were discontinued, while initial concern with the transfer of expropriated properties made it almost "inevitable that business would gain at the expense of sound native administration."[37] Although Bougainville was now part of the Kieta District, with headquarters still at that harbor settlement, administrative staff was small, since the Mandated Territory was supposed to pay for itself.[38] There was an administration hospital in Kieta but missionaries, partially subsidized by the government, supplied much of the public-health and all of the educational services to the indigenous population.[39]

It is not surprising that, for the Nasioi, planters and missionaries played bigger parts than did government officials in the colonial situation during the interwar years. A few patrol officers could hardly be a dominating presence to people scattered in small settlements throughout a rugged landscape, circumstances that easily led the Nasioi to a strategy of avoiding the ***kiap*** (administrative official in Tok Pisin) whenever possible. Nor did the Australians have any better luck than had the Germans in establishing and maintaining native officials as a supplementary administrative force.[40]

So Bougainville before World War II became a colonial backwater removed from centers like Rabaul, in which copra planters, missionaries, and ***kiaps*** were relatively free to interfere with the lives of the native inhabitants according to agendas that differed in principle but seemed to have much the same effect, at least on the Nasioi. Racist attitudes were universal, more (among planters) or less (among missionaries); it is hard to find any expression of colonizer sentiment or policy that credited Nasioi with the potential to achieve anything like an equal standing with Europeans. Mission education emphasized conversion, not anything that might be called "modernization." As for the administration, Edward Wolfers has argued that "the primary aim of all colonial administrations in Papua and New Guinea until the 1960s was neither 'development' nor 'preparation' for self-government, but control."[41]

When copra prices began their decline--from a postwar high of more than forty-one Australian pounds in 1920 to a depression low of less than six pounds in 1934[42]--plantations became even less a place for the Nasioi to enter fully a world they saw in tantalizing, but fragmentary, glimpses of the colonizer. Increasingly, individual planters became heavily indebted to the big trading companies and, after 1934, sometimes lost their little fiefdoms.[43] On plantations owned by large firms, hired managers were not under great pressure to increase profits from copra.[44] But whether owner or hired hand, planters in the 1930s were trapped in an economic situation that provided even less incentive to treat Nasioi and other Bougainvilleans in a manner that would cease to promote feelings of frustrated dependence or of inferiority. In Rowley's words:

> Management reflects the [unskilled] nature of the labour; labour, the inefficiency of management. The cultural barriers make for a simple authoritarian pattern; the marked difference in living standards between the workers' barracks and the manager's house ensure [***sic***] that the workers contrast their own situation with that of the white master; the whole situation reinforces impressions made by authoritarian and paternal district administration.[45]

World War II and Aftermath

Colonizer and colonized alike were to have this strange kind of social limbo violently disrupted by World War II. Mannoni has written that colonized people are "prepared to treat as father and mother governors and administrators not always worthy of that honour; but people dominated by a need for dependence cannot identify themselves with leaders who, they feel--they may be wrong, but no matter--have abandoned them."[46]

The Nasioi faced real abandonment in January 1942, about which they still spoke bitterly twenty years later. (Indeed, even youths too young for firsthand experience of the war had incorporated these stories into their ongoing resentment of their colonial situation.) As soon as Japanese planes were reported reconnoitering Bougainville, the district officer, with as many other Europeans as could crowd onto a small vessel, left Kieta with a haste that provoked embarrassment in many Australians then and later.[47] Many Europeans had been evacuated earlier, so that by the time Kieta was actually occupied by Japanese troops in mid-1942, the nonindigenous population had been sharply reduced. Most of those remaining were Catholic missionaries; there were also a few European planters, some Chinese storekeepers with their families, a few Fijian Methodist teachers, and some "coastwatchers," the latter men drawn from administration and plantation and trained to stay behind enemy lines to broadcast information about troop and shipping movements.[48]

Nasioi response to the occupation was, predictably, varied. Like other Bougainvilleans, they were most concerned with the practicalities of surviving. Traumatized by the precipitate departure of the European colonizers, they at first apparently thought that establishing a dependent relationship with the Japanese could be a key to that survival. Although Australians seem to have regarded the Nasioi as "disloyal" or "pro-Japanese," some assisted Paul Mason, the planter-turned-coastwatcher who most often operated in Nasioi territory. After the war, Australians sometimes attributed the different responses to mission affiliation: "disloyal" Catholics versus "onside" Methodists or Seventh-day Adventists. The only certainty is that the Nasioi were never united as to whether to cooperate with the new conquerors or with the coastwatchers.[49]

As the Japanese were cut off from supplies by Allied bombing and began to raid Nasioi gardens for food, any sustained cooperation ceased.[50] During this period, villagers probably suffered more from hunger and illness than from any direct military action. In retrospect in the 1960s, they described their parlous existence in the tropical forest as "living like wild pigs." After American troops established a beachhead on the west coast of

Bougainville in November 1943, some Nasioi began to move toward that outpost where, they reported in the 1960s, they met with a friendly generosity that they contrasted with the treatment they had received under plantation colonialism. Fortunately for most Nasioi, the heaviest fighting of the last Allied ground campaign against the Japanese took place outside their home territory.

Bougainville was one of the parts of the Mandated Territory most afflicted by the war. Although Nasioi casualties might not have been as high as those elsewhere on the island, the psychological trauma was profound. Earlier attitudes toward their place in the colonial situation, shaped by planter, missionary, and ***kiap,*** had been called into question, as they experienced wartime abandonment by those they had been led to believe possessed superior qualities and knowledge. However, these attitudes did not completely disappear but continued to affect Nasioi attempts to adapt to postwar conditions.

Bougainville, together with the rest of the old Mandated Territory, became a Trust Territory of the United Nations after the war and was in theory to be the subject of a new Australian policy that emphasized "development" in both economic and political terms.[51] For the Nasioi, whose disillusionment with their colonial situation had been brought to a critical point by their wartime experience, any development initiative from returned Australian "masters" was viewed with deep suspicion. They were no longer willing to work in the local plantations when these were reestablished, forcing planters to import contract laborers from mainland New Guinea.[52] Whether the ***kiap*** promoted cash crops, producers' cooperatives, or local government councils, he was met with stubborn resistance from many Nasioi.

Rowley has shrewdly contrasted the administration's activities in the New Guinea highlands, where directed social change was rapid after the war, with its performance in the long-occupied coastal and island areas like Bougainville:

> Where the people have rapidly become involved in making new decisions, in new economic activities, in new experiences in a wider world, there is every chance that attitudes change, and early traditions of tyrannical interference fade away with the old men. But where the government has maintained over long periods what seems pointless interference in the affairs of villagers; and its officers seem to have pointlessly exercised power at their expense, the initial resentment will remain, often under a facade of what the white man sees as "apathy".[53]

This contrast provides a context for interpreting a Nasioi account, commonly heard in the 1960s of their colonial history:

> When my grandfather was alive and my father just a little boy, the Germans came. They gave us steel axes and loincloths. Then the Australians came and drove away the Germans. Then the Japanese came and drove away the Australians. Then the Americans drove away the Japanese so the Australians could come back. Now my grandfather is dead, my father is an old man, and I am a grown man. And what do we have? Nothing more than steel axes and loincloths.[54]

In other words, many Nasioi believed that, despite changes in colonial rule, their attempts to cooperate had not produced the improvement in their lives that the colonizer presence--including the display of great material wealth--seemed to promise. Administrators, for their part, were frustrated by what they saw as a sullen lack of cooperation with their development efforts, apparently unaware that Nasioi reluctance grew out of decades of disillusionment, whether with planters, missionaries, or colonial officers.

Nasioi "sullenness" was simply one way to deal with a domination they had by the postwar era faced for more than four decades. Withdrawal had long been a favorite tactic; now they had withdrawn their labor from the planters. Even as some Nasioi began cash cropping in earnest, they tried to escape from government interference. But some were also involved in certain activities that caused consternation among the colonizers, who began to be worried about what they called "cargo cult."

There is a vast body of anthropological and other writing about "cargo cults," social movements (usually with millenarian overtones) reported frequently from Melanesia. The term itself has in recent years been severely criticized as a label less informative than mystifying. Nancy McDowell provides a less contentious approach to the subject by proposing that such beliefs and behaviors are best understood as merely one "example of how people conceptualize and experience change in the world."[55] Clearly, by the postwar period, Nasioi conceptualizations of change drew on a variety of experiences. Their attitudes in the 1960s not only displayed continuities with the lives they had known at the beginning of the European invasion but were also shaped by their interactions with planters, missionaries, and administrators, as well as by the cataclysm of war fought on their land. One result was a widespread notion that, if the Nasioi were to enjoy the kind of

life they attributed to colonizers, they needed to obtain the help of more powerful forces.

This notion took diverse forms. As McDowell points out, economics, politics, and religion all contain assumptions about change, so that in particular the line separating so-called cargo cults from economic or business activity "seems to be blurred indeed."[56] Thus, it was often the case in the 1950s and 1960s that the same Nasioi who undertook initiatives--like cash cropping and organizing trade stores--that could be approved as "development" might also lead rituals in cemeteries with the stated goal of summoning the ancestors or the Virgin Mary to bring material wealth ***(kago*** in Tok Pisin). Since even those Nasioi most eager for "development" could not have acquired such necessary skills as automotive operation and maintenance, much less bookkeeping and marketing, while enrolled in a mission school or making copra, it is not surprising that frustrations with their attempts at new economic activity sometimes led them to seek supernatural assistance, whether in a traditional or mission-influenced mode.

It is correct to note that colonizers in Melanesia had political reasons for putting the tag "cargo cult" on social movements that might threaten their dominance; Kieta administrators were quick to prosecute suspected "cult" leaders, under the charge "spreading false reports." However, one cannot therefore simply ignore the statements made by Nasioi themselves about how they expected to improve their lot. In 1962-1964, villagers were always eager to ask the anthropologist's opinion about stories of a book that contained the secrets of obtaining ***kago*** or of a cave in another part of the island that reportedly sheltered a treasure trove of Land Rovers and other valuable products of Western technology. In discussing rituals aimed at both ancestral spirits and the Christian pantheon, these Nasioi had their own Tok Pisin label--not "cargo cult" but ***"longlong lotu"*** (crazy church). In other words, as part of their conceptualization of achieving social change, many Nasioi included the notion that aid from more powerful, often supernatural, forces was as necessary as help from ***ma'naari*** had been in traditional subsistence activities. One could say that a "drama of dependency" continued, but the drama was always being rewritten by the Nasioi themselves, as their experiences of the modern world broadened.[57]

Nasioi desire for more satisfactory relations with external powers did not always emphasize supernaturalism, however. A particularly telling incident took place in Kieta in April 1962, when a visiting United Nations team touring the Trust Territory asked assembled leaders for their opinions. To the chagrin of administrative officers and other Europeans, several Nasioi asked that Australia be forced to relinquish control of Bougainville to the United States. The charge was made that the Australians treated Nasioi "like dogs,"

doing nothing to improve their welfare, and the implication was that Americans had shown the possibility of better treatment during World War II. (Other Nasioi present disagreed and expressed satisfaction with Australian rule--a further illustration that consensus has been hard to achieve throughout the colonial period.) What would seem most significant is that no Nasioi expressed a desire for ***independence,*** only for more congenial kinds of ***dependence.***[58]

Thus, sixty years of colonization's contradictions had produced in many, perhaps most, Nasioi profound resentment but no coherent strategy of resistance. In the fertile soil of indigenous religious attitudes present at the beginning of the century, colonizers had planted their own versions of Nasioi subordination and fostered the belief that the Nasioi should be dependent upon allegedly superior Europeans and their introduced ideologies. These messages had been delivered both explicitly and by everyday practice, with special force in the context of a plantation system that taught laborers nothing but their supposed inferiority. At the same time, the Nasioi maintained such agency as they could, even if only by withdrawing from colonizer activity. They continued to revise their ideas about the best ways to deal with social change, without losing all continuity with their precolonial past.

Conclusion

In 1964, geologists began the exploration of Nasioi land that ultimately led to creating a huge mining operation. What happened thereafter is beyond the scope of this article, but it cannot be emphasized too strongly that the Nasioi did not forget about all the years of plantation colonialism simply because new forms of exploitation were on the horizon. Intermittent fieldwork from 1964 through 1972 demonstrated clearly that the mining project was typically interpreted as "the last straw," merely the latest in a long history of disappointments created by a European presence. Experiences of racism and frustrated attempts to achieve satisfactory relations with colonizers formed a lens through which Nasioi assessed Bougainville Coppers activities.[59] When villagers complained about the mine, they regularly related the new threat to stories of earlier disillusion.

Thus, the argument presented here is that the events since 1964 cannot be completely understood without reference to the decades during which the Nasioi lived in a particular kind of colonial situation. Plantation colonialism as the Nasioi knew it differed from colonial history in many other parts of Melanesia. For example, a colonizer presence dominated by missionaries is not likely to have quite the same effect on villagers as one dominated by

planters. For another, even in the New Guinea highlands where coffee planters had a powerful influence on social change, they entered at a different period of world history, with different attitudes shaped in part by the requirements of a different crop as well as by a different administrative policy.[60]

In other words, this article provides an example of viewing colonialism "through its local expressions and refractions" in which the Nasioi have certainly been part of a "disputed process."[61] During the period described, they were never able to challenge colonizer dominance successfully, but they continued to be active agents in a complicated, contradictory history. Their attempts to adapt to change were rooted in attitudes that antedated a European invasion, but these attitudes in turn were reworked by a particular kind of political economy, one in which the peculiar institution of the copra plantation was a preeminent factor. The present group of young adults has grown up in a very different political economy, but they are not likely to forget their elders' stories of planter, ***kiap,*** and missionary. Rather, what must now be carefully scrutinized is how present and future generations of Nasioi will reinterpret and incorporate these earlier experiences in their own struggle for the more satisfactory life that still eludes them,

NOTES

1. The more substantial publications include Douglas L. Oliver, *Black Islanders: A Personal Perspective of Bougainville, 1937-1991* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991); Paul Quodling, *Bougainville: The Mine and the People* (St. Leonards, N.S.W.: Centre for Independent Studies, 1991); R. J. May and Matthew Spriggs, *The Bougainville Crisis* (Bathurst, N.S.W.: Crawford House Press, 1990); Matthew Spriggs and Donald Denoon, *The Bougainville Crisis 1991 Update* (Bathurst, N.S.W.: Crawford House Press, 1992); and a special issue of *The Contemporary Pacific* (Fall 1992).

2. Georges Balandier, *The Sociology of Black Africa: Social Dynamics in Central Africa* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1970 [orig. 1953]), 52.

3. James G. Carrier, ed., *History and Tradition in Melanesian Anthropology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), is a good example of this criticism. See also Eugene Ogan, review of *History and Tradition in Melanesian Anthropology,* ed. James G. Carrier, *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1994), 224-229.

4. Ernst Frizzi, *Ein Beitrag zur Ethnologie von Bougainville und Buka, mit spezialler Berucksichtung der Nasioi* (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1914), is the earliest substantial account of Nasioi life. The Marist Father Rausch's work on Nasioi language is also relevant: P. Rausch, "Die Sprache von Sudost-Bougainville, Deutsche Salamonsinseln," *Anthropos* 7 (1912), 103-154, 585-616, 964-994; "Die Verwandtschaftsnamen der Nasioi, Sudost-Bougainville, Deutsche Salamonsinseln," *Anthropos* 7 (1912), 1056-1057.

Other publications based on research carried out before World War II that discuss Nasioi include Richard Thurnwald, "Reisebericht aus Buin und Kieta," *Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie* 41 (1909), 512-531; E. W. P. Chinnery, "The Natives of South Bougainville and the Mortlocks (Taku)," *Territory of New Guinea Anthropological Reports* 4-5 (1924), [65]-166; Beatrice Blackwood, "Mountain People of the South Seas," *Natural History* 23 (1931), 414-433; Douglas L. Oliver, *Studies in the Anthropology of Bougainville, Solomon Islands* (Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum, 1948).

5. Eugene Ogan, "Nasioi Land Tenure: An Extended Case Study," *Oceania* 42 (1972), 82-93.

6. Douglas L. Oliver, *A Solomon Island Society: Kinship and Leadership among the Sinai of Bougainville* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955); cf. Marshall Sahlins. "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5 (1963), 285-303.

7. Cf. Frizzi, *Ein Beitrag,* 23.

8. Eugene Ogan, "Nasioi Marriage: An Essay in Model-Building," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 22 (1966), 172-193.

9. The statement was originally recorded in Tok Pisin: *"Sapos yu no givim kaikai long ol, yu yet kam bun nating tasol."* For early descriptions, see Frizzi, *Ein Beitrag,* 11; Chinnery, "The Natives," 72-73; Blackwood, "Mountain People," 427. Cf. Hugh Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians: A History of Catholic Missions in the Solomon Islands* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1976), 8.

10. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 25-26.

11. Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians,* 15, 54.

12. Ibid., 9, 73.

13. Ibid.. 66-71.

14. Peter Sack and Dymphna Clark, *German New Guinea: The Annual Reports* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979), 257.

15. Ogan, "Nasioi Land Tenure."

16. See, for example, Stephen W. Reed, *The Making of Modern New Guinea* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1943), 143-149.

17. C. D. Rowley, *The Australians in German New Guinea 1914-1921* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1958), 156.

18. Quoted in Roger M. Keesing and Peter Corris, *Lightning Meets the East Wind: The Malaita Massacre* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1980), 31-32. Cf. Judith Ben-

nett, *Wealth of the Solomons: A History of a Pacific Archipelago, 1800-1978* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), 164-166.

19. Michel Panoff is notable among anthropologists working in Melanesia for his early and continued appreciation of plantations as important forces in culture change. See, for example, his "An Experiment in Inter-tribal Contacts: The Maenge Labourers in European Plantations 1915-1942," *Journal of Pacific History* 4 (1969), 111-125; the special issue he edited of *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* 42 (1986); and "The French Way in Plantation Systems," *Journal of Pacific History* 26 (1991), 206-212.

20. Edward D. Beechert, *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1985), 58-59; Beechert, "Patterns of Resistance and the Social Relations of Production in Hawaii," in Brij V. Lal, Doug Munro, and Edward D. Beechert, eds., *Plantation Workers: Resistance and Accommodation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 45; Doug Munro, "Patterns of Resistance and Accommodation," in Lal et al., *Plantation Workers,* 11.

21. Cf. C. D. Rowley, *The New Guinea Villager: A Retrospect from 1964* (Melbourne: F. W. Cheshire, 1965), 107-115; Bennett, *Wealth of the Solomons,* 188-191.

22. The description of planters' lives in the Solomons given by Judith Bennett, " 'We Do Not Come Here to Be Beaten': Resistance and the Plantation System in the Solomon Islands," in Lal et al., *Plantation Workers,* 132-133, seems applicable to Bougainville planters as well. See below for further details.

23. Rowley, *The Australians,* 134.

24. Rowley, *The Australians,* 138-149. As Rowley, *The New Guinea Villager,* 105, notes, although illegal it still went on "for a long time." Flogging was taking place in Bougainville at the beginning of World War II; A. B. Feuer, ed., *Coast Watching in the Solomon Islands: The Bougainville Reports, December 1941-July 1943* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 66. During fieldwork in the early 1960s occasional incidents were reported by Nasioi, although in the form of "bashing" rather than systematic flogging. By this time, as described below, the labor force on plantations in the Kieta area was almost entirely non-Nasioi.

25. Balandier, *Sociology of Black Africa,* 52.

26. Rowley, *The Australians,* 134.

27. Peter Sack, "German New Guinea: A Reluctant Plantation Colony?' *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* 40 (1986), 126.

28. Peter G. Sack, *Land between Two Laws: Early European Land Acquisitions in New Guinea* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973), 103; R. S. McKay, personal communication, Kieta, 1963. Aropa continued to produce a small amount of rubber up to the 1960s.

29. In addition to working on plantations in the Bismarck Archipelago, Bougainvilleans made up the overwhelming majority of plantation workers on their own island until World War II. In 1933, they amounted to 90 percent of the labor force on Bougainville plantations; see Jill Nash and Eugene Ogan, "The Red and the Black: Bougainvillean Perceptions of Other Papua New Guineans," *Pacific Studies* 13, no. 2 (1990), 15. The experience of such "at-home" laborers differs significantly from that of indentured workers in the Solomons and elsewhere in New Guinea in that, for example, they were relatively shielded from new diseases on the one hand and from contact with other Melanesians on the other. Cf. Bennett, " We Do Not Come Here"' and, for Melanesians working in Australia, Clive Moore, "The Counterculture of Survival: Melanesians in the Mackay District of Queensland, 1865-1906," in Lal et al., *Plantation Workers,* 93-95. Being in familiar surroundings was almost certainly one factor leading to Nasioi strategies of "accommodation" rather than "resistance"; Munro, "Patterns."

30. Rowley, *The Australians,* 114, 151-155.

31. On the contrast between Melanesian ideals of reciprocity and the strictures of colonialism, see Bryant Allen, "The Importance of Being Equal: The Colonial and Postcolonial Experience in the Torricelli Foothills," in Nancy Lutkehaus et al., eds., *Sepik Heritage: Tradition and Change in Papua New Guinea* (Durham N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 1990), 185-196. Of course, many of the planters' attitudes and behaviors were shared by administrators and some missionaries. When planters occupy as prominent a place in the colonizer community as they did in the Kieta area, they may come to be "a stronghold of racial discrimination, an attitude that tends to spread to all European residents." H. Ian Hogbin, *Social Change* (London: Watts, 1958), 176. Cf. Rowley, *The New Guinea Villager* 74.

32. Rowley, *The Australians,* 317-325.

33. Robert Stuart, *Nuts to You!* (Sydney: Wentworth Books, 1977).

34. Ibid., 48, 54.

35. Ibid., 50, 56.

36. Ibid., e.g., 100-101, 109-110. Fieldwork in Kieta from 1962 to 1964 proved that remarkably little had changed in the interim.

37. Rowley, *The Australians,* 10-11.

38. James Griffin, Hank Nelson, and Stewart Firth, *Papua New Guinea: A Political History* (Richmond, Vic.: Heinemann Educational, 1979), 50.

39. Methodists and Seventh-day Adventists established missions in Bougainville during the Mandate era; however, the Nasioi and other Bougainvilleans adhered to Catholicism by a large majority.

40. Rowley, *The Australians,* 213-232.

41. Edward P. Wolfers, *Race Relations and Colonial Rule in Papua New Guinea* (Brookvale, N.S.W.: Australia and New Guinea Book Company, 1975), 5. See also Reed, *Making of Modern New Guinea,* 243-252.

42. K. Buckley and K. Klugman, *"The Australian Presence in the Pacific": Burns Philp 1914-1946* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), 125, 234. Prices are f.o.b. Sydney. The Australian pound was devalued in 1931.

43. Griffin et al., *Papua New Guinea,* 53.

44. Buckley and Klugman, *"The Australian Presence,"* 190.

45. Rowley, *The New Guinea Village,* 107-108.

46. O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964 [orig. 1950]), 139. There are a number of interesting parallels with regard to the creation of new senses of dependency and inferiority, and the ways in which both colonizer and colonized are caught up in such attitudes and behavior, between Mannoni's description of Malagasy and the Nasioi case. However, the present article is based on historical and ethnographic data, and there is no intention of following Mannoni in putting forth a general argument about colonialism that transcends these particulars.

47. Feuer, *Coast Watching,* 6-10, 41; Griffin et al., *Papua New Guinea,* 78-80; Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians,* 110-117.

48. A number of civilians still in Bougainville at the time of Japanese occupation, including most of the Catholic missionaries, were evacuated by U.S. submarines in late 1942. Others were interned; some were killed by the occupying troops. At the end of July, even the coastwatchers were evacuated. Feuer, *Coast Watching,* 155-157. See also Eric Feldt, *The Coastwatchers* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1964).

49. James Griffin, "Paul Mason: Planter and Coastwatcher," in James Griffin, ed., *Papua New Guinea Portraits: The Expatriate Experience* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1978), 139-161. See also Feuer, *Coast Watching,* 88. Even kinship did not determine "loyalty." In 1966, Nasioi in the mountainous Kongara area provided vivid stories of ambushing a raiding party of Japanese who were being assisted by lowland Nasioi of a particular clan in searching for Paul Mason. All in the party were killed by the Kongara villagers, except for one lowland youth who was saved by his classificatory "mother's brother." Note, however, that the same clan affiliation did not protect the other Nasioi raiders.

50. Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians,* 116-117.

51. Eugene Ogan and Terence Wesley-Smith, "Papua New Guinea: Changing Relations of Production," in A. B. Robillard, ed., *Social Change in the Pacific Islands* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1992), 50-55.

52. Nash and Ogan, "The Red and the Black," 7, 15.

53. Rowley, *The New Guinea Villager,* 72.

54. This is a synthesis of a number of statements made by men in their thirties, collected during 1963-1964. Although the statements were made individually, there was remarkable uniformity in their narrative style.

55. Nancy McDowell, "A Note on Cargo Cults and Cultural Constructions of Change," *Pacific Studies* 11, no. 2 (1988), 122. For a standard treatment of the subject, see Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of "Cargo" Cults in Melanesia* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968). Andrew Lattas, ed., "Alienating Mirrors: Christianity, Cargo Cults, and Colonialism in Melanesia," *Oceania* 63, no. 4 (1992) is one example of recent criticism of earlier literature.

56. McDowell, "A Note," 129. Cf. Eugene Ogan, *Business and Cargo: Socio-Economic Change among the Nasioi of Bougainville* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1972).

57. Ogan, *Business and Cargo,* 172-176. For a discussion of how new experiences changed Nasioi participation in three national parliamentary elections, see Eugene Ogan, "Cargoism and Politics in Bougainville 1962-1972," *Journal of Pacific History* 9 (1974), 117-129.

58. See *Pacific Islands Monthly* (May 1962), 138. Several local versions of this incident, from both Nasioi and Europeans, were collected in 1962-1964.

59. In 1964, a visiting senior administration official said he found race relations as bad in Kieta as in any place he had seen in Papua New Guinea. See J. Momis and E. Ogan, "A View from Bougainville," in Marion W. Ward, ed., *Change and Development in Rural Melanesia* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1972), 108.

60. Ben Finney, *Big Men and Business* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1973).

61. Nicholas Thomas, "Partial Texts: Representation, Colonialism, and Agency in Pacific History," *Journal of Pacific History* 25 (1990), 158.