

5. Camilla Wedgwood: ‘what are you educating natives for’¹

David Wetherell

Camilla Wedgwood, anthropologist and educationalist (1901–55), spent much of the Pacific War and its immediate aftermath in Papua New Guinea—the scene of her field research in anthropology in the previous decade. Tough yet in some ways timid, mannish yet maternal, intellectually and physically tireless yet oddly dispersed in her enthusiasms, she seemed a paradoxical personality. Born at Newcastle-on-Tyne, UK, Camilla Hildegard Wedgwood was the fifth of seven children of Josiah Clement Wedgwood, later first Baron Wedgwood (1872–1943), a long-time Member of Parliament, and his first wife, Ethel Kate Bowen (d. 1952), daughter of Charles (Lord) Bowen, a lord of appeal in ordinary. Descended from Josiah Wedgwood the master potter, the Wedgwoods belonged to what Noel Annan called the ‘intellectual aristocracy’.² The Wedgwood and Darwin families were intertwined. Geoffrey and Maynard Keynes were related to the Wedgwoods by marriage as were the descendants of T. H. Huxley; Dame Veronica Wedgwood OM, the historian, and Ralph Vaughan Williams, the composer, were cousins.³ After attending the Orme Girls’ School not far from the family kilns in Staffordshire, Camilla followed her two brothers to the progressive Bedales School in Hampshire before studying English and Icelandic literature at Bedford College, University of London, from 1918. Here she developed a lifelong interest in Old Norse and in such old-English sagas as *Beowulf*. Her rugged, independent bearing, as well as her sympathy for ‘primitive’ peoples, earned her the sobriquet of ‘The Ancient Briton’.⁴ In 1920 she moved to Newnham College, Cambridge. Reading for the tripos in English and Anthropology, she completed each stage with first-class honours, qualifying as MA in 1927 (the university did not award degrees to women until 1948). She was trained as an anthropologist by A. C. Haddon and her lecturers included W. E. Armstrong, former Acting Government Anthropologist in Papua.

1 I acknowledge the Hon. Julia Wedgwood’s gift of her sister Camilla’s correspondence with the Wedgwood family (in my possession), hereinafter cited as WPC (abbreviation for Wedgwood Personal Correspondence). I am also indebted to Dr John Wedgwood for his help during the early stages of research.

2 Noel Annan, ‘The Intellectual Aristocracy’, in J. H. Plumb (ed.), *Studies in Social History: A tribute to G. M. Trevelyan* (London, 1955), p. 253; Paul Mulvey, *The Political Life of Josiah C. Wedgwood: Land, liberty and empire, 1872–1943* (Woodbridge, UK, 2010).

3 Geoffrey Keynes, Maynard’s brother, was married to Camilla’s cousin Margaret. Helen Wedgwood’s daughter Richenda was the wife of Andrew Huxley, son of Leonard Huxley. For a Wedgwood genealogy, see David Wetherell and Charlotte Carr-Gregg, *Camilla: C. V. Wedgwood, 1901–1955: a life* (Sydney, 1990), p. viii.

4 *Thersites* (Cambridge), 10 March 1923.

Wedgwood was teaching at Bedford College when Bernard Deacon, a young Cambridge-trained anthropologist, died in the New Hebrides in 1927, and she was offered the lectureship in anthropology at the University of Sydney left vacant by his death with the proviso that she undertake the important task of editing Deacon's field notes for publication. In addition, instead of pursuing her own research, she also accepted the self-effacing task of editing her friend and age-mate Raymond Firth's *Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Maori* (1929). The task of immersing herself in Deacon's disorderly notes became an albatross, although she brought them to publication in the book *Malekula* in 1934.

After holding temporary research and teaching posts under Professor A. R. Radcliffe-Brown at the University of Sydney (1928–30), Camilla lectured at Cape Town (1930), then attended Bronislaw Malinowski's seminar at the London School of Economics (LSE). In 1933–34, she conducted field research on Manam, a volcanic island of 4000 inhabitants in New Guinea, helped by an Australian National Research Council (ANRC) grant that had been secured by Firth.⁵ In 1935 she conducted methods of reviving native arts and crafts on the island of Nauru. She was in her sixth year as Principal of Women's College at the University of Sydney when the Pacific War began with the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and Malaya. By early 1942, the Japanese had bombed Rabaul, the colonial capital of New Guinea, entered the Australian-controlled Territory of Papua, and by August they were well down the Huon Peninsula and were striking over the terrain of the Owen Stanley Range towards Port Moresby, the capital of Papua.

Camilla felt personally affected by these events. She had lost friends in the fall of Singapore, and wrote to her sister Helen at the beginning of the academic year of 1942 that 'my chief feeling about the war in Malaya, Java & New Guinea is a feeling of the wicked injustice of involving the natives...in this highly organized form of mechanical destruction'.⁶ Her convictions about an individual's moral responsibility did not allow her to remain detached for long, and she was rethinking the Quaker's pacifist principles she had long held—a revision due, ironically enough, to what Malinowski had called her 'damned Quaker conscience'.⁷ Though President of the Peace Society in Sydney, she felt a growing conviction, in the face of Japanese expansion, that absolute pacifism

5 Firth had left Sydney by September 1932. A. P. Elkin was lecturer in charge until he was appointed Professor on 23 December 1933—a position he took up on 1 January 1934. ANRC grants for anthropological research were recommended by a committee chaired by Sydney University's Professor of Anthropology, who made the final decision.

6 Wedgwood to her sister, 1 April 1942, WPC.

7 Wedgwood's views on the individual's moral responsibility and the need for 'some sort of faith and the hope that faith gives' are expressed in 'The Bondage of Despair' [c. 1943], Wedgwood Papers, National Library of Australia [hereinafter NLA], MS 483/7/32.

offered no answer to the emergency. There was a second strand laid bare by her constant reflections on Manam in her letters: she began to feel that her research in New Guinea had been in abeyance too long.⁸

Before 1943 Wedgwood had been a member of the pacifist Sydney Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Her move from a pacifist's opposition to all warfare into a lieutenant colonel's uniform was part of a religious transition away from the liberal, sceptical environment of her youth, of which she had become highly critical. Originally sharing in her parents' agnosticism (friends of the Wedgwoods said they were atheists), her early life was strongly influenced by the secular Fabian beliefs of her family—an assumption that a social utopia of planned democracy was attainable through enlightened legislation. Her sister Helen was married to the geneticist Michael Pease, son of the Secretary of the British Fabian Society. Inclining with Helen towards militant pacifism by 1918, she had become a Quaker at Cambridge—a move that gave a broader base to her Fabian convictions.⁹ As the 1930s wore on, she was increasingly drawn to Anglicanism, much influenced by C. S. Lewis and Dorothy L. Sayers. Already interested in religious drama, her attraction to the ceremonial of the Church of England was closely linked with her understanding of visible symbols and rituals as the binding elements of any culture. As a disciple of Malinowski, she well understood that the vehicle of authentic communal religious experience lay in the rites, artefacts and ceremonial feasting of most societies.

Her conversion from pacifism to an acceptance of the doctrine of a 'just war' was influenced by her reading of *A Conditional Justification of War* (1940) by William Temple, Archbishop of York (later of Canterbury).¹⁰ As the plight of the European refugees became known, and Chamberlain's policy of appeasement all too obvious, her calm optimism that all would be well began to ebb. The Nazi persecution of Jews, the prison camps, the *Dunera* and *Struma* scandals involving the shipboard treatment of internees—against which she publicly protested¹¹—and the human beastliness of war all seemed to point to something other than man's upward moral evolution; and her Fabian's confidence in a smooth progress towards a more perfect social order was overshadowed by a newfound belief in original sin. Neither the Fabian Society planners nor the Quakers fancied that doctrine. On 18 January 1944, in the presence of witnesses she had chosen, she was baptised in St James' Church in King Street, Sydney. In the same month, Wedgwood was commissioned in the Australian Army Medical Women's Service, holding the temporary rank of lieutenant colonel—an officer

8 Wedgwood to her sister, 18 June 1948, and Dowager Lady Wedgwood to Wedgwood, 3 February 1949, both in WPC.

9 See, generally, Patricia Pugh, *Educate, Agitate, Organize: 100 years of Fabian socialism* (London, 1984).

10 Personal communication, John Garrett, 3 July 1986.

11 The *Dunera* shipped to Australia some 2500 mostly Jewish refugees from *Mittleuropa* who had escaped to Britain from Nazi persecution.

of field rank that few women ever held. Her appointment to the Australian Army, *The Times* said, was made at General Sir Thomas Blamey's wish to ensure that 'the best anthropological knowledge would be applied to the problem of protecting native society from the disruptive effects of the war'.¹²

As a member also of the Australian Army's Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs (DORCA), Wedgwood was able to combine her beliefs with a non-combatant's position. She was responsible for the first comprehensive research into mission school education in Papua New Guinea as a preparation for postwar government educational planning. Others involved in the directorate were Colonel J. K. Murray, who conducted a detailed survey of the agricultural potential of the region, and H. Ian Hogbin, who recommended reform of the labour system governing employment in businesses and plantations.

The directorate's role in planning for postwar reconstruction has given rise to several conflicting views. All agree that it owed its existence to Alfred Conlon (1908–61) who recruited Camilla with such other talented Australians as the historian J. D. Legge, the jurists J. R. Kerr and Julius Stone, the soldier and agricultural scientist J. K. Murray and the poet James McAuley. A curious figure of bulky outline and somewhat owlish appearance, Conlon possessed an insight that gave some people an impression of having intuitive understanding. An unlit pipe, thrust near his nostrils at significant pauses in a conversation, became his motif: it heightened the air of mystery and authority that surrounded him.¹³ It is probable that Alf Conlon and Camilla Wedgwood met at Women's College in his role as university Manpower Officer. Through his contacts in the Army, Conlon was brought to the notice of General Blamey, who from March 1942 had been the Australian Army's Commander-in-Chief. As the Japanese threat receded from the islands, the directorate, established by Blamey in late 1943, was meant to help the Army frame policies that had not previously been handled by the armed forces: what role should Australia seek in the Pacific region? How should the islands cleared of Japanese forces be administered, and how could Australia retain the friendship of Pacific Islanders, particularly the 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels' of Papua and New Guinea? Camilla followed the directorate in January 1945 as it moved from Melbourne to Duntroon in Canberra (there called the School of Civil Affairs) and finally in January 1946 to Mosman in Sydney where it was transformed finally into the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA). Her colleagues during these years included H. Ian Hogbin, Lucy Mair,

¹² *The Times*, 25 February 1944.

¹³ See Brian Jinks, 'Alfred Conlon: The Directorate of Research and New Guinea', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 12 (1983), p. 24. See also the chapters by Cassandra Pybus and John Legge in this volume.

C. D. Rowley and Peter Ryan. The Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) was another field organisation involved in what was called the 'native affairs' of Papua and New Guinea.¹⁴

In the second week of March 1944, Lieutenant Colonel the Hon. Camilla Wedgwood VF 515041 left by plane from Melbourne. She flew over Port Moresby on the morning of 11 March. There was a coral reef outside the harbour, and a wrecked ship, *Prath*, on it, while the town, abandoned by its citizens, was drab, squalid, hot and sultry. It had been bombed several times, the liquor stores looted, and pieces of twisted corrugated iron left over the main streets. The headquarters of the 8th Military District was dispersed through more than 30 km of dreary scrubland. Camilla went immediately to the 2/5 Australian General Hospital, where she interviewed the General Officer Commanding ANGAU, Major-General Basil M. Morris.

Morris was interested in schooling. He had already expressed dissatisfaction with the record in Papuan development of the long-serving Lieutenant Governor, Sir Hubert Murray, whose government he brusquely described as an 'effete and discredited Administration'. He was, he said, 'appalled by what has been left undone by Sir Hubert in his later years'.¹⁵ Morris spoke to Wedgwood of his hopes for a Central High School for Papuans at Sogeri in the hills behind Port Moresby in order to train agriculturalists, teachers and native medical assistants. Evidently, Morris foresaw a system of education that would need no overall policy, but only the arrival of Australian headmasters and headmistresses of a pioneering bent. (A brother and two sisters had established Church of England grammar schools in Brisbane and Melbourne.)

Wedgwood expressed surprise that Morris and others 'cannot see that the planning of an educational policy is an essential prerequisite for starting a school or appointing headmasters'—a reflection of her attraction to Fabian thinking, with its penchant for centralised planning and administration. She confessed to being shocked at the slow progress of education in the Western Pacific. Perhaps, however, such backwardness provided a way of avoiding the mistakes of the past in Africa. What these mistakes were, she left her readers in no doubt: the main one had been the schools' contribution to the spawning of a landless urban African class adrift from its cultural moorings. This was a judgment only to be expected of an ardent disciple of Malinowski and his

14 Alan Powell, *The Third Force: ANGAU's New Guinea war, 1942–46* (Melbourne, 2003).

15 Basil Morris to F. J. Forde, 'Offer to visit Papua—Mr A. G. Rentoul', 28 November 1942 (copy in author's possession).

conservative school of functional anthropology. Referring to a conversation with Morris, she concluded: ‘He has never really answered, perhaps not asked himself the question, “What are you educating the natives for?”’.¹⁶

For what future, then, were Melanesian schoolchildren to be educated? The educational wisdom propounded in Camilla’s reading on African schools reflected the influence of Malinowski, who held a similar aversion and whose pronouncements on urban Africans in *The Dynamics of Culture Change* (1945) contained similar warnings. Education should not be a tool to aid migration to European towns. Instead it should be adapted to the mentality, aptitude, occupations and traditions of a people’s rural environment. She said the ‘first essential’ was to relate the type of education to a people’s traditional ideas and local conditions. ‘There are some things which please God will not happen here’, she wrote to her sister Helen, ‘like the rise of a babu [bureaucrat’s assistant] class divorced from the life & needs of their own people, belonging nowhere, “wandering for ever in the hell of make-belief which never is belief”’. Nowhere was her disapproval of rapid Westernisation sharper than in her exchanges with the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) missionaries in eastern Papua—‘whose principles I detest but whose medical work here is, I believe, very good’.¹⁷ It was also present in a muted form in her conversations at the strongly English-assimilationist Kwato Mission in China Strait. Her later glowing description of the Central High School at Sogeri established by Morris—a school devoted to producing a white-collar group if ever there was one—showed that Sogeri was the single exception she was prepared to make. But her assumption was that Sogeri would produce only teachers and medical assistants, not a Europeanised elite estranged from its cultural roots.

If the ‘first essential’ was to link educational curricula to local culture, the second educational prerequisite—‘to relate it to the general culture of the world’—lacked precision, and its vagueness contrasted with the clarity of her trenchant affirmation about the ‘inescapable fact that the natives must lead a rural life’. This was also the central message of the publication *Development and Welfare in the Western Pacific*, which Wedgwood and Hogbin had prepared in 1943. The authors deprecated the use of the English or New Zealand syllabi in Pacific Island schools, deploring the fact that a handful of Pacific Islanders had passed through such schools for further qualifications in New Zealand or Britain, ‘more ignorant’ than even the average European of the ‘point of view of the uneducated native’. The diffusion of ‘wholesale Westernization’ was the wrong goal for African and Islander education. Instead, schools should help

16 Wedgwood to her sister, 7 April 1944, WPC. Another discussion of Wedgwood’s educational work in Papua and New Guinea is in Nancy C. Lutkehaus, *Zaria’s Fire: Engendered moments in Manam ethnography* (Durham, NC, 1995), pp. 408–9, 420–6.

17 Wedgwood to her sister, 7 April 1944, WPC; also Wedgwood Diary, VIII, 13–17 November 1944, Wedgwood Papers, NLA, MS 483/7/32.

younger people 'to blend what is good in their tradition with what is good in the tradition of western civilization'.¹⁸ Camilla Wedgwood's reading had been supplemented with William C. Groves' reports on education in the Western Pacific. Groves was appointed first Director of Education in Papua and New Guinea in 1946, and the main theme of his major publication *Native Education and Culture-Contact in New Guinea* (1936) was 'cultural adaptation' in the education of indigenous people. But, as Groves admitted, few of his ideas could claim originality; indeed, most of them had long been current.¹⁹ A similar observation can be made of Camilla, a case in point being her insistence that 'native' education blend the best of both cultures.

She believed indigenous vernacular languages should be used in schools for the first five years of infant class—language being 'an expression of a people's culture, of their physical, intellectual and spiritual life'. But F. E. Williams, Papuan Government Anthropologist (1928–42), stated the opposite: 'I would declare...that the curriculum of the infant class should be divided into three parts—English, English, English.'²⁰ By the time of Wedgwood's wartime inspections, most world literary experts had reached a consensus that agreed with Wedgwood and disagreed with Williams: teaching through the medium of English should begin only after the first few years of schooling in the vernacular.

Camilla was a tireless and meticulous worker who would spend weeks on bush treks, visiting schools, recording information and preparing reports before returning to base in Port Moresby. In the provision of her quarters at base, she perhaps detected a grudging acceptance, as if the Army resented an officer who was a non-combatant, a civilian in khaki and a woman being forced upon it by superior orders. She would have been regarded in the Army as a 'boffin' or intellectual, promoted to the position of lieutenant colonel—three ranks above her substantive rank; and in any case, having a research unit was unusual in an army 'order of battle'. In Wedgwood's letters, however, she never said that her presence was resented. She said simply that it was beneficial for a scholar like herself to be 'pitchforked' into a mixed male group in ANGAU. She liked bustling activity and, like her sisters, was often combative in speech. 'I'm in the mood for a good argument' was one of her favourite openings. She possessed a distinguished voice, heightened by a pronounced speech idiosyncrasy, being unable to differentiate between /r/ and /w/ (thus, addressing young soldiers bound for New Guinea, she would emphasise the need for 'mowal fibre' in dealing with 'pwimitive people'). Her gregariousness made her a companionable

18 H. Ian Hogbin and C. M. Wedgwood, *Development and Welfare in the Western Pacific* (Sydney, 1943), p. 27.

19 D. J. Dickson, 'W. C. Groves: Educationist', in James Griffin (ed.), *Papua New Guinea Portraits: The expatriate experience* (Canberra, 1978), pp. 101–25.

20 F. E. Williams, *Native Education: The language of instruction and intellectual education* (Port Moresby, 1928). See also Deirdre J. F. Griffiths, 'The Career of F. E. Williams, Government Anthropologist of Papua, 1922–1943', MA thesis, Australian National University, 1977, pp. 116–17.

guest at mission centres along the south Papuan coast. Most of the few European civilians remaining after evacuation had been drafted into ANGAU. On her visits, she made a point of calling on all she could in villages and missions, joining in the netball competitions, swimming parties and school games; she played cats' cradle with the children, and she visited their parents. She had a strong dash of egalitarianism and encountered no difficulty as the only woman lieutenant colonel in a male army; later in Australia, she led bivouacs of up to 40 young men who had spent an extended period on active warfare in the Middle East, and was able to gain their acceptance. She was a chain smoker, and a characteristic of hers when offered a cigarette by her young cadets was to reply 'No thanks, I roll my own'—from her army ration.²¹

This is to suggest a somewhat 'tough' woman coming into her own, a 'man among men', but the picture needs focusing. She was always gracious, speaking impeccable English without, however, any trace of Oxbridge 'plumminess'. No matter how red her sunburn, how much 'like a swagman' she might look, she always managed to give an impression of smiling good nature and serenity—a serenity of a kind often possessed by English county families with an unquestioning acceptance of their own worth.

It is not surprising that, with such a striking and assertive manner, she was widely regarded as a feminist, a 'blue stocking', an unmarried female academic. Camilla's distinguished women colleagues in Malinowski's class were unkindly known as 'the flat-heeled school of social anthropology', and she appeared to fit well the description of a 'blue stocking', of not being dependent upon marriage and not subordinate to men. She had been the only woman lecturer in anthropology at Sydney University; in wartime, the only Australian woman lieutenant colonel in Papua and New Guinea. In such entirely male institutions, a woman with a fine intellect and unfeminine looks could not realistically hope for an offer of marriage from a suitable mate. It is clear from Wedgwood's publications and wartime reports, however, that she saw gender stratification and marriage as the natural order of society. She believed that women of her own family and class were able to lead full lives within the limitations imposed by a male-dominated society.²² A woman's proper place was in marriage and the family, tempered by good works and scholarship. She was angry at being described as a 'leading Australian feminist' in her citation for the award of the

21 Personal communication, H. W. West, 20 January 1985.

22 Marie Reay, 'Review [of Wetherell and Carr-Gregg, *Camilla*]', *Canberra Anthropology*, 14:2 (1991), pp. 120–3. I am grateful to Dr Reay for pointing out this inconsistency in Wedgwood's attitudes—an inconsistency more apparent than real.

1937 Coronation Medal ('you have no idea how I loathe feminism'), and she remained critical of women who were, as she put it, 'obsessed with women's rights'.²³

Wedgwood's wartime research consolidated her earlier work on Manam. While she was no feminist, such research made her the pioneer anthropologist of women's social roles in Melanesia. Long before the discipline of anthropology recognised gender relations as essential to social cohesion, Wedgwood had gone to Manam Island to investigate 'the lives of women and children'. Her first article on Manam (1934) was an account of girls' puberty rites, written while still in the field. She obtained an 'inside view' of women's lives by putting into practice her own version of the 'participant-observation' method of fieldwork. As Manam women reportedly said 20 years later:

[S]he knew how to plant taro. She dug the hole. She cooked the taro just as we do. She cut away the scrub with a bush knife as we do. If a man died she sat in the middle with all the other women and grieved for him. She was not like white people, she was just like us black-skinned folk.²⁴

If Wedgwood's first aim in 1944 was to devise an education curriculum suited to Papua New Guinea's rural culture, her second was to persuade the Christian churches to accept secular government control in the place of a shreds-and-patches system of mission schools. The colonial governments of both territories had been happy to hand over education to the missions, and education was almost entirely in the hands of the churches. From the 1920s, missionaries had been nominated to represent Papuan interests on the legislative council; their role was as mediators between the core of the colonial territory and the indigenous periphery. But their activities were severely constrained by chronic shortages of funds. They could not command the financial resources available to the colonial governments and received grants-in-aid in health and education, tied to a government-supervised examination of pupils.

Here Wedgwood's initial expectations were again marked by the directorate's venturesome confidence at the time. In her diary at the Sacred Heart Mission on Yule Island in June, she had commented ominously that the mission 'resents increased control by Government'.²⁵ The Roman Catholic Church, she wrote, was likely to prove the greatest of the 'awful snags ahead', blocking 'constructive work', by which she meant the creation of a government-controlled education system. She had thought that a postwar administration would quickly take

23 Wedgwood to her father, 28 June 1937, and Wedgwood to Dowager Lady Wedgwood, 19 September 1951, both in WPC.

24 H. Ian Hogbin and C. D. Rowley, 'Camilla Hildegard Wedgwood', *South Pacific*, 8:6 (1955), pp. 110–12. See also Luktehaus, *Zaria's Fire*, especially pp. 73–122, 419–32.

25 Wedgwood, Diary, 15 June [1944], Wedgwood Papers, NLA, MS 483/7/32.

over all the schools and that the non-Roman Catholic churches would facilitate a smooth transfer, but during her second Papuan patrol in August 1944 (she spent a brief interval in Melbourne between patrols), she became aware that the Anglican diocese—one of the major missions in Papua—was not likely to hand over its schools without a fight. Other missions, including the London Missionary Society, were also affronted by Morris creating the government secondary school at Sogeri and enrolling mission students there without consulting the missions.²⁶

The Anglican Mission had been deeply involved in the circumstances of the New Guinea campaign. For most of 1942, thousands of Japanese soldiers had occupied the northern third of the mission area in north-eastern coastal Papua, and all but one of its missionary staff had remained at their stations attempting to maintain their spiritual, medical and educational endeavours in the face of increasing threat. In March 1942, its bishop, Philip Strong, and some of his Papuan mission helpers aboard ship were machine-gunned from the air by a Japanese Zero and narrowly escaped death. In July, the northern missionaries at Gona and the inland stations of Sangara and Isivita were caught by the Japanese landing at Gona and advancing on Kokoda. They had tried to escape but were variously led to the Japanese lines and executed. One, Father James Benson—separated from other groups—was captured and made prisoner-of-war until 1945.²⁷

The experience of war—particularly the deaths of the northern mission staff in horrifying circumstances—had toughened the attitude of Bishop Strong to the possibility of postwar secular intrusion into the sphere of education, which the mission considered its own. It was church control over the training of teachers that prompted the most unyielding statement of policy: teachers were trained to fulfil the multiple roles of lay readers, teachers and evangelists: ‘the maintaining of the Training of our Teachers in our own hands is a matter of fundamental and absolutely vital importance to us and to the life of the Church in this diocese’, wrote Strong: ‘*We will under no circumstances surrender it.*’²⁸

How was it possible for Wedgwood to have underestimated Anglican opposition to her educational plans when she herself was already an Anglican? The answer seems to be that, as a recent convert, she was unfamiliar with educational thought within the Church of England. The fact that her own educational background was either secular or nonconformist explains her unpreparedness

26 Wedgwood to her sister, 22 October 1944, WPC; Wedgwood, ‘Papua Reports on Mission Schools, Anglican Mission (Baniara Sub-Division—visited August–September 1944)’, Wedgwood Papers, NLA, MS 483/7/32.

27 See Hank Nelson, ‘The Swinging Index: Capital punishment and British and Australian administrations in Papua and New Guinea, 1888–1945’, *Journal of Pacific History*, 13:3 (1978), pp. 130–52.

28 ‘The Bishop of New Guinea’s Educational Policy’, n.d., 2, cited in *ABM Review*, June 1945.

for church resistance. In addition, her conversion was theological, not social, in nature: a heartfelt acceptance of the doctrine of original sin and the reality of the sacraments. In her moral and social concerns, she remained strongly a Friend and a Fabian all her life, and her Fabian convictions favoured the growth of government bureaucracy over education, as in other areas.

In the event, it was the Anglicans rather than the Roman Catholics who were to become the 'awful snag ahead'. In the days when Colonel Conlon was establishing the basis for a directorate in which 'new deal' policies for postwar education would be hammered out, Bishop Strong was addressing large public meetings in crowded town-hall meetings in Australian capital cities. Ministering to servicemen as senior chaplain to the forces had reinforced Strong's views on education. It had become apparent in 1943 that many servicemen had developed an appreciation of the work of missions which they had not had before. Experience of Papuan carriers and medical orderlies who were kind, courteous, honest and hardworking—the 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels' with many of whom they could converse in English—so astonished some servicemen that they wrote to friends and newspapers of their discovery that missions were worthwhile. Strong used this discovery to support his own evaluation of missions: Australians should be aroused to provide a 'new order' for the people of New Guinea.²⁹ But it was a different 'new order' from that of the directorate's blueprints, and it differed sharply from Camilla Wedgwood's. A theme repeated with many variations was the 'very real danger' of a 'purely secular education'. Strong added: 'if we allow education to pass out of the hands of the missions I believe we shall be selling our trust.' As noted by Donald Dickson, historian of the Anglican educational system, Bishop Strong appeared as apprehensive, distrustful and belligerently defensive.³⁰

On the other hand, Wedgwood became more than ever convinced that government control was necessary. It was desirable, first, on grounds of finance and the reluctance of the Australian public to devote large sums to church schools in the territories. Second, the right of freedom of conscience was in her view violated by compulsory education administered in a geographical zone where, under the comity of missions in Papua agreed upon in 1890, a single denomination had a monopoly.

While Camilla completed her plans for a government system, Bishop Strong's fear of secular schools became more pronounced. His rare letters to Lieutenant-Colonel Wedgwood were courtly ('I hope you feel your visit has been profitable';

29 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1943. See also D. J. Dickson, 'Government and Mission in Education', MEd thesis, University of Papua New Guinea, 1971, p. 15; David Wetherell (ed.), *The New Guinea Diaries of Philip Strong, 1936–1945* (Melbourne, 1981), pp. 161–7 (8–23 March 1943).

30 D. J. Dickson, Transcript of interview with P. N. W. Strong, 1 February 1969, p. 133, University of Papua New Guinea Library.

‘I hope it was not too uncomfortable’);³¹ but he had little doubt that the hand of Jacob lay behind Esau’s glove. In his private diary, he wrote that he ‘[h]ad seen of the appointment of Col. I. Hogbin and Col. Camilla Wedgwood Anthro[pologists] to go up to New Guinea to advise the authorities. [The Bishop of] Melanesia told me of his experiences of Hogbin, and that he is anti-mission and an unbeliever.’³² Hogbin provided confirmation of his nonconformist missionaries at Kwato in China Strait. In the words of Russell Abel, son of Kwato’s founder:

Hogbin is fed up and bitter about Missions and is very outspoken, said most damaging things and added—‘you can quote me—everything I said is for publication!’...[He is] very like Camilla, except that Camilla is a Christian...whereas Hogbin stoutly avers that he is *not*...‘I have no faith, little hope, and absolutely no charity!’ I can well believe the latter!³³

Among other preoccupations, Wedgwood maintained an interest in ‘mixed-race’ people who were gathered in the towns and at the Yule Island headquarters of the Sacred Heart and at St Agnes’s home at the Anglican headquarters at Dogura. She agreed with the mission heads that an ‘English’ or European education would continue to be necessary. Most of them had no villages and no land, and their lives would continue to be identified with the whites, most of them as employees. She compiled brief studies of prominent mixed-race families (including Guise, Parascos, Burfitt, Cadogan, Dolla, Evennett)—the first genealogical information about them to have been recorded. At the Yule Island headquarters of the Sacred Heart Mission, she had regarded the future of mixed-race people as ‘bound up’ by education and marriage with Europeans. But later at Dogura she recorded that the attitude of Papua’s Europeans to mixed-race families was such that she felt there was ‘no hope of their being absorbed into them’.³⁴ The consensus among Anglicans was that the gap between mixed-race and Papuan should be reduced and that intermarriage between Papuan men and mixed-race women be encouraged.

With the coming of a state-supervised system and government schools, the missions could concentrate on secondary schools and teachers’ colleges while spreading out their informal ‘systems’ of schools on the other. The effect of dealing with such shreds-and-patches mission systems tended to decentralise,

31 See Wetherell and Carr-Gregg, *Camilla*, pp. 175–6.

32 Wetherell, *The New Guinea Diaries of Philip Strong*, p. 194 (28 February 1944).

33 R. W. Abel to S. Abel, 25 March 1945, Abel Papers, New Guinea Collection, University of Papua New Guinea Library.

34 Wedgwood, Diary I, 28 August 1944; and more generally Wedgwood, Diary III, 18 September – 2 October 1944, both in Wedgwood Papers, NLA, MS 483/7/32.

or at least blunt, the centralising tendencies of the state, and this was implicit in Wedgwood's final report, which accepted that replacing mission schools with government schools would not be as easy as initially expected.

In her writing about the Government's assumption of authority over education, Wedgwood's intentions now became drastically modified. She concluded there were cogent arguments against taking native education 'entirely' away from mission hands. These were practical: almost all the educationists in Papua and New Guinea, whether European or Melanesian, were mission teachers. The Europeans were men and women, many of them holding degrees and diplomas in teaching, who had gone to the territories 'not to make a living but with a sense of vocation, and prepared to spend most of their lives there'. No satisfactory development in education could be expected if the European personnel who were to be recruited as government teachers regarded the work only as a 'job' and were prepared to stay in New Guinea for only two or three years.³⁵

In short, Camilla Wedgwood realised that, in spite of pipe dreams in the directorate, there was no other body offering the manpower and expertise to replace the mission education systems. 'For the immediate present', she wrote, 'I believe it would be wisest to concentrate educational activities in those areas where education has already been begun with success by the missions'.³⁶ But the prewar 'bob-a-nob' funds awarded on the basis of an inspector's appraisal of Papuan students' competence in the mission classroom would be replaced with a grant-in-aid system based on a mission teacher's proved competence established by a government-supervised certificate of training.

The first four of Camilla Wedgwood's five reports on aims, problems and suggested policies, based on field research between March and December 1944, were completed in May 1945. The fifth was published three months later. After the first report, *Some problems of native education in the Mandated Territory and Papua* (1944), the reports were: *Summary of native education in Papua; The development of native education in New Guinea; Some suggestions concerning the organisation of education in the Territory of New Guinea* (all in May 1945); and *The aims of native education and the incentives which lead the natives to desire it* (August 1945).³⁷

Wedgwood's writing on education projected the conservative, non-evolutionary functionalism of Malinowski and his disciples who, from the end of World War I, had proposed that among tribal societies, things should be kept as far as possible as they were. Though written from within the functionalist camp, Wedgwood's writing nonetheless recognised that the war had brought irrevocable change

35 Wetherell and Carr-Gregg, *Camilla*, pp. 178–9

36 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 179.

37 The reports are housed in the National Archives of Australia (Melbourne), MP742/1, WOB 274/1247.

in the Western Pacific. Her articles spoke of the application of anthropology to postwar conditions—notably, ‘The Contribution of Anthropology to the Education and Development of Colonial Peoples’.³⁸ Along with F. E. Williams, Ian Hogbin and A. P. Elkin, she was a significant figure in the history of Australia’s dealings with indigenous peoples in Australia and Papua New Guinea. Though she did not make a lasting mark on anthropology, the contribution she made through such writing to education and public service was shaped by anthropology.³⁹ Her advice reveals the intersection between anthropology and colonial administration during and after the Pacific War.

Wedgwood’s wartime reports were thorough, informed and confident. Her 30-year plan to provide ‘mass education’ or primary schooling for all—thus avoiding the social problems flowing from an elitist program for only a few—was consistent with her own deeply held ideological outlook. The optimism about the degree of progress possible in providing primary education reflected the idealism of the Fabian reformer. But Camilla did not visualise the opposition her ideals would have to face from Melanesian parents as well as from international planners. The postwar clamour of indigenous people for schools meant that conditions had changed. Rural education no longer sufficed: the indigenous PNG people were not satisfied with an educational curriculum that fitted them only for village life, but were anxious to ‘catch up’ with Europeans and be able to migrate to opportunities of taking part in the cash economy.

Camilla Wedgwood had initially proposed replacing mission schools with a universal government system, but she had seriously underestimated the strength of Anglican objections to secularising tendencies. She argued the cause of early vernacular education with vigour and suggested practical policies for organisation. On the basis provided by her detailed plans for educational policies, the Federal Government could be confident that a comprehensive educational program could be devised. Opinions differ on the extent of her influence in the stages leading to the drafting of the Papua New Guinea Provisional Administration Bill of 1945. Those close to her in Melbourne and Canberra, such as Peter Ryan, say she and Hogbin were consulted extensively during its framing.⁴⁰ Her surveys—though not explicitly invoked during the debate on the Bill—had led to the first formulation of an education policy for Papua New Guinea by an Australian administration. The Wedgwood reports, however, were only one incident in an unfolding story that included Hogbin, J. R. Kerr, Julius Stone and J. K. Murray, and none of them contributed a share of the planning

38 Wedgwood, ‘The Contribution of Anthropology to the Education and Development of Colonial Peoples’, *South Pacific*, 4:5 (1950), pp. 78–84.

39 Nancy Lutkehaus, ‘Review [of Wetherell and Carr-Gregg, *Camilla*], *Oceania*, 62:2 (1991), pp. 156–7.

40 Interview, Peter Ryan, 11 February 1986. Hogbin told Elkin that he was largely responsible for the content of its framing (see chapter on Hogbin in this volume).

large enough to be able to say, 'Alone, I did it'.⁴¹ Camilla Wedgwood's plans for the structure of formal education made it clear that the Government could not manage, for the time being, a workable education program without the missions' assistance. This represented a considerable modification of the views she had held at the outset of her wartime work for the directorate.

The experiences of some of the other individuals in *Scholars at War* demonstrate that there was no easy road in adjusting to the changed conditions of postwar Australia and New Zealand. For Wedgwood, as well as for others experiencing demobilisation, the lull allowed the freedom for reflection in place of the disciplined activity of the directorate, and with it came the stirrings of discontent. She felt disappointment with the school that had developed with high hopes from the School of Civil Affairs in Canberra; she felt disappointment with W. C. Groves—sent to inaugurate a system of government education in Papua New Guinea—especially since she had recommended his appointment; and she felt uncertain about her own future in Australia. Wartime confidence and camaraderie were evaporating. She expected to be involved as an educational adviser in postwar reconstruction. The opportunity never came her way. Apart from a return visit to finish her surveys in 1946–47, she found it impossible, in the administrative stagnation that beset the territories after the war, to do any more than train *kiaps* and teacher trainees at a distance. At ASOPA, Wedgwood was remembered with affection by *kiaps* as an outstandingly popular lecturer.

She tried to meet her own ebbing certainty by searching for closer relationships with her family during visits to Britain, and saw her mother for the last time in Switzerland in 1952. The reunion was a happy one, marred only by Camilla's failing health. On her return to Sydney, she worked in the office of the South Pacific Commission (SPC) with Harry Maude and his social development research group—'young university folk, full of energy and initiative and gaiety'.⁴² During this time, she compiled, on behalf of the SPC, an *Annotated Bibliography of Native Education in the South Pacific* (1956).

In spite of privileged beginnings and influential family connections, Camilla Wedgwood was dogged by professional disappointments. Her painstaking editing of *Malekula*, based on Bernard Deacon's field research, was rewarded with a threat of legal action by another anthropologist. John Layard had threatened the publishers of her edition of *Malekula* with litigation because, faced with Deacon's disorderly field notes, Wedgwood had unwittingly ascribed material in her text to him instead of to Layard. This harrowing experience probably contributed to her failure to produce a full-length book based on her own research on Manam Island, thus placing her in the second rank of

41 As is made clear in Lucy Mair, *Australia in New Guinea* (London 1948), pp. 161–73 (ch. 8, 'Education').

42 Wedgwood to her sister, 31 October 1951, WPC.

professional anthropologists after Malinowski's other women students such as Audrey Richards and Lucy Mair.⁴³ She worked as Malinowski's research assistant on his manuscript about kinship, but the book was ill fated and never appeared. She failed to secure tenured academic positions at Sydney and London—the LSE lectureship was given to Richards instead—and in 1945 she was passed over for the coveted headship of Lady Margaret Hall at Oxford. Her remarkable wartime research on education in Papua New Guinea received little recognition at the time, and she was ill rewarded by seeing the position of first Director of Education given to W. C. Groves—a lesser talent.

A. P. Elkin found that, '[b]eneath her apparent self-confidence', she was 'somewhat retiring and lonely'.⁴⁴ After the war, she kept in close touch through correspondence with her distant family, especially her father and her sister Helen, and relied on old Sydney friends, particularly Theresa Britton, her husband and children. Before 1951, she lived in a series of flats in North Sydney before finding herself 'a permanent abode' in Alfred Street overlooking Sydney Harbour. She had few possessions in Australia, having left her furniture and books in her family home at The Ark in Moddershall in Staffordshire in 1927. The main room of the Alfred Street flat was simply furnished with an iron bed at the side. The wall shelves contained some magnificent Wedgwood pottery.

Camilla Wedgwood died of cancer on 17 May 1955 and was cremated. Her friend James McAuley dedicated to her his poem 'Winter Nightfall' (1967). A government girls' high school at Goroka was named after her, and in Port Moresby an annual educational lecture series for international scholars was inaugurated in her honour.⁴⁵

43 Michael Young, 'Review [of Wetherell and Carr-Gregg, *Camilla*]', *Journal of Pacific History*, 26:1 (1991), pp. 121–3. See also Nancy Luktehaus, "'She was very Cambridge": Camilla Wedgwood and British female anthropologists', *American Ethnologist*, 13:4 (1986), pp. 776–98.

44 A. P. Elkin, 'Camilla Hildegard Wedgwood, 1901–1955', *Oceania*, 26:3 (1956), p. 177.

45 A list of speakers in the Camilla Wedgwood Memorial Lectures 1959–66 is given in Wetherell and Carr-Gregg, *Camilla*, pp. 231–2.