

Part II

The Transformation of Ocean Island

1. Introduction

In the period ~~und~~er discussion, Ocean Island was radically transformed: it became a "company town," a social part-system of which the Banabans were only one element. Because of space and our focus, I must ignore much that happened, and many structural features of the situation. In the balance of this paper, anthropology and history become inseparable.

In their 1932 article, the Maudes wrote (1932:262-3):

"Except for the occasional visits of whalers and a few trading schooners, there was but little contact with Europeans before the discovery of phosphate in 1900 [fn. om.], though a number of deserters from whaling ships lived as beach-combers among the natives. As far back as the 'seventies,' however, five black-birding ships visited the island, and, finding the islanders in the throes of a severe drought and consequent famine, transported between 1,000 and 1,500 of them to Honolulu and Tahiti. [Maude and I agree that this number is probably a gross overestimate; the beach-combers apparently left at the same time--MGS.] This terrible famine, resulting in an enormous reduction of the population of the island through deaths and migration, had the effect of severely dislocating the social organization of the Banabans and caused many customs to decay even before the coming of the Europeans employed in the phosphate industry.....By 1914 the population had sunk to little over 400, but since that year there has been a steady increase, the 1931 Census giving a total of 729."

I have not yet elaborated upon the drought problem. The drought of the 1870's was by all accounts disastrous (see Grimble 1957). Yet it also seems likely that the island was subjected to periodic droughts and their associated population reduction; any social structure to survive must have been flexible. Droughts were probably a constant feature of the Banaban experience. The natural environment was a source of great uncertainty; after 1900, the social environment occupied that position.

In concluding their 1932 paper, after describing the descent and land inheritance systems from which so much of the last section is derived, the Maudes (*ibid.*:292) wrote:

"Many of the customs described in the preceding pages are no longer, or are fast ceasing to exist. The hamlets have disappeared and all islanders now live in the four villages of Tabwewa, Tabiang, Uma, and Buakonikai. Owing to the policy of the government the chiefs [described by me as 'elders'--MGS] have been divested of such powers as they formerly possessed, although their personal influence is still considerable. The islanders are now ruled by a Native Government consisting of a Magistrate, Chief of Kaubure, Chief of Police and Scribe, aided by four village police. The rights of Tabwewa have been rendered largely obsolete with the changing of conditions on the island and are seldom now exercised. The sitting-places in the maneabas [meeting houses] have long since been forgotten except by the very oldest men and women and the uma-n anti [spirit houses] have disappeared, only their sites being remembered. The kouti magic is still, however, performed surreptitiously on the eastern shores, and an enthusiastic revival of the traditional games took place in December, 1931, during our stay on the island.

"The interests of the younger generation are fast becoming centered around the Mission Church and the British Phosphate Commissioner's Trade

Store, and their lands are of little importance except as a source of income, when sold to the Phosphate industry. But in spite of the drastic ~~re-orientation of their lives which has been crowded into the last thirty years, the descent system, which weathes were placed on the head of the~~ years the Banabans retain a courtesy and independence of thought which makes them one of the pleasantest races to live with and augurs well for their future in the difficult times ahead."

I would of course assert that the lands were of more than economic importance, and memories have lingered on with more tenacity than many expected in the 1930's. We must now backtrack somewhat, even before then.

2. Christianity: Land and Differentiation

In 1885 the first Protestant missionary arrived on Banaba; an American on a ship of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (Boston) left a Gilbertese teacher.⁸ Conversion was by no means fast or even, and in the 1930's Maude says there were a few declared pagans. But by that time, the fabric of Banaban society and culture had changed.

Much work still needs to be done on the fragmentary information about aboriginal Banaban myth and religion.⁹ Spiritual figures were associated with descent units and thus localities, and a few seemed to have been recognized as having some kind of direction over the island as a whole. Some current sources quote an old Banaban phrase: "Banaba is shut," meaning that it was protected from the outside. To penetrate the inside without disaster befalling him, the visitor had to go through the "ritual machine," i.e., the descent system. When ¹weathes were placed on the head of the visitor by the descent unit which had the right, it was a sign to the protective spirits that the visitor was acceptable and should be spared.

There are certain general considerations which should be stated on theoretical grounds: they relate to land not immediately, but ultimately in the context of political activity. First, the very activities of missionary personnel, whether people were converted or not, probably brought to awareness and thus systematized the native structure; it could more easily be contemplated as an object. Christianity decreased the "embeddedness" of the cultural system in the social system. With the literacy missionaries taught, it presented a symbolic system of which any person, in any place, could partake. To accept or reject would have required a significant alteration in the native structure. The Banaban religious system was tied to Banaba and its lands; Christianity, of course, was not.

Social structurally, the church became something far from what had existed before. It introduced a non-ascriptively recruited, continuing, solidary, exclusive-membership group organized on quasi-bureaucratic lines. It brought a theology stressing the individual's relationship to God, but defining religious action also in terms of strong groups. It carried a universal morality, which in the long run was of central importance, as it meant that kinsman, Banaban, Governor and Parliament were bound by a single moral system. It provided a unified moral means of envisioning the world as a whole. And that this systematic "breaking into" the modern world was in moralistic terms has its effects today.

The local church was part of an international network, and as religion became more differentiated from kinship, religious roles became more differentiated from other roles. But the idea of Banaban progress--probably a new idea--became linked with Christianization (as was of course the case elsewhere), and Christianization with the church which brought it about. (The idea of progress presupposes a tension and thus a marked differentiation between social and symbolic systems.) Banabans contrast the pre-and

post-mission phases as "the time of darkness, ignorance" and "the time of light, understanding," respectively.

What were some of the more immediate consequences, and implications for the descent and land system? The religious base was to become undermined. In 1886, the missionary was taken into a water-cave by a female guide; in 1900, two woman took Albert Ellis, the discoverer of the phosphate, into a cave.¹⁰ Further aspects of changes have been described in a previous paper (Silverman 1967).

In 1896, the second Gilbertese missionary on Banaba was ordained--a sign, no doubt, of what a native could accomplish--and became head of the local mission. Two Christian Banaban families who had been living on Kusaie, an American Board center in the Carolines, returned to help with the mission work, after a reported absence of twenty-five years. By 1897 there were four families teaching in the four villages; new churches and schoolhouses had been built in each.¹¹

This association of the church with the village is an important one, to which we will have cause to return. An observer in 1902-3 reported that church services were rotated among the different villages on Sundays.¹² To get ahead of the historical development: The villages eventually had both 'government' and church meeting-houses, and the church began to take over some of the functions of the descent system, both in transmitting basic messages, and in later becoming the new "ritual machine" through which things were put. Some leading Banabans told Albert Ellis in 1900 that they didn't want any Catholic priests brought to Ocean Island.¹³ Thus the notion of "Banaba is shut" may have been accomodated to apply to the Protestant church, and to this day its adherents feel that the "lineal descendant" of the American Board church (the American Board transferred its activities to the

London Missionary Society in 1917, and in Fiji the latter gave its work over to the Fiji Methodist church) is the only true Banaba religion.

The political implications of Christianization were alluded to above. The congregational form of organization for the church is easily generalized to an autonomy model for politics. In 1907, after the phosphate had been under operation for seven years (and Gilbertese laborers had been brought to Ocean Island), London Missionary Society officials observed a "wave of revolt" against discipline and work in the Gilberts. Ellis ascribed it to "swell-headedness" because of wages from Ocean Island. The phosphate company had difficulty getting recruits. The Gilbertese were demanding higher wages, higher prices for their copra, and some traders were boycotted, according to mission sources.¹⁴ The economic change because of Ocean Island was undoubtedly involved. The Banabans themselves may not have been unaware of what was going on in the Gilberts. But another element, only to increase, was probably the simple fact that dissenting Protestants will be dissenting Protestants. The undermining of the colonial system had begun.

Even as the church moved into a position where it performed some of the same functions as the descent system, the symbolic system was still left dangling. There was a difficult problem of integration. Land no longer could have the same position of ultimacy that it had before. The indigenous focus on land was particularizing, as was the concept of 'Banaban Custom,' which became elaborated. Christianity pulled in a universalizing direction. A solution to this problem appeared much later.

3. Mining and Colonial Beginnings: Land, Money, and Authority

Some Banabans say that an old missionary prophesied that the rock of their land would be turned into bread. It was, with the discovery of suspected deposits of phosphate of lime by Albert Ellis and his associates in 1900.

Ellis and some others arrived on the island, confirmed the deposits, and signed an agreement with the alleged "King" of Ocean Island, and some "chiefs" for monopoly rights on the mining of phosphate, for an annual rental of £ 50.¹⁵ A contemporary source indicated that the "highest chief" signed, but others refused, indicating that the land was the people's.¹⁶

The question of kings, queens and chiefs is one which will recur below; thus I quote from a pre-war document¹⁷ probably by Arthur Grimble, or someone closely associated with him: The author had discussed the Banaban legend that there was an indigenous group centered at Tabwewa, and the descendants of migrants from Beru in the Gilberts (the ancestors of the other village districts) who divided up the rest of the land among them.

"Where the two parties really ~~really~~ join issue is...on the answer to this question: 'What became of Tabwewa when the Beruans divided up the land?'

"The Tabwewa people claim that their ancestors, being the original stock of Banaba, were not only left undisturbed in their own district by the newcomers, but also as by right assumed the overlordship of the whole place with its inhabitants both old and new. They were in the position of chiefs welcoming the overseas strangers, and hospitably allowing them to settle on the surplus land of the island. But neither then nor thereafter did they lose the sovereignty of Banaba. To support this claim, they refer to the rights and privileges enjoyed by them to this day in respect of the foreshores of the island: Any turtle, porpoise, whale or urua-fish stranded on the beaches or shoals of the island belong by common consent to the Tabwewa folk. If a strange ship arrives, the Tabwewa canoes have the prior right of going to board her, and the Tabwewa families take any presents that may be given by the strangers. These rights transcend all rights of other individuals or families to the various divisions of the foreshore.

"The people of the other villages admit that Tabwewa has these rights upon their foreshores, but they argue that they are held as mere concessions of courtesy from the Beruan conquerors. They say that as their ancestors, on first arrival from Beru, sought wives from among the Tabwewans, they could not with any decency make a clean sweep of the island. The Tabwewans were therefore left in peaceful occupation of their own district, and, as a reward for their reasonable spirit generally toward the invaders, were allowed to keep certain foreshore rights which they had always enjoyed. [See pp. 17-18, and Maude & Maude 1932: 293-6, for another version.] That they have been allowed to keep them to this day proved no title to sovereignty of the island. As for the Kingship of Banaba, there never was a king.

"All the social evidence seems to bear out this statement of the Uma, Tabiang and Buakonikai people, that there never was a king of all Banaba, as we understand kingship. That is to say, there was never a chief so powerful that he could dictate to the inhabitants in all matters of daily life. Certainly, the Tabwewa family has enjoyed certain privileges which are usually associated with kingship; but it has never in the course of its history been in a position to influence the domestic life of the other village-districts of the island. In all matters connected with land, inheritance, marriage, games, food-getting, and so on, each village has been its own master, has had its own local chiefs (elders--MGS), and has gone its own way, uninfluenced by outside authority.

"Until the coming of the white man we may therefore regard Banaba as an island divided pretty equally among four [or five--MGS] small communities, allied to one another by race and marriage, but politically independent. One of these communities, Tabwewa, has the prestige of being descended from the original swarm that migrated into the island from the west [a Grimble theory--MGS];

and it held certain immemorial privileges on the foreshore, which override the local claims of other holders....

"It was the coming of the Pacific Phosphate Company which really dragged the question of kingship into prominence, and made a sore point of it.

"As recorded above, the Tabwewa canoes had the prior right of boarding all strange ships, and receiving presents from them. So when the vessel carrying the first representatives of the Company arrived, it was a small fleet of Tabwewan canoes which boarded her.

"The immediate business of the Company's people was to get into touch with the influential men of the island. The first question they put to the Tabwewans who came aboard was therefore 'Who's your King?', or words to that effect. Of course, the Tabwewans produced one of their own chiefs... as a matter of fact, this man was not even the senior chief of Tabwewa, being merely the husband of...the hereditary high chiefess [a leading elder of The Upland coalition--MGS] of that village community. However, he was taken then and thereafter to be the King of all Banaba, and the fact that he, as King, together with four other natives, purporting to represent all Banaba, put their marks to one or two early documents, considerably facilitated the negotiations of the Company in London to acquire a monopoly license to work the phosphate deposit on Ocean Island.

"The Banabans soon became aware of the feeling of the white men on the island, that Tabwewa was the home of the kingly line and the centre of native politics. Tabwewa naturally enjoyed the mistake, and during the course of years, as the rumour became more and more established (being even accepted semi-officially by the Government), the Tabwewan people began to feel that there really might be some truth in it after all. Uma, Tabiang and Buakonikai contradicted the claim whenever they could, but nobody was sufficiently interested in a matter that seemed so purely academic to go deeply into it; and

no concrete case of any importance arose to force the administration to take note of the muddle. Thus Tabwewa has now reached the stage of definitely claiming the kingship of the island."

How the phosphate company obtained its license in London is beyond the scope of this paper, and has been treated by Langdon (1965-6); a few details of licenses are given in Appendix A.

An associate of Ellis' reported that the "King" at a meeting distributed items he had purchased, but the Buakonikai and Uma people would accept nothing since they wanted to sell directly to the phosphate company ships.¹⁸ Three days later the associate convened a meeting in Uma because the Uma and Buakonikai people had indicated some confusion on what had gone on. It emerged there that the "King's" so-called authority was really limited to Tabwewa and Tabiang. Difficulties were created when he withdrew the balance of the company's rental; his purchases went only to Tabwewa and Tabiang people. The report is somewhat unclear here, but the confusion is not. The company employee indicated that he explained the object of the money payment to the "King," and the people seemed content. There is another company-based report that at a meeting the people said the so-called "King" had no right to make an agreement, but the people did ratify the agreement, the rent to be divided in half between the "King" and the people. In spite of the

In spite of the question above, it is difficult to specify exactly what the position was of the person identified as "King". It is tempting to see him as a member of a Tabwewa descent-unit which had the prior rights of dealing with visiting vessels.

Eliot, a later pro-Bqnaban Resident Commissioner, wrote as follows (1938; quoted in Langdon 1965-6:45):

"The chiefs of the island were feted [in the Pacific Islands Company's ship Archer] and a paper was obtained from them giving the company rights to raise and export phosphate from the island for 999 years for the ludicrous seem of £ 50 a year, or trade goods to that amount (at the company prices, of course).... About 1916, when I started to unearth this story, which is now broadcast for the first time, I took statements from three of the chiefs who were feted in the SS Archer in 1900. The company had tried to make out that the chiefs were the representatives for all island land held 'in common,' and could therefore lease the whole island on behalf of their subjects. Not only in Ocean Island, but throughout Polynesia, every family owns its own land. A chief has no power over any land beyond that of his own family. When it became known on the island that the company's representatives had made some 'paper' which was said to bear the marks of their chiefs, the islanders repudiated the document, but the Government gave them no assistance. At that time there was no Government representative on the island."

In any event, it is unlikely that the people fully understood the terms of the "agreement," nor the terms of the sales and leases of land which went on apace; the ability of the company's interpreter has also been questioned.

Ellis and his crew surveyed the island, and were busy buying and leasing land (after 1902, only leases were possible). The Banabans surely had clear ideas about land boundaries, but this activity on the part of the phosphate company may have "fixed" the nature of land even more. At the beginning, people were apparently paid in cash orders on the phosphate company steamer, trips to the Gilberts, and later, money. And indeed, to the great complex of which land was the center, the phosphate activity added another element: MONEY. I will not go into the implications of money as a medium of exchange here.

People were not only receiving goods and/or money for rights to their land; they were also collecting the phosphate rock and selling it to the company. Even the mission teacher joined in. The teacher was at Uma. Ellis wrote in his diary: ¹⁹ "Received a present of fowls and fruit from the teacher; the natives of this village are apparently most anxious to satisfy us in regard to land etc., and probably are jealous of Tapi^{wa} [Tabwewa] village for having received so much of our attention hitherto. There is a great rivalry between the two places, which no doubt will help matters with us." Just after the alleged "King" and a "Chief" had made the initial agreement, they insisted "that our prospecting party must not stay at the Southern Village [Uma], but must go round to the King's Village; this is owing to there being considerable rivalry between the two places, it being said that the Teacher at South Village was trying to undermine the King's authority." It is also suggested that village rivalries were exploited to motivate people to collect more phosphate rock.

Ellis had told the people that all could work, they would be paid for their phosphate and fish, a store would be provided, and even water condensers brought to the island. Especially with the memory of the last drought in their minds, it must have seemed to some as if utopia had arrived. Later, the phosphate industry became much more highly mechanized, the Bahabans worked mainly in quasi-white collar jobs and sold fish, and Ocean Island had a hospital and a school.

It is unclear exactly when British colonial authority was first asserted. By 1903, some form of Native Government along the lines prevailing in the Gilberts had been established (see Maude, quoted above, p. 23). Lundsgaarde's recent paper (1968) on the transformations in Gilbertese law makes it unnecessary to go into the details of this system, since at present I have little independent information on it for Ocean Island. An observer reported

in 1902-3 that the "king" and "chiefs" were appointed to represent the four villages, and another chief was scribe. In 1903 there was a complaint from the phosphate company that the Native Government could not enforce the instructions given from Telfer-Campbell, the Resident Commissioner at Tarawa; there was no superior authority backing them. Telfer-Campbell visited Ocean Island in 1905 (he had probably made a previous visit), and wrote that there were native complaints on land acquired by the company; they were not serious, he said, but showed that the "natives are placing a fictitious value on their land (Langdon²⁰ 1965-6:50)." By this point, perhaps, the honeymoon was over, or almost.

Maude notes that in the early days, the company's relations with the Banabans were on a personal basis; the traditional leaders were dealt with, and they maintained their support for the company even when minor troubles arose.²¹

When the Government came, it assumed responsibility for labor relations and relations between the company and the Banabans. (In 1907, Ocean Island became the headquarters or capital of the Gilbert & Ellice Islands Protectorate.) If the company had difficulties it did not have to deal with the Banabans directly as in the past, but could take those difficulties to the government, which often decided on issues without consulting the Banabans.

Maude observes that as things developed, the Ocean Island Native Government was much less of a determining entity than its counterparts in the Gilberts. Its major role was to maintain law and order under various government regulations. The Court sessions (see Lundsgaarde 1968) were often attended by a European official, and the European government was referred to in even minor matters. The Native Government also acted as a channel of communication from the colonial administration to the people.

To review and make a few new points: The phosphate company came; a link between land and money was forged; there were some objections to the manner in which the company operated, and a little later certain anti-authority actions were taking place in the Gilberts; the descent system, probably already undermined by Christianity, became implicated both in company and government activities through recognition of representative figures, and the "kingship confusion" arose. Selling land to the company, and working for it, may have gnawed at the kindred system, as the younger generation was employed. Through all this the Banabans were probably compelled to think more of what their "system" was about, and with their recognition as a distinct entity by the company and government, the latter setting up an administration, the "community" was on the road to becoming more of an entity than it had been before. I note again the request in 1900 to keep Catholic priests out, reported by Ellis.

There is another equally crucial area, about which the data is frustratingly fragmentary. The Maudes observed that there was an in-gathering of people from the scattered hamlets into four villages. The formation of centralized villages was the general policy of the Protectorate Government. Some current sources say this occurred between 1905 and 1909. One old Banaban man says that people were free to move into the villages in the company's time. Another, an old man of Tabiang, claims that people could move into Tabiang village if they had a Tabiang ancestor, but there were arguments at the time. An old woman recounts that people moved onto the land of their ^{kinemen, with their} kinsmen's permission, but special arrangements had to be made regarding the use of trees growing on the land; some made those arrangements, others still went out to their own lands for fruits.

Yet mission records identify the existence of four villages, before the phosphate enterprise and colonization began.²³ What seems likely is that the sites of the villages (few if not all) were the sites of already-existing contiguous and, in the descent system, important hamlets. They became the core of the newly centralized villages, reinforced by the location of the churches, which attained an increasing importance. The descent-locality system was probably by this time being pushed into a differentiated symbolic system, with an uncertain relationship to the present, and to the individual's status and social personality.

And the village as a locality became more highly differentiated from the village-district as a descent unit. At the same time, some of the functions of the descent system became distributed between the church and the administration. And, as will become evident in later discussion, the "community" became more of a self-conscious and political community as it became less autonomous.

4. The First Concerted Opposition: Land and Political Consciousness

Many of the "phases" of Banaban history being identified here have to do with the phosphate operation, especially times when there were large leases or changes in the existing system. This manner of dealing with the situation derives not only from an analytic focus on land. The "phosphate history" provides many of the high-points of the Banabans' sense of their own history. It provides a kind of political chronology, as genealogies provided a kind of chronology.

Robert Langdon wrote of the complaints about the company's handling of the land to which Telfer-Campbell, the Resident Commissioner, responded in 1905 (see p. 34). Langdon goes on (1965-6:50-51):

"By 1909 the complaints had reached the ears of members of the House of Commons. From then until a few days before the outbreak of World War I, the Colonial Secretary and his understudy were faced with an almost constant barrage of embarrassing questions on Ocean Island. Meanwhile, the Ocean Islanders had become so bitter over the ungenerous treatment they had received from the phosphate company that they refused to let the company have any more land. The Colonial Office resolved the impasse in 1913 by sending out Edward Carlyon Eliot as Resident Commissioner with authority to negotiate a considerably better deal for the Ocean Islanders. The result was that from then on the company had to pay the Ocean Islanders £40-£60 an acre for land, plus a royalty of 6d. per ton on all phosphate exported, and compensation for food-producing trees destroyed. (The royalty was paid into a trust fund, held for the Ocean Islanders by the Government; a royalty of 6d. per ton was also paid to the GEIP Government itself.)

"Two years later, apparently to guard against the day when land on Ocean Island might have to be acquired compulsorily, the Colonial Office got Eliot to take the necessary steps to turn the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate into the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony.....

"Meanwhile, neighboring Nauru where the phosphate company had begun production in 1907, had been taken from the Germans by Australian forces as a prize of war. After the war ended, and Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain had obtained a mandate over the island from the League of Nations, the three governments combined to buy all rights, titles and interests of the phosphate company on Nauru, Ocean Island and elsewhere for £3,531,500, and to work the islands jointly.....

"...[The] Ocean Islanders and Nauruans could not have noticed much difference in the new state of affairs, especially as many members of the phosphate company simply moved over to work for the new set-up, the British Phosphate Commission."

I will expand first on some of Langdon's points. It appears that by 1909 the Banabans became aware that almost the whole island was covered with phosphate, and were concerned that if operations continued, the island would become uninhabitable. At the same time, their awareness of the value of the phosphate had increased, and there are ^{hints} ~~limits~~ that legal action was even considered. Eliot (1938:139) states that the company "stank in the nostrils of the landowners," and at sometime during this period, as an expression of their dissatisfaction, they refused to work for the company.

Eliot's predecessor as Resident Commissioner, Quayle-Dickson, was very sympathetic to Banaban interests, and discussed with the Banabans a scheme to confine mining activities to certain areas. At this time meetings were held with the Banabans as a group, in some way, and an official who looked into the situation in 1909 reports having received a deputation on the land issue.

Either before or during discussions on the new land arrangement took place, one datum suggests that the question of moving the site of Uma village arose (whether on Company or Government initiative is unclear), but the villagers refused, apparently presenting a united front on the issue. ²⁴ And this seems to be the transformation which occurred at this time: The Banabans were recognizing that they had a common interest vis-à-vis the phosphate company and the government. A new dimension was being added to the Banaban community as a community, although to what degree is unclear. Land, as a symbol, had expanded in its area of meaning.

A deadlock was reached in 1911. Quayle-Dickson argued for a higher price, confinement of mining as the Banabans wanted to preserve the island for the future, and also a Trust Fund for the purchase of a new island. Higher authorities seemed to look upon the matter as one which they and

company officials should decide among themselves, the role of the Resident Commissioner being that of convincing the Banabans that their decision was right. Even when the sites for two mining areas were agreed upon between Quayle-Dickson and the company, the Banabans wouldn't yield. The Banabans were questioning the interpretation of the terms of the 1900 "agreement," Quayle-Dirkson was transferred, according to Eliot, by company pressure (Eliot 1938).²⁵

Eliot's role was discussed by Langdon in the quotation above. Eliot indicated that he convinced the younger Banabans that the terms he brought would make the community rich; they agreed although there were some hold-outs in the older generation. Eliot also wanted a Trust Fund, and the contentment of ~~mining~~^{mining} so that the villages would not be ~~encroached~~^{encroached} upon prematurely. He won out after what Grimble (1952) describes as "official misunderstanding."

Rotan Tito, a Banaban leader for some time, has given the following version of the events of this period (written in 1965).²⁶ I will not assess the legitimacy of the claim; it certainly has a reality as an input to the current political scene, which will be discussed later.

Rotan claims that the buying and leasing of pieces of land "continued until 1912 when the Company and the Government saw the inconvenience that the Company had to face in taking phosphate from those lands, as these lands did not adjoin its already acquired mining area. The Government and the Company could also see the difficulty that the dissenting landowners who did not alienate their lands were going to face, as their lands would be left isolated in the middle of the mining area and access to them would inevitably be impossible. In the middle of 1912 a decision was made by the Resident Commissioner then Mr. E.C. Eliot (Later C.B.E.) that: (a) Sales of land by individuals to the Company should cease; (b) lands which would

be required for mining by the Company were to be allocated to adjoin its already acquired lands; (c) all land not within the allocated mining area must be returned to the owners....

"In November 1913, a decision was reached between the Government and the Company and they made an agreement before the Resident Commissioner (Mr. E.C. Eliot) under the Union Jack inside the meeting house at Tabiang village."

Among the terms of the Agreement which Rotan mentions, in addition to the financial ones, are the following: "There will be no right for any landowner to sell his or her land after the execution of this Agreement. There will be no right for the Company to purchase lands outside the mining area. The Company's limit in digging will be twelve feet. There will be a limit of the export of phosphate from the mining area by the Company which was 300,000 cars, i.e., 300,000 tons (as the landowners did not know what a ton was but they only knew a car which was filled with phosphate from their lands)....

"There were two families who refused to give their lands on the amount of compensation agreed to by their fellow landowners. The Resident Commissioner with the leaders of the BPC accepted their wish and their lands were left unmined in the middle of the mining area of 1913; they were dug later in 1947 with the approval of the descendants of the original owners and they were fortunate to receive £200 as the compensation per acre and not £60.

"The terms of the 1913 Agreement...have been verbally passed down to us through our forefathers. It was most unfortunate for us the present generation that our forefathers had unwisely returned the copy of the Agreement to Government for safekeeping. We had since then repeatedly requested the Government to supply us with a copy but they had not given us any....

"...[The] management of affairs maintained from 1913 to 1926 strictly followed the terms of the Agreement, without the introduction of any local executive body for the purposes of altering the terms of the Agreement," until 1927 (see below).

A mission source records that at one point when Eliot was in Fiji, the "Old Men" of Banaba wrote to him of an official who was not "keeping the rules;" Eliot returned and removed him.²⁷ Thus by this time the Banabans' sophistication in handling the colonial government bureaucracy was increasing.

Quayle-Dickson and Eliot were apparently exceptions to the general rule. Both colonial officers and the Banabans, the latter at least by the end of this period, realized that the company was the dominant element on the island. The company had a powerful lobby in London, and local officials on Ocean Island were dependent on the company for the amenities of European existence, which the company establishment provided. During this period the latter had become much more complex, to include Gilbertese and Chinese laborers who made of the Banabans a minority on their own island.

There were other political and related developments in this period which ~~command~~ command our attention. A number of Banaban families returned to the island, mainly from Honolulu and Tahiti, where they had been taken by labor recruiters (Ellis 1936). News of the phosphate was spreading. Some claim now that their return created no special difficulties, but it is likely that there was a scrambling of land-rights and genealogies connected with their absence.

Later in the period, Arthur Grimble, who arrived as a cadet in the colonial service (and was to become Resident Commissioner), conducted some ethnographic inquiries on Ocean Island and in the Gilberts which resulted in a useful collection of myths, two popular books, and a number of papers.

Grimble's activities might have resuscitated some declining phenomena, and probably increased the "systematization" and "objectification" phenomena theoretically asserted as a consequence of mission activity. It is interesting to note that the author of the myth recounted in Maude and Maude 1932, attached ^{a note} ~~to the~~ to the 1922 original that there was agreement on the system of descent unit rights before, but now there was disagreement.²⁸ This may have been a response to changing conditions; it is more likely that such a note would have been appended at any time in Banaban history.

At roughly the same time as Grimble was mining the old culture, the mining began to pay for a school for Banaban boys, thus supplementing mission education (1920). And the British Phosphate Commission came into control of the phosphate. As Langdon notes, the change may not have been much noticed locally, but it was to have tremendous implications; not only were the governments now more directly involved, but the BPC was to sell phosphate to the partner countries not at a profit, but at cost price. As the Banabans came to see it later, they were subsidizing the farmers of Australia and New Zealand. The groundwork for a further divergence of interests between the Banabans and those with control over them was laid, as was the groundwork for the further complexity of their political dilemma, as they were to contend, at least indirectly, with three governments rather than one (see Appendix A).

The complexity of life on Ocean Island was increasing. In 1919, according to a mission source, there was a small Gilbertese labor force on Banaba because of war-time shipping complications. The laborers whose contracts had expired "have 'downed tools' and refuse to work except at an exorbitant figure."²⁹ In 1925 there were serious labor troubles, during which Gilbertese laborers struck, demanding that the Chinese laborers be removed (see Ellis 1936, Grimble 1957). This may have colored Banaban thinking

about political action; it came two years before the next land controversy. Mission sources report demands against the trading company on Butaritari, and disturbances elsewhere.³⁰ The political climate in the Gilberts may have been getting hotter. As in the earlier time (see p. 27), it is difficult to know the extent to which this was known on Ocean Island. But Ocean Island, itself had surely become an important "node" in the *areal* communications system, given the changing Gilbertese labor force. (There were a number of intermarriages with Banabans, although when they began is uncertain. Many Banabans were probably visiting the Gilberts.)

To round out the picture of the 1909-1926 period, I must refer to relevant developments in the church. The resident American missionary when he arrived found it difficult to get help for various chores, but there must have been a flurry of religious activity with about forty prayer meetings a week for various audiences.³¹ It is possible that, if Protestantism did not build in a general work ethic, it did motivate some people to economic action for contributions and the purchase of books.

For reasons extrinsic to this analysis, the American Board Mission in the region was coming into hard times, and discussions were underway to transfer their work to the London Missionary Society. In 1911, some Roman Catholic functionaries came to the island to look after the spiritual welfare of Catholic Gilbertese laborers--no doubt a sign of doom to the Americans, many of whom were *militantly* anti-Catholic.³² Some Banabans converted either through marriage or for other reasons, and the "one church" theory of Banaban solidarity was becoming undermined.

An American Board missionary in 1913 reports the concert of a "native debating society," at which the women and girls of each village dressed in the same way--an indication of the position which the village had attained.³³ The debate was on the relative merits of the coconut and pandanus trees. Two

people spoke, the missionary reports, then the opinion of the gathering was taken; the debaters were usually judged as equal--an unlikely example of the egalitarian ethic referred to in Part One.

The existence of the debating society itself (about which nothing else is known) may not be as trivial as it appears. If a system of "Rules of Order" was followed, as was the case in some other parts of the Pacific, people were being socialized into a way of viewing the world which reinforced certain aspects of Christianity, and with political consequences: people were bound by an objective set of rules and procedures. In current academic parlance, this would be a push in the direction of modernization.

At this debating society concert, songs were sung in various languages, the missionary and his wife contributing a duet in English. Two legends were told by two ^{tattooed} old men. One is impressed not only by a certain cosmopolitanism, but also by the fact that the missionary did not despise (at least in his report) the old men or the tales. Perhaps the strict Old Testament-ism of the earlier missionaries had become mollified, and the church was on its way to becoming, in a curious fashion, a conservation ^{of} of some "explicit tradition."

In 1917 the American Board transferred its functions to the London Missionary Society, which had a somewhat different form of organization and some different behavioral rules. ³⁴ I cannot dwell at length on the LMS, but I would like to note that although the LMS is regarded among the Banabans as the heir of the American Board, the change-over might have had some consequences for the way in which they viewed religion.

I hypothesize that in some converted communities, there is a "flat view" toward the new teaching; a prohibition against smoking is regarded as tapping

the same level of ultimacy as a belief in hell. With a transfer of religious supervision of the kind noted here, a new view arises. It is a view which distinguishes more carefully between areas which are central, and areas which are peripheral. Such a view would be another push in the direction of modernization.

Around this time, the LMS was considering the formation of Island Church Councils. I do not know when the Banaban one was established, but a Council on Nauru was probably established in 1919. The Nauruan pastor had recently been involved in a petition to the King on certain grievances. There was some dissatisfaction with the phosphate royalty on Nauru also, and legal action against the company had been considered. The nature of the interchange of information between Ocean Island and Nauru on native political aspirations remains a mystery. The expressed LMS attitude to the situation on Nauru--which was probably representative of their attitude toward Ocean Island--was that mission teachers should keep out of political controversy, although their responsibilities as citizens had to be recognized. At the time of the Nauruan controversy, the mission chief from the Gilberts delivered a sermon taking off from "Render unto Caesar...."³⁵

Maude notes that in general on Ocean Island, the missions discouraged relations between Europeans and Banabans. One missionary was worried about "unsupervised contact" between Europeans and natives.³⁶ Certain European unchristian acts were referred to the company manager, but in general prudence reigned and confrontations with the company were avoided. The mission policy reinforced that of other European elements: there was a kind of segregation on Ocean Island, with Europeans, Chinese, Gilbertese, and Banabans located in different places. This is not to suggest that any element desired anything else. But the system certainly reinforced the notion of Banaban separateness, which developed into one of Banaban separatism.

European LMS missionaries visited Ocean Island on and off during this period. In 1919, there is a report that some church members had lapsed, and a special problem was created by the fact that the Roman Catholics permitted and the Government perhaps encouraged native dancing, of which the church at that time disapproved. (Later, "clean" dances became acceptable. Probably by this time the Christmas--New Year season became a focus of dancing activity--a transformation from the old system to the new calendar.)³⁷

In 1919 there were two new Gilbertese mission teachers on Banaba, each in charge of two villages.³⁸ In 1925--the year of reports of "disturbances" in the Gilberts, and a strike on Ocean Island--a visiting LMS missionary reported that each Banaban village wanted a teacher of its own, and promised to raise money for his support.³⁹ The "village-mission complex" was asserting itself.

However, more importantly, communications from LMS Beru headquarters to the Banaban church (which presumably had an Island Church Council by now) in 1925 and 1926 indicate that the Bahaban Church had requested that the balance of the funds they raised, after their own teachers' ^{stipends} were paid, not be used to ^{assist} teachers on poorer islands, but should be returned for the Banaban Church's own use.⁴⁰

Thus developments in the sphere of religious organization were paralleling the political orientations which began to be manifest in the 1909-1913 lands dispute. The people were, more and more, moving in the direction of an ideology of autonomy--which the very activities of the church, the phosphate company, and the government had often unwittingly fostered.

5. The Second Concerted Opposition: Land, Defeat, Codification, and the Birth of Banaban Political Style

There are many relevant details about the period to be considered now which are obscure because of the unavailability of data. As in preceding sections, however, educated guesses will be used.

In 1927, the British Phosphate Commissioners wanted more land. According to Rotan Tito, the Resident Commissioner (Grimble) told the people to form a committee of two men from each village to deal with land matters. Maude notes that with the obvious divergence of interest between the company and the Banabans, the unsuitability of the Native Government to represent Banaban interests became apparent, and the traditional leaders were not active. Rotan Tito, who was involved with the committee, emerged as a leader of a "progressive" group which the company recognized it had to deal with. Thus there was a greater differentiation in the social structure. Rotan, and probably some of the others, were also church people, and the link between Christianity and the land issue began to be forged at this time. Rotan himself was born in 1900, and was thus one of the first generation socialized in the phosphate-colonial government-mission era.

In 1927, some Banabans agreed to the price that was offered. There was some generational conflict here, the younger making the demands (see Grimble 1957; a factor may have been that the younger had not experienced the devastation of drought). Maude wrote that the Provident Fund was proposed in 1927 for the purchase of a future home, but the Banabans thought it was a trick to get them off Ocean Island. This was the climate of the times.

Grimble told the hold-outs that they would find their land in the middle of areas where active mining was to go on, and that they should exchange their

land with others so that this would not eventuate: But a significant number of the people still held out.⁴¹

If the Banabans still nurtured any illusions about their objective position, they were soon to be shattered. In 1928 an ordinance was passed which would allow the government to resume mining land "in the public interest" when negotiations failed. The documents indicate that the Banabans had approached, in some way, a higher authority: most likely the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, possibly the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The official quoted back the old price, and the Banabans refused. Trying to manipulate local custom, Grimble pointed out to the Banabans that this official was offended, and if they did not agree to the terms offered, punishment would be considered. Even the breaking up of Buakonikai village (in which Rotan had important connections in the traditional descent system) would be considered, so that it would be empty before the digging began.⁴²

Grimble wrote to the Buakonikai people that he was speaking not as Resident Commissioner, but as their old friend and father. (It seems that Grimble was well-liked, except on this issue.) In that role he told them that the "words of life" were to agree, and the "words of death" were to disagree -- their land would be taken as Crown Land. He wrote that it would be impossible to foretell the limit of land-seizing; the price and the digging itself would proceed in an arbitrary manner. If you commit suicide, Grimble told them, he would be sympathetic, but powerless.⁴³ We will have cause to discuss this kind of language later.

The land was resumed, and a price arbitrated -- by the British Agent and Consul, Tonga, presumably brought up for the purpose, and the Manager of the

British Phosphate Commission. The award was similar to the company's terms, which surprised nobody. Appendix A sets out some of the terms.

When the arbitrator from Tonga read the award out to the Banabans, he indicated that the royalty was a question not up for discussion, and that the surface price was based on the market value of the land excluding any increase in value because of the phosphate.⁴⁴

This separation of surface from phosphate has been an important element in the whole controversy. The funds deriving from the surface and the under-surface are treated in different ways. The first is regarded as the equivalent in money of the land itself, and the money can change hands only as land can change hands in the official version of traditional Banaban culture.⁴⁵ Thus the link between land and money was made even more solid, and the government put itself in the position of arbiter and enforcer of custom. (Grimble had spoken against the "degeneration" of the adoption system in the Gilberts, and instructed his officers to enforce the "true" system; one could go on at length about the static notion of "custom" presupposed, and the relationship to adaptability.⁴⁶)

The situation was different with regard to the undersurface. Officials found, not surprisingly, that there was not a special body of native custom relating to undersurface mineral rights; the closest thing was rights to the water-caves discussed in Part One, and the owners of the rights to the cave need not have been the same people who owned the land above. There was an ambiguous situation until a ruling in 1930 that the money deriving from Trust Funds should be used for the general benefit of the community, not the specific benefit of any landowner. In 1931, the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific informed the Banabans that the surface belongs to the owner,

the minerals to the government. However, whether payments from those funds were legitimated by the rights of the landowner, or the grace of the Crown, remained unclear. Much remained unclear, and still does. But another axis of controversy was born.⁴⁷

Although the arbitrator tried to avoid discussion of the royalty with the people, the people insisted on raising the issue. One prominent Banaban recalled during the discussion that the company first got land for sewing machines. Eliot had promised that no more land would be acquired until the land already acquired was worked out, but this was now being abrogated. The Banaban interlocutors asked the arbitrator what his "personal opinion" on the issue was. Here was born a prominent feature of Banaban political style, nurtured by the manner in which some officials behaved (e.g., Grumble as paraphrased above). The Banabans suspected — and were sometimes right — that those opposing them were acting on instructions from superiors, and in their own minds must have seen the justice of Banaban claims. The officials, in turn, would find refuge in their official role, thus reinforcing the Banabans' ideas. Where there were conflicts within various officials, they probably gave off signals to assuage their guilt, thus driving the Banabans on to hope to overturn the decision in question.

Another aspect of Banaban political style is revealed in a Banaban "letter of complaint" written in 1932, possibly to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. It was pointed out that the BPC had not finished its old area, and this was contrary to a "Covenant" made in 1913, and confirmed by Eliot "under British flags." The British symbolism is being invoked, and the term "Covenant" itself is highly suggestive of a religious resonance. The Covenant also promised that trees destroyed would be paid for, and the 1931 arbitration did not provide for a special payment for trees on mining lands. The price,

the letter said, was arranged between Grimble and the arbitrators; it was neither a buyer's nor a seller's price (the language had become more sophisticated.) The company manager would have given a better price if he had not been prevented (see below). "So, therefore, please kindly help us by your merciful arbitration and judgment in front of Our Heavenly God, and in front of His Majesty King George V."⁴⁸

The appeal for personal help expressed in humble language on a strong issue, going up the bureaucratic scale, the invocation both of God and the King (thus acting within the system, by the system's own rules), representing a joining of religious and political symbolism -- these became established by 1932. The 1912 land affair joined the Banabans in the idea of a community articulated by an interest in land. The 1927-31 land affair propelled in the direction of a symbolic joining of God, government, and Banaban custom articulated through land. Land was to become the medium of symbolic exchange between these things -- in a general sense, between a Banaban past, a present embedded in European institutions, and an uncertain future.

I will backtrack to consider Rotan's version of some of the events of the 1927-31 period. His version is, again, a significant input to the current political scene.⁴⁹

Rotan claims that after Grimble informed the Banabans of the first offer, the Banabans asked for a royalty not of 10¹/₂d. per ton, but £5 per ton (although they were willing to go down to £2/10/-). A company official came who repeated the original offer, and later offered to raise the royalty slightly. The Banabans again refused. The company man was about to make a statement (the suggestion is that it would have been in the Banabans' favor), when Grimble stopped him. Grimble told the people that unless they agreed, the price might go even lower. He then made his "words of life -- words of death" pronouncement.

In June, 1928, according to Rotan, Grimble told the Banabans that some should prepare to go and look at Kuria, in the Gilberts, as a place of resettlement, but they refused. Grimble was angry when the Banaban delegation told him of their refusal, and he threw them out. The delegation relayed this to the people, and the old men were afraid -- they wanted to agree.

There was a great deal of argument until it was decided that they should return to Grimble with the following offer: the price is approved if there is compensation for the trees on the land. Grimble was happy, went off to the Gilberts, and on his return told the Banabans to prepare to sign the agreement. But they asked him about the trees, he refused, and they refused. The Banabans then said that the matter of land acquisition was over, because the company had much land that it hadn't mined yet. After this, Grimble forbade games, and established a curfew from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. (there may have been a curfew before from 9 p.m.). There were more refusals later, and then the land was resumed as Crown Land. Rotan also claims that the committee representing Banaban interests was told to go to visit the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific with Rotan as its secretary, but there was a last-minute change of plans.

Rotan wrote in 1965 that:

"...the arbitrators gave the BPC the authority to work the lands where the BPC proceeded by first digging the centre of the island to prepare its way. When the way was ready it began destroying lands without first obtaining the boundaries of each individual holding of the landowners who had refused the proposed land compensation.

"We refused to mark the boundaries of our lands, because we did not expect to receive the compensation money and we thought that our lands would

be left alone as it had been done to those who refused to alienate their lands in the 1913 Agreement.

"Mr. Grimble did not agree with our wish and he gave our lands to be mined. The Company started to cut down cocconut trees and dig lands, and we saw that two pieces of lands whose boundaries had not been obtained by the BPC were nearly finished....

"We saw this with much grief and anger and we assembled to request the BPC not to destroy our lands while we had not given our consent for them to be worked. Mr. Grimble released the prisoners to accompany his constables and with guns they resisted our approach to the representataves of BPC and he also accompanied his constables.

"We were willing to die for our lands at that time, but we respected our elders' word of advice under the Banaban Custom that to shed blood is prohibited on their island.

"We followed such advice then with my anticipation and trust in the Sovereign of Britain, that he would readily help us when he is able to hear the true position of the Banabans on their homeland, and that was why we had kept on making petitions.

"After that I wrote to our Acting Resident Commissioner, Major Swinbourne, and his secretary, Mr. H. E. Maude, informing them that it was right for us to let them know the boundaries of our individual lands. This was not because we had agreed to the amount of compensation or to their alienation, but simply because of the love for them. We could not bear the thought of losing them completely when they were going to be worked without knowing their position and compensation value as it was with the lands which had been worked out under the authority of Mr. Grimble's orders...."

Disputes over rights in this period apparently did not only involve land. According to a company source, in 1934 (when, incidentally, the government reported 80-100 Banabans as employed by the BFC as day labor), two women asked if a lease could be arranged for a reef where the Boat Harbor was located. The Resident Commissioner said it was not necessary. In 1937 a man asked about rights to part of a reef, perhaps the same one. He indicated that the rights concerned a fish which swarmed there and could not be taken without his permission. The company made a small offer, which it is claimed the government did not confirm. In 1947, it came out that the issue concerned the reef which belonged to one of the village districts, of which the man was a prominent member. There was undoubtedly some misunderstanding on the European side, but there is also the suggestion of a confusion over the translation of traditional rights into modern monetary terms, a confusion which some ambitious people may have tried to exploit.⁵⁰

I must slightly backtrack chronologically to refer to another critical event: the conduct of the Ocean Island Lands Commission, from October 1931 to March 1932. Lands Commissions were held in the Gilberts, and (on that) Ocean Island began the year after the phosphate arbitration. During this period people's thoughts must have been saturated with land. H. E. Maude was Native Lands Commissioner, and the job of the Commission was to "enquire into the ownership of all native owned lands on Banaba (Ocean Island) and to codify the native customs of land conveyance and inheritance."⁵¹ Four Banabans from each village became members, and the Magistrate and Chief of Kaubure sat as assessors, at each village. Ninety-seven claims were heard. "The vast majority of these claims were either groundless and were unanimously rejected by the

Commission, in accordance with Section 7 (1) of the Ordinance, as not being well founded, or were amicably settled by the parties in the presence of the Commission. Altogether 28 claims were rejected by the Commission, either because they were frivolous or because they were clearly based on happenings before the establishment of the Protectorate in November, 1900. 15 claims were withdrawn with the consent of the Commission and 54 claims were settled by agreement between the parties.... Besides hearing claims, the native members of the Commission were instrumental in discovering many pieces of land which had been lost by their owners, as well as in settling the boundaries of lands and in erecting permanent marks where the boundaries had been hitherto in doubt.

"The various points of native custom with regard to land which arose during the course of the inquiry were settled by the Commission at the time, and at the final sittings the land customs were codified...."

In his report, Maude listed "the customary conveyances that I recommend should be in future recognized by the Administration. They have been read to the Lands Commission and have been agreed to unanimously," the members indicating the Banabans' wish that the rules regarding these conveyances be applied also to cases where "their land has been leased and is now represented by a capital sum or by an annual payment of interest."

There were also a set of "conveyances customary before the coming of the Government but no longer recognized except as establishing ownership prior to the declaration of the British Protectorate." These conveyances (see pp. 7-11) were 'the land of peacemaking,' 'the blood payment,' 'the land of life giving,' 'the land of marriage,' 'the land for theft,' 'the blood payment for animals,' and 'the land for bone setting.' Some of these conveyances had probably already been in abeyance, and they represent mostly those which

were involved in the kinds of sanction activity which the government had taken over. Thus the implications of colonial government and differentiation for the nature of land as a medium of exchange were codified.

At the same time, it was stipulated that 'the land for looking after' cannot be devised to a member of the 'near kindred,' and could only be given when the Native Court was satisfied that the 'near kindred' refused to look after the giver. The 'near kindred' for lands purposes was defined as being limited to relatives having a common great-grandparent.⁵² This was probably the conventional native definition, but it was likely that those considered or not considered 'near kindred' in many circumstances were so defined by other than genealogical criteria.

The role of the 'near kindred' in adoptions was codified, as were other details of the land system. Adoptions had to be formalized by registration with officials. Through codification, greater "objectification" of the native structure was probably achieved. Maude observes that those elected to the Lands Commission from the villages were mainly traditional leaders, and for a while they had a resuscitation of prestige as the most powerful native group on the island.

The Maudes noted that "an enthusiastic revival of the traditional games took place in December, 1931, during our stay on the island (1932:292)." It is possible that this was a nativistic response to the phosphate crisis. It is also possible that the game revival was related to the activities of the Lands Commission, during which matters of "traditional custom" were discussed and thought about.

'Baraban Custom' was being defined as it was being changed, and as it was being changed, certain aspects of the "old culture" were resuscitated which had the effect of propelling the community in a direction of even more

rapid political change since the "center of gravity" of that custom was land, land had become associated with phosphate, and phosphate was a commodity articulating with international business and government. I will refer back later to this apparent, and perhaps somewhat obscurely phrased paradox.

Before I propel myself into the next phase of Banaben history on Ocean Island, I must ask the reader's indulgence while religious organization is briefly discussed.

I indicated above that in 1925, two years before the great Ocean Island lands dispute, there were mission reports of "disturbances" in the Gilberts; there had been reports of anti-authority activity in 1907, two years before the first land deadlock.

Rev. Eastman, the head of the LMS operation in the Gilberts, referred in 1928 to a general self-assertion against authority, both mission and government. He wrote that giving Gilbertese more responsibility in the church was good in principle, but it was difficult especially because of the infrequency of visits to train church councils.⁵³ The people, however, were to outrun their principals. (The head of the school at Abaiang in the Northern Gilberts went so far as to refer to a "spirit of Bolshevism" there in 1930; the students asked to be paid even to clean up the station.⁵⁴ It should be noted here that not only were there Gilbertese laborers with LMS backgrounds on Ocean Island, and LMS pastors, but there were also Banabans who were trained in LMS schools.)

The Rev. Percy Hannah was at this time responsible for the spiritual oversight of both Ocean Island and Nauru. Hannah wanted to run the church affairs of both Islands directly under the London office rather than through the LMS Beru headquarters, because, he said, of the nature of available means of communication.

There was a mission teacher in each Banaban village, in addition to the Ellice teacher responsible for the spiritual welfare of the LMS laborers; the latter was probably head of the Ocean Island Church Council. In 1930 the LMS District Church Committee sent a letter to the Council reminding the teachers that they had to report to Hannah on matters of importance. One may reasonably make the assumption that at least the Committee felt that the teachers had not been reporting to Hannah on matters of importance. Hannah spent most of his time on Nauru, but did make visits to Banaba. There was serious trouble in the Nauruan church at this time, related to the anti-administration activities of a pastor there.⁵⁵ Some Banabans today are aware of the activities of that pastor, and they may have been aware then.

In 1931, Hannah reported that the LMS pastors and teachers had been "sane and helpful" during the land crisis, with the exception of one man -- probably Rotan. Being "sane and helpful" most likely meant, minimally, keeping out of the fracas.⁵⁶

This probably represented the official mission point of view. But at the same time, Hannah reported that the Banabans wanted to run their own church, and ^{they} felt that the Ellice man in charge was an outsider.⁵⁷ Thus the solidarity that was being expressed in the political sphere continued to be paralleled by developments in the religious sphere.

X I have no data, unfortunately, on the participation of Banabans in the Island Church Council. Given the general nature of LMS organization, it is likely that even if many Banabans were not on it, they at least exerted a pressure upon it that was very direct. Church meetings in this period are reported as "dealing with offenders" against church discipline.⁵⁸ As the lands committee provided experience in dealing with Banaban issues, the organization of the church must also have been a factor in developing ideas about autonomy.

¶ A 1934 document reports a combined Christmas service in the company chapel, in which some Europeans joined. As was probably the general case in such affairs, each Banaban village and the Ellice people sang a song or hymn. The church was providing a framework in which people of diverse origins could join, and which at the same time reinforced ideas of both a separate Banaban identity, and the village as a significant unit.⁵⁹ In 1935 the Jubilee of Christianity on Ocean Island was celebrated, marking the progress of the community into the modern Christian world. A current source indicates that the people were told to wear white rather than black lavalavas, to symbolize their transition from "the darkness" into "the light."

I cannot assess here the role of increasing education, both secular and religious, among the people. I will note in passing a comment by a European teacher at Beru that as Gilbertese wealth was generally measured in land, the word "acre" was being added to the vocabulary.⁶⁰ It had no doubt long been in the Banabans' vocabulary, but one can reasonably assume an increasing sophistication in financial matters, as well as an increasing knowledge of what was going on in other parts of the world. (In 1928, Hannah reported that the Nauruans were learning things they had not been officially taught -- about murders, divorce, strikes and gambling among Europeans -- from newspapers which found their way there; this was related to what he said was a decreasing respect for Europeans.⁶¹ The same may have been true on Ocean Island.)

While this increasing sophistication was taking place, and while the community was being reminded of its emergence from the darkness into the light, vast and reverberating changes had been occurring in the definition of land rights, inter alja, which must have been difficult to understand. Given the importance of land in the Banabans' structuring of the world, they must have been faced with cognitive and affective problems of massive

proportions. The church might have been looked to as a source of stability, even while it too was responding to general structural trends. But there was to be little respite, since in 1936 or early 1937, new developments occurred to which the Banabans again had to respond, with their redefined personality, and social and cultural resources.

6. Codification Continues: Land, Annuities, a Cooperative, and a New Island Considered

A new arrangement regarding Banaban funds was under consideration in the government in 1936. A proposal (of undertermined nature) was made to the Banabans in early 1937, and it met with a disquieting response. The proposal was probably some earlier transformation of the annuities scheme ultimately agreed upon, and some aspects of which are indicated in Appendix A.

At a meeting in the Tabiang meeting house, a number of old men were present in response to a government invitation, to have the proposal explained to them. The representatives went off to discuss it with the people, and replied to it by saying (with Rotan as their spokesman) that the government's intentions were good, but that the community wanted the direct distribution of royalties to landowners, and the landowners should be free to do whatever they wanted with them.

This was a rejection of the ideas advanced by the government in the 1930 and 1931 decisions: that payments from the undersurface should be used for the benefit of the community as a whole. The community stand welded around land, and what solidarity came with it, thus did not go so far as to entail the putting of monies into a collective pool to be used for the collective benefit. The fact that people owned different amounts of land was still recognized. The Banabans apparently did not then (and they certainly

do not now) accept the logic of the surface-undersurface distinction. The individual owned land, money came from that land, and the individual should get the money from that land. Collective action was thus in part oriented to the securing of individual rights, as defined by the Banabans through the translation of land into money established in the earliest company times.

This orientation, however, introduced a certain strain in Banaban political thinking which is still present: where do the boundaries of the domain of the community as a community, and the individual as an individual -- particularly as a landowner -- begin and end?

There is some indication that the government proposal involved the payment of a uniform annuity. An agreement was reached whereby there would be both a general annuity, and a bonus to landowners only, those in the 1913 and 1931 phosphate areas, the amount scaled according to their total holdings, but with an upper limit of £10 (see Appendix A). The settlement thus combined features of a recognition of both the ^eidentity of Banabans (qualified in a manner to be discussed shortly), and of their differentiation as individuals with different amounts of land.⁶²

The government had proposed that payments only be made when a stipulated minimum tonnage export of phosphate was achieved in one year, but some Banabans concluded that the amount was far more than that necessary to pay for both annuities and the services for which Banaban funds paid. A decision then came down that the availability of funds would determine whether the payments could be made. It was then that agreement was reached; only Rotan and two of his children dissented. In order to prepare for the first distribution, the government locally had to bring together information on land-holding and descent since 1913, thus again "fixing" certain information.

One particular problem came up at this time which is of central interest to us: the status of people who were not "full-Banabans." It is not clear whether the initiative for considering them in a manner distinct from the others came from the government or the people. The colonial government recognized the need for an annuity to support a native resident on Ocean Island, but simultaneously recognized that a part-Banaban -- thus a person who had land rights in the Gilberts (or elsewhere) -- could derive his support from those rights when in his other home locale. There was also the consideration that people from elsewhere might cut into Banaban funds, through an ad hoc adoption, or in some other way. A set of nineteen rules was finally agreed upon in 1937, in collaboration with Banaban elders. They stated a determinate relationship between kinship, land, and locality, and thus must be set out (slightly abridged):

1. Payments are to be made twice yearly,....
2. Natives over 15 years of age are to be regarded as adults for the purpose of the payment of the annuity.
3. Children of a full-Banaban and a half-Banaban ('itera') are to be regarded as full-Banabans for the purpose of the payment of the annuity.
4. Children of two half-Banabans shall be regarded as half-Banabans.
5. Children of a full-Banaban and any non-Banaban shall be regarded as half-Banabans.
6. Children of a half-Banaban and any non-Banaban shall be regarded as half-Banabans.
7. The Resident Commissioner reserves the right later to define the status of half-Banabans in consultation with Banaban representatives, for the purpose of the payment of the annuity, if such definition shall appear to him necessary owing to later weakness of consanguineous ties. [In the Gilbertese version, the last section would be translated more correctly in

the following way: '...if it appears that the true Banaban blood is becoming weak.')

8. No payment shall be made to the relatives or dependants of any full or half-Banaban, who shall die during a six-monthly period, either in respect of the whole or part of that period.

9. Children born during a six-monthly period shall be eligible to receive their share of the annuity at the date of payment next following their birth.

10. Full-Banabans shall be eligible to receive the annuity no matter in what island or country they may be resident at the time of the payment.

11. No half-Banaban, whether adult or child, shall be eligible to receive the annuity during his or her absence from Ocean Island.

12. (a) A half-Banaban who returns to Ocean Island before the payment of a share of the annuity, shall be eligible to receive his or her share of the annuity, the payment of which next follows. No specific period of residence prior to the payment of that share of the annuity shall be necessary.

(b) If, however, the Resident Commissioner is of the opinion that the above-mentioned rule, 12 (a), is being abused, he reserves the right to impose a residential qualification for half-Banabans returning to Ocean Island to obtain their share of the annuity.

13. (a) In future, only a native adopted as 'te nati' ('child') by a full-Banaban shall be regarded as a full-Banaban and shall be eligible to receive the annuity as such.

(b) Such an adoption shall be held to imply that the native adopted has renounced his or her rights to his or her lands elsewhere, with the exception of those lands given as 'te iria' ('the accompaniment').

(c) Should this form of adoption be, in the opinion of the Resident Commissioner, abused, (it being customary only to adopt one 'te nati'), His Honour reserves the right to limit the number of natives adopted by one family as 'te nati', who shall be eligible to receive the annuity.

14. A native adopted by a full-Banaban under any recognised form of adoption other than adoption as 'te nati' (i.e., tibutibu, i-taritari, i-mamane and te nati-ni-kauatabo (grandchild adoption, 'sibling-of-same-sex adoption, 'sibling-of-opposite-sex adoption, and a form of child adoption in which the child is regarded as still a member of his natal family)), shall be regarded as a half-Banaban for the purposes of the payment of the annuity, and shall be eligible to receive his or her annuity as such, but only if land has passed from the adopter to the native adopted.

15. Any non-Banaban adopted as 'te nati' by a half-Banaban shall be regarded as a half-Banaban for the purpose of the payment of the annuity and shall be eligible to receive his or her share as such.

16. Any non-Banaban adopted by a half-Banaban under any recognised form of adoption other than adoption as 'te nati', shall not be eligible to receive any share of the annuity.

17. In order to entitle a native adopted as 'te nati' to the receipt of the annuity, the adopter must sign a written declaration at the time of the adoption to the effect that the adopted native shall receive a portion of the adopter's lands, not less than the maximum portion due to any of the adopter's natural issue.

18. In order to entitle a native adopted by a full-Banaban under any recognised form of adoption other than adoption as 'te nati'...to the receipt of the annuity, the adopter must sign a written declaration at the time of the adoption specifying the actual piece or pieces of land which he is passing to the native adopted.

19. Any native to whom land has passed or shall pass, which has carried or shall carry with it the right to a landowner's bonus, shall be entitled to receive the same irrespective of whether he or she is a half-Banaban or non-Banaban, provided that, in the case of an absentee landlord, the bonus will only be paid to a caretaker duly appointed to receive it on his or her behalf."⁶³

It has already been indicated that with the coming of Gilbertese laborers and increased communications in the area, many Banabans married Gilbertese. Although I have not yet counted heads, it is likely that most Banabans today have at least one Gilbertese parent or grandparent. This does not mean, however, that the Banaban gene pool was completely closed aboriginally. The genealogies indicate Gilbertese marrying in, and being adopted. But by the time these rules were adopted, the Gilbertese presence was dramatically different.

The first thing that should be noted about the rules is what is implied by Rule 19 in contrast with the others. For the landowner's bonus, the right was carried by the land rather than by the person, although a "caretaker" provision is made. This is directly tied to notions in the descent system. For the annuity, the right was carried by the person, but could depend on land conveyances.

The rules stipulate two categories, 'full-Banaban' and 'half-Banaban,' without indicating how one originally decides whether a person is a full-Banaban or a half-Banaban. If one could be a 'closer' or 'more distant' kinsman according to the amount of blood one shared with another person, one could apparently also have been more or less of a Banaban depending upon how much Banaban blood one had. I repeat that I do not know the origin of the

writing-in of this distinction. The Banabans might have become more concerned with drawing lines around themselves.

The 1937 rules defined full-Banaban for annuity purposes as the natural child of a full-Banaban with a full- or half-Banaban, or the adopted child of a full-Banaban if the adopted child's land rights from his adopter were already ensured, and his only lands from his natal family were 'the accompaniment,' a small parcel or parcels of land which symbolized a limited continuing relationship with the natal family. (The adoption system is discussed in detail in Silverman 1969a, and I will only allude to it briefly here.)

The rules defined half-Banaban for annuity purposes as the natural child of a half-Banaban with a half- or non-Banaban, the natural child of a full-Banaban with a non-Banaban, the adopted non-Banaban child of a half-Banaban (with the assurances of land transfer), or a person adopted in one of the other forms by a full-Banaban, if actual land had already passed. The distinction between different forms of adoption, and their relation to full- and half- status, represented a transformation of aspects of the kinship system into the societal community system.

Full-Banabans and half-Banabans, as defined, were also subject to different residence qualifications: the full-Banaban could be anywhere at the time of payment and get his annuity; the half-Banaban had to be on Ocean Island. In many circumstances, the Resident Commissioner reserved the right to change the regulations, in consultation with Banaban elders, if it appeared that the blood and the money was dispersing too widely. It is quite clear from the rules that blood could go anywhere, land was as good as blood if the holder did not have significant land relationships elsewhere, but land was not quite as good as blood in other circumstances. The non-

full-blood had to validate his status by being on Ocean Island itself. Thus was the relationship between blood, land and locality defined.

The full-Banaban half-Banaban terminology was carried through in the "Ocean Island Regulations, 1939," which stipulated that a native other than a full or half-Banaban, unless he was a missionary, teacher, or a person assured of employment, could not land on the island without a permit signed by the Native Magistrate. The boundary around the community was reinforced.⁶⁴ The regulations -- which I will not discuss in detail, since their period of applicability was so short -- also regulated the proper care of children and the aged, dancing and feasting, and public order. 'Custom' in a revised form had moved again into a differentiated legal system.

In 1939 we find the identification of an official as "Banaban Welfare Officer;" his role is not yet clear.⁶⁵ Also in 1939, a visiting LMS missionary reported that after a new church was opened on Nauru, the Banabans decided that they wanted one. Nauru was to become a model of great importance to the Banabans on Rambi, but that started on Ocean Island. Church activity was of course going on during the period discussed. On Empire Day, special hymns were sung from each village. The association of church activities with public holidays had become a fixture of Banaban life, partially integrating the political and religious institutions into which they were tied. The "peak" of the Empire Day meeting, according to Rev. Welch, was the presentation of the collections taken from the villages for the year's work.⁶⁶ A competitive aspect to village-church activity may have been established early on Ocean Island (it is certainly the case on Rambi), and this competitive aspect, one can speculate, was an important factor in the church's success. For although it was not proper to give advertisements for oneself, it probably was proper to give advertisements for one's village and its

success. The presence of Roman Catholics may also have given the Protestants a legitimate hostility focus.

Interestingly enough, Rev. Welch told the people at the Empire Day celebration to conserve their native arts and crafts, and the day closed with native dances. There would appear to have been a ritual tying up of things in one package.

The matter of acquiring a new island was broached in 1940. At a meeting probably with the Resident Commissioner, the Banaban Committee asked for an increase in the annuity and bonus, and also asked for approval of purchasing a new island to plant with coconuts because of the "increasing poverty" of Banaba.⁶⁷ Probably through government sources, the people had been informed of the availability of Wakaya Island in Fiji, and they wanted to go and inspect it. The Committee was asked whether a permanent or partial resettlement was contemplated. They replied that they did not want to give up their rights to Ocean Island, but move back and forth at will. A little later they identified a government official as the "Adviser" whom they wanted to go with them; they recognized their inability to handle the difficult problem on their own. Fiji was cited as the locus because it was within the Empire, and governed by the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. (It was governed by the Governor of Fiji, but for many years the Governor and the High Commissioner were the same man.) The Western Pacific High Commission was the next step up in the colonial bureaucracy, and Rotan Tito tells that the real reason behind this move was to be closer to the High Commissioner, to facilitate the presentation of Banaban grievances. The move was also to realize a decision made by the "old men" in Eliot's time.

In their letter, the Banabans noted how Ocean Island was being gnawed, and that the present generation was beginning to forget native crafts. "We feel sorry that our descendants will consequently be compelled to habituate European ways of living," and they wanted to revive native cultivation and fishing, "like our custom before." It was also noted that Wakaya was near trading stores, so that European goods were available when wanted.⁶⁸ I cannot judge the extent to which the letter was framed in a manner directed to appeal to European officials, but this combination of two things -- remaining distinctly Banaban, and having the benefits of modern, Europeanized life -- became a major theme in Banaban culture. The people probably did not realize the difficulty of simultaneously maximizing these two goals. We shall return to this question later.

In 1940 there were also new proposals from the BPC on the acquisition of 230 more acres of mining land, including £175 per acre for surface rights, and 1/- per ton royalty, with the Provident Fund to increase over time to £250,000. The Banabans agreed in principle, but were dissatisfied with the plan for cash payments; they asked the BPC General Manager to advance their case. The war was to delay consideration of further acquisitions.⁶⁹

In 1940 an event of paramount importance took place: the formation of the Banaban Cooperative Store, financed by a deduction from funds, and supervised by the Banaban Welfare Officer.⁷⁰ The cooperative movement had been proceeding in the Gilberts, and a report had been issued on the Nauruan cooperative, which had been doing its own import¹⁰⁹ and exporting, according to government sources. Rotan was a moving figure in the cooperative, and Maude observes that it provided an outlet for the more "progressive" elements in the community. A current Banaban source recalls a time when the store had overstocked a particular item, and the people were pressured into buying

it after the distribution of annuities. All business previously had been in the hands of the BPC, which for an undetermined length of time had a two-price system: higher for natives, lower for Europeans. The Banaban store was an economic unit with political overtones. The changes which had been occurring in political and religious action were now replicated in the economic sphere. The importance of the store will become apparent when we discuss the early days on Rambi.

7. The War: Abandonment, Occupation, Deportation, and Survival

In 1940, the Banabans contributed £12,500 from their funds to British war funds.⁷¹ They reminded the British government of this fact in their request for approval of purchasing an island in Fiji. Rev. Eastman noted that in 1941 the Banabans contributed to other war funds, and decided on a voluntary levy on church members to help the IMS in its times of difficulty, especially because of the London bombing. He reported a new Young People's Movement in the Ocean Island Church, "The Children's Guild of Banaba," which raised money to help the situation in the Gilberts. There had been letters from the Gilberts asking for assistance -- the war interfered with the sale of copra, their major resource. Rotan appears to have been instrumental in the Guild, perhaps an indication of a growing feeling of solitariness among younger people.⁷²

In 1942 European government and company officials, with a few exceptions, departed from Ocean Island. One can speculate on the effects upon the Banabans of their abandonment by the establishments which had presented themselves as their protectors.

One of the officials who remained continued discussion of resettlement, and by this time another island in Fiji, Rambi Island, which was owned by Levers', was injected into the deliberations. An inspection by the Banabans

was now impossible. Wakaya was pointed out as being smaller and less fertile than Rambi. Maude observes that the Banabans agreed to the purchase of both, but Rambi only was purchased since Wakaya was too unsuitable.⁷³

Japanese forces landed in August. Rev. Eastman wrote that the Japanese stopped the work of the IMS teacher, but allowed four Banabans limited church work. The Japanese activity thus may have reinforced Banaban ideas on autonomy. During this period, Rotan's leadership again showed itself; he argued to get more food for the people.⁷⁴

Captured Japanese documents indicate that the occupiers tried to plug the existing system of native administration into their own. Each Banaban village was under a "chief," and the "chiefs" were the old village kaubure. There were also "chiefs" of the BPC and government settlements. The Banaban Magistrate became "General Village Chief."

The village kaubure were supposed to function as links with the villagers. They were, for example, to be informed of births and deaths, which would then be reported to the Japanese administration. Dances were to be provided for certain occasions, and certain new regulations came into force, including one forbidding the wiggling of the thighs in the dance.

More importantly for the Banabans, there were regulations on rationing, the acquisition of food and fish, the supply to the Japanese of items they wanted, and labor for them. The Banabans report that the Japanese commandeered whatever they wanted, and women were hided in the middle of the island to remove them from the 'Japanese' path.⁷⁵

In July, 1943, a serious food shortage on Ocean Island developed, and the deportation of the Banabans began: to Kusaie in the Carolines, Nauru, and Tarawa in the Gilberts. By common agreement the group at Kusaie were the worst off, suffering greatly from malnutrition, and the people at Tarawa fared better, in part because they were sheltered by the Gilbertese there.

People left without many of their possessions, and other things were either commandeered, destroyed, or lost. Among these were treasured family genealogies and land records.

One could go on at length about the privations of the war-time experience, including hunger, forced labor, beating, bombing, and death. The events of the war are often recounted today. But perhaps one of the things of prime importance was that in spite of it all, the community survived. Some say that "God looks after the Banabans," and their sheer survival was one testimony to this fact. People recall how they had to trick and steal to get food; breaking the rules was justifiable because of an unjust situation.

Detached from the people, places and structures which had provided a framework for their lives, their survival speaks of an adaptive flexibility. One of the factors contributing to that survival was probably that Christianity, like Banaban blood, was transportable.

The Australians took Ocean Island in October, 1945. The government stated that because of the destruction there, it could not be occupied by a native community for two years. The officer whom the Banabans had selected before the war as their adviser went to Tarawa, and collected the Banabans from their various places of exile (some were caught, or had been living, on other islands in the Gilberts). The people were asked whether they were willing to go to Rambi. After two years they would decide whether to stay there, or return to Ocean Island. The government would foot the bill for transportation. On inquiring, they were told that the resettlement would not compromise their financial interests on Banaba. Land had not been forgotten. The community was not unanimous in its enthusiasm, but the proposal for the move was accepted, and on December 15, 1945, they arrived by ship at Rambi, about 1600 miles from Ocean Island.⁷⁶

The situation there will be examined in Part III.

8. Conclusion to Part Two: "Blood and Mud" Revisited

Part Two has focused around the perhaps too minute analysis of a number of concrete events. Here I am treading on very dangerous ground. I was not trained as an historian, and especially lack sophistication in the handling of historical sources. The sources are unevenly distributed over the period, by their existence, their public availability, and my knowledge of them. There is always the danger of assuming that the most critical events are the events reported in the sources. There is also the danger of knowing the way a situation turns out, and structuring one's description so that the end-points seem inevitable.

Having launched into an attempt to understand Banaban culture, however, I find no alternative -- other than to hold back presentation of what I know until some of the problems alluded to have been rectified. But many of my colleagues, the Banabans certainly, and my own impatience, tell me that I have been holding onto this material long enough. So much for confessions of inadequacy.

An almost micro-historical presentation is unavoidable, as I have indicated. Consider the time factors involved here. There were fifteen years between the arrival of the first Protestant missionary on Ocean Island, and the advent of both phosphate and colonial control. (For that matter, there were only about ten years from the last disastrous drought to the appearance of Christianity.) Between the beginning of the commercial-governmental complex and the first significant lands negotiation: nine years. From the solution of that dilemma to the beginning of the next, in which Banaban lands were resumed: twelve years. From the resumption to

the introduction of the annuities-bonus system: six years. From then to the Second World War: four years.

The focal events were not initiated by the Banabans, but were initiated by external forces, or rather (after a time) forces which had local establishments with which the Banabans participated, and toward which Banaban culture and society had become partially differentiated.

Thus, since it is Banaban culture with which I am primarily concerned, the major task has been to assess how the Banabans (without much information being available to me on individuals) marshalled their cultural and social resources to contend with the other factors in the largely-expanded field of which they were part. The task has then been to assess the implications for future action of the ways in which those resources were marshalled.

Unless I am grossly overmagnifying the significance of the events described, it is hopeless to consider this sixty year period from the point of view of an equilibrium state. And it is silly to restrict an anthropologist to equilibrium states. I therefore deal not only with events and consequences, but also with tendencies, or directions. Perhaps direction is to diachrony as structure is to synchrony, or, if "structure" is considered more broadly, a diachronic analysis which transcends the particular consists of structures of tendencies and directions. But here I am undoubtedly getting out of my epistemological depth.

We have seen, in the period under discussion, a number of things. Christianity was introduced, with a set of implications deriving both from dogma and religious organization, set within a universalizing framework. Phosphate opened the island up more concretely, linking land and money, and dramatizing the ambiguities in the position of traditional leaders, some of whom found themselves in a Native Government which was created after the

assertion of colonial control. A system of four centralized villages was established, reinforced by church and government administration, and distancing descent and locality-as-residence. The separateness of the Banabans as a people was also reinforced, and an association formed between that separateness and the Protestant church.

Unhappiness with land arrangements and realization of the island's eventual destruction crystallized into a concerted opposition to the phosphate company and the government when the latter acted in the company's defense. Banaban land as a resource became closely identified with the Banaban people, and the creation of "common funds" gave them a corporateness which they had lacked before. Education, and ethnographic inquiries, simultaneously underscored and objectified the traditional structure, and increased sophistication in dealing with new structures.

A second set of land negotiations crystallized a developing "progressive" element and brought the situation to a point where the power which the people still had over their lands was lost. Undersurface rights were asserted as not belonging to the landowner at all, and funds from them were to be used for the community as a whole rather than for the individual landowner, a stipulation which was to be resisted as contrary to the cultural meaning of land, as seen within the setting of an individualism fostered by religious and other changes; and a "political style" was formed linking the Banabans' position, the nature of the Empire, and the universalizing ethical system of Christianity. Almost simultaneously, the Lands Commission codified the inheritance system, with the implications which this had both for kinship and the "objectification" of traditional culture, and a revival of one of the aspects of traditional culture occurred.

This codification continued as a new annuity-land[^] owners' bonus system was introduced, which raised the question of the relationship between the Banaban collectivity, Banaban identity, Ocean Island as a locality, and land as a locus of inalienable individual rights.

By looking backward from the phosphate-focused summary just concluded to other domains, and looking forward to the rest of the Banaban historical experience up to the crisis of the war, the tendencies or directions which comprised the structure of the Banaban historical experience become evident. The text has been peppered with them; I will try and bring just a few points together here, with apologies for repetition.

The historical consequence of developments in the church, and "trouble" in the Gilberts, with some of the more dramatic events of Banaban history suggests both that the kinds of things described were not localized to Ocean Island, and that the church was a setting in which the movement toward an idea of autonomy and solidarity was crystallized. Even if local European missionaries did not enact the formal ideal of self-governing, self-financing, and self-propagating churches, enough became communicated, and enough was inherent in the nature of the kind of Protestantism taught, to have the effect noted.⁷⁷ The church was a domain more subject to local control, and more responsive to local circumstances. The cooperative store, formed just before the war, and in competition with the BPC store, was an even more direct manifestation.

This manifestation may have been sparked by the Nauruan cooperative, and it seems reasonable that there were lines of communication with Nauru other than through the church, so that the use of external models increased. The guides for action were no longer coming only from the inside.

As noted, Christianity presented an ethical system ideally binding on all men. In religious, political and economic action units there was a shift toward performance standards. Banabans worked for the company and presumably relatively universalistic standards were applied to native performance. Thus an increasing universalism, and universalism is notorious for its "spreading effect."

However, at the same time a two-price system was in force as well as limited segregation. Thus there was a contradiction within the colonial structure. But the Banabans themselves had an interest in the maintenance of particularistic definitions because of the phosphate, and no doubt also for the gratification of being a landowner. This contradiction was solved by their ultimately judging their interests as legitimated within the framework of a generalized morality.

It is quite clear also that a valuation on a high level of consumption of European goods and services developed early, and increased. Yet at the same time there developed a concern for the conservation of Banaban identity, which was in part defined by a "custom" which had nothing to do with the consumption of European goods and services.

The relationship among these elements is informed by the phenomenon of increasing objectification, postulated as a consequence of mission and government activity. The distance between "the individual" and "the system" progressively increased (see Bellah 1964). An explicit notion of 'custom' was written into official regulations, but at the same time, given the assumption of many of the functions of the descent system by other institutions, individuals and families probably elaborated and systematized their own versions of that structure, in different ways.

Which brings us right back to blood and mud. Blood and land as symbolizers of kinship in general continued right through. But what of the whole structure outlined in Part One? Of hamlets and porpoises? Where did they go?

Assuming that major aspects of the traditional culture as described were in fact institutionalized in the traditional society, and taking the key from the Maudes that, in 1932, "many of the customs described...are no longer, or are fast ceasing to exist (1932:292)," they must have gone into a differentiated symbolic system. As I wrote above, the descent-locality system was probably being pushed into a differentiated symbolic system, with an uncertain relationship to the present, and to the individual's status and social personality. Through phosphate days the system (in a refined form) was partially "historicized;" people could say: this is what it was like in the days of our ancestors. But there was still a skirting of the issue of what it had to do with the present. It undoubtedly served identity functions, and operated as a set of "subjective status categories."⁷⁸ And the meanings from that system must have constituted a continuing input to the whole lands issue. The land issue had resonances from the center of traditional Banaban culture.

One likely feature of the entering of the complex into a more differentiated symbolic system, and one related to the redefinition of localities on the island, was the transformation of the hamlets into categories with more of a conceptual and less of a concrete aspect than before. The implications of this will be discussed in Part Three.

At the same time as constructs of 'Banaban Custom' were being elaborated, constructs of a modernized society were being elaborated, with the dimensions

specified by the tendencies discussed earlier. There was obviously some institutionalization of these constructs, as political, religious and economic developments indicated. But given the nature of the colonial system, these constructs could not be fully institutionalized. Cultural structure outran social structure. In the resettled situation there was more of an opportunity to build a social structure, with consequences which will be set out.

As further background to that discussion, it is clear that a critical factor to elucidate is the way in which the community was conceptualized as a community. Had the "modern revolution: in Dumont's sense (1961:36-8) occurred? Had the idea of a "nation" developed (see Dumont 1964), with a territorial focus and individuals as its basic constituents?

The answer may be more in the negative than the positive direction, although the material is ambiguous. The differentiation between individual-as-individual, and individual-as-landowner was incomplete. For the functions of land as a medium of symbolic exchange had become elaborated. Not only did land function to order the relationships among differentiated elements within the traditional sector of the system, but it also functioned to order the interrelationship of that sector with the "modern" sector.

Perhaps the situation can be clarified by a comparison with Schneider's discussion of nationality, religion and kinship in American culture, an expansion of some points made in American Kinship (1968), with which I assume readers are familiar. Schneider writes (MS)!

"In American culture, one is 'An American' either by birth or through a process which is called, appropriately enough, 'naturalization'. In precisely the same terms as kinship, there are the same two 'kinds of citizens', those by birth and those by law. And indeed it would not be hard to show

that the same three categories are derived from these two elements as three categories of kinsmen are derived from those elements. There is the person who is by birth an American but who has taken the citizenship of another country; there is the person who is American by naturalization but not by birth; and there is the person who by both birth and law is American.

"What is the role of a national? To love his country, his father- or mother-land. Loyalty and support for his nation and all those who belong to it. Patriotism in the extreme of 'My Country Right or Wrong' is one statement of it. But even where it does not take that particular form, loyalty to and love for one's country is the most generalized expression of diffuse, enduring solidarity."

Arguing both from contemporary definitions and the 1937 annuity rules cited above: one was a "Banaban" either by birth or through adoption, which entailed the transfer (assured or actual) of Ocean Island land. There was the person by birth a Banaban, but with a special status if he had land rights on other islands, There was the person who was a Banaban through adoption but not by birth, also with a special status if significant land rights were held elsewhere. The special status had to do with place of residence. Then there was the person who by both birth and residence was a Banaban (its being inconceivable to have Banaban blood and not Banaban land). Thus the paradigm follows fairly closely, with the important qualification that 'naturalization' in the societal system was only possible as a consequence of adoption in the kinship system, and adoption in the kinship system to have this implication was only possible through transfer of land.

As for generalized expressions of enduring, diffuse solidarity, we have some documentary indications, but the data is too incomplete. The major contexts in which such a solidarity would have been called for involved,

again, land. In contemplating the future, however, such a notion probably crystallized for some people (and the war gave them a heritage of common suffering). It may have been part of the conception of the Protestants (this point will be elaborated in detail in Part III). Which brings us to religion.

Schneider (1969) writes:

"With Christianity (in contrast with Judaism), as ^{is} well known, the criterion for membership shifted from birth to volition. That is, in the most general sense, one is a Christian by an act of faith and not an act of birth, and correspondingly conversion to The Faith becomes a very different matter and a real possibility since it takes only an act of will to effect.

"But this view leaves out two very important facts. Being a Jew is not simply being born a Jew. There is a code for conduct which is linked to the fact of birth. What is true is that it is the act of birth which has the quality of the defining feature, and so the other element tends to be easily overlooked. And it is here that the parallel between kinship and religion in Judaism is quite clear, for ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ both there are those two features, relationship as substance and relationship as code for conduct; the substance element is bio-genetic, the code for conduct is one of diffuse, enduring solidarity.

"Although the shift from Judaism to Christianity seems to drop the condition of substance as the defining feature and rest it entirely on the commitment to code for conduct, this is not really so. Certainly there is a shift away from the particularistic, bio-genetic, criterion of substance as the defining features. But the shift entails a re-alignment so that commitment to the code for conduct becomes paramount as the defining feature, and the substantive element is re-defined from a material to a spiritual form. It is ~~the~~ triumph of the spirit over matter that is at issue here.

Closely linked to this is the prominent place given to love as a symbol, to the spiritual aspects of love, and to the spiritual aspects of creation as against its rather more narrowly material or bio-genetic aspects in Judaism."

Among the Banabans, needless to say, Christianity did not differentiate out of Judaism; it was imported. But the general line of argument holds. Schneider is making the point that in America (at least), "the domain of religion may well be structured in the same terms as kinship and nationality," in terms of "substance" and "code."

In the Banaban situation, the contrast between identity and code is symbolized at one level by the contrast between blood and land. Yet, at least in the contemporary culture, and to repeat what was stated above (see p. 3a), the opposition between blood and land can be overcome -- both symbolizing unity -- by a contrast with nurturance and residence, symbolizing code. Nurturance and residence are not things, but continuing acts; they are more literally code-like. And the meanings of blood may be inclusive of the meanings of both land and nurturance and residence, as the meanings of land may be inclusive of the meanings of nurturance and residence. Land again is the mediating link. Out of this complex the revised descent system, the new village form, Banaban identity and a plan for a new island were differentiated; into it Christianity was injected.

If the correct transformations are made given these symbolic differences, Schneider's paradigm can be applied to the Banaban case. Thus we are right back where we started from: blood and mud, identity and code, and the ways they are distributed against one another.

The author regrets that his verbosity
and delinquency will require the dis-
tribution of Part III separately, and
at a slightly later time.

