

JOHN FRUM MOVEMENT IN TANNA

By JEAN GUIART

THE population of Tanna, already, for the New Hebrides, high, has for some decades been increasing (6620 at the last census). The island is geographically isolated, the more so because the two other islands nearby have very few inhabitants, and possesses a culture of which the sociological basis is very distinct from the rest of the Hebrides. Its hereditary chieftainships are quite different from the hierarchies of rank of the northern islands. As everywhere else, European contact was not made without shocks, most often unsuspected and in time the reactions of the native society brought these to the surface in an unforeseen explosion. This was the movement known as "John Frum," neo-pagan and nationalist, which has now lasted more than eight years.

THE FIRST JOHN FRUM

Agitation was evident among the natives from the beginning of 1940, though the first forms of it are little known. The affair blazed up at the beginning of 1941 as a veritable revolution.

Churches of all denominations were deserted by the faithful. No one went to the daily services of the Presbyterian Mission, or to the Dominican services, and even the children abandoned the schools.

Families left the Christian villages, which were creations of the Mission, and took up residence apart on their own lands. Some gathered in pagan groupings in the interior. The new dwellings were only primitive shelters, and the result was a lowering of the general hygiene.

Dances and *hava* drinkings were organized on Saturday evenings. This was not a complete reversion to traditional customs, which would have called for long

prior organization and an elaborate ceremonial. A certain licence accompanied the festivals.¹

Ordinarily not at all extravagant, or even miserly, the natives began to buy generously in the European owned shops. Some of them paid with sovereigns, which they had up to that time hidden. They seemed to want, at all costs, to get rid of their money. Some threw it in the sea.

In face of this situation, the English district agent made arrests and conducted an inquiry. The Administration then deported the leaders to Port Vila. This severity indicated a justifiable anxiety. The movement was general, though centred on the west coast of the island about Green Point. A village of huts was erected here to receive those who came to hear the words of a mysterious being whose instructions had given rise to all the disturbance. The inquiry showed that there had been deception. A man named Manehevi had posed as a supernatural being by means of ingenious stage management. He appeared at night, in the faint light of a fire, before men under the influence of *kava*. He clothed himself in a costume with sparkling buttons and adopted a shrill speaking voice. The credulity of the spectators made them into messengers, called "ropes of John Frum," who carried orders of this man throughout the island.

John Frum, the mysterious personage, was at first careful and respected the established order. He did not attack the Mission or the whites. He was content to promote the dancing and *kava* drinking, to encourage communal work in the gardens, to denounce the idle, and to give advice on matters concerning collective action. But, after his first success, he gave himself up to a more and more intense prophetic activity on a theme at first traditional.

"Karaperamun" is the god of Mount Tukosmeru, the highest peak of Tanna; and travellers crossing the width of the island left offerings of food and *kava* for him to ensure safe passage. It was this god who had shown himself at Green Point, presently substituting for his ancient title the name "John Frum" (or "John Brum").²

John Frum could not be seen by whites or by women. One day he would reveal himself to all the people of Tanna, bringing them the material civilization which the whites had denied. The latter would depart, and John Frum would assume power and provide salaries for chiefs and teachers.³ The Mission would leave also, replaced by the John Frum school. A new coinage, struck in the image of a coconut tree, would replace gold pounds and silver. There would no longer be any need to work, for John Frum would provide everything—metal houses, clothes, food, means of conveyance. He was the master of the planes, which, with the

¹ Debauches have been mentioned, but there is as yet no proof. This behaviour would not be encouraged by the physiological action of *kava*.

² It is certainly John Frum in two words, and not Jonfrum, for he is described also as John the great. Cf. the letter of Joe Nalpin in the Appendix.

³ The chiefs are not paid by the Administration; teachers receive help in kind from the faithful, and a very small allowance from the Missionaries.

approach of war, in 1941, began to appear in the Hebridean sky. Friday would replace Sunday as a day of rest, for it was the day chosen by the god for his *parousia*. But it was necessary to prepare the way for him. All money in the possession of the natives had to be returned to the whites⁴ or destroyed. So long as there remained a single threepence on Tanna, the golden age could not come. The whites would then depart, for there would no longer be any justification for their presence.

Some of the prophecies were also of an apocalyptic nature. The island of Tanna would become flat, the mountains fill up the valleys, Tanna be joined to Aneityum and Erromanga, a new youthfulness and perfect health come to all.⁵

But John Frum was not alone; social forces were stirring behind him. One of the principal chiefs, Sam Nako, whose political position was due to Mission influence, gave the order to abandon the churches. This he confirmed several times in the following years. The framework provided by the Presbyterian Mission broke up, and chiefs and teachers followed the people in general and accepted the new teaching. In the opinion of the district agent the women favoured the movement, partly from weariness of too frequent religious services, partly because of the greater sexual freedom which became increasingly characteristic of it. The pagans, however, seemed little affected by the movement. They were content to sell large quantities of *kava* to the followers of the new god.

There was one shadow on this picture of unanimity: the chief of White Sands on the coast gave his support to the arrests of the men from elsewhere.

Government action at first brought apparent calm. But the churches remained empty, and the dances and *kava* drinkings continued. The prisoners at Port Vila and the sympathizers there sent encouraging messages, one of which revealed new developments of the John Frum myth. This letter, sent by one Joe Nalpin to Sam Nako, took up again the idea that the whites would depart; John Frum would send his son to America to seek the King⁶; Mount Tukosmeru would be covered by invisible planes belonging to John Frum. From elsewhere ran the rumour that, in spite of the Administration statement, Manehevi was not John Frum, and that the latter was still at liberty.

THE SONS OF JOHN FRUM

The movement again broke out openly at the beginning of 1942, this time on the other side of Tanna in the neighbourhood of Sulphur Bay and Port Resolution. A second inquiry was held and new arrests made. The protagonists, one of whom was already in gaol at Vila,⁷ used young girls of eleven and twelve as intermediaries.

⁴ This is borne out by speeches to the traders: "By by money belong me he come, but face belong your fella King, tak'em 'e go back."

⁵ Cf. R. P. Patrick O'Reilly, "Prophetisme aux Nouvelles Hébrides: Le mouvement Jonfrum a Tanna (1940-1947)," *Le Monde Non Chrétien*, N.S., No. 10, Paris, 1949, pp. 192-208.

⁶ Another interpretation of the letter is that John Frum was in America and would send his sons, who would return one day to seek him when all was ready at Tanna for his coming. The text is obscure. Cf. letter of Joe Nalpin in the Appendix.

⁷ The beginning of this new affair was earlier than the suppression of the events at Green Point.

The new myth referred back to the letter from Joe Nalpin. The three sons of John Frum had come from America by plane and landed at Ipihel. They were half-castes, had black hair, and were dressed in long robes and jackets. They showed themselves near a banyan tree and gave their orders to Gladys, a girl of twelve, who translated the words which the other young boys and girls heard without understanding. A sack of magic stones had to be laid at the foot of the banyan tree to ensure the coming of the divine children. One of the sons, Isac, was the mouthpiece of his brothers Jacob and Lastuan. He was to be king of the south-east part of Tanna. The other two were also to be kings.

Young boys and girls were dedicated to the new gods. They did not work, lived in a common dwelling,⁸ bathed together by day in the lake, and danced at night. They made night pilgrimages, sometimes to Green Point, where the John Frum movement had its beginning. Monday was their day of rest.

The remainder of the population continued as before with *kava*, dances and heavy buying in the stores. Someone went to ask the son of a Chinese merchant the price of his store, telling him it would pay him better to sell before he was compelled to leave with the Europeans.

Now suspicious of the Administration, the natives had taken certain precautions at Ipihel. The entrances to the village were guarded and strangers accompanied across.

After his inquiry, District Agent Nicol was inclined to think there was a certain difference between this movement and the happenings at Green Point. It seemed, in fact, that the new developments corresponded with a traditional rivalry between the east and west of Tanna. There were indications, too, of a hidden rôle by certain pagan chiefs.

In addition to new deportations to Port Vila, this affair was closed by one conviction for incest and six for adultery.

Again there was an appearance of calm, though the agitation was by no means suppressed. The myth of the might of John Frum grew. The American soldiers, who were now landing in the Hebrides, had come to help. A man was brought to trial⁹ for having said that Mount Tukosmeru was full of soldiers. When the day came, he proclaimed, the mountain would open so that the soldiers could go to the aid of John Frum. Some Tanna men, more politic, tried to give the district agent the impression that the movement was not directed against the Administration.

In October, 1943, the natives made an attempt on a big scale to convert their hopes into reality.

⁸ It is not certain that this common dwelling plays the part of the *bukumatula* of the Trobriand Islands. Life in common was spoken of, without making it clear whether there was official organization by couples.

⁹ A new officer, Mr. Rentoul, replaced Mr. Nicol, who went on leave. The latter returned just in time for new troubles.

THE SECOND JOHN FRUM

A man named Neloïag proclaimed himself John Frum, king of America and of Tanna, in the north of the island. He surrounded himself with an armed police, thanks to whom he requisitioned manual labour by means of village contingents. The people cleared a plateau at Ikelau with the intention of making an aerodrome which would enable American fliers to land. The district agent intervened by arresting Neloïag, who had gone to see him at his office. The station was then invaded by armed partisans come to release their leader. Mr. Nicol, very anxious, calmed them by promising them that an American officer would come, and obtained permission to telegraph to Vila, on the pretence of asking for a ship to leave the island. Headquarters sent him a military detachment with an American liaison officer. Arrests, demonstrations of armed force, speeches by the American, all the measures taken by an astute agent engendered a certain passing fear, but nothing overcame the native distrust. Neloïag, when sent to Vila, was pronounced to be insane and was later confined in the asylum in New Caledonia.

Revolution was now far advanced, and the threats of violence serious. Some of the pagan chiefs leaving their retreat had at first supported Neloïag. They later withdrew because they thought that the leaders were too much influenced by Mission teachings.

The calm seemed more lasting after this outbreak. The agent, however, employed a ruse to send Neloïag's wife to Vila, as the people of the north continued to pay homage to her as queen. She went of her own will to follow a lover, and was then compelled to stay. The movement remained underground and the Missions did not manage to take up their work.

AFFAIR OF TICKETS

On April 11, 1947, a group of natives invaded a European store at White Sands, leapt over the counter, and pulled the tickets off the goods. The instigator was Iokaeye, of the village of Latabü. He said he had received orders from a spirit and passed them on to other natives. This spirit, Isac, had the voice of a man; he was the son of John Frum, "our master." He spoke only to Iokaeye on Thursdays, towards evening, before sunset, in a secret place in the bush where the latter met him. In the first conversation he said he did not want the colours red, blue and yellow; red was the sign of blood, blue of sickness, and yellow of death. The women should no longer dye their grass skirts with these colours, the only two permitted were white and black.

After this revelation, Iokaeye and others decided on the raid on the shop during a *kava* evening at the club house of Latabü. Those guilty were arrested and tried, and the village of Latabü, as well as the neighbouring village of Loearfee, were declared out of bounds to the other islanders.

In the following October it seemed that another rising had taken place. The John Frumists in exile on Malekula had sent some coconuts, which were planted on the site of their houses, to Tanna. The Presbyterian missionary saw in this a

symbolic message. This is doubtful. The agent ordered the coconuts to be dug up. The generally accepted native version was that it was simply a matter of introducing a new variety of nut.

After this there were no events of importance. My personal information indicates that the people became afraid. The movement went underground, but it was still approved by public opinion.¹⁰

THE MOVEMENT OUTSIDE TANNA

Some hotheads had been sent into exile at Port Sandwich in Malekula to prevent them from having relations with Tanna. In spite of the coconuts, the measure was reasonably effective. But the leaders had given up none of their ideas and entered on active propaganda in the neighbourhood of their place of residence.

It is known that they held secret reunions and had succeeded in attracting supporters. But, perhaps because of the nearness of the French district office, they could not provoke any manifestation like those for which they had been responsible at Tanna. Their influence was stronger on the other side of the strait, on Ambrym. To the north of Port Sandwich, the villages of Dwen and Burbar were partly peopled by natives from Ambrym evacuated at the time of the great earthquake of 1913. Relations had always been frequent between these villages and the region of Craig Cove. A chain of "ropes of John Frum" was established between the two islands. An Ambrym man was the representative at Malekula of the exiles from Tanna, and a messenger went to and fro bearing directives to a local delegate in the Presbyterian village of Uro, near Craig Cove. It might perhaps be thought that the Tanna men, if they had given the impetus, were not responsible for all that happened on the Ambrym coast.

The village of Uro was organized in military fashion. A militia commanded by captains and lieutenants exercised daily and changed trousers at each meeting. A guard post was set up at all three entrances to the village, and it was necessary to give one's name, to be entered in a register, along with the reason for the visit or transit. The roads had been widened and cleaned and notices were erected, saying: "Stop," "Halt" and "Compulsory stop."

The people of Uro said they had no more need of missionaries, that they knew religion and would conduct their school by themselves. If the Administration was mentioned to them they said, "The 'Capman' will not come to seek us in the mouth of the volcano." Young boys played at putting lianas in crab-holes and at telephoning to Tamar, the ancestor-god of the volcano, speaking into tinned food tins.

An old woman, Limwelta, was said to have seen a light in a craggy portion of lava and had heard what seemed to be the sound of a bell. In the evening, the village went in procession to the music of the guitar and dancing, to the lava flow. They heard the sound of the bell and waited. As nothing happened they began to

¹⁰ Cf. the report of J. Kalsakau in the Appendix.

kill the cats, at the direction of the old woman. The dogs were tied up in the village during the evening and, of course, began howling.

The people paid their debts at the stores and threw their money into the sea. A new money, they said, would come to replace the old. The followers of John Frum would receive a great quantity of goods, brought by a white steamer which would come from America. The natives no longer cried out as before, "Sail oh," on the approach of a ship, but watchers took turns through the night to warn of the coming of the vessel. Everyone was disappointed when the *Polynesien* of the Messageries Maritimes, newly painted white, came to unload cargo at Craig Cove. The chief of Uro went to ask the priest if he was really sure the goods were for him.

The villages of Wakon, Sulol and Malver were affected after Uro. The followers of John Frum compared themselves to sweet potatoes. "At first there are only a few, then soon the island is covered with them." A song, the refrain of which was "*Kumala O, Kumala O, Kumala O,*" gave expression to this metaphor. But the propaganda did not attract the Catholics nor the Adventists.

From Craig Cove the trouble spread to the north coast of Ambrym, in the neighbourhood of Olal. As from Malekula to Ambrym, communication followed the traditional channels. The people of the village of Ranmuhu, of whom the greater part belonged to the abandoned village of Fanu, received it first. But it was Fanu which introduced the ceremonial of degree taking, *Mage ne Mal*, transmitted from Malekula, by the people of Dip Point.

Here the movement did not have time to gather much force. It also remained rather mysterious, probably because of the presence at Magam of the missionary Paton. It is known that gold pounds were thrown into the sea and that the bell of the bush village of Likon rang for nocturnal meetings. On the departure of the missionary at the beginning of 1949, the boys of the mission at Magam seriously debated whether it was right to have the women in common from now on. But the matter did not get beyond the stage of talk.

Again, starting from Port Sandwich, and following the traditional methods of intercourse, the movement reached Paama, a wholly Presbyterian island, where the natives began to rid themselves of their money and kill the pigs.

John Frum was known now in a general way on Malekula, Ambrym, Paama, Epi and Pentecost. Many people went to visit the exiles at Port Sandwich, who, if they did not adhere to the movement, regarded it not unfavourably. The exiles had great prestige.

THE CAUSES

Even on Tanna, John Frumism seemed to be directed against the Missions, more especially against the Presbyterian Mission, till then in the majority. The Rev. P. O'Reilly indicates in his article that the most active were above all the "half half" natives, that is, those who had been in touch with the Mission without completely giving up their pagan behaviour. However, the Presbyterian missionary declared that even his teachers took to the bush in 1941.

The Presbyterian Mission is mainly responsible for this state of affairs. The first to arrive, it acquired a preponderant position, which it has jealously guarded. A Mission tribunal, for instance, sentenced a pagan native to several months' imprisonment for going aboard a European ship. Later, English district agents were appointed, but often they could hardly be other than the secular arm of the Mission.

With the praiseworthy intention of preventing the alienation of native lands, the Mission had been given custody of the greater part of the coast ; but, as proprietor in the eyes of the law, it profited by expelling those whom it considered undesirable.

Convinced of the intellectual inferiority of the native, the Presbyterians neglected educational work. Very few of the people of Tanna could read and write, even in the vernacular. The natives blamed the Mission fiercely for this state of affairs. " All they teach us," they said, " is to pray, pray and sing, sing, sing all the time." After the second John Frum affair, the Agent Nicol tried to show the natives the advantage of the Presbyterian teaching, and when his questioners complained that the missionary taught only the Bible, he replied, " If you want more, you have only to contribute and pay for it."

Mission methods tended to uproot the new Christians. They were grouped in villages created all of a piece, where they were subjected to strict discipline and governed by chiefs nominated by the Mission, rarely from a traditional governing family (many were old teachers). A directing class of chiefs and teachers was thus formed under the auspices of Christianity, but it had no longer the authority of tradition, and it had not been permitted to have that of greater knowledge. An artificial edifice, the social framework created by the Mission, gave way before the first shock. The Christian leaders who retained their influence were those who actively supported the John Frum movement.

The other missions are too newly come to Tanna to bear the same responsibility. However, Nakomaha, one of the Lamap exiles, a former supporter of the Adventists, accused them of being as unmindful as the Presbyterians of temporal instruction for their church members.

This view is confirmed by a creditable native testimony, that of the Medical Practitioner, J. Kalsakau, in a report to the Administration dated April 1949. In English perhaps a little maladroit he develops the following case : the anti-white aspect of the John Frum movement is only a secondary phenomenon ; the underlying cause is a desire for education ; the natives could not get from religious schools anything which would raise the level of their economic life. This desire was behind the pre-war conversions to Adventism, and the new deception explains the neo-pagan movement.¹¹

¹¹ Cf. extracts from the report of J. Kalsakau in the Appendix. His testimony is also fully confirmed by that of the former temporary agent, Alexander Rentoul, " John Frum : Origin of New Hebrides Movement," letter to the Editor, *Pacific Islands Monthly*, Vol. XIX, No. 6, January, 1949, p. 31.

THE MOVEMENT

It is evident from documents that the initiative of Manehevi alone launched the movement in 1940. It is now known how favourable was the ground. This agitator had been publicly unmasked and put in the pillory, bound for twenty-four hours to a tree in front of the district office. In spite of this apparent victory for reason, the John Frum myth has still gained in strength and is now more than eight years old. We are faced with a phenomenon of collective belief, escaping all logic, ignoring deceptions and denials. Everything has happened as though a myth, launched by one person, has been endowed with a life of its own, developing in systematic fashion what, in its setting forth, was scarcely foreshadowed in the beginning.

We have as yet no notion of the internal evolution of this native society, which, from a tame life tinged strongly by puritanism, has thrown itself into a disconcerting adventure, apparently without issue. However, we can see certain social influences. To the rivalry between the different parties in Tanna there correspond the two aspects of the movement, John Frum and his sons. Personal action by the god is the first stage, then organization of the myth forming the social framework of the movement. John Frum becomes inaccessible and sends his sons to represent him. Their action is extended by those who receive the orders and the messengers who spread them through the island. Neither version absorbs the other, events being supported sometimes by the one, sometimes the other. The traditional element remains invariable. John Frum, alias Karaperamun, is always the god of Mount Tukosmoru, which will shelter the planes, then the soldiers.

After some years the Mission made a feeble attempt to regain its influence. This was enough to cause a spiritualistic quest in the framework of the ancestor cult, which had never been abandoned, even by the Christians. The symbolism of colours was an interesting and new development of this quest. The beginning of fanaticism may also be noted. The agent asked Iokaeye if he would kill a man when Isac, son of John Frum, ordered him to do so. The reply was: "Yes, John Frum is our master, I must obey him." The movement has hardened under repression.

By an inverse process, the content of the myth itself determines the form of certain actions. From belief in the planes of John Frum, we pass to the building of an aerodrome where they can land. This military aspect of the myth, and the actions corresponding to it, were the reaction to the severity of administrative sanctions.

John Frum, the modern god, must give a body of doctrine to his subjects. Among the Melanesians ideology is possible only in so far as it is expressed by external manifestations—hence the new symbolism, not corresponding to anything known about the traditional symbolism of colours.

The hidden rôle of the pagans is known. They sell *kava* to the John Frumists. Suspicion fell on certain chiefs who were thought to be active behind the scenes. One of agent Nicol's reports gives details. In 1912 the pagan chiefs of Tanna agreed to try to stop the Presbyterian propaganda and its attempts to abolish pagan customs. The intervention of two of these chiefs at Port Vila was also the origin of

the nomination of the first district agent for Tanna. Neloig's father was one of the signatories of this agreement. A pagan also, Neloig proclaimed himself John Frum, sure of the agreement of the other pagan chiefs. But his subsequent conduct alienated their support.

A former Adventist teacher of Tanna gave me a version of events which goes to confirm this view. According to his statement, the John Frum affair had been begun by a pagan chief of the south in order to test the strength of the Mission. If it withheld the shock successfully the action could be considered valid. But it failed.

In the report quoted above, the agent considers the disappointment of the pagans in the beginning of the movement. They would have liked to join it, but the disrupted ways of the ex-Presbyterians scarcely fitted into the ceremonial complexity of the pagan traditions. However, despite the suspicion of the old, the pagan element became more and more active. Under cover of the general nationalism of "man Tanna," a wary struggle for power went on between the different districts. He who to-day aided the repression was to-morrow on the side of the rebels—if his rival was removed from the scene.

Outside Tanna, the movement has infected only natives of the Presbyterian communion. Others may act as intermediaries but refrain from taking part in collective activity. It can be said that, where they are strong, Catholics and Adventists have displayed restiveness, which does not imply hostility, their attitude being rather one of waiting.

It may be useful to take a more political view of things. The phenomena of collective belief are evidently partly due to contagion, but they correspond to something deeper. The myth of John Frum expresses, in a population statistically in the ascendant, the bringing into consciousness of the opposition existing between native interests, on the one hand, and those of the Mission and the whites generally on the other. The native analysis is directed more particularly towards the past rôle of the Mission, but the movement is twofold. It aims first to get rid of the totalitarian grip¹² of Presbyterian Christianity, then to eliminate the European merchants, who are supposed to be guilty of exploitation.¹³ The aim is systematic non-co-operation, abandonment of the churches, scorn of European money. Repression alone has given rise to attempts at military organization.

It remains to anticipate the growth of a political struggle on the European model. It cannot be said that its realization is at hand, but the outlines are there. Certain half-caste elements of European status know of the movement and seek to get a standing in it. Beneficiaries of a great superiority in political education, they will be marked out for leadership.

¹² "Emprise totalitaire," claiming to be applicable to all aspects of daily life, individual or collective. The expression has been used already in this connection by the Protestant missionary theologian Kraemer.

¹³ The merchants are thought to be responsible for variations in the price of copra.

CONCLUSION

The Condominium Administration has limited itself so far to repressive action. At first, arrests led to administrative deportation without trial. Not till after the departure of agent Nicol were natives implicated in the movement brought to regular trial.

Various agents tried to reason with the natives but clashed with their suspicion and disbelief. Besides, these attempts could not bring results. The myth of John Frum expresses the desire for independence as much as the will to organize to obtain it; it provides the framework which allows the people to act. If they abandoned it, they would have to seek other ways of achieving their aim. In this connection should be noted what J. Kalsakau has written about a movement which arose on Efate—a part of the population wanted to go over to the Adventists in the hope of getting facilities for education. The movement was blocked when the English Residency decided to send some young people to schools in Fiji.

The John Frumists would like to be more radical, but they have been curbed recently on Ambrym. The native church, in theory autonomous for more than a year past, has become so in reality with the departure of the missionary, who has returned to Australia. A teacher has taken over the direction of Presbyterian affairs for the whole island—formerly shared by two missionaries. Free from European restraint or control, he has been able to take the faithful in hand again. Much might be said on the methods and the content also of his action, but it seems that he will be successful.

These two examples indicate the possibility of a twofold direction for positive action by the Administration.

The organization of sufficiently comprehensive educational facilities would make individuals less receptive to irrational contagious collective action. In conjunction with the granting on the local plane of a certain administrative autonomy, it would allow in its formation for the satisfaction of the native elite, while weakening the importance of the rivalries between districts.

The tendency of the John Frum movement is towards the formation of a neo-pagan national theocracy, replacing the foreign Presbyterian theocracy. The best antidote seems to be a democratization of the native community life.

This programme may seem daring and difficult to carry out in the New Hebrides, where it has been impossible hitherto to do anything for the mass of the native people. The alternative is a new movement, more political and more effective, which would unite John Frum in the south with the Naked Cult of Santo.

In accordance with a new administrative policy, all the John Frum leaders imprisoned have been recently released and allowed to return to Tanna. Hopes for a better issue will be sustained if the Condominium Government can carry out the liberal educative policy for which plans have been laid.

JEAN GUIART.

APPENDIX

8/4/49.

To Resident Commissioner for
French Republic, Vila, N.H.

From J. Kalsakau,
N.M.P. Loanegou,
Tanna, N.H.

Jonfroom. There is no doubt that everything in the world has a cause and an aim follows by action. So Jonfroom movement has procedures. The word anti-white which many people fixed in their mind that it was the cause of Jonfroom is completely false. Their action taken against the white settlers on the island was originating from the cause and was not the origin of the movement. The origin of the movement or the cause started more than thirty years ago. This same spirit has been occurred locally in villages from other islands in the New Hebrides, from time to time. I will say one here for example. Presumably in 1931, two school (christian) lads from my island (Fila) were trying to leave the Presbyterian Mission to Seventh Day Adventist Mission. They were complaining bitterly that our Presbyterian Mission was only teaching the Bible lesson and failed to teach any other subjects from which to uplift them in their worldly life. But as my father had taken prompt action against the matter, helped by Mr. Seagoe, the ex B.D.A., Vila, the lads were prevented from their attempt, and as the British Resident Commissioner had decided to send some of us to Fiji for schooling, the spirit is now completely eradicated from the island. The same spirit was the cause of Jonfroom on Tanna. The natives who were born as members of the Presbyterian Church, left the Church (most of them) and joined the S.D.A.M., but they found the same teaching, so they had to find some way to relieve the pressure. Some people may think that kava was the cause of Jonfroom, but kava was really acted as a sugar-coated and a stimulant for the movement, to attract people away from the religion of the Church, and was not the cause of the movement. The movement may be dying down, but the two main rules, what they called "Jonfroom's law," namely: (i) people must not go to school (church), and (ii) people must drink kava. These rules are still strongly carried out at present. So the aim and the action taken have come from the cause of one focus. Therefore, Jonfroom is simply a strike for EDUCATION, and it can be said with sufficient accuracy that the spirit have arise from the school (church) people, and not by heathen natives.

J. KALSAKAU.

TRANSLATION OF LETTER FROM PRIVATE JOE NALPIN TO HIS FATHER SOMO
AND TO SAM NAKO, CHIEF AT LENAKEL, TANNA

Dear Father Somo,

I am Joe. I forgot something I had to tell you I say to you Somo and Sam Nako that I come here to Vila. The government at Tanna tied you up but that is nothing. Do not forget the tobacco which came to me from John Frum and Nauka. John Frum wanted Nauka to show him the road to come out. Nauka did not know the road so he sent the tobacco to me, to you Somo and to Sam Nako. I made the road so that all the chiefs could go and shake hands with John Frum because I was not there but Karaua softened his heart and showed the chiefs John Frum. John Frum only spoke to them because he did not see me with them. He asked Karaua where I was and Karaua told him I was in Vila.

John Frum and I were together and we arranged that all the others should come to Vila. We talked together about them (the chiefs) and we arranged that the chiefs should follow us when they came out of jail.

John Frum and I came to Sidni (mission village near Lenakel) to look for a place for a house. John Frum pointed where his house was to stand just alongside mine but he did not describe what kind of house. So listen well you Somo and Sam Nako; Nako will provide three men, Natoga will provide three men: Bangor will send three men to build the house and Sidni will provide the food for the workers. You are not to say that the house is for John Frum or for me but just say it is a company or a communal house.

We two are only waiting for the chiefs to go back to Tanna and when the house is ready you will send word to us and John Frum and I will come to the house you will have prepared at Sidni. Then John Frum will gather the white men and talk to them. He will send his son to America to bring the king. You must not be afraid. He showed me aeroplanes at Lonopina (name for Tukosmeru, the highest mountain in Tanna) as thick as the bush.

You two must conceal the contents of this letter. This is not my letter, John Frum is sitting by me as I write.

This is the end of my letter but John Frum's is underneath.

john the great

my brother here is joe: my name is karapanaman

every thing is near to me

see us two joe captain cockle shell.

I am joe. I am saying to you two brothers and father that this spirit writing speaks to you these four lines only which you see. See how his writing has not capital letters. He says cockle shell. The meaning of this is that we two fit like the two halves of a cockle shell. Everything will come from Sidni Jonfrum wants you to answer this letter by the Morinda.

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