

Chapter 5

New Directions

Managing Social Change

After 14 years as Administrator, Sir Donald Cleland retired in 1967 and used his final speech to take stock. Ted Wolfers glossed his address:

Strong Australian control, the stress on the long distance still remaining before self-determination, the assumption that inter-racial cooperation was still a viable proposition, were the principal points of Cleland's speech, as they had been the hallmarks of Hasluck's career and policy.¹

There was no sign of faster change. Cleland even suggested that constitutional matters would be better handled by lawyers than by political processes. When Hay took over, he accepted the glacial pace but wanted to consult 'Papua New Guinean institutions'. To improve relations with the Administrator's Council, he slowed its procedures so that members could grasp what they were doing. He believed that they were grateful, but that did not transform them into an engine of policy-formation, or even a reliable sounding board.

Hay consulted a public relations expert who advised him to extend the broadcasting service and to form a conservative party 'to counter some of the radical elements'. That idea lapsed but, consistent with his focus on public relations, Hay prepared three introductory speeches: one to the public (in Tok Pisin), another to the Administrator's Council, and a third to his heads of departments. Once settled in Konedobu, he tried to appoint Terry White as his liaison officer, a move that introduced him to a persistent frustration: the Public Service Commission could not move quickly, when it moved at all. (It took Hay a year to appoint a press secretary.) Eventually, Terry White managed Hay's liaison with 'opinion-formers ... student groups, Members of the House of Assembly, the business world — but mostly the Papua New Guinea elements'.²

Was this the democratic way to test opinion? When mining company CRA needed to assess opposition among Bougainvilleans, their managing director, Frank Espie, went to Harvard to engage the anthropologist Douglas Oliver. Oliver had done research in

Bougainville and agreed to revisit the island and to mobilise young scholars to work there independently.³ Espie respected Oliver's advice, but when the Territories Department saw his report, its response was merely defensive:⁴

formal liaison and exchange of information [between Canberra, Konedobu and CRA] could have altered some of the recommendations regarding the collection of information (surely the responsibility of government rather than the company).

[This report] fails to achieve its purpose. The psychological material is probably correct but the recommendations appear to support further psychological study and information collection rather than to provide the answers sought by the company or to utilise existing avenues of information.

This was preposterous. To find out what villagers were thinking, CRA sought the best advice that money could buy. Hay was keen to debrief experts who visited the territory:⁵ otherwise officials relied on 'existing avenues of information' — a polite term for untrained *kiaps*. No one treated elected politicians as representatives of their constituents.

But the reference to psychology is odd. It was not Oliver but the department's own experts who claimed the insights of social psychology. In 1966, the Minister was impressed by a report on 'Communication of Government Policy to the People of Papua and New Guinea', which proposed an advisory committee to advise him on:

- i the social changes likely to result from new Government policies,
- ii the nature and intensity of the resistance likely to be shown ...
- iii methods of minimizing such resistance.

The paper was commended to senior officers, and Barnes established a Social Change Advisory Committee to advise him on social change, official policy and 'problems of communication between "government" and the native people'.⁶ The committee's core members were Brigadier Edward Campbell, former Director of Psychology for the Army and author of the paper that impressed the Minister, and Dr Alex Sinclair, a psychiatrist who had surveyed the mental health of Papua New Guineans.

The committee presented a low profile. Meetings were rare, but members were consulted individually and the agenda was wide: in 1967, Bougainville prospecting, public servants' wages and land in the Gazelle. In 1968, they addressed national unity, localisation, the defence force and Bougainville; and, in 1969, land legislation, Bougainville (again), unity (yet again), trade unions, family planning and manpower planning.⁷ Given the backgrounds of the members and the recent emergence of colonial social psychology,⁸ their analyses were predictable. Western behaviour was the goal, indigenous values the obstacle and paternal administration the solution. They cited no empirical evidence to flesh out this formula. Addressing the vexed issue of land, for instance, they ignored all reports of actual land use⁹ and accepted without question that the proper goal was the 'ultimate achievement of individual tenure, replacing the traditional

communal tenure'. The committee asked itself 'how best to take into account the cultural change for and the views of indigenes in assessing what system of tenure is most suitable, and educate indigenes to accept change'.¹⁰

Describing the general dilemma of governance, they repeated their earlier advice:

Any administrative authority attempting to implement a process of cultural change in an immature preliterate social group is in the unenviable position of a parent attempting to guide a family of not very co-operative adolescents towards adulthood.

This parent could exercise authority 'at three levels of maturity': first, authoritarian, then paternal, and eventually, 'he may set definite limits to areas of behaviour, and within these limits, allow the adolescent complete freedom'.

This is the precise situation in which the Administration finds itself in Bougainville... deciding to what degree it can relax its paternalistic control and encourage permissive risk taking. If it remains paternalistic it will be resented. If it is permissive, its new attitude may be perceived as weakness.

The only solution ... appears to be the application of a masked and subtle form of directiveness which will give the native people greater control and responsibility.

Reviewing the difficulty of communicating with 'native peoples' in general, and especially with Bougainvilleans, the committee declared that Bougainville was 'ready-made for the application of a psychological operation aimed at manipulating public attitudes in the Administration's favour'. Part of that plan was

a full scale propaganda campaign having

- 1 the OVERT aim of advancing the people's political education and so enabling them to make a more reasoned decision on their future.
- 2 The COVERT aims of exploiting the lines of fission [described in the report] and providing factual information which the supporters of the Administration can use in argument.¹¹

The committee's bark was more alarming than its bite. The members never consulted the people; they ignored other disciplines; they avoided the ANU's New Guinea Research Unit; and only in 1969 did they meet scholars with real expertise — the political scientist Charles Rowley and the anthropologist Ralph Bulmer. Eventually, Hay asked the obvious question:

I have some doubts as to whether the Committee ought to be continued at all: ... over a large part of Government activity communication with the people is now a responsibility of Ministerial Members to be carried out by their Departments.¹²

For the same reasons, he questioned the rationale of the Public Relations Advisory Committee that he had created as administrator. When Tim Besley in Canberra proposed to extend the role of the SCAC, he found only one instance of cross-cultural communication. At its most recent meeting, the committee had at last included a Papua New Guinean, to discuss censorship. For Besley, this was useful in giving firsthand information, feeling and attitudes to the committee, and impressing the public servant with the Australians' concern for 'the social and cultural issues involved in carrying out our responsibilities'.¹³

SCAC's advice implied — what Barnes, his department and the Administration also expected — that relations between the governors and the governed would change very little. Government would evolve as an Australian Territorial Administration while Papua New Guineans were initiated into Australian governance. But developments in the territory were undermining this scenario.

New Australians and New Papua New Guineans

As funds flowed from Canberra, governance was less influenced by the frontier and 'modern' agencies emerged. *Kiaps* were still recruited but their instruction changed. When Philip Fitzpatrick was training at the Australian School of Pacific Administration in Sydney, his lecturers told cadets that they were 'social misfits':

who else would enjoy sitting out on a lonely patrol post in a swamp by themselves ...
but they convinced me the discomfort would be worth the spectacle of watching the
dying days of a colonial empire.¹⁴

Australian programs and procedures crossed Torres Strait and brought a leaven of Australians and others, shattering the formula that all white people were missionaries, *kiaps* or planters. Many were graduates, whereas *kiaps* were commonly recruited from school. Many were from Melbourne or South Australia; hitherto rural Queensland and New South Wales had been the main sources. Many old-timers saw themselves as bearers of order and civilisation to backward natives, but urban graduates saw themselves as critics, reformers or opponents of colonialism. This was an aspect of a broader change in Australia. During the 1960s, Australians were conscripted to fight in Vietnam, provoking a vigorous anti-war movement. The mistreatment of Aboriginal people on the land and in country towns was brought vividly to the attention of a wider public. Apartheid became an Australian issue when racially selected rugby teams represented South Africa. The Labor Party opposition was still wedded to White Australia and to the long-term occupation of Papua New Guinea, but there were enough liberal responses in and around government to justify the title of Donald Horne's overview, *Time of Hope*.¹⁵ To many, Australian rule in the territory was indefensible. Decolonisation was the only honourable way to remove a blot on Australia's democratic reputation and an unfair impost on Melanesians.

Liberal ideas were slow to travel north. Jim Byth, an astute observer at Melbourne University Press and then in Port Moresby, insists that 'if you wanted to meet The Ugly

Australian in full howl for the whole 1950–75 period, in was in PNG that you were most likely to find him. And, let's be clear about it, her!¹⁶ But the new men were not bound by 'the white man's burden': they opposed the Vietnam War and hoped for better lives for Aboriginal people. There were new women too, who did not feel bound by the White Women's Protection Ordinance. Women and men alike could imagine, and work towards, self-government. John Langmore, for example, grew up in a Melbourne protestant family with links to the Kwato Mission in Milne Bay, so Papuan students visited his home in school holidays. He graduated in economics and social work — development economics being a modern form of mission. Coming to Port Moresby in 1963, he found kindred spirits when he joined Boroko United Church and the multiracial Contact Club.¹⁷

Langmore worked in the new Labour Department which was extending industrial relations beyond the straitjacket of indenture, and raising 'modern' issues such as Occupational Health and Safety. Alan McCasker, as Economic Adviser, relayed the ideas of the Australian economic strategist John Crawford.¹⁸ Thinking outside old paradigms involved analyses of urban and rural minimum wages. These inquiries drew in the new Council for Social Service and activists such as Rachel Cleland, who had retired locally with her husband.¹⁹ This network encouraged the efforts of freethinkers such as David Fenbury, *kia*p and 'renegade philosopher-bureaucrat'. Voutas and Holloway would raise awkward issues in the House. Their impact on policy was minimal, but non-conformists were clustering and supporting each other.

A critical forum was the ANU's New Guinea Research Unit in Waigani. As economists, anthropologists and geographers from the Research School of Pacific Studies began sustained field research, the Unit accommodated them and hosted debates with authorities. Directors Ron Crocombe and Ron May ran seminars and circulated papers that attracted everyone (except the Social Change Advisory Committee) with an interest in public policy.

Industrial relations also came under scrutiny. By the 1960s, Australia's industrial relations regime was probably the most complex in the world. Wages were negotiated in a three-cornered manner, in which the State was a third party between employers and unions. Each party was highly organised, and they negotiated in a regime of compulsory arbitration and conciliation in specialist courts. This sophisticated regime required workers to form unions to engage with employers in a quasi-judicial forum. If workers did not form unions, the system could not operate. But unions in Papua New Guinea were usually local, informal, ad hoc bodies that formed for the duration of a wage crisis. Rather than adapt to this reality, the State propped up the unions, ignoring their procedural irregularities and enabling them to present a façade in the tribunals. The new system was conducted in the name of Papua New Guinean workers but was managed by Australian experts.²⁰

The transfusion of new men and women certainly animated the judicial system.²¹ Until the 1960s, the legal establishment was four judges and a registrar, six magistrates, 15 lawyers in the Law Department, six in the Public Solicitor's Office and eight small private firms. Judicial institutions were shaken up when David Derham reviewed them. His report and Hasluck's selective response affirmed Australian principles and proce-

dures, including independent magistrates and judges. Hasluck endorsed many of Derham's ideas: *kiaps* began to pass their judicial work to magistrates, and the constabulary began to look like a police force. But Derham also proposed a system of Village Courts, partly independent of Australian judicial principles. Hasluck's liberal principles would not tolerate a two-tiered court system, so courts became increasingly Australian in their personnel, principles and procedures.²²

The influence of Melbourne was diffuse and stimulating. The Supreme Court was led by Chief Justice Sir Alan Mann, a Victorian appointed (he said) to create 'an independent system of courts of a much higher level of proficiency'. Smithers, Minogue QC and Frost QC followed from Melbourne. Ollerenshaw was the lone non-Victorian. John Greenwell, a barrister who was interested in the Territory through his friendship with the judges, applied to be Assistant Secretary (Legal) in the department, and took over in August 1970.²³

More usual was the lure of the territory itself. Thomas Barnett was close to quitting law after purgatory in articles when his mentor, Derham, encouraged him to apply for a post as Judge's Associate. Arriving in 1961, he was kidnapped at the airport by the new Public Solicitor, Peter Lalor, as the office's first Defence Counsel. Lalor had studied law after a serious accident derailed his career as a *kiap*. As hard as his Eureka Stockade namesake, he inspired subordinates, made enemies — and defined the Public Solicitor's role as defending the people from the Government. Under his influence, Barnett assumed the mantle of crusader, and defeated so many prosecutions that he became 'Tossim Out Barnett'. He did notice that defendants might regret their acquittal if they were then killed in retaliation (or 'payback', as people called it). Some defendants happily admitted guilt for this reason: the corpse of one who took a contrary view was thrown onto the court verandah.²⁴

The Public Solicitor's Office offered sophisticated remedies to the least sophisticated. A case often rested on irregularity: the *kiap* or policeman was unfair; the interpreter erred; the witness was bribed or was trying to please officials; the prosecution was over-zealous. The office represented everyone charged before the Supreme Court, often ingeniously. The office acted for land claimants against the Administration. In the Era Taora (Newtown, Port Moresby) land case, they argued that the Crown lacked the capacity, during the British Protectorate, to buy land at all (the claimants ultimately lost in the High Court of Australia). Even more radical was an attempt to invalidate the entire mining regime for inconsistency with the Australian Constitution.²⁵

These are the memories of Geoffrey Dabb, who arrived in 1962, aged 23, from a Melbourne criminal law practice. A conversation with his mentor, Derham, propelled him to the Territory and his trial expertise took him on court circuits. Like Barnett for the defence, his prosecutions made him query his role. When he prosecuted two women in Enga who had strangled a younger wife, they insisted, 'We didn't use an axe. We only used a rope.' They had heard Justice Smithers insisting that 'This killing of people with axes is very wrong'.²⁶

Another lawyer from that stable was John Ley: Wesley College, Melbourne Law School, bored as a solicitor.²⁷ A major influence was John Guise speaking on the ABC

radio program *Guest of Honour*, explaining that Papua New Guinea was on the road to self-government and needed Australians of good will. (Langmore was moved by the same talk.) After six months in Crown Law, Ley moved to the Public Solicitor's Office. His colleagues were liberal, close-knit and at odds with their elders: they all resigned from the Aviat Club, for example, when Julius Chan was blackballed (Chapter 1).

By 1966, Ley was Deputy Public Solicitor in Rabaul, with Mataungan clients. In 1970, he studied African law in London and toured Africa, meeting Peter Bayne (also from Melbourne) in Dar es Salaam. By the time he returned to Papua New Guinea, there was a university with a Law Faculty headed by A. B. Weston and including Bayne, Abdul Paliwala from Tanzania and the Nigerian Ikenna Nwokolo. Bayne had studied in London and America before going to the University of Dar es Salaam. He followed Weston to Papua New Guinea, partly from interest in law and development, but also because he expected his Tanzanian wife to be happier in Port Moresby than in Australia.²⁸

Most Supreme Court work was criminal trials, mainly when a judge, his associate, a prosecutor and a defence lawyer travelled on circuit. These were all-Australian parties until 1968 when Joseph Aoa became a prosecutor. In 1970, he was joined by Buri Kidu and Bernard Narokobi.²⁹ Violent crime was the main business, and the Highlands generated a great number — Dabb conducted six trials for murder in one day at Wabag.

The Public Solicitor wanted the autonomy that Australian courts took for granted. Mann also demanded an independent judiciary. He meant that judges should come from outside the Territory, that most government officers should be barred from exercising power in the lower courts, that the court was equal with the Administration in status, and that they should control their own resources. These aspirations irritated the *kiaps* and, in 1964, Mann came across a summary of criticisms made by DCs, who alleged that in some areas 'even the Supreme Court' was 'regarded with contempt'.

Defence Counsel and officers of the Public Solicitor's office should have made clear to them that their duty is to ensure justice, and not to attempt to enhance their reputations and defeat justice by employing legal chicanery.

Mann was so incensed that he complained, successfully, to Barnes. The judges also sought international support, joining the International Commission of Jurists as a Territory branch.

A byproduct of the new diversity of views was a vogue for the African precedents that Hasluck had discouraged. Fenbury was rare in having been allowed to study British colonial practice.³⁰ In African analogies he was helped by Nigel Oram, town-planner from Uganda, now in the New Guinea Research Unit at the ANU. After 1967, several lawyers travelled to London to study African law, but there they learned that native courts were unlikely to survive, since they involved a differentiation between the administration of justice to Africans and that to non-Africans'.³¹ The popularity of African precedents was intense but brief.

The Territory also attracted economists. ANU economists enjoyed personal links with government, often through Crawford and Professor Swan. Gerry Gutman, in the

Territories Department, attended seminars, and undergraduates could attend research seminars and meet policy-makers. Many graduate students had international interests. Ross Garnaut won a scholarship to the ANU in 1963 and continued to a PhD on South-East Asia, but first he detoured into the New Guinea Research Unit on vacation, working alongside the promising Papua New Guinean student Rabbie Namaliu (who went on to be a vacation scholar at the ANU).³²

These networks were reinforced when the University of Papua New Guinea opened in Waigani. Vice-Chancellor Gunther fought cannily with the Territories Department for funding, and for the right to ignore the White Australia immigration policy in staffing (the New Guinea Research Unit had been the only exempt agency).³³ At the university's annual Waigani Seminars, international scholars inspired staff and students. The Law Faculty offered courses in constitutional law; Ulli Beier organised the publication and performance of students' poetry, novels and theatre; students and politicians organised campaigns; and political topics were ventilated in *New Guinea* magazine and in the *Australian Journal of Politics and History*.³⁴

Gunther himself maintained an open house. Arriving from Nigeria, Ulli and Georgina Beier were startled to meet Kauage — a labourer, not yet an artist — when he dropped in for a beer on his way home from work. The first professors — Ken Inglis, the historian, Bulmer and Rowley — were scholars of vision who attracted keen lecturers who devised imaginative programs. To make up the first intake, the university combed the Public Service, seminaries, schools in Australia and Territory high schools. The future novelist Vincent Eri was a public servant; Hannet had been expelled from his long-suffering seminary; John Waiko flew in from Popondetta with an axe and a spare shirt; Namaliu arrived from Rabaul; and John Kasapwalova brought with him the radical politics of Queensland University. As the first graduates, they could expect glittering careers: meanwhile, they animated a lively campus.

Beier was allowed to devise an entirely new approach to the teaching of literature:

it is best to start by analysing a text from their own tradition. Students come out of mission schools with the notion that poetry is an English invention. 'Civilised' countries produce 'literature' while 'primitive' peoples produce 'folklore'.

Since English was no longer the preserve of the English people, a course in New English Writing from Africa revealed

how African writers treated the language with a healthy disrespect, broke its back and welded it into a useful tool for themselves. Courses on new writing from Africa and India ... corresponded to issues which preoccupied our students: colonialism, conflict between generations, the search for traditional values, problems of identity, the struggle for independence and post-independence disillusion ...

This was a moment in Papua New Guinea's history when a man had to be highly articulate and capable of formulating ideas.

By evoking a confident voice, Creative Writing enabled many students to do just that. At school, Waiko began to doubt the folk-knowledge he had learned as a child, when he assumed that the purpose of education was to learn European lore. That judgment was shaken by Hank Nelson and Inglis in courses on Papua New Guinea history; then he rebuilt his confidence in the wisdom of his Binandere people through Creative Writing and by staging a play.

To understand the response to this voice, we must recall the silence that preceded it. Most Australians met Melanesians as servants, policemen or villagers. They were an inert problem to be doctored, analysed, instructed, converted, disciplined or civilised. Missionaries and *kiaps* spoke for them. That they had a voice at all was a revelation. By the end of 1968, there was a series of *Papuan Pocket Poets*. *Kovave* published stories, poems and plays. These serials, with Albert Maori Kiki's autobiography, *Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime*, Eri's novel *Crocodile*, and Ulli's work with Kiki — *Hohao* — suddenly comprised a serious body of literature.

The books addressed English-speakers but the plays reached wider audiences. Hannel's *The Ungrateful Daughter* makes an anti-colonial parable of the tale of a Melanesian girl adopted by Australians and promised in marriage to a prospector. Waiko's *Unexpected Hawk* uses Binandere images to convey the turmoil of colonialism; Kasaipwalova's *Reluctant Flame* uses the rhetoric of negritude to dissect Port Moresby. Plays were staged in an amphitheatre where gardeners and cleaners mingled with academics and students; families came, children joining in the hum of conversation; and the plays exploited slapstick satire and solemn dance-drama. Beier is not surprised that the first book by a Papua New Guinean was written by Kiki, the secretary of Pangu, 'because the birth of Literature was part of political awakening'. The new literature and the Tok Pisin plays linked young politicians with Highlander and other workers in Port Moresby. The writers enjoyed wider influence when Al Butovicus's Prompt Theatre took three of their plays to Canberra in 1970. In a vain attempt to negate their message, Barnes sent officers to explain that real Papua New Guineans were grateful to a paternal administration.

This intervention helped to promote — and to feed — a quickening Australian interest in the Territory. The media needed a crisis to focus its attention, preferably one that revealed the Government as incompetent. That requirement was met in 1969 when Bougainville landowners resisted the developers of Panguna mine (Chapter 4). The Australian media could not sustain their intense interest for long, but the silence had been broken, and for the next few years — until independence, in fact — Australian reporters lived in Port Moresby in order to report events for Australian newspapers. Similarly, the young writers dispersed into politics, government or business; yet a generation with something urgent to say was able to say it trenchantly. In doing so, they savaged Keith Willey's stereotypes (Chapter 1) of a land without history, populated by primitives.

Whitlam Intervenes: Gorton Responds

Yeast was working, but the dough had to be stirred. The chef de cuisine was Edward Gough Whitlam, patrician, lawyer and self-conscious man of destiny. In his ascent to the

leadership of the Labor Party, he challenged policies dear to the party: White Australia, Hasluck's paternalism and Australia's colonial heritage. He knew the Highland pioneer Mick Leahy and, in a long parliamentary career — beginning in 1953 — he visited the Territory more often than any other backbencher. From 1960, as Deputy Leader, he opposed his leader on Territory issues. As he saw it, 'Calwell condoned Hasluck's leisurely programs because he believed the Territories were a *cordon sanitaire* for White Australia.' It was a struggle to convert the party. Frontbenchers Kim Beazley and Gordon Bryant were closer to Calwell — and to Hasluck and Barnes — than to Whitlam. Only in 1971 did the Party Conference declare that Labor would 'ensure the orderly and secure transfer to PNG of self-government and independence in its first term of office'.³⁵ Whitlam exercised more influence on the affairs of the Territory while in opposition than he did later as Prime Minister. In Goroka in 1965, he predicted that Australia might have only five more years in charge. The next year, he proposed that the Papua New Guinea Act be amended to become 'the constitution of an independent republic'.³⁶ In 1967, as party leader, he began talks on decolonisation with Bill Morrison, diplomat and (from 1969) Member of Parliament.³⁷ After the 1969 election that brought Labor in sight of victory, they toured Papua New Guinea 'to propagate and develop the ALP's policy'. In Whitlam's opinion, this intervention not only changed government policy, but helped to unseat Prime Minister Gorton.³⁸ In Rabaul, they were welcomed by Catholic and Methodist choirs 'and cheered by a congregation of 11,000, the largest in the Territory's history'. In Port Moresby, Whitlam insisted that independence was an Australian decision:

it is either misleading or meaningless to assert that the decision for independence is one for the people of New Guinea alone. The form of independence is certainly for them to decide for themselves. The fact of independence has already been decided.³⁹

If Labor won office, Papua New Guinea would gain early 'home rule', controlling everything except foreign affairs and defence.

Whitlam relishes the contrast between his visit and Gorton's a few months later:

John Gorton, who had never visited Papua New Guinea ... and David Hay ... were greeted in Rabaul by an audience of 10,000 who were as hostile as our 11,000 had been enthusiastic. [So hostile that Ellis] gave Gorton a handgun. In a panic, on Sunday 19 July, Gorton called a cabinet meeting which, without a written submission, agreed on the precautionary step of an Order in Council calling out the Pacific Islands Regiment. Tension between Gorton and Malcolm Fraser, the Minister for Defence, over this proposal was a factor in the resignation of Fraser on 8th March 1971 and the replacement of Gorton by McMahon [as Prime Minister] two days later.

A feature of Whitlam's policy was its focus on Australian rather than territory interests. When he denounced Barnes for carrying 'gradualism to the point of imperceptibility', he insisted that Papua New Guinea's destiny was an Australian issue:

The Minister will protest ... that the inhabitants of the Territory should decide for themselves, that they fear independence. The Minister's exploitation of a reluctance which he himself and his immediate predecessors have fostered sedulously is a tactic which reflects little credit upon him ... It is devious and dishonest to try to hold New Guineans responsible for developmental shortcomings which in fact are our own.⁴⁰

He never sought Papua New Guinean support for this position, nor did he pretend to have it. After his Goroka speech, Guise told him that he agreed — but only in private.

Where Whitlam led, Gorton followed. The trigger for the U-turn was Whitlam's visit, Gorton's visit, and the conclusions Gorton drew from them, including the fact that Whitlam's policy played well in the newly attentive Australian media.⁴¹ Gorton's interest in the place had been slight until the Bougainville crisis. Taken together, however, the Bougainville and Gazelle protests implied that peace was most fragile precisely where economic development was most advanced. Australian subsidies accounted for more than half of the Territory's budget, so economic development was essential for any degree of self-sufficiency, let alone self-government. Yet economic development was evidently going to antagonise the people most affected by it, destabilising the polity as a whole.

A new policy was required, and Gorton did not hesitate. Changes were announced in July 1970 and extended in 1971. These implemented most of what Whitlam had proposed, so that bipartisanship was restored — on Whitlam's terms. When Barnes's successor, Andrew Peacock, announced in October 1972 that self-government would be in place by December 1, 1973, Whitlam gave his full support:

I would like to express also what I believe is a general view that the Minister has done our country a service in the comradeship and co-operation which he has achieved with the Government of Papua New Guinea.

The Gorton Reforms

It was not easy to teach Barnes to perform an about-face. Christine Goode heard that Gorton met Barnes after another embarrassing duel with Whitlam and told him, 'It's not good enough — doesn't go far enough.'⁴² Expecting rebellion in his own Liberal Party, Gorton's only reliable supporters were in the Country Party, including Barnes. That explains the retention of a minister whose policies had to be reversed.⁴³

Hay knew that he and Gorton would agree, but he could not address him without being disloyal to his own minister. Late in 1969, when the House of Assembly created another Select Committee, Hay flew to Canberra to beg the department to concede more authority to ministerial members. Not only did Barnes and Warwick Smith reject that approach, they would not refer it to Gorton.⁴⁴ Happily, there were back channels. Hay and Gorton were old boys of Geelong Grammar, whose headmaster contrived that Gorton invite Hay to dinner. Hay grabbed his chance to advise Gorton that Papua New Guineans must be given real responsibility. That was exactly what Gorton wanted to

hear, and he used Hay's ideas to draft a letter to Barnes.⁴⁵ By the time the Select Committee arrived, Gorton was ready to urge it to move faster towards fuller autonomy. He was also ready to instruct the department to draw a map of how to get there.

Goode was one of the public servants who would steer new policies through the department. Arriving in 1968, she identified the dominant figures under Warwick Smith as Gerry Gutman in the Economic Division and John Ballard in Political Development. In Special Projects, she helped the other mover and shaker, Besley, to draft the Governor-General's speech to the House of Assembly (only one of her sentences survived). By the end of 1969, she was Personal Assistant to Warwick Smith, preparing Cabinet submissions on devolution.⁴⁶

In Port Moresby in July 1970, Gorton announced what he believed were major changes. Like Whitlam, he did not claim Papua New Guinean support but hoped that the Select Committee would 'want to be associated' with his ideas.⁴⁷ He proposed that 'less should be referred to Canberra for decision and more should be retained for decision by the Administrator's Executive Council and by the Ministerial members'. The instruments for this shift included the selection of a spokesman for the AEC in the House, where he could be questioned. Gorton promised not to veto ordinances on subjects for which ministerial members were responsible. He also announced a transfer of executive powers through a device in the Papua New Guinea Act that allowed the Minister for Territories to define the functions of ministerial members.

The powers to be transferred were substantial: education — primary, secondary, technical but not tertiary — public health, tourism, cooperatives, business advisory services, workers' compensation, industrial training, posts and telegraphs, territory revenue including taxation ... price control, coastal shipping, civil defence, corrective institutions, registration of customary land, town planning and urban development.⁴⁸

Gorton was leading the ministerial members to water, but would they drink?

He also replaced key personnel. Warwick Smith was replaced by Hay, whose post was filled by Leslie Johnson. Johnson had quit, but Gorton enticed him back by promising to end Warwick Smith's reign. As part of the same general post, Greenwell replaced Ballard as Assistant Secretary in the Legal Branch. Barnes found it hard to expound the new line, but he was loyal to Gorton and survived with his leader.⁴⁹

The value of these reforms was less than Gorton hoped. First, the Administration continued to absorb Australian specialists, Australian practices and Australian values. Bringing Papua New Guineans into quasi-policy-making roles would not reverse that trend. Second, these reforms depended on energetic ministers, cooperative departments and an independent Administrator's Council. But if these had existed, the Territory would have already been autonomous. The Secretary to the AEC noticed that Australian public servants remained in charge of their departments, legally and practically.⁵⁰ Alan Kerr agreed. Public servants were baffled by the extra-legal powers attributed to ministerial members, several of whom spoke no English and some of whom were illiterate.⁵¹ ToLimán was rare in being literate, fluent in English, industrious in his portfolio and

supported by a helpful Director of Education. But he was quite unable to fulfil his competing obligations to his constituents, to his colleagues and to parents who wanted a school for their children.⁵² In other cases, there was a poor fit between portfolio and department so that ministerial members were involved in a fraction of a department's activities. Browbeaten in the House, remote from their electors, surrounded by experts in arcane procedures, they were deeply insecure.⁵³

The Gorton reforms made equally little impact on the AEC. The Council comprised the Administrator, two assistants, the Director of District Affairs, seven ministerial members and — Hay's nominee as AEC spokesman, which dismayed the department — the planter Tom Leahy.⁵⁴ At the end of his term, Hay wrote this tepid report card on the reformed AEC:

the important decisions affecting the Territory are discussed and opinions of all the members are heard and debated. The predominant part is played by the elected members. The Administrator acts very much as a Chairman ... no votes have been taken ... conclusions have been arrived at by consensus.

The AEC is not responsible to this House but it is responsive to it. Its responsiveness would be more obvious if the House had more time to devote to its affairs. As it is it has invariably been the practice to refer major matters for endorsement by the House.

AEC members were reluctant to represent the Administration, as they were allowed little room to manoeuvre. Even in private, they offered little criticism of the Administration. 'In fact,' concluded Hay, 'in Council meetings there were no serious disagreements on these matters with the policies pursued by the Colonial power.'⁵⁵

In brief, Gorton stole Whitlam's policy clothes and surely intended to transfer powers, but decolonisation needed more than top-down reforms. If he and Barnes had remained in office, the movement to self-government would have continued, but devolution would still have been hampered by a House whose insecure members were overawed by officials, and by a self-doubting Cabinet. As Greenwell saw it, Barnes told Parliament that

All initiatives for constitutional change would be subject to House of Assembly endorsement. That policy statement was the basis of Australian Government policy throughout the Barnes/Peacock period and was never quite forgotten during the Morrison period.⁵⁶

So the House and the Council enjoyed a de facto veto over constitutional change, but evinced little interest in taking control. From Gorton, they gained the shadow of authority, but power would remain with the department that provided most of the revenue and an Administration used to conveying instructions. The machinery of self-government needed two more elements before there was real change in the distribution of power. The missing elements were officials to create a road map and Papua New Guinean leaders to drive along it.

Footnotes

1. Ted Wolfers, 'January-April 1967', in Moore with Kooyman, *A PNG Political Chronicle 1967-1991*.
2. Hay interviews, National Library of Australia.
3. Denoon, *Getting Under the Skin*.
3. 69/2160, undated minute by A. G. Martin, cited in *ibid*.
4. Eg., Heinz Arndt, *Asian Diaries*, Asia Pacific Monograph 2, Chopmen, Singapore, 1987, Chapter 12.
5. A451/2 68/4769, M. A. Besley's review, October 16, 1970.
6. A 451/2 68/4769, M. A. Besley's letters to UPNG, December 1969.
7. *Ibid*.; M. A. Besley's review, August 1970.
8. Cf. Susan Carruthers, *Winning hearts and minds: British governments, the media, and colonial counter-insurgency, 1944-1960*, London, Leicester University Press, 1995.
9. Eg., Crocombe, 'Communal Cash Cropping among the Orokaiva', *New Guinea Research Bulletin*, IV, 1964; and 'The M'Buke Cooperative Plantation', *New Guinea Research Bulletin*, VII, 1965.
10. A 452/1 71/2146, Social Change Advisory Committee Background Paper, October 1, 1968, referring to their 1964 *Follow Up Study on Mental Health of the Indigenes of TPNG*
11. A 452/1 71/2146, M. A. Besley's note, November 6, 1968, enclosing the SCAC's 'Notes on the Bougainville Situation'.
12. *Ibid*.; Confidential Minute by Hay, as Secretary of the Department, December 2, 1970.
13. A451/2 68/4769, M. A. Besley's review, October 16, 1970.
14. Philip Fitzpatrick, *Bamahuta: Leaving Papua New Guinea*, Pandanus Books, Canberra, 2005.
15. Donald Horne, *Time of Hope*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1980.
16. Jim Byth, interview, Melbourne, 2000. See also Fitzpatrick, *Bamahuta*.
17. Interview, John Langmore.
18. Interview, Ross Garnaut. McCasker, who arrived in 1965, had been on the Vernon Committee reviewing Australian economic policy, but fell foul of John Stone and was therefore in exile in Konedobu.
19. Rachel Cleland, *Pathways to Independence: Story of Official and Family Life in Papua New Guinea from 1951 to 1975*, Perth, 1983.
20. Michael Hess, "'In the Long Run ...': Australian Colonial Labour Policy in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea", *The Journal of Industrial Relations*, March 1983.
21. Geoffrey Dabb, in 'Hindsight'; Interview, John Greenwell.
22. Interview, Greenwell, and Dabb, in 'Hindsight'.
23. Greenwell, Interview.
24. Interview, Tos Barnett.
25. In defending one client in 1964, Dabb attacked the basis for a common form of charging procedure: Ebulya (1964) P&NGLR 200. See also Daera Guba (1973) 130 CLR 353 and Teori Tau (1969) 119 CLR 564.
26. Dabb, in 'Hindsight'
27. Interview, John Ley.
28. Interview, Peter Bayne.
29. Nick O'Neill in 'Hindsight'.
30. Fenbury's plea to the 1965 ICJ conference is reproduced as 'Kot Bilong Mipela' in New Guinea.
31. Dabb in 'Hindsight', citing Morris and Read, 1974.
32. Interview, Ross Garnaut.
33. Ian Howie-Willis, *A Thousand Graduates: conflict in university development in Papua New Guinea, 1961-1976*, Australian National University, 1980.
34. Interviews with Ulli Beier. See also Ulli Beier, *Decolonising the Mind: the impact of the University on culture and identity in Papua New Guinea, 1971-74*, Pandanus Books, Canberra, 2005.
35. Whitlam, in 'Hindsight'. Beazley wrote the friendly preface to the Barnes biography; Loraine Nott's *CEB: Exploits of an Uncommon Man*, Pioneer Press, Warwick, 1989.
36. Hank Nelson, 'The Talk and the Timing', in D. Denoon (ed.), *Emerging from Empire? Decolonisation in the Pacific Islands*, Department of Pacific and Asian History, ANU, 1997.
37. Interviews with Morrison.

38. Whitlam, in 'Hindsight'.
39. Whitlam had the statement included in *Hansard*, October 10, 1972, pp. 2298–3000.
40. Nelson, 'The Talk and the Timing'.
41. Christine Mary Goode, 'Preparation and Negotiation — The Transfer of Power from Australia to Papua New Guinea 1970-1975', UPNG thesis, 1975; and interview with Paul Kelloway.
42. Goode, 'Preparation and Negotiation', p. 40.
43. Ian Hancock, *John Gorton: He Did It His Way*, Hodder, Sydney, 2002.
44. Hay's interviews, National Library of Australia.
45. *Ibid.*, citing Gorton's minute of February 2, 1970.
46. Interview with Christine Goode.
47. Ballard to Newman, June 18, 1970, telex.
48. Johnson, 'Westminster in Moresby'.
49. Interview, John Greenwell.
50. Interview, Paul Ryan.
51. Interview, Alan Kerr.
52. ToLimán to Administrator; Interview, Ebia Olewale.
53. Mark Lynch, 'Communication and Cargo'.
54. Tom Leahy, *Markham Tom: Memoirs of an Australian Pioneer in Papua New Guinea*, Crawford House, Adelaide, 2002; Interview, Pat Galvin.
55. Hay's interviews, National Library of Australia.
56. Interview, John Greenwell; and Greenwell to Kerr, December 1976.