EDUCATION IN BOUGAINVILLE-BUKA: SITE OF STRUGGLE

ELEANOR RIMOLDI

INTRODUCTION

Education in Bougainville-Buka must be understood as a site of struggle in the critical sense that it has been perceived and implemented in the context of political, theoretical, and moral conflict. Although the impact on the people is sometimes alluded to in the analysis of policy makers, the decisive control of material resources, pedagogy and curriculum has for the most part remained in the hands of government administrators. It has often been suggested that educationists and anthropologists should work together in Papua New Guinea. This essay will question the underlying premises of this proposition, and focus on an appreciation of how people themselves analyse their situation and formulate educational directions for their communities.

The political context of the development of education in Bougainville is enmeshed in a history which includes European colonialism and two world wars. The particular way in which these events affected Bougainville contributed to the subsequent development of its identity vis-à-vis the various central authorities that directed educational policies on the islands – and indeed still powerfully affect both Bougainville and the central government in Port Moresby, threatening to dismantle hard won gains on both sides.

The theoretical and moral context have been brought together in a western-style liberal-humanist concern for a relevant education system sympathetic to the needs of 'indigenous' people – with, of course, the prevailing administration in control. Seldom is any real weight given to the observation made by the man who was the first professor of anthropology at the University of Papua New Guinea, the late Professor of Social anthropology at Auckland, Ralph Bulmer. Bulmer reversed the usual assumption that education was something that the west needed to give to the rest. He pointed out that a major contribution from Papua New Guinea to education in the western world is in the comparative study of culture and society (Bulmer, 1969). At its best, the discipline of anthropology requires an equal, participatory and rigorous form of communication to achieve mutual understanding in a situation where the pupil is the anthropologist. The patience and generosity of generations of Papua New Guineans and in this particular instance the people of Bougainville-Buka, in educating western students of society is very great.

ACCESS Critical Perspectives on Education Policy
11 (2) 1992, pages 73-86

In 1936 William Groves (later to become the first Director of Education in the post-war territory) made reference to an alliance between educationists and anthropologists:

> It is certain that if education is to succeed even moderately in the task of adapting its programme to New Guinea conditions and requirements, it is the first duty of the educationist to understand the native and his culture. For how can education hope to adapt its programme to the needs of the natives, and at the same time gain their confidence, unless it know the nature of their life and outlook, and the problems that beset them? The need is apparent for education to ally itself with and to make full use of social anthropology. In the planning of every phase of education work, there must be a combination of the methods and the faith of these two human sciences if success is to be achieved (Groves, 1936: 145).

The complicating factor in this formula is in the historical and contemporary variation in the methods and the 'faith' both in anthropology and in education theory and practice. 'Faith' is an aspect of a moral conviction underlying human relationships and the value of knowledge. Hence the emphasis here on the interpretation of education on Bougainville as a site of struggle between the elements of politics, theory, and morality.

The Historical Present

In this paper I move back and forth between history and the present on Bougainville in order to illustrate the recurrence of various issues in education such as language of instruction, educational goals, and village focused or state focused curriculum. I will also contrast the motivation and initiative taken in the field of education by populist movements with that of other vested interests in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and wider international organisations. The relationship between social anthropologists and educationists is also subjected to scrutiny and questions are raised as to the proper locus of control as the people of Bougainville-Buka struggle to formulate a new society based on the old. This attempt to translate from one social reality to another requires a sophisticated and moral dialectic constantly distorted by the politics of power and domination as well as the arrogance of western academic disciplines.

Bougainville-Buka, the North Solomons Province of PNG (or the Republic of Bougainville as it is called by the rebel interim government fighting for secession from the Papua New Guinea mainland) is made up of two main islands, in total some 240 kms long and 64 kms at the widest point. The population is approximately 140,000 and there are about eighteen language groups.

In considering the history of education, schooling and development in Bougainville-Buka, it is wise to keep in mind that for thousands of years, the people of these islands had their own well developed social and economic systems as well as institutions and customs that contributed to the nurture and education of their children. Children were very much a part of the on-going life of the community as observed by Beatrice Blackwood, a British anthropologist working on Buka and North

Bougainville in the late 1920s. Learning to talk, for example, was encouraged by both parents who talked to their children a great deal. Fathers had a big part in this and "it was common to see father taking his small son or daughter for a walk through the village, pointing out various things seen on the way and giving their name" (Blackwood, 1935: 168). Adults did not use baby talk when addressing small children. The care and education of the child bonded social groups, in spite of competing interests, into a cooperative whole. For example, "as soon as he is permitted by custom, after the child is washed for the first time, the father begins to help the mother by doing small services for the child" (ibid). The father's devotion to the child, and recognition of this through ceremonial presentations to him from the child's maternal kin is still a crucial dynamic which expresses something of the nature of social cooperation and morality in this culture. Blackwood gives the example that "the child's mother's people might kill a pig, cook it, and present it with ceremonial pudding to the father because he has tended the child while it was ill and washed its sores" (ibid). There is a phrase which means "to father the child", although the child does not belong to its father's clan as this is a matrilineal society and affiliation and inheritance is through the female line. The matrikin present gifts in this manner to acknowledge services which the father is under no obligation to perform.

Blackwood observed then (as now) that small children and babies were carried and nursed much of the time and mothers worked with them on their backs. The natural world embraced the child and raised her up – as she struggled to walk upright – with a sling fashioned from fibrous tissue that grows round the stem of the banana palm.

According to Blackwood, "the children are subjected to little or nothing that we should describe as discipline ... obedience is never insisted upon" (ibid: 172). She never saw a child made to do an errand it did not want to, nor anyone lift a hand to a child much less a stick or weapon ... though they may be scolded. She observed that children take up a life not very different from that of their elders at a much earlier age than do our own children. Yet she believed them to have a happy childhood and plenty of scope for the development of character and marked individuality. "Life" she says "is never so serious that there is not time for play and laughter, even for adults, and the children certainly have their fill of both" (ibid: 174). Sixty years on their grandchildren seek out this earlier generation as they shelter in the bush from the ravages of a war of secession. They want to learn the meanings of old words and old worlds. The new world is falling about their heads, outsiders are not to be trusted, and their schools are largely destroyed. Some of the young people are in PNG government "care centres" (or "concentration camps" as some Bougainvilleans refer to them) having their "hearts and minds" won over, away from the "influence of their kinsmen and home villages" (*Post Courier*, 1991).

The struggle over hearts and minds was not the first priority of the outside world when contact was made on Bougainville-Buka in the late eighteenth century as whalers, traders, and blackbirders (slavers) passed through, each intent on their own commercial interests. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century when German and British commercial interests began to compete that colonial boundaries were established. With no consideration of the traditional ties between peoples the Solomon Islands chain was divided between Germany and Britain. Germany took the North Solomons which included Bougainville-Buka and the southern islands became the British Solomons. The British Solomons has since gained full independence, whereas the North Solomons passed from German rule, to Japanese occupation, to

Australian administration which led to incorporation with the PNG mainland – a development challenged many times by the people of Bougainville-Buka, not least in 1975 when Papua New Guinea gained full independence.

At the time of her research Blackwood observed that the people of Bougainville were already affected by outside influences – they had been a mandated territory for nine years under Australian administration and had experienced some schooling from the Marist Missions for several decades. Prior to this, 'education' in the era of German rule was of a very practical nature. A new leadership was created which usually had little relationship to that already long established and took no account of the women leaders. These *luluai* were then taught how to collect the annual head tax and earned a salary as a ten percent commission on the taxes they were able to exact from their fellows (see Oliver, 1991). There was some vague assertion that a system of taxation, and the various measures taken to force labour for the so-called "public welfare", would act as civilizing devices and a sort of education in 'responsible citizenship' whereas 'other measures of education ... formal schooling ... [was left] almost entirely in mission hands' (ibid: 33). In these early years, mission education was in the vernacular, and largely focused on the Christian gospels.

Politics, Theory and Morality

Within this constellation of politics, theory and morality we can clearly see the divisive nature of these factors and the strange manner in which 'education' is seen as equally applicable to situations of virtual slavery on the one hand and of spiritual piety on the other. By placing some men in this matrifocal society in authority over their fellows – using money and labour as weapons of coercion and enticement – the carefully developed systems of balance and restraint already functioning in Bougainville-Buka were placed under stress. There is a history of resistance to this process (often improperly characterised as cargo-cult) as well as the development of social and economic responses to change that emerged from the people themselves. One such movement which emerged during the second World War was the Hahalis Welfare Society on Buka. The three major factors of politics, theory and morality which have made education such a major site of struggle in Bougainville-Buka can be examined in an analysis of their effects on the Hahalis Welfare Society as a social movement.

The politics of colonialism prior to World War II impacted on Buka Island primarily in a context of laissez-faire. Administration from German authorities was relatively minimal. Education was not established there until 1914 and was left in the first instance to Marist missionaries from Germany and France. The Halia language group where the Hahalis Welfare Society was based, were instructed in the vernacular. The Methodists, who established themselves further inland in the Solos language group, preferred English as the language of instruction. There was already represented on this small island the elements of one of the major theoretical educational debates which rested on the language of first instruction. It is said that the Methodists were more concerned with the practical goal of village development and hence English would be more useful (in commerce for instance) and the Marists were more concerned with maintaining the integrity of the traditional way of life while training native catechists to spread the message of the gospels. In the memory of many Buka,

the period of German occupation was preferable to what came later, at least there was a relatively benign neglect and the 'luluai' in spite of their tax collecting, could be more or less ignored as they usually had no traditional status or leadership rights. However, things were soon to change.

At the start of World War I "Australian authorities rounded up a band of volunteers and shipped them to Rabaul. Their commander accepted the surrender of the handful of German residents" who took the oath of neutrality and were allowed to stay (ibid: 39). Three months later the Australians arrived at Kieta on Bougainville and the Germans surrendered. Until 1921 the colony was administered by Australia under a military regime but German rules and practices continued (ibid: 40). At the War's end it "was officially recognised that the act of military occupation did not legally constitute the establishment of sovereignty, but it was widely assumed, and publicly demanded, that the colony would remain in Australian hands for both military and economic reasons" (ibid: 41). The allied position during the war had been no territorial gains. Under the new anti-colonialist philosophy that prevailed at the peace conference, the former German New Guinea was proclaimed a ward of the new League of Nations, under mandate to Australia "to promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and social progress of the inhabitants". The Australian government appointed a Royal Commission to investigate and make recommendations. These shaped the events in the territory, including Bougainville-Buka, for the next twenty years. Having been the administrative power in Papua since 1884, Australia seemed to have no compunction at simply including Bougainville-Buka in this protectorate as of 1921. The people had no say in the matter.

Anthropology and Policy

The chairman of the Royal Commission, Hubert Murray, was Lt. Governor of The Territory of Papua. He saw his educational objective as helping the natives of Papua raise themselves to the highest level of civilization which they were capable of attaining. This plan was to be financed by taxes collected from the native population (that is from all men aged between 16 and 36 years) and the money was to be used to their benefit. "Between 1920 – 1941 307,000 pounds were collected, but only 90,000 pounds were used for educational purposes. The rest was used for medical assistance, encouragement of village games, and to support the government anthropologist" (Smith, 1975: 23). This fund was originally proposed for educational purposes, but as W.C. Groves is quoted as saying above, education and social anthropology needed to work in tandem. As it turned out it seemed that the people were expected to purchase from the educationists and anthropologists the version of knowledge, and of their own culture, deemed appropriate by the authorities. The government anthropologist in 1932 was F.E. Williams. At the time, the issue of a 'relevant' education was taken up by Williams in an editorial in the *Papuan Villager*, advising the 'natives':

> The white men know far more than you do. They make and do a lot of things that are quite beyond you. You cannot be the same as the white man; and there is no reason why you should. It is true that there are many of the white man's ways that you can copy; you can learn to work

> hard and save money; you can learn to read and do arithmetic; you can learn to buy and sell and be 'business-like'; you can learn to use tools in your gardens; and there are all sorts of useful things you can buy in the stores. But you can never be quite the same as the white men; and you will only look silly if you try to be (cited in Smith, 1975: 9).

Murray himself thought that agricultural education was of particular importance and assisted it by the Native Taxation Fund. Prior to World War II the native money was given in grants to the Mission Schools. One anthropologist who reported on the quality of these schools was Camilla Wedgwood. She travelled extensively in the Territory inspecting educational work. She noted the low level of literacy and commented that:

> above all, after they have left school the natives had nothing to read either in English or the vernacular except the Bible and their old school books, so that they lacked the incentive and the opportunity to practice the skill which they had acquired in childhood.
>
> Wedgwood criticized [the] failure of the school system's relationship to village life. It was equally true that the schools did not generally provide any deep knowledge of the world outside the village (cited in Smith, 1975: 25).

These two major concerns persisted throughout the educational history of PNG and affected Bougainville-Buka as policy was formulated under national direction. Wedgwood worked for the Army Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs during World War II and made recommendations for the reorganisation of education after the war. W. C. Groves was appointed to this office in 1946. He had strong anthropological interests and had expressed ten years previously the need for consultation with anthropologists. Nevertheless, he apparently drew up a plan for native education without a glance at Wedgwood's reports until his plan was written which 'regarded the focus of education as the life and activities on the village' (ibid: 26). Wedgwood was concerned to establish a system which allowed parents a choice of school systems "which is implied in the universal declaration of human rights" whereas the Administration plan established as a "general principle ... not to duplicate Government and Mission projects in the one area" (ibid: 27).

We can perhaps see how the opinions of anthropologists are not uniform, nor can we assume that even the strongest proponents of the value of the partnership between educationists and anthropologists can be relied upon to take seriously such consultations. But beyond this there is the need to consider the effects of policy on the people themselves, and to listen to their own opinions – not as 'natives' but as people.

Oliver has pointed out that fifty years ago, after many decades of contact with whites "not one of the indigenes were in a position of authority or social status equal to any of the whites in the administration, or the commercial or religious organizations" (Oliver, 1991: 41). Nevertheless, as was mentioned earlier, the systems of authority and social order on Bougainville-Buka which had served the people well for thousands of years, remained in their hands and were indeed being continually examined and altered in order to adapt to new situations.

Fifty years ago one of these Buka social reformers was beheaded by the Japanese, suspected of either being part of a cult, or of being loyal to the Australians and the coastwatchers left behind by them to report on the Japanese. Her name was Taneha and her dying words were a plea for a new kind of leader who could unite her people in a spirit of love and cooperation. Taneha died in front of her own children. From her death sprang a social movement that was to fulfil her prophecy in the leadership of her daughter Elizabeth and Elizabeth's husband, John Teosin. Elizabeth was about three years old when her mother was executed. The children of the Japanese occupation recall that schools were set up to teach Japanese language, customs and songs. In the 1970s these songs were still remembered and taught to the children. One of these was sung by a group of Hahalis children wearing hats painted with the Rising Sun – history made manifest. It was said that some of the Japanese soldiers knew Halia, the local language before they arrived on Buka. The "Japanese deliberately sought to win over the affections of the population at large by a show of friendly egalitarianism. The Japanese encouraged ancestor worship, through which it was considered Christianity would be weakened and a bridge provided to Japanese State Shinto" (Oliver, 1991: 71).

Considered only as anthropological, or educational theory – their behaviour could be seen as proper. However, the politics of the situation suggest more sinister motives and clearly the question of motives can not be avoided. The outcome of this situation for the Buka Islanders was disastrous. Both the Japanese and allied coastwatchers hiding in the bush, enlisted the aid of the Buka even to the point of Buka killing Buka who worked for the other side – the islanders were inevitably divided among themselves. It would seem that the same tactic is being employed as I write, as the Papua New Guinea central government forces on Bougainville have not only divided Buka from the Bougainville mainland but have also engaged, for payment, coastwatchers among the local population to spy on their fellow Bougainvilleans if they attempt to take their canoes out to sea.

History repeated itself with amazing rapidity on Bougainville, and schooling is a very deliberate example of this. Laracy (1976: 146) suggests that the missionaries were well aware of the theory that 'who owns the schools owns the nation' but this conflation of education and politics was certainly not limited to them. The Japanese made every effort to "Nipponize the indigenes" well into 1943 and according to Oliver the schools were not only popular but contributed to anti-allied sentiment. However, as the allied forces made a forceful advance into the area, the Japanese became more brutal. The Japanese surrendered in 1945 and the Australian administration returned in 1946. It is recorded that over two thousand Australians were either killed or wounded, and that over 18,000 Japanese lost their lives, but no figures were kept on the number of Bougainvilleans or Buka who died or were wounded.

The Struggle for Control

Education in the post-war era proceeded slowly on Buka-Bougainville. Commissions were set up and policy developed from the administrative centres but the mission-schools, with government subsidies, were the primary source of education on Bougainville. While policy was being debated at the centre, traditional leaders on Buka were also meeting to discuss plans for the future of

their people. It was decided to recall John Teosin, one of their mission-educated boys, from Rabaul where he was attending high school. They then proceeded to share with him their vast knowledge of tradition and gradually invested him with much of the power of their own status until John Teosin became the new leader, the *tsunono* prophesied by Elizabeth's mother Taneha during the Japanese occupation. John later married Elizabeth and together they established the Hahalis Welfare Society, an innovative social movement first studied by anthropologist Max Rimoldi in the 1960s whose work was a departure from the narrow paternalism of earlier anthropologists (Rimoldi & Rimoldi, 1992).

Dismissed by some commentators as a cargo cult, the Hahalis Welfare Society was in fact busy with the work of adapting their culture and values to contemporary conditions. At the same time, dominant figures in New Zealand and Australian educational policy served on Royal Commissions to develop educational policy in PNG – which now included Bougainville-Buka. Sir George Currie was Chairman of the report of the commission on higher education in PNG published in Canberra in 1964. The report was focused primarily on the need for secondary and tertiary level education in order to create an educated elite. (Later in 1969 another familiar name in New Zealand education – Beeby – was on an advisory committee which focused on primary education in Papua New Guinea.) One of the first wave of graduates who constituted this 'elite' at the newly established University of Papua New Guinea was Leo Hannett, a Bougainvillean whose earlier education was in Marist schools. Upon graduation Hannett returned to Bougainville and lead the 1974-5 bid for secession, establishing close ties with the traditional leaders. I arrived to do fieldwork during this period and recall a poster on his office wall – "Education for who? Education for what?" Politics and motive are not separable from the process of education. On the other hand, the view that "whoever owns the schools, owns the country" is far from straightforward.

The various commissions on education in Papua New Guinea reflected some of the historical issues in mass education in the western world – for example, should education focus on the individual child, or the needs of the state? There was also the tension between village-centred, and nation-centred curriculum – "there are values in communal village life that must be defended against unwarranted interference, but if Papua New Guinea is ever to be a nation it must be something more than a collection of villages" (Weeden, 1969: 4). The needs of the soon to be independent state were given emphasis.

In the meantime, what was happening in that "collection of villages" on Buka – the Hahalis Welfare Society? Working with the older leaders, John Teosin established the Welfare Society as a viable cooperative where people worked together and shared in the profits from the sale of cash crops. They resisted inclusion in the local councils established by the Australian Administration, they were excommunicated from the Catholic Church for their supposed immorality and their traditional spiritual beliefs, and in 1962 they refused to pay taxes for amenities that were never provided (Rimoldi & Rimoldi, 1992). They wanted a decent road, as well as a school and medical services that were not tied to the mission. (By 1970 there were only seventeen administration primary schools on Bougainville compared with eighty Catholic schools, and twenty-eight schools of other Christian denominations.) After a period of conflict a road was finally built to take their crops to the market, but the school was only granted in 1974, the year before independence. However, when the school raised the North Solomons

flag and Hahalis supported the bid for secession from PNG in 1975, Port Moresby withdrew its teachers and the school was forced to close.

The subsequent compromise which established Bougainville-Buka as the first provincial government in PNG – The North Solomons Province – introduced an era of decentralisation that included significant provincial control over education. Bray clearly acknowledges that the devolution of resources and authority in Papua New Guinea was a Bougainville initiative. And what is more, the Education Department was at the forefront of this decentralisation (Bray, 1984). However, a new centre of power created another source of tension for the "cluster of villages" in the Hahalis Welfare Society. Greater acceptance in a political sense meant the traditional leadership being drawn into the provincial centres of power which in turn were tied to Port Moresby. Confusion over traditional jurisdiction in serious disputes and the distribution of locally collected taxes all undermined the alliance between the grassroots development at Hahalis and the educated elite in power at Provincial level. The little school at Hahalis now relied on that Provincial government for support – indeed a new plan was afoot for an experimental community school programme which would teach a bilingual and bicultural curriculum in the primary schools. There was a move made by the government to purchase from a local landowner, the land where Hahalis school stood. When Teosin heard of this he invoked the Welfare Society rules which established communal ownership of the land for its members and elaborated a complex plan which would compensate the particular group of people who had wished to sell the land. Landowners elsewhere on the island were selling land to the government for schools and other public buildings which increased the pressure on the Welfare Society which was trying to retain traditional practices of land use – resisting the trend towards individual enterprise. Since land is traditionally passed on through the women in this society, it is they who were specifically at risk of losing status and authority. Further, some of the women at Hahalis also felt the pressure of increased work obligations that centred on the school and its grounds which added to the considerable effort they already contributed to subsistence gardens and cash crops. Thus, the increase in access to schooling at the village level, even though the Provincial Government had more control and planned to make these schools bicultural, created an avenue for the destruction of traditional economic and social relations. Such contradictions must be incorporated in the theoretical discourse which seeks to determine the locus of schooling in developing societies.

EDUCATION AND 'ECONOMIC MAN'

Another significant player in these negotiations of change is the giant mining conglomerate Bougainville Copper Ltd, which made its own huge impact on the land owned by the women of Bougainville at Panguna. For nearly thirty years the women have protested the damage and effects of the mine – to no avail. Bougainville Copper has been influential in the education field – training and scholarships are one area of their influence. However, they have also funded research in order to provide a theoretical basis for the creation of a population that will be suited to its commercial enterprise – not just as producers and employees, but also as consumers and a docile local population. One such project was carried out by T.K. Moulik in the 1970s who saw Bougainville's experience of the mine as a "ready-

made natural experiment for the testing of social science generalizations" (Moulik, 1977: 4). His primary interest was:

> concerned with the adaptive behaviour of the Bougainvilleans. It is therefore an intimate socio-psychological inquiry into the minds of Bougainville people and their motivations affecting their involvement commitment and participation in the new socio-economic environment ... The study investigates the motivations of Bougainvilleans towards success in the monetary sector of the economy (ibid).

This research was based on a sample of adult male heads of households (in this matrifocal society) and on a sample of school students "in order to tap responses from a most important labour force in Bougainville ... sensitive young people ... subjected to conflicting psychological pressures: an overwhelming internal tug-of-war between the influences of modern industrial ways of life and the subsistence-oriented traditional rural ways" (ibid: 21). Both male and female students were interviewed although Moulik was of the arrogant opinion that "the average Bougainvillean is not usually given to reflection on the pattern of his [sic] life, [and thus] the assessment of his motivation at its true worth involves the greatest caution" (ibid: 22). The tests that he used in order to overcome this perceived obstacle were the Thematic Apperception Test and others for the assessment of such things as the motivations for achievement and success, how people ranked various occupations, and even a test "to measure anomie" (ibid: 24). Moulik's conclusions seem to belie his own absurd assumption that Bougainvilleans do not reflect on the direction of their lives. Favoured occupations ranked by the students placed doctor, political leader, priest, or military career at the top and mine worker somewhere in the middle of the possible choices. According to Moulik "money was seen to be an important incentive only when the job satisfied the criterion of socio-political desirability with particular reference to welfare and political influence and ideals of nationalism. Given the type of basic economic security of the village economy, which a majority of the Bougainvilleans have, money will not always be the supreme motivating factor, particularly if the monetary incentives are not greatly different between jobs" (ibid: 94-95).

A decade after the publication of Moulik's work the Panguna Landowners Association sabotaged the mine and forced its closure, sparking off the current battle for secession – the bloodiest in their history. Young men educated in the seventies are fighting and dying for their homeland in the eighties and nineties. Some of these men were in fact trained by Bougainville Copper and now use what they know against the mine. Some became doctors now struggling to serve their people under a total blockade even of critical medicines and supplies, to save the lives of women in childbirth or people wounded in the fighting; some became innovative political leaders now struggling among their people (or in exile) for self-determination; some became priests who now appeal to the international Christian community to aid them in their struggle for a just peace and an end to violence. And some – indeed many – have taken up arms in a bloody conflict with the Papua New Guinea military forces. How does this reality relate to Moulik's 'Occupational Prestige Rankings'?

Education as a state system of schooling can not predict, indeed should not predict, the production or reproduction of any particular social form. The power of people to develop social forms will always assert itself in the whole context of their personal and

social selves. Certainly a simple equation between education and economic 'man' is not possible.

In spite of the inevitable potential for knowledge and skills to be turned to unpredictable ends, governments and international organisations have a vested interest in directing the focus of educational institutions. It would be unrealistic to ignore this influence in Papua New Guinea where the United Nations and the World Bank have been very dominant. Because these organisations fund research and publication their influence goes beyond policy advice, although certainly developing nations must heed that advice if they expect financial aid from the World Bank. According to Mark Bray the World Bank has made a major policy shift towards decentralisation and he refers to a 1975 statement from Robert McNamara, then President of the World Bank, to that effect:

> experience shows that there is a greater chance of success if institutions provide for popular participation, local leadership and decentralization of authority (World Bank 1975: 90-8, quoted in Bray, 1992: 15).

When Bougainville leaders made a bid for secession in 1975 they staged demonstrations to coincide with a visit to Papua New Guinea from the World Bank. The World Bank has been very influential in Papua New Guinea and has even put pressure on Bougainville to reduce its rate of population growth. The irony is that central government has tried to measure out liberty and leadership to the Bougainvilleans – not unlike the way that curricula measure out a people's identity. They must come hat in hand in order to ask for what is theirs by right.

Language and Liberation

Although there was always a tension in Papua New Guinea educational planning between English or the vernacular as the language of instruction, it is recognised by Bray that this assertion of cultural identity and its incorporation into formal schooling was most effectively formulated within the general push for autonomy which came from Bougainville in 1974-5. "The North Solomons has forced both the timetable and the shape of decentralisation" (Bray, 1984: 134-5). Although some mission schools had initially used the vernacular, and the first national Director of Education, W.C. Groves, had "attempted to graft an English-medium system onto a base of largely mission-run village vernacular schools, intended to develop as community education centres" (Delpit & Kemelfield, 1985: 4) both initiatives had their own motivation – the missions were concerned to graft a Christian theology onto a traditional spirituality, and Groves was concerned to educate the villagers in such a way that they would not compete with Europeans. As it was, by the 1960s, the vernacular was largely abandoned in the schools – in fact using the vernacular in the classroom was seen as a breach of discipline. Although some effort was made in the 1970s by the first Papua New Guinean Minister of Education, Olewale and "Port Moresby Teacher's College ran courses in vernacular education in preparation for the reintroduction of tok ples education", the 1976 Education Plan made no change in language policy (ibid: 2-3).

Delpit and Kemelfield's report is a commendable evaluation of the development of Bougainville-Buka initiatives in education which "reflected feelings of grievance concerning the loss of local control over the content and direction of children's education, as a result of the steady development of the national system of English-medium education, with its curriculum designed in Port Moresby" (ibid: 8). Village leaders and North Solomons staff and students cooperated to establish the aspirations of the parents of Bougainville-Buka for their children. There was an overwhelming desire for the children to learn to read and write in their own language as well as in English, and to study the "traditional customs and beliefs, of which clan relationships, land rights, stories and the history of their place as well as the acceptable behaviour of the community were seen as particularly important" (ibid: 7). The parents felt so strongly about it that they were prepared to initiate the scheme without government support if need be. The very fact that the North Solomons Provincial Government went to the people to determine education policy is seen by Delpit and Kemelfield as almost unprecedented "in most countries in the world" (ibid: 119):

> The evaluation of the scheme came to the conclusion that it shows benefits on at least three levels – to the individual child, the village community, and the province as a whole ... Children appear to be learning the academic skills taught in VTPS, that is they have acquired literacy skills in their own language and seem to be able to transfer those skills to Tok Pisin and, since Grade 1 teachers assess them to be better speakers and readers of English, to that language as well. They appear to adjust more quickly to community school and are claimed by their Grade 1 teachers to be more alert, better behaved, quicker to understand and follow the teacher's directions, better at handwriting skills, and more confident in speaking out in class. Parents perceive VTPS children to be more responsive to and interested in cultural norms and are proud that their spoken and written tok ples is their 'real' tok ples, and not what they consider to be the 'hap-kas' (mixed) language spoken by community school children who have not attended VTPS (ibid: 119-20).

In concluding their report, Delpit and Kemelfield stress that these initiatives are not simply a resistance to change: "North Solomons people have striven to translate the modern world into their reality, and incorporate their reality into the modern world" (ibid: 123).

In a sense then, we come back to where we started. The need to translate from one social reality to another – the desire to engage another field of knowledge. But as Bulmer pointed out, the initiative is not necessarily one that belongs to the West. Like their notion of sovereignty, the initiative in terms of leadership, economic and moral change was always felt by the Bougainvilleans to be theirs.

According to the Papua New Guinea *Post Courier*, 'TOKPLES IS SUCCESSFUL':

> In many schools today you can hear teachers and children using tokples. No longer are they punished for using their own language. Now it is national policy that all children should learn to read and write in a language they already speak ... Tokples literacy is the bridge to English literacy....

> The Education Sector Review proposes the establishment of three year, village based Elementary schools, which will absorb existing Preparatory classes (22 January 1992).

Thus, the early use of the vernacular by the Marist Missions with its concentration on the catechism, gave way to teaching in English with its motivation for national unity, only to return to the vernacular largely through the efforts of the push from Bougainville and the powers it achieved in becoming the North Solomons Province. These powers spread to the establishment of other provinces, and the initiative for teaching in the vernacular is now national policy. At the same time, Bougainville is in a state of disastrous crisis socially, physically and spiritually as it again has felt the need to struggle for its autonomy. Communications, trade, medical supplies, and education have come to a virtual halt in an official and unofficial blockade imposed by PNG and its occupying forces. One of the worst long term effects will be the internal suspicion and anguish caused by the psychological warfare conducted by PNG and the use of essential medical aid to secure their presence on Bougainville.

During the crisis some educationists have done what they can to help although many of their stories are as yet untold. Educationists such as Kemelfield, who was director of the University of Papua New Guinea's extension centre in the North Solomons, were instrumental in arranging earlier peace talks. Another educator who reluctantly left the island as the crisis deepened is Sr. Mary Kenny of Auckland whose efforts at getting aid to the island, and publishing the extent of the crisis, are becoming legend. For such people, the relationship between teacher and student is reciprocal and this has generated a commitment that goes beyond any assumption of the superiority of western knowledge, nor is there a paternalism that assumes the irrelevance of that knowledge.

CONCLUSION

In 1976 Sheldon Weeks, the Director of the Educational Research Unit at the University of Papua New Guinea called his Inaugural Lecture: "If Education is the Answer, What is the Question?" John Teosin has said that in the Halia language of Buka, a question is put to you in such a way that only half of it is stated – you must supply the other half in order to answer the question. What begins as a dialogue becomes a dialectic. The intimacy of this process is not satisfied by the use of a western discipline such as social anthropology *in order to* facilitate schooling in a western system of education that is imposed on a different social order. Rather, knowledge – or wisdom – gained through this dialectical process changes all participants and develops all knowledge systems. Within such a relationship the motives of all participants should be transparent even as they change, there must be a confidence in the significance of areas of intellectual excellence and skill, there must be an agility of mind that is not fettered by fear or favour, and most importantly there must be courage in the face of the unknown, for:

> We must consider Robert Lynd's question: 'knowledge for what'. And the answer cannot be given only in terms of whether six-year-old

> children should be able to read, count and write. We do not know what a child is capable of, as we have as yet no theory which enables us to create sets of optimal learning environments; and even if such a theory existed, it is most unlikely that resources would be available to make it substantive on the scale required. It may well be that one of the tests of an educational system is that its outcomes are relatively unpredictable (Bernstein, 1971: 65).

We can clearly see the unpredictability of educational outcome in many areas of the world and it may be that mass education in the service of state systems is too blunt an instrument to allow a delicate process as that involved in the true exchange of knowledge between cultures to develop. Nor has it been shown that anthropology, particularly career anthropology, is capable of facilitating that dialectic. In my view the creative energy for that process will necessarily always remain at a populist level in spite of the repression which seems inevitable whenever it shows itself, as in the case of the Hahalis Welfare Society of Buka-Bougainville.

REFERENCES

BERNSTEIN, B. (1971) 'Education cannot compensate for society'. In B. Cosin, I.R. Dale, G. Esland & D. Swift (eds) *Schools and Society*. London: Open University, 61-66.

BLACKWOOD, B. (1935) *Both Sides of Buka Passage*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

BRAY, M. (1984) *Educational Planning in a Decentralised System: The Papua New Guinea Experience*. Port Moresby, Sydney: University of Papua New Guinea Press/Sydney University Press.

BULMER, R.N.H. (1969) 'Cultural Diversity and National Unity, Past and Future Contexts for Anthropology and Sociology in New Guinea. Inaugural Lecture'. Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea.

CURRIE, G., GUNTHER, J. & SPATE, O. (1964) *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in Papua New Guinea*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

DELPIT, L. & KEMELFIELD, G. (1985) *An Evaluation of the Viles Tok Ples Skul Scheme in the North Solomons Province*. Awara: Educational Research Unit, UPNG Port Moresby and The North Solomons University Centre.

GROVES, W.C. (1936) *Native Education and Culture-Contact in New Guinea*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

LARACY, H. (1976) *Marists and Melanesians: A History of Catholic Missions in the Solomon Islands*. Canberra: Australian National University Press.

MOULIK, T. (1977) *Bougainville in Transition*. Canberra: Australian National University Development Studies Centre, Monograph No 7.

OLIVER, D. (1991) *Black Islanders*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Post Courier (15 February 1991; 22 January 1992). Port Moresby.

RIMOLDI, M. & RIMOLDI, E. (1992) *Hahalis and the Labour of Love*. Oxford: Berg Press.

SMITH, G. (1975) *Education in Papua New Guinea*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

WEEDEN, W.J., BEEBY, C.E. & GRIS, G.B. (1969) *Report of the Advisory Committee on Education in Papua and New Guinea*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

WEEKS, S. (1976) *If Education is the Answer, What is the Question?* Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea.

WORLD BANK (1975) *The Assault on World Poverty*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.