

# PART 1: AUSTRALIAN RULE

## Chapter 1

### Miss Tessie Lavau Discovers Australia

Like a handful of other Papuans and New Guineans in the 1950s, Miss Tessie Lavau of Iokea Village in Kerema District of Papua visited Australia as a nursemaid with her employers on their vacation 'down south'. Most Australians in the Territory employed a servant, but few brought them to Australia. These household relations must have been friendly: when Miss Lavau moved on to be a public service typist, the family offered her a place to stay if she ever visited Australia. In 1958, she acted on their suggestion and made her application. That very ordinary action startled Australian officials on both sides of Torres Strait, and forced them to think about relations between the Territory and people of Papua and New Guinea and the Commonwealth and people of Australia.

Lacking direct experience, most Australians relied on stereotypes of the Territory and its people. In 1964, the Australian journalist Keith Willey toured the Territory from the Indonesian border to Bougainville, recycling stereotypes that were already on their last legs:<sup>1</sup>

Remote from the surge and flow of human endeavour, [New Guinea] slumbered; yet it, too, had a kind of history ... Dawn men, forced from the jungles of Asia by stronger races to the north and west, straggled through the chain of islands which is now Indonesia to find refuge here in the southern ocean. The result is a people bewildering in diversity, sundered by 750 languages and a thousand tribes.

Lumped together under the name of Melanesian are negritos, small and woolly-haired; and tall, slender warriors who show links with the Aboriginal Australians. The Kiwais of the Fly estuary could be one of the lost tribes of Israel. The Bukas are as handsome — and as black — as the Somalis. Pigmies with a life expectancy of less than thirty years range the swamps of the western Sepik. In the Highlands are strains even of the so-called Hairy Ainus ...

Among the coastal tribes cannibalism was universal and several missionaries went into the cooking pots ...

Willey was reporting the first election for 'a Stone Age parliament'.

To transform a living museum into nationhood within a generation is a task of giant proportions. Twenty years ago it would have seemed an impossible dream; yet in New Guinea today, dream is becoming reality.

It would be hard to assemble more clichés per page, yet the liberal Willey based them on his own observations and on talks with Territory residents.

Another Australian, Gavin Souter, described New Guinea as 'the last unknown',<sup>2</sup> but the converse was just as true. Tight rules governed the 'Removal of Native People from the Territory'.<sup>3</sup> Melanesians entered Australia under supervision in parties of uniformed forces, as crew of Territory vessels, as servants, for schooling, medical treatment, conferences or Scouting jamborees. (The Administration fostered Boy Scouts and Girl Guides for character-building.<sup>4</sup>) What were misleadingly called 'educational tours' were also permitted. In 1927, the Government was scandalised to discover two New Guineans at school in rural New South Wales. Their headmaster attested that 'no white boys have given me so much satisfaction'; these 'fine lads' were popular, courteous, punctual — and good cricketers. Nevertheless, the Australian Minister for Territories decided to prevent the Administrator of New Guinea from sending any other youngsters to Australian schools. After all, as the *Rabaul Times* pointed out, that exposure might provoke such lads to ask for higher wages, or even to go on strike.<sup>5</sup> That prohibition prevailed until the 1950s, when a selective scheme was introduced under tight supervision.

After the Pacific War, the Territory Administration proposed to bring groups of Papua New Guineans to Australia for short courses in technical subjects:

native leaders would see the hard and continuous work of Australians to produce the means and articles of commerce ... and they would gain a clear realisation that there is no miracle or royal road in production.

Territories Minister Eddie Ward conceded that much good would result — but 'it would be premature'.<sup>6</sup> Few Papua New Guineans saw Australia at all. During 1957, five men were brought south by their employers; for everyone else, Australia was unknowable. In 1954, an inquisitive 'native teacher' asked to see the Australian way of life. Before the Director of Education and the Director of Native Affairs had reviewed his request, however, he withdrew it.

So Miss Lavau's application startled the authorities, who referred it up through the ranks to the desk of the Administrator. He mulled it over and decided that:

The girl is a mature type who has adopted European dress and living standards and has saved sufficient money to pay her fare both ways ...

I can see no objection to granting permission for a native person to leave the Territory in these circumstances, provided that the bona fides of the applicant stand up to close examination and that each application is dealt with on its individual merits following a close investigation into the character, background and motives of those concerned with it and to the relationship between the applicant and the persons in Australia who are to be visited ...

Applications would be rare, since few could afford the trip or had friends to house them.<sup>7</sup>

Miss Lavau's character survived scrutiny (and so did her sponsors) and the proposal satisfied the Administrator's ideas of seemingly race relations. Sir Donald Cleland earnestly desired that 'individual native people build up personal contacts with individual Australian citizens' — under the sleepless eye of authority, which would assess character and motive. A District Commissioner would vet each applicant, officers in Australia would conduct random checks, and each visit would be limited to three months.

A decision of this weight required the support of the Minister for Territories. Sir Paul Hasluck endorsed Cleland's advice and referred the matter to the Minister for Immigration, Sir Alexander Downer. Two governments, two Commonwealth departments, two Cabinet ministers and many police studied the case, which might seem absurd for a visit to a police inspector's family by a law-abiding tourist. But the entry of any non-European to Australia was problematic. Miss Lavau was not only testing the racial conventions of the Territory; she was questioning the nexus between the Territory and the rest of Australia, and picking at the seams of White Australia.

The application uncovered a paradox. On what legal basis could Australian citizens be excluded from Australia? The Minister for Immigration unearthed this anomaly:

The Migration Act permits the exclusion from Australia of any 'immigrant'. [Decisions and observations by the High Court suggested] that any person may be regarded as an immigrant who is not a constituent member of the Australian community — whatever his national status may be.

On this basis, legal power exists to prevent the entry to Australia of either natives of Papua, whose national status is that of Australian citizens, or natives of the Trust Territory of New Guinea, who are Australian protected persons (Nationality and Citizenship Act and Citizenship Regulations).<sup>8</sup>

He did not need to explain that 'constituent members of the Australian community' was a euphemism for 'white'. It was not nationality but race that separated Miss Lavau from her friends, and the Australian Territory from the Australian Commonwealth.

## Natives

Australians described Papua and New Guinea as a dependent Territory, inhabited by two million natives and a few thousand non-natives, most of them from Australia. Natives

were, of course, born in the Territory, but the term groaned under a weight of colonial history and ideology. Since 'native' and 'stranger' first met on Pacific beaches,<sup>9</sup> the balance of power had tilted: the stranger became the settler and the native became a subordinate.

The term brought people under Native Regulations, which were simpler and more oppressive than the laws governing Australians. 'Natives' had been evangelised and colonised, so they were no longer 'savages', but they were not yet citizens, a conversion that would occur if and when the Territory evolved into a State. Meanwhile, they were legally incompetent. In Stewart Firth's view, the concept of the native was a device to create social distance and keep control.<sup>10</sup> Whites expected each other to remain aloof from natives. Almost all believed that they were in every way superior to their servants. Rhetorically, the native was masculine and singular, a device that homogenised hundreds of languages, living styles and production systems, matriliney and patriliney, coast and highland. The term 'native' melted varied humanity down to a pitiable stereotype. Of such a poor creature no one would expect social complexity, political acumen, intellectual vigour, artistry or science.

Miss Lavau was rare in being discussed in her own name. The Administration had a Central Advisory Committee for the Education and Advancement of Women. Lady Rachel Cleland, the formidable wife of the Administrator, was one member; but the chair and three of the 14 members were men, and only two or three were indigenes. The committee had no vision beyond women's clubs, Girl Guides, water supply and welfare officers.<sup>11</sup> These were irrelevant to most women. Paula Brown recorded this statement from a Simbu woman:

What we women do is very difficult. 1) We cook for our family every day ... 2) Go to the garden every day ... 3) Clean the grass in the garden and plant the food crops. 4) Look after pigs ... 5) Look after our babies while we are doing the other jobs ... The work that men do is very simple ... They break firewood, cut grass or clear the bush, dig the garden drains, build houses only. They do not do it every day. Men spend most of their time doing nothing and talking.

Simbu men insisted that they worked just as hard;<sup>12</sup> but neither view imagined common ground with the agenda of the committee.

The committee hesitated to 'advance' educated women. Two went to a Melbourne meeting of the Associated Country Women of the World in 1962 and made such a good impression that the ACWW voted funds for 'the advancement of the women of the Territory', and asked how to do this. Six months later the Administration confessed that the file was lost. The ACWW persisted, offering support to women training as nurses in Australia. The Health Department knew of none, although there were in fact seven.<sup>13</sup>

## Planters and Peasants

The territory was anomalous among tropical colonies in the limited impact of its plantations. When Australians annexed Papua in 1907 and occupied New Guinea in 1914, they

expected plantations to be the engine of development. As early as the 1920s, Papuan officials despaired of the planters and instead began to coerce villagers to produce copra on village land. Plantation prospects were brighter in New Guinea, where Germans had developed estates. After World War I, these were expropriated and sold to Australian ex-servicemen, just in time to break their hearts in the 1930s Depression. The planters blamed the Australian companies Burns Philp and W. R. Carpenter, which enjoyed a near monopoly of trade, or the laws that required all cargoes to be shipped in white-crewed and expensive Australian vessels.<sup>14</sup>

The plantation strategy resurfaced after the Pacific War when ex-servicemen were again placed on the land. But few Australians ever had capital and those who did could enjoy more secure title in Australia.<sup>15</sup> The most promising development occurred in the Highlands, where Australians pioneered coffee estates in alliance with Big Men, who mobilised labour for them. But even these plantations were limited. In 1960, New Guinea's production was:<sup>16</sup>

<i>Crop</i>	<i>Holdings</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Production (tonnes)</i>
Cocoa	355	78,441	4,520
Copra	474	219,549	70,596
Coffee	171	7,415	1,726

By then, agricultural extension officers (*didimen*) and cooperatives officers had helped villagers to grow cocoa, mainly on the Gazelle Peninsula around Rabaul, and Highlanders had planted more coffee than had Australians.<sup>17</sup>

In 1953, scholars from The Australian National University reviewed development and reached a common conclusion:<sup>18</sup>

An economist [Trevor Swan] reports that ... European industry on the whole is making little if any headway, and may even be in a state of slow decline ... The running-down of copra and gold is scarcely balanced by development in new directions ...

An anthropologist [Cyril Belshaw] argues that native society offers a basis for economic organisation for productive purposes, through individual enterprise, native co-operatives, and looser forms of community development ...

A geographer [the chairman of the review committee, Oskar Spate] points out that the New Guinea terrain does not lend itself to widespread European settlement, but does present many opportunities for the development of native crops ...

*Our central thesis, then, is that a prosperous New Guinea economy can be built on the foundations of native society, and that this is not only socially the most desirable but economically the most feasible ...*

European agriculture flourished only in a few places where soil, topography and anchorages favoured it; whereas 'native agriculture' had evolved for 6,000 years.<sup>19</sup> Adapting to climates and soils, people grew taro, sweet potato, sago or yam; they cleared bush, selected varieties, inter-planted, mulched and irrigated. These staples also sustained pigs, the main store of wealth. Highland production was spurred by elaborate exchanges of pigs, shells, feathers and other valuables, such as the *moka* of the Melpa people.<sup>20</sup> Coastal production sustained maritime expeditions such as the *kula* that so impressed Malinowski.<sup>21</sup> These rituals and adventures were sustained by hard work and years of planned surplus, but these skills were barely visible to Australians. Archaeologists did not reveal the antiquity of New Guinea agriculture until the 1960s; swidden seemed inefficient to Europeans, pigs and cassowaries could not be herded like cattle, and benefits from exchange relations were invisible to casual observers. Officials saw only backwardness, especially when steel tools displaced stone axes. Mass-produced pottery, long-range sailing vessels (such as the *lagatoi*, which survived only on Papuan postage stamps) and most of the coastal trading systems were also superseded by imports.

Economists grappled with these issues when Sir John Crawford, Australia's leading economic policy-maker, became Director of The Australian National University's Research School of Pacific Studies in 1961. Encouraged by Crawford, Ernest Fisk visited the Highlands. Goroka town dismayed him: 'This was not under-development as I had known it. It seemed to be an earlier stage in the process of economic evolution.' But in the countryside he struck a paradox:

These people seemed to have more leisure, more adequate food supplies, and generally to be considerably better off than quite a lot of villagers in South and East Asia whose average incomes were recorded as being very much higher.<sup>22</sup>

This economy defied conventional economics, so Fisk turned to anthropology. Richard Salisbury had analysed the introduction of metal tools, which triggered a reordering of work and leisure, and Scarlett Epstein had contrasted *Capitalism, Primitive and Modern* in East New Britain.<sup>23</sup> Fisk coined the term 'subsistence affluence', best described in his doggerel:

*The Song of the Tribal Economist*<sup>24</sup>

The primitive farmer says Cash  
Is unsatisfactory trash;  
It won't keep off the rain  
And it gives me a pain  
If I use it to flavour my hash ...  
If I act in a rational way  
I'll just sit on my backside today.  
When I want a good feed  
I've got all I need

Piping hot, and there's nothing to pay.  
Cash cropping is all very well  
If you've *got* to have something to sell;  
But tell me sir, why,  
If there's nothing to buy  
Should I bother? You can all go to hell.

When Fisk's 'primitive affluence' (softened to 'subsistence affluence' by Ron Crocombe) escaped from academia into colonial society, it helped to justify low wages. A World Bank mission stated that view with less finesse than Fisk: 'Subsistence agriculture is relatively easy and has bred an agricultural [labour] force that has not had to acquire disciplined work habits.'<sup>25</sup>

Economists and administrators believed that land tenure was communal and that this was an obstacle to progress. If so, the obstacle was adamant: land was the source not only of people's food and crops, but also of their identities. The 800 languages of Papua New Guinea articulate an ancient tradition of isolated communities whose attachment to particular pieces of land narrowed their horizons, but made the attachment correspondingly intense. At the end of the colonial era in Papua, less than two million acres out of 55 million had been alienated: of those two million acres, only 24,000 were owned as freehold, and the balance remained in Crown ownership. The situation in New Guinea was similar, but there were areas of intense production, such as the Gazelle Peninsula, where ownership was contested.<sup>26</sup>

In 1952, a Native Land Commission began to record native title rights and to identify 'ownerless land'. Their task was complicated because 'there are many different rights in any one parcel of land and they are often held by different parties'.<sup>27</sup> Some people had rights of way to their own gardens; others needed access to water; some held rights to cultivate, and others to hunt or gather wild produce. Working against that tradition, the commission became bogged down. Ten years later, a Land Titles Commission was asked to determine and register customary rights and also found itself involved in disputes. From a bureaucratic point of view, arguments over land rights were a problem, but for Papua New Guineans such wrangles were normal: tenure always had to be adjusted to take account of migration, succession and marriage.<sup>28</sup> The people and their cultures — not to mention their convoluted economic relations — were evidently the major obstacle to development and modernisation.

## Missionaries and Millenarians

If culture was the problem, Christianity and schooling might provide a solution. Firth notes that colonial governments in Melanesia were rudimentary, whereas Christian missions exercised wide powers. Many missions came earlier and provided more services than the State. During Japanese occupation in World War II, many missionaries stayed with their flocks when other foreigners fled. Indeed, 'the outside world was embodied not in government but in the mission station with its plantations, workshops, schools

and gardens, and with missionaries who came to stay, and learned the language of their congregations'.<sup>29</sup> Christianity became 'traditional' for many people. In Bougainville in 1939, anthropologist Douglas Oliver counted 65 missionaries shepherding 30,000 souls, or two out of every three villagers. By 1968, Australian officials counted 57,000 Catholics, with a priest for every 1,426 people:

The forty priests, 442 catechists, 96 sisters, 50 brothers, 58 seminarians, 39 catechist trainees, 17 lay missionaries, 386 certified teachers give the Catholic Mission in Bougainville contact in depth with the people, which the Administration cannot match.

The United Church also had 10,000 members and there were 3,000 Seventh-Day Adventists.<sup>30</sup> In most parts of the territory, there was a dominant mission - often Catholic, but Lutherans in much of the Highlands and Anglicans in the Northern District of Papua. The United Church prevailed in most of coastal Papua once the London Missionary Society (Congregational) and the Methodists joined forces. Missions offered almost all the schooling. In Bougainville in 1967, administration schools enrolled 2,105 pupils compared with the missions' 15,000. Until the University of Papua New Guinea and the Institute of Technology opened in 1967, missions monopolised higher education, and most of the indigenous leaders of the 1960s and 1970s were products of the seminaries.<sup>31</sup> In consequence, few people recognised

the overall role of the central government in creating such things as the framework of arrangements under which Bougainville exists, has relations with the rest of the Territory and the rest of the world, and enjoys the basic public services ...<sup>32</sup>

Christians and 'pagans' do not account for all faiths. Colonialism, Christianity and commerce required ideological as well as material adjustment. Many thinkers coopted European customs, and some revived their own. These innovations were branded 'cargo cults', a pejorative term for any movement that relied on ritual action, especially if it doubted the wisdom of the missions or the Administration. They were most often seen after the Pacific War, when the phrase 'cargo cult' was coined. In an influential book of 1957, Peter Worsley — barred from Papua New Guinea because of his radical politics — represented these movements as proto-nationalist responses to colonialism, forerunners of modern politics.<sup>33</sup> Other scholars argue that cults were not desperate reactions but creative enterprises. Lamont Lindstrom observes that Melanesians often seek economic advantage through ritual action and they presume that knowledge is the product of revelation. Social activists must be (and must be seen as) prophets.<sup>34</sup> What is clear is that their adherents desired not only Western goods, but harmony among themselves and in relation to Europeans.

It was a millenarian episode that revived Australian politicians' interest. In 1956, the Administration proposed Local Government Councils for Buka, the smaller island of Bougainville District. The officials then imposed a tax on adult men, whether or not

they joined the councils. In opposition, the Hahalis Welfare Society emerged in 1960, to advance the interests of Hahalis, Ie lelina and Hanahan villagers. Like the councils, the society promoted cash-cropping and formed a work collective, but its members shunned the councils and official cooperatives. Self-help and hard work lifted production, allowed capital formation and raised consumption; but the Administration and missions still disapproved. According to the Territory's Intelligence Committee, the society

degenerated into a cargo cult in which there was no longer any semblance of individual ownership; one result of this being sexual promiscuity, practised through the establishment of 'baby gardens'. Believing in their own self-sufficiency, they totally rejected the Mission and the Administration and refused to conform to any Local Government Council requirements, including the payment of tax.<sup>35</sup>

As in this case, 'cargo cult' became a shorthand term for irrationality, superstition — and opposition. How could members be brought back to the fold? Confrontation backfired. When the Catholics excommunicated some leaders, they founded their own congregation.<sup>36</sup> In 1962, when society leaders advised their followers not to pay the tax, the Administration flew in 400 police and more than 400 protesters were arrested.<sup>37</sup> But in the longer-term, opposition seemed to pay off. The Administration built roads, clinics and schools, which were used by society members and council adherents alike. And, although missionaries condemned the society's morals, they invested in projects that everyone enjoyed.<sup>38</sup> Over time, tempers cooled. By 1968, Hahalis members were cooperating with officialdom, and even with the council.<sup>39</sup>

On the larger island of Bougainville, millenarian ideas seemed endemic. In 1968, an investigator deduced that cultists hoped for

a period of no Government, with no police force or army, when people can live as they do now, with their same worldly goods, with no internal strife and in universal brotherhood. The majority of people ... are distrustful of the Administration, and prefer to have as little contact with it as possible ... The Marist Mission is in a similar position.<sup>40</sup>

In a similar vein, Eugene Ogan reported a Nasioi man's narrative in 1962–63, complaining to the United Nations Visiting Mission:

When my grandfather was alive and my father just a little boy, the Germans came. They gave us steel axes and lalaps. Then the Australians came and drove away the Germans. Then the Japanese came and drove away the Australians. Then the Americans came and drove away the Japanese so the Australians could come back. Now my grandfather is dead, my father is an old man, and I am a grown man. And what do we have? Nothing more than steel axes and lalaps.<sup>41</sup>

## Government

The physician Ian Maddocks saw the Territory as a series of largely self-sufficient villages, each with narrow horizons:

[The villager] did not read newspapers, the majority did not hear the radio. His sources of information were government officials who may have been infrequent visitors, rumours passed on by returning workers, or by those adventurers who travelled outside of the local boundaries.<sup>42</sup>

To villagers in such isolation, ‘Papua and New Guinea’ was a mere abstraction. The major centres of government were Port Moresby, the capital, Lae, at the mouth of the Markham River and the terminus of the Highlands Highway, and Rabaul, the commercial and government centre of New Guinea until a volcano and the war wrecked it. Each district had a township as its headquarters. Indigenous people seldom ventured into these Australian enclaves, which were almost as baffling and menacing as the territory of other language groups. The officials whom people met most often were *kiaps* — field officers of the Department of District Administration and Native Affairs, from District Commissioners (DCs) to cadet Patrol Officers. Sam Alasia, in the nearby Solomon Islands, sums up the general experience of Melanesians. A visit by the DC provoked a flurry of anxious activity:

The village was cleaned, pigs were fenced, cultural items were prepared for performances, elders, teachers and church leaders were invited. The DC was ‘the government’ ... Most Islanders perceived the government as represented by an individual ... because it resembled the traditional system.<sup>43</sup>

On the other side of the border, in Bougainville, Douglas Oliver reported that:

[Some *kiaps*] may be liked personally and others are undoubtedly hated, but as representations of an all-powerful ‘Force’ ... they are all more or less feared. In some cases this fear is exacerbated by dislike, distrust or contempt, in others it is tempered by genuine respect and even liking. But even in cases of the latter, natives ... know by experience that postings are brief and that the next *Kiap* will probably be a wholly different kind of individual.<sup>44</sup>

*Kiaps* exercised control mainly by foot patrols. Their village visits were brief and they had to rely on *Tok Pisin* to communicate so they had limited insight into village affairs. A *kiap* relied on what he could see (pit latrines, swept courtyards, fenced-off pigs, tidy houses, records in the Village Book) and whatever village officials told him. Village officials (*luluais* in New Guinea, Village Constables in Papua) were government appointees who might — or might not — be Big Men with authority of their own. Only in the 1950s did local councils begin to replace this personal link between the State and society. In 1963,

Local and District Courts were created, gradually displacing the *kiap* courts. These innovations, designed to introduce an impartial justice system, stripped the *kiaps* of many of their sanctions and rewards.<sup>45</sup> Until then, however, the *kiaps* relied on the personal authority of 'native leaders' as 'traditional' Big Men or 'modern' office-bearers. The Local Government Councils were intended to build democratic processes. In practice, councils often served to entrench and enlarge the powers and authority of individual Big Men.<sup>46</sup>

Invisible to villagers, the Territorial Government was housed in offices in the suburb of Konedobu in Port Moresby. After the Pacific War, the Australian Government appointed Colonel J. K. Murray as Administrator, then left him and his embryonic regime to get on with it. Little was achieved in the next six years, and, in 1951, Territories Minister Hasluck replaced Murray with Donald Cleland, a political colleague from Western Australia, and incited heads of territory departments to propose and implement projects. This approach unleashed a great deal of energy. As Director of Public Health, Dr John Gunther doubled the number of government hospitals in a dozen years and funded the missions to do the same. Dr Bill Groves wrought a similar miracle in schools, yet failed to satisfy Hasluck. All development was to be achieved from the top down. Cash-crop cultivation must be supervised by *didimen* or organised through cooperative societies guided by Australian officials.<sup>47</sup> Political participation should be channelled through Local Government Councils, which must accept expert guidance. These scenarios allowed little initiative by the *kiaps*, and almost none by Papua New Guineans, who (as in Buka) were coopted into official structures or discouraged from expressing their views.

Equally invisible to village people was a Legislative Council, inaugurated in 1951. Sixteen of its 28 members were officials, bound to support the Administrator's proposals. Three others were appointed to represent the missions, another three to represent planters, three more for commerce, and three — Merari Dickson from Milne Bay, Aisoli Salin from the New Guinea Islands, and Pita Simogun from the New Guinea mainland — represented indigenous interests. Indigenous membership grew to seven in 1961. The official members were now a minority, but the council was more decorative than effective. The Administrator could ignore its advice and so could the Minister. Occasionally, the Administration consulted council members, but these opinions were hardly independent. Concerning the Hahalis affair, a Native Member apologised that he must again

ask the Administration to forgive our New Guinean indigenes for the misunderstanding and selfishness they have, and to do what it considers to help us until the day comes when our people will appreciate all the things very much.

He complained that *kiaps* were too lenient, issuing cautions rather than stamping out bad behaviour. A colleague, who had travelled to Buka on behalf of the Administration, observed: 'It will be better for the Government to step in immediately to stop this sort of native cult business so it will not spread.' A third grumbled that young people who had more education than their elders 'want to spoil the whole place'.<sup>48</sup> Before sending in the police, the Administration sent two councillors to persuade Hahalis members to pay tax,

but they failed. The deference of Native Members gave rise to strange alignments. Australian members saw that they had nothing to fear from more Papua New Guinean members, whose presence would inhibit the Minister from exercising his controlling powers.<sup>49</sup> No one thought that they would develop agendas of their own.

People like Tessie Lavau had no role in these bodies: the institutions and traditions of paternal, rural governance could not accommodate them. The Government did oppose racism, at least formally, and in the 1950s legal drafting began cleansing the laws of odious terms. But politically correct language did not abolish the disabilities that people endured on account of their native condition. If the countryside was ruled by *kiaps* and Big Men, the towns were enclaves of Australian suburbia, where villagers were unwelcome. Indigenous people could expect paternalism at best — service at the side door of shops and trade stores, drinks served in plastic rather than glasses — and overt racism on occasion.

Ugly incidents were increasingly frequent as the dichotomy between colonial towns and native countryside eroded: even ‘native leaders’ objected to discrimination in cinemas, sports clubs and shops, and the treatment of young educated people was often much worse. When Julius Chan returned from school in Queensland, joined the Public Service and applied to join the public servants’ Aviat Club in Port Moresby, he was blackballed in a move that was widely seen as racism.<sup>50</sup> To avoid such disgraceful incidents, Hasluck wondered if businessmen might be required to endorse ‘the Government’s policy against racial discrimination’.<sup>51</sup> This was not an acute insight: policy did discriminate, and Australian residents did little more than reflect and articulate that fact.

Tessie Lavau and Julius Chan crossed the boundary between Natives and Citizens, but boundaries of many kinds continued to define the life chances of whole categories of people. Australians moved freely into the Territory, unless (like Peter Worsley and Jeremy Beckett) they were seen as radical and were deemed to be security risks. Although Papuans were Australian citizens in law, and New Guineans were Australian protected persons, neither had a right to enter Australia, as they were not ‘constituent members of the Australian community’.<sup>52</sup> The way forward from statelessness was to transform the Territory into a State, within or beyond the Australian federation. That event would alter the identity of Australia as well as Papua New Guinea.

#### Footnotes

1. Keith Willey, *Assignment New Guinea*, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane, 1965, pp. 1–15.
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4. Eg., Rachel Cleland, *Grass roots to independence and beyond: the contribution by women in Papua New Guinea 1951-1991*, Claremont, W. A., 1996.

5. A518, B818/1/3. Discussion initiated by Minister's cable to Administrator, Rabaul, August 18, 1927. Headmaster Schilling to Collector of Customs, Sydney, March 7, 1929. *Rabaul Times*, January 25, 1929.
6. A518, B818/1/3, Administrator to Minister, July 31, 1948, and reply, September 24, 1948.
7. A452/1, file 60/8329, Administrator to Department, September 8, 1958.
8. Ibid., Minister A. R. Downer to W. C. Wentworth MP, October 27, 1959.
9. Greg Dening, *Islands and Beaches: Discourses on a Silent Land, Marquesas, 1774-1880*, University of Hawai'i Press, 1980.
10. Stewart Firth, 'Colonial Administration and the Invention of the Native', in Donald Denoon, Stewart Firth, Jocelyn Linnekin, Karen Nero and Malama Meleisea (eds), *The Cambridge History of The Pacific Islanders*, Melbourne, 1997.
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12. Paula Brown, 'Gender and Social Change: New Forms of Independence for Simbu Women', *Oceania*, XIX (1988), p. 128.
13. PNG Archives, DIES file ES/59/103, desultory correspondence during 1963.
14. Maxine Dennis, 'Plantations', in D. Denoon and C. Snowden, *A Time to Plant and a Time to Uproot: A History of Agriculture in Papua New Guinea*, Port Moresby, 1979. Ken Buckley and Kris Klugman, *The History of Burns Philp: the Australian company in the South Pacific*, Burns Philp, Sydney, 1981.
15. G. T. Harris, 'Papuan Village Agriculture', in *A Time to Plant and a Time to Uproot*.
16. Maxine Dennis, 'Plantations' in Ibid.
17. M. J. Donaldson and Ken Good, *Articulated agricultural development: traditional and capitalist agriculture in Papua New Guinea*, Sydney, 1988.
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