

PAPUAN LEARNING AND TEACHING, TOO

By A.M. ROSENTHAL Special to The New York Times.

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Dutch Find Islanders Apt Pupils Who Are Quick to Reverse Their Role

By A. M. ROSENTHAL
Special to The New York Times.

NAPAN, Netherlands New Guinea, Dec. 19—Since the Dutch started to pay real attention to Netherlands New Guinea in 1950, they have provided the Papuan people of this island with a variety of schools. The Papuans, in their own way, have provided something of an education for the Dutch.

These are some of the ways the Papuans did it:

A Dutch official walked into an office in Hollandia. Seated at a table were an Indonesian official, still in the Netherlands' service, and two Papuan village headmen. The Indonesian jumped to his feet and stood still. The Papuans looked up, smiled and remained seated.

In the bar of a grimy Government hotel, about 9 o'clock one night, a Dutch official asked the Papuan bartender for a beer. The bartender, after five minutes, produced it. He also produced a pointed look at a wrist-watch and asked the Dutchman how long he intended to stay.

A Dutch destroyer pulled into

a south New Guinea coastal port. Local Dutch officials thought it would be a good idea to show some people from the jungles, still in the head-hunting stage, some real weapons.

Jungle people trekked down, wandered around the ship, and one of them gave the verdict:

"Yes, you have guns. But see these bows and arrows that we have? We think you are not able to use these fine bows and arrows. We can use them."

Anthropologists put it that Papuans have their own cultural values, that they regard all "outgroups" as inferior to their own "ingroup." A Netherlands official put it:

"Independent people, these Papuans, damned independent."

Netherlands officials, especially old-time officials who have seen service in Indonesia, have had to do some considerable adjusting in New Guinea.

In Indonesia they came into a society that had its caste and class distinctions, its own ideas of authority and rights of rulers. They were masters and were treated as masters.

In New Guinea there are no masters and no slaves. Papuan life is a free sort of life. There are no village councils, no great lawgivers or authorities. A man's pretty much his own man, except for the influence on life of demons and spirits.

Between the Dutch and the Papuans there is no bowing and scraping. An Indonesian school-teacher who tried to convince Papuans that the proper way to show respect was to walk



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A LAND OF PEDAGOGY:
The people of Netherlands New Guinea learn from and instruct the Dutch.

hunched over in front of superiors was told:

"We are men, and men walk straight."

Dutch authority does not overawe the Papuans, and neither does Dutch wealth. Papuans like things like wrist watches and sewing machines, but they are not impressed that the Dutch have them.

That's because the Papuan belief is that all these good things originated right here in New Guinea. The Papuans say:

One day the gods became angered and withdrew, with all their machines and inventions, to the West. One day the gods will return, and all these fine things will come again to their rightful owners, the Papuans.

How do the Dutch feel?

There are some old-time of-

ficials who don't like it much and don't pretend to like it. Impertinence, that's the word.

But the fact seems to be that these officials are in the minority. They can be rude and brusque to the Papuans, but they don't advertise it.

A larger group of old officials were startled by the independent attitudes, and still are not quite used to them. But these officials have accepted such independence as inevitable and in line with the goal of the Government.

Adjustments are helped by the fact that the Dutch have not paid much attention to color bars, and pay even less attention now. There are social distinctions between the Dutch and Papuans, but they are based on rank and education.

The Papuans' free and easy attitude toward big-shotism produces a third reaction—one of delight. That is the reaction of some younger officials in New Guinea, officials trained here and without any master complex.

It delights them because, first of all, they think it makes Papuan development, Papuan growth an easier thing.

Besides, the younger officials are not enthusiastic about the formality required of them as Dutch civil servants. So the Papuans and some young Dutch officers feel much the same way.

But the Papuans have one advantage: they can say so: