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New Guinea English:
"Yielding to the Studical Means"

P. O. Box 628,
Port Moresby,
Papua,
Territory of Papua
and New Guinea

June 26, 1969

Mr. Richard H. Nolte,
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Dear Mr. Nolte,

"Language is the expression of ideas, and if the people of one country cannot preserve an identity of ideas [abstract ideas as well as those concerned with the physical and cultural environment], they cannot retain an identity of language" with the people of another country. Thus, by 1828, it seemed quite clear to Noah Webster that the people of the United States of America had begun to think sufficiently differently from their British forefathers, and had had to find, and sometimes to create, words to describe such a vastly different physical and cultural environment from that of the British Isles, that they finally deserved their own American Dictionary of the English Language. In the following year, Edward Gibbon Wakefield gloomily predicted in A Letter From Sydney:

> "Bearing in mind that our lowest class [that is, the convicts] brought with it a peculiar language [to Australia] and is constantly supplied with fresh corruption, you will understand why pure English is not, and is not likely to become, the language of the colony."

And now, nearly 150 years later, an authoritative dictionary of Australian English is in process of compilation at the University of Sydney to replace a series of more amateurish attempts published over the intervening period. Unfortunately, however, the new dictionary will be published too late to help President Nixon to decode the recent promise (and vindication of the need for such a dictionary) made by the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Gorton, that "we will go a-waltzing matilda with you, sir".

Papua has had a small permanent English-speaking population now for nearly a century, New Guinea for more than fifty years. It would be surprising, then, if a distinctive vocabulary of New Guinea English had not begun to emerge here to handle the expatriate population's ideas about, as well as its plans to change, the new and alien physical and cultural environment of Papua and New Guinea. Given the comparatively late, and then socially quite marginal, development of educational facilities here, and the absence of an indigenous recorded literature, the indigenous impact on, and use of, English has to date been rather slight. New Guinea English (as distinct from Pidgin, which although often

derided as "only New Guinea English", is a language in its own right) is still largely an expatriate creation, although the situation in this respect is changing very quickly indeed, as I hope this "Newsletter" will show.

The Changing Vocabulary of the Territory's Expatriate Population

New Guinea English as spoken by expatriate Australians is not yet very different from Australian English. The Territory's expatriate population has tended to be too homogeneous, linguistically and nationally, at least since the Germans lost New Guinea in 1914, for Papua and New Guinea to become a linguistic melting-pot. In addition, the rate of movement between the Territory and Australia has been so high - a three-months' trip south at least once every two years even for the Territory's "permanent" residents - that Papua and New Guinea's expatriate society has never been as much cut off from its well-spring as Australia once was from Great Britain. It is quite possible - to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw - for an Australian in Papua and New Guinea to open his mouth without making some other Australian despise him. Indeed, there is probably no discernible difference between the pronunciation of the two. If it is true, as Dr. Halliday Sutherland wrote in 1940, that "the colonial accent in Australia is due to the effects of an inflammation of the nose, a complaint from which most Australians seem to suffer," then the same pollen in the air (produced by thousands of grasses in Australia) to which the learned doctor attributed our national pattern of pronunciation surely grows in profusion throughout Papua and New Guinea. Despite its versatility in growing through such a wide range of climates, heights and types of physical terrain, however, the particular types of grasses responsible for "the great Australian twang" are selective in their impact: to date, they have affected the pronunciation of but a very tiny minority of (otherwise immune?) Papuans and New Guineans.

The English vocabulary employed by most Australians in Papua and New Guinea, however, contains not a few quite unique elements. Relatively few of them are direct borrowings from indigenous vernaculars - an interesting reflection perhaps of the infrequency and unidirectional quality (issuing orders in English, Pidgin or, more rarely, Police Motu, rather than conversing) of interracial interactions in Papua and New Guinea.

Very few Australians, and then usually only missionaries or anthropologists, have ever bothered to learn even a few words of greeting in an indigenous language. Just on two-thirds of the Territory's expatriate population aged ten years and over in 1966 claimed to speak Pidgin, and only 8% Police Motu - and both figures are, given the circumstances of the test, quite likely exaggerations. Probably one-third of the expatriate population of Papua and New Guinea could, therefore, converse only with the 13% of indigenous Papuans and New Guineans who claimed (on equally uncertain grounds as the expatriate Pidgin- and Police Motu-speakers) to speak English. Small wonder that New Guinea

English has still only borrowed about as many words from the Territory's languages as Australian English has acquired from Australia's Aborigines.

Most of the borrowings from local vernaculars by New Guinea English have tended to come from the languages of the people who have been in contact with Europeans longest: Kuanua, the language of the Tolai of the Rabaul area, and Motu which is spoken around Port Moresby. Most such borrowings have probably been made indirectly - through Pidgin or, rather less frequently, Police Motu. The Tolai have provided luluai and tultul as the titles for certain government-appointed village officials, although the original meanings of both terms have been quite drastically altered in the process. More conventionally, kina (originally a mussel-shell, more generally in Pidgin and now English a goldlip shell which is shaped into a crescent, then worn around the neck by many Highlanders) and garamut (a slit gong - a type of wooden drum) have been taken over unchanged from the Tolai to describe artifacts for which there are no ready English terms. Motu, on the other hand, has provided puripuri (sorcery), dubu (a carved post used for ceremonial purposes), lakatoi (a twin-hulled sailing-boat), guba (squall, storm or gale), and magani (wallaby - often used in a jocular way in New Guinea English). Otherwise, the Motu have provided only a few of those terms required to bolster the social statuses and divisions of colonial society: taubada (literally, big man) and sinabada (big woman), which were originally used as terms of respect when describing or addressing great traditional leaders, but were subsequently expropriated, and insisted upon, even in English conversation, as the appropriate terms to be used by, to and before Papuans when describing Europeans. The Motu language is also the source of a derogatory title often applied to the Territory by expatriates anxious to emphasise the allegedly timeless quality of life here. Papua then becomes "the Land of Dohore" (the land of bye and bye, or wait a while).

The Pidgin component in the vocabulary of New Guinea English is very much higher in New Guinea than in Papua, and in the bush than in the towns. The list of terms provided here is in no way definitive, and contains many words (shown in brackets where known) that came originally from other languages but seem to have entered English via Pidgin. The first version is the English one in each case, underlined where its spelling or precise formulation coincides with the Pidgin form. The list represents something of a compromise then: it contains words that are thought (but not definitely known) to have come from Pidgin into English; while the actual items listed represent something of a middlepoint between the basically urban Australian vocabulary of Port Moresby's expatriate population and that of the New Guinea outstation. The list has been compiled primarily from firsthand observation; too little is published in Papua and New Guinea for an appearance in print to be the criterion for inclusion, as is the case with the Oxford English Dictionary.

Some relatively straightforward borrowings from and via Pidgin are:

baret (Malay)	ditch, drain, furrow, trench
bighead (Pidgin: bighet) bigheaded bigheadedness	proud, too proud, overweening, an upstart (usually a term of abuse)
bilum	a net-bag suspended from the head and used as a carry-all by women throughout Papua and New Guinea
buai (Kuanua)	betel nut (Areca catechu)
bung (Kuanua)	as a noun:"(native) market" as a verb: assemble, gather together, gather round, meet
court (Pidgin: kot)	to take someone to court

(N.B. "I will court you" means "I will take you to court" - an occasionally embarrassing ambiguity, no doubt, for the romantically inclined)

didiman	an agricultural officer
gumi (German)	"rubber" in Pidgin; in English, the inner tube of a tyre
guria (Kuanua)	earthquake or tremor
kai (Pidgin: kaikai)	food (a slang expression in New Guinea English)
kaukau	sweet potato (a species of Ipomea)
kiap (A Pidgin expression that probably came originally from the English word "captain")	patrol officer

(hence "number one kiap" - Pidgin: nambawan kiap - for the senior Administration field officer in a District or Sub-District)

kunai (Kuanua)	grass, grassland
kundu	drum, tomtom, hand drum
kuskus (New Ireland)	clerk
laplap	waistcloth, loincloth
lapun	"old" in Pidgin; in English, a slang term for a villager
lucky (Pidgin: laki, from the English word "lucky")	a card game, sometimes involving gambling, played by Papuans and New Guineans
mankimasta	domestic or personal servant
meri (from the English words "Mary" or "marry")	in Pidgin, a woman generally; in New Guinea English, a derogatory slang word used to describe indigenous women

mumu	the food cooked, or the method of cooking, by steaming with heated stones in a hole in the ground
oli (originally from the English word "all")	a derogatory term used by many expatriates to refer to what they clearly regard as that great amorphous mass of Papuans and New Guineans "out there"
one-talk (Pidgin: wantok)	a speaker of one's own language; more generally, just "friend" (usually used in expatriate New Guinea English to describe the indigenous friend of another indigene)
raus (German)	to throw out, dismiss, get rid of, sack
sarif (also pronounced, and there -fore spelt, sarep or sarip in Pidgin)	grass-knife (usually just a sharpened length of hoop iron)
singsing	an indigenous festival or ceremony, usually accompanied by singing, dancing and/or feasting
tambu (Kuanua)	forbidden (more specifically, forbidden to Papuans and New Guineans, often accompanied on public notices by a picture of a hand held up like that of a policeman stopping traffic)
tasol (originally from the English "that's all")	that's all, only, but, however

Some Pidgin terms have undergone a change in meaning in the process of entering New Guinea English. Many such changes have been of the kind that one has come to associate with the racial assumptions and social structure of colonial society (for example, meri, oli and tambu above). Other expressions have changed in rather less socially invidious ways: pas (Pidgin for "letter") now indicates in New Guinea English a letter given to a Papuan or New Guinean explaining what he is about, or recommending him for employment; while "going finish" (from the Pidgin go pinis) now means more than "went" or "has gone". In New Guinea English "going finish" means "going to Australia for good, with no intention of returning". Other Pidgin expressions, such as man no gud ("man no good" in New Guinea English), no ken ("no can" - that is, cannot), nogat ("no got" - no, there are none) and rabis man ("rubbish man" - man of no account), have been absorbed into the slang of New Guinea English so as only to add local colour to conversation. They carry no more derogatory overtones in New Guinea English than their direct meanings imply.

Finally, some quite conventional English words and phrases that are but infrequently used in Australian English have acquired rather greater currency in New Guinea English conversation, probably because their similarity to certain Pidgin terms renders dialogue somewhat easier between expatriates whose mother-tongue is English and New Guineans who

prefer not to speak Pidgin. Thus, "bugger up" and "buggered" are not swearwords in New Guinea English, although they are not quite as neutral in meaning as the Pidgin bagerap, which means "to be damaged, ruined, wrecked, spoilt, badly hurt, injured, out of order, very tired, not well, done for". The term's New Guinea English meaning is much the same as in Pidgin, but it is still not quite as polite as its more conventional alternatives. Words like "benzine" for petrol (Pidgin: bensin), "cargo" for baggage (kago), "humbug" (hambag), "calaboose" for gaol (kalabus), "kanaka" (a derogatory term, Polynesian in origin, for an indigene), "lollywater" for soft drink (loliwara), "piccaninny" for indigenous children (pikinini) and "savvy", a possible melding of the English slang term "savvy" and the Pidgin term for "knowledge" (save), are all standard English terms that are only infrequently used in Australia. In Papua and New Guinea, they tend to replace all of their alternatives because of their simultaneous use in Pidgin, and in some cases in Police Motu too, or because of their identity of meaning (if not spelling) with their Pidgin counterparts.

One of the most interesting gauges of the changing structure of Territory society and race relations would be a glossary of the terms used by expatriates to describe Papuans and New Guineans, and of the terms of respect (or apparently acknowledged racial supremacy) required in return. At the present time, such a glossary would probably measure a second aspect of the same broad subject: the geographical dimensions of social change, or, put another way, the time-lag between, say, the change from "native" to "indigene" as between Port Moresby and other Territory centres. Broadly, such a study would show not only an increasing time-lag between the town and the bush, and between various urban mainland centres as one moves westwards from Port Moresby, but, secondly, a fantastic gap between public and official terminology, and private conversational usages among expatriates. Thus, such terms as "missus" and "masta" for expatriate females and males respectively when addressed by Papuans and New Guineans "respectfully" are as much part of New Guinea English as "boi" (sometimes less offensively spelt "boy", although still applied indiscriminately to adults) for indigenes generally, just men, or an expatriate's employees and underlings, and "bushkanaka" as a derogatory description of a villager. For what it is worth, "master" and "missus" (sometimes replaced by taubada and sinabada by Papuans) are still quite frequently insisted upon as the appropriate terms for Papuans and New Guineans to use when addressing Europeans in Port Moresby, which is, by far, the most "liberal", freely intermixing town in Papua and New Guinea. Papuans and New Guineans, in turn, are lucky if they called nothing worse than "boy" or one of its variants,"cookboy" (Pidgin: kukboi),"bossboy" (bosboi - for an indigenous foreman or supervisor), etc., by expatriates.

Before leaving the rather tawdry, narrow-minded provincialism of New Guinea English as used by expatriates, one ought perhaps to point to the emergence of a few quite interesting neologisms. Time, for example, is measured in "company and government fortnights", stemming from the general practice whereby the employees of the government and of private enterprise are paid on alternate Fridays, presumably to prevent a run on the banks every two weeks as well as to lighten the work of the police hotel patrols (fotnait, incidentally, has now become an alternative Pidgin word for pe, "pay"). In addition, general stores, many Chinese-

and most of the few indigenous-owned and -habituated stores are still called "trade stores" in memory of the time when copra was exchanged for trade goods in such stores rather than bought for cash from Papuans and New Guineans. "Compound", too, is used in a special sense in Papua and New Guinea: it designates a special housing area for indigenes, formerly a separate part of most Territory towns, but now generally just the place where a company or the government provides accommodation for its employees. On the relatively rare occasions when they discuss the structure or customs of indigenous society, expatriates also use a few special terms, like "big man" for an important traditional leader, or "payback" to describe the tendency to reciprocity in many transactions among indigenes, from revenge-killings to the fulfilment of a debtor's obligations to his creditors.

In general, however, but for some locally-derived slang and colour, New Guinea English ought probably still to be regarded as but a sub-type within the broad framework of Australian English rather than a major deviant in its own right from Standard Southern English. Only when English becomes, and is felt to be, a language that Papuans and New Guineans can use as well as learn, will New Guinea English begin to acquire the rich local flavour deriving from a close identity with its environment that characterises the standard vocabularies of both American and Australian English.

How Papuans and New Guineans Are Beginning to Use English

Only forty years after the arrival of the first fleet in New South Wales, an observer of the local scene was pleased to report that "All the natives round Sydney understand English well and speak it, too, so as to be understood by residents" (that is, Europeans):

> "The Billingsgate slang they have acquired in perfection, and no white would think of competing with them in abuse or hard swearing, a constant torrent of which flows from their mouths as long as their antagonist remains before them."

The structure of Papuan and New Guinean urban and plantation society is still such that many Papuans and New Guineans who cannot otherwise speak English are quite well acquainted with the Australian vocabulary of swearing and abuse, both in general and of the racially-pointed variety. I even know some Highlanders who normally converse in Pidgin with their employers who have now learnt to swear for quite extended periods in Italian, without being able to provide a word-for-word translation of what they have learnt from their supervisors.

English has always been pre-eminently a colonial language in Papua and New Guinea: a medium of instruction rather than conversation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the first few Papuans and New Guineans to appear in print should be, as Ulli Beier has written of Papua's first English-language poet, men "whose work was characterised by good intentions and no imagination."

For a long time, the sole sources of literary inspiration available to most Papuans and New Guineans have been religious tracts, reforming pamphlets and injunctions, carefully selected novels and bucolic poetry. What was probably the first English essay published by a New Guinean, a lad from Manus studying at the Rabaul government school in the early 1920s, bears witness to the inappropriateness of the inspiration expatriate educationalists provided for the young. He was asked to describe a picture:

> "This is a very large dog.
> The skin of the dog is black and white.
> There are many sheep in this picture.
> They are standing in the grass.
> The dog is near the sheep.
> I think the dog is running at the sheep.
> They are also in the picture.
> The grass is green.
> There are some flowers too."

In its report to the League of Nations on its administration of New Guinea during 1922-23, the Australian government predicted confidently from the above evidence (the product of only two years' schooling) that there was, fortunately, "little doubt that the disinclination [on the part of many New Guineans] to speak grammatical English will disappear as time goes on."

In 1932, Ligeremaluoga (Osea), a New Irelander, authored the first book-length work by a New Guinean (by writing his story in the vernacular for translation into English by a female expatriate missionary). The book's character, indeed the entire set of assumptions surrounding the young New Guinean's admission to the literary world, may be gauged from the translator's description of the book as the "work of a man who, though a savage, had the fine instincts of a gentleman and the brain power of a scholar." It was not until 1968 that any Papuan or New Guinean ever again attempted to publish a book-length work other than small booklets of legends or religious moralisings, which were widely held to be the best and most appropriate forms of self-expression for them.

Although one can press the point too far in a country in which only a very tiny minority of the people understood any English at all, and certainly lacked access to a printing-press, only very recently indeed have Papuans and New Guineans been encouraged by outsiders to express themselves at all freely, and without the rather dubious benefits of expatriate editorship. Given the oppressive paternalism, however benevolent, of the few media of self-expression available to them, Papuans and New Guineans required encouragement rather than permission, or at least stimulation from a literature with which they could identify in some way. A vernacular literature was never really possible among a people with so many small language groups, many of whose languages have still not gained an alphabet.

The best medium for self-expression available in Papua before the war was F. E. Williams' The Papuan Villager, a government-sponsored monthly publication, designed to educate, and provide an avenue for the literary output of, the indigenous inhabitants of Papua. Its tone was at best benevolently paternalistic, and always very "correct" and moralistic (in a mid-Victorian way).

In the paper's first issue, the editor, who was, significantly, also the government anthropologist at the time, explained his policy in the following terms:

> "The paper is written in English, because the Government want you to learn the white man's language. There are many languages in Papua - Kiwai, Namau, Motu, Suau, Binandele and many others - more than a hundred of them. The white man cannot learn them all. It is better then for the Papuans to learn the white man's language. Then he will understand you, and you will understand him. And that will be a good thing, for he can teach you a lot that is new.
>
> "If you try hard to learn English, someday you will be able to read the white man's books. But now we hope you will try hard to read this paper.
>
> "Many of you will not understand it yet. If you do not, then ask your friend, or your teacher, or your taubada or your sinabada to help you; and if you are still at school try hard to learn English."

Within the rather narrow framework of its moral and linguistic terms of reference, The Papuan Villager tried hard. It assiduously sought indigenous article-writers, even if their writings were only classified as articles in inverted commas at the start:

> "We want Papuans to help to write their own paper. We want them to write "articles". An article may be one of your old-time stories; or it may tell about some of your village fashions; or it may tell about something you have done in the village, or on the Government station, or at the Mission, or on the plantation. The article should not be a very big one."

In general, indigenous article-writers were asked to confine themselves to about half a column each (in a newspaper of eight three-column pages), and were promised five shillings for the best article to appear each month, and one shilling each for all the others. The very first issue of the paper, in fact, contained an article entitled "How we Catch Dugongs in our Village at Suau" by a Papuan clerk, Nansen K, who was employed in the Magistrate's Office at Rigo, east of Port Moresby. By The Papuan Villager's third issue, Williams' office seems to have been inundated by the manuscripts of budding authors:

"Plenty of boys have sent in articles this month. Many of them are very good, and they are all welcome. There is not room enough in the paper to print them all, but we hope you will keep on sending them in."

One of the central problems in the development of an indigenous literature, and hence in the emergence of a rich and vital set of locally relevant vocabulary-items and expressions, has been the need to cast off the shackles of expatriate correction and editing of indigenous attempts at writing. Eventually, F. E. Williams himself seemed to see that Papuan authors ought to be allowed to use the English language as they chose and to make mistakes as expatriate authors do. English should, in time, become "their" language too, as much as it was "ours" now. Thus, in his introduction to "The Reminiscences of Ahuia Ova", a prominent Motuan leader, which were published in the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1939, he apologised for his failure to correct the English of Igo Erua's (another Papuan) translation. After what he described as "much troublesome experience in the emendation of native MSS" while editor of The Papuan Villager, Williams admitted to being able "still...to find some humour in the expressions used by native scholars, and the hope that others may do so has induced him to leave them close to their original form." A few examples of the prose should leave no doubt that there was more than humour to their style.

In a quite expressively stilted prose, the reminiscences, as published, drew a poignant picture of the way in which many Papuans were still concerned to feel their way slowly forward....

What editor could have corrected the following description of Ahuia Ova's behaviour after his conversion to Christianity without depriving it of its real impact?:

"And I lived with good and also went to church with strong, and I preached in village too..."

- shades of years of sermonising by the London Missionary Society.

Again, after ceasing to attend church regularly, two European missionaries went to a great deal of trouble to cajole Ahuia Ova back into their flock. They feared he might have defected to the Catholics, whereas, as the reminiscences so faithfully record, the problem was really rather different; Ahuia Ova had not yet subordinated himself completely to the ways required of him, and the precepts preached to him, by the white man:

"But they came to me all the time, and kept on persuading me. And I told them that I had not been going to church at all; but my mind was waking continually and not sleeping at all. Of course my body was dancing and making a feast in the village."

After so many years of persistent moralising at Papuans and New Guineans, and quite assiduous correction of their grammar, their vocabulary, and their ideas, by expatriates, it should come as no surprise to find a still quite exceptional young New Guinean doctor venting his anger in the sort of English that only really reveals pent-up frustration. For Dr. Ilomo Batton at least, careful, controlled, and calm, academic discourse can come later. Meanwhile, on with one's personal struggle for self-expression, specifically in the author's self-chosen cause to rename Papua and New Guinea "Paradesia", whatever the rules for political debate Westminster-style:

> "So the names, Papua and New Guinea, have been in all truths the imposters!!! having been coined here and there and both have the mixtures of the qualities of all the human degradations about them and have been pushed into our heads without our concerns. People who first saw us must have thought that our land, with all its malaria-stricken peoples, provided the good dumping ground for them to cast in their filthy wastes of their contempts of other human beings."

According to the 1966 national census, just over 13% of the indigenous population of Papua and New Guinea aged ten years of age or more now speaks English well enough to tell an interviewer in English how many pigs there are in a picture shown to them in the test. A higher percentage of Papuans than New Guineans speak English, probably because of the pre-war administration's relatively wide official use of English (and never Pidgin) in Papua, and because of the relatively greater number of village-level schools there. Further, in both territories, roughly twice as many men as women speak English. While less than half of those who speak Police Motu or Pidgin are literate, 81% of those Papuans and New Guineans who can speak English are literate - an interesting reflection, probably, of the tendency for English still to be a language learnt formally at school rather than an autonomously spreading lingua franca. As only one-fifth of those Papuans and New Guineans who speak English do not speak Pidgin or Police Motu too, it seems reasonable to assume that English is generally used only as a second or even a third lingua franca (after the local vernacular, perhaps Kâte or another regional lingua franca, and Pidgin or Police Motu). Nonetheless, increasing numbers of Papuans and New Guineans are becoming fluent in English, and some cannot speak another lingua franca. A few indigenous children of relatively well-educated townsmen, or the adopted children of expatriates, cannot speak another language. Unfortunately, however, for many children who go to school for only a few years without completing their education (still probably a majority of those who even get to school at all), learning English is almost pathetically pointless. When they return home to the village, there is often no one else with whom they can converse in English, and little more to read. Within a few years, then, their knowledge of English is forgotten, and most of the expatriates with whom they come in contact find it easier to converse with them in Pidgin than to struggle on in English.

The colonial heritage of English has given it a somewhat ambiguous reputation in indigenous eyes. In many of the more remote and backward parts of Papua and New Guinea, a knowledge of English is

prestigious, an obvious indication of access to the modern world. In some places, a knowledge of English is regarded as a possible key, not only to social acceptance (by expatriates) and status, but perhaps even to the secret sources of expatriate wealth and power. Indeed, the prestige of English is probably highest among those who have had least access to it, while, conversely, many coastal New Guineans are coming to regard Pidgin as "our" language as opposed to English which is "theirs", and "ours" only for official purposes. A number of very well-educated young Tolais who come from an area of relatively intense, if unhappy, contact, have taken this particular line of thinking one step further now, and ostentatiously speak Kuanua when they can. A young Tolai announcer on the local radio station here has recently been criticised for beginning his regular programme for English speakers with"bo na marum (Kuanua for "good night") everyone".

One can detect some signs of the wide range of attitudes towards English to be found among Papuans and New Guineans from the persistent requests from many members of the House of Assembly for more English schools in their electorates, while, at another extreme, a Papuan candidate for a New Guinea coastal electorate in the 1968 elections ruefully reported that he was having difficulty in living down his reputation as a well-educated English-speaker among people who seemed to agree with his own self-deprecating verdict:

> "The great majority of natives are boastful creatures especially the lucky ones who can speak English."

On the other hand, a young New Guinean university student recently revealed that some expatriates at least share the assessment of the voters whose verdict appears above. Late last year, he was refused vacation-employment as a clerk by an expatriate official who explained that New Guineans who speak English tend to be "bigheaded". Has the wheel now turned full circle from the days when New Guineans were refused employment because they could not speak English?

Many Papuans and New Guineans are, nonetheless, quite rationally and unemotionally aware of the longterm personal value to be derived from an English education in a country that, economically at least, cannot afford another language (except perhaps Malay) for educational and official use. A young Papuan, in his third year of high school, recently gave rather quaint expression to the widespread feeling of his fellow-pupils that English ought to be insisted upon not only in the classroom, but in the playground too. In a letter to the editor of his school newspaper, he wrote:

> "Dear Editor,
>
> I am in a unsatisfactory condition with the students because many of them are not using English in this school. As far as I am concerned prefects are not doing what they ought to do. Sometimes I hear a prefect shouting out to the students to do the right things but they are not using English but Motu. This is because I think the prefects are leading the students to this problem and something must be done quickly."

Even more forcefully, the editor, a classmate, of the original correspondent, then replied:

> "You are in the right mood. If it is as you say, I think if you see this happen again, the Headmaster will be pleased to hear about it. I think the prefects not a band of stupids.
>
> Editor."

One should enjoy finding out what the United Nations Trusteeship Council would make of such support for its view that English only should be taught, and be the medium of instruction too, in Territory schools. If nothing else, some Papuans and New Guineans are beginning to use English in their own way, after more than twenty years of government adherence to the U. N's views.

Although Papua and New Guinea still lacks the vital and exuberant literature of Nigeria's Onitsha market, the buoyant self-confidence in both style and subject matter Ulli Beier so vividly described in Black Orpheus (No. 14), the beginnings of an alive and original literature in which Papuans and New Guineans use English for their own purposes are in sight. A creative writing course is being taught at the University of Papua and New Guinea; a new literary journal, run by students and staff-members at the university, Kovave (named after the first Orokolo initiation ceremony), has appeared this year, mercifully free of the cloying sentimentality, moralism and provincialism of Port Moresby's "respectable", cultural establishment; and a Papuan, Albert Maori Kiki, last year published the first full-length book by an indigene (and the first by a Papuan), Kiki: Ten Thousand Years In A Lifetime, for more than thirty years. His book, which was dictated on to a tape-recorder, and then transcribed by Ulli Beier, was the first published of a number of books by Papuans and New Guineans, most of which are still presently in process of preparation. It represents a new departure from the sermons and legends of old to which Papuans and New Guineans were customarily restricted. Papuan and New Guinean writers are at last beginning to express themselves, free of many of the constraints on their grammatical and vocabulary use of English imposed by expatriate editors, and, above all, of those constraints upon their ideas that expatriate editorship, almost by definition, has so far implied. Papuan and New Guinean writers no longer need to be simple, grateful folk.

Even at high school level, a new freedom is felt, and a fascinating freshness is revealed. The last of several generations of schoolboy versification on such subjects as roses is still published in high school magazines:

> "The roses that grow in Michael's garden
> Are as pretty as a beautiful girl.
> In the early morning they look happy
> As happy as a girl dancing...."

Meanwhile, in the wings, an increasing number of young Papuans and New Guineans is beginning to ask some fascinating questions. In a poem called "My Island "Yuo"", one lad from the Sepik has provided us with just the barest insight into what the European "discovery" of "unknown" New Guinea looked like from the other side:

> "I was born with joy on the island of Yuo,
> Island explored by the unknown Spanish explorer de Retez,...."

As yet, Papua and New Guinea lacks the "Highlife" literature of Nigeria. Papuans and New Guineans generally are uncertain about their rights to public self-expression, and rather wary of exuberance in print. They tend to share the suspicion expressed in an uninvited contribution to one school's newspaper by its typist (whose letter appears here exactly as it did in the original):

"NOTICE TO ALL DISTRIBUTORS.

Dear Distributors,

As I sit on my chair, looking suspiciously at your distributions, I always get angry, because of the following reason:-

a). Poor writing.
b(. Poor expressions.
c). Poor speech and accuracy.
d). To much explainations.
e). Rep eated Matters, etc.

less All this is because the Editor and his newspaper men have interest in looking through the inward articles. It usually takes me hours and hours to correct the errrors. Sometimes when I have much work to do or less interest in correction, I just type them out as it is written. I therefore warn you, please be very careful when you send in your article. Make sure you must read your article aloud by yourself and feel yourself if it makes any sense, if not then please try again before you finally send in to be published.

matters

Are you happy to read the same over and over? I ask you this question, because I haven't read any legends, myths, stories, etc from you. Try and make out newspaper more interesting, because we are sending [it] to other schools.

I havent not typed other inward artic les because of the reasons that I have mentioned above. Thank you.

Mr. ————————
(Headmaster's Secretary)."

It was hard enough to persuade the teachers to stay out, but here, in the language and with the enthusiasm of a "Highlife" writer, is the voice of the old order (added to the magazine without the editor's knowledge), the order that stifled or denied indigenous attempts at self-expression, and reduced even expatriate writing about Papua and New Guinea to works suitable only for external consumption.

Relatively few books circulate in Papua and New Guinea, and even the token appearance of some African titles on school reading-lists - "to show them [presumably because they are black] that they can do it too," as I was recently told by an expatriate who supported the new trend - has scarcely altered the picture. The few novels written in or about Papua and New Guinea by expatriates are largely jaundiced, unimaginative accounts of cargo cults (one of which is so unpleasant that it has unofficially been banned), the poetry no better (and often worse) than the simple ballads reprinted in EPW-9. Otherwise, Papua and New Guinea has been left to anthropologists and travel-writers to grapple with, authors **from** and for the **outside world.** The very frequency of "cannibal", "dohore", "savage" and "unknown" in their titles tells the story, for, as one rather exceptionally prejudiced, but honest, writer, Helen McLeod, put it in her book, Cannibals Are Human: A District Officer's Wife in New Guinea (which was published in Australia in 1961):

> "...even though I have friendly feelings for the "boongs" at most times, I do not care enough about them to dedicate my whole life and the boyhood of my sons to their emancipation from the superstitions, ignorance, blood-lust and laziness that have been their ingrained characteristics for thousands of years..."

- so she wrote her book, and left her husband and the last few years of her life in the Territory, quite unable to master, or even understand, the fierce variety and complexity of Papua and New Guinea's many culture-areas and peoples, and the beauty of the landscapes. Most of the literature dealing with Papua and New Guinea that has been written by outsiders has just not been able to cope with the reality of the country. It has, instead, appealed to some of the less noble interests and instincts of its outside readers. One can only hope that eventually these outside voices will, in time, be replaced by the authentic voices of the people themselves, so that the analyses and descriptions of the outside world will **return** to their appropriately minor role in the education to, and the creation of, an indigenous self-image, as well as Papua and New Guinea's image abroad.

In conclusion, it seems appropriate to point out that the original stimulus for this "Newsletter", and the source of its title, comes from one of the most fascinating pieces of indigenous writing I have ever seen. After years of expatriate theorising about, and spying upon, very rarely accompanied by participation in, indigenous society, a young semi-educated New Guinean decided several years ago to try his hand at anthropological analysis, and submitted **the** resulting work to a journal in which, on any realistic appraisal of the situation, he could not hope to be published. His first sentence, however, seems worthy of remembrance as a stimulus to future indigenous writers on Papua and New Guinea:

> "The time has now arrived when the Ideological and Cultural things must yield to the studical means."

After years of expatriate writing on Papua and New Guinea, why should not Papuans and New Guineans have a go?

Yours sincerely,

Edward Wolfers.

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