

# The utopian promise of government

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08 March 2006

# Contents

Origins and development of the Pomio Kivung . . . . . 6  
Alternative models of sovereignty . . . . . 11  
Buying gavman through blood . . . . . 21  
References . . . . . 27  
Notes . . . . . 29

Today academic debate and public discourse about the Pacific often focuses on the collapse of government - on failed nation-states. Yet ever since Self-Government and Independence, Melanesians have experimented with developing their own alternative forms of local government, which have often embraced but also side-tracked official governmental schemes, structures, and practices. Using the Pomio Kivung movement in East New Britain, this article explores how government, together with its projects and promises of sovereignty, civilization, and development, is displaced and re-mediated through the world of the dead. The customary shamanic worlds of dreams and possession are redeployed and merged with the pastoral practices and disciplinary schemes of civilizing projects originally belonging to Western churches and governments.

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In rural Papua New Guinea (PNG) many villagers have developed their own art of government. They have developed local schemes, techniques, and practices for creating *gavman* (government). In the area known as Pomio, different language groups have used the Kivung's movements beliefs and rituals to unite and seek their own kind of government. In particular, they have sought to re-ground political legitimacy and the ethical ordering regimes of government in the dead. Colonialism brought a certain fetishization of law, of society as the rule of law, which Kivung followers embraced and merged with their version of Christianity's Ten Commandments and with local customary understandings of law (see Robbins 2004). Traditionally, *lo* (law) was a set of ethical requirements and prohibitions that encompassed ceremonial rules and taboos, customary kinship and exchange obligations, various avoidances of kin and places, as well as moral duties to the dead (cf. Rose 1992: 44). It was from the underground and the dead that people derived their culture, material resources, and well-being. In the mythic past, the dead provided villagers with their songs, masks, dances, magical spells, clans, and certain species of taro, bananas, and pigs. Having provided the ordering regimes of custom, it is to the underground dead that Kivung followers turn for the modern ordering regimes of government, law and order, church, morality, hygiene, and self-discipline.

My approach draws on Foucault's (1977; 1982; 1991) attempts to move political analysis away from a theoretical study of formal legislation and state institutions and towards an empirical study of pragmatic forms of knowledge and their techniques for governing subjects and subjectivities. Foucault explored the changing and contested meaning of government in the West and how modern state institutions increasingly took up confessional pastoral forms of power that had their origin in the church (Asad 1993; Foucault 1977; 1982). I want to focus on what modern political institutions mean to villagers who developed their own versions of government and pastoral care - their own confessional and disciplinary regimes, schemes, and institutions - that often surpass in regularity, intensity, and efficiency those of their European rulers.

The alternative worlds of the dead and the underground allowed Kivung followers to develop their own alternative clandestine versions of government and church. Those subterranean worlds are believed to reduplicate institutions in the surface world and in doing so they provide secret alternative grounds for participating in above-ground government and church structures. When Kivung followers participate in official governmental structures and practices, it often as a ‘skin’ (*karamap*), which serves as a cover to be pulled over the eyes of the living so as to conceal a deeper commitment to an alternative government of the dead. The skin or *karamap* is a surface (what is called in Mengen a *patuna*) which conceals something that is more real, true, and essential (*mirana* in Mengen). This scheme of visible versus invisible, appearance versus substance, allows everyday social reality to be understood as a layer either of masks or of protective skins and deceptions hiding beneath them *kaikai* (food, i.e. future reward). The scheme is often explained using an analogy with fruit, such as a banana or mango, whose skin hides valuable flesh underneath so as to protect it from insects and rot. The underground and the dead are the inner fruit that Kivung followers conceal through miming and participating in surface-world forms of government and church. The secret work of the underground dead has to be concealed, especially from envious educated Melanesians who might angrily judge the ritual work of backward rural villagers as subversive of their legitimate authority and power.

Kivung followers emphasize that they do not reject government and mission. They especially value their moral ordering and civilizing projects; they just want those projects more effectively realized in terms of their transformative promises (cf. Elias 1978). For this reason, they displace and mirror modernity’s structures in the underground, which provides clandestine truer versions of modernity. Rather than withdrawing from the modern world, Kivung followers reread their participation in it as a mimetic activity or *piksa* (picture) which mirrors and draws into itself a truer unseen reality. The respected Kivung leader, Gimi, explained how this mimetic logic generated followers’ commitment and motivations through their knowledge that those down-below would copy what was being worked in the surface world.

If we do something up on top, then they [the underground] also do it. If you don’t do anything up on top, then they won’t work something down below. There are two roads that have to go together. We work its *patuna* [concealing skin or picture] up on top and they work its *mirana* [truer version] down below, that is its *kaikai* [food or future reward].

This mirroring, mimetic logic produces intense moral scrutiny and policing, for Kivung followers can retard activity in the underworld by unethical or lazy actions up on top. Though coercive, it is this ongoing ethical vigilance that promises redemption and a new world of hope.

Throughout New Britain, there was an explosion of cult activities in the late 1960s and 1970s (Lattas 1998; 2000; 2001; 2005). At the time the colonial administration

experimented with localizing government by introducing local councils, a Legislative Council with appointed native representatives, a House of Assembly and Provincial Governments, and local village courts (Chowning & Goodale 1965; Counts 1971; Fitzpatrick 1980; Wanek 1996). For many villagers, these official experiments did not go far enough in creating Melanesian forms of government, in localizing and nationalizing government. Official innovations in giving Melanesians judicial-legal autonomy held a promise that had to be reconsolidated through much more radical forms of localization; villagers responded by uncovering truer forms of self-government, independence, and law via the underground - namely the dead and *masalai* (wild bush spirits).<sup>1</sup> In particular, the cults created hybrid institutions that used the customary underground and its personnel as a clandestine experimental sphere for merging ecclesiastical confessional forms of pastoral care with state forms of politics and administration. The underground offered a terrain of imaginary possibilities for merging local and Western techniques for transforming and perfecting self and society.

Papua New Guinea has had many long-running cults, like the Johnson movement in New Ireland, Paliau on Manus, Dakoa on Bali Island, and the Pomio Kivung (Aquart 2001; Billings 2002; Otto 1991; Schwartz 1962, Wanek 1996). Today some movements have become unofficial Melanesian churches with their own black theology of Christ, suffering, and redemption (Trompf 1991). Some movements, like Paliau on Manus and the Pomio Kivung, have used their large followings to move into politics and elect representatives into Parliament (Otto 1991; Wanek 1996). This has created unorthodox alignments of politics with religion, which have not been sufficiently analysed as the coalescing both of different techniques of power and of different understandings of law and sovereignty. Frequently these mergers took the form of understandings and practices that whitened and Westernized the customary terrains of the dead and the underground. Followers posited an alternative future government of the dead involving a secret subterranean state with its own laws and moral work combining the surface state's pedagogic ethical projects with the surface church's work of confession, salvation, self-surveillance, and moral purification. The underground eyes of the dead were 'whitened'; the ancestral dead were modernized into supervising white-skins who had shed their black skins and, from their hiding places, were now responsible for watching over the living.

Many rural Melanesians were apprehensive about independence insofar as Whites were departing and leaving them in the pastoral and state care of educated Melanesians, whom villagers often feared. Consequently, as Whites withdrew from the everyday run-

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<sup>1</sup> *Masalai* or wild bush spirits take various forms in Pomio: they can be dwarfs or people who hop around on one leg or various kinds of changelings who occupy particular places from where they steal the souls of the living. Other anthropologists (Knauff 1999; 2002; Wood 1998; in press) have also shown how Melanesian villagers seek to localize modernity and gain access to it through relationship with customary powers. In terms of exploring such folklore constructions of the ontology of state power, the work of Kapferer (1988; 1997) has inspired my own and similar kinds of work in Melanesia (Clark 1997; Wood in press).

ning of government and church, some villagers created a clandestine alliance with a hidden whiteness that belonged to them. They entrusted their pastoral care and governmental belonging to a more moral form of whiteness that came from dead relatives who would now steer them so as to reclaim and redeem the forms of modernity being offered. They struggled to create a truly Melanesian government, a truly Melanesian civilizing process, which was a hybrid of state and church forms and which localized anew the spirit of Western attempts to create morally autonomous subjects.

## Origins and development of the Pomio Kivung

The Kivung movement traces its beginning to the first national election in 1964 (Chowning & Goodale 1965; Tovalele 1977; Trompf1990; Whitehouse 1995). A number of different Pomio language groups - Mengen, Kol, and Mamusi - joined with electors in Kandrian to elect Michael Koriam Urekit as the local member for Pomio and Kandrian. Koriam's campaign committee was very instrumental in having him elected as the Kivung's first political leader by merging popular established folklore stories about him with the promise of government power. The first day Koriam entered parliament is said to have been a Thursday,<sup>2</sup> which is why Thursday is the Kivung's day of rest, its Sabbath. Acutely conscious of the growing prevalence of other ethnic groups, especially educated Tolai, in government, church, and the economy whilst highly critical of their own *savi* (educated) men, villagers in Kandrian and Pomio saw themselves as voting for an uneducated man like themselves. As he travelled his electorate, Koriam used *tok box* (cryptic talk) by describing himself as a humble *longlong* (simple, backward) man who had some 'rubbish work' (silly, useless work) from *tumbuna* (grandparents, forefathers) to give.<sup>3</sup> From 1964 until the most recent national election in 2002, the Kivung has had a member in national parliament. When Koriam died in 1973, Alois Koki replaced him and remained the local member until his death in 2000. Koki was then replaced by his brother, Francis Koimanrea, who stepped down as Governor to assume the Kivung's prized seat of Pomio.<sup>4</sup> Early Kivung leaders also dominated local government councils. The Kivung's first spiritual leader, Bernard Balatape, was the first President of the Mengen Local Government Council. The Kivung also had representatives in the Provincial Government, namely Pinap Lauulu and, later, Francis Koimanrea, who went on to become Minister for Health (1992-4) before being twice elected Governor of East New Britain (1995-2000).

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<sup>2</sup> The House of Assembly was officially opened on a Monday, 8 June 1964, but folk legend has it that Koriam first entered on a Thursday.

<sup>3</sup> Today, Kivung political leaders copy Koriam's disingenuous self-characterizations by describing themselves as simple, humble folk.

<sup>4</sup> This article will close with 2002 when the Kivung lost the seat of Pomio. There have been major changes in the movement since then.

A millenarian outlook motivates Kivung participation in politics. The national electorate of Pomio is seen as a special seat that will deliver a future Prime Minister. He will change investment and migration laws to allow better access to Papua New Guinea by white men and multi-million dollar companies. This overseas investment will provide a *karamap*, a protective cover or disguise in the surface world, within which the dead can deliver underground wealth to their kin.

The dichotomy of surface versus underground, above versus below, protective skin versus inner fruit, public disguise versus hidden truth, is part of a pervasive binary logic. This logic can be found in the kinship system, where all the different Mengen clans belong to two matrilineal moieties, *Magian* and *Marana*. The major myths in Pomio are of two rival brothers, commonly called *Bikpela Nutu* (Big God) and *Liklik Nutu* (Little God). This customary binary logic influences the Kivung. Its leaders often ignore the smaller ‘sub-district’ offices in villages and stress that the Kivung has only had two offices ‘registered’ with the underground. The first main office at Kaiton has ceased to operate, but it continues to be symbolically paired with the current main office at Salel. Originally, when Kivung money was banked, it went into two accounts belonging to mission and government (or district). It was expected that later this money would help finance a new national capital at Palmalmal plantation and the nation’s (if not the world’s) future religious headquarters at Unung Plantation. For this reason, the Kivung contributed money to develop Palmalmal plantation as the site for a new regional administrative centre and it unsuccessfully negotiated to purchase Unung Plantation.<sup>5</sup>

The dichotomy of government and mission pervades Kivung thinking and its organizational structure. From its inception, the movement’s parliamentary leaders in Port Moresby or Rabaul existed alongside local religious leaders who control relations with the dead. Those relations include feeding the dead, giving written requests or reports to them, organizing public and private confessions, and levying fines for breaches of the Kivung’s *Tenpela Lo*, the Kivung’s version of the Ten Commandments. This alliance of *gavman* (government) and *misin* (mission) first emerged when Koriam, the charismatic politician from Kandrian, entered into an alliance with Bernard Balatape (mentioned above), a local Mengen leader who was secretly developing practices for feeding the dead. Jointly they created a movement that synthesized politics with local dream practices, spirit mediums and possession, and new cult ways of feeding the dead as a secret means of accessing the world of Europeans. Local leadership was placed under the spiritual authority of Bernard, who, as a small child, had slept holding food for his deceased mother. Bernard went on to transform customary practices of individuals feeding dead relatives into a communal feeding of the dead that sought a debt relationship with underground white people. In return for being fed, white relatives

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<sup>5</sup> My understanding is that the Kivung gave money to start Palmalmal High School, but this is glossed as having given money to start a new regional administrative centre which will become the national capital of a new government.

would offer protection, guidance, and an alternative feature. When Bernard left this world, significantly in 1975, the year of PNG's Independence, his spiritual leadership role went to Kolman, an ex-plantation manager who had previously been experimenting with cult magical practices in the Baining area. When Kolman left the visible world in 1994, his wife Margaret Tuataprea became possessed by their miscarried son Joe. The spirit of this *blut pikinini* (blood-child) became the Kivung's spiritual leader by taking over his mother's personality, mannerisms, dress, and voice.

Busy in Port Moresby, Kivung political leaders have increasingly left the everyday running of the movement to the spiritual leader. Today Joe, via his mother's body, appoints committee men in villages to administer and police Kivung beliefs, rules, and practices for feeding the dead, for working in communal gardens, and for confessing and atoning for sins. The committee men levy fines for small breaches of the Kivung's *Tenpela Lo*. In some villages, secretaries might also record those who attend Kivung meetings and the fines paid by those who miss meetings. Along with the Kivung's two main offices (previously at Kaiton and now at Salel), there are smaller 'sub-district' offices at Brigi, Matong, and Bain, which the Kivung hierarchy claims are not recognized by the dead. Accordingly their communications with the dead should be channelled through the main office.

All offices contain books that record followers' specific requests to the dead and the amount of money accompanying those requests. Though not compulsory, money 'strengthens' a request, often called a 'report'. Followers' 'reports' vary: these range from requests that a sick child or relative be cured or that a husband or wife be less argumentative to pleas that a lost pig return from the bush or that a soccer team win its next competition. Other written requests or reports made through Kivung secretaries and offices include: a husband or wife wishing to change the day of the week for feeding his or her dead kin; and a village wishing to change its days for collectively feeding the dead at its cemetery called City House or at the other communal feeding house called Gigunga, which lies inside the village.<sup>6</sup>

Like the City and Gigunga houses, each domestic house of a Kivung family has a designated room with tables, cups, plates, forks, and spoons for feeding the dead (Fig. 1). Given that each household asks the Kivung's main office to inform dead kin of the specific days they are to come to be fed, each domestic house is administratively linked to the dead. This is termed having a 'census' with the dead. This census is the specific location where the dead must go to be fed by relatives and where they can leave invisible cargo as repayment. Any movement or alteration of a domestic dwelling requires that the main office be informed in writing so that it can pass on to the dead any information about the new or temporary house where they should go to be fed. The same occurs if a follower passes away and others need to take up his or her obligation

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<sup>6</sup> Re-enacting a perceived need for binary order, the City House belongs to Koriaam and government whilst the Gigunga House belongs to Bernard and religion. I prefer these common Mungen expressions rather than Whitehouse's (1995) rendering of City House as Cemetery Temple and Gigunga as Haus Bilong Bernard. In Mungen, Gigunga means a men's house or meeting house.



to feed particular relatives on a certain day. Followers are warned that should they go to town others must be found to feed their dead relatives in their absence. When they go, and after they return, they need to inform the Kivung's main office and pay money. The same applies if followers move their residence to another village. Here we see a Kivung appropriation of the colonial administration's processes of policing and stabilizing nomadic populations through regular inspections and census forms. In addition, each child born to a Kivung family will have his or her existence 'registered' (recorded, acknowledged, booked) with the ground and the dead through a small ritual and the payment of money that 'contracts' him or her to a special communal garden known as Paradise Garden. Given all of this administrative attention to detail, we should not be surprised that Kivung followers boast that they undertake better census inventories than those of the PNG state. However, for followers the ultimate watchful authoritative gaze that records and registers their existence is that of the dead, for it is they who are the true alternative government, to whom information is passed through Kivung offices.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 1. A room in a domestic house for feeding the dead. The husband and wife are reflecting on and cleaning away their sins before putting out food.

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<sup>7</sup> Over time Kivung records are destroyed by rats and humidity. This does not disturb followers for ultimately the true record is kept by the underground. Each piece of information about births, deaths, and movements is not collated into an ongoing census register. What is important is the collection of this information; its analysis and systematization belong to the underground.

Kivung offices also play other communicating and regulating roles with the dead. Any new spirit that possesses a follower must come to the Kivung's current main office of Salel to be checked with respect to who he or she really is, why he or she has come, and what work he or she will undertake in the surface world (e.g. as a healer or diviner). Only then can the spirit be authorized through a *sek hand* - shaking hands over money - when the spiritual leader Joe will 'strengthen' a spirit with money so that he or she can return to the surface world in support of Kivung work. At the Salel office, the *sek hand* is written down in a book along with the amount of money given and the questions asked of a spirit and his or her replies. Any dreams and visions of followers or mediums recognized as significant will also be written down. Sometimes this is done at a sub-district office like Matong and then forwarded to the main office of Salel. There important spirit mediums have whole books devoted to their communications with the afterworld. Those 'reports' are often of meetings in the invisible world with deceased Kivung leaders who are later quoted as supporting the main office and the Kivung's current leaders. From very early on, under Bernard, there has been a history of mediums disrupting and challenging Kivung leadership, and so the Kivung has sought to centralize and control communications with the dead. Indeed, communications to and from the dead have become bureaucratized. Books, offices, and money seek to authorize and control shamanic and dream practices, channelling them into the magic of the state, and its hidden future (Taussig 1997).

Requests to the dead for help in gardening or with an illness will be written down in a village or sub-district office and then forwarded to the central office at Salel during its specified opening hours. There any written requests will be written down again in a separate book or pad, often using carbon paper so a copy can be given to the spiritual leader, Joe. Later in the day, Joe offers the requests and any accompanying money to the dead and God, who will take the soul or *mirana* of the money. Left behind is the skin or *patuna* of the money, which can be banked or used for Kivung administrative purposes. The Salel office goes through substantial quantities of carbon paper in duplicating reports; if there is no carbon paper, secretaries laboriously copy out requests twice. It is as though the act of reduplication itself is fetishized or deemed a ritual act. Partly a copying of Western administrative forms, such copying also underpins the mimetic logic of *mirana* and *patuna*, where a picture imitates a reality partly so as to draw it close. It is said that one copy of a report will be taken by the spiritual leader Joe (and previously Kolman) and worked in a more secret, powerful office that ordinary followers cannot see. Indeed, the main office at Salel is simply the skin, cover, or *patuna* of a truer underground office. In a dream, the Kol spirit medium Augustine visited this underground office at Salel and found Kolman working with his true secretary - Augustine's deceased son, Joseph Seguna:

This [true office] is at Salel, but underneath. It is underneath the office that is there. This one there is just *patuna*, the one that is on top. The true

office is there [down below] and Kolman works there with all the reports. He goes down below to work with them.

This mimetic reduplication of bureaucracy and administrative practices, this copying of Western governmental forms of copying, is not just applied to the cult's headquarters. Each Kivung secretary in a village has an underground double. Moreover, as each secretary in the surface world records attendances, fines, requests, and money offerings in his books, so another secretary in the underground is recording the same information in his own books and at his own office. We enter here a world of double book-keeping which is also a world of displacement where the recorded meanings, statistics, and financial accounts of the surface world are re-recorded to manifest their true administrative-governmental being in the underground. The bureaucratic form becomes a magical form communicating with a double of itself something beyond itself which amplifies and redeems the recorded labours of the living. Mimesis here is fetishized. In particular, powerful European ways of mimetically recording and reduplicating reality offer a promise of symbolic forms that escape themselves and are always more than themselves through their displaced copies. Writing and book-keeping are vehicles for centralizing communications and exchanges with the dead and for channelling individual transactions with the unseen through a hierarchical structure of protocols and procedures which validate the Kivung movement's power structures.

## Alternative models of sovereignty

The Kivung's first leaders, Koriam and Bernard, sought to create a centralized politicoreligious movement that embraced a number of adjacent language groups - the Mengen, Kol, Mamusi, Tomoip, and later the Baining. All were seeking to escape the hegemony of the Tolai and other members of an emerging educated Melanesian elite. Kivung leaders also helped create new models of sovereignty that borrowed and remade the political-religious models of Europeans by merging these with Melanesian understandings of power and moral order.

Prior to the first national election for a House of Assembly, Koriam had been appointed by the Australian administration in 1962 to the New Britain District Advisory Council and as an observer to the Legislative Council in Port Moresby. Today this is seen as early secret confirmation by Whites that Koriam was special and possessed a hidden knowledge that he cryptically revealed in the parables, or *tok piksa*, for which he is renowned. Today these are repeated in weekly speeches where Kivung leaders enjoy displaying their skills in oratory. Stories about Koriam are legendary and, like his parables, are part of the movement's collective memory (Lattas 1998). There are stories about how white *kiaps* (government patrol officers) tried to jail or kill him in various ways but failed, about how a white man called *brata* (brother) gave him the *Tenpela Lo*, about how he went missing for many years and, during that time, went to

Rome, and about how he went to Australia and into the underground at Port Kembla, where he saw the dead being punished by being forced to make cargo for Europeans.

One important story tells of Koriam's time in Port Moresby when the Australians tested him and other parliamentarians. Like Koriam, Australians are seen to be craftsmen of the concealed and allegorical. They talk and perform their true plans and meanings in roundabout cryptic ways. It is said that at the first opening of the House of Assembly, the Australians even covered up the true new constitution they were giving Papua New Guinea.<sup>8</sup> Of all the members in the chamber, Koriam alone knew how it was really the Kivung's *Tenpela Lo* that the visiting Governor-General, Lord Casey, held concealed under a cloth. Otto, who helps administer the Salel headquarters, prefaced this story by describing this concealment and disclosure as similar to that practised by Joe, their spiritual leader, who can see what the dead hide but does not fully reveal it to followers. Otto went on to say:

Before, there was the time that Lord Casey covered up the *Tenpela Lo* ... When Lord Casey brought this, it was the Australian government that had covered up this something and they sent the Governor-General in front of all of the Members he asked 'What is this here?' Not one person put up their hand. He asked again and no one put up their hand. When he asked a third time, Koriam, who was sitting at the back put up his hand, and said: 'This something is the Bill of Pomio and Baining.' You know why he called it the Bill of Pomio and Baining? It was because in '64 they had already stood up the Ten Laws in Pomio. He was telling the Australian government that later with the Papua New Guinea government, when we got up its Independence, then this here would be the bill. [Koriam talking to himself] 'I will make it come up in Parliament so I can govern Pomio through it.' He was saying this here [the concealed Bill] was the Ten Laws; it was the Bill of Pomio and Baining. Well you should have seen all of these other men. Their mouths were open. He [Lord Casey] answered 'Yes.' The white man stood up and said 'This here is true.' Lord Casey then stood up and opened [revealed] this something. All these other men were blind and they wondered how Koriam could look through and see this something. Well Koriam had these eyes that could look through into the world. He could see whatever there was.<sup>9</sup>

With minor variations, this story is told repeatedly by Kivung followers. The story reinterprets the grounds of Papua New Guinea's sovereignty. It reclaims national sovereignty through a trial or test of native ingenuity. It takes an exceptional Melanesian to match and unravel the concealing arts of Whites, to cut through the Gordian

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<sup>8</sup> This story might be built on other events or times because Governor-General Casey only visited Port Moresby in May 1966, though a few years earlier he had visited as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>9</sup> Otto ignores how Koriam's electorate initially incorporated Pomio and Kandrian; instead he tells the story in terms of it becoming Pomio and Baining.

knot of sovereignty and secrecy tied by the Australians. This is a modern-day myth of sovereignty, a charter for a government that is to come. It is about a hidden government that has its own way of straddling the divide between a legislative centre and ordinary people. The story ties Papua New Guinea's true government - its true constitution and independence - to the moral ordering work of the Ten Laws in the villages. The legislative process of introducing bills and a future constitution for the nation is revealed to be really the process of obeying and paying fines to the Kivung's version of the Ten Commandments. Koriam straddles both forms of government, the government in Port Moresby and what the Kivung calls *Gavman bilong Ples*, which is what Bernard was administering in the villages and which is today administered by the returned bloodchild Joe.<sup>10</sup> This is a government that comes from the dead and which uses the dead to police adherence to the *Tenpela Lo*. Kivung followers mark this *gavman* by erecting *Tenpela Lo* posts on roads leading into villages; those posts are called 'fundamentals' and the 'constitution' (Fig. 2).

As the national member, Koriam brings the hidden government of the dead to Pomio villages concealed as the Ten Commandments. He discovers the secret of government, which is that important white men have selected Pomio for certain kinds of state secrets and for a new experiment in government. Earlier in the Legislative Council, white men had selected Koriam to participate in government with them; in the new House of Assembly he continues to form a hidden compact with them. In the new chamber and site of Melanesian governmental autonomy, there emerges a new structure of secrecy, of the state as the locus of secrecy, which Lord Casey brings as a 'Bill' hidden under cloth (Herdt 2003). He carries an alternative constitution and government that is not seen or recognized by educated Melanesian parliamentarians. It is known only to the Governor-General and a member who is often characterized by his followers as uneducated and even as not knowing how to read or write.<sup>11</sup> He sits in the back row of parliament, for he is not in a hurry to show off his knowledge. He embodies the reserved knowledge of rural folk that await their time. Koriam and Lord Casey know that what is being secretly introduced into parliament is a future constitution, which will establish the basis for a true national Independence - one that Pomio will pay for with money but also with blood.

The blood that will buy Papua New Guinea's destiny will be the blood of Kivung leaders - Koriam, Bernard, and Kolman. None of these leaders is believed to have simply died. Instead they are credited with having voluntarily left this world for the

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<sup>10</sup> Whitehouse (1995) translates *Gavman bilong Ples* as Village Government. I prefer a Government of Place, which also refers to the anthropological Melanesian literature (Feld 1982; Schieffelin 1977) on how place encodes and merges with the dead.

<sup>11</sup> A few people claim that Koriam did know how to read and write, though he is listed (Veur 1965: 448) as having no formal education. Such popular caricatures serve to identify Koriam closely with his electorate of 'backward' villagers and contrast him with educated Melanesians. In Mengen myths, before He took it back, God gave His magical knowledge for taro gardening to two rubbish individuals (*silolo*) and not to the polished 'good' people.



Figure 2. A *Tenpela Lo* post; around it are politicians from Port Moresby invited to a Kivung ceremony at Salel.

next. They offered their lives as a sacrifice so as to become mediators for their followers with God and the dead. They became the movement's *malyav*, a customary term for a guardian spirit, such as a deceased relative who offers supernatural help in gardening, fishing, and hunting. Before leaving this world, all three leaders were reportedly given a large sum of money by the Kivung to buy their ongoing loyalty in the afterworld.

The Kivung movement is continuously using money to mediate followers' relations with God and the dead, but also to buy *gavman* and *misin*. Koriam initiated this ritual work of collecting and allocating money for government and mission. During an early visit to Pomio the new member gave out the *Tenpela Lo* and told followers they had to pay fines if they broke any Ten Commandments. Initially, the money from fines lay dispersed in Kivung villages but it was soon pooled and taken to the colonial administration at Pomio base camp, where it was banked. (The first administrative headquarters of the Pomio region was also called Pomio.) The Australian government's early participation in organizing the counting, banking, and transportation of this money out of Pomio to Rabaul created a strong belief that this First Money was given as a gift to the Australian government.<sup>12</sup> Kivung followers strongly associate this and their other banking with 'giving money to Big Government'. When characterizing how

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<sup>12</sup> Many anthropologists have explored how Melanesians transform Western money using the local logic and practices of gift exchange, politics, ritual, and indigenous beliefs and values (Akin & Robbins 1999; Foster 1998; Nihill 1989).

this First Money was a pure gift to the Australian government, followers say it went down into the deep blue sea or into a *raun wata* (pool, lake) that was completely black and from whence it cannot be pulled back by anyone. People speak of this First Money as buying government, opening a road, or seizing a room to prevent it being owned by another association, group, or race. Leo Rawl, who, like Koriam, originally came from Kandrian, described Koriam as saying to Kivung leaders:

You must hurry up, so that all the villages bring the money to Pomio ... because it would not be good if another place from wherever went and seized (*pasim*) this room, this room that is there, and then when you want to run you will not have a road belonging to you. Put the money quickly because we must hold government. We must hold government and mission.

Banking money here becomes part of a race between groups, a competitive exchange ritual whose combatants are not local, customary exchange partners or relatives but distant, regional ethnic groups or rival cult movements in the nation-state. Money articulates the terms of a competitive struggle by Melanesian groups to gain supremacy by gaining prior rights to government and mission. The Tolai have achieved surface access through the education system and cash crops but regional groups must find another clandestine road. In particular, they must use the money generated from the moral work of the *Tenpela Lo* to create a secret alliance with Big Government. This purchase of institutional rights, or hidden sovereignty, was frequently likened to the customary payments of shell money that villagers made to purchase the rights to use masks, songs, and dances and especially to get a magician from another village to come and 'straighten' an unsuccessful taro garden. The Kivung sees itself as using Western money to buy rights to the institutional forms of modernity, or more accurately to their secret institutional existence.

Some Kivung leaders likened this First Money to a bribe given to Australian *kiaps* and government so they would not squash their association's work, as they had done with cargo cults elsewhere. Peter Avereh, a Kivung leader at Matong village, described money as a thread that sewed up the *kiap's* mouth. Leo Rawl claimed Koriam saw the Kivung as competing against other movements for privileged secret access to government: 'He was talking about other associations [cult movements] ... because no other association had yet put money with the government'. Many people spoke allegorically of the Kivung vying with the Tolai to purchase a hidden room. Leo Popkoleh quoted Koriam: 'You must hurry up! Supposing the Tolai secure this place then we will have no other place left'. According to Leo Rawl, when Kivung leaders gave the First Money to the *kiaps* at Pomio base camp, they gave this speech:

With this money that we are giving, we will no longer have talk about this money [claim it back]. The government can look after this money. Now this money can go and it is up to the government itself, it can make work

with this money. It can help whatever country with it. However, later, the government must think about it, about this area of Pomio. Koriam said: 'Put the money in the bank and then it is up to the government itself. If the government wants to help other countries with it then it can help these countries and then later all these countries can look back to Pomio. Put the money and the money will go down into this part [of the sea] that is completely black'. We cannot get up any talk about it because it stops in this bank that they call, I think that you have the name of this bank?

There is here a different understanding of the banking system and the way it lends out deposited funds to others. The Kivung sometimes calls itself the Account Association, for the depositing of its funds into a bank account and the re-lending of that money is seen to create debts between nations in an unseen global world. Originally Kivung money was given to the Australian government as a gift to be used in Australia's own gift relations with other nations, and one day the Australian government must think about the origins of its gifts in Pomio. Money here is reincorporated into the logic of exchange and debt so as to bind modernity into a secret duty and obligation to Melanesians. Many Kivung followers believe their money is accumulating secretly in a bank controlled by the dead. The late member for Pomio, Alois Koki, believed it had formed the wealth of the Vatican Bank for, like other villagers, he assumed that the dead, and the secret law of existence, resided in Rome. Today many Kivung followers believe their money has gone into the World Bank, where it is supplemented by money from the underground as well as by the interest and profit earned in the bank controlled by the dead. There is a great deal of folklore about the World Bank; villagers who go to town return with news about the huge amount of Kivung money in the World Bank and of envious attempts by national politicians and a bankrupt PNG government to access Kivung funds. Followers reinterpret the World Bank's clashes with the national government over economic priorities as validating the Kivung's perceived more frugal regime of managing money compared to that of the corrupt, spendthrift, educated politicians who currently run PNG.

The Kivung characterizes itself as a movement devoted to giving debt rather than to being in debt. By 1999, the Kivung had over 400,000 *kina* in the bank. Leo Popkoleh phrased Koriam's philosophy of banking as follows:

We must give a debt to government. We cannot be indebted to the government. The government must have *dinau* [be indebted] to us. The government must have a *dinau* to the Kivung. The Kivung of Pomio cannot *dinau* from the government ... When they put it [money] into the hands belonging to all the *kiaps*, they said . 'We are marking Central Government so it can help us to get up the district of Pomio'.

Central Government is a government of the underground, and the gift of money to the Australian *kiaps* gave money to Big Government so it could prepare all the *save*



(smart) men to come and work all the resources in the sea and bush. The Kivung opposes all the 'rubbish companies' of today that come and exploit Papua New Guinea's resources. It has opposed the Malaysian timber companies that have devastated so much of New Britain. Those companies have been brought in by the educated and the businessmen of Pomio, whom the Kivung chastizes for not waiting for the true *save* men, that is, the dead. Knowledgeable deceased relatives will come disguised in multimillion-dollar companies, which will not just export logs but work with the totality of timber resources. They will create valuable products even from currently discarded roots, leaves, and bark. Malaysian timber companies who regard the Kivung as an obstacle to their entry are accused of financing the Kivung's political opponents. For now, the Kivung waits anxiously for the money given to the Australian government to be honoured through finding and bringing *save* men to Pomio who will create factories and teach people how to work complicated machines. This is the meaning of the debt given to the Australian *kiaps* which went into the deep blue sea.

After the First Money given in the mid-1960s, later amounts of money were collected from Kivung villages and deposited into twelve bank accounts. They belonged to twelve future government departments which would be run by an alliance of the living and dead. Money was also deposited into seven bank accounts for the seven sacraments of a future mission or church. In many villages, there are lists of the twelve future departments with the names of particular villagers who will manage departments like education, health, lands, and so on. The lists and the money deposited into the departmental accounts are said to have marked out a picture of government. They traced out a picture which will draw into itself a hidden future government of the dead, known by Kivung followers as District Government. The banked money is called District Money because it is buying a future government of the dead both from the underground and from the Australian government.

Nearly all Kivung ritual work is done through money. Money is the empowering medium of mediation, exchange, and transformation. In Kivung rituals, a symbolic state structure is mapped out through flows of money with money creating the *piksa* (picture) or *patuna* (skin) of a future governmental reality. During the 1970s and 1980s, as official national government departments expanded and were renamed, so the Kivung altered its corresponding lists of future departments. Individuals marked as future managers of departments were responsible for collecting and bringing the money for their department to be banked in special accounts. Each Kivung departmental officer was said to have an underground double, a spiritual twin born from his placenta and umbilical cord, who would later surface to educate him and to create the true government department.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Each Kivung follower has a special spiritual twin or double that is known as one's *vitona* or *sipona*. It acts as a moral guardian and conscience who can make a follower sick if it is shamed by his or her behaviour. Later this spiritual twin will provide its surface world double with the knowledge for how to function successfully in the new modern Kivung world.

The major rituals performed at the Kivung headquarters are called reports and involve offering money to the dead so as to buy government or, more accurately, to create its skin or picture to be later filled by its *mirana* (essence, hidden reality). In 1998, I witnessed reports where money was symbolically allocated for the office of the Prime Minister, the District, a flag, a government seal, and the year 2000 (which was expected to usher in a new millennium of change). At a later ceremony, Kivung village leaders received cups and flags bearing the Kivung insignia with its triangle of hard work, *save* (knowledge), and *lo* (law). Along with Kivung calendars these are symbols of a new polished corporate culture, an administrative managerialism designed to seduce the dead. The cups were to be put on tables designated for feeding the three deceased Kivung leaders - Koriam, Bernard, and Kolman - while Kivung flags were to fly over communal houses where the dead were to be fed. Otto explained:

We are working government; we are building government. The government must have a flag, it must have its own money, and it must have its own departments. The government needs to give services and it must have its officers and workmen belonging to government. Now supposing we want to become the workmen of the government, of the future government, then we must follow orders ... With all these reports [for the flag, seal, etc.], we work them so as to buy out the government; you must buy government and then this government can belong to you.

Money pledged in reports is also said to 'straighten government' by buying governmental autonomy. Initially money bought government from white *kiaps* but now it buys it more directly from the underground, which receives the soul or *mirana* of money offered in reports. It is this spirit of money (dare I say the spirit of capitalism) which accumulates in the World Bank from Kivung followers' reports or requests to the dead and from their fines for cleaning away sins. To the extent that its money accumulates followers' fines for breaking the *Tenpela Lo*, the World Bank's money embodies the accumulated redemptive labours of the living upon themselves. Its money also embodies the self-reflexive confessional labours of the living who cannot feed the dead until they have cleaned themselves by offering small payments for transgressions. This moral economy buys and creates government and is called the '*Bisnis* of the *Tenpela Lo*'. It is a more moral form of *bisnis* than the road of cash crops and tradestores which Koriam warned followers against taking. Kivung followers tend to plant few cash crops, just enough to pay for store goods, school fees, and their ritual, confessional work with the dead. Koriam's alternative morally redeeming road for money offered a more ethical use of money to buy away the sins of the living, but also those of the dead.

In monthly ceremonies called *Baim Lo* (Buying Law), followers stand publicly before a glass jar and think of any wrongs deceased relatives may have committed. They also do this for themselves in weekly ceremonies called *Sek* (check, self-examination), when they stand similarly and confess any transgressions (Fig. 3). Otto explained how it

was only money from this cleansing confessional work that could be banked as ‘money belonging to government’ or District Money:



Figure 3. A follower contemplating his sins in a weekly *Sek* ceremony.

Today you take money belonging to the Kivung and you want to place it with the money belonging to the District. Well, this money, it came up from what road? Because money belonging to ... District Money, it must come up from the road of *Sek* and *Baim Lo*. You can't just take money from anywhere and say that it is the money belonging to the District.

Twice a week, before they can feed the dead in their houses, followers perform a smaller private *Sek*, where they reflect on themselves and confess any sins. They clean themselves by thinking of their offences whilst depositing money in small glass jars that sit on the tables specially allocated for feeding the dead. One such prominent *Sek* jar is called Television and it is believed to watch over the household. It is called Television because a television can see everything everywhere; it can show what is happening in distant countries and places and can capture and replay what happened in the past. The Television jar sits on the table for feeding male relatives and contains a watchful deceased relative who has become a *malyav*. This guardian spirit is ‘sat down’ into the jar by paying ten *kina* to the Kivung’s head office. Five *kina* stays at Salel whilst the other five *kina* is blessed and returns inside the Television jar as its ‘Power’. This empowered money is the visible form of the invisible relative, the *malyav*, who watches

over a family and who can be shamed by its behaviour. The *malyav* will then refuse to produce ‘profit’ or extra money (*win moni*) inside the jar for its owner. In the case of Michael and his wife at Matong village, their continual fighting shamed the Power in their Television so it ran away from their jar. It had to be replaced by another five *kina* with a written apology and fine offered to the dead through the sub-district office at Matong, which relayed the report and money to the head office at Salel.

The splitting of the ten *kina* Television charge into two equal halves is said to create a ‘power’ connection between Salel and each household Television. Salel is described as a generator sending out power to individual household Televisions in villages. The split ten *kina* Television charge also creates a connection between each domestic Television and an invisible larger Television at Salel that sees everything. In a dream, Peter Avereh traveled to Salel and saw this huge Television. It was being operated by a dead person, who was watching Kivung followers in different villages by changing channels:

He was a dead person. He took this Television and he was setting it to go to each village and to me as well ... He came up to me and said ‘The Television that I have put there [at Salel] has been there for a long time. You can be in your garden or you can be wherever and whatever wrong you commit, the Television will see you. Whatever corner of the Kivung you are in, if you are not following the Constitution or these ten laws, then this Television will see it. It doesn’t matter that you are hiding, it will see you. Later the Television will show all this and you will be judged over these wrongs of yours. Supposing you know that you committed wrongs today and you checked yourself out [confessed] then you will be alright’.

Kivung followers believe that on the Last Day, prior to the world changing, a huge Television will emerge to display each individual’s transgressions before he or she is judged by God, and in particular by His replacement, Kolman. The omniscient judgmental gaze of God is displaced and localized into Kolman and into the *malyav* of each household Television jar. God’s gaze is re-mediated by the gaze of a dead relative who operates as the externalized form of one’s conscience or superego. A long history of contact with the Catholic Church means that it is the pastoral, confessional, and salvational practices of Catholicism that are appropriated and re-mediated by the dead incorporated into a Kivung bureaucracy that allocates and empowers the dead’s watchful gaze. Technological metaphors of a centralized power grid or communication system connecting dispersed households to a privileged spiritual centre reinforce the pastoral management of followers by the Kivung hierarchy at Salel.

Followers buy their alternative road to modernity through the continual moral work they perform on themselves and on the dead. In this moral economy, followers are also obliged to feed the dead, which then establishes a debt on the part of the dead. Many households record on paper the amount of money they offer to purify themselves before putting out food for the dead. Following Western accounting practices, this money is

collected quarterly and taken to Salel, where a third to half will remain. Before it leaves, the money is counted and many households claim to find extra money in their jars over and above what they put in and record. This extra money is called ‘profit’ and ‘mark belonging to government’. *Mak bilong gavman* is a sign by the dead that they are happy with the moral state of a household and its care in feeding them. Houses that never show a mark of government are an embarrassment to their owners. Occasionally coins from other countries (America, Fiji, Singapore, etc.) are found in jars, proving it is not just the dead from Pomio but those from all over the world who come to be fed. Indeed, the Kivung calls itself an association not only of the living and the dead but also of all races and cultures.

Followers describe their ongoing moral work with money as the long road of hard work, which is why they insist that they are not a cargo cult. As they see it, they do not just sit idly waiting for cargo to come but instead work hard for their future government and church. After acquiring both, followers will move into ‘Heaven Polity’, where they will acquire the magical knowledge of *koinapaga* - the power to wish for something. Long ago, God wanted to give it to Melanesians but he ran away from them to the land of Whites. He gave them the important knowledge that currently privileges Whites but he did not give them *koinapaga*. When Kivung followers win this final knowledge, it will be for the whole world, and they will not behave like Europeans, who refused to share the knowledge they received from God.

## Buying gavman through blood

In his version of Kivung history, Joe Kenpali described how Koriam returned to Pomio after Lord Casey opened and ‘put power’ into the House of Assembly. Koriam held meetings where he put up two fingers and asked: ‘Do you want hard work or do you want the easy road?’ No one responded, so he asked: ‘Do you want clean water or dirty water?’ Again no one replied, so he asked: ‘Do you want the long road or do you want the short road?’ At one meeting someone replied: ‘We want the short road’. But Koriam said: ‘No. I don’t want the short road, for I know if we follow the short road then we will go and become buggered up along it. I want the long road’.

For Kivung followers, this parable speaks of their need to persevere with their demanding moral-ritual work, which they contrast with the short road taken by the Chinese in Rabaul. They had previously lived like Melanesians in *kunai* grass-roofed houses until their leader, Akun, went to Australia, where he sacrificed himself. The story of Akun is widely known in New Britain. I also heard in Kaliai and Bali Island how Akun collected money from the Chinese in Rabaul so he could go to buy the Law, but what really bought the Law was his willingness to die for his people. Pomio villagers often claim that Akun was accompanied by two other Melanesians - a Pomio paramount *luluai* (government-appointed headman) called Golpak and a cargo cult leader from another area often said to be the famous Paliau of Manus Island. Significantly, both

Melanesians ran away when it was their turn to die by having their heads cut off. Governor Francis Koimanrea gave this version:

Akun gathered together all the Chinese, and the Chinese gathered together all their money and then the banking system no longer had money because the Chinese were hanging on to the money ... They brought it and gave it all to Akun. The Australian government then said they should 'check out' [interrogate] Akun and Akun said: 'I want to die for all these Chinese families here'. The story about all these Chinese before was that they were people who slept inside *kunai* houses but because Akun offered his life, they became rich people. But, Koriam said this was a short road. He said the short road was good but it was also not good and this is because they all stop with the custom of ordering. You will stay here and you will send orders to go and the rice and tinned fish will come from England and elsewhere. Now this is what the Chinese have. However Koriam said 'you must find the road so you can make it [cargo] come up from your own ground. You must dig this ground of yours and make it come out. For you to know something as belonging to you, it must come out from the ground belonging to you'.

Here independence and empowerment come from rediscovering one's ground as the hidden source of plenitude. The Kivung morally works with the ground to unearth the ultimate knowledge of *koinapaga*, the magical power to speak a wish and have it become real. As Francis put it, 'You cannot wait for the ship'. Francis then turned the table on opponents who called Kivung followers 'cargo cultists' by claiming that it was these educated businessmen who were always waiting for ships to bring cargo into their stores.

In contrast, Kivung followers work hard through their ethical labours with the money to create an alternative civilization for Papua New Guinea by breaking the cement that seals off the living from the underground dead. As Francis explains it:

Koriam said, 'God has already given you everything. You yourself must break the cement'. Now what kind of cement is this? It is this road here that blocks us and all these other people [dead]. Now all these people they do not belong to another country. They all belong to this country here. They died long ago, from the time of our ancestors up until now, and they must come and sit down with us.

We must eat together ... and we must be happy together. This will be the civilization of Papua New Guinea.

Here Francis redefines the civilization process; the pedagogic project of the West giving a grand culture to Melanesians is redirected and localized to Melanesians creating their own grand culture. Francis also quoted a European friend and priest in

Port Moresby: 'You yourself must find your own civilization belonging to you alone'. For Kivung followers, true cultural empowerment and autonomy will be uncovered by returning to the autochthonous truths of their ground and their dead. God has given them all the necessary resources but He has taken away and stationed elsewhere the special people, the true *save* men (the dead and *masalai*) who can truly work those resources. Francis rhetorically asks: 'Who can bring them back, so we can sit together on top and we can eat together and we can make come up the civilisation belonging to Papua New Guinea? Who can do this?' This new truer Melanesian civilization is a culture where the dead exist alongside the living. The current return of important spirits, like Kolman's miscarried son Joe, is one promising sign. The future choice of Francis as Prime Minister will also realize this promise. He could then change migration laws to allow in more white people from overseas. The dead will then come disguised in multimillion-dollar companies; this will be their own personal *karamap* but also a cover for another more covert road for wealth. The money publicly earned by working for these companies will disguise the cargo and money that will magically appear in followers' houses as a repayment by the dead for the living having fed them for so long and for having bought away their sins.

Kivung followers believe that their ongoing love and care for the dead has progressively domesticated the dead and allowed them to move closer to the living. When the Kivung first started, the dead were reportedly much wilder for many were ancestors from long ago who had not undergone the civilizing effects of knowing government and mission. These ancestors were wild naked pagans who were bought out of the darkness of their underground *kalabus* (gaol) by Kivung relatives giving money for their sins. Today recently deceased relatives also have payments made to Salel so they can receive clothing in the afterlife and be given a 'ticket' to enter feeding houses. The same applies to spirit children (who were miscarried or have come up from menstrual blood or from sexual relations with a spirit in a dream). By paying three *kina*, these spirit children can leave the pagan existence they were condemned to by not having lived in the surface world and be brought under the civilizing influences of government, mission, and the Kivung. Peter Avereh described them like this:

They do not have clothing and they live in darkness because we do not know of them so as to buy them out. they are still pagan. This is why their huge penises are just there out in the open. They just sit down, living in rubbish, and they have not gone inside [Kivung houses] to eat. Well now, we must straighten them all so that they can go [eat].

Through clothing, feeding, and washing away the sins of the dead, the living become bearers of a pastoral project whereby they civilize themselves by civilizing the dead. The pedagogic work of the church is amplified and extended into the past so that the Kivung can create a past it can live with. Given a colonial history that has morally prob- lematized the pagan past, the Kivung seeks the moral rehabilitation of the dead.

It is not, however, just the physical and moral separation of the dead that is ritually cleaned away by money. The moral work of monthly *Baim Lo* ceremonies also buys away the wrongs of white people in the hope of creating a better kind of white man. *Baim Lo* ceremonies include the sins of other countries because their dead are also being fed in Kivung communal houses. Indeed, an Australian soldier is listed as being fed in the communal feeding houses at Matong village, where he died during the Second World War (Fig. 4).

The Kivung believes it is buying a future government not only with reports, banked money, confessions, purifying rituals, and the feeding of the dead but also through having sacrificed its three leaders - Koriam, Bernard, and Kolman. Their blood will also help buy government and *koinapaga*. In 1975 PNG received only the skin or picture of independence; a truer form is still to come. This true independence will not just be political autonomy but also economic autonomy, defined as securing one's livelihood from one's own ground through the help of a government of the dead. Otto explained how in 1974, when it still had two main offices working, the Kivung gave money and a report to the dead so as to buy the *piksa* of national independence. Later, in 1975, other money was given to Bernard to send him on his way, to sacrifice him, as the ultimate price for buying the 'skin' of independence:

We are now preparing the foundations for the true independence for Papua New Guinea ... In '75 we received independence because previously in '74 Kolman had stood up with independence money here [Salel]. Bernard had stood up with it [money] in the office at Kaiton. The two gave it [reports and money] together at the same time. Then later in '75 on 5 September, they [Kivung] gave [more] money to Bernard and they said to Bernard, 'You have to get up and go for the country'. Bernard then got up and left [died]. Later, on 16 September, Papua New Guinea became a free nation and there was no bloodshed. They lowered the Australian flag and they raised the Papua New Guinea flag and the Australian government gave this independence for free, for nothing, to Papua New Guinea. Why? It was because this transition had already been worked. Now who gave it? It was all Pomio who were walking along another road. As Koriam used to say, 'All Pomio walk about underground and Papua New Guinea flies on top and it doesn't know the work that Pomio is working'.

Here a secret sacrifice, a hidden exchange, buys independence for Papua New Guinea without the widespread bloodshed of the wars of independence which afflicted other nations.

The hidden blood that bought sovereignty is a debt owed secretly by the nation to the Kivung. It ritually worked through money to restrain and divert the constituting violence of sovereignty by offering its leaders as sacrificial substitutes. The independence of 1975 was just the skin for a truer independence that the Kivung will uncover





Figure 4. An Australian soldier listed as one of the dead fed at the City House of Matong village.

and whose imminence is signified by recent natural disasters in PNG such as the tidal wave at Aitape and the volcanic explosions at Rabaul. The big *sens* (change) is close because, as I was repeatedly told, for something good to come up, something no good must come first. Many expect Port Moresby and Rabaul to be destroyed; then the true big cities of Papua New Guinea will be shown to be in Pomio, at its administrative centres of Palmalmal and Pomio. There individuals will walk along streets and see their reflection in the glass and marble of surrounding tall buildings. Otto quoted a female shaman Denise as saying: ‘This place [new world] is ready but it has its time, when they [the dead] will remove this *karamap*. It will then stand up, out in the clear. Then there will be a new parliament and it will stand up here, with the true government. It will be *gavman mirana*’. Otto explained:

It is the skin of government that they are playing with in Moresby. Today the Papua New Guinea government is trying ... to find a road for acquiring money to pay public servants and its departments. Well we [the nation] will go and go on until we don’t have any money left. That’s why we have to get up a new eye of water [euphemism for the Kivung’s headquarters of Salel, which is known as where the eyes of waters (springs) gather]. First we must make come up a new government and then we can make come up the new eye of water, which will give services to Papua New Guinea as a whole.

The big *sens* will arrive when Pomio succeeds in having Francis elected as Prime Minister. Unlike the Prime Ministers of today, he will possess the fire or power of another people, the dead. But their arrival and Francis's political power will be ultimately due to the ethical labours of backward villagers caring for the souls and memories of deceased relatives. As Otto put it:

He will not become Prime Minister of this government of today that we criticize, that doesn't have any money, and that doesn't give good services to people. This man will be Prime Minister of a government that has *kaikai* [food or future reward]. It must have services. If this man becomes Prime Minister it will be so as to get up true knowledge. Well this true knowledge and these true services have to be engineered back in the village. Joe is engineering them now in the villages and all the leaders and all the committee are giving reports and they are making all the work. It is all of this that will make come up the true knowledge. This man here [Francis] he's just a picture. He will come up in front of the government and all of the people of other countries will see him and say, 'Ah, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea; Papua New Guinea now has attained true Independence'. But who has truly made this change come up? It is all these rubbish [poor] people around us. It is all these rubbish people in the villages because they are working the true work.

Here true transformations at the level of national government are reconnected to the 'rubbish work' of the *Tenpela Lo* worked by uneducated villagers who received this rubbish work of *tumbuna* from their *longlong* (simple, backward) first member, Koriam. A future Kivung Prime Minister will be just a picture pointing to this alternative government of *ples* (place). It is the *Tenpela Lo* as a process of pacification, civilization, and moral reform that is the true local work of government. This work has to be locally realized for the nation to be transformed, and only when the rubbish people remake themselves as moral can they be embraced by white outsiders and by the world. Papua New Guinea will then have true government, true independence, and true citizenship. This citizenship of the world will encompass the dead but will only come about through Melanesians taking up fully the task of morally cleaning themselves.

In Kivung villages, followers created an alternative form of modern government that traced sovereignty not to the ground but to the underground. They sought autonomy by purchasing their participation in modernity, buying their own government and mission through merging Melanesian models of exchange with Christian schemes of sacrifice. They also sought to remake the mediating power of money and transform the forms of value that money can circulate and establish. Here people entered into a complicit relationship with modernity within which they participated in politics, government, and the cash economy while reclaiming their own grounds for participating in these projects of self-development.

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### *Résumé*

Le débat académique et le discours public sur le Pacifique est souvent centré aujourd'hui sur l'effondrement des gouvernements - sur l'échec des États-nations. Pourtant, depuis l'autonomie puis l'indépendance, les Mélanésiens ont expérimenté d'autres formes de gouvernement local, souvent calquées sur les schémas, structures et pratiques de gouvernement officiels mais aussi déviées de ceux-ci. À partir de l'exemple du mouvement Pomio Kivung dans l'est de la Nouvelle-Bretagne, l'auteur étudie la manière dont le gouvernement, avec ses projets et ses promesses de souveraineté, de civilisation et de développement, est déplacé et re-médié par le biais du monde des morts. Les univers chamaniques traditionnels, ceux des songes et de la possession, sont redéployés et mêlés aux pratiques pastorales et aux schémas disciplinaires des projets de civilisation qui étaient initialement portés par les Églises et les gouvernements occidentaux.

Andrew Lattas has held teaching positions at the Australian universities of Adelaide, Sydney, Macquarie, and Newcastle. He was also an Australian Research Council Research Fellow at Macquarie University. His main research work has been on Papua New Guinea and on race relations in Australia.

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## Notes

I want to thank Glenn Bowman and three anonymous *JRAI* referees for very useful editorial comments. The photos in the article come from a film entitled *Koriam's law - and the dead who govern*, which was made by Gary Kildea, Andrea Simon, and myself. The film won the RAI Prize at the 9th RAI Film Festival.

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The utopian promise of government

08 March 2006

J. Roy. Anthropol. Inst. (N.S.) 12, 129-150.

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