Review: [untitled]
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Reviewed work(s): The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of "Cargo" Cults in Melanesia by Peter Worsley
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dealing with social organization. Thus the division into matrilineal moieties, which he suggests is the most common type of grouping, is by no means universal. In the Solomons, matrilineal moieties are confined to central and southern Guadalcanal. However, the sections on secret societies and religion carefully distinguish between the various islands. Where the old cults have survived the intervening three generations of European contact, they remain substantially as here described.

Now that Codrington has been reissued, perhaps the publishers may turn their attention to Mariner's Natives of the Tonga Islands. This is equally valuable, and the third and last edition appeared in 1819.


Reviewed by Anthony F. C. Wallace, University of Pennsylvania

The Trumpet Shall Sound is a comparative and historical study of Melanesian revitalization movements ranging from early cargo cults to modern political nationalisms. It is based on a reading of “everything published on these Melanesian cults, mainly in English, French, German and Dutch.” The major part of the volume is devoted to a generation-by-generation, island-by-island summary of events occurring in dozens of movements. The second chapter and the Conclusions and Appendix contain interpretive generalizations and critiques of the theoretical literature. Without doubt this is the best comparative study to date of Melanesian cargo and other cult activities; it is also one of the most thoughtful contributions to the theory of revitalization movements. The descriptive material will be valuable for teaching purposes and also for independent analysis, and the theory expressed will stimulate thought and discussion.

The main theoretical gambit is a familiar one: to view enthusiastic religion as the forerunner of political action among a population characterized by either a general anomic or a struggle with an exploiting alien group, or by both. The data presented by Worsley seem well suited to demonstrate the utility of the concepts of anomic and class struggle as labels for etiological conditions for both the older type of religious cult (e.g., Vailala Madness) and the newer political action (e.g., the Paliau Movement). Anomie (the situation where the group holds goals which its culture does not enable individuals to reach) applies equally well to a situation of current inability to reach traditional goals and of current inability to reach new goals, because a condition of anomie can be reached from a situation of equilibrium either by a rise in level of aspiration or a fall in capabilities, or by both. Exploitation by, and resentment of, European traders, labor recruiters, police, military, missionaries, and government officials, is clearly enough demonstrated to convince even the most hardened relativist that no Melanesian society has ever been composed entirely of people who do not mind being trod upon, and that the nativism of many Melanesian movements has arisen from the simple fact that many Melanesians did not like the Europeans.

Implicit in the book is a typology, but it is never developed explicitly because whatever it is a typology of, is never defined by Worsley. Indeed, he asserts (not quite accurately) that he is restricting himself to only one type of movement because of the presumably dire consequences which would ensure if “a very large part of world history could be subsumed under the rubric of religious heresies, enthusiastic creeds and utopias.” His failure to define a revitalization movement explicitly is responsible for a certain awkwardness in treating the relationship between religious and political action.

Most of the religious movements are labelled “millenarian;” they are further sub-
divided into "activist" and "passivist." Passivist millenarian movements are regarded as essentially "pie in the sky" movements, variable only in their estimate of the closeness of the sky, and are to be contrasted sharply with rational, secular, political movements which are activist, and (often) nationalistic and economic in emphasis. These two types are said "ultimately to include all" movements. In this schema a movement which is activist, rational, secular, and political, obviously cannot be passively millenarian. But it can be religious and even millenarian. This, however, Worsley does not emphasize; if it is not essentially a cult of passive resignation, it is analyzed as essentially a secular political organization. Paliau's movement (an eminently rational, secular, and political phenomenon, and also a religious one, as described by Mead, to whom Worsley defers as his main authority) therefore has to be shorn of any aura of religious enthusiasm. "It would be erroneous to overweight the mystical aspect of Paliau's doctrine. ... Paliau's feet were well on the ground." And, in the discussion in Conclusions of the religious "form" of the many "activist" movements with a more or less millenarian ideology, religion is consistently construed as a consciously manipulated device of political leaders to solve structural problems. Thus the leader attributes his message to a supernatural authority in order to "avoid being seen as the representative of the interests of any one group" and thereby is able to unite jealous factions more easily. And again, the "reason that we find such heavy emphasis laid in all the cults upon a new morality" is that revolutionary energy can only be generated by flouting old values. "All prophets, therefore, stress moral renewal. ..."

The analysis thus depends extensively on a (largely implicit) Marxian theory of revolution for its model. In the final treatment, movements divide into passivist, "pie-in-the-sky," "religion-as-the-opiate-of-the-people" religious withdrawals from the anomic produced by class exploitation, and activist, rational, "feet-on-the-ground," politico-economic campaigns within the class struggle. Religion inspires and resides in the leadership of the former; in the latter it is largely an instrument of the astute party leader, who finds it useful, in the initial phases of the campaign, for liberating the energies of the masses from the toils of factional dispute and traditional moral inhibitions.

The reviewer, and many readers, will take issue on the ground that the new morality, far from being merely an energy-liberating ritual of rebellion, is in itself a part of the new code or "goal-culture" (to use Theodore Schwartz's phrase), and that the essence of religion, as it functions in revitalization movements, does not lie in fantasies of celestial tarts, nor in its uses in political in-fighting, but in the revolutionary credo itself.


Reviewed by Katharine Luoma, University of Hawaii

The thesis of this book is based on a statement by Captain Cook, who, in telling an accidental one-way voyage of Tahitians to Atiu Island, Cook archipelago, thought that an account of a single real-life episode would "serve to explain, better than a thousand conjectures of speculative reasoners, how the detached parts of the earth, and in particular, how the South Seas, may have been peopled; especially those that lie remote from any inhabited continent, or from each other."

Andrew Sharp argues that Polynesia, his main but not his only region of interest in the settlement of islands, was first discovered and occupied by sporadic accidental voyagers who were driven off course into the eastern Pacific by westerly storms.