NEW GUINEA IMPRESSIONS

DMYTRO CHUB

Also by Dmytro Chub

So This Is Australia

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(In The Footsteps Of Myklukho-Maklay)

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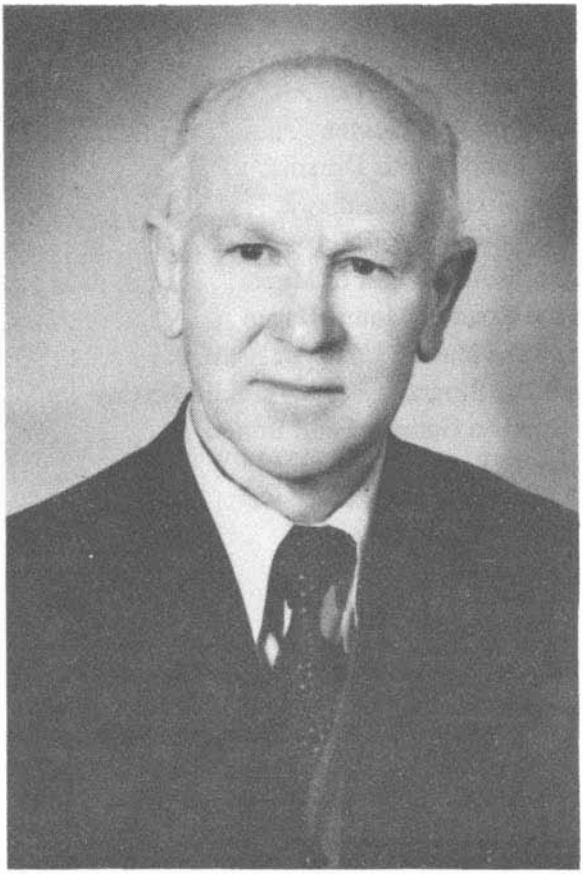


Dmytro Chub

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dmytro Chub (pseud. of D. Nytczenko) was born in Ukraine in 1906, the son of a farmer. He graduated from the Kharkiv Pedagogical Institute, becoming a teacher of Ukrainian and Russian.

With the outbreak of WW2 he was mobilised to the front, but soon after was captured by the Germans. His knowledge of German enabled him to secure his release from the prisoner-of-war camp, where thousands died of hunger. Covering 900 kilometres in four weeks on foot, he returned to his home in Kharkiv. Subsequently he was evacuated with his family to West Germany, together with countless other refugees escaping the advancing Soviet front.

In the immediate post-war years he taught in Displaced Persons camps in Germany, emigrating to Australia in 1949. Completing his obligatory two year contract in Bandiana, he worked as a storeman for the State Electricity Commission in Melbourne until his retirement in 1972.

In his spare time after work Dmytro Nytczenko taught at Ukrainian Saturday schools, working for eight years (1954–62) as head of the Ukrainian School Council in Australia. He is a member of the Organisation of Ukrainian Writers in Exile, and a full member of the Shevchenko Scientific Society. A long-term contributor to many Ukrainian newspapers and magazines in the West, he also plays an active role in Ukrainian cultural life.

Dmytro Chub's first poem was published in 1925, and thereafter he became a regular contributor to various publications. His first collection of poetry (*Vault*, 1931) was followed shortly after by another, and also a book of short stories. Several of his poems were put to music.

Since arriving in Australia, Dmytro Chub has published 12 books in Ukrainian, including short stories of Australian life *Paths of Adventure*, reminiscences of war *In the Forests Near Viazma*, a Ukrainian orthographic dictionary, *The Theory of Literature and the Science of Stylistics*, and *Shevchenko – The Man* about one of the greatest Ukrainian poets. He is also the compiler

of a five-yearly almanac of Ukrainian emigre life in Australia, which has appeared regularly since 1954.

His first collection of adventure stories in English, *So This Is Australia*, appeared in 1980.

Yuri Tkach

DREAMS OF NEW GUINEA

Perhaps it was way back in 1928, after I had read the translation from the Russian of Myklukho-Maklay's* diary *Among the Savages of New Guinea,* that I became intrigued by this country with its peculiar peoples and environment, enthralled by the daring of the author, and the numerous adventures and incidents which he so masterfully brought to life in that book.

I had no idea at the time that one day I would end up in Australia and that I would be lucky enough to visit exotic New Guinea and to stand on the very spot where in 1871 the descendant of a Ukrainian Cossack, Mykola Myklukho-Maklay, renowned scientist and explorer, stepped from his boat unarmed, unafraid of the savage natives.

Back in the DP camps in Germany I had heard that Ivan Sirko, a Ukrainian doctor, had been sent to work in New Guinea. Shortly after my arrival in Melbourne I was lucky enough to be introduced to Ivan Sirko and his wife, Indra. Both were here on holiday from New Guinea. Their account of New Guinea and the surrounding islands which they had visited, our correspondence over the following years and my subsequent meetings with them, deepened my desire to go there. Besides, Doctor Sirko had stressed in his letters: 'This is a wonderful land of eternal spring! The semi-civilised brown-skinned natives are warm-hearted, good people. Forever smiling, they are satisfied with their lives and are happy. They always help each other and respect one another, never knowing malice, hatred, deceit or even envy . . .'

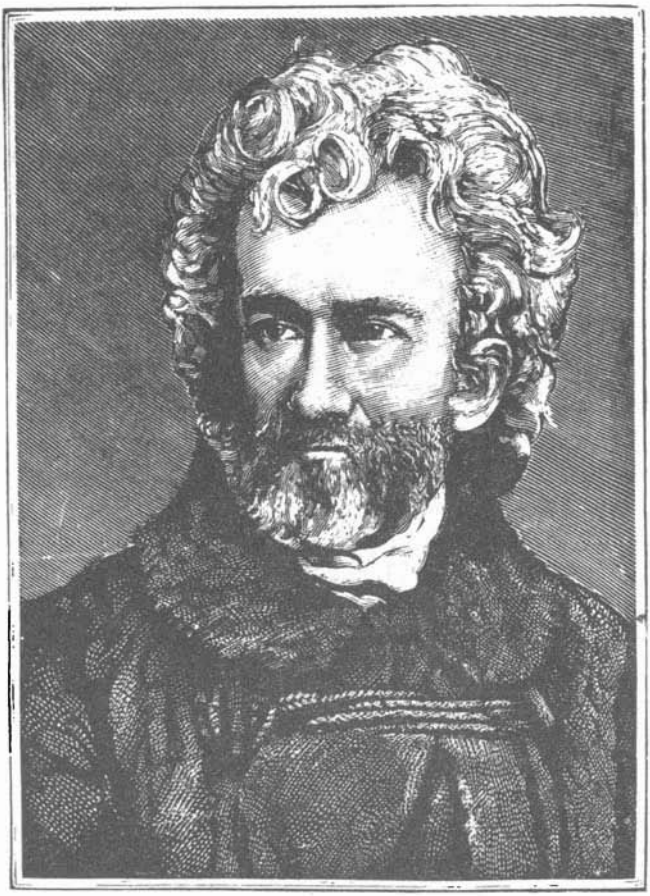
* Various spellings of this explorer's name abound, the most popular being Milkloucho-Maclay.

Meanwhile I had uncovered some interesting facts about Myklukho-Maklay, things which had hardly received a mention in publications about the man and his work. Few sources ever mentioned Myklukho-Maklay's origins or his Ukrainian Cossack ancestry.

Most of Myklukho-Maklay's personal papers are to be found in Australia, for the explorer had married Margaret Robertson, the daughter of a one-time premier of New South Wales. She died in Sydney in 1936, and was survived by both her sons. Myklukho-Maklay's three grandchildren still live in Sydney, and one of them is a well-known journalist. The existence of the Maklay archives made possible the publication of two books in English about Myklukho-Maklay, one of them being *Who Travels Alone* by Frank Greenop, published in 1944. In his book Frank S. Greenop gives the historical background to Ukraine's attempts to gain independence from Poland and Russia. He also traces Maklay's origins and in so doing mentions the fact that the Maklay family owned an estate near Malyn in Kiev Province and that Myklukho-Maklay was born there; although contemporary Soviet sources state he was born in Russia in Novgorod Province, to where his father had been posted.

The years went by and my dream to visit New Guinea remained just a dream. However, in 1976 I heard that a fellow expatriate of mine in Adelaide, Pylyp Wakulenko, was planning to journey to Papua New Guinea. I decided to contact him, hoping he might agree to take me along as a fellow traveller. He agreed, and we began to plan our journey. At first we thought of travelling about there by rail, air and sea. But luckily we were able to get in touch with Mr. Prestashevsky, a Ukrainian who had been working for over ten years as a lawyer at the National Parliament in Port Moresby, the capital of New Guinea.

He soon dispelled our illusions of travelling about the country on our own, trying to hire transport and finding accommodation where possible. In one of his letters he wrote: 'We can show you Port Moresby by car in the short



Mykola Myklukho-Maklay (1846–1888). This portrait was made in St. Petersburg shortly before his death.

time you will be here, but afterwards it won't be so easy; there are no railways and white people usually do not travel alone. Apart from the heat (30℃) there is the humidity (60-80%), which will exhaust you after a three mile trek. There are no hotels nor guest-houses in the villages and it is rare to find a store where you can buy food. And because of the heat you'll find food will spoil quickly. This isn't Europe for you; outside the cities it's a wild country, where the traveller will find no comforts. Few people venture into the tropical rain forests, where the undergrowth teems with venomous snakes, scorpions and leeches. My wife has been there and has seen snakes and crocodiles slithering across well-trodden paths; danger lurks everywhere. Also, the native population is not too friendly towards whites now . . .'

And as for our intended journey to places connected with Myklukho-Maklay's stay in New Guinea, Mr. Prestashevsky stated: 'Madang and the Maclay Coast are three hundred miles from Port Moresby. If you state that you are travelling as researchers or journalists, then you must apply for official permission, and if this is granted, you will have to pay $100 each. Therefore I would advise you to book through a travel agency, so that your transport and accommodation will be assured . . .'

I sent this letter on to my partner in Adelaide and we decided to see what the travel agencies had to offer. Though we encountered several problems, we soon found ourselves in Sydney from where we were to commence our journey to New Guinea.

On the morning of July 23rd we passed through customs and boarded our plane. I sat next to another Ukrainian, Doctor Jaskewycz, who had decided to join our party at the last minute. Mr. Wakulenko must have been in the smoking section nearer the pilot's cabin. Until now I hadn't realised what a heavy smoker he was. We had been airborne for about an hour when he approached me and confessed that he had bought three cartons of cigarettes in Sydney, but had heard that the customs in Port

Moresby did not allow tourists to bring in more than two cartons each, and asked if I could help him out by taking one carton through customs. I agreed, and a minute later he returned with his cigarettes.

I was so glad we had surmounted all of our problems, certain we would find new and interesting things in New Guinea. Time went quickly. Soon we had left Brisbane and Cairns far behind, and were only a hundred miles from the New Guinea coastline. Australia lay behind us.

Young girls in a carefree mood.

IN THE LAND OF OUR DREAMS

At last the jet landed at Port Moresby Airport. The country had recently gained its independence and was was now called Papua New Guinea. As we approached the airport terminal we spotted Mr. Prestashevsky and his wife on the balcony. They had come to meet us, and Mr. Prestashevsky wore a broad grin on his face. In the terminal we exchanged hearty greetings and then moved to the booking counter to obtain our tickets and documents which we needed for our continuing journey.

The heat made itself felt; in Sydney it had been only 18° C, and we were dressed appropriately. Here it was 30 °C and I had to remove my jumper. I noticed that the Papuans were in charge of everything, all lightly dressed in navy shorts and short-sleeved shirts, but sporting a heavy crop of curly hair on their heads.

We barely had time to talk with the Prestashevskys, let alone to inspect the airport terminal, before we had to board our twin-engined aircraft to Goroka, an hour's flight away from Port Moresby. Our seats were next to the pilot's cabin, and we noticed that one of the pilots was white, and the other a Papuan. All thirty-eight seats on the plane were occupied. From the plane window I could see the shore on my left, and the hinterland with its endless chain of mountains, ravines and valleys covered with dense vegetation and forests. Only the occasional mountaintop stuck out like a shiny bald head.

We noticed that Doctor Jaskewycz was not on the flight, and decided he had been put on a later flight.

The township of Goroka has a population of over ten thousand and nestles in a valley pinned on all sides by mountains and rainforests. It reminded me of the Carpathian Mountains in Ukraine. Papuans, half-naked

women, children, youths and men crowded around the cyclone fence separating them from the small wooden airport lounge. We didn't know whether the natives were waiting to board a plane, or whether they were there out of curiosity.

After collecting our luggage we boarded a small hotel bus with several other tourists. A young Papuan in charge introduced himself and then ran off to settle a few other matters. Mr. Wakulenko went with him and only three of us remained in the bus: me, a lanky man and his wife. I introduced myself and in the ensuing conversation learnt that they were tourists from Canada. The lanky fellow was Morris Gibbons, a university professor from Vancouver. His nose was very long, with a slight curve to it. He also sported a spindly beard and side-burns. He told me he had toured Australia, and had now decided to see New Guinea. He was surprised that my fellow expatriate and I still spoke our mother tongue.

"How long have you been in Australia, that you still speak Ukrainian?"

"Oh, it's been twenty-six years," I replied.

"And you still speak your mother tongue?"

"And why not. It's dearer to us. Besides we've always participated in the cultural and social life of the Ukrainian community and taught in Ukrainian Saturday Schools, and for this you have to know Ukrainian . . ."

"Are there Ukrainian Schools in Australia?"

"Schools, and also halls and churches in the larger cities. There are also three Ukrainian newspapers, theatres, dance groups, choirs."

"I've seen your dances in Canada," he remembered. "Ukrainians are marvellous dancers . . ."

"There are about half a million Ukrainians in Canada, and there are even Ukrainian senators and government ministers," I continued. "There's even a Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, and many Ukrainian publishing houses and other organisations."

"Yes, there are Ukrainians in our university," he

agreed. "Unfortunately, I know very little about the Ukrainians in Canada."

Our conversation ended at that, for we had to move to a car and were driven to our hotel, a fine two storey building. There was a restaurant and a kiosk just off the hotel lobby. We were shown to our room on the second floor.

My compatriot was seized with a fit of coughing. He lay down on his bed to rest after the plane trip, and said:

"I thought I would have to be carried out of the plane on a stretcher when we landed in Port Moresby, but somehow I managed on my own . . . I caught this blasted flu in Adelaide . . ."

"I also had the flu," I replied. "And I'm still coughing a bit, but this warm climate should help get rid of it soon . . ."

I also lay on my bed, but curiosity got the better of me and I was soon in the kiosk and out in the street. Postcards showing the scenery and the natives of Papua New Guinea caught my eye. On the footpath outside the hotel several old Papuans were displaying their handcrafts: necklaces made from seeds and miniature shells, wild boar tusks, stone axes and hammers, and jewellery. The natives were barefoot, dressed only in shorts, most of them of average height. Children hung around them.

For the first time since arriving here I saw a girl wearing nothing but a grass skirt. Her breasts were beautifully sculpted and I was sorry I had left my camera behind in the hotel. Barefoot, the girl had several rows of beads around her neck.

Doctor Jaskewycz appeared just before dinner. Because our plane had been booked out, he had been placed on a later flight. We assembled for dinner in the hotel restaurant. Carved wooden crocodiles, Papuan spears and other weapons hung on the walls. Native flowers and potted plants were everywhere. Waiters floated bare-chested about the room, like black ballerinas. They were dressed in sarongs, brightly-coloured pieces of material

wrapped around their waists to form a skirt. Some of the waiters wore native necklaces, others had flowers and feather stuck in their fuzzy hair. There was a great variety of food on the menu, many of the dishes completely foreign to us.

Before dinner arrived my sick companion ordered himself a cold mug of beer, and after downing it, another. A little taken aback, I couldn't help but remark that until recently he had been coughing and complaining.

"I feel a little better now," he replied.

After a delicious meal we met our Papuan guide, Gary. He was of average height, strongly built, had small sideburns and spoke fluent English. He told our party of twelve tourists to gather near the hotel entrance at nine the following morning.

My companions went to their rooms, but I still wanted to walk about the town and to see its inhabitants. It was getting dark, but people still wandered past the hotel, and I wasn't used to seeing so many smiling black faces with fuzzy hair.

The hotel was flanked by a semi-circle of mountains covered in thick forest, which reached almost to the hotel grounds. As I approached the corner of the hotel I heard a babble of voices. I noticed a door through which people continually came and went. As I drew closer I saw that it was a bar packed with Papuans; but there were no women present. Young and old alike were barefoot. Some sat on the benches along the walls, while others had squatted in groups on the floor. The echo of their drunken babble and cries could be heard in the street. 'So this is where they squander their meagre earnings,' I thought as I left the bar. I didn't go any further down the street, for it had narrowed into a path running into the forest. I could see the roofs of houses through the treetops.

Trees and flowers graced the large hotel yard. The grass had been recently mown. In the mass of lush greenery I recognised only the palms and the leafy banana trees. My companion was lying on his bed, smoking a

cigarette. I couldn't help commenting:

"You said you had bronchitis, and yet you poison yourself with beer and tobacco! You forget that you could end up in hospital somewhere."

He grunted something in reply, but did not justify himself.

The following morning after breakfast we saw our guide Gary arrive in a bus. Our group finally materialised and we set out. We were going to Goroka. Each year this town holds a large festival or a sing sing which attracts not only locals, but also tourists, journalists and photographers. Most people seemed to be heading in the same direction as us, and large numbers of Papuans were moving on foot.

Our bus stopped after awhile and we had to walk the rest of the way, reaching a huge clearing fenced off by a high cyclone fence. In the middle of this enclosure was a fairly large spectator's stand, and it too was fenced off by a low wire fence. In the space between the two fences

Our tourist group.

there were numerous tents, kiosks, stalls and round or oblong exhibition stands made of straw, grass and palm leaves, looking like Papuan village huts.

Most of our party had cameras, and Mr. Wakulenko had a movie camera as well. The number of dark-skinned natives steadily grew, and several hundred were milling near the gates where policemen stood selling entrance tickets. Here and there in the crowd we spied interesting groups of natives. One group was painted with coloured clays and ash, with bird of paradise feathers in their hair. All were barefoot, and the men wore shorts or lap-laps, some of which were quite dirty. The lap-laps hung at the front and back from a belt tied around their waist. Others had only a cloth covering their front, with bundles of leafy branches covering their buttocks. The women and girls wore gaudy dresses or short grass skirts. Some were bare-breasted, with large numbers of native necklaces around their necks. Their fuzzy hair crowned their head like a black fur hat, and was often girdled with a ribbon and bedecked with flowers. Many of the women carried their

These women from Rogaya are dressed for the festival.

The author in the company of two women from the Kukukuku tribe.

children about on their shoulders. Our avid cameramen had a field day.

The natives posed readily in exchange for two or three cigarettes. Though they did not speak English they guessed what the cameramen wanted of them.

"Stand between them!" shouted my compatriot and pushed me into the path of two native women. The women stopped, realising our intentions, and a moment later I was fixed on celluloid between two 'beauties', one of them wearing only a grass skirt.

"By the way," said someone from our group, "did you know that they are from the Kukukuku tribe? Only recently this tribe butchered and clubbed people to death in raids on neighbouring villages."

"And you weren't afraid to stand near them to get photographed?" quipped a young Australian.

"Life is a daily risk," I retorted.

Towards midday the grounds around the stadium became a sea of colourful clothes. Occasionally we

chanced on bare-breasted women.

"In Myklukho-Maklay's time, and even more recently in the 1950s, many of the women went about naked," I said to Mr. Wakulenko. "But here most of them are dressed, wearing skirts or bright dresses."

"I suppose it's progress," said my friend. "Though the opposite is happening in Australia and elsewhere in the West, where whites live. People seem to be reverting to the Stone Age. Given half a chance a good ten percent of women would go about naked, at least to the waist."

The crowd was thousands strong by now, even though some had travelled a hundred and more kilometres to reach here. There were no trains and very few cars, and on their meagre earnings they couldn't have afforded a plane trip.

Doctor Jaskewycz had wandered off on his own to see some exhibit and Pylyp Wakulenko and I decided to check out the grass huts. The cloudless sky and the oppressive heat didn't slow us down, for we knew that we would be leaving that afternoon.

We strolled among the shops, kiosks and tents. In one such tent we saw two Papuans polishing seeds on a lathe. A few logs were burning beside them, and they heated an awl in the flames and perforated the seeds, slipping them on to a string to make a necklace.

Further on we saw displays of vegetables and various plants potted in buckets. Next to another tent stood four-inch-thick bamboo poles. Here we also chanced on our guide Gary, and he told me that this bamboo was so hard that the natives used it to make knives and other sharp implements such as razors.

The other kiosks contained hand-made goods: baskets, woven belts, fabric, books, stationery and clothes. Everything on sale looked different from the goods we had seen in Australia. I bought a book illustrated by a local artist.

Some Papuans had gathered around a bower with a cone-shaped straw roof. The hut was surrounded by a

Fragment of the Goroka festival.

fence. As we approached the hut, we saw a European woman peer over the fence and run off giggling, half covering her face with her hands.

We peeped over the fence too. Several Papuans with painted faces and bodies, wearing decorative headgear, had slipped gourds over their 'sinful flesh' and tied them on with string. We shrugged off this peculiar local custom and moved on. Later on we saw one of these 'heroes' wandering among the people. As the Ukrainian humorist Ostap Vyshnia once said: 'Many a strange thing does one see at a market!' This festival really reminded me of our fairs back in Ukraine. All that was missing were the oxen, the sheep, the horses, the drays and carts, the rolls and pasties, the women squatting on the ground with baskets full of pumpkin seeds, the horse dealers whipping their horses, and the merchants slapping hands with customers to confirm a sale. However the din here was just as loud.

There were droves of young people and children everywhere.

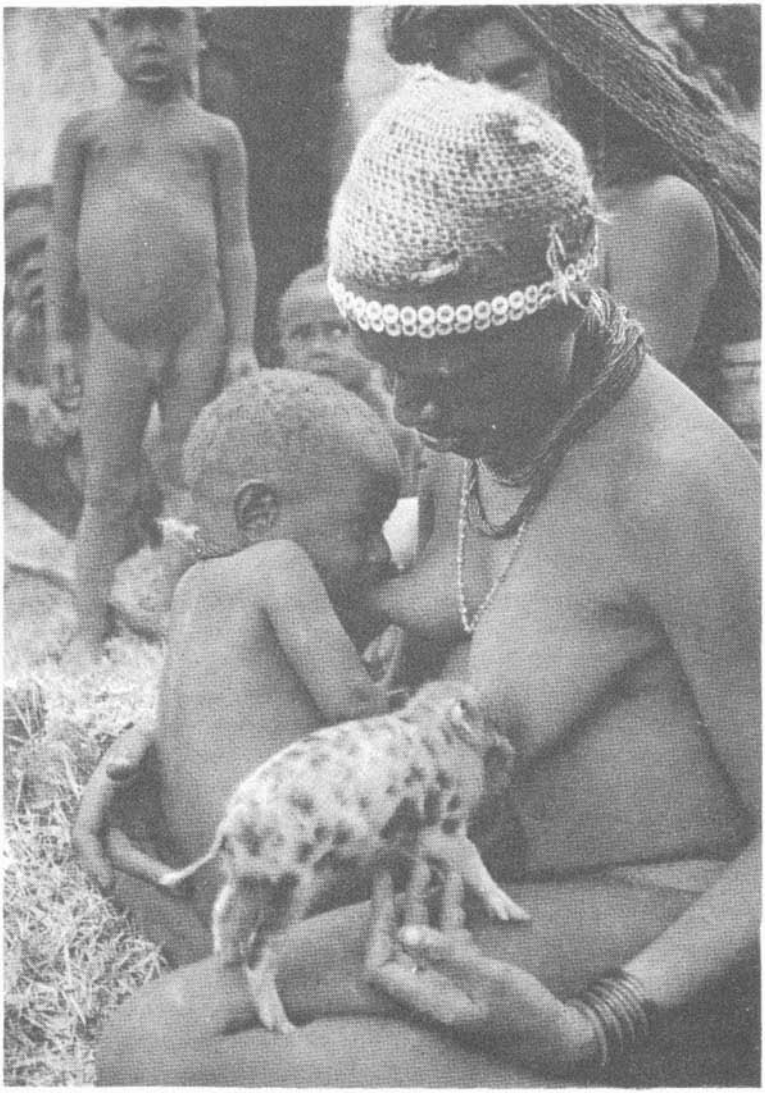
We saw a group of girls aged about thirteen, who wore only grass skirts or lap-laps. Despite their youthful age they looked almost fully matured, and some suitor would soon be coming to their parents and offering them five hundred to a thousand kina* for their daughter. My fellow expatriate had already zoomed in on them with his camera. I noticed that the groups of girls went about unaccompanied by youths.

Having traversed practically the whole arena, we came to a crowd of Papuans resting under some tall trees. Some were eating, others just dozing on the grass. They were all probably awaiting the official opening of the festival.

Passing through the entrance gates, we made our way to the grandstand, having received our tickets earlier. Most of the spectators were Europeans. We sat down behind two German correspondents. There was an unofficial competition going on in the arena. Some Papuans were competing in a sixty metre sprint. Two Europeans, perhaps tourists, decided to race them and soon left them far behind. Then the wheelbarrow races began. Each wheelbarrow overturned just short of the finish line, spilling their 'passengers' and sending the 'drivers' sprawling. Laughter rippled through the crowd.

After a short break the police put their dogs on show: the dogs ran, jumped over hurdles and through burning hoops, finally attacking 'dummy' criminals. For each feat the dogs were rewarded with food. This display didn't interest us very much so we made our way back to where Gary had arranged to meet us. Gary arrived soon with a hamper of food. After lunch we returned to our bus.

* One kina is approx. equal to $1.30 Australian.



Chimbu woman breast-feeding her child and a young pig.

ON THE ROAD TO KUNDIAWA

As we left, we were all sorry that we were unable to see the highlight of the festival, which was only now beginning. Apart from us three Ukrainians in the bus, there were also a young Australian couple and a middle-aged English couple, a tall young bearded man from Victoria, the Canadian professor and his wife whom I mentioned earlier, a Scot, a German and our guide Gary Kable. As the journey progressed we got to know each other better and the conversation became livelier, jokes and laughter filled the air.

Our guide Gary not only spoke good English and Pidgin, but also knew his local dialect from the Chimbu Province, for which we were now headed. Pidgin is an artificial, simplified language based mainly on English and created to give the natives a common language. For in Papua New Guinea there are over seven hundred existing languages; each province and district usually has its own distinct language. Therefore three languages are taught in the schools: the local dialect, Pidgin and English. As a language, Pidgin can be studied at the university in Port Moresby.

Gary was quite talkative and readily answered questions about himself and the customs and lifestyle of the natives. He was twenty-six years old. His father had sixteen wives, twelve sons and only one daughter. For each wife he had to build a separate house, and had to supply each one with firewood every day. But Gary had only one wife and two children. By local standards Gary was rather well-off, and had three cars.

Gary mentioned that in the highland areas far more boys were born than girls, and so a boy who wished to

marry had to pay the girl's parents close to a thousand kina. In the towns, which were mostly in the lowlands, on rivers and on the coast, more girls were born and so the price for a bride was only five hundred kina. "Everyone knows," Gary said, "that girls and pigs are the most expensive things here in the highlands."

We all laughed at the remark, but immediately asked why pigs were placed on an even footing with girls. Gary explained that there were no cows, horses or other domestic animals, and though there were goats, these gave little meat. Therefore the people preferred to buy piglets and to fatten them for meat. But because piglets fattened best on milk and that commodity was practically non-existent here, women occasionally breast-fed them. Though my friends were surprised by this, I had already heard about such things from Doctor Sirko . . . Soon after I bought a postcard with a photo of a woman feeding a child on one breast and a small piglet on the other.

Gary continued to tell us about the girls:

"In the outlying areas the mothers really watch out for their daughters, for if a girl's reputation becomes suspect, her price will fall too. Therefore it is rare in villages for girls to give birth before marriage. In the towns, it's a different story . . ."

Our bus rattled along the graded roads, built only four years earlier with Australian financial assistance to connect the major towns. The landscape steadily became more mountainous. Our bus swerved from side to side as it wound its way along steep winding tracks, which clung to precipitous slopes covered in rainforest. We looked down into deep yawning chasms and ravines smothered in lush vegetation, occasionally seeing the thin frothing ribbon of a mountain stream.

We had stopped for the third time to enable the photographers to capture a breath-taking view. Such views abounded at every turn in the road, and at times the panorama extended for more than a hundred kilometres.

Now and then, on square patches of more or less

even ground, tiny Papuan huts clung precariously to the mountain sides, surrounded by steep plots of cultivated taro and sweet potato. The surrounding rainforest abounded with bananas, coconuts, pawpaws, yams and bread-fruit. Women and children moved outside the huts and sometimes one saw a domesticated black or tawny pig, or a goat. At last we stopped at the tiny hamlet of Mosul. Children of all ages came running out to meet us, followed by the adults and the elders. All stared curiously at us and smiled. Some of the older natives came up and shook hands. Many of the children were naked, especially the small boys. The adults were half naked too, wearing only shorts or lap-laps. They were barefoot, and a thick mop of curly hair protected them from the sun. Though barefoot, most of the women were clothed.

Our guide Gary had obviously been here before and spoke to the people in their dialect, for this hamlet belonged to his province. He immediately made arrangements about something with the village chief, who appeared before us dressed in a coat with shiny buttons and wore a cap with red trim which was perched miraculously atop his head. A tin plate hung on his chest, attesting to his position in the hamlet.

I asked permission to look inside the huts to see how the people lived in these remote regions. These Papuan villages were so different from the Ukrainian villages of my youth. There were no wicket fences, roads, or wells. Instead there was a rather small sandy clearing ringed by about twenty huts. On our left stood a long building with three doors opening onto the clearing. There were no windows, the walls were of grass matting, and it was topped with a steep roof of kunai grass. The floor was earthen, unswept and strewn with rubbish and dried grass. In the middle of the building stood several beds, if they could be called that, comprising of only a few raised boards. This building was called a 'spirithouse', and was strictly for men. Women were refused entry here. In the middle of this long hut stood an empty oil drum. And in

sharp contrast, a guitar lay on one of the beds.

On the threshold of a small hut sat two women, one of them holding a child; another child played nearby. I gave the children a chocolate each and asked if I could look inside the hut. The women guessed what I wanted and let me inside. There was no bed in the hut, only a grass mat on the floor. No pillows or cushions. In the middle was a cold fireplace, just like the ones in the spirithouse, only there the fireplaces were located opposite the doorways. There was no chimney and the smoke from the fires which were lit at night against the cold, found its way out through the doors and the roof. The hut contained no possessions, except for a pot and a tin in one corner. Another hut boasted a bag of freshly-picked coffee beans.

Meanwhile a show was being prepared for us outside. The natives had painted themselves with coloured clay, chalk and ashes, their heads were festooned with feathers and flowers, chests covered in beads. We were shown a scene where a young man wanted to marry and was preparing for the wedding feast. His bride and the wedding guests and relatives surrounded the young man. He embraced his bride, but at that moment the bride's mother broke through the crowd, screaming, wielding a handful of green branches, with which she began to thrash the young couple and the guests. Everyone fled to the angry mother's shouts. It turned out she was against the marriage because someone in the young man's family had had leprosy, which still occurred in New Guinea. After her harangue, the mother departed to her house, and the young couple and the guests returned to continue with the wedding feast.

The show was witnessed not only by us, but by about fifty of the locals as well. Cameras clicked away continually, and Pylyp Wakulenko had his movie camera rolling.

I decided to inspect another long hut. It was empty. There were no windows, the floor was earthen, and there was a door at each end. The building served as a kind of

A Papuan schoolgirl.

guest-house during the annual sing sing festival, when many guests from neighbouring villages arrived. The natives must have slept on the ground on mats, or probably made themselves beds of grass.

I sat down on a stump outside the long hut and noted into my diary everything I had seen. Children gathered around to watch. All had bows and arrows, looking ready for war. They obviously liked playing at war. This was not surprising, since only fifty years earlier intertribal warfare had been common, and enemies were killed, roasted and eaten. The heart of a captured enemy chief was cut into pieces and given to the children to eat, so they would grow into brave and fearless warriors.

Having finished jotting down my notes, I tried to talk with the children, but few understood English. However I finally struck up a conversation with Elsen, a boy of fourteen, who told me that not all the children went to school, which was not compulsory. Elsen spoke English well, a surprising change. It was obvious that given more educational opportunities, the natives could easily have achieved equality with the whites.

The Papuans showed us two more tribal dances, after which Gary paid the village chief for their performance. As we were about to leave we noticed the Canadian professor sketching one of the Papuan women on a large sheet of paper. She was good-looking, about thirty years old, and wore only a grass skirt, posing in the doorway of one of the huts. Nearly all the village population gathered around him. Each of the tourists was craning forward to see how the portrait was progressing, however the Papuans were more reserved, and did not jostle forward. Another fifteen minutes, and the portrait was ready. Morris signed and dated the sheet, and presented it to the Papuan woman. She smiled and nodded her head in appreciation. The villagers now crowded around to see the drawing. The likeness was extraordinary.

Morris made sketches in the other villages we visited. Sometimes he would present the sketch to his model, on

'Armed' Papuan children watch the author writing in his diary.

other occasions he left them in his folder.

"Have any of your sketches ever been published?" I asked Morris one day.

"Not yet," he replied. "Perhaps one day . . ."

Having covered sixty kilometres in three hours, we finally reached Kundiawa, which literally means a bird of paradise. This is a small township with a passable hotel into which we checked in. It is the provincial centre of the Chimbu Region.

In the morning we drove off into the highlands. Again our bus was doing the impossible up steep rises, skirting gorges and chasms. At times we crossed small iron bridges across streams and creeks. However we came across no large rivers. Nowhere did we see any dams. Easily built of rock, these could have supplied the natives with water, a place to swim, and fishing grounds. The fledgeling Papua New Guinea government was now trying to overcome such problems. In the remote highland regions the natives still lived as they did thousands of years ago: there were no shops, electricity, or libraries . . . Most of

the children did not attend schools, because these were located only in the larger hamlets. Empty churches were few and far between.

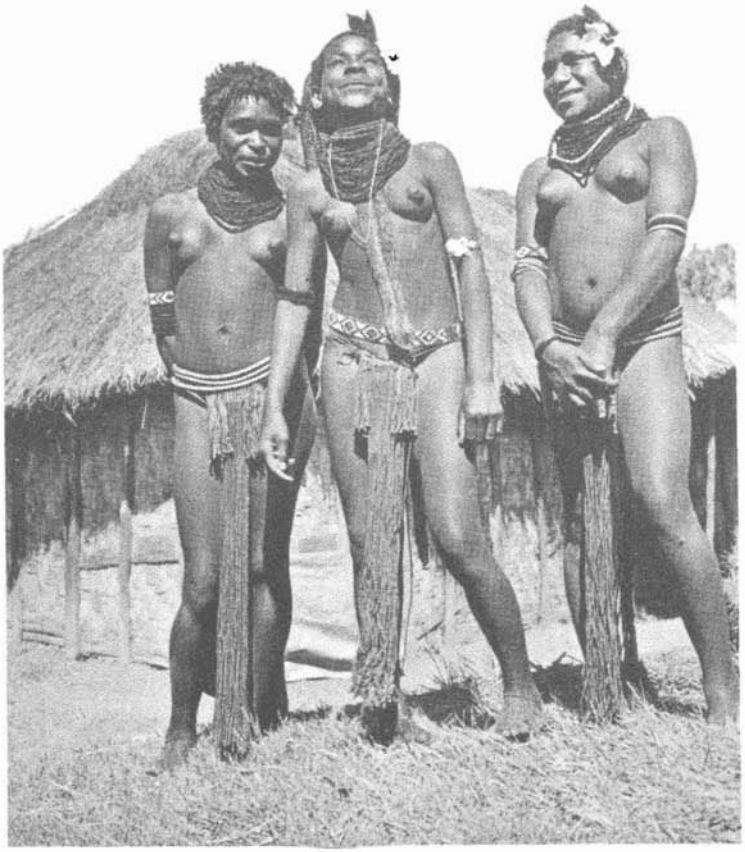
Having crossed a gorge, our bus barely moved up the steep slope. To lessen the load, we alighted and walked behind the bus. On our left were some huts and a group of natives. Suddenly two Papuans appeared from behind a bend in the road ahead, holding long poles above their heads. Pieces of paper fixed to the poles fluttered in the light breeze.

"They're matchmakers," said Gary.

The two Papuans, one about twenty years old, the other older, stopped in their tracks and stared at us. Cameras began to click away. I drew closer and saw that the pieces of paper were Papuan two-kina bills. I started to count. One pole contained 112 kina, the other slightly less. This was their way of showing the prospective bride's parents that they had money and could now haggle out a price for the bride. As well, they offered a pig or a goat, and a bag of coffee beans.

Leaving the matchmakers behind, we travelled on to Pari Village, situated at the foot of a mountain along a shallow rocky stream. A small church stood on the far side of the stream. We left the bus and headed for the nearest huts, where a group of people had already assembled. The children ran about with bows and arrows here too. The older Papuans stood holding shields, as if protecting themselves from the advancing tourists. In one place the women and girls were sitting in a row on the grass, as if waiting for us to photograph them. I quickly seated myself among them, while my friends photographed us. Natives crowded around, watching the cameramen at work. I sought permission to inspect a hut. Though it was dark inside, I could see the fireplace in the middle of the floor. There were no windows and the hut was divided into two, each half no more than two by three metres.

Most of the children here attended school. A thirteen-year-old girl from grade five, wearing only a grass skirt



Girls from the Eastern Highlands.

and looking quite mature, told us that there were 113 children in their school, which had six grades. Apart from a white woman who taught English, the teachers were all Papuans. Pari has a population of two hundred, and contains some fifty huts.

We crossed into the neighbouring yard over a stile, with a stone step on either side. Older Papuans armed to the teeth gathered here, bearing shields, spears and bows. A mass of coloured feathers adorned their hair and some had white, cigarette-sized pieces of bone pushed through the pierced skin dividing their nostrils.

At Gary's request they staged a mock fight, which broke out after a quarrel between two groups. Suddenly the din increased, there were more screams and movement. One group rushed at the other, waving their spears about, taking aim with their bows. The defenders sought refuge behind their shields of bark and wood. Someone fell, another was 'wounded' with spears; we heard groans. One group began to retreat, leaving behind 'dead' and 'wounded'. However reinforcements suddenly joined the retreating group and now they advanced, on the offensive. Weapons flashed above heads. The whole scene was encircled by a crowd of spectators and photographers. The children followed the battle intently, their eyes aglow with the desire to participate.

Another ten minutes and the 'battle' was over.

Through our guide we tried to talk with the natives. Pylyp Wakulenko photographed a group of girls sitting against a fence. Near a tree stood a dried-up old Papuan woman, looking rather quaint. I stood beside her and asked Mr Wakulenko to photograph me.

We stayed here for another forty minutes or so before leaving, but first our guide said we had to see the local cemetery. A young local native led us up a steep forest-covered slope behind the village. Carefully we made our way up slippery, naturally formed steps, holding hands in case someone fell over. Soon the terrain levelled out and we walked past bushes and under trees where the earth had been dug up by wild pigs. It really looked as if the place had just been ploughed. The Papuan stopped at the base of a high overhanging cliff, where slabs of rock lay strewn about. He moved some of the smaller rocks aside and revealed a deck of logs two metres in length and the

Secret burial cave, Chimbu District.

thickness of a man's arm. When removed, the logs exposed a dark rectangular hold some half a metre by one metre. The Papuan disappeared into the opening and we heard only his voice, telling us to follow him inside. Everyone hesitated, not wanting to crawl into the dank cave. Overcome with curiosity, I asked someone to hold my bag for me, got down on all fours, and gingerly lowered myself into the cave. It wasn't so bad inside, the roof of the cave being high enough to allow me to squat. I looked ahead and saw a heap of mixed human bones about a metre before me. There was no stench. Obviously the crypt was very old.

Glancing to my right, I saw the Papuan squatting beside me. The cave ended behind him in total darkness.

"How many people are buried here?" I asked.

But he merely shrugged his shoulders in reply, unable to understand me, and smiled apologetically.

Outside again, I asked Gary whether there were many such burial crypts.

"Yes, there are many," he said. "As one cave is filled up with skeletons, another is opened to accomodate the dead."

Burial traditions vary from region to region. Myklukho-Maklay wrote in his diary that a dead native would be put in a woven grass basket and kept in a hut until the body was taken away to be buried at a predetermined spot.

In the afternoon we returned to our hotel in Kundiawa. Gary announced that the rest of the day we would be free to do as we wished, and that we would be leaving the next day.

After a short nap we left the hotel. The sky was clear and the day warm, but it was less humid now. We checked out the adjacent garden, stretched out on the lawn, sat on benches and looked at the exotic trees; nearby stood a leafy banana tree with a gigantic pod of still-green bananas. Next to the hotel and the restaurant there was a high pavilion covered with grass thatch which looked like a giant cluster of mushrooms. The pavillion was still being completed and bags of cement lay nearby.

"Probably improving the facilities, so the tourists can have their meals outside in the shade," I said to Wakulenko.

"See that carving over there?" Wakulenko replied, and pointed to a thick piece of yellowish wood lying on the floor of the pavilion. We decided to take a closer look. The carving was about half a metre in diameter and two and a half metres in length. On one side was an expertly carved life-sized crocodile. Carefully we turned the log over and saw a no less expertly carved figure of a naked man with a pointed head.

Soon after we learned that the piece had been carved in two weeks by an illiterate forty-year-old Papuan from the Sepik region, which is famous for its wood-carvings.

I also learned that crocodiles are frequently carved because they are so commonly hunted in the Sepik. They form a part of the natives' lives. Besides, crocodiles occupy an important place in Papuan mythology. They are said to have been the first living creatures to have appeared on earth, and Man was born in their mouth. In the Sepik

region the crocodile is looked upon as a benevolent spirit. The humanoid carvings are a representation of the wood spirit, as the natives' ancestors imagined them to look.

Later we saw many such carvings gracing the walls of hotels and souvenir shops.

After dinner we bought some postcards to send home to friends and relatives. The owners of this particular hotel were a young Australian couple. But the staff were all Papuans, though there wasn't a single woman among them.

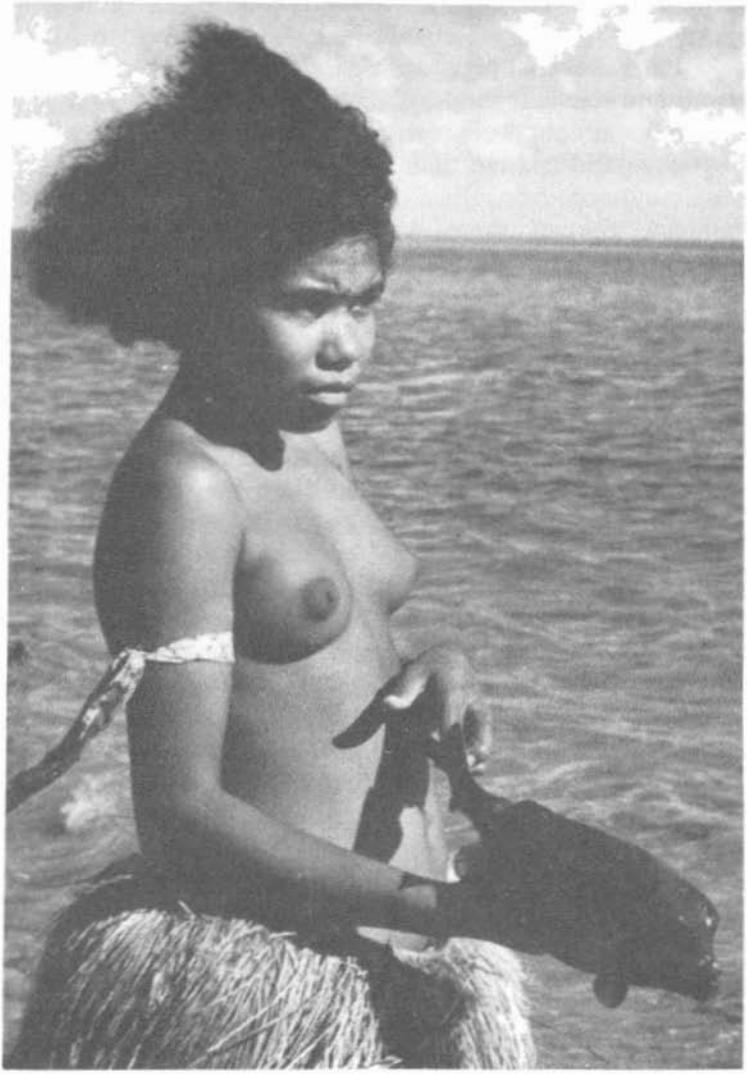
In the morning after breakfast Gary arrived with our tour bus and we continued on our way. This time we were heading towards Minj. Again we were confronted by a rich series of breathtaking views, and the bus stopped occasionally for photographs. We crossed the majestic Wagi Valley and the wide Wagi River. The grass in the valley was high and for the first time we saw a herd of cows, which we were told was part of a government pilot project. The valley was ringed by steep mountains, and we had to ascend a high pass, winding our way through abysses and gorges. From time to time we passed Papuan hamlets perched on the slopes. Strings of grey paths fanned out from these hamlets into the forest. It seemed incredible how these people could survive here, for we saw no water nearby, only steep bare cliffs and rainforests. Perhaps there was a mountain stream hidden away somewhere.

The bus was a buzz of conversations and laughter. Doctor Jaskewycz had moved and was now sitting beside the bus-driver. Pylyp Wakulenko was in a window seat across the aisle to me, busy taking photographs. Morris' wife was asleep, resting her head on his knees. Morris was stroking her hair, face and neck.

"Your baby's asleep?" I said jovially.

"She slept badly last night," he replied.

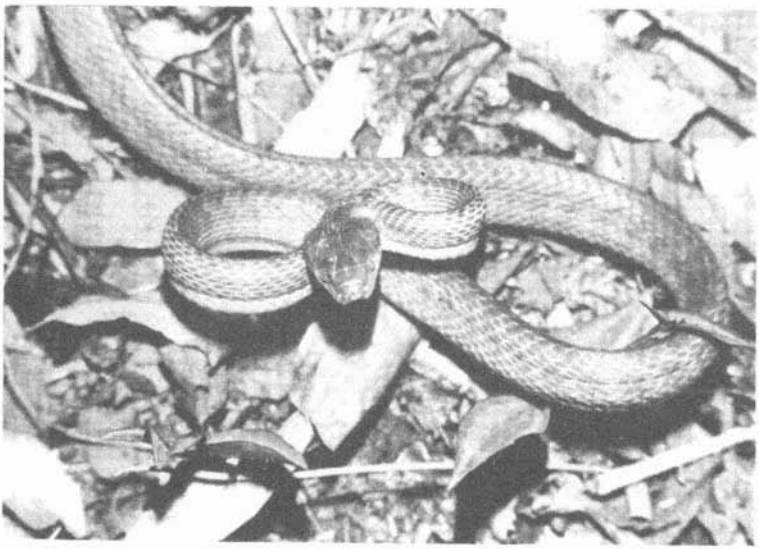
Gary was sitting up front near the door, forever answering our questions or telling us something new about the country. We learned that the average life expectancy



Girl with a fish – Samarai Island.

of people in New Guinea was 50 to 55 years, that the average weekly wage for a labourer was about thirty kina, that most of the villagers owned no more than seven acres of land, except for the established farmers and plantation owners, and that the last documented case of cannibalism in the area occurred in 1950.

Gradually the countryside became flatter. We saw coffee trees, which reminded me of young cherry trees, and by the roadside outside huts coffee beans lay drying in the sun on sheets of whitish canvas. Here the gardens looked better, and the huts were larger and better constructed. But again it was mostly the women who worked in the gardens. There were quite a few people walking along the road, and occasionally we passed trucks loaded with Papuans, who always waved to us and smiled.



A Brown Tree Snake.

Girl in sing sing dress.

IN THE TOWNSHIP OF MINJ

On the afternoon of July 26 we arrived in Minj. A new building here housed the hotel offices, a restaurant, and a bar for the Papuans (from which much noise emanated in the evening). Carpenters were still at work finishing off the verandah and assembling chairs from kits. The tourist accomodation consisted of several simple bungalows that were each divided into two flats. Each of these had a separate entrance and contained two or three beds. Fur rugs lay beside each bed. All the comforts a tourist could want were here. Though on the outside the roof was of kunai grass, and the walls were covered in grass matting, the interior was neatly finished in plaster. Mr Wakulenko and I received our keys and retired to our room.

However the food here was nothing to brag about: the menu was limited and the food seemed badly prepared. Some of the tourists complained, but I didn't mind too much. The owner of the hotel, a young Australian, must have invested heavily in the construction of the hotel, and was now probably trying to save on the food. A garrulous fellow, he seemed to know a lot about life in Papua New Guinea. The hotel manager was a young Papuan who was assisted by his wife.

Gary fetched us as it was growing dark to take us to see another 'spectacle'. Having driven us some four kilometres in the bus, he stopped next to a forest and led us along a path which disappeared into the undergrowth. It was so dark we had to hold hands so as not to become lost. We reached a long, low hut and had to duck our heads to enter in through the low doorway. The structure was some eight metres in length and four metres in width.

Moving across the rubbish-strewn floor, we sat down against one wall on a sheet of whitish canvas. There were no windows, and two flickering lamps provided the light. Some old Papuans and children were sitting against the wall opposite us.

Two children, a boy and a girl of about twelve, began to sing some folk songs, which I found monotonous. Some of the older Papuans helped them along. At first the children were shy and giggled nervously, punctuating their singing with bursts of laughter. It was stuffy inside and smoke still rose from the dying embers of a fire, making it even more difficult to breathe. The songs seemed to drag on forever, even though the children had fine voices. No wonder Myklukho-Maklay wrote in his diary that the natives 'do not sing, but whine'. Still, it was interesting to hear their traditional songs. I felt even more uncomfortable however, when I noticed two dogs nearby busily scratching themselves. Wakulenko and I left the hut for some fresh air.

Suddenly we heard the rumble of a car nearby and the babble of young voices. A few minutes later the figures of several young men and women emerged from the darkness and hurried into the hut we had left. When Wakulenko and I returned to our places the girls were already seated in a row, wearing only grass skirts. They laughed and joked among themselves, and then began to sing, swaying from side to side. Their beautiful young breasts swayed in time with their chanting. These young women had performed before tourists many times before. Together with the boys they sang a medley of songs both sad and cheerful. One love song was performed with the boys sitting opposite the girls. At first they must have been coy, and joined hands only after much persuasion from the older Papuans. Joining hands, they rocked towards each other, touching faces as if kissing. Most of the songs were very drawn out and repetitive.

The concert lasted ninety minutes and we returned to the hotel at nine, a little tired.

In the morning we set out on a new tour in our inimitable bus. As we passed through the town we saw cement-sheet houses, some of them on stilts; these were a striking contrast to the native hovels of the highland regions.

On the outskirts we stopped at a market, where about two hundred Papuans were milling around. Wakulenko immediately spied a woman carrying a large pancake-like piece of pig meat on her head, and snapped her with his camera. I was amazed that the woman was able to balance the meat so effortlessly on her head, without even supporting it with her hand. The market stalls were roofed over against the blistering sun. I bought an avocado, which looked like a dark-green pimpled pear, and also some colourful native material.

The sky was blue again today and the sun beat down mercilessly, even though it was only nine o'clock. Filling up with petrol nearby, the bus pulled out onto a well-graded wide road, which ran through a fertile valley. Mountains could be seen only in the distance. Coffee plantations fringed the roadway, interlaced with plantations of low sharp-leafed tea bushes.

While the fields were practically deserted except for the occasional group of women, we saw many people walking along the roadside. Many of the women had babies in their arms and bags on their backs. The bags lay low on the women's backs, with straps slung across their foreheads, thus leaving their hands free to carry their children. It was even stranger however to see men walking alongside the women emptyhanded.

After a tiring four hour drive we reached the shady grounds of the Baiyer River Wildlife Sanctuary. We set out on foot into the lush green jungle, which echoed the shrill calls of various birds heard so often on television.

First we inspected the aviaries full of majestic birds of paradise of various colours. Most of the birds screeched and fluttered away at the sight of us, and the photographers found it hard to take decent shots. However

one bird, which seemed to have the best colouring, perched on a branch nearest the netting, spread out its wings and turned from side to side, as if begging to be photographed. It kept tapping its beak and making a 'tok-tok' sound.

In another place we saw the large New Guinea Crown Pigeon. Azure in colour, it was about the size of a hen and had a crown of plumes on its head. In an adjacent cage flying foxes hung upside down from branches like small black handbags. Occasionally they stretched their wings open, and then wrapped them around themselves again.

At the far end of the sanctuary were pits with various snakes and pythons, and a large enclosure of tree kangaroos. One of these kangaroos was beautifully marked with sandy streaks running down the length of its reddish back.

The sanctuary was being modernised, and carpenters were still at work on new aviaries and pits.

I saw an enormous black parrot hopping from branch to branch on a tree nearby, and called over Pylyp Wakulenko. Meanwhile the bird with a beak the size of a banana had flown to the ground and was fearlessly strutting about on the grass. Wakulenko drew closer to the bird and reassured it:

"Come here, cocky . . . Come here, cocky . . ."

But 'Cocky' had no intentions at all of flying away.

Seeing a simply constructed arbour where two Papuan boys were playing, I went over to join them in the shade where it was more bearable on this hot day. I wiped the sweat from my face with my handkerchief and then treated the boys to some chocolates. Looking at the dense wall of jungle nearby, I asked them:

"What animals are there in the jungle?"

"Oh, there are many animals," the taller boy replied in English.

"Which particular ones?"

"Large boa constrictors, tree kangaroos, all kinds of snakes, wild boars, possums, cassowaries . . ."

The Spotted Cuscus, a common fruit-eater in the lowland rainforests of P.N.G.

He also named several other exotic animals which I failed to remember.

"And do you ever venture into the jungle?"

"Only in twos or threes, or with our parents to gather wood, pick bananas and coconuts."

"Are you afraid to go alone?" I asked, the shorter of the two boys.

"No, but father won't let me go, because once a boa constrictor grabbed a small girl near here and she disappeared without a trace. And last year we saw a boa constrictor grab hold of a small wild boar. When everyone heard the boar's squeals, they came running and killed the boa. The boar was taken back to the village and roasted."

"Do you attend school?" I asked them.

"Yes, we're both in grade five," the taller boy replied.

"How many pupils are there at the school?"

"One hundred and sixty-two."

"What will you do when you finish school," I asked the taller boy.

"Go to high school and become a teacher."

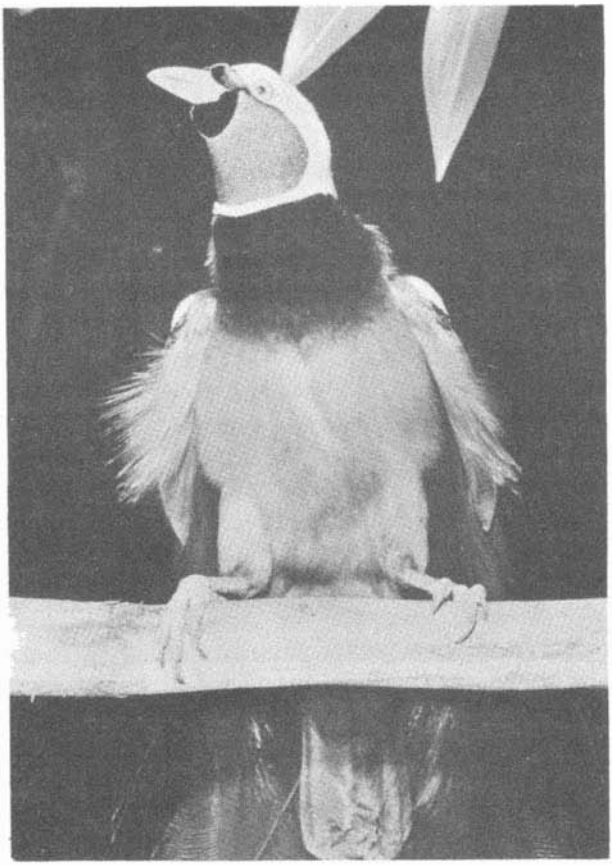
"Really?!" I exclaimed. "I'm a teacher too!"

"You're a teacher?" he asked in surprise. "Where do you teach?"

I told the boys about myself, how I had migrated to Australia and taught at Saturday schools for Ukrainian children. I liked the boy's aspirations, and taking down his address, promised to send him an interesting book in English. Later, from Australia, I sent him a copy of *Ukrainian Folk Tales* in English.

Saying goodbye to the boys, I went to look for the rest of our party, and found them at the other end of the sanctuary. They were resting on the lawn in the shade and watched the squawking birds of paradise in the branches overhead.

Only a few metres away stood the dense wall of the jungle, with only a narrow path disappearing into it. I ventured along the path for a short while to see what real jungle looked like. Among the tall trees countless bushes,



A male Bird of Paradise.

weeds and creepers strained upwards towards the sun. Vines twisted spiral paths up tree trunks. The rubber plant which I had growing back home in a small pot was a huge tree here, its trunk two to three metres in diameter.

Many of the trees had enormous aerial roots beginning some three metres above the ground which looked like gnarled, twisted old fingers spread out to support the tree. The jungle seemed intensely eerie.

Enormous round leaves lay strewn on the ground. I

wanted to venture off the path, but heard my friends calling me. We were leaving the reserve.

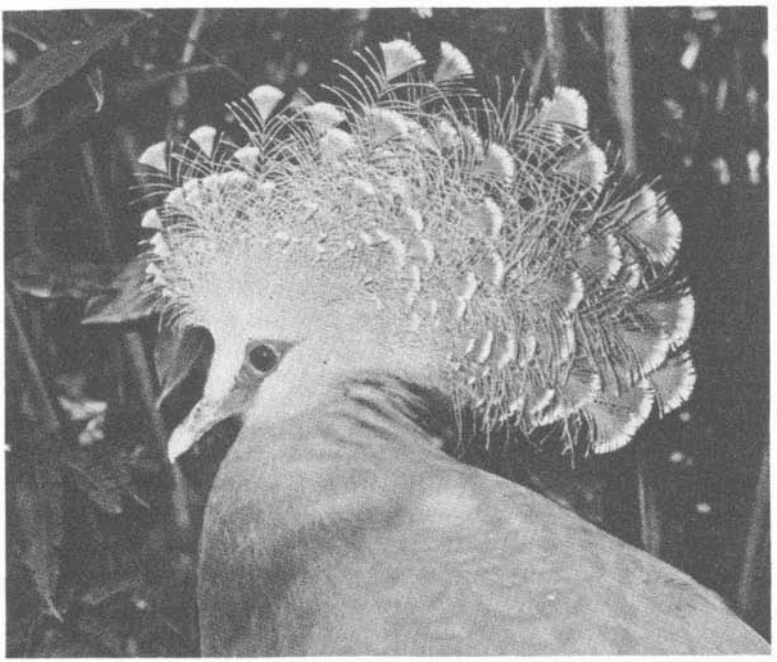
After spending some two hours here we returned to our hotel in Minj, which was a tiring four hours away by road. We made it back in time for dinner, during which it was announced that after it became dark the Mudmen would be giving a performance.

Soon after we gathered on the lawn outside the restaurant. After a while two torches were lit on both sides of us. It seemed as if the moon never appeared here in this inky blackness. Soon mysterious shapes began to materialise from the darkness, indistinct figures of naked whitish people. The natives seemed to be painted with white clay. Each had a weird goggle-eyed mask the size of a pumpkin on his head. They approached us ever so slowly, moving cautiously and without a single sound, looking like mechanical toys. It seemed to take a minute for each of them to take a single step. They raised their legs up high, and carefully placed them on the ground without a rustle, as if they were approaching a victim.

There were five performers in all, moving along ten paces or so apart. In their outstretched hands they held clumps of leaves. A strip of white cloth was tucked into the twine belt around their waists at the front and back.

This ritual continued for some twenty minutes. Then the torches went out and one of the Mudmen came up to us and took off his mask. We applauded this artistic 'pantomime', surprised to see that the Mudman was our own guide Gary.

Gary later told us about the origins of the Mudmen. Several hundred years ago one tribe had taken advantage of the fact that the men of a neighbouring tribe had left their village for the day, and they attacked their settlement, abducting their women and children. The men returned home and saw what had happened, but did not have the numbers to launch a reprisal. So they made these frightening mud masks and smeared their bodies with mud. Under cover of darkness they made their way to the



The New Guinea Crown Pigeon.

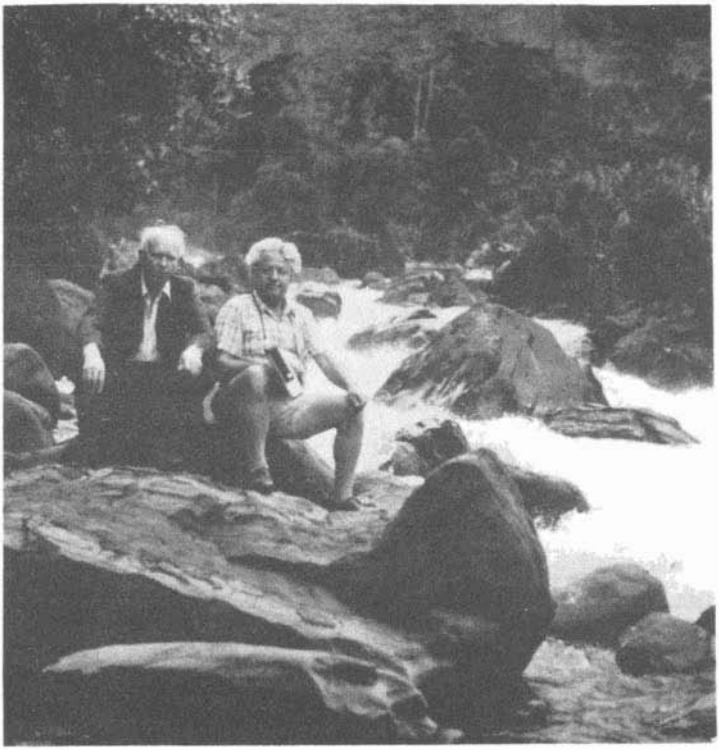
enemy village. The enemy tribesmen ran in terror from their huts when they saw the approaching apparitions, fearing some supernatural force had come to punish them. And the wronged natives took back their women and children without shedding a drop of blood.

ACROSS MOUNT IALIBU TO MENDI

We continued along the road we had come along the day before, passing through Mount Hagen, where we stopped for only half an hour outside the market. The market and the town were much larger than Minj. The road ahead wound deeper and deeper into the mountains. It became cooler, and then rained heavily for a whole hour. But this didn't worry us. Gary again told us that in Papua New Guinea pigs and girls were the most expensive things. At the Mount Hagen Market however, pigs were selling for only 200-300 kina today, while girls were fetching 500-600 kina. Girls could be bought not only for money, he added, but could also be traded for pigs and other goods. Those girls who had previously been married were much cheaper. In some of the villages two thirds of the bride price was paid by the bridegroom's parents, the rest being paid by his tribe.

A rich man could have up to forty women, Gary explained. One Papuan he knew of had fifty-five children. In the mountainous regions where the number of women was much smaller, there were endless battles over them. The boys, and the whole village in fact, jealously guarded their girls from boys from other villages. I remembered similar rivalries which occurred in the villages back in Ukraine.

We stopped outside a small hamlet where a crowd of people had assembled, as if awaiting our arrival. This was the home of the Ialibu tribe, the most backward in Papua New Guinea. Until 1948 no one had known of their existence. There were no roads leading here and they led a secluded life in the forests. Even now their huts were hidden from view, and all we saw was this small clearing



Lunch on the Kaugel River.

bounded by two low long huts with a door at each end.

We entered the clearing. It was evident that no one lived here and that the huts were used only for yearly festivals and sing sings. Seven painted natives stood in front of one of the huts. They looked different to all the other natives we had so far seen. These wore strange Napoleonic-looking hats with two wings which stuck out to the left and right. They were called Wigmen because of their headgear, which was also adorned with colourful feathers. Their faces were so plastered with clay and ash that it was difficult to tell their age. Even their beards were painted grey. From the waist down to their feet hung strange sack-like skirts.

In height and build they were more solid and taller than the natives we had previously seen. Each man's body glistened as if he had been cast in bronze. We later learned from Gary that they had rubbed themselves down with an oil which they obtained from a special tree.

At last they began their unique 'concert'. On either side stood a man with a drum, accompanying their singing, which was very monotonous and primitive. It consisted of the single sound 'O-o-o-o', which they sang louder as they slowly rose on their toes, and then more softly as their heels drew closer to the ground. They repeated this several times, evoking little more than awe from the tourists. It only served to drive home just how primitive these people were. The performance could not at all be compared with those of the villages we had already visited. Even the primitive dance of the Mudmen at least had an idea behind it and was presented artistically. But here there was none of this.

During the 'concert' about fifty of the locals, many with children, sat down opposite the men and watched. The mothers held their babies in their arms, while the older children kept running about, inspecting the tourists. It was quite cold, and even the Ialibu tribesmen must have felt it. Some of the half-naked women had draped pieces of rough homespun cloth over their shoulders, and the almost naked small children crouched or snuggled up to their mothers. I tried to talk with some of the school-age children, but they ran away from me, grinning. No one understood English here.

The skies cleared again and the sun appeared. We set out for Mendi, stopping for lunch near Kaugel River, after crossing over a steel bridge. Taking the hamper containing our cold lunch we descended an overgrown path near the bridge to the river's edge. The steep path was slippery from the recent rain, and we had to grab hold of bushes and tussocks of grass as we made our way down. Along the river's banks, and in the river itself there were many large boulders, making the cold clear water foam

and boil as it made its way past them. We jumped from rock to rock, each member of our party finding himself a comfortable place to have lunch. I surveyed the river shallows and the small pools among the rocks where the water stood motionless, but nowhere were there any water spiders, small fish or tadpoles, not even an ordinary frog. I couldn't explain why this was so. In contrast the banks around us were smothered in dense vegetation.

After finishing his lunch Mr Wakulenko began to take photographs. I jumped across onto the largest rock which rose some two metres from the water and posed for him too. And when we climbed back up to the road, Morris took a photograph of our whole party with Wakulenko's camera.

Again we pressed on. Our tour bus kept weaving its way up and down through the mountains, and we didn't reach Mendi until almost nightfall. Like most of the larger villages, it lay in a valley along a river. The long, single-storey hotel had guest rooms, a dining-room, a bar and an office all under the one roof. Over dinner I met two teachers, one of them an English woman, the other a Papuan. I asked them about the university in Port Moresby where they were studying. The Papuan girl had not yet completed her course. There were over a thousand students in the university. This was the cultural force which would breathe new life into a country which had only recently gained independence, and which still had so many throwbacks from the Stone Age for which white people were partly responsible having ruled this land for many years.

From our conversation I surmised that these two young teachers had arrived here on an assigment from one of the church missions. But they really said nothing definite, hinting only that they would be 'conducting cultural work among the natives'. These two young people were very friendly and intelligent, and it was a pleasure to talk to them over dinner. They were curious about life both in Australia, and in Ukraine.

ON THE ROAD TO MOUNT HAGEN

At nine the following morning we left on another bus tour. First we inspected the local agricultural college farm, which was not all that exciting, and then the agronomy school museum, where we saw many pictures and displays about the life of the tribes in the surrounding districts. Here were pictures of folk festivals, and daily work, also displays of clothes, ornaments, grass skirts and old examples of pottery. One of the photographs showed natives taking oil from a man-made hollow in a tigaso tree and rubbing it onto the bodies of participants in a sing sing, just like the Ialibu Wigmen we had recently seen.

Other displays carried population statistics, from which we learned that within a 150 kilometre radius of Mendi there lived sixteen different tribes which totalled sixty-four thousand people. Each tribe had its own distinct customs and festive dress.

Apart from the various weapons such as shields, arrows and bows, there were also displays of a bark cloth made with the help of a special ridged hammer. Back in the old days the cloth was used to shield the head from the sun.

After seeing the piggery we drove off to Mount Hagen by a different road, to see different poeple and different countryside. The bus laboured its way out of the valley along a steep winding road. On our left yawned a deep gully, whose clay slope was eroded away each year by the rains. To our right rose a steep clay mountain. We could see evidence of bulldozers having worked here, trying to head off the erosion, but it was a difficult battle to fight nature.

Nomad warrior – Western Province.

After a while we stopped near a small village. About thirty adults and children came running out to greet us, staring at us in amazement. The children were afraid, and if anyone tried to approach them, they ran away laughing, even though the adults shouted at them to stay put. The huts were primitive and stood scattered around a clearing. To one side stood a church with a cross on its roof. It was empty, without pulpit or icons. A missionary priest arrived here occasionally to celebrate mass. Few of the natives understood English. I found one boy who attended grade four at school. I took out a packet of sweets and gave them to a girl of fifteen. She accepted them uncertainly, laughed nervously and began handing them out to the others.

This was the first village we had encountered which stood practically in open grassland. There were only a few gardens nearby. Further on we came upon another small village. Several of the huts were empty, the doors held closed by branches or stakes, signifying that there was no one at home. We saw only one old man, and he spoke no English. Through our guide we learned that everyone was out at work. Along the length of the grass-covered clearing stretched a long hut without any windows, and with only a door at either end. Our guide explained that the natives used it each year for their communal sing sing. Then over two thousand people gathered here from the neighbouring villages, celebrating day and night, dancing, carousing, enjoying themselves for up to two weeks at a time. To feed such a large number of guests several hundred pigs were slaughtered. All this showed the good organisation in these villages. Fires burned for nights on end as meat was singed and roasted, and taro and other dishes prepared.

Walking to the end of this unfenced village clearing on which grew several trees, we strolled back, followed by about five boys. They ran alongside us, smiling, and jumped nimbly into the air. I picked up a blade of grass, cupped it between my thumbs, and bringing it to my lips, made it utter a shrill whistle. The children darted

A funeral near Mendi.

away in surprise, not understanding where the noise had come from. Laughing, I showed them how it was done, but they were unable to produce any sound, no matter how much they tried.

Further down the road we stopped near another village to view a field of whitish pyrethrum daisies, which were used in insecticides. A bunch of children rushed into the field with us. At first they were frightened of us, but I began to pat them on the head and to tug them by the arm until they became used to me and walked behind me in a drove, lightly tugging at my clothes.

As we boarded the bus again, adults and children gathered around us. Sitting down, I opened the window and admired their faces. I took some chocolates from my bag and gave them to the children. Then I offered another one to a girl of about ten standing next to a woman, possibly her mother. But hardly had the girl taken the sweet, when the woman snatched it from her. I wagged my finger at the woman, and gestured to her to return the chocolate to the little girl. She did so, but who knows whether she didn't take it back later? The engine started

up, the children mobbed the bus, each wanting to touch my outstretched hand, as if to say farewell. I can still see their faces before me. How many of them there must be in those wild parts – without schools, education and books! And how much good they could be doing for their country and its people under different conditions.

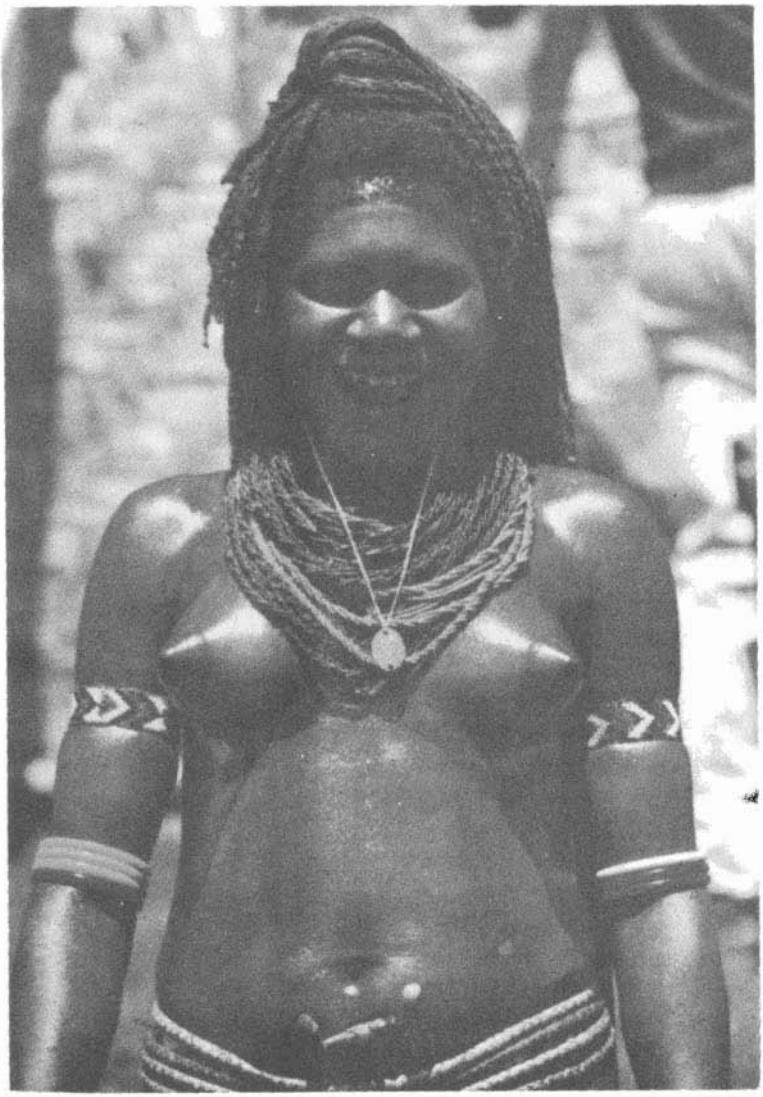
Before sunset we arrived in Mount Hagen and stopped at the Highlander Hotel. The hotel and the accompanying tourist block were single storeyed, quite modern in construction, and the walls were decorated with carved crocodiles, spears, arrows and other knick-knacks. The manager was a tall, well-built Australian who continually raced about, hurrying up the cleaning staff and the waiters.

That evening I went to the dining-room and sat at a small table. A friendly Papuan woman with a plate of fish and chips joined me. She struck up a conversation, saying that she was working here temporarily, waitressing and washing dishes.

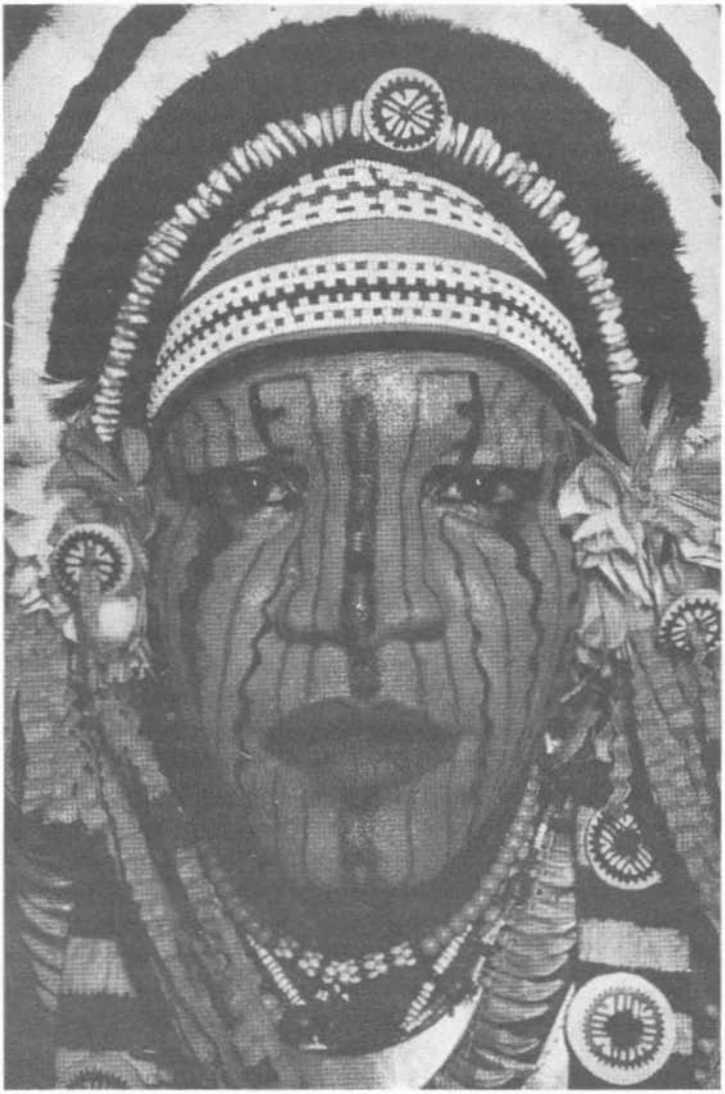
"Here, have some," she offered me her plate of chips. "It'll take ages before they serve you." But I desisted, feeling uncomfortable having to eat from her plate, even though her invitation had been sincere. She was affable, talkative and pleasing in appearance. She said that she was married to a white man who worked at the bar in an adjoining room. Just then the hotel manager walked past us. He had probably noticed how slowly she was eating and that she was talking to me. He told her to finish up and to return to work. The woman stood up immediately, without saying a word, and hurried off. Later I saw her serving the other tourists.

Meanwhile, my travelling companions joined me. According to our tour timetable we would be wasting all of the next day waiting till late in the afternoon for our flight to Goroka, and from there to Madang.

Mr Wakulenko rang through to Minj to the owner of the hotel there who organised tours around Papua New Guinea. The fellow arrived in Mount Hagen soon after, but there was little he could do, for all the planes were booked out.



Happy tribespeople pose willingly in the New Guinea Highlands.



Facial decorations, Central Province.

Though our plane wasn't due until four that afternoon, the hotel manager served us breakfast the next morning and asked us to vacate our rooms, leaving our luggage in the lobby. Gary arrived soon after and took several of our group to the city. We browsed through the shops, bought some souvenirs, postage stamps and postcards, and visited a business which bought up and sorted raw coffee beans. Though the coffee was grown here, the instant coffee sold in the shops was all made in Australia and was very expensive. Nearly all manufactured goods were imported here from Australia.

After strolling through some of the larger stores in Mount Hagen, which were almost identical to the shops in suburban Melbourne, we browsed through the craft shops and gathered outside another hotel designated by Gary. Here he organised some lunch for us, and after we had rested in the hotel lobby, he took us to the airport. This was our last trip with our friendly guide Gary. The evening before we had decided to put in two kina each to buy a present for him and his children. But the instigators of this idea had become miserly, deciding that it was enough that Morris had painted Gary's portrait and presented it to him. I felt ashamed, when I said farewell to Gary, but I had only learned what had happened at the last minute and it was too late to correct this tactlessness.

OFF TO THE MACLAY COAST

At last, after changing planes in Goroka, we left for Madang, drawing closer to our main goal, to the realisation of my long-standing dream to visit those places where the famous scientist and explorer Myklukho-Maklay had been.

For most of the trip a cobweb of clouds hid the ground from view. But as we drew closer to Madang the clouds gradually dispersed. Slowly the aeroplane descended and we could see dense forests, the silvery threads of rivers, countless palms, and then hills surrounding a wide valley, airport buildings, streets, orchards.

We disembarked from the plane, passed through the small airport lounge, and were met by the hotel owner, a tall, solid Australian, who whisked us away in a small tourist bus.

The streets were lined with palms and tall leafy trees; occasionally we saw whole complexes of multi-storey buildings. Some fifteen minutes later our bus turned to the right into a hedge tunnel, and we arrived at the Smugglers Inn.

Everyone took an immediate liking to the place: nearby stood three storey accomodation blocks, and the restaurant and bar were located on the sea's edge. The waves crashed against the hotel veranda walls and often splashed onto the veranda. A large tree grew in the middle of the dining-room, its trunk passing through a hole in the ceiling, and the ample branches covered the roof. The inn was drowned in a mass of tall leafy trees, palms and flowers. And among the buildings was the enticing azure rectangle of a swimming pool.

We received our keys and settled into a spacious

The Maclay Coast.

comfortable room on the first floor. Then we went down for dinner. All the waiters were young Papuans. Like black ballerinas, they walked about bare to the waist, some with necklaces of beads, and all wearing colourful sarongs wrapped around their waists. Some had a flower stuck coquettishly in their frizzy mop of hair. They came up to the tables with large menus pasted on cardboard sheets. The hungry and the gourmets would have had a field day here.

After dinner the hotel owner announced that at eight that evening students from a nearby high school would stage a native performance. When we returned, the tables were packed with tourists who flocked to the hotel each day. The lights were turned off and it became pitch-black. A minute later the youthful figure of a Papuan appeared on the wall of the veranda. Holding a raised torch in his left hand, he moved back and forth along the stone wall, which rose a metre above the veranda floor, and peered out to sea into the darkness. Somewhere out there fishermen were lost, and with his light he was

showing them the way to shore.

At last he uttered a joyous exclamation, jumped down from the wall, and raced over to his drum to announce the good news to the fishermen's families and the rest of the village. A moment later a dozen young men and an equal number of women raced out onto the now-illuminated veranda. The natives broke into a lively, joyous dance. The faces of the boys and girls were painted with streaks of white paint and there were feathers and flowers in their hair. All the boys carried spears, wearing only short pieces of colourful fabric around their loins.

The girls, dressed in short grass skirts, their bare breasts criss-crossed with long strands of beads, created a magical picture. Everyone's eyes were glued to the spectacle. A dozen cameras kept flashing and clicking away.

The second scene performed by the students was different. In the darkness at one end of the veranda sat a barely visible couple, obviously in love. Meanwhile, a boy bearing a torch appeared on the veranda. He had to watch over the girl, who was meeting with a boy from another village, and had to punish them. At first he seemed not to notice the couple, but then, spying them, he let out a scream and a group of boys and girls burst out onto the veranda. The boys attacked the young couple and beat them up. The girl could hardly move, and crawled along the wall on all fours, while her boy lay 'dead'. The girl rose with difficulty, walked up to him and kneeling beside him tearfully stroked his face. The other girls gathered around him and wept too. The scene finished with the 'dead' boy being lifted up and carried out.

For their third act the students all sang to the accompaniment of guitars and native instruments – bamboo rods, the openings of which were struck with hands and sticks. The song sounded very European.

These students' impressive performance, their beautiful faces and artistic skill, will stay with me for a long time . . .

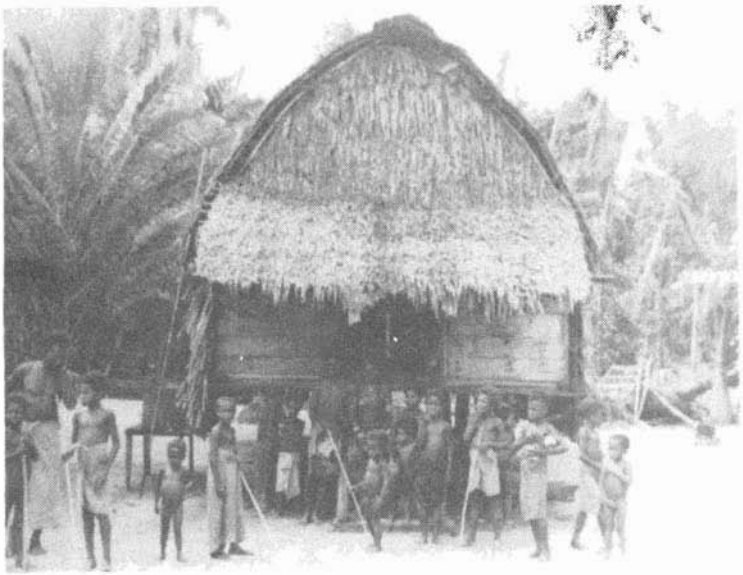
High school students performing in a Madang restaurant.

On Saturday, according to the tour itinerary, we were to see the surrounding countryside, the islands and a printing works. But the hotel manager who was responsible for the organisation of our sight-seeing tour claimed he had no time to show us around. However he summoned a young man who owned a car and a small tourist motor boat to show us the sights around Madang, on the condition that we each pay him eight kina. We piled into his car and drove off to the port.

There weren't many of us now, most having chosen to travel along a different route from Mount Hagen. Soon we had boarded the boat and were chugging through the beautiful cove. John, the seventeen-year-old owner of the boat, stood in the bow and using a megaphone explained the sights to us. It was a hot sunny day, but luckily for us the boat had a canvas awning. The motor chattered away carelessly as John showed us relics from the war years, when the Americans fought the Japanese here: the rusty remains of a sunken Japanese destroyer jutted out from the water on a sand-bar near the beach.

We passed small islands smothered in vegetation, tall slender palms in whose tops hung coconuts, looking like bombs. Here and there through the trees we caught glimpses of Papuan huts on stilts. The water was clear and one could see fish darting about in the depths. Meanwhile John was telling everyone that several missions were located on the island before us. We sailed past the islands of Tipun, Kranken and others. Some were quite small, being only half a mile or so in length. One island consisted entirely of a coconut palm plantation. John told us that his parents also owned and worked a hundred acre coconut plantation.

Far in the distance we saw the misty outlines of the mountainous Karkar Island, seventy-five kilometres away. We landed on Siar Island. The beach was clean and sandy, everything green with leafy trees, palms and bushes. In the grass we came upon holes five centimeters in diameter. John told us that snails lived in these burrows, which were



Typical Papuan house on the coast.

up to half a metre deep. At night they emerged and fed on the grass. Several trees were covered in fragrant white flowers with unique clusters of leaves growing in the form of a fan around the flowers. This was the frangipani.

It became warmer and more humid. Outside a hut Mr Wakulenko took a picture of an old Papuan whose skin was much lighter than the ones we had hitherto seen. The old man asked for a copy of the photo to be sent to him and to show his gratitude, gave my compatriot a coconut. John helped peel it with his knife and cut a hole in it. Everyone tasted the coconut milk it contained. I found it sweetish and pleasant, but my compatriot didn't think much of the coconut's juice.

Venturing a short distance inland, we looked at the lush vegetation, seeing many trees for the first time. Then it was back into the boat, and after circling the island, we headed back for the mainland. John told us that a thousand acres of palm forest could be bought here for two thousand kina.

John pointed out two specks in the water ahead of us. I put on my glasses and strained my eyes.

"It's two dogs swimming across from one island to another," John said with a smile. As we drew closer we could make out the animals' heads above the water.

"They must be good swimmers," I remarked, for it was no less than half a mile from one island to the other.

Returning to the hotel, we rested a while and had lunch. Then John took us in his large black car around Madang. After visiting the pottery village of Yabob, we travelled to Bil-Bil Village, which Maklay called Bili-Bili in his diary. It was hidden in the undergrowth along the beach. From the road we set out along a path to the village, which was almost deserted. The people must have had some festival and had probably gone to a neighbouring village. Here and there we saw children and old people. So as not to bother the natives, we walked past the houses and made for the shore, where the sea lapped calmly against the sand. On the beach a girl of about ten was sitting on a fallen tree, fishing. She wasn't frightened by us and only stared, surprised by the sudden influx of white people, which didn't happen all that often in these parts. I walked up to her, gave her a sweet and asked her several questions. I learned that she attended grade four at school, that there was a village close by called Bukati with some two hundred inhabitants, and together with Bil-Bil contained a total of five hundred people. These villages stretched for some twelve kilometres along the shore.

Not far out to sea was the clear green hat of a small round island. It was called Bil-Bil too. In Maklay's time it was still inhabited, and the natives from here often visited him in Garagassi Point or in Bongu and invited him to join them. It was on Bil-Bil, according to the explorer's diary, that one of the Papuans grabbed his dog, clubbed it against a tree, and lay the dead animal at the white visitor's feet as a sign of deep respect and gratitude, for Maklay often cured the natives with his medicines. Maklay had asked that the dog be skinned and roasted first. When

the meat was ready he cut off a choice piece for himself, giving the rest to the Papuans, knowing they had very little meat. It was nothing new for Maklay to be eating dog meat. While living in Garagassi and Bongu he often had to supplement his diet with dog meat, which the natives brought him. But now the island was deserted. During the last war the Germans had resettled everyone onto the mainland in Bil-Bil.

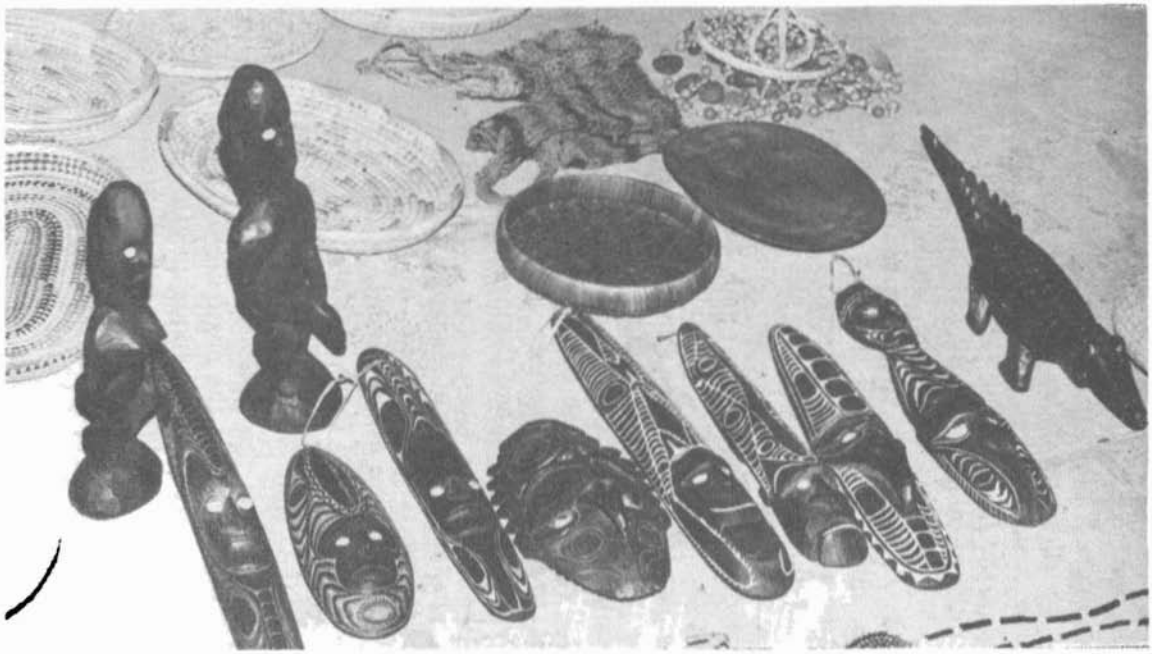
We walked along the sandy shore, admiring the beauty of the coast. Grasshoppers chirruped away in the grass, birds called from the trees. Strolling past a house we saw women making pottery out of clay.

Returning to the car, we set off to explore new areas. Along the road we often passed people, the occasional truck or van, and twice saw boys riding bicycles. Passing through tall palm forests, we pulled into Siar Village. Houses were strung out along the beach; here they were larger and neater than those in the mountains. Chickens and dogs wandered outside the huts, and these stood in the shade of large mango trees, whose fruit ripened in November. But there were no fences between the houses, and fishing nets were hanging outside to dry.

On the outskirts of Madang we visited a printing-shop which took on large orders. About thirty Papuans were employed in the establishment, which was run by two white men. One of them, Mr Jaworsky, was an American of Polish descent. They greeted us hospitably. Mr Wakulenko, who worked for a printer himself, was well acquainted with this business, and asked many questions, even inquiring about the possibility of a future order. We were impressed by the high quality of the work. Here they printed large albums, maps and illustrated books. We each received a new 1977 calendar with large colourful illustrations and captions in English and Pidgin.

On the way back to the hotel we saw Papuan youths playing soccer in a clearing.

As I made my way to the restaurant for dinner I



Papuan handcrafts on display outside a Madang restaurant.

noticed what seemed to be quite large birds with short tails flying in from the offshore islands. A Papuan nearby told me that they were flying foxes, which flew here each evening from the island forests and caves. I stopped and watched them settle on the tall trees. They fed on wild and cultivated fruit.

Towards evening several craftsmen had laid out their wares near the hotel dining-room. A few days earlier we had learned from our guide Gary that the best and cheapest woodcarvings and handcrafts came from Madang and Sepik. There were beautiful necklaces here, small crocodiles, medallions and decorations made from the colourful polished seeds of plants, bows and arrows, even grass bowls of various sizes and shapes woven from reeds and kunai grass, and original telums with human-like faces carved from wood.

The tourists snapped up these souvenirs as mementos of this sunny, wild land.

Having bought myself a few things as well, I returned to our room after dinner. But my room-mate, Mr Wakulenko, did not return until late that evening, after I had finished writing in my diary and was preparing to go to bed.

"Where have you been?" I asked.

"Ah, I stayed behind with those drunks . . ."

"Which drunks were these?"

"Several plantation owners came into the bar," he explained, "and we all had a few glasses of beer, and then the talk began. I asked them how things were now, adding that they would probably have to leave soon, once the Papuans learnt how to run their own plantations. 'Not yet,' they replied. 'We'll keep at it for a few more years, and then we'll see what happens.' "

"How many glasses did you down?" I asked Mr Wakulenko.

"Nine . . . "

"Then you must have really drowned your bronchitis!"

"Oh, definitely!" he replied in a bubbly joyous voice, which attested to his good humour and better health.

We were about to go to bed when Doctor Jaskewycz, who was sleeping in another room, knocked on the door. On Friday he had found the address of the local Catholic mission in the telephone directory, and what's more the priest had had a Ukrainian-sounding name. The missionary priest turned out to be of Slovak descent and had arrived here several years earlier from America. Doctor Jaskewycz hunted him down in Madang and made his acquaintance, telling him of our desire to visit the Maclay Coast and asked him to hire a car for the three of us. Now he had returned with the good news that everything had been arranged, and that a covered four-wheel-drive vehicle would arrive the next morning to take us on this long-awaited trip. As well, Doctor Jaskewycz had arranged for a local Papuan teacher who knew the way to come along as an interpreter.

We were overjoyed at the news, glad that we would at last be able to attain the principal goal of our trip. And without having to fill out countless forms, obtaining special passes and paying a hundred dollars each. It was after midnight before we got to bed. I was so excited that I had to take half a sleeping tablet to enable me to fall asleep.

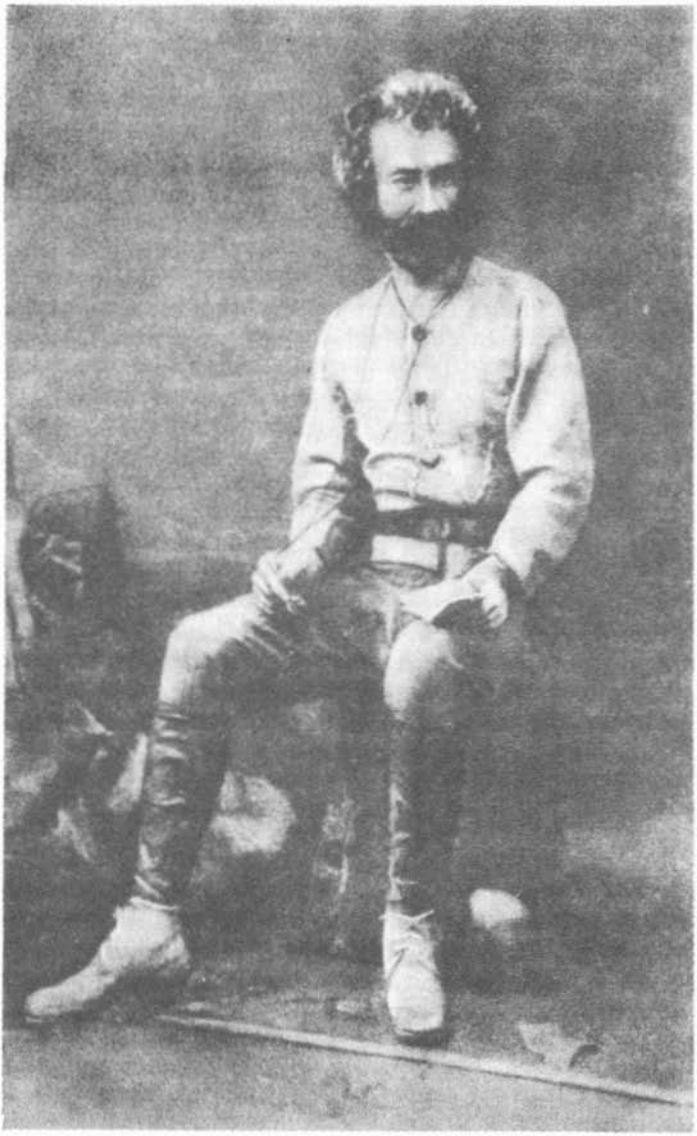
FROM THE BIOGRAPHY OF MYKLUKHO-MAKLAY

Most people know very little about the life of this scientist and explorer. And little has been written about his Ukrainian background. Only recently the Soviet scientist Oleksander Ivanchenko, who had been researching the life of Myklukho-Maklay for over twenty years, published several valuable articles about the explorer in a Kiev journal, providing a wealth of new information about this eminent man. From these articles we learn that one of Myklukho-Maklay's ancestors, Okhrim Makukha, was a commander in the Zaporozhian Sich. And Maklay's great-grandfather, Stepan Makukha, was a captain in the Cossack army. Stepan Makukha changed his surname to a more aristocratic one, as he had been promoted to the rank of ensign and made a noble for his role in the taking of Ochakiv in 1772 during the Russo-Turkish war. The surname Makukha, meaning 'oil-cake', didn't sound very aristocratic, and besides his Cossack nickname was Makhlay, which meant Droopy Ears. It was then he decided to change his name to the more euphonic Myklukha Maklay. Since the name Myklukha actually derives from Mykola, the Ukrainian for Michael, the scientist decided to change his surname slightly, and hyphenated the two words, becoming Myklukho-Maklay.

Mykola Myklukho-Maklay's father, also named Mykola, came from the Starodub district in the Chernihiv Province of Ukraine. His father's older brother, Hryhoriy, had gone to school and was friends with Mykola Hohol*, the author of *Taras Bulba.*

The Maklay family preserved stories about their

*In English the translation Nikolai Gogol is used almost exclusively, transliterating from the Russian spelling of this writer's name.



M. Myklukho-Maklay.

ancestors. It was the scientist's uncle, Hryhoriy, who told Hohol about his ancestor, Okhrim Makukha, who together with his three sons – Omelko, Nazar and Khoma, fought the Poles to free Ukraine. But one day the second-eldest, Nazar, fell in love with a Polish damsel, and betraying the Cossacks, went over to the Polish side, hiding inside a fortress beseiged by the Cossacks. To save face before the Cossack brotherhood, the brothers Omelko and Khoma decided to kidnap their brother and to punish him by a Cossack court.

Late at night they stole into the fortress, grabbed him and tied him up, and were leaving when they chanced upon a group of Polish guards. There was an armed struggle. Throwing himself at the Poles, Khoma called out to Omelko to escape, while he held the Poles at bay. Though Omelko escaped with Nazar on his back, Khoma died in the uneven fight. For his betrayal and the death of his younger brother, the father sentenced Nazar to death. This episode later became the basis for Mykola Hohol's novel *Taras Bulba.*

From Ivanchenko's material we find that Maklay's relatives were patriotic Ukrainians. The scientist's father, who had worked as an engineer on the St. Petersburg to Moscow railway, and then later as stationmaster at the St. Petersburg Railway Station, was acquainted with the works of Taras Shevchenko, and had read many of the poet's poems in manuscript form. When a move was made to release Shevchenko from exile, he sent the Ukrainian poet one hundred and fifty roubles. For this act Maklay's father was dismissed from work in 1856 and was to be tried in court. However he was saved by a doctor's certificate stating that he was suffering from consumption.

From the archival materials collected by the scientist's sister, Olga, it is clear that her brother loved Ukraine and wrote articles in its defence; but these unfortunately have been lost to posterity, and we know only their titles. The author had sent them to Russia, but they were destroyed there, Ivanchenko assumes, because

in them the author criticised tsarist policies and defended Ukraine.

According to the Australian author Frank Grinope, who had access to the explorer's archives, Mykola Myklukho-Maklay was born on July 17, 1846 in Malyn in Kiev Province; though current Soviet sources give his place of birth as the Novgorod Province in Russia, to where his father was transferred because of work.

The scientist was educated at the St. Petersburg university, from whence he was expelled at the age of seventeen because of anti-government views. After this he left for Germany and first studied philosophy at Heidelberg University (1864) and then medicine at Leipzig and Jena universities. He graduated from the latter in 1868, having worked there as an assistant to E. Haeckel, specialising in comparative animal anatomy and the study of marine fauna. On his first expeditions to the Canary Islands, Italy and the shores of the Black Sea he conducted anthropological and ethnographic research alongside his zoological work.

Later Myklukho-Maklay took part in ten expeditions to various places such as New Guinea, the Philippines, the Moluccas, Australia, Melanesia and Micronesia. But his longest stay by far was in New Guinea, which he visited three times between 1871 and 1883, living among the natives for a year on each occasion. Here he wrote his interesting diary *Among the Savages of New Guinea* and many scientific works which were published not only in Russia, but also in Germany, France, England and other countries. Altogether he was the author of over 160 articles on various scientific subjects such as anthropology, comparative anatomy, meteorology, geography and zoology. In his account of the Papuan natives, he maintained that on an intellectual and moral level the natives were not inferior to Europeans, and that their backwardness was a result of historical reasons, in particular colonial oppression.

Myklukho-Maklay's mother came from the mixed

Polish-German family of a Doctor Bekker, who arrived in Russia in 1812 and decided to settle there.

While working in Sydney the scientist married the daughter of the premier of New South Wales, Margaret Robertson, and returned later with her to St. Petersburg. After his death in 1888 his wife moved back to Australia with their two sons. Three of Myklukho-Maklay's grandsons now live in Sydney, one of them a well-known journalist. Myklukho-Maklay's large archives were collected by his sister Olga, and are now to be found in Sydney libraries.

People often questioned Maklay about his nationality. In an interview with the correspondent of the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1884 he said:

'My person is a living example of how happily three eternal enemies have been united. The fiery blood of the Zaporozhian Cossacks has blended peacefully with the blood of their age-old enemies, the haughty Poles, whose blood had in turn been diluted with cold German blood. It would probably be well nigh impossible to judge which element predominates in this mixture. I very much love Ukraine, the homeland of my father, but this love in no way lessens my respect for my mother's two homelands – Germany and Poland.'

From this we can see that there was nothing Russian in his blood, but that living then in the conditions of Russian despotism, when everything Ukrainian was forbidden and his profession was distant from national concerns, the circumstances were unfavourable to foster within him a deep patriotism for the Ukrainian people.

However his expeditions and his popularity among certain nations was so great, that some people considered him theirs. The researcher Ivanchenko, who visited not only New Guinea, but also many other countries connected with Maklay's life, wrote that in Indonesia the people he spoke with all considered Maklay to be an Indonesian, and even assured him that Myklukho-Maklay was born on Java. When Ivanchenko told them that

Maklay hailed from what was once the Russian Empire, they only smiled knowingly.

From archival materials we find that Myklukho-Maklay carried with him books by Goethe, Mickiewicz and Chernyshevsky, as well as Hohol's *Taras Bulba.* Bulba's portrait always stood on his work table.

Utilising little-known Australian publications about Myklukho-Maklay, Pylyp Wakulenko, in his book *In The Jungles Of New Guinea,* emphasises that the room of one of Myklukho-Maklay's sons was graced by a portrait of his father in a colourful embroidered Ukrainian shirt.

Dancers from the Central Province.

BY ROAD TO GARAGASSI AND BONGU

It was Sunday, August 1 when our covered four-wheel-drive vehicle set out for Garagassi and Bongu, the main towns connected with Myklukho-Maklay. Little wonder the coastline was named after him.

Apart from us three Ukrainians, there was a local Papuan school teacher, a German who was part of a newly-arrived group from Madang, and a young Australian. Since they had nothing to do that Sunday, they had decided to come along with us. As well, some eighteen Papuans came along with us for the ride. They included young women, men and children of various ages, including breast-fed infants.

Garagassi was some thirty-five kilometres away. It was a fine sunny day, and by nine o'clock it was quite humid. In anticipation of the hot weather, we were all dressed lightly in shorts and tee-shirts.

At first we moved along good asphalted roads, but about ten kilometres out of Madang the asphalt ended, and there was only a rough graded track left. Forests lined the road. To our right stood the occasional bulldozer and other machinery being used to widen and improve the road. But today was Sunday, and everything stood idle. Here lay fresh piles of gravel, and felled trees still to be removed.

Somewhere nearby, to the left, stretched the seashore. Near Madang we had been able to see it from the mountain along which the road wound, but now we had plunged into forest, and the shore and sea had disappeared from view. The road ahead was often punctuated by shallow creeks and dry stream beds which became raging torrents during the rainy season between January and March.

On the road to Garagassi.

One of the largest rivers which we crossed was very silted up and bore the name Gogol River. Besides, the road along which we were travelling was called Gogol Road, alongside its native name of Yangwam. We were interested in what the name Gogol meant to the natives, for it reminded us so much of the Ukrainian writer Mykola Hohol who wrote in Russian. As the Papuan teacher could not explain the name we assumed that the river had been named by Myklukho-Maklay in honour of Mykola Hohol, with whom his uncle and father were friends, and towards whom Maklay himself was very sympathetic. Maklay liked to give his own names to coves, islands and other landmarks in the places he visited. He had named Bili-Bili Island with his own name – Maklay Island – but the name had not remained.

The wide Gogol River was spanned by a long steel bridge. We even stopped for a few minutes to allow the

photographers to capture it on film.

From here on the track became narrower. The forest and jungle closed in on the road, and we saw only the occasional Papuan hut. In one place we stopped to look at the fruit of the cacao tree, from which cocoa is made.

We passed Male Village, which Maklay had visited, but all we saw of it were several huts; the rest of the village was lost in the jungle greenery. We passed the turnoff for Bongu and headed for Garagassi, where Maklay had first landed and had lived for a year.

At last our vehicle stopped. Through the vegetation ahead we saw the outlines of school buildings. Even though it was Sunday, a group of pupils was milling around the buildings. Meanwhile a raky Papuan had appeared to show us the way to Garagassi Point. Everyone who had come in our vehicle followed him along a winding, narrow track which ran towards the coast. The abrasive kunai grass lashed at our legs as we walked in the shade of tall coconut palms. Coconuts lay everywhere on the ground, some with the soft outer husk bleached grey. In places they lay in piles, possibly for use later on, or simply to clear the ground. Gradually the track veered left. In one place we saw a small hut on stilts not far from the track, but it seemed deserted.

The sea glistened through the trees and the forest became denser. We stopped near a small cove, whose left shore was Garagassi Point. A small stream flowed into the sea here. Clambering over a fallen tree, we proceeded to the right along the cove shore. There was no track here and we moved across untrampled grass.

"Well, this is Garagassi Point," said the Papuan teacher, who was walking alongside our guide. There were tall trees everywhere, mostly palms, and we felt expectantly solemn. This was the place where Myklukho-Maklay lived and worked, facing danger at every step. We stopped some fifteen metres from the tip of the point. The thin black Papuan stopped and pointed to something among the weeds and grass. Coming closer, I noticed a

Through the jungle towards Bongu and Garagassi.

cement slab about a metre high and half a metre wide concreted into the ground, to which a bronze memorial plaque was affixed with an inscription in English and Russian. I took out my diary and copied down the words: *In memory of the landing on this shore in 1871 of the Russian scientist N.N. Miklukho-Maklay from the corvette 'Vityaz'.*

From the sailors and scientists of 'Vityaz', December 1970.

Everyone gathered around to read the inscription, but we Ukrainians were saddened to see no mention made of the Ukrainian background of this man who had done so much for Russia and the world. Well, perhaps there wasn't any room on this small plaque to mention his biographical details, but then in many Russian publications today, the authors fail to mention Myklukho-Maklay's Cossack roots and his love for Ukraine.

Mr Wakulenko and I stood beside the memorial,

flanking our Papuan guide, and had our picture taken. Then Mr Wakulenko captured everything on film.

The shore was steeper here, and trees hung over the water. An impassable wall of bushes and tall weeds grew along the water's edge. I looked around. To the left of the memorial the ground rose steadily and became hills in the distance, hiding Gorimu Village from view. Somewhere close by on our right was Bongu Village. Myklukho-Maklay's hut once stood a short distance from the shore somewhere near this spot. This was where he had spent his first year in New Guinea. With him was a hired servant from Samoa named Boy and an assistant, Ohlsen. The stream we had seen earlier, had been their only source of water. And Boy was buried in the sea here not far from shore after he had died of malaria. 'Conspiration' demanded this: the natives weren't to know that these people could die. This disappearance would be a mystery to them. Six months later, after Maklay had learned the native language, he was asked if he could die. The natives obviously considered him an extra-terrestial being. They were positive that he could stop the rain, set the sea ablaze, and perform various other miracles. They believed he had come from the moon and asked him what life was like there, and whether he had been to the stars.

We wanted to find at least some trace of Maklay's stay here, but there was nothing. The only witnesses to those times were the old trees which stood everywhere in silence, barely swaying in the light sea breeze. Only the crashing of the waves disturbed the serenity. And the sun was already burning fiercely . . .

Lost in thought, I hadn't noticed that nearly all of our group had wandered off somewhere: there was neither Mr Wakulenko, nor Mr Jaskewycz, nor the Papuans. Only the skinny black Papuan guide stood quietly nearby, waiting for me.

"Where is everyone?" I asked him. He understood only through my gestures, and pointed at the path along which we had come here. We marched off briskly. Soon

we heard voices and caught up to the rest of the group near the stream. They had made themselves comfortable on its banks to rest and have lunch. I wasn't very hungry and gave most of my lunch to our guide.

Meanwhile, one of the boys had crawled up a palm tree like a cat and had knocked off some coconuts, which splashed into the water. He came down, collected them all, and gave them to his friends. They all set about the difficult task of ripping off the porous outer husk around the coconuts. Then with sharp-pointed-stones they poked holes in the top of the coconut and began to drink its juice. They gave me a coconut too, for which I gave them some lollies in return.

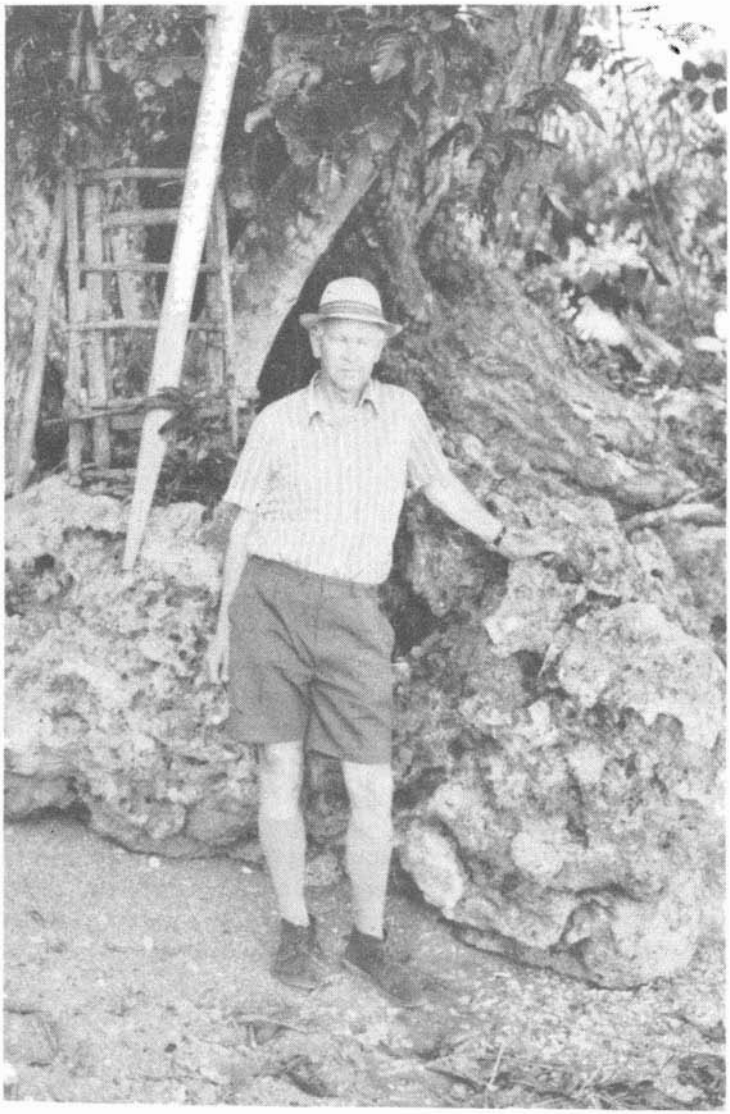
After lunch we returned to the four-wheel-drive vehicle. I felt cheated, having been unable to explore the area properly, missing out on seeing Gorendu and Gorimu, and not being able to establish even the approximate location of Maklay's first hut. At least its appearance had been preserved in sketches made by Myklukho-Maklay in his diary. There the reader can also see the landscapes, native huts, Papuan handcrafts, and countless numbers of his Papuan friends, which he sketched to illustrate his notebook. Among them is a picture of his first and best friend, Tui. Maklay had nursed him back to health, saving him from death.

We headed back, and half a mile further on stopped opposite Bongu Village. The road to the village was wider and well used. Before we reached the village, the teacher pointed to the left of the road, saying there was a cemetery there.

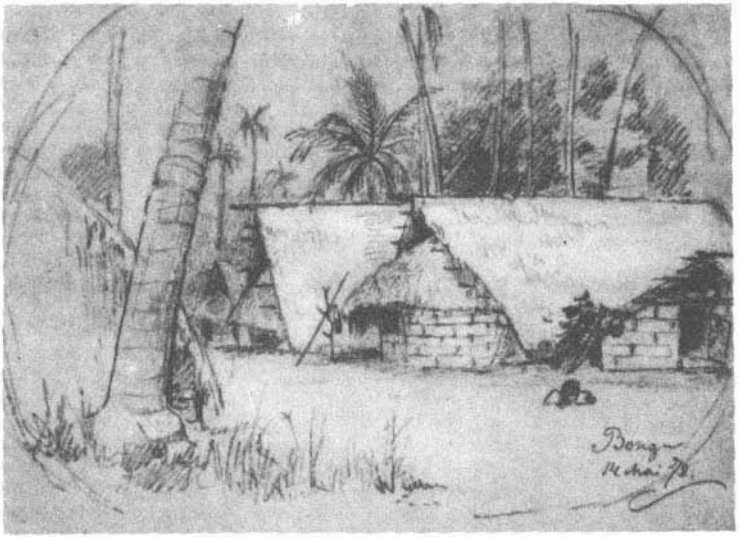
"Where is it?" I asked him.

"Those piles of rock," he said. Here and there among the trees, which reminded me of apple trees, lay mounds of rocks about two metres in diameter and a metre high. But there were no markers to show who was buried where. However even this cemetery looked more decent than the one we had seen at the base of the cliff in the highlands.

We entered Bongu. The village had no streets or



The author at the place where Maklay's hut once stood.



Bongu Village.

fences, only a spacious sandy clearing surrounded by a disarray of huts. The huts weren't as small as the ones we had seen in the remote highland villages, and were built on high stilts, but were without windows here too. The walls were made of grass matting. Several older people and some school-age children approached us. But there weren't many of them, perhaps because it was Sunday and they were probably visiting neighbouring villages.

The Papuans are very hospitable people. In their free time they like to go visiting in groups from village to village, bringing with them gifts of food or fruit, sometimes even a whole suckling pig. They were wealthier here than in the highlands, and could afford to be generous.

Several older people appeared. We exchanged greetings and with the help of the Papuan teacher explained what we were interested in. When we mentioned Maklay, we found they knew a lot about the explorer. In fact in 1971 they had even celebrated the 125th anniversary of his birth in Bongu and the 100th

anniversary of his arrival to these shores. Some missionary had told them about the dates, and together with the surrounding villages they organised celebrations lasting several days, which included dancing, battle re-enactments and a play titled 'The First Meeting With Maklay'. The sailors and scientists from a Soviet ship which had been in the area on a scientific mission, also took part. They had brought with them a government official from Madang, who could speak Pidgin and acted as an interpreter. One of the scientists had learnt several words and phrases in order to greet the Papuans and to deliver a short speech, but his command of the language was not adequate for further conversation.

Myklukho-Maklay's popularity here can be judged by the fact that people from over fifty villages came and took part in the festivities.

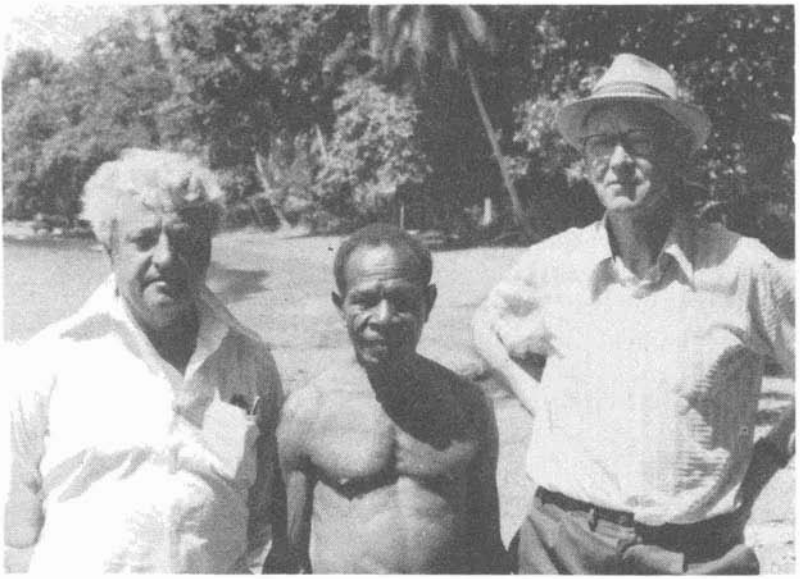
The highlight of our visit was a meeting with two of Tui's great-grandsons. One of them was also called Tui, probably in memory of his great-grandfather. The other, Kamu Tabe, was now a village elder in Bongu.

Kamu Tabe, with whom we spoke longer, was short, thin, barefoot and wore only a pair of dirty shorts. With him we went through the jungle to the beach, where a dozen or so boys were cavorting about in the water.

"Maklay's hut once stood here, under this tree," Kamu Tabe told us. But there was no sign of it now. White ants were quick to destroy wooden structures. In fact, when Maklay had returned to Garagassi a second time in 1876, all that remained of his hut were the bases of the stilts which had supported it.

I looked at the giant ficus which was some two metres in diameter at the base and wondered about the stories it would have been able to tell, as I posed for a photograph on the spot where Maklay's hut once stood. These ficuses, which are grown as house plants back home in Australia, towered over the forest here.

We surveyed the vast expanse of the sea and watched the young Papuan boys splash about noisily in the water.



From left to right: Mr Wakulenko, Kamu Tabe and the author.

"See," I said jokingly to Doctor Jaskewycz, "they're allowed to swim here without any bathing costumes." And I remembered my childhood when we boys swam in the village river, just like these children. And the girls would occasionally come to the opposite bank to swim, also without bathing costumes.

I talked to the children, all of whom spoke English quite well.

"Where's your village," I asked. "All I can see is some twenty houses."

They laughed and said that there were many more houses hidden in the jungle. Their school, which was on the other side of the road, had one hundred and fifty students.

Returning to the village clearing, Mr Wakulenko and I posed for a photograph with Kamu Tabe. Looking at Kamu's thin figure, I asked him how old he was. But he only shrugged his shoulders, and said he didn't know

himself. We worked out that he was about fifty years old, even though he looked far older.

"What is the population of Bongu?" I asked Kamu.

"I'll have to check in my book, I don't remember."

"Well how many houses are there in the village?"

"I've never counted them," Kamu replied, somewhat surprised. But with the help of the teacher and the pupils I learned that Bongu had about 480 residents. The whole village spread in small oases through the forest.

Hiding an ironic smile, Mr Wakulenko asked Kamu:

"I'd like to settle in Bongu. Would you accept me into your village?"

"When will you be coming here?" Kamu asked with interest.

"I'm not quite sure yet, I need to think about it and to consult my wife," he replied evasively.

Kamu told us that he had bought Garagassi Point, where we had just been, from some Germans a while back for 8,500 kina, and had still 1,500 kina to pay off. Though he did not stand out from the other natives, Tui's great-grandson was obviously a wealthy man.

I looked around. The twenty or so huts around the clearing were surrounded by forest. A black pig lay near one of the huts. Two small dogs rushed past us playfully and several chickens were scratching about for food nearby.

I wanted to look inside Kamu's hut to see how he lived, to ask many other questions and to wander about the village, but it was already after two and we were reminded that we had to head back.

On the return journey our vehicle became bogged in a dry streambed. The banks were so steep that our vehicle couldn't get up them. Besides, the driver didn't even have a spade to dig us out. Everyone had to get out and push. It took us at least fifteen minutes before we were on our way again.

The road was wide enough for only one car at a time, and was surrounded on both sides by a wall of

jungle. Occasionally we moved through a green tunnel as the branches of the trees intertwined above us, creating a green twilight.

Moving through these jungles one involuntarily remembers Maklay's accounts in his diary and his brave exploits which greatly shortened his life. He was a brave, fearless man. Being only twenty-five he had set out on a dangerous expedition to New Guinea and lived alone among the savages, despite all the dangers that threatened his life. At first the Papuans sent showers of arrows past him, telling him to go back to where he had come from and threatened to kill him, but he was frightened by nothing. He overcame all with firmness and humaneness. Malaria became a more frightful enemy, confining him and his servants to bed for long periods.

I recalled several episodes from his diary.

On December 13 Myklukho-Maklay's servant, Boy, died of malaria. So the Papuans wouldn't learn of his death, Maklay and Ohlson sewed him into a sack with some rocks and buried him at sea that night. The next day Tui and two other Papuans arrived, inquiring about Boy's health, saying they had brought along a man from Gumbu who could cure him. But Myklukho-Maklay asked them to descend to the grass in front of his hut and decided to divert their attention with an ingenious bit of magic. He took a saucer, wiped it clean, filled it with a bit of methylated spirits and stood it on his veranda. Then he took a glass of water, had a bit to drink and then gave some to one of the Papuans to sample, so they would have no doubt that it was water. They followed Myklukho-Maklay's every move with interest. He poured a little of the water into the saucer and put a match to it. The spirits caught alight, sending the Papuans dashing back in fright. Then Maklay splashed the rest of the spirits onto the steps and the ground, which caught alight too. This had a frightful effect on the natives. They were afraid that Maklay could set the earth and sea ablaze.

They hurried away, but soon returned with a whole

crowd of Papuans. News of this incident quickly spread through the surrounding villages. It was said of Maklay that he could set fire to water and earth, stop rain, fly, etc. And when he showed them his rifle one day and killed a bird with it in one shot, the natives considered Maklay's power and authority unsurpassable.

In six months Maklay had already learnt their language and could converse with natives from Bongu and the neighbouring villages. Everywhere he went he was greeted as a close friend, and he helped cure the natives, giving them knives, axes and mirrors as well. When he arrived here for the third time, he even brought with him a goat, a heifer and a cow, which was an unheard-of sensation for the natives, for they had never seen these animals. They said the cow was a large pig with tusks on its head. All this gave Maklay a lot of prestige among the natives.

One day he set out from Garagassi to Bongu to talk with the people there and to relax in their *buambramri* (a community house). There he met a lot of people from Gorendu. He was greeted affably with shouts of:

"E-a-ba (greetings), Maklay!"

Maklay greeted them. He visited here often and stayed the night. He was always asked to explain various natural phenomena about which the natives were curious. On this occasion, after several conversations, his good friend Saul came up to him and gently placing his hand on the European's shoulder, asked:

"Tell me, Maklay, how many wives, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren have you got?"

Maklay was very surprised at such a question and replied:

"What wives? Come to your senses, Saul!"

Saul shuffled from foot to foot, and then added:

"Up there, on the moon . . . "

"I can't understand what's gotten into your head, Saul? You can see for yourself that I have no wives or children."

Saul thought in disappointment that Maklay did not want to answer him. A short while later he asked again:

"Tell me, Maklay, can you die?"

All the Papuans stopped chewing on their betel nut and intently awaited his answer.

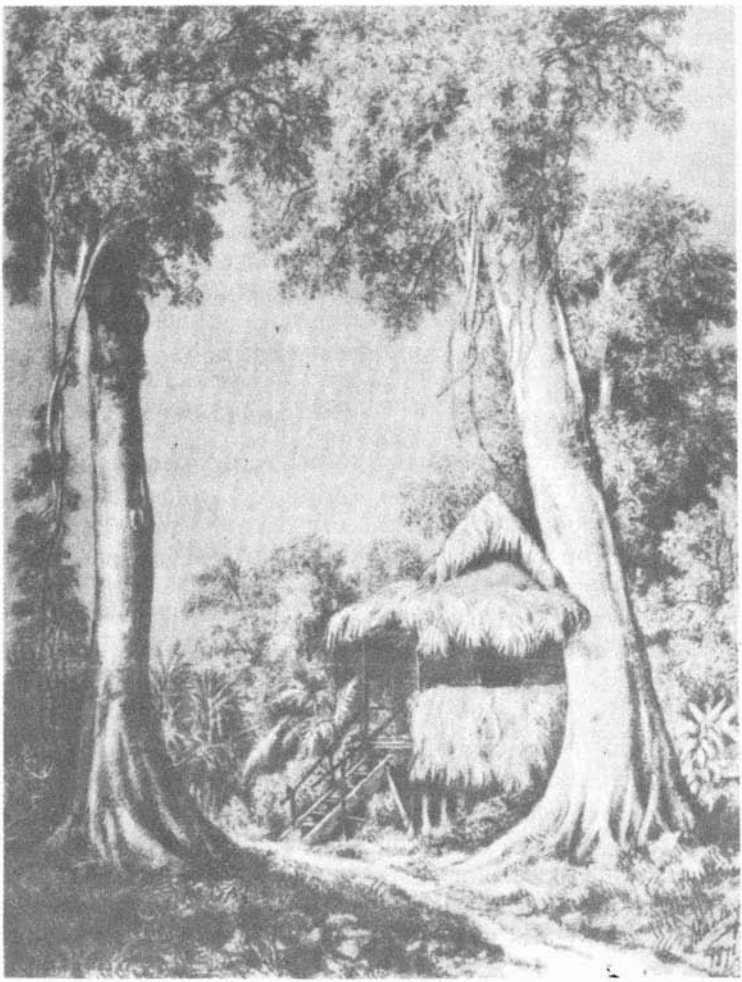
The situation was charged. The Papuans had grown used to hearing only the truth from Maklay. By telling them now that he could die, when only several days previously he had forbade them to make war against a nearby highland village, they would think he was just a mere mortal like them. But he didn't want to tell them that he was immortal, in case something happened and he was suddenly proved to be a liar. Maklay paced up and down the *buambramri* to win time, then paused, took a strong spear from the wall and handed it to Saul.

"We'll see whether Maklay can die," he said calmly to Saul.

Then he took several steps back and took off his hat so that it wouldn't shade his face. All had to see that he was not joking. The Papuans fixed their gazes on Maklay. Saul stood motionless for a moment, without raising his spear, and then two Papuans raced up to Myklukho-Maklay together with Saul, saying:

"Aren! Aren!" Which meant "No! No!'.

An incident happened in another village. Maklay learned from Tui that two Papuans were plotting to kill him so that they could have his food and possessions. Hearing this, Maklay went to the village and called the people together. But the two plotters did not appear. He then asked that they be summoned there too. When they appeared, Maklay announced to the natives that two of their villagers were plotting to kill him. He said he was going to fall asleep under a nearby tree, so the willing men could come and kill him. When Myklukho-Maklay awoke, the two natives who had wanted to kill him approached him with presents of coconuts and suckling pig. And since Maklay couldn't have carried everything back alone, they accompanied him back,



Myklukho-Maklay's hut in Garagassi (Maklay's sketch).

bearing their gifts to his hut.

A contemporary Soviet scientist, Oleksander Ivanchenko, wrote in his works of the high respect Myklukho-Maklay enjoyed among the natives and the great influence he had on them. In many of the closer villages which he visited, special huts called *Maklay-tal* were built where he could stay when in the village. Because of his efforts, wars between enemy villages ceased in these areas. Under pressure from Maklay such savage customs as arranged child marriages were modified, whereby the girl could change her chosen husband for someone she loved during the wedding ceremony.

Taking into account his valuable scientific work on various aspects of Papuan life, and in the fields of anthropology and botany, his influence on native life and his appeals for aid for the populace of New Guinea to the Australian government, Myklukho-Maklay can be placed alongside the great explorers of uncharted lands such as Amundsen, Amerigo Vespucci, Livingstone, Scott, Captain Cook and others. For apart from showing exemplary humanity, he was the author of some 160 scientific works and a splendid diary.

Returning to St. Petersburg in Russia, Maklay brought with him thirty chests full of different collections. He was despondent when the Academy of Sciences wouldn't even accept his works and collections. Only the personal intervention of Tsar Alexander III forced them to accept the chests.

Myklukho-Maklay had also wanted to help Russia by promoting the idea of setting up a Russian colony in New Guinea, and placed an advertisement in the papers. Over two thousand willing emigrants responded. Discussions about the feasibility of his idea began, but the reactionary press immediately attacked him, hurling gibes, insults and objections at him. Caricatures and epigrams aimed at him appeared in the press, and the slanderers wrote that Myklukho-Maklay was no scientist, that he was a rebel against government authority. In part this may have been

due to the fact that most of those wishing to emigrate to New Guinea were people dissatisfied with tsarist government politics.

The most ardent attacks against him came from *Novoye Vremya,* the satirical journals *Strekoza, Budylnyk, Shut* and others. The Papuans were drawn as monkeys, and they wrote of Myklukho-Maklay: 'We must be wary of the local philanthropists who love and value only those people who are well roasted.' *Strekoza* wrote: 'A new paradise has been opened up in New Guinea. A superb climate, bananas, maize, tarantulas, Papuans, snakes and free sea bathing await you there . . . ' And the paper *Novoye Vremya,* whose editor at the time was the infamous Suvorin, slung mud at Myklukho-Maklay too, printing articles with such headlines as 'Papuan Maklandia', 'Swindling the Papuans', 'Appeal From the Papuan King Maklay the First'. An article in the same paper carried threats as well: 'Maklay should remember the law concerning criminal responsibility for inciting Russian subjects to emigrate', and 'To make Myklukho-Maklay eminent, a man who has made no discoveries nor enriched any branch of science, is tantamount to needlessly bothering the public'.

But there were quite a few papers and magazines which defended Maklay. Besides, these were times of expansionism, the occupation of foreign lands, a policy being actively pursued by England, Spain, Portugal, France and Germany. The famous Russian writer Lev Tolstoy expressed great moral support for Maklay in his letters. Having read excerpts from Maklay's diary, he was enthused not so much by the idea of a Russian colony in New Guinea, as by Maklay's activities among the Papuans, his scientific work and humane attitudes. Lev Tolstoy wrote to Maklay:

' . . . Your activities are touching and fascinating, for as far as I know you are the first who has proven by experience that people are the same friendly beings everywhere, and in dealings with them we can and must

use goodwill and truth in place of cannons and vodka. And you have proved this by a truly courageous feat, which is attempted so rarely in our society, that society cannot even grasp its significance.'

This gave the explorer a big boost, and despite his frail health, he continued to work on his diary at Tolstoy's insistence. And when his illness waned for a while, he gave public lectures which were always packed out.

Even though the discussion about the possibility of a Russian colony did not abate and the numbers of willing emigrants had surpassed two thousand, Russia was too weak to undertake such a venture, especially if it required armed defense against rivals. Therefore in December 1886 an Extraordinary Committee issued the following communique: 'The dispatch of a Russian military vessel for the securement of one or several islands in the Pacific Ocean with the aim of establishing a Russian colony there is not desirable at this point in time, since the raising of the flag there would inevitably draw the government into taking a whole course of actions which would be very expensive and would bring no substantial benefits'. Tsar Alexander III confirmed the committee's decision with his conclusion: 'I consider this matter to be closed. Myklukho-Maklay is to be refused permission.'

An end was thus put to the idea of a Russian colony in New Guinea. The decision reflected badly on Maklay's health. The fact that even the Academy of Sciences at first refused to accept his collections, which were of enormous scientific value, attested to the primitivism of Russia's scientific circles of the time and their reactionary orientation, once more emphasising the difficult circumstances under which Myklukho-Maklay had to work. The bitter antagonism of the scientific community as well as his recurring malaria brought Myklukho-Maklay to his grave at forty-two years of age. Even his superb diary *Among the Savages of New Guinea* was not published until after his death.

* * *

In Ivan Shapoval's book *In Search of Treasure* we learn that the Ukrainian researcher of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, Dmytro Yavornytsky, was acquainted with Myklukho-Maklay too. Yavornytsky was an ardent researcher, having excavated over a thousand Cossack graves, and collected over seventy-five thousand Cossack artifacts in Dnipropetrovsk Province. Seeking out these artifacts and clambering about the Dnipro Rapids, he fell many a time and broke several ribs. One time a burial mound he was excavating caved in on him, and he was saved only by the quick action of the villagers assisting him. However for some time afterwards he had to go about on walking-sticks. Myklukho-Maklay must have heard a lot about Yavornytsky, who was the author of *A History of the Zaporozhian Sich* and many articles on history and folklore. The two men met in 1877 in St. Petersburg. Maklay had just returned from his second trip to New Guinea. The famous artist Ilya Repin had just finished his painting *Zaporozhian Cossacks Writing a Letter to the Turkish Sultan,* for which Dmytro Yavornytsky had posed as the scribe. Yavornytsky had come to Repin's place to see the finished picture, and there chanced on Myklukho-Maklay, to whom the host immediately introduced him.

'The conversation continued late into the night,' Shapoval recounts. 'Yavornytsky was very interested in Maklay's life, his activities and expeditions. Myklukho-Maklay eagerly told him about his travels to the islands in the Pacific Ocean to study the Papuan race, told of his stay in New Guinea . . .

'Myklukho-Maklay talked with a guttural voice, probably a result of the long time spent in foreign lands . . . He sat on the sofa, feet tucked under him in Turkish fashion.'

Later Yavornytsky visited the home of Myklukho-Maklay, who was staying with his family on Galernaya Street in St. Petersburg. Maklay was sick at the time, complaining about his lungs, rheumatism and neuralgia. He attempted to overcome his illnesses and continued to

work on the notes he had made during his trip. The two men were drawn together not only because both were Ukrainian, but because of common interests. Yavornytsky had seen many of the native artifacts Myklukho-Maklay had collected on his expeditions, and had wanted to obtain some pieces for his museum, but because of the explorer's ill health, dared not ask.

After Myklukho-Maklay died in April, 1888, Professor Yavornytsky visited the deceased explorer's widow, who made him a present of some artifacts from the rare collection. Mostly these were weapons: shields made of tortoise shell, crocodile skin and elephant ear, spears, arrows, two quivers made of crocodile heads and bows whose handles were covered in leather. These items are still on display at the Dnipropetrovsk Historical Museum.

Some people might say that I am glorifying a man who has given his energy and knowledge to Tsarist Russia, Ukraine's oppressor. But looking at this question objectively we can see that the circumstances of Myklukho-Maklay's upbringing did not nurture in him a patriotism towards Ukraine. From his early years he had to live in Russia and abroad, and yet despite all this we know from other people's reminiscences that he knew the Ukrainian language and loved Ukraine, defending its rights in his articles. And this was at a time when the tsarist government had announced that Ukraine and the Ukrainian language had 'never existed, didn't exist, and never would exist'. Besides, his area of activity was science, a far cry from politics.

We need only look at the number of young scientists and even older people from the Ukrainian migrant communities in the West, who having received a well-paid job and made a good career for themselves, forget about Ukraine, neglect their language and assimilate into the foreign environment without contributing in any way towards the Ukrainian community. And for some reason we do not censure them.

Talking with Mr Wakulenko, who was sitting beside

Margaret Myklukho-Maklay with son Vladimir.

me, I once again expressed regret at having 'galloped through the Europes' so to speak, without even stopping at any of the villages, without properly exploring the district. I had wanted this 'epopee" of ours to finish with something interesting, a sensational incident, like every good adventure story.

"You're always looking for sensations," my interlocutor said good-naturedly, "but where can one find them here? We're lucky that we've at least achieved our planned goal."

"Perhaps I expressed myself badly," I said. "I meant an interesting episode. As for the word 'sensation', it can be taken many ways. In the journalistic world when a dog bites a man, it is no sensation, but when a man bites a dog – now that's a real sensation!"

"A good sensation!" my companion laughed aloud.

The next day we explored the outskirts of Madang, went to the market, visited many shops, and Doctor Jaskewycz and I even had our photograph taken in the company of a smiling Papuan mother and her child. We were driven around the town by the same young Papuan,

Johnny. We even visited a catholic college attended by sixty Papuan students. The students were all on vacation when we arrived. Doctor Jaskewycz visited the college prorector, Father Kuszniryk, and had an interesting conversation with him. The priest told him of his institution's work, and about the students' attitude to study. The father complained that the students weren't very conscientious. 'They seem to be studying here only to get ahead in life, rather than because of any calling or any desire to serve the Church and God,' he had said.

The institution was in fact a seminary which consisted of two levels. In the end the father had said jokingly:

'God knows how these students will turn out, or maybe even He doesn't . . . '

While Doctor Jaskewycz was with the prorector, Mr Wakulenko photographed the interesting native flowers growing on the seminary grounds, and I told the young Papuan workers mowing the lawns about our recent trip to Garagassi, about Myklukho-Maklay and his adventures.

That evening, after we had returned to our rooms from the hotel dining-room, buying more souvenirs from the natives outside, Mr Wakulenko said sadly:

"Eh, I like Madang! I'd love to come here and stay until my death. But life and circumstance make slaves of us. One must sit in the nest one has feathered."

FAREWELL, PAPUA NEW GUINEA!

Preparing for our departure, we said our goodbyes to the other members of our tourist group who had just returned from the Sepik district.

The next morning after breakfast I shook hands with the 'black ballerinas' who had served us delicious meals for almost four days and at a quarter to eight we were taken to the airport for our flight to Port Moresby, and from there to Australia. All the seats in the twin-engined aircraft were taken, and one passenger was even sitting in the aisle near the pilot's cabin on an extra chair. This wasn't surprising, for it was the start of the tourist season; August and September were the most popular months with foreign tourists. The Papuan air-hostesses with pretty chocolate-coloured faces handed out cups of orange juice.

In Port Moresby we were picked up from the airport by Mr Prestashevsky's wife. Soon the man himself arrived home from work and joined us. Over a snack we told them of our trip around New Guinea, about all the strange sights we had seen and the striking contrast in the Papuan lifestyle, where people in the remote highlands continued to live as they had lived for thousands of years.

During our conversation I remembered the words of our guide, Gary, who had told us that the last known case of cannibalism had been in 1950 in the Chimbu Province. I asked Mr Prestashevsky if this was true. He smiled bitterly and said:

"Nineteen-fifty, my foot . . . ' There was a case in a village near Port Moresby only recently, where a man had died. Before his funeral had been organised, natives from a neighbouring village stole off with his body, roasted it and ate it."

At Madang market, a Papuan woman flanked by Dr Jaskewycz on the left and the author on the right.

We were all amazed that such incidents still occurred. Even in Maklay's time such things happened infrequently. Most often it was a slain enemy chief who was roasted and eaten . . .

"What made them do such a thing?" Doctor Jaskewycz asked.

"It's difficult to say," Mr Prestashevsky replied. "There haven't been any incidents such as this for a long time. While on the one hand these are throwbacks from the past which still hang over the older people, many of the villagers continue to live in privation. There are bananas, coconuts, taro and sweet potato, but there is little meat and a lack of education."

"What happened to those responsible?" I asked.

"Well they carried out some investigations, someone was imprisoned for several years, and that was that . . . "

Once again I pictured the small highland grass huts

without windows and furniture, apart from some tin cans. I had seen no beds nor pillows in the huts either. Nor did the villages have clubhouses, libraries or cinemas.

We had half an hour left till our departure and had to hurry to the airport. Mr Prestashevsky, whom I had known from his days in Melbourne, made me a present of Myklukho-Maklay's diary which had been published in English in New Guinea in 1975.

At the airport souvenir shop I bought a few more presents and we said our farewells to our hospitable hosts, who said they would be moving to Melbourne in December.

We checked in our tickets and passed through customs. Our baggage was hardly checked, but seeing my toy bow and arrows they took them away, saying I would get them back on Australian soil in Brisbane, for they were a weapon. But my pocket-knife, which they also saw, was allowed through.

The next day in Sydney I hurried to the library and obtained four volumes of Myklukho-Maklay's archival materials. Here were secret letters to the Australian government and reports to the St. Petersburg Geographical Society which had sent him to New Guinea and other countries, and complaints to various governors about the injustices inflicted by many of the white missionaries against the Papuans. He vehemently demanded a ban on the shipping of Papuans to the canefields of Australia and for other hard labour, where many died from cruel treatment at the hands of the white plantation owners.

Reading these documents I realised what an extraordinary man Myklukho-Maklay was: he was not only a brave scientist and explorer, but also a humane man, a defender of the Papuans. This placed him above a whole host of other explorers who had opened up new lands and yet were unable or not prepared to do as much for human rights as Myklukho-Maklay. Therefore we should popularise his name amongst the nations of the world, to show them his achievements and their significance.

There have been countless eminent Ukrainians who have been taken to Russia by force or lured there by promises of good money and fame, whose achievements have fed the glory of Tsarist Russia. Among them were the composer Bortniansky, the scientist Vernadsky, the composer and singer Maksym Berezovsky, the writer Gogol, the inventor of the first rockets in Russia, Zasiadko, actor and singer Ivan Alchevsky, Metropolitan Dmytro Tuptalo and many others. And among them too was Myklukho-Maklay.

* * *

And here I was finally on the train, travelling home from Sydney to Melbourne. The monotonous flat Australian countryside sailed past my window: flocks of sheep and cattle were speckled across fields bounded by wire fences. Small dams gouged into the slopes flashed past like mirrors.

However I still kept seeing before me the spectacular views of Papua New Guinea: the steep mountains, deep ravines, squalid villages, the lively eyes of the curious children who flitted around us, the half-naked figures of men and women, the winding roads along which our bus laboured and the colourful native dances.

I felt happy and overjoyed that I had been able to fulfil a long-standing dream, that I had seen that corner of Papua New Guinea which the scientist Myklukho-Maklay had visited over a century earlier.

Newport
August – December, 1976