PRAISE THE LORD AND PASS THE AMMUNITION
Criminal Group Surrender in Papua New Guinea

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Criminal Group Surrender in Papua New Guinea

by
Sinclair Dinnen

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INTRODUCTION

The mass surrender of self-proclaimed criminal youth groups dates back, at least, to the early 1980s (Giddings 1986). In recent years, it has become an increasingly common phenomenon in many parts of Papua New Guinea. The larger surrenders tend to be elaborate, ceremonial affairs, and are usually the outcome of intensive preliminary negotiations. These negotiations often involve a brokering party, which is typically a church group or community organisation, and occasionally the police, as in the following case study. Some church groups have adopted a distinctly entrepreneurial role in contacting criminal groups and persuading them to surrender. Also, such mass surrenders are likely to be accompanied by the handing over of large quantities of firearms, ammunition, and other implements of crime. A review of local newspaper reports over the past few years indicates the prevalence of this practice, and the variations in size of the groups and quantities of commodities surrendered:

- four youths with ammunition at Rabaul, East New Britain Province (Post-Courier, Wednesday, 4 September 1991, p.4);
- 400 youths from the Kokoda district, Oro Province, with homemade guns (Times of Papua New Guinea, Thursday, 3 September 1992, p.5);
- 70 youths with homemade weapons at Badili, National Capital District (Post-Courier, Monday, 19 October 1992, p.3);
- 100 youths with weapons in Mendi, Southern Highlands Province (Post-Courier, Monday, 14 December 1992, p.3);
- 20 youths from Lae, Morobe Province, with weapons including a Japanese made automatic pistol and assorted homemade guns and ammunition (Post-Courier, Monday, 15 February 1993, p.4);
- 35 youths in Kimbe, West New Britain Province (Post-Courier, Monday, 8 March 1993, p.17);
- six youths with half a kilogram of marijuana at Kagua, Southern Highlands Province (Post-Courier, Monday, 21 June 1993, p.4);
- 17 youths with weapons and marijuana from the SinaSina district of Simbu Province (Times of Papua New Guinea, Thursday, 16 September 1993, p.5);
- 17 youths with firearms and ammunition in Popondetta, Oro Province (Post-Courier, Monday, 20 September 1993, p.4);
- 100 youths with homemade weapons in the Toma area, East New Britain Province (Post-Courier, Friday, 24 September 1993, p.3);
- 65 youths with firearms in Vunaidir, East New Britain Province (Post-Courier, Thursday, 28 October 1993, p.15);
- 34 youths in South Lavongai, New Ireland Province (Post-Courier, Friday, 10 December 1993, p.4);
- 45 youths in Mendi, Southern Highlands Province (Post-Courier, Monday, 3 October 1994, p.3);

Mass surrenders raise a number of interesting questions. In the first place, what motivates groups to pursue this course of action? The stereotype of ‘raskol’
2 Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition

gangs\(^1\), conveyed in the media and elsewhere, is of groups of violent, well-organised criminals who are capable of operating with minimal chances of apprehension or detection. That being the case, what induces such groups to voluntarily give themselves up to the authorities and risk the legal and other recriminations which might follow?

The ceremonial character of the mass surrender, including the handing over of criminal implements, resembles aspects of customary exchanges, and raises other issues relating to continuities in long-standing social traditions and their interaction with more recently introduced institutions. Supplementary questions concern the role and motivations of the brokering parties, as well as the longer-term outcome for the surrendering group.

Mass surrender also constitutes an important political forum for dialogue and negotiation between socially marginalised youth groups and the State, and provides important insights into how rascal groups perceive themselves and other significant actors in the wider society. Like the less frequently held 'gang retreat', where rascal leaders meet with politicians and other leaders from 'respectable society',\(^2\) the mass surrender provides an opportunity for criminal youth to express their grievances and negotiate directly with those in positions of authority and power. The surrender involves expressions of contrition for past crimes, and commitment to reform, which is often symbolised in religious conversions. At the same time, they are usually conditional upon the provision of cash and other resources required for chosen reform plans. This conditionality is underwritten by veiled threats of resumption of criminal violence should these conditions not be met. In this respect, the threat of a return to violence remains the surrendering groups' most potent bargaining device in negotiations with authorities.

The significant role of church groups in brokering such surrenders is indicative of their influential role in the civil society of Papua New Guinea and their relatively autonomous and mediating position between the State and marginal social groups. Their perceived independence vests them with a high degree of legitimacy amongst all parties concerned. The surrender constitutes one of an extremely limited number of strategies available to youth groups to legally access desired resources — almost invariably cash. Its success in diverting youth away from crime ultimately depends on accessing resources. In this

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1 The term 'raskoi' (Melanesian Pidgin) or 'rascal' (English) is commonly used to describe a member of a juvenile criminal gang. 'Rascalism' refers to the phenomenon of gang crime, in general.

2 Two major 'gang retreats' have been held in the Port Moresby area over the last decade. The first was held at the Goldie River Army Barracks outside the city, in April 1985. Approximately 75 gang leaders and members attended the five-day retreat and held discussions with a number of national political figures including the Governor-General, Deputy Prime Minister, and several Cabinet Ministers, as well as with prominent business and community leaders (Houghton 1985). The second occurred at Mirigeda in the National Capital District in July 1991, and was reportedly attended by some 500 youths who met with the Prime Minister and a number of his Cabinet colleagues (Post-Courier, Monday, 8 July 1991, pp.1 and 3).
respect, the motivational factors underlying both surrender and acquisitive crime are essentially the same — they constitute different means to the same ends.

The following case study documents one such surrender which I have been able to follow closely through contacts with the main participants. These include the youth leader who emerged as the principal spokesperson for the surrendering group, and who subsequently became the president of the registered youth association. I also met the criminal leaders who were imprisoned at the time of the surrender, and were initially opposed to it taking place. Discussions were also held with members of the Police Community Relations Directorate which played a key role in brokering this particular surrender. The progress of the group is narrated, from the time of the surrender in October 1992 to the end of 1994.

It is, of course, always difficult to generalise in the diverse Papua New Guinean social context, and certain aspects of this case — notably the brokering role of the police — differ from others reported. Nevertheless, the case study may reveal some of the broad social dynamics underlying the mass surrender phenomenon and, in the process, shed some light on the questions raised earlier. The discussion that follows the case study deals with these broader issues.
FROM GGB-MAFIA TO METROPOLITAN YOUTH LEAGUE AND BEYOND

In October 1992, the Papua New Guinea Post-Courier reported the surrender of 70 members of the GGB-Mafia gang at a ceremony held at Badili Police Station, in Port Moresby. Gang members were reported to be tired of being hunted by the police and to have decided to give up their criminal activities for 'normal' lives. They claimed that many of their associates had been shot dead by police over the previous two decades.

A spokesperson announced the formation of a new youth group — the Metropolitan Youth League (MYL), that would seek government recognition and funding assistance (Post-Courier, Monday, 19 October 1992, p.3).

The young men involved in this surrender were mainly of Goilala ethnic descent and lived in the Rabia Gini settlement, popularly known as Two-Mile Hill. This is a densely packed urban settlement clinging precariously to the slopes of the hill, under the shadow of one of Port Moresby's tallest landmarks and most luxurious residential blocks, the Pacific View building. The visual contrast between Pacific View and the settlement over which it towers is striking.

Originally settled in the late 1950s by small groups of migrants, the settlement started growing at a significant rate in the 1960s (Norwood 1984:49). It remains one of the most neglected of the city’s inner settlements in terms of infrastructure and services. Although there are several water tanks, raw sewage flows down the streams cutting across the residential area and, as yet, there is no established electricity supply.

The settlement comprises groups of clustered dwellings inhabited by people from the same areas of origin. Just over 30 percent of the estimated 3,000 inhabitants are from the mountainous and undeveloped Goilala region of Central Province. Other residents come from Kerema (Gulf Province), Daru (Western Province), Finschhafen (Morobe Province), Simbu Province, Eastern Highlands Province, and Southern Highlands Province (Department of Village Services and Provincial Affairs 1993). The ethnic composition of the larger community is reflected in the resident youth groups which comprise a mixture of mainly Goilala, Kerema, and Simbu youth.

The GGB-Mafia is a large and indeterminate criminal association consisting of numerous relatively autonomous subgroups operating in various parts of the National Capital District, as well as in some other major urban centres. The name GGB stands for the Gaile Goilala Boys, or GoiGai Boys as the group is sometimes known. Whereas Goilala youth appear to have been the main ethnic constituency during its formative period, the current array of subgroups exhibits the multi-ethnic composition shared by most contemporary urban criminal groups in Papua New Guinea (Harris 1988:vi). According to informants, the Goilala involvement can be dated back to the GoiPex gang in the late 1960s, with

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3 The names of all the informants involved in the actual surrender have been changed.
From GGB-Mafia to MYL

a change of name to G105 in the mid-1970s, before becoming the GGB-Mafia in the 1980s. Both Goltex and G105 were Goilala groups.

Operational alliances subsequently forged with criminal groups in the Gaire area, to the south of Port Moresby are reflected in the current name. The Mafia is another large association that evolved through an earlier process of consolidation involving a number of groups centred around the Hohola suburb in Port Moresby (Harris 1988). By the late 1980s, the Mafia had affiliated subgroups in many parts of the city, including the Badili area at the foot of the Two-Mile Hill, as well as in other towns. After the October surrender, GGB leaders publicly claimed that the GGB-Mafia had up to 800 members in Port Moresby alone, with more in other urban centres (Post-Courier, Wednesday, 11 November 1992, p.6). However, it is not possible to estimate numbers with any degree of accuracy. Lack of a clear definition of membership, shifting alliances, and the practice of claiming simultaneous 'membership' of different groups, amongst other things, render precise quantification impossible.

Those involved in this particular surrender were mainly young men in their mid-teens to early twenties who had been born in the city or had spent most of their formative years there. In many cases, parents had moved to Port Moresby from relatively undeveloped rural villages in search of work and a better quality of life. Few of the youths who were interviewed mentioned any desire to return to the village, and most expressed a strong empathy with their residential community and the urban environment, in general. While ethnic identities remained strong6, the shared experience of growing up in the city had helped forge strong social relations between those youth from different ethnic backgrounds.

Individual profiles suggested a typical background of interrupted formal education, a drift into minor crime at a comparatively early age, occasional stints of unskilled employment, and an incremental involvement in group crime. Peter, a twenty-two year old involved in the surrender and formation of the MYL, is representative. Born in Goilala, he was brought to Port Moresby by his parents at the age of four. His father was employed as a labourer with the Department of Lands, and the family lived at Four-Mile. Upon retrenchment, his father invested his savings in a small plot at Two-Mile in the proximity of

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4 This account differs from that contained in Harris' (1988) report of the evolution of rascal gangs in Port Moresby.

5 The concept of the 'gang' which is now widely used in reference to the organisation of youth crime in Papua New Guinea does not sit particularly well within the Papua New Guinean context. Empirical evidence suggests that 'raskol' groups are much looser and more fluid associations than implied by the gang label (see Goddard 1992).

6 This is particularly so amongst Goilala youth whose villages are largely accessible by road from Port Moresby. This strong ethnic identity is also reinforced by the widely held perception amongst Goilala migrants that they are systematically discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity.
relatives and wantoks\textsuperscript{7} from home. Peter had been back to his father’s village on several occasions for feasts and other ceremonial events, but expressed no interest in permanently returning to village life. He attended community school at Badili and dropped out in Grade 8.

By that time, he was stealing from stores, snatching bags, and engaging in other acts of petty theft. His drift into crime occurred in the company of older boys, and his involvement escalated to more organised and serious activities, including housebreaking and car theft, by his late teens. Although he had never been convicted by a court, he had spent several short periods in remand in Bomana Gaol. Like many of those youths involved in criminal groups, Peter had held a number of unskilled positions, working in stores, and as a security guard. These bouts of employment were invariably short-lived, with Peter being dismissed for poor time-keeping or voluntarily leaving because of the monotonous and low-paid character of the work. When he was working, his small pay packet had been invariably “eaten-up” by family and wantoks at Two-Mile, leaving him with little for himself.

Several youths claimed more serious criminal involvement and regularly boasted high criminal status. However, there was scant evidence to suggest that any of them had the experience or commitment associated with hard-core criminals. Undoubtedly, this was largely a consequence of their youth and will be returned to later. Jimmy, the spokesperson for the group, was a 22-year old Goilala youth. He was born in Port Moresby after his parents left home (the Upper Kunimaipa area of Goilala) in search of work. His father worked with the National Housing Corporation and initially lived in a Housing Corporation compound in Badili. The family went back to Goilala when Jimmy was about eight years old and he attended a local mission school before going to high school to complete Grades 7 to 10. He returned to the city at the age of about 16 and stayed with wantoks at the Administrative College. After a couple of years he moved back to Two-Mile where his mother, four brothers and two sisters lived, after returning from Goilala. His father remained in the village.

Jimmy claimed to have spent a great deal of time looking for employment. He did get a temporary job as a security guard but was laid off when the expatriate company owner left the country. Like many of his ethnic peers, he believed that discrimination against Goilalas was pervasive and that this was a major obstacle in the way of securing employment. Jimmy became involved in a range of acquisitive crimes, including housebreaking and robbery, and built up his own personal following among Goilala youth living at Two-Mile. These activities, he explained, were the only way he could support his dependent mother and younger siblings.

Jimmy’s following comprised younger Kunimaipa youth, as well as some non-Goilala associates from Two-Mile. While his group operated fairly

\textsuperscript{7} The term ‘wantok’ in Melanesian Pidgin literally means someone who speaks the same language (that is, one talk), but it is commonly used to describe the relations of social obligation binding relatives, tribesmen, and clansmen, as well as much looser forms of association (see Monsell-Davis 1993).
independently, he acknowledged the standing of more experienced criminal leaders from the same area. At the time of the surrender, most of these older youth were in prison, serving sentences for past crimes. They included the alleged principal leader or 'father' of the GGB and several other senior and experienced leaders.9 The previous 'father' had been shot dead by police at Badili in July 199110 — a fate allegedly shared by his immediate predecessor in the mid-1980s. At the surrender ceremony in October, group representatives claimed some 32 of their members had been killed by the police in the 20 or so years since the formation of the original group. In fact, this was one of the official reasons given for their decision to surrender.11

Jimmy had been trying to secure funds to start a group project for some time, prior to the surrender. In the course of these attempts, he met Arthur, who was a senior expatriate contract police officer. Arthur headed the Police Community Relations Directorate and was actively involved in expanding the scope of its operations. This initiative involved the development of community auxiliary policing which had commenced in selected parts of the National Capital District in 1991. Auxiliary policing entailed the appointment of selected settlement and village residents as special constables to work in their own communities, under the supervision of the regular police. By the middle of 1992, considerable success was being claimed for the pilot projects in the National Capital District with an apparently dramatic drop in local crime rates (Dinnen 1993a). Arthur was engaged in disseminating this success and seeking government (and other) funds for further development.

From the police point of view, the surrender of a major urban gang presented an ideal and, in Arthur's case, timely public relations opportunity. Arthur encouraged Jimmy to get the group to give itself up and register as a youth group with the city authority — the National Capital District Commission (NCDC). He also proposed calling the new group the Metropolitan Youth

8 The overall leader of the group, often referred to as the 'father' in English, is called 'apai' in the Kuriama, but were also fluent in Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu, and most could speak some English.

9 These leaders, whom Harris calls 'lieutenants' (Harris 1988:27), are often referred to as 'kakana' by Port Moresby youth. 'Kakana' is a term of respect used to refer to the elder brother of a man, or a woman's elder sister, in Hiri Motu, which is the language spoken by people from Central Province.

10 In July 1991, a local newspaper reported the fatal shooting by Port Moresby police of a 32-year-old male from Tapini, Central Province. The victim was known to police as a hard-core criminal with a history of armed robberies and multiple escapes from prison and was on the run after escaping from Bulimo Jail at the time of the shooting (Post-Courier, Wednesday, 17 July 1991, p.4). Considerable controversy followed an ABC Radio Background Briefing Report, broadcast on Sunday 25 October 1992, which revealed that the deceased had, in fact, been shot by an Australian police adviser attached to the AIDAB Police Support Project.

11 In this context, a number of the youth involved stated (and repeated to me by many other urban youth), that they believed the police had a 'hit-list' of hard-core criminals and were deliberately eliminating them whenever the opportunity arose.
League. The registered group would be able to compete with other community organisations for cleaning contracts and could also apply to government agencies and international donors for project assistance. In the following weeks, Arthur and his officers spent a great deal of time encouraging and assisting Jimmy, and it is clear that they played a key role in the brokering of this particular surrender. Jimmy's original plan had been to register his followers as a youth group but he had never seriously contemplated surrender. The change in plan was, nonetheless, welcomed as a practical way of securing funds. Jimmy believed this strategy was likely to benefit from the active support of a senior and respected expatriate police officer.

Rumours of the impending surrender circulated rapidly, and Jimmy soon received threatening notes from imprisoned GGB leaders declaring their opposition to the proposal, and anger at his lack of consultation. These individuals were mostly Goilalas, aged in their late twenties, with a long history of criminal involvement. Their opposition was later explained in terms of their deeply ingrained suspicion towards the police. Relations between police and urban youth in Papua New Guinea, criminal and otherwise, has long been characterised by mutual suspicion and conflict. Policing has been routinely experienced by this constituency as discriminatory and repressive. Likewise, previous experience of politicians and government agencies has generated little faith in the value of official pledges of assistance.

Anger was also directed at Jimmy's perceived attempt to represent himself as a leader of the GGB-Mafia. One of these older leaders, Stephen, later described Jimmy as 'just a school kid' intent on building his name. Whereas Jimmy had only intended to mobilise his own immediate followers, it was widely believed at the time that he was trying to speak on behalf of the larger entity. Subsequent newspaper reports reinforced this misperception by identifying the surrendering group as the GGB-Mafia, and naming Jimmy as one of its leaders.

Arthur and Jimmy visited the leaders in prison to clarify some of the misunderstanding and argue their case for proceeding with the surrender. Although later denied by Arthur, Stephen claimed that a number of specific 'promises' were made. These allegedly included the prospect of establishing a workshop for unemployed youth to be funded by Australian aid. This proposal appealed to Stephen and Joe, another Goilala leader, who were shortly due for release and hoped to utilise the skills they had acquired in the prison joinery. Arthur was also alleged to have promised the purchase of a dump-truck with private sector donations and reportedly said he would help secure cleaning contracts with the city authorities. Stephen and his colleagues were also impressed with Arthur's status as a senior and well-connected expatriate officer. Their decision, conveyed to Jimmy, was to approve the surrender of those who wished. They now accepted that those involved would consist of Jimmy's followers, leaving others to do as they wished.

Detailed arrangements for the surrender were subsequently worked out between Arthur and Jimmy. Arthur drew up a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the police and the Metropolitan Youth League. Under its terms, the police undertook to:
(a) accept the surrender of the members of the gang, their weapons and ammunition, in a recognised form of ceremony;
(b) inform gang members as to the nature and type of any outstanding criminal charges, warrants and offences for which they might be classified as wanted persons;
(c) arrange for outstanding charges to be heard before a magistrate and for the charge to be lawfully determined, with each individual's voluntary surrender being taken into account by the court;
(d) in cases of a minor charge, the Police Department would recommend to the court that the accused, on conviction, should be sentenced to a fine, suspended sentence, or community work order;
(e) in serious cases, the Police would advise the court of the voluntary surrender of the accused, in order that the court could take this into account when passing sentence;
(f) the Police Department would guarantee the safe conduct of all persons who voluntarily surrendered under the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding for a further period of 14 days; and
(g) the Police Department, through officers of its Community Relations Directorate, would maintain a close liaison with the group and provide guidance and support, in cooperation with other agencies, to assist with their rehabilitation, training and the acquisition of skills necessary to effect their rehabilitation.  

In return, the Metropolitan Youth League agreed to:

(a) deliver all arms, ammunition and offensive weapons under their control to the Police Department, where they would be handed in at a recognised form of ceremony;
(b) advise police of those members of their organisation who might be classified as 'wanted' persons, in order that their cases might be dealt with;
(c) register with the National Capital District youth office under the name of 'Metropolitan Youth League' and make their members available for work parties, etc., as allocated by the NCDC Youth Office;
(d) maintain liaison and contact with the Community Relations Directorate of the Police Department which would make an officer available for youth liaison purposes; and
(e) work in liaison with the Community Relations Directorate of the Police Department to effect the surrender, rehabilitation and fostering of understanding between youth gangs, police, and the community, and make a positive contribution to the maintenance of peace, law and order in Papua New Guinea (cf. Footnote 12).

Despite the formal and legalistic tone of the Memorandum of Understanding, it proved to have little practical effect. Arthur subsequently checked the 70 names...
of the Metropolitan Youth League members against police records. Only two were wanted for outstanding charges, and as these charges were of a trivial nature, Arthur had them struck out. In the event, no charges were ever laid against any member of the surrendering group. While available criminal justice data in Papua New Guinea, including police records, are notoriously unreliable (Clifford et al. 1984:15-42; Walker 1985), this is further confirmation of the minor criminal status of those who surrendered. Other evidence suggests that many of those who surrendered had little, if any, criminal experience. Interviews with Jimmy and released leaders indicated that the more criminally active youth were awaiting the eventual outcome of the surrender.

The formal surrender took place on Friday, 16 October 1992 in the precinct of the Badili Police Station. Weapons handed in included homemade rifles, ammunition, knives, and bows and arrows. Arthur, who acted as master of ceremonies, arranged for the media to be in attendance, as well as a number of official guests. Three government Ministers were present, including the Minister for Police. Short speeches were delivered by Arthur, Jimmy, an Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police, and a well-known local evangelist. The Memorandum of Understanding was formally signed by the Acting Deputy Commissioner on behalf of the Commissioner of Police, and by Jimmy, as Executive Officer of the newly formed Metropolitan Youth League.

Others who attended the ceremony included most of Jimmy's followers, local youth on the lookout for any immediate opportunities, and an assortment of onlookers from the Golala community at Two-Mile. Jimmy formally asked for forgiveness on the part of the former gang and made a plea to government representatives for financial support for the newly formed Metropolitan Youth League:

We need your assistance and we would like government bodies that are directly responsible for youth development to help us get a subcontract with NCDC so that we can keep our members busy with useful activities and not turn back to crime (Post-Courier, Monday, 19 October 1992, p.3).

The media subsequently ran a number of stories on the surrender. In one, titled 'Bad Boys Come Good', the story diverged markedly from that subsequently given by Jimmy and other participants, but conformed to the popular depiction of the dynamics of group surrender:

(W)ith continuous police community relations in the settlement and tireless efforts by church leaders, some members of the GGB-Mafia gang came to realise that crime will eventually destroy them and that there was no purpose in the lives they were leading (Post-Courier, Friday, 23 October 1992, Weekend Magazine, p.1).

Arthur issued special identity cards to each member of the newly formed Metropolitan Youth League. These ID Cards certified that the holder was a member of the Police and Citizen's Youth Employment and Assistance Program and were designed to appeal to potential employers and donors. In the following weeks, Arthur and Jimmy explored various avenues for acquiring job placements and financial assistance. Initial signs were promising with a number
of businesses expressing interest. Within a short time, 28 MYL members were working as security guards, shop assistants and carpenters for a local company. A few got similar work in other enterprises and there appeared to be good prospects of securing a cleaning contract with the NCDIC. Arthur helped to prepare a lengthy proposal for submission to the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) for K8,000 funding for a proposed poultry project. One company agreed to donate chicken wire, while another promised K1,500.

On 10 November 1992, Arthur arranged for three imprisoned GGB-Mafia leaders to hold a press conference at the Corrective Institutional Services headquarters in Port Moresby. The immediate purpose was to appeal to prison escapees to give themselves up. Ten alleged hard-core prisoners had escaped from Bomana Jail on Sunday, 25 October 1992, in what was reported to have been a well-planned operation (Post-Courier, Tuesday, 27 October 1992, p.1). Of the ten, eight were from Goilala. Earlier in the same week, two other convicted murderers from the same area had also escaped from Bomana Jail. Jimmy told Arthur of his suspicion that the escapees were looking for him because of his role in the surrender and was duly given some police protection. One of the escapees did, in fact, contact Jimmy at Two-Mile but the purpose was to solicit money rather than wreak revenge.

In the course of the press conference, the three prisoners stated that only a small number of the GGB-Mafia had actually surrendered in October and that most remained sceptical of the venture. They circulated a letter that had recently been received from one of the escapees. In it, the escapee spoke of the treachery of those who had surrendered and threatened to take revenge on them. While the leaders dutifully called on the escapees to give themselves up, they also urged authorities to devote more attention to the country’s unemployed youth. To this end, they proposed a massive injection of funds into youth projects. In the words of one youth:

We want to take part in the development of this country. If the government can give us the opportunity, we will prove that we do have something to offer this country (Post-Courier, Wednesday, 11 November 1992, p.6).

Arthur also appealed to business houses for support and publicised the fact that 28 members of the Metropolitan Youth League had already found employment and that 30 others were likely to be offered jobs in the near future.

The surrender and accompanying publicity raised high expectations on the part of all involved. Despite what was said in the media reports, Jimmy’s decision to surrender was principally based on its appeal as a strategy for securing project funds and opening up employment opportunities. The emphasis in media stories upon fear of the police and the impact of religious conversions was at variance with available evidence. As already stated, Jimmy’s group was not composed of hardened criminals and few were, in fact, known to the police. While many of those who surrendered are likely to have had first-hand experience of police brutality, it is unlikely that any believed themselves to be objects of special police interest. Likewise, the churches played a minor role
in the events leading up to the surrender. Jimmy informed me that few of his followers, himself included, had any genuine interest in spiritual conversion. In their view, the surrender was primarily a strategy for pursuing altogether more secular ends.

The police also had their institutional interests in mind while facilitating the surrender. News of their involvement in preventative police work provided a welcome contrast to their popular image as a reactive and repressive force. In addition, the Community Relations Branch, with its recently launched community auxiliary initiative, was receiving timely publicity that might help secure the financial support needed for further expansion. Jimmy and Arthur also stood to gain in terms of the kudos attaching to their respective individual contributions.

In the immediate aftermath of the surrender, Jimmy was pursued by journalists and received warm receptions at the various business and government offices he visited. On a visit home to Goilala, he was delighted to see that students at his old mission school had placed his newspaper clippings on the notice board. In effect, he had become something of an overnight celebrity. At the same time, whereas the police could claim considerable success upon the surrender taking place, the longer-term success of Jimmy's strategy depended on him achieving tangible results in the months to come.

During the early part of 1993, Jimmy — by now President of the MYL — continued to express cautious optimism about the prospects of the enterprise. Real problems were, nevertheless, beginning to appear. Principal amongst these was the lack of administrative skills necessary for completing lengthy and technical funding documents. Related to this, the bureaucratic procedures governing the administration of project funds were complex and cumbersome. For many of the youngsters, the long delays constituted a continuous source of confusion and frustration. The proposal for Australian aid for the poultry project had been passed on to the Papua New Guinea Office for International Development Assistance (OIDA) which is required to approve all international project assistance. They subsequently sent the MYL a request for the following documentation:

- a project file or feasibility study;
- a letter of proof from the Department of Lands (this letter was required to ensure that the proposed land was not subject, or likely to be subject, to a lands dispute);
- projected cash flow;
- quotations from three suppliers on materials and equipment to be purchased;
- a sketch of the project site or any other designs for the intended project; and

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13 Considerable confusion was caused when the Post-Courier prematurely reported that the MYL had secured an K8 000 grant from AIDAB (Post-Courier, Tuesday 3 November 1992, p.2.) At this stage, the application for assistance was still being processed.
confirmation from market outlets intending to take some of the future produce.

Without the basic skills and experience required, the group remained largely dependent on the assistance of individuals such as Arthur. At the same time, Arthur was under mounting pressure from the expansion of the community auxiliary scheme and other projects and was spending increasing periods away from Port Moresby. In the event, the necessary documentation was never completed and the application proceeded no further.

The Department of Home Affairs and Youth — the government department charged with promoting the interests and welfare of the nation's youth — proved particularly unhelpful, and assistance was sought from the voluntary sector, as well as from a variety of sympathetic individuals. An initial approach was made to the American Peace Corps organisation. While sympathetic to the cause, the Peace Corps, like many other overseas voluntary organisations, required that volunteers be provided with secure accommodation by the project participants. Satisfying this requirement was extremely difficult in this case, as with other youth groups, given their lack of resources. The newly formed National Volunteer Service was also approached and was able to provide some temporary assistance.

The dependence on voluntary assistance clearly had its limitations. Most of those individuals and organisations that were prepared to help had other pressing commitments, and little direct experience in either youth work or small project development. The same people found themselves facing expectations they could not fulfil. Meanwhile, Jimmy was coming under mounting pressure from followers and detractors alike. He was receiving daily visits from those expecting jobs and projects. The initial interest expressed by business houses receded as time passed.

In the absence of immediate results, many of those involved in the surrender were questioning the wisdom of the surrender strategy. Accusations were resurfacing that Jimmy and his followers had been 'tricked' by the police. Jimmy also faced the continuing hostility of some of the imprisoned leaders who had subsequently been released. Stephen, for example, was claiming that Jimmy had reneged on a promise to hand him the leadership of the MYL upon his release. In addition, the relationship between Arthur and Jimmy was becoming progressively strained with Arthur complaining of Jimmy's endless demands, and Jimmy countering with complaints about Arthur's increasing lack of assistance.

Problems were also appearing in respect of those who had secured jobs immediately after the surrender. Accusations were made that contracts promised by employers had not materialised and that pay rates were lower than originally agreed. On the other side, there were complaints of petty pilfering and poor time-keeping. Of the 28 youths employed by one company, only five remained in employment by May 1993. While the funding application for the proposed poultry project continued to languish at OIDA, it also became clear that the original site chosen at Badili, near the Two-Mile settlement, would have to be changed. Local health regulations prohibited the raising of livestock within
the city limits. The new plan was to use some customary land at Laloki, on the outskirts of the city. Even if the funding application proceeded — which it did not — the next problem would have been how to transport the produce to city markets.

Several meetings were held in the middle of the year in an attempt to generate wider public interest in the issue of funding and supervision of youth projects. Jimmy, as well as other youth leaders, appeared on talkback radio shows appealing for assistance, and a meeting was arranged with the Deputy Prime Minister (and Minister for Finance), Sir Julius Chan (Post-Courier, Wednesday, 21 April 1993, p.1). Once again, sympathy and support were expressed but no tangible assistance was forthcoming.

By August, the MYL appeared to be falling apart. Several of Jimmy's original followers had abandoned him and switched their allegiances to other leaders, or were simply hanging out in the settlement and drifting back into petty crime. In September, Jimmy returned to Kuni-mai-pa in Gollala with about 20 of his closest followers. Gold deposits had recently been discovered and another potentially lucrative opportunity presented itself. Attempts were simultaneously being made to secure funding to start a vegetable project in the village and then sell the produce in Port Moresby.

Jimmy came back to Port Moresby in January 1994 and resumed his strenuous rounds of visiting government offices, business contacts, and sympathetic individuals. Initially, he was seeking funds to purchase a large freezer for storing the vegetables prior to their transportation to Port Moresby. Despite the failure to secure funding assistance, Jimmy's entrepreneurial drive showed no sign of faltering. By mid-1994, he had embarked on his most ambitious project to date. This entailed incorporating MYL as a company and then submitting a tender to carry out cleaning for government offices in Port Moresby. He had met a senior official in the Department of Trade and Industry who informed him that the cleaning contract was up for renewal. This official helped Jimmy draft the Memorandum and Articles of Association for the Metropolitan Youth Corporation Pty Ltd and encouraged him to apply for a small business scheme loan from the Rural Development Bank. At the time of writing, the outcome of this latest scheme remains unknown.
DISCUSSION

Cash, Prestige and Development

It should be clear from the foregoing narrative that contrition for previous crimes and the desire to become law-abiding citizens had little to do with the decision to surrender. Jimmy and his group were never very heavily involved in criminal activity in the first place, and had a lot less to be forgiven for than was implied by the media reports. In practice, he and his followers had to work quite hard at projecting the kind of 'criminal' and 'violent' image appropriate to the surrender strategy. Cultivating such an image, with its underlying threat of resumption of crime, constitutes an integral part of the surrender strategy. At the same time, the individual and collective pasts of Jimmy and his followers differed little from those thousands of other socially marginalised urban youth, and certainly did not amount to the extraordinary 'life of violence, stealing and hurting others' subsequently depicted (Post-Courier, Friday, 23 October 1992, Weekend Magazine, p.1).

While this image was obviously not contested by Jimmy, it was by the older youth who, when interviewed, ridiculed his claims to high criminal status. Evidence from this and similar cases suggests that mass surrenders tend to attract groups of youth whose criminal commitment is less serious than that of the typical 'hard core' criminal for whom crime has become an established way of life. Such a strategy is less likely to appeal to the latter, who would be more likely to face the prospect of a lengthy period in prison.14

The decision to surrender in this case was perceived by all the main parties as a strategy for acquiring funds, either through project assistance or employment opportunities. This was the prospect that Arthur offered while persuading the group to surrender in the first place. Throughout the period immediately preceding and after the October ceremony, Arthur was actively engaged in trying to secure contracts, jobs and funding assistance for group members. It is also one of the main reasons why the imprisoned leaders withdrew their initial opposition to the surrender. Jimmy’s tireless quest for funds and jobs attests to the same purpose.

Having established the importance of securing funds, it is necessary to ask why this was considered so essential. On the face of it, the answer appears to be relatively straightforward. Money is needed to procure the basics for survival in any cash economy — food, clothing, shelter, transport, and so on. Lack of legal opportunities for acquiring the necessary cash encourages those who are excluded to explore illegal means to the same ends. This view has particular

14 A public declaration of reform on the part of ‘hard-core’ criminals is more likely to occur after a period of imprisonment for the same reason. See, for example ‘Once feared ‘King Eric’ is a new man — tears at Nadzab as ‘born-again’ former gangster returns’, Post-Courier, Tuesday 13 July 1993, p.1.
force in the contemporary urban context where the option of falling back upon
the subsistence sector is limited. It is also the view propounded in the post-
surrender media reports. Commenting on the criminal history of Jimmy's group,
one report stated that:

For them, there was nothing wrong with stealing. Stealing was the only
means of surviving in a big town like Port Moresby. (Post-Courier,
Friday, 23 October 1992, Weekend Magazine, p.1)

While the forces driving the activities of Jimmy's group obviously included
considerations of material survival, there is little doubt that they also went well
beyond these.

At this point, it is necessary to broaden out the discussion and consider some
aspects of the wider socioeconomic position of contemporary Papua New
Guinean youth, as well as some of the specific social dynamics that have
informed their collective responses, criminal and otherwise. This also provides
an opportunity for demonstrating that the switch from crime to reform strategies,
exemplified in the mass surrender, entails a much less significant transformation
in underlying social commitment than the initial contrast suggests.

Most accounts of the current crime situation in Papua New Guinea focus
selectively upon the highly visible area of youth (that is, gang) crime, and usually
seek to explain it in terms of the criminogenic effects of rapid socioeconomic
change and its particular impact on youth (Department of Provincial Affairs
1983; Clifford et al. 1984; UNDP/ILO 1993). Population growth, the adequacy
and appropriateness of the formal education system, and lack of employment
opportunities are regularly cited as the principal underlying causes of discontent
and disorder amongst youth. In particular, unemployment has achieved a
prominent explanatory status in discussions concerning the rise of 'rascality'. In
this respect, Papua New Guinea's raskol phenomenon has been portrayed as little
different to that of other countries with similar developmental profiles. At the
same time, available empirical evidence suggests that the social responses of
youth groups in Papua New Guinea, whether these be criminal associations or
otherwise, have their own distinctive etiology.

There are several difficulties associated with attempts to causally connect
unemployment to youth crime, some of which apply in other national contexts,
while some are peculiar to the Papua New Guinean environment. Addressing
the issue of employment/unemployment in Papua New Guinea is notoriously
difficult. In addition to the problem of the lack of reliable statistical data, the vast
majority of the population remain outside the formal wage sector. The 1980
National Census, for example, estimated that only 9.7 percent of the total
population were counted in the formal wage sector (Mannur 1987:29). This
percentage is likely to have decreased further since 1980 because population
growth has exceeded growth in wage employment (McGavin 1991:53). Even
when the problems of definition and quantification are left aside, the relationship
between unemployment and crime is by no means as straightforward as its
proponents suggest. For example, most unemployed people, however defined,
do not resort to the criminal lifestyles usually associated with 'raskol' groups.
Also, there is evidence that many crimes, including crimes of acquisition, are, in fact, committed by persons who have employment. Interviews with criminal youth, including some of those already mentioned, indicate that many have, at one time or another, occupied unskilled positions, but deliberately relinquished these for potentially more exciting, prestigious and lucrative opportunities in crime. Moreover, consideration of the non-acquisitive dimensions of contemporary youth crime, such as violence against women, as well as an appreciation of the particular social organisation of criminal groups in Papua New Guinea, raise further difficulties with reductivist formulations of the relationship between youth crime and unemployment. In the words of one commentator, 'the popular stereotyping of rascals as unemployed school drop-outs is too simplistic and therefore a misleading generalisation' (Schiltz 1985:155).

In a similar vein, the benefits of being employed for wages in Papua New Guinea have to be viewed within the context of extended Melanesian kinship networks and the social obligations that these engender. Having a job brings with it demands and expectations on the part of relatives and wantoks who can, in some cases, effectively undermine the incentive to work. One observer described how the employed person in such a situation becomes 'a channel for the flow of cash and commodities' (Goddard 1992:22). Another remarked that, in the urban context, 'too many demands being made on the income of young people in their first jobs becomes an intolerable burden' (Monsell-Davis 1993:11). Individuals who find themselves in such 'intolerable' situations might deliberately choose unemployment or, alternatively, resort to crime as a means of supplementing their income. Peter’s experience, as already discussed, falls into this category.

This is not to deny the criminogenic impact of deepening structural inequalities, including those relating to access to education and formal employment. The broader background of socioeconomic change and emergent structural inequalities constitute the primary context of many aspects of contemporary criminality in Papua New Guinea, amongst both the relatively deprived and the relatively advantaged (Dinnen 1993b). For example, it is clear that the absence of any legal means for individual and collective advancement, such as employment opportunities, is an important factor in influencing criminal choices. At the same time, however, these macro-processes do not, in themselves, explain the specific form or range of responses adopted by particular groups. While comparatively recent structural processes provide us with the general background to today’s principal areas of social disorder, an explanation of the foreground demands a more focused analysis of the underlying social and situational dynamics informing criminal and many other forms of social behaviour in Papua New Guinea.

Success in both capitalist and pre-capitalist Melanesian worlds depends, in varying degrees, upon the accumulation of wealth. Whereas the capitalist ethic promotes individual accumulation as an end in itself, Melanesian societies tend to view wealth for its instrumental value in the pursuit of more fundamental social objectives, such as prestige. Access to resources and the manner of their distribution constitutes a fundamental social dynamic which links the conduct of social relations in both modern and traditional settings. In this context, Monsell-Davis stated that:
Reputation, including moral and ethical superiority, is commonly based on access to, and command over, resources and their distribution. The expectation of reciprocity, and the idea of prestige associated with giving (along with the concomitant fear of being perceived as repudiating proper social relationships if one rejects a request for help) are important elements of continuity in modern Melanesia (Monsell-Davis 1993:51).

In this sense, access to material wealth provides an important means for achieving other social ends. Insofar as employment provides opportunities for acquiring necessary wealth, its absence, low returns, or restricted access may encourage crime as an alternative strategy to essentially the same ends. The inherent versatility of cash as a form of transactable wealth has made it the most attractive medium for both criminals and non-criminals who are engaged in prestige building strategies. On the one hand, it is difficult for law enforcement agencies to link cash directly with specific crimes, while on the other, it is capable of being used in a wide variety of social contexts. In a study of Highland migrants to Port Moresby, it was noted how 'money has become the sole operator, the only medium through which status and relationships can be expressed' (Strathern 1975b:315). In Strathern's view, money has become the 'coin of social commerce' (ibid. :300). Other research on rural crime also emphasises the centrality of cash in the building of prestige and power across a number of different social settings (Borrey 1994).

From this perspective, acquisitive crime in Papua New Guinea may be best understood as a strategy for acquiring the resources needed for other purposes. Comparatively low levels of popular allegiance to many aspects of the normative order embodied in state law15, in combination with low chances of detection and apprehension, make acquisitive crime an accessible and legitimate strategy for many youth. This view of crime as being essentially a goal-oriented activity is supported by the habit among youth of referring to their criminal activities as 'wok' (E=work) and, in this sense, indistinguishable from other goal-oriented activities, such as wage labour, which are aimed at the same ends.

Many observers have noted the resilience of long-standing Melanesian forms of kinship obligation and prestige building and the manner in which these have interacted with a range of contemporary institutions and processes. A significant aspect of these cultural continuities lies in the relations of support and reciprocal obligation between those in leadership positions, and their followers. For example, it has been argued that today's criminal leader shares many of the characteristics of the traditional 'big-man' and, in particular, his pursuit of prestige and power through the manipulation of social relations with others (Goddard 1992). His success, like that of the 'big-man', depends on his ability to build and manipulate relations of patronage with a range of individuals and

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15 Low levels of popular allegiance to the substance and procedures of the introduced law in Papua New Guinea are well known (Dinnen 1993c). Available research also conforms the existence of significant differences between many of the values embodied in the criminal law and those adhered to in a selection of contemporary Papua New Guinean communities and organisations. See, for example, Strathern (1975a); Moore, Richardson and Wullemim (1984); and Richardson, Wullemim and Moore (1997).
groups. Whereas the ‘big-man’ builds his power through the accumulation of traditional items of wealth and their redistribution through ceremonial exchange, the criminal leader constructs his power base around acquisitive crime and the strategic redistribution of the proceeds among criminal associates and kin. The object of redistribution in both cases is to create and reinforce highly personalised relationships based on obligation and dependency and, in the process, to build up the prestige and influence of the donor.

The explicit expectations of reciprocity on the part of those involved in redistribution has a direct bearing on the practice of handing over firearms and other implements of crime at mass surrenders. Amongst other things, such acts engender expectations on the part of the surrendering group that the recipients will reciprocate by delivering the funds, clemency, or other resources which are being sought. The surrender of firearms also signifies a group’s willingness to abandon criminal activities. This willingness is, of course, conditional upon authorities satisfying the expectations of the surrendering group. Failure to do so will result in the group resorting to their carefully displayed capacity for disruption and violence. Rascal groups are acutely aware of their disruptive potential and their ability to thwart official efforts to provide a stable ‘law and order’ environment. In this vein, Schiltz quotes a gang leader addressing a 1985 gang retreat:

We determine Papua New Guinea’s image abroad; we control the country’s economy; we are the carpet you walk on; and we are your time bombs (Schiltz 1985:142).

The pervasive desire by youth for cash in hand, and the patterns of conspicuous consumption noted by Borrey (1994) relate to expectations that items will be redistributed within given social relations and that all will share, in varying degrees, in the material rewards and prestige of the successful individual or leader. Contemporary leaders, whether their ‘wok’ is in politics, the public service, business, or crime are all expected to engage in this social process, in much the same way as the traditional Melanesian leader. Individual accumulation without redistribution is not only unlikely to enhance the status of the individual concerned but may well attract the retributive attention of those who thereby feel excluded or tricked.

For Jimmy and his boys, the surrender provided an important opportunity for initiating potentially rewarding social relations with those in positions of authority and influence. Like other youth groups throughout the country, they held extremely high expectations of government, principally in terms of financial assistance. In this respect, their perceptions conform to popular views which conceive the essence of ‘government’ and the ‘State’ as lying in its control of vast and desirable resources. Expectations of it are, in turn, premised on it conducting relations with its subjects in much the same way as any other powerful group or leader. The State’s control of resources thus provides it with a unique status and potential in the context of Melanesian patterns of wealth distribution and the manipulation of social relations. Borrey has recently used the analogy of the State as ‘big-man’ to describe these popular perceptions:

(For lots of people, the State is a surrogate ‘big man’ or leader who, in the process of wealth accumulation (like mineral and logging projects), is
expected to redistribute some of this wealth back to the people (Borrey 1994:248).

Interviews with some of the informants in the case study confirm the prevalence of such views. For example, Stephen attributed government with a key role in providing for the material welfare of its subjects, in much the same way as he, as a criminal leader, was supposed to look after his boys. Jimmy’s outlook was similar. These views indicate a highly personalised perception of the State and its obligations towards its subjects.

The inevitable failure of government authorities to live up to such high expectations leads to acute disappointment and anger, and this anger is further fuelled by the regular flow of political leaders’ extravagant promises, which are rarely fulfilled. This is partly the reason for the markedly anti-government, anti-politician invective that is expressed by youth leaders. From the same perspective, crime is often articulated as a way of punishing those who are seen as having reneged on their promises, and, at the same time, a way of forcing them back into more familiar and appropriate exchange relations — a situation that has been referred to as the ‘equalising dimension’ of ‘rascalism’ (Schiltz 1985:149).

The perennial quest for cash and prestige has led to a number of innovative strategies on the part of youth and other groups.16 These invariably involve some attempt to attract government or private sector resources. Youth group ‘walkathons’ have become a favoured tactic in this respect and have been evident throughout the nation. Such groups travel considerable distances, often by foot, to get to Port Moresby, the seat of the National Parliament and the central repository of public and private sector resources. The object is to attract maximum media coverage and meet with politicians and other prominent figures, with a view to acquiring funds for a variety of ‘development projects’. In the past, youth groups often succeeded in procuring funds in this way and were able to return home in triumph. However, as more and more groups resorted to this strategy, public opinion grew increasingly sceptical and the potential returns from walkathons diminished accordingly.17 The mass surrender provides a more spectacular version of the same phenomenon.

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16 Such strategies are by no means confined to youth groups (which, in practice, often comprise older adults) but are also evident, in varying degrees, among women’s groups and other associations including local government councils, provincial governments, and so on.

17 This change in fortune is reflected in regard to two reported walkathons involving youth groups from Simbu Province. In the first case, 16 youths arrived in Port Moresby in September 1993 after walking from Wau in Morobe Province. Weapons and marijuana which the group had carried all the way from Simbu were surrendered in Port Moresby (Times of Papua New Guinea, Thursday, 16 September 1993, p.5). They were given a cheque for K$ 000 by a government Minister and were taken back to Simbu on a chartered government flight. A second group arrived in Port Moresby in October 1993. Unlike their predecessors, they received no official reception or government funds and were reported to be seeking emergency relief and transport home from the National Disaster and Emergency Services (Post-Courier, Wednesday, 13 October 1993, p.20).
The long-term outcome for surrendering groups appears to be largely dependent on the provision of adequate funding for project development and appropriate levels of technical and administrative assistance. At the same time, the progress of particular projects is inevitably complicated by the social dynamics of prestige and obligation, as already discussed. Such considerations are rarely anticipated by project planners and, once manifest, are likely to lead to dismay on the part of proponents of economic growth and individual production. For participants, on the other hand, it is these underlying social factors that may be considered more important than those of accumulation, growth, or sustainability. In this sense, the measure of success is largely a question of perception.

The Brokering Party

Arthur and his community relations police played a significant role in organising the surrender of Jimmy's group. Indeed, without Arthur's active encouragement and early assistance, the surrender would not have occurred. The activities of brokering parties have undoubtedly contributed to the growth of the mass surrender as an option for peripheral youth. Most reported surrenders involve the participation of such a party, acting as an intermediary between the surrendering group and government authorities. This particular case was unusual because of the prominent role of the police. In most cases, it is the police who accept the surrender on behalf of government.

The role of broker has most often been taken by church or community groups that are generally viewed as independent and better suited to the task of administering the rituals of contrition and reconciliation which are integral to the surrender ceremony. Many surrenders involve mass conversions of participants, thus adding to the poignancy and symbolism of the occasion. Whether genuinely spiritual conversions occur or not, the language and rituals of being 'saved', 'converted', and 'born again' provide a near-perfect symbolic expression of the transformation in status from criminal to reformed person.18

Several church organisations and evangelists have adopted a pro-active and entrepreneurial role in contacting and seeking to rehabilitate criminal youth groups. Principal among these is Port Moresby-based Pastor, Charles Lapa, and his Life Outreach Ministries. Pastor Lapa's organisation conducts annual Operation Tanim Bell19 crusades in different parts of the country. These are led by reformed criminals, and are designed to appeal to the 'unwanted and lost'. In addition to facilitating individual acts of repentance and conversion, these crusades also aim to 'provide a platform for testimonies by gang leaders where they apologise to the community for their former activities' (Life Outreach

18 Official backing for the conversion strategy is regularly voiced. In April 1994, for example, the then Minister for Police, told a religious youth gathering that becoming 'born again' would solve the country's social and criminal problems ('Minister: be 'born again' to solve PNG's crime troubles', Post-Courier, Tuesday, 5 April 1994, p.5).

19 The Tok Pisin phrase for a change of heart, conversion (usually in a spiritual sense), or, more broadly, individual rehabilitation.
Ministries 1989:1). Such crusades have proven to be a popular catalyst for mass surrenders. In January 1993, for example, approximately 60 former gang members were reported to have surrendered in the Southern Highlands as a result of one of Pastor Lapa’s crusades (Post-Courier, Tuesday, 26 January 1993, p.17).

The mass surrender provides an important forum for public dialogue between marginalised youth and the wider community in general, as well as with those who control resources. Outside these forums, youth groups and leaders have little opportunity for publicly articulating their grievances. In addition to the inevitable expressions of contrition and commitment to reform, such forums allow youths to express their frustration and anger at their perceived exclusion from broader processes of development. Church organisations are often sympathetic to the views expressed and, moreover, provide instant forgiveness. Some organisations, such as Pastor Lapa’s, are also involved in the post-surrender process of rehabilitation through, for example, the provision of half-way homes in a number of urban centres.

While the ostensible purpose of church involvement is to save souls, the intervention of more secular agencies, such as the police, is articulated in terms of crime prevention and improved community relations. In practice, the police are often prepared to argue for reduced penalties in any subsequent court proceedings by, for example, making a case for non-custodial sentences. The prevalence of minor (as opposed to serious) offenders increases police discretion in this respect. In this sense, the mass surrender can be seen as a form of plea-bargaining — an attempt to mitigate, or even avoid, the imposition of formal criminal justice sanctions. In Jimmy’s case, as we have seen, no actual charges were ever laid against any members of the surrendering group.

Brokering parties clearly benefit from their involvement in mass surrenders. The Community Relations Directorate of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary received widespread praise for its role in this particular case and this success, undoubtedly, helped its efforts to secure funds for its own subsequent development. Likewise, Pastor Lapa’s role has been officially acknowledged by successive governments and he has been able to secure substantial funding assistance from both public and private sources. The mass surrender thus presents considerable opportunities to a range of entrepreneurial groups and individuals, in addition to the surrendering group itself.

20 In December 1992, for example, Pastor Lapa was reported to have received K50 000 from the Minister for Home Affairs and Youth for the development of his half-way house activities (Post-Courier, Monday, 14 December 1992, p.4). In March 1994, the Administrator of Enga Province announced the allocation of K20 000 for church-organised crusades in the province in an effort to curb law and order problems (Post-Courier, Wednesday, 23 March 1994, Provincial News, p.20).
Conclusion

The phenomenon of the mass surrender has many interesting aspects. The immediate objective is to provide a strategy for securing funds, while simultaneously developing new avenues for prestige building. The pursuit of funds and prestige, in turn, underlies a range of contemporary social behaviour in Papua New Guinea, including the activities of groups of young criminals. In this sense, the move from 'raskolism' to 'reform', via the mass surrender, represents a continuation rather than a change, in underlying social commitment. As one anthropologist expresses it, 'one strategy to achieve prestige is abandoned in favour of another' (Goddard 1994:30).

The same phenomenon illustrates the innovative way in which social groups, that find themselves increasingly marginalised in the emergent capitalist order, are able to create negotiating space with those in political and economic power and, in the process, open up new opportunities for individual and collective advancement. An irony shared by the walkathon and the mass surrender options is that they both encourage participants to inflate — and occasionally invent — appropriate criminal backgrounds for the purpose of accessing the required funds. Whereas one dimension of rascal violence may be, as a strategy, to punish those believed to have reneged in their exchange obligations (Schiltz 1985), the surrender entails a conditional offer to abandon violence, accompanied by a threat to resume if conditions are not met. The manipulation of 'raskol' identities and reconciliation rituals that are evident in this context illustrates the sophisticated way in which certain groups are able to turn their marginal and officially stigmatised status to advantage. Such manoeuvres, in turn, suggest both an impressive appreciation of the nuances of contemporary 'law and order' politics, as well as the emergence of distinctive cultures of resistance amongst contemporary Papua New Guinean youth.

None of this is to deny the broader context of political and socioeconomic disadvantage that is faced by the majority of contemporary Papua New Guinean youth, including the gravity of abuses which they routinely experience at the hands of the police. Rascal violence is often legitimised by its practitioners as a necessary response to growing levels of State violence. As mentioned previously, the broad genesis of current trends in crime and criminalisation in Papua New Guinea lies in the processes of comparatively recent structural change. As such, this wider context can hardly be ignored by those seeking to explain the historical evolution of crime amongst particular constituencies, or the responses which these have induced.

At the same time, it is important to move beyond the generalities of structural analysis to focus more closely on the specific forms of the social responses by particular groups. Our analysis of the mass surrender draws attention to the resilience of long-standing Melanesian social traditions and the manner in which these shape a wide range of contemporary social responses. Moving between different levels of analysis enables us to accommodate both the sociocultural specificities of social behaviour and its encompassing sociopolitical and socioeconomic contexts.
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