

A JOURNAL OF
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
AFFAIRS, IDEAS
AND ARTS

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VOL. VI NO. 1.

BIKMAUS

PROVINCIAL GOVT. IN P.N.G.
Charles Batapei
IMAGES

Photographs from the German Archives
THE LADY WITH THE TOWEL
Kalyan Chatterjee

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS
reviewed by Don Niles
GOGODALA GAWATAO
Maureen Mackenzie
REVIEWS
by Peter Trist

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A JOURNAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA,
AFFAIRS, IDEAS AND THE ARTS,
Vol. VI, No. 1, March 1985.

Editorial Board : Andrew Strathern
Kalyan Chatterjee
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John Kolia

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REVIEWS

MIXED BLESSINGS by John Kolia: Aklat Publications, Port Moresby: 1984

In what has become an annual event, John Kolia's latest poem has arrived. This one is called MIXED BLESSINGS, and joins its relatives — IN BETWEEN, LADIES OF QUALITY and X AND FRIENDS.

Each of these long poems could be described as a form of diary in poetry form. Although known for the speed with which he has produced the large amount of his published work, Kolia has written each of these poems over a longer than usual period. Some were composed at Boroko, but parts of others were written at various places around Papua New Guinea including on top of Namanula Hill in Rabaul.

Like a diary, the poems contain events that affect his life and the lives of his friends, national and international happenings, politics, influences from his reading, his responses to music, even fluctuations in his health — all are grist for the work in progress.

MIXED BLESSINGS is written in one hundred and forty six stanzas — each of ten lines, in iambic pentameter with rhyming couplets.

Whatever else may be said about the style that the poet has adopted in this series, they certainly do rhyme! The style is firmly within the convention of such writers as Alexander Pope (1688-1744).

Some of MIXED BLESSINGS' rhymes are fairly outrageous, but most are witty and appropriate.

One of the many themes threading through this latest poem is that of marriage-formal or informal — or at least of personal relationships.

Having examined (in such stanzas as 5 to 16, and 31 to 33) the many unions between

indigenous Papua New Guineans and expatriates, the poet turns to more directly 'political' marriages. These are, one is led to understand, more expedient than 'love' matches — as this illustration from the recent past:

21

Ah, sad divorce when Chan bereft the bed
Of happiness once to Somare wed,
the orphaned children weeping in the
House —

But no, she's taken Okuk for her spouse;
It cannot last, so dash its seven glitter
And but achieved, Somare's feeling bitter;
No chance of happy reconciliation?
No Ministry brought forth for celebration?
Neither forgiveness nor forgetting? What,
No chance of that? Somare answers:
"Not!"

This element of satirical political comment often enlivens. MIXED BLESSINGS. However, because politics in Papua New Guinea (as in most places) are so often in a state of change, adjustment and compromise, the poem's political comment has lost some of its topicality, and its shock impact is dulled by time.

As an example of the highly perishable nature of political parody, the successful Australian performance satirist Max Gilles was alarmed that his television show was to be broadcast on Wednesdays rather than in its previous Monday timeslot. Gilles' programme was recorded on Saturday night before an audience, and the content was largely dependent on topics current up to that night. By Monday, it was assumed, the content would be still 'hot' and in the public concern. By Wednesday — much material could have 'dated', and be overtaken by newer, more 'relevant' issues.

Even though some of the political satire has become obscure in MIXED BLESSINGS, (and the Falkland's War sequences in LADIES OF QUALITY — reprinted with this volume — have also — mercifully-faded into insignificance), its inclusion in this 'immediate' type of diary-poem is still justified. The events that the poet chooses to write about are significant for him

— at the time of writing. However much one may choose to deny or ignore the fact — political events do alter and shape the pattern of our lives. Here is Kolia's version of then current Government quarrels:

26

For quarrels' suds through media are sloshing

When linen is afforded public washing

United falls apart and Progress pauses,

Alliance re-examines all its causes,

The Independents rush to join sub-groups

In case some soapy would-be leader stoops

To conquer all; the Nationalists foregather

And work the two of them into a lather

Unrinsed; disequilibrium is a vandal

When marital discord becomes a scandal.

Kolia, in *MIXED BLESSINGS*, often reveals that his keen observation of the particular social customs of urban Port Moresby is still acute. This ability to express aspects of social and cultural behaviour — that are often overlooked or ignored — was evident in his stage play *GOING FINISH* and in the novels *THE LATE MR PAPUA* and *VICTIMS OF INDEPENDENCE*. Although a participant in the social customs he writes about, Kolia is also a detached observer and interpreter. Here, for example are his views on that well known contemporary Papua New Guinea custom — the writing of Letters to the Editor:

61

But where we really shine is in replying
To someone else's first attempt, and vying
To prove him wrong, we crack his
definitions

With much appeal to Oxford and the
Missions,

But then as soon as two have answered
one,

Then five must quick reply and every gun
Is primed and fired, until the readers wail
As confrontation with the daily mail
Displayed, and then the quarrel's so
extruded

"This correspondence is now (Ed.)
concluded."

Together with the writer we share events

that include: visits to a well known (upstairs) Chinese restaurant in Boroko, reactions to West Irian and East Timor, Richard Strauss, Father Ross's beard, bigamous marriage, Arnold Ap's death, the cost of the new Parliament House in Waigani, reviews of books that are never available in Port Moresby, and the visit of the Pope:

131

The Pope has gone with all the faithful
blessed

And claiming to be Catholics were all the
rest

For several days, and although its slightly
hollow

In fact, its quite an act to follow

And even if the Fundamentalists bitter

Complain, at least they can admire the
litter

About the streets and dying branches stuck
In hallowed ground and fast becoming
muck

And while the people at their topmost
lungs

Rejoiced, at least the Baptists spoke in
tongues.

Towards the end of *MIXED BLESSINGS*, the poet offers a note of regret that he did not write about his impressions of Moresby (and the Gulf) when he first experienced them in the mid-fifties:

... I've always meant to

Describe the place where accident had sent to
This aging soul . . .

We readers of John Kolia's writing are grateful that he has written so much of value since 1978 (when his first novels were published).

However, as one of those readers, I hope that he will not restrict his writing just to the form of poem represented by these recent volumes.

A country like Papua New Guinea needs more sharp, critical and concerned literary insights that Kolia generously provided in his novels, short stories, and plays for stage and radio.

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PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE

PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE by Dame Rachel Cleland, ART LOOK BOOKS, Perth, Western Australia: 1984 (Hardback and Paperback)

This is an extremely interesting book by a woman who is known and admired by Papua New Guineans through her many years residence in their country from the early nineteen fifties to the late nineteen seventies.

Dame Rachel describes her story as a book of "memories".

To ensure that these memories are accurately based on fact, the book's acknowledgement lists many distinguished contemporaries and experts who have checked details of events covered. Mr. Stan Pearsall, Sir John Gunther, Mr. David Chenoneth, Sir Buri Kidu, Justice Paul Quinliven, and Miss Nancy Lutton are among those who are quoted directly, or who gave the author much assistance. What emerges is an accurate and comprehensive social history of the final years of Australian colonial administration, as observed by a person who was close to the centre of that system — as wife of the Administrator, Sir Donald Cleland.

However, *PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE* is far more than an 'insiders' view of the political changes and developments that led to self — government and independence. It is also the personal and often moving story of a closely knit and loving family. As well as telling the background to the considerable achievements

of Sir Donald, the book reveals Dame Rachel's own reactions to the responsibilities and restrictions of her duties as the colonie's 'First Lady'.

The book's early chapters fill in the Clelands' life before their coming to Papua New Guinea. Then, amusingly we learn of the shock of Dame Rachel's first impressions after landing in Port Moresby (after an eventful day and a half's flight from Sydney) at the tail end of 1951's Dry season. Where was the lush, attractive tropical port that she had fondly imagined? Here was dust, ragged trees, and atmosphere (apart from the sudden glimpse of aqua blue sea from Three Mile Hill) that suggested a dreary, Central Australian out-post! I was reminded of the reported reaction of Sybil Murray, Sir Hubert Murray's wife, when she first was confronted with an earlier, equally dusty Moresby.

Unlike this predecessor, Rachel Cleland stayed — and did something positive to improve the town's environment! The house allocated to the Clelands was equally unprepossessing — especially after the comfort that they had left. This is how their first Moresby residence appeared:

"... We turned up a steep twisting track with little houses on one side, surrounded by a few shrubs thickly covered with dust, and turned into a newly made drive before a small, perfectly square, railway-station-ochre and brown house which becoming vacant, had been hastily bought for us. We climbed a flight of steps to a three-foot-wide verandah. I couldn't believe it and stood stock still, with visions of our Sydney home on the harbour at Darling Point. Inside: a room fifteen feet square, newly painted three shades of curry — with a bare wooden floor on which stood two easy chairs in khaki plastic, four wooden dinning chairs and a table, and a sideboard with coloured glass, in front. Don said:

"It'll only be temporary"

Dame Rachel was soon to learn many other administration families had to put up with much worse in the way of domestic comforts, and of course the Papuan villagers

had no 'luxuries' at all.

"On my second day, our awful house began to take on perspective, for we attended the opening of the first oil terminal — and every woman I met said: "Oh. You've got the house with the bath!." So the deep mauve bath in the bright green bathroom, which had so repelled me, I now found was unique. Everyone else had merely a shower . . . After all, everything in life is relative. Moreover this bath had been flown from the U.S. to Manus Island in 1944 especially for Carol Landis (the Hollywood actress) who went to entertain U.S. Marines there — bought of course, by our predecessor at "Disposals."

As a matter of necessity, Dame Rachel had to quickly adjust to life in Moresby, and absorb the implications of her husband's position as Assistant Administrator. Sir Donald's first duties included the implementation of the 1949 Act for a partly-elected Legislative Council.

This body was to comprise heads of Departments and nine non-official members of whom three were to be indigenous people. Three members were to be elected to represent Papua, the New Guinea Mainland and the New Guinea Islands regions.

Sir Donald found the attitude of some members of the expatriate community unhappy at this order for 'Native' representation. The community was also depressed as the Australian Grant (on which the economy was totally depending) had been reduced from four million pounds to three million seven hundred thousand pounds. Dame Rachel also noted that there were insufficient funds for a new house. Throughout the book Dame Rachel emerges as very supportive of her husband, but admits to some early difficulties in communicating:

"We also had a big temperamental gap to bridge. Don found my enthusiasm and effervescences trying at times and would be irritated; while in those first few months his taciturnity and moodiness, when he became withdrawn, left me feeling very lonely and yearning for the liveliness of the

boys and their young friends. Thus I left more and more the need to find my own identification with the country."

She does become increasingly involved with community and national concerns regarding the welfare and social encouragement of Papua New Guineans. The Girl Guides Association is only one of many organisations that had Dame Rachel's support and active practical assistance.

Her first project was very close to home. It was to be the improvement of the barren and rocky hillside area called Lawes Road where she first lived. (And where she and Sir Donald made their home after his retirement). This project involved clearing piles of wartime accumulated rubbish, spreading richer soil (sent down from Sogeri Plateau) and the planting of gardens and trees. This community effort was achieved by marshalling teams of other 'Admin' wives, their house staff, off-duty wharf labourers, and, — one assumes — the occasional 'at home' husband!

The legacy of this activity can be seen today in the magnificent raintrees spreading their shade over the roads, and the area's beautiful gardens. The Lawes Road beautification was to be repeated in Dame Rachel's wonderful garden at Government House, and in other successful efforts to encourage tree planting in Port Moresby and its suburbs.

It was on the retirement of Colonel J.K. Murray that Sir Donald was appointed Administrator, and the family moved to Government House at Konedobu. There had been only two previous tenants of the Official Residence. These were the departing Murrays, and the first Lieutenant Governor, Sir Hubert Murray — who had spent thirty seven years in Papua.

After much hard work, and with an imaginative sense of what needed to be done — and done economically — the old building was gradually improved, the garden extended and replanned. So, with the Clelands, Government House became a charming and attractive residence.

Many Papua New Guinean staff who

assisted in the grateful tribute include the Hanu Dosi and Matha Kerema gardener Maiva.

The problems of the accusations of the claim that Sir development of (unofficial) rule of development' is suggested that attempts could be forward-thinking based Department workable new policy shortly after Sir Administrator. Ne to implement these

Although she v any official capacity making (often bureaucrats at the in far-off Canberra strong opinions controversial Tap Telefomin murder decision are among events that are intensely argued Rachel in the book

Many outstanding personalities contributed (and at times, frustrated) development towards New Guinea.

The contribution of Sir John Gunther a value — Hasluck as Canberra policy-maker Cleland's valued A Health (with his control of malaria, as the founding University of Papua

Visitors to Government what seemed a consistent how the Clelands managed family life with

assisted in the transformation are given grateful tribute by Dame Rachel. These include the Hanuabadans — Lohia and Keke, Dosi and Mathaias from Milne Bay, and the Kerema gardeners Aihe, Oahu, Levai and Maiva.

The problems of postwar education and the accusations of "gradualism" are examined. The claim that Sir Paul Hasluck impeded the development of education through the (unofficial) rule of 'gradualism' and 'uniform development' is convincingly dismissed. It is suggested that the delay and piece-meal attempts could be blamed on the lack of forward-thinking policy from the Konedobu based Department of Education. A clear and workable new policy was brought into effect shortly after Sir Donald took office as Administrator. New directors were brought in to implement these policies.

Although she was not directly involved in any official capacity in decisions or policy making (often these were made by bureaucrats at the Department of Territories in far-off Canberra), Dame Rachel often had strong opinions on these matters. The controversial Tapini incident, the tragic Telefomin murders, the two-salary Scale decision are among the significant historical events that are intelligently, and, at times, intensely argued and clarified by Dame Rachel in the book.

Many outstanding and significant personalities contributed to the excitement (and at times, frustration) of the years of development towards Nationhood for Papua New Guinea.

The contributions of Sir Paul Hasluck and Sir John Gunther are seen as being of special value — Hasluck as a sensitive and intelligent Canberra policy-maker and Gunther as Cleland's valued Assistant, and Director of Health (with his work on the prevention and control of malaria, a great success) and later as the founding Vice-Chancellor of the University of Papua New Guinea.

Visitors to Government House came in what seemed a constant stream. One wonders how the Clelands managed to lead any private family life with their children and

grandchildren — yet somehow the 'official' and 'private' worlds managed to exist together.

Dame Rachel tells of an amusing side issue concerning a Royal Visitor, typical it seems, of the need for carefully rehearsed preparations necessary to make official functions appear 'spontaneous'. Before a visit of the Duke of Edinburgh and the Governor General, Sir William Slim, Dame Rachel had to demonstrate the method of the curtsy — for women who would be presented to the Royal Party.

She went to the Village Local Government Council:

"The President acted as the Duke, another councillor as Sir William, and I demonstrated, stepping sideways and bringing the other foot behind, so that your knees lock as you go down, preventing a wobble. When you straighten again, another sideways step placed you in front of 'Sir William' to repeat the curtsy, at the same time looking up and smiling. We had lots of fun and laughter and they all practiced until they were perfect In the receiving line on the night, I was standing next to Sir William and I must say I chuckled with pleasure when he commented on the beautiful Papuan curtsies."

The work of the various Christian Missions is well documented, with examples seen by the Clelands on their many trips around the country. Especially memorable is the description of the Bishop's (Archbishop Philip Strong) formal dinner party at the Anglican headquarters of Dogura.

It was of course expected that the Clelands would meet many Papua New Guineans who were leaders and important citizens. This was part of their official duty. However they were able to make more than formal contacts with many men and women who became their friends rather than just acquaintances.

PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE contains affectionate and personal

portraits of people such as Sir John Guise and his family, Maori and Elizabeth Kiki, Ted Diro, Mrs Mary Kededo and family, Josephine Abaijah, Reuben Taurek, Ebia Olewale, Joe Nombri, Vin ToBaining. Oala Oala Rarua and many others — all of whom, I am sure would regard Sir Donald and Dame Rachel as their good friends.

The book is attractively produced and each chapter is illustrated with a delightful drawing by the Papua New Guinea artist Jon Dangar. There are many photographs — some of considerable historic importance. The photo caption on page

353 is, I think, incorrect. The graduating student pictured being congratulated by Sir Donald is not Renagi Lohia, but Maurice Tagaratsi (Thompson) from Vanuatu (then the New Hebrides).

I was disappointed that the book had no Index — which would assist in the location of various topics, however the Contents pages do list the main topics covered in each chapter.

PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE is a valuable record of a memorable achievement.

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FILMS ON THE PACIFIC

FIRST CONTACT

16mm 54 mins NRC

A new documentary by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson about the first contact in the 1930s between Europeans and the people of the New Guinea Highlands. The clash between two aggressive cultures was recorded on film by the late Mick Leahy, one of the first explorers to meet the Highlanders. His original footage is incorporated with the memories of surviving Highlanders and Leahy's brothers to make a rich historical portrait of conquest and rapid social change. "A compelling study of colonialism and colonialist attitudes. The film-makers themselves have not forced the issue, but simply allowed the story to unfold in the words of those who were there at the time. **FIRST CONTACT** represents the very best of current Australian documentary making." - National Times

GREATER UNION AWARD FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY
1983 SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL
GRAND PRIX - CINEMA DU REEL, PARIS, 1983
MAIN PRIZE, SOCIOLOGY SECTION
1983 SAN FRANCISCO FILM FESTIVAL



ANGELS OF WAR

16mm 54 mins NRC

A film by Andrew Pike, Hank Nelson and Gavan Daws about the experiences of the people of Papua New Guinea during World War Two. Winner of the Grand Prix for Best Film at the 1982 Nyon Film Festival, Switzerland, and the 1982 Australian Film Award for Best Documentary. "Enjoyable as well as very moving ... makes a serious subject both revelatory and entertaining." - The Australian. "An excellent documentary ... puts the New Guinea campaign of World War II into a grim, new perspective." - Sydney Morning Herald.

KAMA WOSI

16 mm 54 mins G

A film by Les McLaren about music in the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guinea. **Kama Wosi** (literally "our songs") reveals the richness of Trobriand aesthetic traditions, linking the songs to the daily life of the islands. "Utterly charming and loaded with information." - John Hinde, ABC Radio.

NAMEKAS

16 mm 53 mins G

A lyrical companion film to Les McLaren's **Kama Wosi**, this time about music in Lake Chambri, in the Sepik area of western Papua New Guinea. McLaren's film explores, in slow, poetic rhythms, the relationship of the music to the natural and spirit worlds of the Chambri people.

MALANGAN LABADAMA

16 mm 130 mins G

A documentary by Chris Owen, produced for the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies. Shot in the South Mandak village of Pinatgin in New Ireland, Papua New Guinea, the film observes an elaborate ceremony performed in tribute to a regional leader, Buk Buk. Elizabeth Brouwer served as anthropologist consultant to the film.

THE RED BOWMEN

16 mm 58 mins NRC

A short one-hour version of a documentary by Chris Owen, produced for the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, about the complex two-day-long *ida* ceremony of the people of the Waina-Sowanda area of the West Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. Alfred Gell served as anthropologist consultant to the film.

TROBRIAND CRICKET

16 mm 54 mins G

One of the great ethnographic films. Directed by Gary Kildea and anthropologist Jeremy Leach, the film examines the form of cricket played between rival villages in the Trobriand Islands in Papua New Guinea, and links it with the colonial past of the islands.

SHARKCALLERS OF KONTU

16 mm 54 mins G

A film by Dennis O'Rourke about disappearing cultures in Papua New Guinea: the theme is represented by the spectacular and dangerous ritual of shark-calling in the village of Kontu, New Ireland, where men go out in small canoes to catch sharks by hand. "A beautiful, muted but angry film ... absolutely staggering to watch." - W. Lydecker, Radio 2XX, Canberra. "... (the film) carries us through a whole revolution, or devolution, of values, and I for one found it an experience that was sometimes beautiful, and sometimes shaming and painful." - John Hinde, ABC Radio.

YAP -HOW DID YOU KNOW WE'D LIKE TV?

16 mm 55 mins G

Dennis O'Rourke's witty and disturbing documentary about the introduction of American TV (complete with ads for carpet shampoo and Cadillacs) to the small Pacific island of Yap, on the eve of the island's independence. A brilliantly perceptive view of cultural imperialism at its most cynical and blatant.

YUMI YET

16 mm 56 mins G

A lively and affectionate portrait by Dennis O'Rourke of how Papua New Guinea celebrated its independence. Winner of two major awards for documentary, at the Milan and Virgin Islands festivals. "Visually stunning and politically effective ... an extraordinarily beautiful film." - Time Out (London). "Rich and exuberant." - Sydney Morning Herald.

ILEKSEN

16 mm 58 mins G

A film by Dennis O'Rourke and Gary Kildea, the extraordinary companion to **Yumi Yet**, recording the excitement of politics in Papua New Guinea after independence. Shown on BBC television a few weeks after **Yumi Yet**, it won similar enthusiasm from the London press. One critic in the British Film Institute's **Monthly Film Bulletin** placed it on his list of the Ten Best films of the year. "A rich, complex and fascinating analysis of neo-colonial politics, made with an insight and skill rare on any (TV) channel. Don't miss it." - Time Out (UK).

GOGODALA: A CULTURAL REVIVAL?

16 mm 58 mins G

A short one-hour version of a film by Chris Owen (produced for the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies) about an attempt to revive the rich culture of the Gogodala people in the swampy lowlands of Papua New Guinea's south-west. Their cultural traditions had been destroyed in the 1930s under missionary influence, and now their revival is again provoking controversy and confusion.

Soon to be released

CELSE AND CORA:

The first feature-length documentary by Australian ethnographic film-maker Gary Kildea (director of **Trobriand Cricket**). The film records the daily lives of a young family living in a Philippino squatters' settlement, and earning a meagre living selling cigarettes on the streets of Manila. **Meaghan Morris of the Financial Review at the 1983 Sydney Film Festival:** "... an outstanding documentary in the direct cinema mode ... with its long, detailed sequences of conversation and conflict (the film) is a fascinating introduction to people who are usually used as decor in western 'Asia' films."

For further information on rental and print sale prices, please contact:

RONIN FILMS

136 Blamey Crescent, Campbell, A.C.T. 2601. Telephone Canberra (062) 48 0851

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