



Routes of knowledge: an aspect of regional integration in the circum-Roraima area of the Guiana Highlands

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It should always be borne in mind that, when Amerindians travel to distant places, they frequently learn and bring back songs and tales, as well as material goods of all kinds. They have a great curiosity (personal communication from C. de Armellada).

The designation *Hallelujah* (*Aleluia*, *Aleluya*, *Areruya*)¹ denotes a system of beliefs and rituals, with an accompanying church organization, which today

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It is difficult sufficiently to thank the Rev. Padre Cesáreo de Armellada, Capuchin missionary and Venezuelan scholar, or to indicate the extent of the debt I owe him. A very great deal of the information in this article was obtained through our mutual collaboration, whilst the material on the Pemon is also founded on his own unique research experience carried out during many years of residence on the Gran Sabana. This present attempt to unite two sets of data, those from the Kapon and those from the Pemon, could not have been carried out without his generous aid. It is our intention to begin writing a more definitive study of the history and nature of syncretic religion amongst these peoples in the near future.

Access to the Fr. Cary-Elwes manuscript and papers and permission to publish was accorded by the Rev. Fr. John Coventry, former Provincial of the English Province of the Society of Jesus. I am most grateful for this privilege and also thank the Rev. Fr. Bruno Brinkman for his constant interest in my work relating to this.

Finally, I wish to express my deep appreciation and thanks to all those who live in the upper Mazaruni and on the Gran Sabana who, by giving generously of their knowledge and personal recollections, have made the writing of this history possible. I hope that they will forgive any errors or deficiencies on my part. I hope too, that this present work will support their adherence to Hallelujah, as a system of beliefs and practices of their own, which encapsulates the knowledge and wisdom of their *ipu-kenaton* -those outstanding men and women past and present, who forged it under divine inspiration and revelation.

¹ I originally used the spelling "Hallelujah" for two reasons. Among the Akawaio the "h"

is a characteristic and important part of the culture of certain Carib-speaking peoples of Guiana. Investigation shows that it contains a complex syncretism—that of the traditional, indigenous system joined to beliefs and practices adopted from Christianity. However, Hallelujah is not just an assembly of ideas and customs derived from two distinct cultures. In the amalgamation an originality has emerged: a re-interpretation of the universe and of man's activities and being, created through the profound thought and revelations experienced and propagated by indigenous "wise men and women," or prophets (*ipu kena'ton*: wisdom possessors).

I am not here concerned with the nature of this cult, its mode of practice or organization, and I shall refer in outline only to its origins in mission teaching and the inspired revelations of its prophets. Instead, my focus is on the routes, or paths, of dissemination of this new knowledge between the regional groups of two ethnic entities in the circum-Roraima area.² Although a relatively modern cult, formed in the second half of the 19th century, Hallelujah provides an excellent example of how non-material culture (beliefs, tales, songs, prayers, dances, moral injunctions and sets of values), may pass from region to region, disregarding the indigenous frontiers as well as those international ones which were being imposed at the turn of the present century. I shall attempt to show how the passage of these intangibles assists in the maintenance of regional and ethnic interdependence and symbiosis, as much, it may be argued, as the more familiar and better studied interchanges of material items conducted by barter and trade.³

Although a study of how knowledge and its related practices are disseminated is clearly of value to social anthropologists, it should also be of interest to archaeologists, who depend in the main on material remains and the inferences which can be drawn from these for an understanding of the rest of society, its culture and its links with neighbours. In the case of Hallelujah (and also other closely related cults of the Gran Sabana Pemon which I do not discuss here), we can discover how and when a certain body of knowledge took form, the circumstances in which it was carried to others and by what routes. We can discover some of the feedbacks and the formation of networks of interchange and, finally, attempt to assess the total effect all this has for a common accord between regional groups which have, in other respects, been seen to be hostile to each other.

is very frequently heard, especially when emphasis is intended. Since, also, some phrases of the cult may be labelled as enthusiastic, through the intensity of feeling and the ritual practised, it seemed appropriate to use the more ecstatic denotation. However, the usual form for the Pemon in Venezuela has been "Areruya," although a variety of spellings may be encountered. There is, I think, no single correct form, whether of pronunciation or derived spelling, either in European or Carib languages. It is for the sake of continuity that I have here kept to my original version.

² The term circum-Roraima has been coined by Cesáreo de Armellada. It is a useful, short reference term denoting the highland and neighbouring lowland region surrounding the Roraima range of mountains, where the Kapon and Pemon peoples have their traditional homelands.

³ Several papers have already been published on inter-tribal trade for the same and neighbouring peoples. See Coppens 1971; Thomas 1972; Burt Colson 1973.

The Hallelujah Indians

The Hallelujah Indians today comprise two distinct ethnic groupings, the *Kapon* and *Pemon*, distinguishable by these autodenominations, by their land holdings and spatial relationships, by degree of linguistic and cultural variation and by the intermarriage network. They are, nevertheless, very closely interrelated peoples, to the degree where it may be argued that they form an overall structural and cultural unity of an acephalous, segmentary kind, (but possessing cognatic kinship networks, without the clan or lineage systems such as anthropological literature depicts as characteristic of African segmentary systems) (Butt Colson 1983-1984).

Within the Kapon unity are two regional groups, known generally by their nicknames, Akawaio and Patamona. The former group has its main centre in the upper Mazaruni river basin of the North Pakaraima Mountains, but also has settlements in the lowland areas of the middle Mazaruni and in the upper Cuyuni basin. Akawaio are found mainly in Guyana, but increasingly on the Venezuelan side of a frontier which was established in 1899 with British Guiana (now Guyana).⁴ A small group also lives at the headwaters of the upper Cotinga River, in Brazil. The Patamona regional group, to the south of the Akawaio, is in the Potaro, Siparuni and Ireng River valleys. They live mainly in Guyana, but there are also settlements on the right, Brazilian, bank of the Ireng River, the course of which defines the present frontier between Guyana and Brazil.

The Northern Pemon consist of those regional groups which live mainly on the Gran Sabana, Venezuela. These are the Arekuna and Kamarakoto to the north-east and north-west respectively, and the Taurepan to the south. North Pemon also have settlements in the Paragua River basin and in the upper Cuyuni and they extend down the Kamarang River into the upper Mazaruni basin, Guyana. In the Kamarang and Cuyuni areas they are much mixed with Akawaio. Similarly, the Taurepan are not confined to the Venezuelan Gran Sabana, but extend southwards into the Surumu River basin, Brazil, merging with another Pemon group, the Makushi. The Makushi, with their subdivisions, are to be found on the middle and lower reaches of the Ireng, Cotinga and Surumu rivers in Brazil, these rivers being tributaries of the Rio Branco. In Guyana the Makushi live on the southern slopes of the Pakaraima Mountains, in the North Rupununi Savanna and the Kanuku Mountains. On their south and west they have intermarried with the Arawak-speaking Wapishana.

Although it is impossible to be exact for all groups, owing to lack of accurate and up-to-date demographic data, population numbers culled from a variety of sources indicate that there are now some 22,000 Pemon and something in the region of 8,000 Kapon, living in the main in the circum-Roraima area of the

⁴ The position of this frontier is in dispute. Conflicting claims over the territory of Essequibo have, in recent years particularly, disrupted the lives of the indigenous occupants of the land.

Guiana Highlands and neighbouring lowlands.⁵ Not all, or even the majority, of Pemon and Kapon individuals are necessarily adherents of Hallelujah. Moreover, a variety of Christian missions is now found in their homelands: Roman Catholic, Anglican and several North American Protestant Churches -notably Seventh Day Adventist and Pilgrim Holiness- each with a core membership. However, today at least, Christian Churches are in the main tolerant of Hallelujah, some missionaries even encouraging its practice as an indigenous complement. New Hallelujah churches are still being founded, since adherents carry their beliefs, practices and organization with them to new settlements. Thus, in the past two decades the Akawaio have built churches for the Hallelujah form of worship in the middle Mazaruni and, in conjunction with Pemon, in the upper Cuyuni. The Kamarakoto church on the upper Cuyuni dates from the 1960s when they founded a new village there. Hallelujah today is not only actively practised, it is even expanding. In judging its social importance as well as its physical extension it should be noted, as I show below, that all the regional groups of the two peoples, Kapon and Pemon, have played a vital part in its establishment and dissemination.

The first literary references to Hallelujah among the Kapon and Pemon

I have so far discovered three sets of literary references to the practice of Hallelujah in the area of the Pakaraima Mountains and Rio Branco Savannas, in the circum-Roraima area. Beginning in 1884, they take in the first decades of the 20th century.

1. *Sir Everard im Thurn* (1885: 256-267). In 1884 Sir Everard im Thurn, a magistrate in government employment, travelled from Georgetown, Demerara, up the Potaro River, a left bank tributary of the Essequibo flowing eastwards from the Pakaraima Mountains. Arriving first at the Anglican mission of Ichowra, he encountered the Bishop of British Guiana on his first visit to the Patamona (Kapon) Indians. The Potaro mission was still in its infancy and there was difficulty in getting it established owing to problems of distance and communications generally. Im Thurn also found a small party of Makushi (Pemon) visiting from the Ireng River to the west. Using them as guides and porters, im Thurn went up the Potaro, above Kaieteur Fall, to the abandoned mission station of Chinebowie (Shenabauwie) or Enapowow, and then walked three and a half days through forest in a south-westerly direction. On the morning of the fourth day the forest gave way to savanna and he soon reached the Patamona village of Euworraeng. A further day's journey across savanna brought him to the Makushi village of Konkarmo⁶ and to within sight of Roraima. Konkarmo

⁵ The breakdown of these statistics and their provenance are considered in detail in Butt Colson 1983-1984.

⁶ At Konkarmo he saw stone implements being made, for the first time during his travels (im Thurn 1934: 5-6).

was then the northernmost village of Makushi in the Ireng River basin. In both villages im Thurn saw a building referred to as a church, and he records that the people of Konkarmo and of the whole neighbourhood were devoting themselves to "an extravagant and perfectly unintelligent imitation of such church services as some few of the party had seen, when on their travels, at the distant mission" (1885: 6). The mission in question was Anglican, established first at Chinebowie and then at Ichowra.

From Konkarmo the party arrived at the Ireng River, crossed, and made its way northwards, in Brazilian territory, towards Roraima. They crossed the Cotinga River just below Orindouik Falls and, continuing northwards, entered the Gran Sabana, eventually arriving at the village of "Teroota" (or Te'wono),⁷ described as facing a gorge between the two mountains of Roraima and Kukenam. The journey from Konkarmo had been made with "Arekoon" guides and im Thurn refers to the Roraima people by the same name. However, we know that they were the Taurepan regional group of the Pemon.⁸ From the village of Teroota im Thurn made his famous climb to the summit of Roraima, long believed to be unscalable. His description of events on his return to the village yields our first record of the existence of Hallelujah.

The closing day of my stay there was last Christmas Day, which we spent at Teroota, the Arecoona village at the foot, and from which is the most astoundingly magnificent view of the twin mountains of Roraima and Kookenaam.Then, when night fell and hid this, the Indians around us, under the influence of a most remarkable ecclesiastical mania which had just then spread in a wonderful way into those distant parts, raised -as they kept Christmas with much drinking, without intermission from sunset to the next dawn- an absolutely incessant shout of "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" (im Thurn 1885: 266).

It seems that by Christmas 1884 Hallelujah had reached the Taurepan at Roraima, having but recently been adopted.

2. *Theodor Koch-Grünberg*.⁹ In August-September 1911, the German explorer Theodor Koch-Grünberg stayed in Koimélemong, a village of Makushi and Taurepan near the Serra do Mel in the Surumu River valley. Whilst there he witnessed "aräruya," or "aläluya." The Wapishana present danced it separately; the Makushi and Taurepan danced it together:

El baile es una particularidad de los Taulipáng de las montañas, especialmente de los alrededores

⁷ According to J.J. Quelch (1895: 161) "Terouta" was the Makushi name for "Tewono," the village of Schoolmaster and where Fr. Cary-Elwes made his headquarters on his several visits to the Roraima group. The position as described by im Thurn is that of Te'wono, now abandoned.

⁸ "Arekuna" is a nickname which, apart from a specific application to the north-east group of Pemon on the Gran Sabana, is applied by the Kapon (both Akawaio and Paramona) to all the Pemon north of the Makushi Pemon. "Makushi" is also a nickname. The structural significance of group nicknaming is discussed in Butt Colson 1983-1984.

⁹ For the purposes of this article I refer to the Spanish translation of Koch-Grünberg's well-known work *Vom Roroima zum Orinoco* (1917). For the map, however, it is necessary to consult this original, German edition.

del Roraima. Es una reminiscencia al estilo indio de los misioneros ingleses que actuaban antaño en esta tribu pero sin dejar rasgos "cristianos" notables (Koch-Grünberg 1979: 74, 90).

The dance steps described were those which characterize Hallelujah dancing today.

Continuing his journey northwards through the Rio Branco Savannas, Koch-Grünberg arrived at Roraima shortly afterwards (September-October 1911). He noted that the leader of the village Kauliánalemóng, who was Selemelá (Jeremiah), danced "arüruya," and he referred to "el aburridor 'arüruya' que desplazó entre los habitantes de Kauliánalemóng casi por completo los bonitos y viejos cantos y bailes" (Koch-Grünberg 1979: 114, 112). Finally, he recounts that Selemelá gave a feast, 6th October 1911, and that dancing began late in the evening -the arüruya dancing, which he referred to as an atypical round dance and a mournful caricature of the traditional parischerá which he had witnessed in the nearby village of Denóng (Koch-Grünberg 1979: 118).

Apart from his experiences of Hallelujah dancing, Koch-Grünberg's map (in the original German edition of 1917) shows an Amerindian village called "Alleluja," situated not far north of the confluence of the Surumu with the Cotinga River and to the south of Koimélemong where he saw the dancing. The village of Alleluja is situated well within the area which he denoted as Makushi, whereas Koimélemong is in the northernmost sector, where the Makushi area ends and Taurepan country begins and, according to his map, extends up to Roraima. We can thus conclude that Hallelujah was being practised by at least some of the Makushi of the Rio Branco Savannas in 1911, as well as by Taurepan and Makushi in a mixed zone on the Surumu River and by Taurepan in the Kukenam valley at Roraima. It was most probably also known to and practised by the Cotinga River Makushi (on the lower and middle reaches) and certainly by the Akawaio on the upper Cotinga (see below).

3. *Fr. Cuthbert Cary-Elwes, S.J.*¹⁰ Fr. Cary-Elwes, founder of the Jesuit mission of St. Ignatius of the North Rupununi Savanna in 1909, made several journeys to the Taurepan at Roraima from the end of 1911 on, travelling mostly via the Rio Branco Savannas. Although he arrived at Te'wono, Schoolmaster's village, and visited Jeremiah (or Seremadá) at his village of Kavariana-remon, he does not record any trace of Hallelujah practice there -unlike Koch-Grünberg who had preceded Fr. Cary-Elwes by just a few weeks only. However, he did hear of Hallelujah among the Akawaio at Amokokupai, during the following years, and he was told that they had never been visited by any missionary. Thus, in 1917, on one of his visits to Roraima, he struck east with the intention of visiting Amokokupai, situated in the Kukui River valley in the upper Mazaruni basin. The route followed took him from the Kukenam River south to the Arabopo,

¹⁰ The information derived from Fr. Cary-Elwes is contained in his unpublished book, *Among the Amazon valley Indians*, which is based on his personal diaries. The sections of his manuscript used here are: vol. 3, p. 540 *et seq.*; vol. 5, pp. 798-803 and p. 859 *et seq.*

a tributary, where he turned east to cross the headwaters of the Cotinga River (known as the Kwatin in its upper reaches). He traversed the mountains which mark the watershed between the Essequibo and Amazon systems, entering the Kukui valley which is thickly forested. The party crossed the Ataro, a tributary of the Kukui River, and eventually arrived at the hilltop village of Amokokupai, the headquarters of the "Alleluiaites."

The missionary and his Makushi helpers arrived on Whit-Sunday and spent over two weeks in Amokokupai, leaving on the third Monday after arrival. During that period Fr. Cary-Elwes witnessed intense and almost continuous, day and night, "Alleluia" singing, dancing, prayers and preaching in the "church." He noted that the proceedings were conducted by William the prophet and William the chief, whilst the enthusiasm of these and their followers was such that his intention to proselytize and to set the people on a more orthodox path could not be carried out. The detailed account of Alleluia activity which he gives is a very exact one, matching the ritual seen by an increasing number of visitors to Amokokupai from 1945 on, when the upper Mazaruni area became more accessible owing to air contact.

Leaving Amokokupai, Fr. Cary-Elwes and his assistants took the trail to Patamona (Kapon) country. They crossed the Kukui River, encountering another Akawaio village with an Alleluia church, and walked towards the headwaters of the Ireng River. On the Sukuapi, a left bank tributary of the Ireng, they arrived at Kanaubia, the village of Benjamin, with its Alleluia church. Benjamin had taken his prayers from the Amokokupai people. Fr. Cary-Elwes found that a number of Patamona villages on the banks of the upper Ireng were all "Alleluiaites" who attended Benjamin's church at Kanaubia. It was not until he got further down the Ireng, to Waipa village and the Makushi sector of the river where Roman Catholic chapels had been founded, that he felt he had left the Alleluia sector behind him.

Fr. Cary-Elwes' second and final visit to the Akawaio and to Amokokupai took place in 1921, about October-November that year. He was again with the Taurepan at Roraima and he set off eastwards, across the Cotinga River to the south of Weitepui Mountain, varying his route slightly from that followed previously. In the Kukui valley he found the villagers of Wazamaekua, (probably Wayamaekua on the Ataro River), who were accustomed to visit Amokokupai to pray. They accompanied him to Amokokupai. There, Fr. Cary-Elwes stayed two weeks. This time, four years after his first visit, he mentions only William the chief. The village was packed with people and Alleluia practice was as enthusiastic as previously in what he described as "this Mecca of the Alleluia." His success in trying to wean them away from Alleluia was no greater than before.

From Fr. Cary-Elwes' invaluable accounts of his two visits to Amokokupai, in 1917 and 1921, we can establish a number of important points. Hallelujah knowledge and practice was centred on the upper Kukui River village of Amokokupai and the fame of this as a headquarters of the religion had by then extended well outside the Akawaio area, for Fr. Cary-Elwes had heard about

it from his Makushi assistants in the south. Not only did the Kukui settlements he visited have close links with Amokokupai, their inhabitants going there to feast and pray and then to repeat what they had learnt in their own village churches, but by 1917 the Patamona of the uppermost reaches of the Ireng River also possessed this knowledge and had close links between their churches and the Amokokupai church. Moreover, the story of the origins of their Alleluia, related to Fr. Cary-Elwes by the Akawaio and Patamona leaders whom he met, was substantially the same as that which I later collected (Butt 1960: 77-84; Butt Colson 1971: 40-46). It is the story of Abel, the founding prophet of Hallelujah at Amokokupai.

However, Hallelujah had by now also spread to the Arekuna (Pemon) in the north-east sector of the Gran Sabana, Venezuela. Fr. Cary-Elwes, on yet another journey to Roraima but travelling via the Mazaruni River, had taken the trail from the lower sector of the river to the upper basin, had canoed up the Kamarang River and had arrived on the Gran Sabana via the Attabrau. North-west of Ilutepui Mountain, he and his party began to circle round it to the south when, on reaching the crest of a ridge extending north to south they saw to the west of them the village of "Manapupai"¹¹ situated on the top of a small hill in the middle of the plain. There were 16 houses, in the middle of which was an Alleluia church. Soon after Fr. Cary-Elwes' arrival an Alleluia feast began, with dancing all day and all night. "Parijöra" was also being danced. The date was December 1919. Fr. Cary-Elwes had intended going on to Amokokupai for his second visit, but on reaching Roraima had to defer this until 1921 for lack of an interpreter.

Oral tradition: the Makushi origins of Hallelujah knowledge

The three sets of literary references summarized here raise the question of exactly how Hallelujah passed between the several regional groups belonging to two different ethnic unities, Kapon and Pemon, over such a wide area. These groups, moreover, clearly committed themselves to the new cult to the extent of constructing special buildings or "churches," in some of their major settlements, whilst inhabitants of smaller settlements regularly made long journeys to participate in cult ceremonial, organized under recognized Hallelujah leaders and prophets. It is at this point that we leave behind the literary records and turn to the oral traditions which throw light on the history of the interconnections between the widely spread areas of Hallelujah activity reported in the literature.

We have already published a synthesis and analysis of several versions of the tale of the origins of Hallelujah among the Makushi (South Pemon) of the Rupununi Savanna related by Akawaio and Patamona (Kapon) leaders (Butt 1960: 66-106; Butt Colson 1971: 25-58). Versions of this same tale were subsequently collected from the North Pemon and a detailed comparison and

¹¹ "Manapupai" seems to be Wanapupai, the village and church of the Pemon prophet Auka.

analysis of these is being prepared. There are no essential differences between the two sets, that of the Kapon groups and that of the North Pemon of the Gran Sabana, although there are some interesting variations of detail and elaboration. The tales relate to a Makushi Indian called Pichiwön (Bichiwön), or Chiwön.¹² He went with missionaries from his home at Kanuku (presumably the Kanuku Mountains which divide the North from the South Rupununi Savanna), on a long journey by water, arriving eventually at the "sky foot" (*kak prakon-po*), the horizon, and eventually at a big town. Pichiwön stayed away a very long time, was baptized in a river and took the English name Eden (pronounced Itang or Idang). He became acquainted with "paper" (*kareta*: books, paper of all kinds), was taught about God and learnt to pray. He is said to have been lonely and he began to pray and think about how he might see and talk to God. In his dreams he travelled far into the sky and eventually arrived at God's place. He was not allowed into God's house, but he saw radiant light (Pemon *auka*; Kapon *akwa*), and he heard God's voice. Hallelujah, the name, beliefs and prayers, especially songs incorporating these, were revealed to him. He also received God's command to go back home to teach these to his people and he was given some material items -a book (*kareta*), a small coin for making purchases and a small flask of perfumed liquid.

Pemon, as in the case of Akawaio and Patamona, sometimes assert that Pichiwön was taken to England. However, the Pemon of the Gran Sabana have often referred to the coastal area of British Guiana (now Guyana) as Engiran or Engran (England) and one of their principal prophets took that name (see below). It is thus probable that the South Pemon, the Makushi, on the distant south-west borderland and strongly under Brazilian influence in the Rio Branco, were accustomed to use the same designation.¹³ From the very beginning of contact with the Old World populations and the subsequent settlement of the lower stretches of the main rivers and the coastlands in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the indigenous inhabitants became accustomed to barter or work for the new and highly desirable manufactured goods, such as metal tools, guns, decorative and dress items (beads and cloth), salt, pins and a great variety of goods ranging from pots and pans to mirrors, combs, perfumes and musical instruments. They gave their own products (hammocks, urucu dye, figured wood, parrots and pet animals for example), and also their labour and bushcraft -that is, their knowledge of the forest and skill as guides, carriers and providers of local foods and means of shelter. We know that metal goods, axes and knives and guns for hunting, were so important that even Ye'kuana (Maionggong) trading parties were sporadically lured into making long journeys, which sometimes lasted several months, in order to obtain these items. They came

¹² *Chiwön* (*sewön, èseön*) refers to the spirit master or mistress of a natural species or resource. Its controlling force or energy is thereby personified.

¹³ In 1904 approximately half of the Makushi population with its lands was assigned to Brazil, the international frontier being established along the courses of the Ireng and Takutu Rivers.

from the tributaries of the upper Orinoco to trade with the Makushi in the Rupununi or to accompany them to the coastlands. They sometimes visited the coastal missions.¹⁴ Certainly parties of Makushi had long been accustomed to travel for several weeks by canoe, paddling down the Essequibo until they arrived at Bartika, at the confluence of the Mazaruni with the Essequibo. From there they could travel by steamer to Georgetown, via the coastal waters to the mouth of the Demerara River. This is the most likely route for those in the company of a missionary. On their own they could take an inland route, leaving their boats on the Essequibo at a point nearest the Demerara River and taking one of the short land trails, entailing about four hours walk, which come out above and below the Great Fall on the Demerara River. They could then paddle down the Demerara River to Georgetown at the mouth.

Makushi travellers became more frequent on the coastlands, and at the stations on the lower reaches of the main rivers, from the 1840s on. There were several reasons for this. The first attempt to set up an Anglican mission among the Makushi in the North Rupununi, in 1838-1841, failed on account of the boundary dispute with Brazil and the consequent freezing of claims on that area. However, Anglican missionaries performed quick tours of Makushi villages and encouraged the people to stay in their missions near the coast. The availability of employment at wood-cutting establishments and timber camps lower down the rivers was also an enticement. By earning money the hinterland Amerindians could then purchase the much desired trade goods. These goods had formerly been handed out as gifts by officials at government posts on the rivers, notably during the period of Dutch settlement in the 18th century; the system had continued under British rule until the emancipation of the negro slaves in 1838, after which the goodwill and policing services of the indigenous peoples were no longer necessary and both gifts and payments abruptly ceased. The hinterland groups had then to find another way to acquire the imported manufactured goods to which they had long become accustomed. From the mid-19th century, both economic and religious motives combined to draw the Makushi Pemon, and also the two regional groups of the Kapon (Akawaio and Patamona), into the sphere of the coastal economy of British Guiana and of certain aspects of the colonial culture, for where Amerindians flocked to the wood-cutting

¹⁴ For example, see Richard Schomburgk (1922: 315-316). The expedition, which was at Pirara in the Rupununi in 1842, encountered a group of "Maionkongks" who were on their way to Georgetown to obtain metal axes. They had reached Makushi country, having travelled from the Cunucunuma, a tributary of the upper Orinoco, via the Cassiquiare, Rio Negro and Rio Branco. A visit of Maionggong to the newly-established Anglican mission of Waramuri on the Moruka River is recorded for 1864. They arrived with Akawaio from the head of the Cuyuni, Waini and Barama Rivers at a time of an influx of Akawaio and some Arekuna to the British Guiana missions. These Ye'kuana asked the missionary, W.H. Brett, to baptise two of their children. There is no mention of trade, but very likely this was a reason for their visit to the Akawaio and they then decided to accompany their hosts to the mission (Brett 1868: 267; Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge 1865: 79-80; Butt Colson 1973: 9-10).

and timber camps along the lower sectors of the main rivers for purposes of wage earning and acquisition of goods, the missionaries also set up chapels and mission churches in order to impart Christian knowledge and practices.

Although the exact site of Pichiwön's religious experience, where Hallelujah was envisaged for the first time, may never be established for sure, the Demerara River mission stations appear to be most likely. Anglican missionaries toured the river stations and catechists were appointed. Some settlers also lent their services. As Carib speakers flocked from the hinterland to the Demerara River for employment in wood-cutting operations, mission teaching was steadily increasing among them from 1865 on. Between 1863 and 1873, a period of evangelisation of a large number of Carib speakers, including some of the Pemon from the borderlands (denoted as Arekuna), was carried out by Church of England missionaries and in this period over 1,000 copies of tracts in the Akawaio language were distributed. Extra copies were given to individuals to pass on to others out of reach of the mission centres. A booklet *Simple truths* was being distributed from 1871. Finally, 1873 saw the publication of a portion of the bible in "Acawoio," consisting of the *First part of Genesis and the Gospel of St. Matthew, with supplementary extracts from the other Gospels, including the Parables of Our Lord*.¹⁵ Translations into Akawaio which had been made by the famous missionary W.H. Brett were being used in every mission that had Akawaio in attendance, and they were also in the possession of Akawaio and other Carib-speaking groups scattered along the western borders. Indeed, Koch-Grünberg records (1979: 114) that whilst at Roraima in 1911 Jeremiah had in his possession a book of prayers entitled *Church service for the Muritaro Mission, Georgetown 1885*, in the Akawaio language. Muritaro was one of the major mission stations established on the Demerara River. The village was occupied exclusively by Makushi, some Arekuna (Pemon of the Gran Sabana), Akawaio and Patamona. Many of them lived there for long periods of time, engaged in timber work nearby (Dance 1881: 163-167). This village meets the criterion of being "somewhere behind Georgetown," which is frequently asserted in narrations of Pichiwön's relationships with his missionary friends as being the latter's location.

Despite any remaining uncertainty as to the exact site of Pichiwön's religious experiences, the important point emerges that it occurred somewhere in the region where an important trade route begins for the hinterland indigenous peoples of western Guiana. The oral accounts of the origins of Hallelujah have definite reference to the material element. Pichiwön had received advice from heaven to send for his Makushi relatives and friends that they might help him take back the vast quantity of goods he had acquired. They were to come bearing their own products for barter in order to obtain yet more manufactures for themselves. During his spirit experiences Pichiwön is said to have received a

¹⁵ Copies of these publications, the numbers issued and re-issued and the dates, are in the Archives of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.), London.

number of desirable items. An "Amerindian bible" (*kareta*)¹⁶ was given him by God, so that Indians might have their own source of knowledge. He was also given a flask of perfume or oil, with medicinal qualities it was alleged. He received a small coin, "a little money," but this had miraculous purchasing powers for, although small, he was able to buy many things with it - "it would never finish." According to one, Taurepan, account, he purchased with it a miraculous knife which, on nearing a tree, began cutting of its own accord.¹⁷

Effectively, Pichiwön brought back to his people two kinds of wealth - intellectual and spiritual wealth in the form of new knowledge and the methods of obtaining this, and material wealth in the form of new and desirable trade goods. They are interrelated: the one, material wealth, being seen to be associated with and derived from wealth of knowledge. This is one field of thought in which the traditional conceptual system of these Carib speakers coincides with Christianity, for in both systems prosperity is obtained through importuning the cosmic powers. The indigenous peoples importuned the *chiwön*, the masters and mistresses of resources; Christians importuned God and associated heavenly beings. Although the nature of the powers and the method of approach differ, this is probably a fundamental act in all religious systems.

The northward routes of Hallelujah knowledge

Our earliest evidence (im Thurn 1884) refers to Hallelujah among the Taurepan Pemon at Roraima, several days of travel north of Pichiwön's home in the Kanuku area where, amidst his relatives, he was making his first conversions to Hallelujah. Literary evidence for Hallelujah in the intermediate area, in the Rio Branco Savannas, begins later (Koch-Grünberg 1911), but certainly this must have been a crucial region in the passage of knowledge from south to north, where the cult took root and is continuing strongly today. In oral tradition one important Hallelujah leader is recalled who fills this gap. He is Pöregaman

¹⁶ The Pemon and Kapon word *kareta* (*kaleda, kareda, kaleta, garetá*, etc.), derives from the Spanish for "letter," *carta*. The use of a considerable number of Spanish words for basic material items, Old World animals and tools for example, indicates an earlier impact on Kapon and Pemon culture, although possibly imported via other Carib speakers. Although it cannot be discussed here, it should always be remembered that some thousands of Kapon (referred to as Waika, Guayca), as well as some Pemon (certainly Kamarakoto), were living in some of the missions of the *Capuchinos catalanes* in the Yuruari region at the headwaters of the Cuyuni River in Guayana Española, from about the middle of the 18th century until 1817.

¹⁷ We may hazard a guess that the missionaries gave Pichiwön a translation of extracts from the bible in Akawaio - God's book for them. A flask of oil may have been that used in anointing, or was perhaps some remedy for rubbing on the body. The small coin which purchased so many goods could have been the very valuable gold sovereign, given as a parting gift. The miraculous knife perhaps refers to some kind of early mechanical saw. It suggests that Pichiwön had been employed at a saw mill, at that time working by water power (see Dance 1881: 157-158, who describes that of Christiaanburg on the Demerara River). No doubt he had also been engaged in timber felling.

(Pölegaman, Prega, Plega, Pörekaman, etc.), a name which is derived from the English "Prayer Man" or, possibly, "Pray God Man" (Pre-ga[d]-man), and the reason why he is universally recalled lies in the dramatic manner of his death. It is related that one day he was singing Hallelujah songs that he had heard in his dreams, but people did not believe what he said so that "he left," that is, he danced until he died. "His body sagged to the ground and his spirit soared."

More important to us here than this graphic example of how, by vigorous Hallelujah dance prayer, one can leave the earth behind and go into the sky to God, is the exact whereabouts and the date of Pöregaman's activity. However, our research has so far yielded very little detail on Pöregaman. He is generally said to be Makushi and is sometimes referred to as "Pichiwön yakon," that is, the younger brother or companion of Pichiwön, but this could equally well refer to a very distant or classificatory kin relationship. Peter William, the present prophet of Akawaio Hallelujah at Amokokupai in the upper Mazaruni River area, has said that they do not know what the relationship between the two men was, only that Pöregaman was a successor to Pichiwön and that he was living in the Ireng. Our most specific information to date derives from a Brazilian Taurepan living in the Suapi River, which is a tributary of the Cotinga near to the headwaters of the Surumu River to the west. Thus Casiano Antoniko in 1975 specified the name of Pöregaman's settlement as "Londra" (perhaps derived from "London"), at a cascade in British Guiana. He also thought that Pöregaman might have been a Taurepan Pemon. Taken together, these assertions suggest a location on the east, Guyanese bank of the Ireng River in its middle or lower reaches -that is, the area of the northernmost Makushi Pemon immediately south of the Patamona (Kapon regional group). Casiano also related that Weyuliran (William), at Amokokupai, learnt Hallelujah from Pöregaman. I shall return to this later (see below).

The eastern routes of Hallelujah knowledge

The detailed history of the dissemination of Hallelujah begins with the role played by the Cotinga River Akawaio, the *Kwatinmögok*, those on the upper reaches of the river, which is often referred to as the Kwatin. Kapon and Pemon traditions coincide in asserting that the Cotinga River Akawaio heard about Hallelujah practice to the south of them, among the Makushi, and a group of them went to learn about it.

That a direct contact with Makushi of the Rupununi is possible is indicated by the fact that when the members of the first, 1894, McConnell Expedition to Roraima were staying in the Makushi village of Kwaimatta, lower Rupununi River, they encountered a Taurepan from Roraima called Schoolmaster, who had arrived with twelve others (referred to as "Arrekuna"). Schoolmaster subsequently became well-known as leader of the Roraima Taurepan at Te'wono, who welcomed Fr. Cary-Elwes on his several visits there from 1911 on. It was "their intense craving for the guns among our barter" which had caused these

Taurepan to come and seek employment as guides and carriers, and to spend considerable time awaiting the arrival of the expedition (Quelch 1895: 121-122). Two Anglican missionaries, F.S. Pringle and F.W.B. Dorset, were on tour at the time and accompanied the Expedition as far as a Makushi settlement near the Karona Falls on the Ireng River. Schoolmaster was the guide up the Ireng valley and he continued with the McConnell Expedition into the upper Rio Branco Savannas to the north-west, until eventually it reached Jeremiah's village of "Kamaivawong" at the foot of Roraima. It is worth noting that whilst at Kwaimatta the expedition members witnessed "a mania for going to church -all over this part of the savanna." Kwaimatta had not only been visited by a number of scientific expeditions and by officials concerned with the boundary dispute with Brazil, but was also a centre for visiting Anglican missionaries on their evangelizing tours of the Makushi village (McConnell 1916: xviii). An input of Christian knowledge into Hallelujah had therefore been continuing in the Rupununi and lower Ireng during the period after Pichiwön's return home.

It is more likely, however, that the Cotinga River Akawaio obtained their knowledge off Makushi intermediaries who were the followers of Pichiwön living in the lower Ireng and Cotinga valleys. Accounts by present-day Akawaio at Amokokupai point to this. These relate that a group of Cotinga River people came eastwards over the mountains dividing the Essequibo from the Amazon basin, into the Kukui valley, and founded a village at Pötökwai (almost invariably pronounced Kötökwai by Pemon), which is a small savanna and stream with that name, situated a short distance behind the present village of Pilipai (Pipilipai, Philipai), on the left bank of the upper Kukui River. Pilipai, today a mission village of the American Pilgrim Holiness Church, is at the beginning of a land trail of some two and a half hours' walking distance to Amokokupai -at that time a garden place belonging to Indono, elder brother of Eperu (Abel),¹⁸ as previously recorded (see Butt 1960: 78-79). The journey between the Cotinga River and Pötökwai is about one and a half days' walk by forest trail, and the path passes through the valley of the Ataro River, a tributary of the upper Kukui. The Ataro village of Wayamaekua (presumably the village of Wazamaekua visited by Fr. Cary-Elwes in 1921 as described above), was probably an intermediary stage in the journey where travellers would pass the night en route. The reasons why people from another, distinct river group in the Akawaio unity should have founded a village in a near neighbour's river area are not clear, but we can guess that kin and affinal relationships were close enough to permit the co-existence in a joint village of certain members from the two and, in this context, we can note that John William whom Fr. Cary-Elwes met in 1917 came from the upper Cotinga but had married the daughter of Indono in the Kukui area. John William therefore had contractual obligations to his father-in-law,

¹⁸ *Eperu* means "fruit" in Kapon and Pemon languages. Characteristically there is a play on the similarity between it and the English name Abel, since *eperu* can also be pronounced as *ebelu*.

counting Abel also in this category,¹⁹ and was obliged to spend long periods residing uxorilocally and assisting his wife's kin. Perhaps too, incoming Hallelujah knowledge and practice provided a ritual umbrella for a greater collaboration and association than was customary between members of distant river groups.

Certainly at the time when Hallelujah knowledge was being propagated by Pichiwön and Pöregaman and was extending northwards, the Akawaio of the Kukui, Ataro and Cotinga River groups were in close alliance at Pötökwai and, it seems, were regularly travelling along the east-west route in order to maintain their kin relationships and to carry out affinal obligations. Accounts of the conversion of Abel to Hallelujah and the process by which he built up his reputation as a dreamer-thinker (*ipu-kenak*) and as the most influential founder of the religion among the Akawaio and Patamona Kapon, have already been published (Butt 1960: 80-84; Butt Colson 1971: 39-46). The role of the upper Cotinga Akawaio at Pötökwai village in the Kukui was essential to this process. Indono and his younger brother Abel first acquired their Hallelujah knowledge in association with them and they practised the prayers and ceremonial in the Pötökwai church (*sochi, chochi*). It is recalled that two expeditions were made to a source of the knowledge, the first being unsuccessful in that people forgot what they had been told and so had to return again. "If you hear something for the first time you do not always take it," as Peter William, sixth religious leader at Amokokupai, explained. Amokokupai people recall that Indono and Abel accompanied both expeditions. It is also related that the people of Wayamaekua village in the Ataro used to go to Pöregaman, accompanied also by the people of Pötökwai (the upper Cotinga settlers in the Kukui), and that the second expedition which set out to acquire Hallelujah knowledge was composed of Pötökwai people with one person from Wayamaekua. It is recorded that on their return they brought back with them a man called Nawai-nawai, who was "first cousin" (father's sister's son or mother's brother's son) of Pöregaman. The names of these Cotinga River Akawaio who first acquired Hallelujah from the Makushi are still recalled. Henry Grant (son of Joseph Grant of the Cotinga and Ataro River areas -see below) stressed the role of the Makushi Wakowiaming, or Wakowyaming, in teaching the Kukui Akawaio (Butt Colson 1971: 39-40); John William (of Paruima and Kamarata villages) stated that a Patamona Hallelujah leader, Karakwapi, was also living amongst the Cotinga Akawaio. Peter William recognized this name and added that "this was at a similar time to Pötökwai." It is very likely that Makushi and Patamona who may have married into the Akawaio Cotinga group to their north, were instrumental in bringing in Hallelujah knowledge to their in-laws. It is interesting to note that the second expedition paid for the Hallelujah information they acquired, giving various trade items (fish hooks, axes, knives, are specified), and this time the knowledge

¹⁹ In the Akawaio kinship system the children of brothers address each other as siblings and their respective male parents as "father." Thus, on marriage, father and father's brothers are fathers-in-law to their "son's" wife.

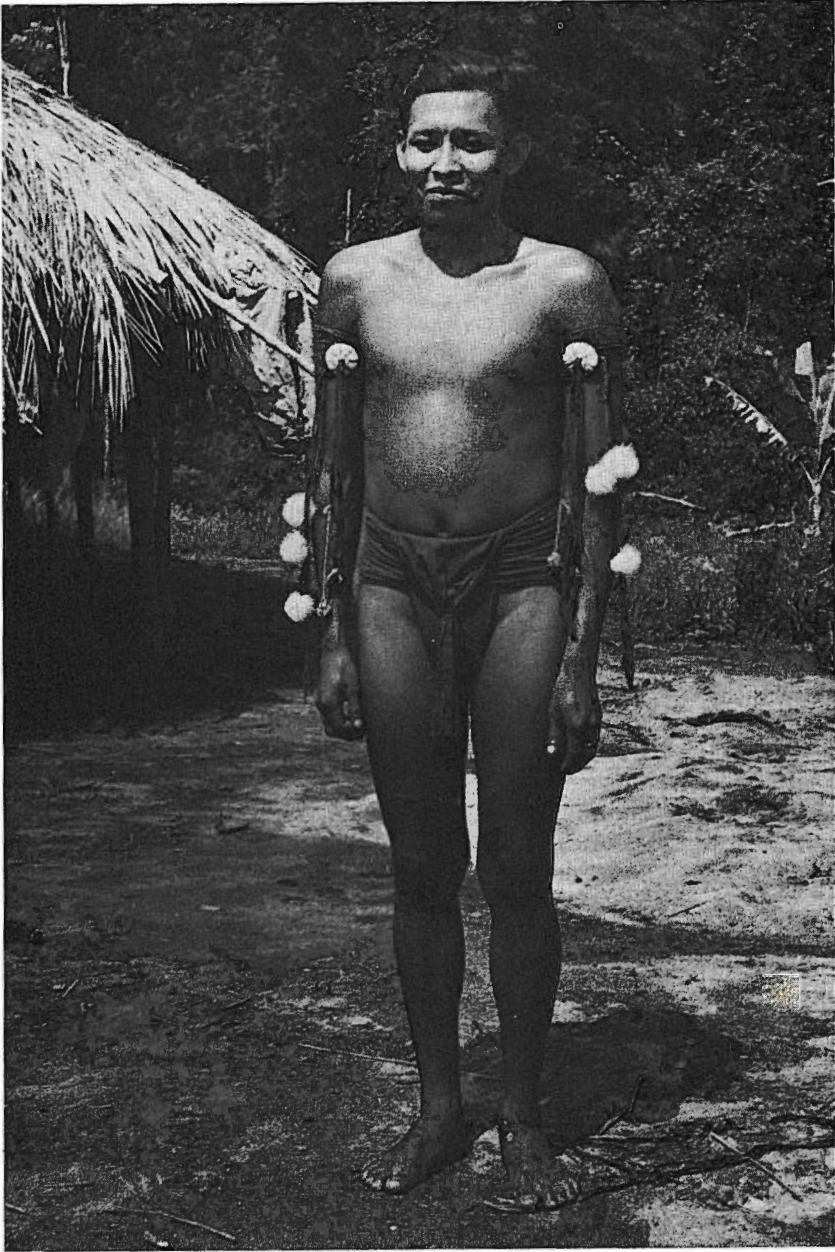


PHOTO 1

Peter William at Amokokupai in 1951. He is today the sixth prophet leader of the Akawaio Hallelujah Church.

was retained. It is said: "They were not charged; they paid of their own free will,"²⁰ but moral pressure might have been put on the visitors to give something desirable in exchange if "those with knowledge" decided to use it to lure in valued material goods. However, a general feeling exists that a donor should also feel willing to part with a possession, otherwise that which is acquired may become ineffective, if not actually retracted and so lost to the receiver. Tangible and intangible property thus tend to be treated alike, under a general expectation of reciprocity of some kind, a major function of the gifts being to establish a basic goodwill.

Oral tradition thus recognizes the ultimate derivation of Kapon (Akawaio and Patamona) Hallelujah from the Makushi Pemon Pichiwön, but the details imparted seem to refer to Pöregaman as being the major intermediary. The Cotinga River people were the first Akawaio to acquire the new knowledge and those who were settled at Pötökwai shared it with Abel and the local Kukui families with which they were allied. The intermediary Ataro River people were equally closely involved. With a time lapse of now over one hundred years it is perhaps impossible to trace the exact sequence of events in minute detail, but the general picture is clear and shows the approximate course of the mainstream of information on the new religion and how it became the foundation on which today's widespread practice rests.

As might be expected, there are indications that Hallelujah knowledge also filtered in along other routes and networks of relationships, and these somewhat different experiences have coloured religious practice within restricted localities. A good example is at Chinawieng, a Mazaruni village on the Ayanganna plateau, where a considerable number of Makushi songs is known and sung. They derive mainly from a former Hallelujah leader, Kragik, who lived at Kōrun Yabon, a settlement at the head of the Kukui River and separated from Amokokupai by a high mountain. Kragik is said to have had a connection with Makushi and Patamona and to have first acquired his knowledge from the Makushi, before the founding of the Chinawieng church and independently of Abel. When Lydia, Kragik's daughter, became wife of Queen Mule from Amokokupai, the two streams of knowledge blended. Queen Mule and Lydia resided in Chinawieng where Queen Mule became village and church leader, and he brought in his knowledge which he had acquired from Abel and the Amokokupai people. It is recalled that he and his wife used to live in Abel's house on return visits to his kin there (Butt 1960: 94-95).

The process of obtaining Hallelujah thus shows a complicated network of knowledge acquisition, but this did not cease with the establishment of the religion and its practice in local village churches, for an elaborate interchange and an

²⁰ During my field research I came across a few instances of purchase of Hallelujah songs. One Akawaio stated (in 1957) that he had paid his wife's father, the well-known leader of Imbaimadai, Edmund, for the Hallelujah songs learnt from him. It is unlikely that payments would be made in the case of blood kin, even classificatory ones, but sons-in-law are expected to make gifts to their wife's relations, to perform services for them and even make outright payments.

augmentation of its tenets and ceremonial took place. For example, although Kragik acquired his Hallelujah from the Makushi (and probably the Patamona), later in his career as religious leader his message was in turn carried southwards to the Patamona and Makushi by those who heard him preach and pray. In the Kukui, Ataro and Cotinga areas of the east-west route, interchanges of knowledge and feedbacks occurred from the very beginning. The careers of John William and his younger brother William show this process very well.

We know that these brothers were the immediate successors to Abel (whom we calculate to have died c. 1911) in organizing Hallelujah and village affairs at Amokokupai, and so they may be denoted as the second and third religious leaders (*ipu-kenak*) there. The sixth, present-day leader Peter William, records that William, the younger brother, took over from John William because the latter was not functioning properly. William was the more active of the two. This perhaps explains why Fr. Cary-Elwes encountered "William the prophet" and "William the chief" at Amokokupai in 1917, but mentions only "William the chief" on his 1921 visit -although there is the possibility that "William the prophet" was away travelling or had died by that date. The brothers had been born in the *Kwatinmögok* (upper Cotinga River group) and according to Amokokupai recollections they came over to live at Pötökwai in the Kukui, where Indono and Abel either had a house or were regularly visiting. John William married Indono's daughter, who was also "daughter" to Abel, her father's brother, in the Akawaio kinship system. According to the assertion made by Casiano Antoniko, Taurepan of the Suapi River in Brazil (see above), John William went to learn about Hallelujah from Pöregaman, but whether in the company of his father-in-law we do not know. When friction began to take its toll at Pötökwai and some of the leading people also died there, the alliance between the Cotinga River families and the local Kukui ones split. Indono and Abel began to centre their activities and to practise Hallelujah ceremonial at Amokokupai, which grew into a large and very active village with its own Hallelujah church. John William and William supported Abel, and so also did "Captain" (otherwise known as Edmund Spencer, Nascimento William, or Kwiabong) who was to become the future fourth religious leader at Amokokupai up to his death in 1953 (see Butt 1960: 87-88). As Peter William of Amokokupai noted: "They all came here together when they left Pötökwai." Then later some Pötökwai people died; they were losing Hallelujah and reverting to the traditional dancing (*tukuik*, *parishara* and other dances), engaging in drunken feasts and fighting. Eventually they abandoned the Pötökwai site and returned to the Cotinga River.

Exactly when Pötökwai village finally broke up we do not know, but it seems to have been after Abel's death. However, John William and William certainly maintained their network of contacts with the Cotinga River and the intermediary Ataro River area for they taught many of the second generation of Hallelujah leaders there. Notably, they taught Joseph Grant, who became leader of the Ataro River village of U-wi, an elderly man when I met him there in 1951 and 1952 but who had died and his village abandoned before



PHOTO 2

Edmund Spencer, or Kwiabong as he was often called: fourth prophet at Amokokupai and head of the Akawaio Hallelujah Church. (Photograph by courtesy of W.H. Seggar, c. 1950.)

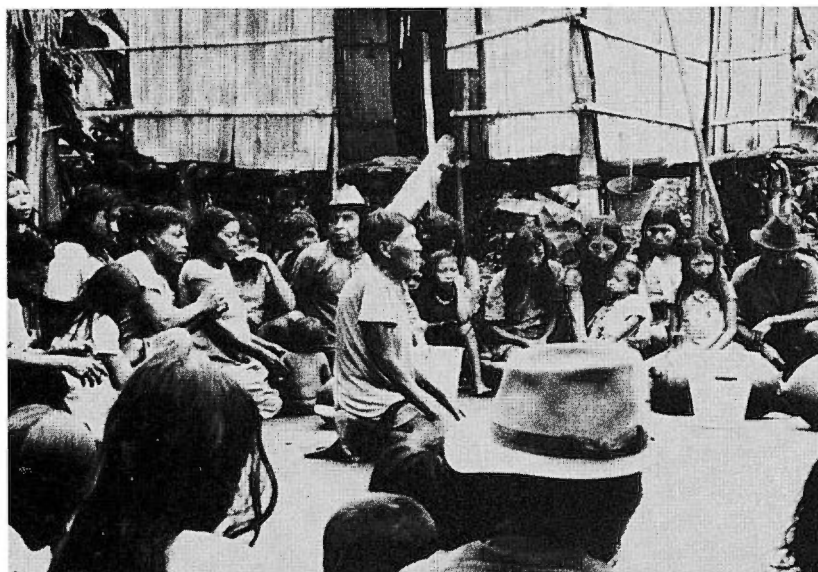


PHOTO 3

Edmund Spencer (Kwiabong) praying and preaching at Amokokupai. (Photograph by courtesy of W.H. Seggar, c. 1950.)



PHOTO 4

Joseph Grant and his wife, standing in front of a family meal outside their house in U-wi, Ataro River, 1952.

my second visit in 1957. Joseph Grant's natal area had also been the Cotinga River, but he had crossed over to the Ataro on his marriage and from there visited both the Kukui settlements to the east and his Cotinga kin to the west. He told me that he had been too young to learn Hallelujah from Abel at Amokokupai, but had learnt from William there and also from the Cotinga people who had been at Pötökwai, who were his relatives. He had also learnt from Krai (see below) who had been at Pötökwai. Joseph Grant became a source of Hallelujah knowledge and a prophet leader (*ipu-kenak*) in his own right, not only for the Ataro and Cotinga River Akawaio but for some of the Taurepan Pemon further to the west. Thus Casiano Antoniko traced his Hallelujah knowledge to Johnny, who had been taught by Johnny Bai (Johnny Boy), who had in turn acquired his from Joseph Grant -so that the Antoniko family on the Suapi River regarded Joseph Grant as a "founding father" as regards their Hallelujah knowledge.

The intricate network of contacts also takes in the Patamona. We know from Fr. Cary-Elwes' encounters in the Ireng River area and of Hallelujah churches and practices there in 1917, that the Patamona had a strong connection with the Akawaio at Amokokupai (Butt Colson 1971: 28-31). William and John William

are said to have visited the Patamona churches, whilst Benjamin (the first outstanding leader of Patamona Hallelujah it is said), and his son Daniell, went to Amokokupai. Then Joseph Grant's son Henry Grant married a Patamona of Kaibarupai village, Ireng River, and having learnt Hallelujah from Aibilibing (fifth prophet of Hallelujah at Amokokupai) took his knowledge with him and today is a strong link between the Ireng Patamona and the Akawaio in the Kukui, the Ataro and the upper Cotinga River groups in the transmission of knowledge and the mutual practice of Hallelujah. The extent of his knowledge can be judged from his account of Hallelujah which has already been published (Butt Colson 1971: 25-58).

Thus we may see how Hallelujah knowledge and practice have passed and repassed between neighbouring river groups and, notably, between regional groups of the two ethnic unities of Kapon and Pemon in the area south of Roraima. In oral tradition the focus in each stage of transmission has been the outstanding leader who has initially learnt from other leaders (or their knowledgeable followers), each adding his own contribution to a growing corpus of Hallelujah belief and practice.

Routes of trade and knowledge south of Roraima

Literary evidence combined with oral tradition and personal recollections thus enable us to trace the history of the extension of the Hallelujah religion, from a source of Christian teaching, combined with personal revelation, in the coastal region of British Guiana during the second half of the 19th century -most probably from one of the Demerara River missions set up in the period 1860-1875. Trade goods and new knowledge were together carried back to the Kanuku area of the Rupununi Savannas, from which the knowledge of Hallelujah was carried in a north-westerly direction, reaching the Taurepan at Roraima by 1884. Acquiring it from Makushi in exchange for trade goods, the upper Cotinga River Akawaio embraced Hallelujah enthusiastically. They carried it into the Kukui valley, to their village at Pötökwai, and shared it with the Kukui families in the neighbourhood. The latter, under Abel, took over the leadership of the movement and propagated it and its ceremonial throughout the upper Mazaruni, Amokokupai being its centre (Butt 1960: 86-97). Oral tradition concerning Pöregaman and the accounts of Koch-Grünberg show that the Makushi and Taurepan groups along the lower and middle reaches of the Ireng, Surumu and Cotinga Rivers were its carriers. Churches were established there and the knowledge travelled on northwards.

The Ireng, Cotinga and Surumu Rivers rise in the Pakaraima Mountains and flow southwards into the Rio Branco. In their upper reaches they and their tributaries are full of falls and rapids, so that travellers use land trails in order to traverse a country which is in the main elevated grassland. Indigenous settlements in this, the northernmost sector of Brazil on the frontier with Venezuela, and where at Roraima a tripartite political frontier has been created

with Guyana to the east, relate to each other through local networks of trails. However, the major routes of trade and communication between the regional groups of Kapon and Pemon lie in a north-south direction, with important east-west routes at the head of the Cotinga River, just south of Weitepui Mountain, which lead into the upper Mazaruni basin. Further down the Ireng other routes lead to the Potaro River. All of these were utilized during the last quarter of the 19th century by a variety of exploratory expeditions under indigenous guidance, but the earliest to be traversed, and the most used, was that from the Rupununi and the Rio Branco northwards to Roraima and the Kukenam (upper Caroní) valley. It was pioneered by Sir Robert Schomburgk on his famous journey of exploration in 1838 (1841: 191-247), which he repeated in 1842. The reasons for the popularity of the north-south route, traversing Makushi, Taurepan and, via the Cotinga, Akawaio lands, were several. The ascent into the highlands is gradual; nor is it impeded by dense tropical forest so that one can walk in open country and avoid the many dangerous rapids and falls which characterize the upper reaches of all the rivers rising in the Guiana Highlands. However, in walking the Rio Branco Savannas to the Gran Sabana, European travellers were but traversing parts of the traditional, pre-Columbian communication system of the indigenous peoples -paths which linked them for purposes of trade and cultural exchange and from which a certain, if limited, degree of intermarriage derived. Highly valued items of indigenous manufacture were carried along these routes. They included the large kassiri pots made by the Patamona of the upper Ireng valley, using a superior clay in the locality (Butt Colson 1973: 37-40, 55). Blow-pipes from the Ye'kuana and curare pots from the Piaroa arrived from the west and were passed on to the north, south and east. The much valued and formerly indispensable Ye'kuana cassava graters were similarly received and passed on (Butt Colson 1973: 19-34) as well as many other craft items, local specialities and surpluses, using the major communication routes. Once Old World settlement began then European manufactures were plugged into the system. Portuguese goods arrived from the Amazon and Rio Negro to the south. Dutch and then British goods were derived from the coastlands of Essequibo and Demerara, being carried by the Akawaio into the upper Mazaruni basin, by the Patamona into the Potaro and by the Makushi into the Rupununi, from all of which areas they were dispersed, a surplus going to the west.

Living in an upland basin, surrounded with mountains, the upper Mazaruni Akawaio have but few ports of access and exit. The southern ones are trails which link the Ayanganna Akawaio (the Chinawieng village area) and the Kukui River valley (Amokokupai village area) with the Patamona of the Ireng River and beyond. Intermarriage, peaceful trading and the sharing of Hallelujah knowledge and practice (see above) have marked these relationships (Butt Colson 1973: 55). The Cotinga River has also been a vital port, leading to the Ataro and Kukui Akawaio in the east and being their outlet to the Taurepan and Makushi of the savannas. A very strong trading connection existed between the Cotinga River Akawaio and the Pemon (for example, Butt Colson 1973:

16) and there is on record a reference by Joseph Grant of the Cotinga and Ataro River Akawaio to his travels on the savannas). Certainly there is a strong and continuing trading connection between the Cotinga Akawaio and the Taurepan at Roraima and in 1976 John Thomas, leader of the Cotinga village A'nareng, arrived with his family for a fiesta in Mapauri, a settlement of the Roraima Taurepan. The Cotinga people wanted hammocks and in exchange they brought knives and the much sought after Patamona pots. Ye'kuana cassava graters are also exchanged between the two groups today. When traders and relations get together they exchange news and perform ritual dancing -frequently Hallelujah dancing.

Just as long distance trade can be carried out in a matter of a few days, up and down the Rio Branco Savannas to the south of Roraima and east-west between the savannas and the upper Mazaruni and upper Ireng valleys in the Pakaraima Mountains, so also can knowledge and "news" be carried. Sometimes informal visiting occurs without trade accompaniment, being in the nature of social calls for drinking and gossiping. The rapidity of exchange was brought home to me when among the Wayana, Carib speakers of Surinam and French Guiana, in 1963, for it took precisely two months for a new, semi-Christian cult to be launched and taken up in all the Wayana settlements along the upper Lawa and Maroni Rivers. The news which the prophet was spreading passed in a matter of days, but it took longer for people to react positively and for ceremonial to be organized. This is not an exact parallel since the Wayana there constituted one regional group and contact with all, riverine, settlements could be accomplished over a period of about one and a half days. A better parallel is perhaps the extension of the Gran Sabana Pemon cult San Miguel (Thomas 1976). This cult began with the vision of San Miguel at Icabarú, on the Caroní River, on 8th December 1971. Like the Hallelujah prophets the Taurepan prophetess, Lucencia, dreamt and sang and then travelled widely to preach her message and teach her songs and prayers. People flocked to hear her, coming from all over the Gran Sabana and beyond. By 1974 only a few of the more isolated villages were not actively practising San Miguel ceremonial.

Thus, once enthusiasm is aroused, or even just curiosity in the first instance, the indigenous communication network is rapidly activated and knowledge may be carried as far and as fast as trade goods are, along the same routes and via the same kinds of relationships. Then parties may be formed specifically to learn more (for example, see Butt Colson and Morton 1982: 241, 259 and note 115, for a Taruma case). When therefore im Thurn remarked (see above) that "...a most remarkable ecclesiastical mania... had just then spread in a wonderful way into those distant parts," this was most probably the case, and the beginnings of Hallelujah practice may date from 1883-1884 or only shortly before.

Hallelujah north of Roraima: the Kamarang River and Kraiss

The input of Christian knowledge is not limited in Hallelujah to the

experiences of Pichiwön. Church of England missionaries periodically toured the Makushi villages in the Rupununi and even up the lower Ireng River (see above). They taught, held services and baptized. Finally, in 1908 a permanent Makushi mission was set up at Yupukari in the Rupununi. However, Anglican influence also came from another quarter during the period that I calculate to be the formative years of Hallelujah (1880-1911),²¹ and this was from the Patamona Mission.

The Rev. Charles Dance, itinerant missionary on the Demerara River and much involved with Muritaro (see above), visited the Potaro River in 1876 and recommended the establishment of a mission at Chinapowie (Chinebowie, Shenabouie), a Patamona village two days journey up river from Kaieteur Fall. A mission began in 1880, involving both Kapon groups, but failed after some intensive work of a few weeks owing to death by drowning of the newly appointed missionary and his family. An effort was made to re-found the mission below Kaieteur, at Ichowra, and in Thurn found the Anglican Bishop of British Guiana engaged in this in 1884 (see above). A catechist was appointed and the missionary area sustained by tours made by visiting clergy. In 1887 the Rev. F.L. Quick visited Euworraeng and Konkarmo in the upper Ireng valley; 400 Patamona attended the first village and 600 people assembled at the latter, being mainly Makushi but also some "Arecuna," Wapishana and Patamona. T.E. Quick took the post of catechist at Konkarmo in August 1888 but a few months later was recalled to Ichowra where his brother, F.L. Quick, had fallen ill. The Konkarmo Mission then lapsed. (See above for reference to these village and mission influences.)

We know that Jeremiah (Seremadá) and his people at Kavariana-remon village at Roraima, visited the Ireng Mission, probably at Konkarmo, and on his return had built his own church.²² Today, several elderly Pemon informants, notably from Kavanayén in the north-east Gran Sabana, recall hearing of teaching coming from places to the east, and they specify Chinepowu, Ichowra, and Tumatumari, (the latter being falls on the Potaro River below Kaieteur). There is even recollection of a "Waika" (a Kapon Indian and therefore either Akawaio or Patamona) coming to Roraima from Chinepowu to preach. However, Christian influences on the Roraima group of Taurepan became multiple and more direct only in the year 1911 and in succeeding years. Pastor O.E. Davis was the first to arrive, travelling from Georgetown via the Cuyuni River, the Wenamu and southwards across the heights of the Gran Sabana. A few days after his arrival at Jeremiah's village he died there, on 31st July 1911. In October came Koch-Grünberg, travelling north from the Rio Branco Savannas, and who, as already

²¹ These dates refer to the most probable end period of Pichiwön's mission experience (which must necessarily be approximate for lack of concrete evidence), and to the year in which Abel is said to have died at Amokokupai (Butt 1960: 84).

²² J.J. Quelch (1921: 1xv-1xvi) gives a vivid account of mission influence on Jeremiah, having seen the effects when the second McConnell Expedition of 1898 was staying in Jeremiah's village.

noted, saw Jeremiah dancing Hallelujah. With Koch-Grünberg was one of the Benedictine Fathers who were then founding their mission on the Surumu River in Brazil. Finally, in December, the Jesuit Fr. Cary-Elwes arrived on his first visit (see above), travelling from the Roman Catholic Mission of St. Ignatius in the Rupununi (founded in 1909). From 1911 therefore, the Pemon at Roraima became a focus of Christian missionary interest, with Jesuit, Benedictine, Seventh Day Adventist and finally Capuchin missionaries touring the area and setting up chapels in some of the Gran Sabana villages.

However, 1911 is also the probable year of Abel's death at Amokokupai and the Hallelujah cult had already become firmly established amongst both regional groups of Kapon in the Pakaraima Mountains. Despite its practice at Roraima, this Taurepan group is not credited in the oral tradition with any important role in the further dissemination of the cult in the Gran Sabana, although we might expect that such an expansion would have occurred via the networks of communication linking together the regional groups of the North Pemon there. The reasons for this we can only conjecture. Roraima drew a considerable number of scientists and explorers and such constant contacts may have disorganized life there. Certainly land for cultivation became scarce, perhaps because of increased production necessary to sustain trade with visitors, but also because of forest fires. Jeremiah died in 1912 (according to Fr. Cary-Elwes), and Schoolmaster, the other important leader, was inclined to support a more orthodox church practice and from 1911 on his village became the headquarters of Fr. Cary-Elwes on his regular visits to Roraima. After 1931 he welcomed the Capuchin missionaries at his settlement of Segun, about half a day's walking distance from Roraima. The Taurepan of the Eruwan River, on the other hand, joined the Seventh Day Adventist Church when this was set up in 1927, an act which automatically inhibited the practice of Hallelujah. The other Taurepan, those of the Roraima group, continued with the traditional song and dance festivals, *tukuik* and *parichara* but also with *Chimitin*, songs mainly of mission origin which were, in some places, joined to a round dance.²³ Only during the last few years have the Taurepan of Roraima and of the area around Apoipö (near the confluence of the Surukún River with the Kukenán) begun again to dance Hallelujah. Thus, if knowledge of Hallelujah was not early on taken enthusiastically by the Arekuna and Kamarakoto (Pemon regional groups to the north of the Taurepan) and even ceased among the latter, how then has it been acquired and spread throughout the Gran Sabana -as is the case today?

The answer to this question begins with a further investigation of the role

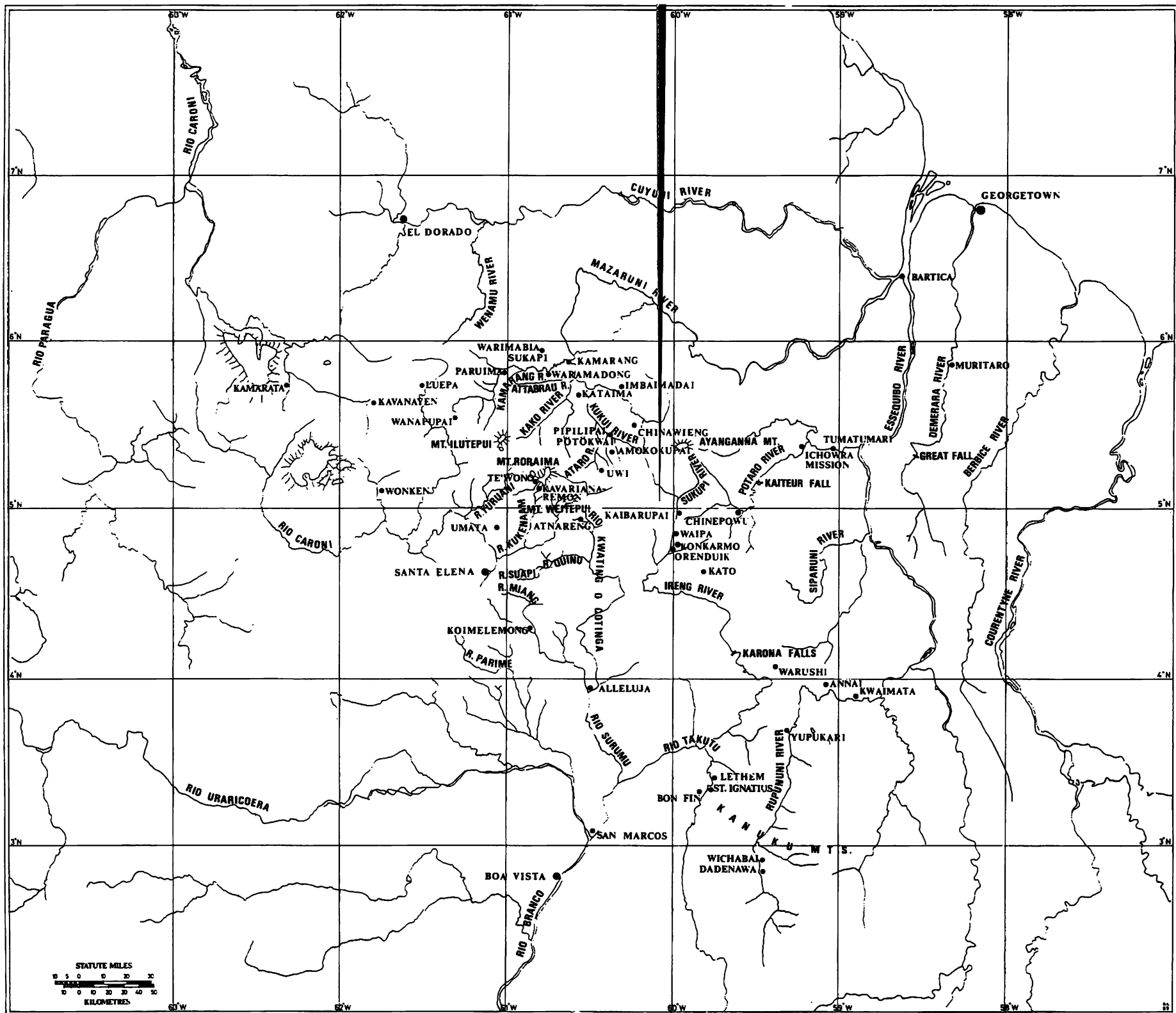
²³ See Butt (1960: 99) for an account of *Chimitin* (Church Meeting). In 1957 the Eruwan River Taurepan informed me that they did not dance *Chimitin*, but they were referring to themselves only it seems, for the Roraima group of Taurepan often accompany *Chimitin* songs by dancing. The latter also maintain that Jeremiah had many *Chimitin* songs. This suggests that *Chimitin* goes back at least to the beginning of the present century. The reason why the *Eruwanigok* did not dance may have been because of the strong influence that the Seventh Day Adventist Mission exerted over them.

which the Pötökwai people, the Cotinga River Akawaio in their settlement in the Kukui valley in the upper Mazaruni basin, played in the dissemination of Hallelujah knowledge and practice to the Kamarang River. Pemon oral tradition and the personal recollections of the elderly point to an Akawaio called Krais (Christ) as the central figure. Krais was of the *Kamalanigok*, the people living on the Kamarang River, a major tributary of the upper Mazaruni River which rises in the north-east of the Gran Sabana in Venezuela. Akawaio inhabited the middle and lower part of the Kamarang valley, but Arekuna Pemon lived at the headwaters. Krais was born in its middle reaches, in the region of the old village of Warimabia which is situated in mixed savanna and forest country, some two and a half hours' walk by trail from the left bank of the Kamarang. He took two wives, Ma'nondong and Lydina, who were sisters living in the Pilipai area of the Kukui. There Krais resided for much of his time with his in-laws. Ma'nondong and Lydina were "grandchildren" of Eperu (Abel) and of his elder brother Indono, living at Amokokupai,²⁴ so that Krais knew these leaders well. Living in the neighbourhood of Pötökwai, he was also in the position for learning Hallelujah from the Cotinga River settlers. Indeed, it is today related by the Amokokupai leaders that Krais, whom they also refer to by the name of Klai-chi, became leader of the Pötökwai church after Abel and Indono, with their supporters John William and William, had left to make their church at Amokokupai. They state that Krais used to go to Abel at Amokokupai for more teaching and that, moreover, he was still at Pötökwai when Abel died -which suggests that this village did not break up finally until after c. 1911.

However, it is clear from the accounts of Amokokupai inhabitants that the Cotinga settlers at Pötökwai were troublesome neighbours and that Krais was associated in this. There is regular mention of drunkenness, disorder and fighting. Krais has been accused of sorcery by Amokokupai informants and others in the Mazaruni River group, and described as leading a very wicked life²⁵ (Butt 1960: 79, 91-92). However, it is important to note that there may have been structural factors involved in these evaluations in addition to personal competition and rivalry, for the Cotinga River people today, as well as the deceased Ataro leader Joseph Grant who was born in the Cotinga, have made no derogatory remarks. Whilst no-one in the Mazaruni River area now acknowledges Krais as their primary teacher, this is not true either of Cotinga River Akawaio or of the Akawaio and Pemon of the Kamarang. It is with the latter, in his natal

²⁴ Lydina survived until 1951, dying at Amokokupai. The mother's sister's husband, whom Lydina and her sister would have called father, was Waking (see Butt 1960: 94). Waking was Abel's son (his elder brother's son) and had in mind the building of an Hallelujah church at Chinawiang village just before he died. The construction was carried out by another, and Queen Mule eventually became the leader of it.

²⁵ The statement made by F.W. Kenswil, quoted in Butt (1960: 92), is probably a repetition of what the majority of the Mazaruni village leaders related, following the lead of the Amokokupai disciples of Abel. Kenswil's major informant and Akawaio associate was Edmund of Imbaimadai, husband of Abel's son's daughter.



MAP 2. THE GUIANA HIGHLANDS & RIO BRANCO

river group, that Krai is particularly associated and where he is regarded as the major founding figure.

Pemon today relate that Kamarang River people from the Warimabia area formed a deputation and travelled to Krai in the Kukui to persuade him to return to them and teach them Hallelujah.²⁶ They had already constructed an Hallelujah church. Krai acceded and became leader of an Hallelujah church at Sukapi, a small savanna on the path between the Kamarang River and the inland village of Warimabia. He is said to have lived at Kada'pe, on the small savanna of Ögöiyentei, near Warimabia. Lamotei is another nearby savanna which is associated with him, so that it is possible that he moved when his garden areas were used up or that he maintained two settlements there. His church flourished and many people came to visit it, including Arekuna Pemon living at the head of the Kamarang River, on the Gran Sabana. Nevertheless, in accordance with custom he still maintained a settlement in the Kukui, amongst his in-laws, and he died at Mokapai, his Kukui River settlement.²⁷

Krai was active as an Hallelujah leader during the first two decades of this century, if not before. He knew Abel at Amokokupai some years before the latter's death c. 1911, and the calculations made by Cesáreo de Armellada and myself from personal recollections of informants suggest that he died in the period 1918-1920, 1919 being the most probable year.

The importance of Krai in the history of the origins of Hallelujah among the Gran Sabana Pemon stems from the fact that he attracted three outstanding disciples, Auka, Enjeri and Engran, all of whom interacted with each other and all of whom became important prophet leaders (*ipu-kenak*) in their own right.

Auka and Hallelujah among the Arekuna

Auka was born in Parueta, in the Kavanayén area (Urbina 1979: 20) so that he was an Arekuna -a Pemon from the north-east Gran Sabana regional group. It is recalled that he founded a succession of settlements on or near tributaries of the Apanwäo River and gradually moved in a south-easterly direction towards Ilutepei, the northernmost mountain of the Roraima Range.²⁸ First

²⁶ The names Warawa, Chigörö and Benjamin are recalled amongst those who sought out Krai. Benjamin was probably the Warimabia resident I met in 1951-1952, today referred to as Benjamin Daniels. He should not be confused with Auka, who also had the English name Benjamin (see note 29).

²⁷ This was stated by John William, a Pemon who lived at Paruima on the middle Kamarang River in the upper Mazaruni basin for many years. He had Krai's daughter as his wife. Statements by the Amokokupai leaders confirm him. Information from the Pemon has proved that my assertion (Burt 1960: 92) that Krai died *before* Abel is wrong and what Kenswil said in this respect is correct.

²⁸ Urbina (1979: 20-22 and Fig. 3) gives the names of Auka's settlements and his Fig. 3 shows the approximate locations. My information supports his data, although he additionally gives the names of two settlements which other informants had forgotten -those of Araparikén and Saramiparu, which Auka probably occupied for shorter periods of time.

he settled at Uraparu, then at Araparikén; a short stay at Samariparu was followed by the foundation of a settlement at Waipapupai, described by Urbina as near the Waipa River, situated on the high ground between today's villages of San Rafael de Kamoirán and Tuaukén. Finally he founded Wanapupai, where he subsequently died. Each of his settlements had an Hallelujah church, the first being at Uraparu which Auka also called Aukaman, a name referring to the fact that it was here that he first saw radiant light and began his career as a dreamer-thinker and as an Hallelujah prophet.²⁹

Auka died a few years after Kraiss, although he was in fact the older of the two, and this occurred not long before the great fire of 1926 swept the north-east Gran Sabana region, destroying so much forest that the Wanapupai people had finally to abandon their village for lack of garden soil in the vicinity. The Seventh Day Adventists, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Cott, arriving on the Gran Sabana in 1927, also referred to the fact that the great religious leader "Owkwa" had died not long before (Cott 1969: 173-179). It is likely that his death occurred between 1921 and 1924, the most probable date being 1922-1923, so that he was perhaps still alive when Fr. Cary-Elwes visited Wanapupai (which he refers to as Manapupai) in the Ilutepui region in December 1919 and where he saw the population feasting and dancing both "Alleluia" and "Parijóra" (see above).

Pemon recall that Auka's knowledge of Hallelujah was derived from Kraiss and they recount that Auka visited Kraiss at Kada'pe, in the middle Kamarang River area, staying with him to become his pupil and follower. They also recall that he visited the Kukui River and went to Amokokupai and we might guess that he did this in the company of Kraiss. Nevertheless, Auka was not a close relative of Kraiss, it is said. They called each other by the reciprocal term of *ye'se*, which means male cross cousin/brother-in-law but which is a term also used between unrelated men of approximately the same generation. Although it is possible that the two men had distant relations in common, for a degree of intermarriage existed between the Arekuna Pemon living at the head of the Kamarang River and the Akawaio Kapon of the middle and lower reaches even before mission conglomeration began an increasing unity of the two groups, nevertheless such a connection is not regarded as important in the relationships between the two men. How was it then that Auka, effectively unrelated to Kraiss, heard about Hallelujah and was able to make the journey to him and become his follower?

I think that the answer may be found in the fact that the Kamarang River has always been a traditional port of entry and exit for trade whereby the Pemon

²⁹ The name Auka translates as "radiant light" and is the Pemon equivalent of the Kapon Akwa. Other names by which Auka was known include Enchimö or Senchimön and also Benjamin. Although Benjamin is an English name and Enchimö is Pemon and Kapon for denoting "change" or "conversion," there has been a play on words here (see note 18). In old age Auka became known as Woröman (an attempt at the English "old man"), instead of the customary Amoko. It can be appreciated that the Kapon and Pemon system of naming, nicknaming and name changing is quite complicated. I hope to publish on this topic in due course.

of the north-east Gran Sabana maintained profitable trading relationships with the Akawaio in the northern sector of the upper Mazaruni basin. I have already described the nature and the importance of this particular east-west trade route of the upper Mazaruni Akawaio (Butt Colson 1973: 55-56) and the material items carried along it. Its significance for the Pemon in the area of Tuaukén, where Auka and his relatives lived, has more recently been investigated by Luis Urbina (1979: 38) who describes how beads are acquired by the Tuaukén Pemon from their relations in the upper Mazaruni who in turn maintain a network which extends as far as Georgetown. Once in the possession of the Pemon at Tuaukén the goods are then carried to Kavanayén, given to other Arekuna and carried to the Kamarakoto Pemon at Kamarata. Eventually the trade beads arrive on the Paragua River and the Pemon there trade them to the Ye'kuana living on tributaries of the middle Orinoco. It can thus be appreciated that the importance of the Kamarang River as a major east-west commercial route for the two peoples, Pemon and Kapon, is paralleled only by the Cotinga River-Kukui River route already described for the southern east-west communication system, similarly linking a Pemon regional group (Taurepan) with the Kapon (Akawaio and also Patamona).

Once Hallelujah had taken root in the Kamarang River area it was virtually inevitable that news of it would be transferred, together with other goods, via the network of trading and kin relationships to the nearest region on the Gran Sabana -which is that occupied by the Arekuna Pemon. Once accepted in the north-east Gran Sabana then it would be only a very short time before Hallelujah travelled still further through the inter-regional communication system. The area of Kavanayén is some three days walk by trail from Kamarata, the centre of the Kamarakoto Pemon group, and in fact it is recalled that Auka, "when woroman" (that is, when an old man) went to Kamarata from Wanapupai on a visit. Pemon today recalled that it was *tarikiran-pe* -that the news spread as if by telegram (*tarikiran*). This further supports my original suggestion (see above) that, given talented individuals, enthusiastic movements may spread very rapidly indeed between interconnected regional groups of Carib speakers. The history of the extension of Hallelujah to the Kamarakoto shows this very well.

Enjeri, Engran and Hallelujah among the Kamarakoto

Present Hallelujah practice among the Kamarakoto is attributed to the evangelizing activities of two prophets (*ipu-kenak*) in particular, Enjeri (Ensheri, Ancheri) and Engran. Enjeri (derived from the English word Angel) was first named Chang Joseph but came also to be called Krai Pörereri or Krai Pre (that is, Christ Prayer or Christ Pray). The Gran Sabana Pemon refer to him as a *Waika*, which is their nickname for both the Akawaio and Patamona regional groups of the Kapon people. In fact he was an Akawaio from the Kukui River. It is related that Enjeri came to the Gran Sabana in association with his elder brother, whom they called Moche Krai (Moses Christ). According to my

genealogical data from the Akawaio, Enjeri had an elder brother called Queen Mule, who, as already noted, took Kragik's daughter Lydia as his wife and left the Amokokupai area in the Kukui to make his principal residence with his wife's people at Chinawieng, Mazaruni River area, where he established the Hallelujah church of that village. Lydia, an elderly widow during my research (in 1951-1952 and 1957) informed me that her husband had travelled widely, preaching and practising Hallelujah as he went. It is therefore possible that it was Queen Mule who accompanied Enjeri to the Gran Sabana, but was there known as Moche Krai through the custom of maintaining multiple names and adapting them according to different experiences and stages in life (as related above for Auka).³⁰ The net result of our information to date is that Enjeri and Moche Krai, (whether real or classificatory elder brother), had the closest relationships with Abel and his successors at Amokokupai. Pemon recall that Enjeri learnt Hallelujah directly from Abel by asking him questions. He had no blood relationship with the Gran Sabana Pemon and they called him cousin/brother-in-law (*ye'se*) and, where there was a big age difference, grandfather (*tamo*). How, therefore, did Enjeri come to be important in the transmission of Hallelujah on the Gran Sabana?

The connecting link is, once again, Krai at Kada'pe in the middle Kamarang River. Enjeri and his brother referred to Krai as "father's brother" (and therefore used the address term for father, *papai*). Queen Mule's wife Lydia also claimed to have relations in the Kamarang River group. The brothers and their wives were accustomed to stay with Krai and must therefore have participated in his church activities and learnt from him the knowledge that he had acquired from his close association with the Cotinga River Akawaio at Pötökwai. Again, three sources of knowledge were united; that from Kragik coming directly, it is said, from the Makushi (see above); that from Abel and John William and William (who had acquired knowledge from their Cotinga River relatives, including those at Pötökwai, before themselves becoming innovators); and that from Krai, who had obtained his initial knowledge from the Pötökwai inhabitants, from Abel and the Amokokupai people and, finally, via his own inspiration and revelations. From Kada'pe, Enjeri and his brother carried their knowledge of Hallelujah westwards into the Kamarakoto of the north-west area of the Gran Sabana, some three to four days' walking distance from the Arekuna region in which Auka was active and some five days or more by river and trail from the middle Kamarang. The arrival of the *Kukoigok*, the Kukui River people,

³⁰ The interrelationships which my data present should now be further investigated. Their significance was not fully appreciated always at the time of field research and, as frequently happens, new lines of enquiry have emerged through the process of collating the two streams of information, from Kapon and Pemon. Moses was not an unusual name among the Akawaio. Abel's eldest son was so called and Enjeri's wife Adelik had a father's brother by the same name who was, therefore, a classificatory father-in-law to her husband. Juan José, son of Adelik, has stated that Moses Krai was elder brother to Enjeri, that he lived at Amokokupai and was *poi'oru* to Abel (that is, nephew/sister's son and, potentially at least, son-in-law).

is still vividly remembered at Kamarata. Enjeri and his wife Adelik (Adrin, Atin), also known as Pörerri Pachi (meaning Prayer Sister or Prayer Woman), stayed on. However, at some stage Enjeri and Adelik separated. Enjeri espoused a Kamarakoto and raised a family there, in a place called Mara'lau where Ramón García, a Pemon leader, was living. It is said that they liked Enjeri and they learnt from him.

Enjeri was active as an Hallelujah leader during the 1920s and 1930s, until his death in November 1938 at Warapai, near Waramadong village on the middle Kamarang River. He was victim of a boat accident in the rapids below Paruima village and information from one of his sons, Rafael Rodríguez, suggests that he may have died of pneumonia afterwards. Enjeri is renowned for the number of women he attracted, and he left children by several of them. His Kukui wife, Adelik or Adrin (Adlin), was also an Hallelujah leader in her own right. She was not known to the Amokokupai people as Pörerri Pachi. This seems to have been a Pemon attribution of an Hallelujah name according to Juan José, a son now living at San Antonio de Tawakupi in the upper Cotinga valley (see also Butt 1960: 98-99). Adelik too spent a long time on the Gran Sabana and this came about through her subsequently becoming the wife of an Arekuna Pemon called Kradin, a sister's son to Auka, the famous Arekuna prophet. Kradin and Adelik lived at Maradowpa, which is near San Rafael de Kamoirán (formerly Wompamota, Kamarang River). However, they also lived in the Kukui area in accordance with uxorilocal custom, so that Kradin became, as Pemon today remark, "like a Waika, because his wife was Waika." The people of Amokokupai still recall Kradin coming to visit them (Butt 1960: 97). At Maradowpa people were dancing and praying Hallelujah until the Seventh Day Adventist missionaries arrived there in 1927-1928. Then, in 1930 approximately, just before the arrival of the Capuchin missionaries at Sta. Elena in April 1931, Kradin died at Atabarikén, near Kavanayén. Adelik, his widow, went back to live in her natal area in the upper Mazaruni but is said to have returned to the Gran Sabana from time to time until her death in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

Owing to their travels between their natal river group, the Kukui, and the Gran Sabana (in the Kamarakoto area in the case of Enjeri and in the Arekuna area in the case of Adelik), these two Akawaio played important roles in the dissemination of Hallelujah knowledge and practice. However, it was their relationship to Krai in the middle Kamarang and in the Kukui which led to the very close associations they came to develop among the Pemon. This in turn is explicable through their part in teaching the man who was to become the Pemon equivalent of Abel (at Amokokupai) among the Akawaio. This was Engran who, with Auka, may be denoted the most outstanding of Hallelujah prophets among the North Pemon of the Gran Sabana. He was a Kamarakoto.

Like Auka, Engran went to learn Hallelujah from Krai at Kada'pe. He was much younger than his teacher and he called him *tamo*, grandfather, a classificatory usage since it is said that they were unrelated.³¹ There too, Engran

³¹ However, a distant in-law relationship seems to have developed, for a Pemon informant

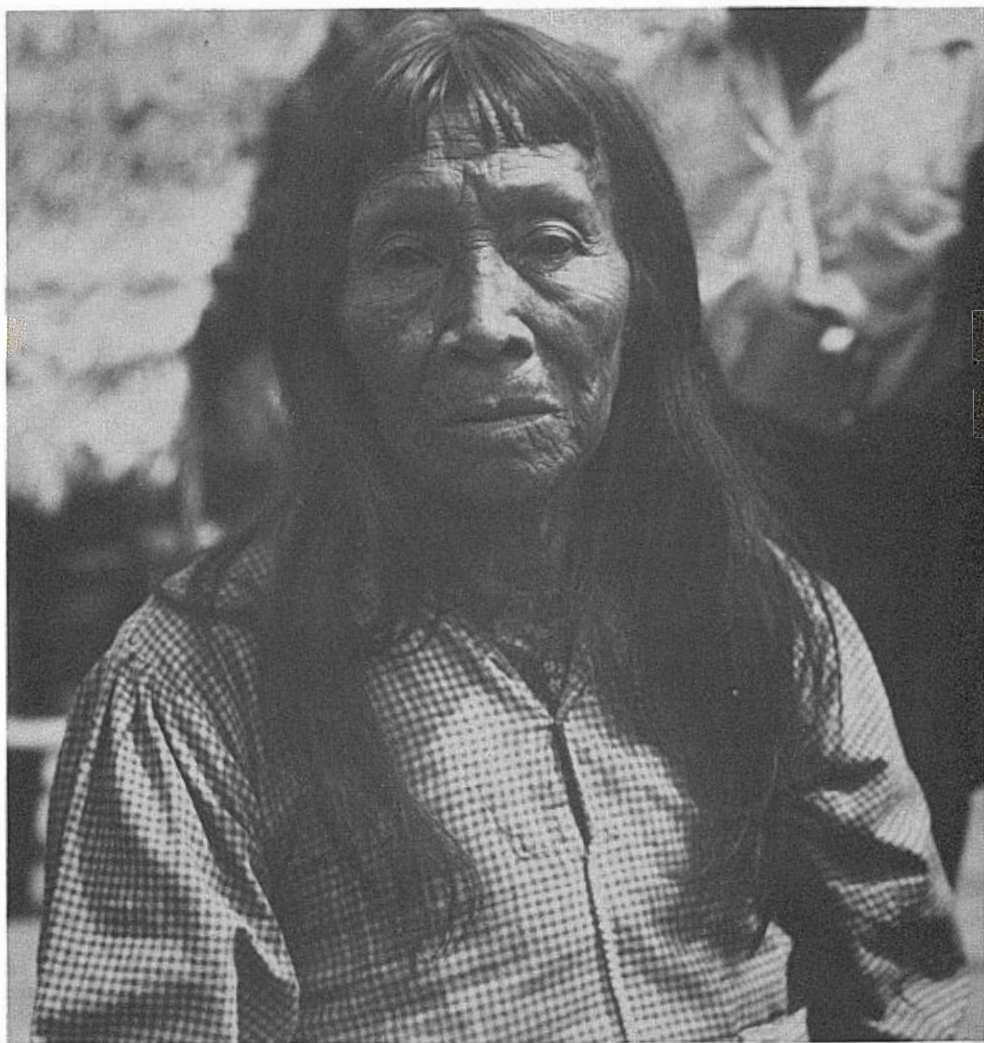


PHOTO 5

Adelik (Pörerri, Pachi): an Hallelujah leader of the Akawaio and Pemon.

was taught by Enjeri, also older than himself. They called each other by the reciprocal brother-in-law term, *ye'se*. It is recalled that Engran was in the Kamarang area, near Warimabia, when the Seventh Day Adventists arrived there in 1932, although by then Kraiss had been dead some ten years probably. The Adventists began by setting up their mission in the middle Kamarang at Sukapi, near Kada'pe, and started to persuade people to give up Hallelujah and join their Church. Under this pressure, Engran decided to return permanently to the Gran Sabana and it was probably at this point in his career when Cesáreo de Armellada met him, for the first time, at the newly established Capuchin Mission of Luepa (north-east, Arekuna region of the Gran Sabana in the Ilutepui area), in 1933. Engran was then about thirty-three years old. The reason for Engran's long stay in the middle Kamarang, apart from the attraction of Hallelujah, was that he had two wives there. It is said that they did not want to go and live permanently on the Gran Sabana and so he left them to return to his natal area.

It is related that this was the occasion when Enjeri also went to the Gran Sabana, and that it was with the object of visiting Engran, his pupil and follower, to ascertain whether he was singing and teaching Hallelujah correctly and well. Engran had now taken an Arekuna wife, but he and his teacher Enjeri were also in the Kamarata area together. Although in contact with the Capuchin missionaries, and baptised by them with the name of Hernán de Jesús, Engran nevertheless pursued the typical career of an outstanding "wise man" (*ipu-kenak*). He founded a succession of settlements, each with an Hallelujah church, beginning in the Kavanayén area on account of his affinal obligations. Thus he settled at Chikandantei, a savanna below the escarpment on which Kavanayén is situated, and then close by at Yumé, where he began to call himself Tarikiran (Telegram). Gradually, he moved westwards to the Kamarata region, founding Pirmokopán (or Pirmokopai) on a tributary of the Aicha River which in turn flows into the Akanán River. His final village was at Sarawaraipa, on the Carrao River, near Kamarata, where he died in 1963 and where Cesáreo de Armellada and I encountered his widow, his son and his relatives in 1974, still practising Hallelujah in his church.

Engran is important in the propagation of Pemon Hallelujah because his genius as a religious leader attracted to him many able disciples, who learnt from him and have subsequently become the religious leaders of Pemon Hallelujah of today. In fact, all the present most important Hallelujah church leaders and prophets claim to have learnt directly from him. It is said that "Engran was in Kamarata with many people; they came together." It was through Engran too, that Auka's wisdom has been so effectively passed down, as well as that of Enjeri and, consequently, of the teacher common to all three -Kraiss, the

recounted that Ramón García was father's brother to Engran. Enjeri, who was brother's son to Kraiss, must have married a kinswoman of Ramón García since he lived a long time in the latter's settlement.

Akawaio prophet of the Kamarang River and, by marriage, of the Kukui River. However, from 1932 on, the history of Hallelujah in the Kamarang area presents something of a paradox. In that year the Seventh Day Adventists began work on the British Guiana side, setting up missions in the Paruima, Warimabia and Waramadong area of the middle Kamarang River, primarily an Akawaio territory up to then. Kradin, husband of Adelik (Pörerer Pachi), was said to have been at Moruimatei, near Sukapi and Kada'pe, when "Papakat" (Papa Cott -Pastor Alfred Cott) arrived there, and certainly both Enjeri and his pupil Engran were active there too. Soon after, we learn, Kradin died on the Gran Sabana in the Arekuna region, and Engran definitively left the middle Kamarang and was encountered near its headwaters, at Luepa which is also in the Arekuna region of the Gran Sabana. A polarization thus took place. Former Pemon adherents of the Cotts during their mission work on the Gran Sabana (1927-1930) were attracted to the new missions built in the middle Kamarang valley of the upper Mazaruni basin in British Guiana, and notably they settled at Paruima, the village set up near the frontier. At the same time, leading members of the Hallelujah religion which the Seventh Day Adventists were trying to annihilate in the area dominated by Kraiss and his followers, escaped up to the Kamarang headwaters into Venezuela and began to propagate their Hallelujah knowledge more intensively there. A proliferation of Hallelujah then began in those northern sectors occupied by the Arekuna and Kamarakoto Pemon. Under the inspiration of that which they had been taught by Kraiss, Auka and Enjeri, Pemon churches began to be created. Notably, Engran became renowned as a "possessor of wisdom" (*ipu-kenak*), taking over the leadership of Hallelujah and attaining the same importance as a propagator of its beliefs and ceremonial as Abel had had before him among the Akawaio.

An overview

Hallelujah originated under inspiration and revelation, following from an instance of direct contact with Anglican missionaries in the setting of the colonial economy, religion and general culture of 19th century British Guiana, owing its initial formation to the effects of these on the genius of the Makushi thinker-dreamer, Pichiwön. It then developed as a religion practised in a series of churches, spreading rapidly throughout the Kapon and Pemon territories in the circum-Roraima area via a different kind of contact. This was contact of the indigenous, traditional sort, whereby knowledge and associated practice and values are passed on from person to person within and between communities, via a network of relationships which ultimately are the links in long chains of association which comprise the major transit routes between the regional groups ("tribes") of the two peoples, Kapon and Pemon.

I consider it important to distinguish between these two kinds of contact: the initial direct one with the "outside" which involves the confrontation of two very different societies and cultures, and the subsequent contacts, internally,

whereby items which have been selected are mediated at each stage in their passage from one community to another. During the latter process the incoming is assessed and adjusted through its interpretation and its incorporation into the life and culture of the receiving society. This is the process of adaptation in which the mediators, in the case of Hallelujah, constitute a series of distinguished ritual leaders (*ipu-kenaton*). The Makushi Pichiwön was the first great mediator and innovator, receiving and selecting knowledge from "outside," harmonizing it with the indigenous conceptual system through profound thought, inspired dreams and revelations. He formulated the essentials of Hallelujah. The Akawaio Epuru (Abel) was the next outstanding creator of the cult, establishing it substantially in its present-day form. The knowledge on which he built came to him from the "inside." In his remote Kukui village he received and absorbed the Hallelujah information which came in via a string of travellers and carriers, extending from the Rupununi Savannas to the Ireng and Cotinga Rivers in the north and there diverted eastwards. According to report Abel never attended a mission, he may never have travelled far outside the upper Mazaruni basin except to visit Pöregaman in the Ireng valley, but he formulated anew the knowledge he received from within the culture. He produced a new corpus of sung prayers; he founded a church organization with its centre at Amokokupai and he and his son Moses pioneered the dance ritual. His message, his organization and the characteristic ritual dancing, have become typical of Hallelujah up to the present day.

Once received, Christian knowledge was passed on in the same way as indigenous knowledge, and so converted into a new set of concepts and associated practices. Nevertheless, we cannot completely discount renewed mission influences and the perception of an advancing national society during the latter part of the 19th century. Parties of Pemon and Kapon continued to travel to centres of employment and religious teaching and, moreover, missionaries were touring some of the more accessible parts of the Carib homelands and attempting to set up mission centres, as at Konkarmo on the Ireng which lasted but a short time in 1888 (see above). However, the salient fact emerges that all attempts to found missions within the circum-Roraima area failed, and even the lower Potaro Mission could not be permanently manned, so that a long period passed which allowed for an internal transformation of knowledge received and for its consolidation in the form of an indigenous church. When Abel died c. 1911, Hallelujah had already been established during some thirty years, and missions bringing a more orthodox Christianity were just being set up. They began in 1908 with the Anglican foundation of Yupukari and the Jesuit foundation of St. Ignatius in 1909, both among the Makushi of the North Rupununi. By 1911 the Benedictine Fathers were working in the Surumu valley of the Rio Branco Savanna, amongst the Makushi and Taurepan. The Seventh Day Adventists staked a claim for future missionary work amongst the Gran Sabana Pemon through the brief visit of Pastor Davis to the Taurepan of Roraima in 1911, whilst the Jesuit Fr. Cary-Elwes began his numerous visits to Roraima just a few months



PHOTO 6

Hallelujah dancing at Kataima village soon after dawn: upper Mazaruni River 1952. It is customary to dance throughout the night.



PHOTO 7

Hallelujah prayers in Kataima village, led by the village leader John Charlie (kneeling, clad in white shirt and trilby hat), 1952.

later, also in 1911. The Akawaio did not receive a permanent mission in the upper Mazaruni until 1932, with the arrival of the Seventh Day Adventists there -some fifty years after the launching of Hallelujah by Pichiwön. There is little doubt that freedom from immediate mission pressures during that half century assisted the development and establishment of the new religion. It might even have permitted its existence! Certainly, the arrival of missionaries living in the Makushi home territories sent Hallelujah practice underground in the 1930s and 1940s (personal communication from Iris Myers), whilst I have already reported Pemon recollections of events on the middle Kamarang from 1932 on, and the suppression of Hallelujah there.

In this article I have drawn a parallel between the acquisition of material goods of exotic origin and the initial acquisition of Christian knowledge and practice, also of exotic origin. Both had the same, major point of derivation for the circum-Roraima peoples. This was the lower reaches and coastal belt of the main rivers to the north-east of their territories -a contact region of considerable antiquity. It was possibly a trading area of pre-Columbian times but which, from the late 16th century, took on additional significance when an assortment of Old World peoples arrived and began trading and then settling there. Once the goods, material ones and intangibles alike, entered the indigenous trading and exchange system, then we can begin to make other parallels. In the networks of local interchanges and also in the chains of long distance exchange, as between different regional groups (or "tribes"), a greater formality can be found than simply that of sharing and passing wealth of one sort or another between individuals who are blood kin. Formality enters with the arrival of a son-in-law, especially if he derives from a community at a distance. Sons-in-law enter a specific exchange system. They are normally obliged to give much or all of their possessions, or at least to share them, so that any concentration of goods rapidly disperses to wife's parents and brothers. In return a son-in-law retains a wife and obtains a recognized position in his new home and centre of activities. That is, in return for goods of a variety of kinds, and also for services and shares in the work of the family, he receives social recognition and status. Since a son-in-law, initially at least, spends most of his time with his in-laws, and even when head of a domestic group, will divide his time between them and his natal family, he acts as a connecting link and route of transmission.

In a previous publication (Butt 1960: 97) I called attention to the importance of sons-in-law in the dissemination of Hallelujah among the Akawaio of the upper Mazaruni basin. Pemon oral tradition reinforces my conclusion by further demonstrating that the passage of knowledge can be a two-way one. Thus, sons-in-law have frequently carried Hallelujah knowledge and its ceremonial expression into new communities -those of the wife's parents, just as Queen Mule was the major organizer and practitioner of Hallelujah in Chinawiang village in the upper Mazaruni valley (see above), whilst his brother Enjeri did the same when he jettisoned his Akawaio wife and married into the Kamarakoto at Kamarata, thereafter spending much of his time there and teaching the Pemon.

Engran, the great Pemon leader of that area, who was a pupil of Enjeri, built his church as a result of that affinal link forged by his teacher. The process still continues, for a young Akawaio who married into the Taurepan at Icabarú in the upper Caroní valley, has recently introduced sung and danced Hallelujah prayers to that community.

However, the links which marriage creates or re-creates may work the other way. A son-in-law may learn from his in-laws and take back his knowledge to his natal community. Kraís is a supreme example (see above) in that he learnt Hallelujah in the Kukui valley, through his marriage there, and then brought it back by request of his natal community in the middle Kamarang. He seems to have divided his time between the two areas up to the last, dying at his Kukui home. Engran similarly linked the Kavanayén and Kamarata areas of the Pemon (see above). In short, men, who are frequently mobile in these uxorilocal societies, mobilize material wealth by carrying it between their two kinds of home and dispersing it there. They also fulfill the same role in respect of non-material wealth, such as Hallelujah knowledge and ceremonial, songs and recitations. Women and their relatives are receivers and retain and use such wealth locally.

To take the parallels further, we can note that there are "big men" in both kinds of transaction. There are the big trading partnerships between individuals living at a distance, each one accumulating goods within their local networks of relationships and then travelling to visit and feast with each other and to conduct important exchanges. In the non-material, conceptual realm of Hallelujah the big men, and sometimes elderly women of status, are the church leaders-prophets (*ipu-kenak*) with their followers. Having developed their local reputation, Hallelujah leaders augment and extend it by travelling and visiting. Wherever they go they preach, pray and conduct the characteristic Hallelujah dance sessions. Such leaders visit each other, taking family and followers with them. Sometimes a teacher will visit a prestigious pupil (as Enjeri visited Engran on the Gran Sabana, see above); sometimes leaders go to learn what they can from each other and, sometimes, two will combine their activities for specific festivals. Parties of knowledgeable Hallelujah leaders among the Akawaio have visited the Cotinga River Akawaio and even, during the last few years, gone to Pemon villages on the Gran Sabana. Quite a celebrated case was a visit by Akawaio, about 1975, to the Kamarakoto Hallelujah centre and its prophet on the upper Cuyuni River. Such expeditions may entail a week or so of hard travel in either direction. Thus, just as trading partners may jump intermediary links to get to a source of wealth, carrying goods for exchange over long distances, so Hallelujah leaders may obtain and carry their knowledge over long distances and exchange their songs and prayers during joint ceremonial.³² We might

³² Pemon recount admiringly that the Akawaio visitors to these Kamarakoto on the Cuyuni had songs for every kind of event. In particular they recall that an eclipse took place during the visit and the Akawaio immediately sang some Hallelujah songs which were appropriate to this occurrence.

compare this with the visit of Schoolmaster, travelling from Roraima to Kwaimatta in the Rupununi in 1894, which had material wealth -guns- as a main objective (see above).

The importance of the prophet (*ipu-kenak*) emerges clearly in the history of the development of Hallelujah and its dissemination. He, or she, is the centre of Hallelujah practice and active propaganda whilst the material sign of this is the maintenance of a church building which is named as such (*sochi, chochi*). In the Hallelujah church dancing and accompanying feasting occurs, at regular intervals and sometimes for a succession of days and nights at a time. The retention and rooting of Hallelujah in any specific locality depends on the emergence of a local leader, his following and his church. If, for any reason, a region does not produce an individual with the moral authority and talents who can set up and maintain a local church, then the cult either does not become operative in that area, or it lapses with the death of such a gifted individual. This seems to have been the case at Roraima after the death of Jeremiah. The Taurepan in the Roraima region maintained *Chimitin* songs and dances but never built an Hallelujah church. It seems to have been a characteristic of Pemon society that although there is a general overall continuity, this does not apply necessarily to any one locality and its residents. There is something of a contrast here with Hallelujah among the Mazaruni River Akawaio. Akawaio villages have maintained Hallelujah churches during the entire history of the cult, at least to the degree whereby a village which has changed location has usually established a new church in the course of time. Moreover, at Amokokupai there has been a succession of churches and a succession of prophet leaders, ever since Abel founded Hallelujah there.

To explain this difference one might note that the Pemon have had a shorter period of freedom from outside visiting and settlement during the period of Hallelujah development and establishment in the circum-Roraima area. However, one might also invoke the distinctions in settlement pattern and continuity between the two ethnic groups, Kapon and Pemon. Most Pemon live in a more impoverished environment, or have recently derived from one. They live in elevated grassland areas, whereas Akawaio live mainly in a highland, but heavily forested, river basin with very small areas of grassland interspersed. Consequently the Pemon have smaller and more mobile communities (at least they did until recently when national pressures and different economic opportunities began to encourage village communities of several hundreds). Certainly the success of an Hallelujah leader, such as Auka or Engran, depends a great deal on the material backing to the spiritual. The superior knowledge and moral authority a leader claims must be witnessed by his material success. This means that he and his extended and joint family group have to own extensive gardens and be energetic food providers in order to give extraordinary hospitality during frequent and long church festivals. Pemon recall that Engran openly acknowledged that this was the way to success and that he had been taught it by his parents.

In considering the parallels between the transmission of trade goods and

that of intangibles such as cult knowledge and practice, we should bear in mind that there are two kinds of journeying, both of which are differentiated in indigenous thought. One is the physical journey, the long and often arduous marching and paddling to obtain and exchange objects, to swap experiences and give news, to relate stories and sing new songs with their inbuilt messages. But real knowledge is said to be gained only by spiritual experiences, which in turn bring material prosperity, and this is said to be the province of the thinker-dreamer. Such a person is *enewadare*: one endowed with (-*dare*) extraordinary (-*wa-*) perception or sight (*ene*). He, or she, is a wisdom (*ipu*) possessor (*genak*). These were probably traditional, indigenous roles, but today among both Pemon and Kapon they are the outstanding Hallelujah leaders who mediate, joining the celestial regions to the earth and so bringing spirit strength (*merundö*) from the skies. Hallelujah prophets base their moral leadership, their teaching and pronouncements on this thinking and dreaming process and its resulting experience. It is through these "journeys of the soul" that they generate new knowledge. This has been the mechanism for conversion of that information which they acquired, minimally in the first instance, from contact with representatives of the national societies (the missionaries). Through thinking and dreaming they selected, adopted and adapted information from "outside" and brought it within their own boundaries -geographical, social and conceptual. They internalized it. The thoughts and dreams of these indigenous philosophers created a bridge for understanding the incoming and so cushioned the impact of an increasing clash of different structures.

Hallelujah is at once a Christian religion in its basic essentials and an indigenous conceptual system, and therein lies the genius of its creators, the *ipu-kenaton*, the possessors of wisdom. In one sense, therefore, Hallelujah is as old as the traditional culture of the circum-Roraima peoples. Indeed, Akawaio are convinced that it is very old indeed, far older than this century. In another sense it is recent, in that it was towards the end of the 19th century that some aspects of the traditional belief system underwent a transformation as a result of inspiration deriving from Christian missionary work. In this latter sense we can now refer to Hallelujah's one hundredth birthday, a centenary occurring perhaps in 1984, it being exactly this period of time since im Thurn made the first literary reference to its existence. We can say that it began as an enthusiastic movement, and that although enthusiasm is not lacking to-day it has now become an indigenous church, still changing and adapting -and still spreading.

Certainly Hallelujah is a unique expression of the two circum-Roraima peoples, the Kapon and Pemon. Although its songs, prayers and ceremonial may be known to some of their neighbours it is not reported as being a fully fledged cult amongst them. Wapishana, many of whom have intermarried with Makushi along their borders in the Rio Branco area and the southern Kanuku Mountain region, have knowledge of Hallelujah songs and practices. At one stage it passed to the Ye'kuana, but its practice was rejected (private commu-

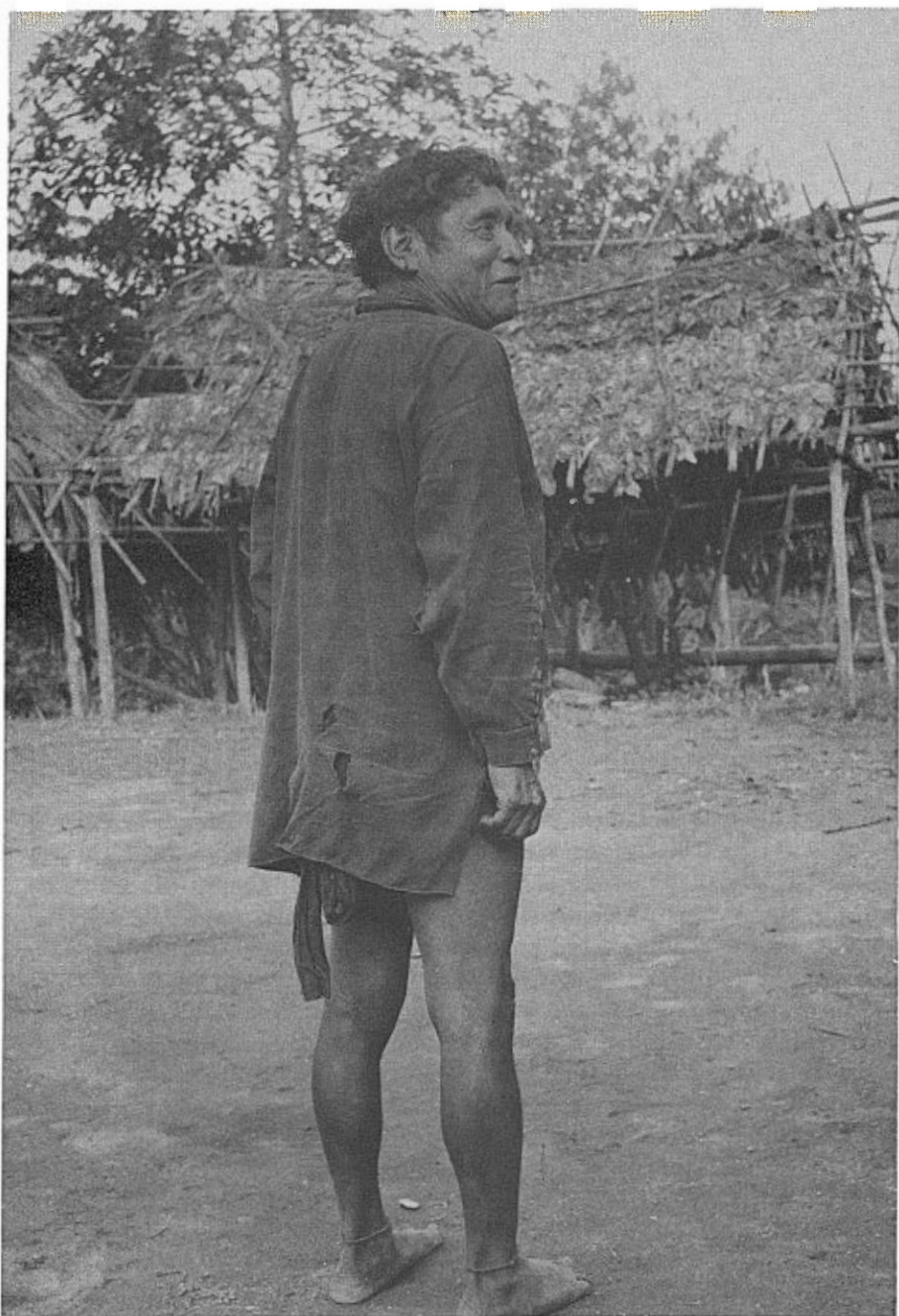


PHOTO 8

Aibilibing: fifth prophet of Hallelujah at Amokokupai, 1957. He was blind.

nication from J. Wilbert), whilst Migliazza (1980: 103) refers to the Yanam, on the periphery of Pemon territory to their east, as having "borrowed sets of specialized vocabulary related to bitter manioc processing, fermented drink and 'Hallelujah' songs from the Carib." So far as we know, not one of these three peoples has created an indigenous church, but they possess items of the cult as part of an exotic culture borrowing. To explain this fact one would have to give an intricate explanation of the circum-Roraima structure of society and thought, set within the framework of a particular historical experience.

It might be argued that the parallel I have drawn, between the adoption of material items into an indigenous economy and the adoption of the non-material, is not a valid one: that material goods are integrated but not transformed or transforming, whilst the non-material, on being integrated, *is* transformed and becomes an origin of social change. However, recent studies have suggested that the adoption of trade goods of European manufacture has in fact created a new system of resource use which has had striking repercussions (Colchester 1981). Metal tools for gardening, guns for hunting, metal fish hooks, have changed time and work input and food acquisition, affected ecological relationships, settlement mobility and inter-group relationships. These goods have more closely interrelated the indigenous societies with the national societies and reflected on the status of the indigenous vis à vis the incoming economy and culture. Certainly Pemon and Kapon daily life has been transformed in the material sphere also, but even in this respect they often accepted imported goods on their own terms and transformed them and their uses. During my field research I regularly saw Akawaio beating out metal objects cold. They did so in order to make arrow heads -the most ingenious being an arrow head with a long foreshaft which derived from a converted umbrella spoke. There was a regular industry in this. Pieces of tin were transformed into ear ornaments; coins were strung on necklaces; trade beads were made into beautifully patterned aprons worn by the women. Among the Taurepan at Sta. Elena, only a few years ago, vehicle parts (engine manifold pipes) were used as trumpets in the *parishara* dances, in place of the hollow *Cecropia* wood. When, by error, a consignment of laundry blue arrived at the government store at Kamarang in the upper Mazaruni, the official there resigned himself to complete financial loss and the prospect of their accumulating dust on the store shelves. He did not count sufficiently on the powers of innovation and adaptation of the Akawaio who, scorning their use on the few white shirts in their possession and with no bed linen worth mentioning, nevertheless found that the concentrated colour made an attractive blue for their plucked eyebrows -and far more convenient than having to go out to collect the fruits of the *Genipa americana* tree with its less obtrusive blue-black dye!

I believe that the history of the development and transmission of Hallelujah provides us with some useful lessons. In the first place adaptation of one society to another is not just at the material level, to goods and the economy, or even to a way of life. It is spiritual and moral, embued with values, as the Kapon

and Pemon have perceived in that they distinguish between technological know-how and an intellectual insight which leads to moral judgement. They have traditionally emphasized the possession of wisdom, which comes from "above" and from contact with the fundamental and overriding forces of the universe. This was what they were seeking in the new, Christian knowledge which they encountered. Once in possession of this knowledge, which would set them on the path to superior energy forces, then the "good life," material and moral, would follow. In the second place, because adoption and adaptation were made on their own terms, the Pemon and Kapon thinkers were able to incorporate the new knowledge by translation and assimilation which did not violate traditional thought structures or their content. Hallelujah took root and grew as part of an adjusted system -transforming and creating anew without destroying. Finally, this constructive reaction indicates that such indigenous peoples are quite capable of dealing with new and incoming culture, material and intellectual, provided that they are not bowled out in a first violent impact. Left in secure possession of their home territories, as a predominantly rural population which is coherent but within national society, not invaded and outnumbered on their home ground, a very gradual contact may lead to an enrichment of culture both indigenous and national. The alternative is the more familiar wrecking of indigenous society, resulting in impoverishment and destruction at all levels and of all kinds. The widespread existence of the latter conditions bear witness that negative forces have been at work, leading to insoluble friction and, as the state of the world shows to-day, to increasing violence. We can put forward the hypothesis that the Western World too is suffering from the effects of changes which are too rapid in both the material and conceptual spheres (the two being ultimately interrelated). Adequate time for the absorption of new goods, new knowledge, new ideas and practices and new cultural contacts, and their tailoring to that which is already in being, is a necessary prerequisite for individuals and communities alike if harmony is to be pursued in place of friction and confrontation. The history of the origins and dissemination of Hallelujah in the regional groups of the circum-Roraima peoples affords us a lesson in this respect.

Postscript

This article is dedicated to Marshall Durbin in commemoration of his genius in the field of comparative Carib linguistics and his special interest in regional interdependencies. I would like, therefore, to end with a linguistic note, which aptly sums up what the overall significance of the history of Hallelujah represents. It is one that I think he would have appreciated.³³

The Gran Sabana Pemon use the terms *ikén* and *ikengok* (or *ikenkok*).

³³ I am especially grateful to Cesáreo de Armellada for basic information on the meaning of *ikén* and also for making available to me his research conclusions on the Pemon numerical system.

The literal meaning is "its" (*i-*) "mouth," "confluence" (*-ken*) and refers to the triangle of land at a river mouth. The word also denotes a trading area. The addition of *-gok* (or *-kok*) gives the meaning "group of people" and, since the Pemon are referring to trade, they mean the people at the river mouth with whom they trade. When designating the direction of the *ikengok* they point to the area north-east of their Gran Sabana homeland -to the country of the Akawaio, this being the direction of the major Gran Sabana trade routes to the east. It is, nevertheless, a vague designation, for the rivers from the eastern side of the North Pakaraima watershed all flow in a general north-east direction. *Ikén* could refer to the mouth of the Kamarang River where, in 1949, a government station and trade store began to be established and to which came many Pemon subsequently, to buy and sell. It might refer to the river system much lower down, where the Mazaruni is joined by the Cuyuni, or where the combined flow joins the Essequibo River (denoted as "the younger brother," *yakon*, of the Orinoco). This is the famous area of the "three rivers," where the Dutch had their administrative headquarters early in the 17th century and where a major centre of exchange and trade was established. It might even refer to the "Bartika triangle," the promontory formed by the Mazaruni -Essequibo confluence, where the township of Bartika is situated, having its origins as an Anglican mission in the second decade of the 19th century. This was, besides, a prime source of trade and goods and the point of departure and arrival for parties of people travelling in the interior. Akawaio in particular have traded at all these river confluences. Finally, the word might have had a shifting reference, depending on exact locations of trade, their development and decline.

A major part of its interest is the image of a triangle. In the Kapon and Pemon languages the word for "two" denotes a union, a partnership and a harmony, but "three" has the meaning of something different being inserted. Two rivers meet at a confluence and a third kind of river is created out of the united flow. In social structure this is what also takes place at the river mouth, for the people of two river valleys join up and meet there and become one larger river group in an escalation of structure. At the mouths of the rivers which make up the Essequibo fluvial system trade routes join up, for in forested areas people travel mainly by boat. Where people meet an exchange occurs, and so a transformation process begins. Whether there is an exchange of the material or of the non-material -such as knowledge, a third factor comes into being, which is different because it derives from two distinct streams. The two make contact and mingle and, in the process of combination, something new emerges.

Abstract

The origin of the syncretic religion of Hallelujah is described and the major routes by which it has been carried between the regional groups of two Carib-speaking peoples, the Kapon and Pemon of the circum-Roraima area of the

Guiana Highlands, from 1884-1984. Information is derived from three literary sources, indigenous oral tradition and personal recollections.

Two kinds of contact situations emerge: initial contact which is between the indigenous and the "outside" society followed by "inside" contacts whereby goods and knowledge are passed, transformed and incorporated. A parallel is drawn between the passage of material culture and that of intangible culture (knowledge, beliefs, songs, ritual, moral injunctions and sets of values). The roles of the "big man" trader and the Hallelujah leaders and "wise men" are discussed and also the mobility of men through uxori-local residence.

This study shows the importance of the conceptual system in maintaining regional integration and uniting both Kapon and Pemon. The development and transmission of Hallelujah additionally shows that, in favourable circumstances, adaptation by indigenous peoples can be creative and harmonious. Such adaptation is not confined to the material realm, but includes intellectual, moral and spiritual values. The conjunction of two culture streams leads to innovation and transformation which avoids rupture and violence if sufficient time is allowed.

Resumen

A partir de tres fuentes literarias, de la tradición oral de los indígenas y de datos recogidos en el campo por la autora, ésta nos narra el origen del Aleluya, una religión sincrética practicada por dos grupos Caribe (Kapón y Pemón) de la región del Roraima en el Escudo de Guayana. También describe las vías a través de las cuales, entre 1884 y 1984, se fue extendiendo a los distintos subgrupos regionales Kapón y Pemón.

El contacto inicial que partió de los indígenas con la sociedad "exterior", fue seguido de contactos "internos". A través de estos contactos comenzaron a circular y se fueron transformando e incorporando bienes y conocimientos. La autora hace un paralelismo entre la circulación de bienes de la cultura material y la circulación de bienes de la cultura intangible (conocimientos, creencias, cantos, ritos, preceptos morales y conjuntos de valores), discute los roles que desempeñaron personajes como los grandes comerciantes, los líderes y los sabios del Aleluya, y examina la movilidad masculina relacionada con la residencia uxori-local.

Este trabajo pone de manifiesto el papel que juega el sistema conceptual en la integración regional y la unidad de ambos grupos. El estudio de cómo se originó y se transmitió el Aleluya nos hace ver que, en circunstancias favorables, la adaptación de los indígenas -que no se reduce al ámbito material sino que se extiende a los valores intelectuales, morales y espirituales- puede ser creativa y armoniosa. Si se les concede suficiente tiempo, la conjunción de los dos culturas puede llevar a la innovación y a la transformación evitando la ruptura y la violencia.

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