

**SPECIAL
SELF-GOVERNMENT
ISSUE**

**NEW
WORLD
NEWS**
FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT



New Guinea highlanders advertise showings of the Pidgin version of the African film Freedom.

**PAPUA
NEW GUINEA**
*new nation
in the making*

Mek Nugintz MHA (right), one of 18 members of the House of Assembly who asked to have Freedom shown in their areas before independence. He is seen dressed for a traditional Sing-Sing wearing a wig made of human hair and a bird of paradise plume.



Papua New Guinean delegation at Asia Plateau, Panchgani, India

Special message

from Paul Lapun MHA, Minister for Mines and Energy

There is no doubt that many people here in Papua New Guinea and most people of other countries in the world and Europeans and non-Papua New Guineans that are here in Papua New Guinea may be still conscious of suspicion of what is going to happen to the whole country of Papua New Guinea on December 1st.

It is quite true that nobody really could tell about what is going to happen to Papua New Guinea on the day. But the facts, and God's plan for Papua New Guinea's future, will tell.

Since most of the elected members of our parliament are good, faithful Christians and most of them have spent a great deal of time with MRA people who dedicated themselves to showing the film *Freedom* and other films to the people of Papua New Guinea, I doubt very much that serious incidents will take place on December 1st.

And there is no doubt of course if Papua New Guinea reaches December 1st peacefully it will be really God's blessing and it could be a great show to the world of today.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

— *new nation in the making*

by Anton Pedersen

Today Australia's long-time colony Papua and the UN Trusteeship of New Guinea will be formally granted self-government as one united country. Full independence is expected to follow in the near future. We mark the occasion with this report and photographs by a young Dane in Port Moresby.

MOVES TOWARDS SELF-GOVERNMENT and independence in Papua New Guinea have created in many parts of the world an increasing awareness of this emerging nation.

Some journalists and political observers are busy predicting secession, bloodshed and a return to tribalism. But the predominant impression one gets here is that the positives far out-weigh the negatives, and that if Papua New Guinea will learn the lessons of history then there is every chance that she will succeed as a nation.

Building a nation is no small task, and in Papua New Guinea there are problems imposed by nature that make progress slower than in other countries.

Historically, parts of the country are still emerging from the Stone Age, with people in remote areas who seldom, if ever, come into contact with modern civilisation. Geographically, the extremes of sharp, tall mountain ridges—several rising higher than 4,000 metres above sea level, impenetrable jungles and crocodile-infested mangrove swamps, hinder surface movement and keep people isolated from one another. Yet the country is rich in what nature has provided, with hundreds of edible fruits and vegetables, and mountains that bulge with copper and other useful minerals.

The indigenous people themselves are of great diversity. There are more than one thousand different tribes speaking 700 distinctly different languages. In addition to the giant tasks of introducing formal education and a common language, there is the problem of helping people to adjust to the new ways of life imposed by their rapidly changing society. For many this has literally meant, as one leader here put it, 'to cross ten thousand years in a lifetime'.

Throughout the country there is much discussion on what Papua New Guinea's future should be. People are searching for new ideas to form the basis of a workable national philosophy. At this decisive point of the country's development, more and more political leaders, churchmen and educators are asking for Moral Re-Armament's films to be shown throughout the country.

In one area which in recent years has been the scene of great bitterness and confrontation, an indigenous church



Geoffrey Craig and Anton Pedersen (centre) with group of New Guinea Highlanders. Photo: Dr D. Beavis

Transferring to canoe

leader arranged twelve showings of *Freedom* (the Pidgin version of the African film *Freedom*) in an effort to bring the dissident groups together. He commented on the fresh ideas the film had given him and others and said that some difficult men, after seeing the film, had begun to act unselfishly, thinking for the good of the whole community and not just their own group.

Last December an international conference of Moral Re-Armament on the theme 'Beyond Hate and Violence to the Unselfish Society' took place at the Institute of Technology in Lae, Papua New Guinea's second impressive university. One result of the conference was that five young Papua New Guineans decided to devote a year to get training with Moral Re-Armament in India. Another was the decision of people from Milne Bay to host a conference over Easter this year. A group of us went to take part in this conference. Although we did not understand much of the speaking, as it was in Suau and Tavora—the local languages—there was no mistaking the spirit of change taking place. This was underlined by the invitations to bring the films to different villages.

During the next few weeks a young Scotsman, Geoffrey Craig, and I visited eight villages. They all lie on the shores of the beautiful Milne Bay, where steep mountains rise out of the sea and the beaches are fringed with coconut plantations. We showed the films mostly out in the open, making use of our portable



Loading film equipment

film unit—generator, projector, screen and lights.

In Wagawaga village we met a young man who had been known for his wild ways in some of the country's towns. He told us that after seeing the films he had decided to stop drinking—the cause of his bad reputation. He walked with us to Gamadoudou, the neighbouring village, where he told the audience that evening of his decision.

The following day we set off across the bay again, back to Alotau, the administrative centre of the district. We loaded the equipment on to the boat from dug-out canoes, which looked perilous as they had no outriggers. But the indigenous people are experts at handling them, so everything went well. Nevertheless, I had bad dreams about our equipment sinking to the bottom.

On another occasion we went twenty miles by very muddy unsurfaced roads

to Naura village. On the way we had to ford two rivers with the truck we had been loaned. When we arrived in the village we were met by our host, Lebasi Mark, President of the Milne Bay Local Government Council and one of those responsible for the Easter conference. He had already had a showing of *Fridom* and *A Man For All People* at the Council Chambers after one of the regular meetings of the Council. Now he wanted his people to see the films. We set up the equipment in the village church and went ahead. At the end of

4 am to get a fire going and bake the scones in an oven made from a 44-gallon drum.

Thus strengthened, we set off again. A schoolboy had already cycled to the river and back and reported that it was falling. When we arrived at the bank another boy waded across. Though it was higher than normal, it looked all right, so Geoffrey decided that he would have a go at driving through. It was about 80 feet wide and in we went. We did not get very far before the wheels started spinning and we were stuck. As

put on *Fridom* and *A Man For All People* at the mine site cinema. These men all come from different districts in the country. On the evening of the show, 714 people, all mineworkers and their families, crowded into the cinema only meant to hold 560; many did not get in. The programme was organised by the committee and at the close of the evening they turned over all the money taken at the door to help cover our travel costs.

Not long after, Lars Thulin, a young Swede, and Geoffrey Craig flew to Buin in the south of Bougainville. They tell about their time there: 'We were the guests of Michael Lugabai, Vice President of the Local Government Council. Though his mother was seriously ill in hospital, he immediately arranged to take us to his village, so the next day we set off in a four-wheel drive vehicle. After one and a quarter hours even this car would go no further, and we had to disembark. Then followed another one and a quarter hours' walk in the hills. We carried our bags and soon were thinking of what we could have left out of them! The equipment followed us, slung on poles between villagers. That evening we showed the films under a beautiful moon.'

'The next day we spent talking with villagers before setting off down the hill to Tabago Catholic Mission. It was two and a half hours walk, and darkness fell while we were still on the road. This did not seem to worry the men carrying the equipment, who happily kept up their cracking pace. This time we had not been allowed to carry anything, yet we still found it difficult to keep up.'

'At one point I slipped and fell in a creek,' Geoffrey recalls. 'But at least it saved me the trouble of taking off my shoes crossing the last river.'

'In ten days in the Buin area the rain came down for most of five days. The road to Kieta was washed out. Even so, we were able to show the films six times.'

At the end of July we went to the Western Highlands. Mek Nugintz, Member of the House of Assembly for Mul near the town of Mt Hagen, had asked us to return with the films to his area. We had been there once before in November last year. Not long before this latest trip we had met a young man from the Mt Hagen area working in a bank in Port Moresby. As he expressed great interest in the proposed trip to the Highlands, I suggested that we might go together. He responded, took ten days leave from his work, and contributed \$50 towards the travel expenses. The day before we were due to leave we still needed \$80. We visited a lecturer at the University of Papua New Guinea and told him about the planned trip. At the end of our conversation he wrote us a cheque for just the amount we needed for our single tickets and the

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Fording a river



we opened the doors of the cab, water ran in. We quickly unloaded the equipment and carried it to the far bank, then tried all manner of shoving and pulling, but the wheels only dug deeper into the riverbed. However, we managed to keep the engine alive, though it seethed and coughed a great deal. After 1½ hours, during which a small earthquake added to the excitement, a plantation tractor came by and quickly pulled us out with a chain, so we could continue our journey.

This episode had a fringe benefit. We had nearly run out of petrol keeping the engine running, so we called in at a Catholic high school nearby and asked the headmaster whether we could buy some. We were a muddy sight, but he immediately asked us in to meet some of the staff, and then took us on a tour of the school. When he heard of the films we had he arranged for us to return that evening, and so 400 students and staff were able to see them.

Six hundred miles to the east of Port Moresby lies the island of Bougainville, home of the world's largest open-cut copper mine.

In June two of us flew to Bougainville. One of our friends, who is on the indigenous staff of the copper mine, decided that he would take time to listen to God to find out what he was meant to do for his country. One clear thought he got was to have a showing of our films at the mine site. He soon had got together a committee of mine staff to

the films, Lebasi Mark spoke to his people. He had been among the first Papuans to respond to the idea of Moral Re-Armament in the 1930's.

While we were showing the films in the village the rain poured down steadily. So we started the return journey with some anxiety as to what the roads and the rivers would be like. Sure enough, when we got back to the first river late in the evening, it was a mass of muddy water rushing seawards. It needed only one look with a torch to see there was no hope of getting through. We returned to Naura where Lebasi Mark had waited, just in case such a thing should happen. Soon after, mattresses and sheets appeared from nearby houses, and we were comfortably installed on the floor of the village church.

The next morning we were welcomed for breakfast with hot scones. A local deacon and his wife had been up since



Miss Alice Wedega, MBE, (above) who in 1961 was the first Papuan woman to be in the Legislative Assembly:

'We desperately need unity between brown and brown, white and white, brown and white. Unity will come by putting right what is wrong inside us - that is what we all need before independence.'

Kumalau Tawali, one of the first graduates of the Papua New Guinea University and the first Papua New Guinean

to win a national poetry prize: 'I wanted to be a leading poet. Then the thought came to me: "There will be people who will be greater than you in the literary field of this country. But who are the people who will be humble enough to lay down their lives so that God will use them to heal the bitterness and mistrust between the races and the thousand tribes in your nation?"'

Tom Koraea, MHA, (right) former President of the Pangu Pati and Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly:

'I believe that the Members of the House of Assembly should have hearts that go forward with truth and honesty. I thought I was better than others, but this is wrong. I think that God is the only one who is better than us all. The people who will be elected as the future leaders of this country should not think of selfish things, impure things, or use dishonest thoughts.'

Leo Laita from Bougainville:

'Independence and nationhood are not



created just by having one central government. We'll only find nationhood as we unite on the basis of a real care, not only for all sections of our country, but for other nations as well. I was a militant Bougainvillian who advocated secession. But now I want to see a country in which each man knows what his contribution is to the welfare of the nation. I have begun to look beyond my own shores and to care for the rest of Papua New Guinea and the world.'

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freight of the equipment. So we could set off. Geoffrey, who had just returned from Bougainville, joined us later.

Mek Nugintz accommodated us in his own 'haus kunai' (a traditional type of hut built of kunai grass) during the first two weeks of our stay and we were soon accepted as part of the clan. The diet consisted mainly of 'kaukau' (Pidgin for sweet potato). The Highlanders eat only once or twice a day. Meat and other high protein foods which we consider essential they seldom eat as these are just not available. Yet they are amazingly healthy.

It was at the time of the world famous Mt Hagen Show, when thousands of Highlanders gather to compete in traditional sing-sings - festival of singing and dancing.

We travelled to and from the Show in six ton tipper trucks which were packed full of warriors dressed with big wigs ornamented with brilliant bird of paradise plumes and carrying long spears, bows and arrows and Kundu drums. Mek was leader of one of the dancing groups which packed the showground in a huge mass of waving plumes and throbbing drums.

We showed the films in villages and schools and also twice in the Mt Hagen Theatre. The local radio station 'Nek Bilong Tarangau' (Pidgin meaning 'Voice of the Eagle') broadcast details of the cinema shows in Pidgin and Meldpa, the local language. When the Chinese cinema proprietor heard what the films were about, he decided to charge us only a minimum amount to cover his expenses. With the rest of the money raised



Archbishop Copas

we were then able to pay our return fares to Port Moresby. More than 600 townfolk came to these shows.

There are seven copies of the African film *Freedom* in use throughout Papua New Guinea. Five of these are in Pidgin. Of these Pidgin copies, one was bought by the Catholic Bishop of Wewak, the Most Reverend Leo Arkfeld, who has had it circulating through the villages on the Sepik River. Geoffrey spent a week as the Bishop's guest, showing *Freedom* and *A Man For All People* in the high schools and the teachers' college there.

In the meantime I went to Tambul, a remote patrol post in the mountains of the Western Highlands, where the local Member of the House of Assembly had asked us to show *Freedom* in connection with the National Day celebrations.

A week later Geoffrey and I met up again. This time at Goroka Teachers' College in the Eastern Highlands where a group of students had arranged an evening with *A Man For All People* and *Voice of the Hurricane*.

Within two weeks of having returned to Port Moresby, after more than two months in the field, we were off again. The Catholic Archbishop of Port Moresby, the Most Reverend Virgil

Copas, had asked us to accompany him on a trip to the Mekeo area of Papua. Lars Thulin and I drove the 120 miles up the Papuan coast on the newly-opened Hiritano Highway. In the Mekeo, Archbishop Copas took us to schools, mission stations, and villages.

Everywhere we have been the people have responded warmly to the ideas of Moral Re-Armament. *Freedom* has proved itself to be immensely popular and very timely for the present situation. During showings dialogue would often be drowned in laughter as people recognised scenes familiar to their daily life.

Living in Papua New Guinea gives one a lot to think about. As one Australian said, 'I wouldn't like to live in a country like Australia, America or Sweden again. It's too materialistic. Here in Papua New Guinea people are not set on materialism.'

Could this be one of Papua New Guinea's assets?

In many parts of the world people are beginning to question whether material development and technological advance for their own sake really are adequate as aims for a nation. Is the prevailing dissatisfaction and frustration that countries in East and West are experiencing the harvest we are reaping because of our worship of these idols?

Is Papua New Guinea going to take the same course? Or could she demonstrate a different way, where God's eternal values are the basis of her life, and where development is a servant of the people rather than a master?

Many other nations might then learn much from her.