

1975

The native administrations of MacGregor, Murray and Hasluck in Papua/ New Guinea: continuity and contrast

Christine Oke
University of Wollongong

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/hj>

Recommended Citation

Oke, Christine, The native administrations of MacGregor, Murray and Hasluck in Papua/New Guinea: continuity and contrast, *University of Wollongong Historical Journal*, 1(1), 1975, 7-41. Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/hj/vol1/iss1/3>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

The native administrations of MacGregor, Murray and Hasluck in Papua/New Guinea: continuity and contrast

Abstract

There are good reasons for making a comparative study of the native administrations of MacGregor, Murray and Hasluck in Papua New Guinea. Each man was responsible for the colony in a crucial stage of its history: the initial period of British control, the consolidation of Australian rule, and the post-war period of general decolonization. Each man ruled for at least a decade, Murray for the remarkable length of thirty-four years, and each man more-or-less centralized policy-making in himself (although the process of joint control by the government of Queensland and the Colonial Office restricted MacGregor's freedom in decisions concerning policy to a large degree).

THE NATIVE ADMINISTRATIONS OF MACGREGOR,
MURRAY AND HASLUCK IN PAPUA/NEW GUINEA:
CONTINUITY AND CONTRAST.

by Christine Oke

There are good reasons for making a comparative study of the native administrations of MacGregor, Murray and Hasluck in Papua New Guinea. Each man was responsible for the colony in a crucial stage of its history: the initial period of British control, the consolidation of Australian rule, and the post-war period of general decolonization. Each man ruled for at least a decade, Murray for the remarkable length of thirty-four years, and each man more-or-less centralized policy-making in himself (although the process of joint control by the government of Queensland and the Colonial Office restricted MacGregor's freedom in decisions concerning policy to a large degree).

Such an approach, however, raises serious problems of methodology, as each man worked in very different times. Obviously, it is reasonable to expect a greater understanding

of indigenous societies and concepts of indirect rule from Murray, who worked when anthropology became a recognized study, and when men such as Lord Lugard in Nigeria were practising indirect rule, then from MacGregor whose administration was established when ideas of indirect rule were still fluid and Victorian attitudes to race prevailed. (1) Hasluck, too, must be assessed in the context of the rapid decolonization of his time. This essay attempts to assess each man's native administration within the context of the ideas and prejudices held at the time, yet argues that a basis continuity exists which makes a comparison valuable.

MacGregor's experience under Gordon in Fiji encouraged him to try and set up a system of indirect rule in British New Guinea. Essentially, this involved the establishment of institutions by which a rapprochement could be made between native and British concepts of law through effective consultation. He was greatly handicapped in this aim by his tiny allowance of £15,000 a year, by his small, rough and untrained staff who had to be constantly prevented from mistreating natives, or replaced because of illness, (2) and by his primary task of establishing law and order which forced him to place great importance upon the direct side of native administration, native police and village constables. (3) Not only was there continual pressure upon him by the Queensland government to rapidly open up areas for settlement, but the activities of both miners and missionaries forced him to keep extending his administration, leaving him little time to

consolidate it or adopt more sophisticated methods. (4) Once an area was pacified, moreover, it had to be protected from attacks by warring tribes from the uncontrolled hill areas: another incentive to direct action. (5)

MacGregor was further limited in his work by the segmentary lineage nature of New Guinean society and by its division into small tribes which lacked traditional hereditary chiefs who could be formally invested with government power. He wrote of New Guinea:

"It does not seem to have ever produced a man capable of uniting the inhabitants of two contiguous glens". (6)

This did not deter him, however, and his system of Government Chiefs which he hoped to use "in such a way that before long they may assume some of the functions of government" (7) and of Village Constables whom he said were "the best substitute that can be created in the place of tribal chiefs that do not exist in New Guinea" (8) slowly spread. In 1889 he reported:

"Endeavours have been made to strengthen the position of a number of leading men in certain tribes, so as to increase their authority and to put on them some responsibility towards the Government. A certain amount of progress has been made, but great patience is required, and it will be long before the position of any chief is sufficiently strong and authoritative to make him an efficient government officer". (9)

By his Ordinance for the Better Regulation of Native Affairs of 1889, MacGregor hoped to further his system of indirect rule. The Native Regulations Board would codify native law in simple terms, and the Native Magistrates Courts would make native custom a recognized part of the judicial process. (10) MacGregor hoped to have native members on these

Boards, and thus they would be one means whereby native and European concepts could be integrated. His hopes were never fulfilled, largely because of the failure of the native magistrate system.

Two traditional Kiwai chiefs were appointed as magistrates in 1890 by Cameron, the Resident Magistrate (11) for the Western division. The following year MacGregor visited them and commented: "The two native magistrates have been more moderate, more just and better officers than could reasonably have been expected". (12)

Unfortunately, the new Resident Magistrate, Hely, thought differently. It is obvious that he did not understand the role conflict situation in which the magistrates were placed, and regarded them as village constables. He criticized one of them in his 1892 Report:

"Not a single person in Gamia's village has ever been brought before me by him, though I don't doubt that there has been cause". (13)

The following year he suspended Gamia for "tampering with women and doing much damage to government influence". (14) He also called the second native magistrate "weak, and absurdly frightened of 'puri puri'". (15) MacGregor was faced with accepting Hely's judgement, or upholding his hope for the native magistrate system and losing the goodwill of one of his best officers. He made no comment on Hely's action.

MacGregor's native policy was both paternalistic and humanitarian: his concern for the well-being of the natives determined his attitude to all other matters. MacGregor had

great respect for the natives and held high hopes for them:

"the Papuans possess an aptitude for tuition which cannot but appear to be extraordinary to any person acquainted with the history of civilization among the present existing cultured races of this globe. If the Papuans are allowed anything like a reasonable time they will become a very important unit in the Australian dominions of the Queen". (16)

Although he believed that the British civilization was the most advanced, he did not follow an assimilationist policy aimed at converting natives into British gentlemen, because he recognized the inherent worth of native culture. He believed that only when his officers understood native culture and languages, so that true consultation could be undertaken, (17) would administration be effective. He therefore spent as much time trying to grasp native customs and to meet as many of the tribes as he could. A missionary wrote of him in 1890:

"He spends his whole life in studying the natives and endeavouring to understand their peculiarities". (18)

Historians have characterized MacGregor as far from sympathetic towards the natives. Lucy Mair wrote in 1948 "He believed in the punitive expedition" and Peter Hastings has supported this interpretation. (19) MacGregor's expeditions, however, were essentially administrative and pacificatory, and he took great personal risks on them to inspire confidence in the Government among the natives. MacGregor expressly avoided the use of force on an expedition except for self defence, as his remarks to Cameron show:

"Instead of organising hostile parties Mr. Cameron should visit the country of the different tribes and leave for them or give them presents; influence them to visit the station and coast tribes. This will require tact and patience; but this is the

only policy which will meet my approval.
Recourse to force is justifiable only in
self-defence". (20)

MacGregor's comments reveal his humaneness. His concern for native welfare determined his ideas of justice, as is shown in the Ancell case.

MacGregor realized that a great number of people were implicated in the crime. Instead of following the gunboat diplomacy of the past, however, he took great pains to capture the actual murderers. He wrote:

"I am extremely anxious that punishment for the murder should overtake the actual perpetrators which would have a great effect on these people, especially if the penalty were carried out in their own locality. A general punishment inflicted on the natives of the district, such as fining them, burning their houses and driving them to the bush, will never, I fear, stop these murderous attacks". (21)

MacGregor thus substituted the British notion of individual responsibility for crime for the previous notion under the Protectorate of punishment of a whole tribe. At the same time he tried to impress the local people with the power of the Government by his action, and held all of them responsible for capturing the murderers and preventing further outbreaks. The execution of the murderers, MacGregor realized, was a compromise between British and native notions of justice, as it would represent 'payback' in the eyes of the natives for the murder of Ancell. After this, there were only two natives executed, and MacGregor carefully explained that this was because:

"the crime was of a kind that is neither justified nor excused by native customs or prejudice". (22)

MacGregor's respect for indigenous standards of justice induced him to follow such a path. (23)

MacGregor's respect for native culture and his reluctance to interfere with native society can be seen in his careful justification of the laws against adultery, home burial and sorcery that such practices led to payback murders which in the interests of law and order had to be prevented, (24). His protective Ordinance by which he prohibited the sale of alcohol, opium and firearms to natives was stringently followed, and established a precedent which was continued by the Australian administration (for so long that it became no longer applicable as a protective measure and merely perpetuated out-dated paternalism and discrimination). (25)

The failure of the experiment in native magistrates in effect meant that MacGregor gave up his aim of carrying out a system of indirect rule in British New Guinea. Why did he give up so easily? Perhaps in view of the circumstances under which he worked it is remarkable that he attempted it at all. However, it is likely that his Victorian prejudices and assumptions, which conflicted with his concern for native culture, and which MacGregor never seemed to resolve himself, were a determining factor in his precipitate retreat from his aim of indirect rule.

MacGregor constantly spoke of his aim in New Guinea as a "civilizing mission" (26), and it is evident that he did not see this as incompatible with the continuance of native

culture. I would disagree with Joyce, then, when he characterizes MacGregor as ignoring the problem:

"Did MacGregor ever envisage how European and Papuan cultures would be reconciled? He realised his measures were changing native lives, but overwhelmed by day to day affairs he probably regarded this as a future problem". (27)

MacGregor saw little incompatibility, as he restricted his "civilizing" to Westernizing a native elite (28) who would then participate in native administration, while at the village level he believed traditional life would be little affected. Thus native culture and customs would co-exist with a western-educated, Christian and English-speaking elite. He believed that such a process of "civilizing" could only occur gradually so that native society would undergo minimum stress. (29)

MacGregor never resolved exactly what he meant by "savage" or "civilized", never defined exactly what in native society he hoped to alter, and these words reveal his Victorian prejudices and assumptions. This confusion led to contradictions in his politics in some areas, as his behaviour in the Trobriands shows.

MacGregor believed that it was his duty to encourage the Missions in British New Guinea as, apart from the Constabulary (30) they were the chief agents of civilization. He wrote:

"To encourage mission work in every way possible was considered a sacred duty by the government. To not do so would, indeed, have been a complete departure from the principle on which British colonization first originated". (31)

As MacGregor relied almost entirely on the missions in many areas to spread knowledge of the government, he was greatly dependent on their goodwill, and it is understandable that he held this view.

The Methodist mission had wanted land in Kevataria on the Trobriands, and MacGregor seems to have deliberately set out to intimidate the chief of this tribe, Enamakala, in order to force him to agree to this. (32) MacGregor recognized Enamakala's standing as a chief, and tried to weaken his authority, because he had refused to surrender his land to the mission. (33) Not only did he interfere with his land rights, but with his domestic life, by reprimanding him for practising polygyny. (34) It is likely that MacGregor's behaviour in the Trobriands resulted from sheer exhaustion due to overwork, or disappointment with his previous experiments in indirect rule, or uncertainty as to the future, but this remains as one instance in which his behaviour was, quite untypically, dominated by his Victorian prejudices, and not by his concern with native welfare.

MacGregor's economic policy incorporated both his aim of preserving native culture and that of spreading "civilization". Initially he opposed small scale white settlement in New Guinea because he believed that it would have endangered native society, and his land policy, by its protective restrictions, effectively prevented it. (35) Partly this stemmed from his medical experience in Fiji. (36)

He hoped, however, to encourage native economic development and encouraged natives to participate in a cash economy by planting coconuts for export. (37) He saw this change as additional to traditional subsistence cultivation, and believed that it would not interfere seriously with village life. (38) MacGregor wanted Western-style economic development in the form of large Companies such as Burns-Philp, whom he believed would be better financed and thus more viable than small, private settlements, as well as better from the point of view of relations with the natives. He saw this development as co-existing with and complementing native life.

Unlike MacGregor, Murray (1907-40) had the benefit of a secure and slowly-increasing Australian grant, and almost complete freedom in policy-making. In practice, he rejected MacGregor's aim of indirect rule for a direct police rule which was based on law and order. Why did he do so?

The constant need to pacify new areas dominated Murray's attitude to natives in already settled areas which can be summarized as extreme paternalism coupled with distrust. The native could never be trusted as

"at times the primitive instinct is too strong even for the returned labourers, and cases have occurred where natives who have been working on the plantations, and who have at least the chance of picking up some idea of civilization, have, on their return to their villages, been guilty of acts of utter savagery". (39)

Murray's most common observation on Papuans was their readiness to accept Western customs and their obedience to authority, characteristics which he regarded as advantageous as they made the native amenable to plantation work! He wrote:

"The natives of Papua are far from being a stupid race, nor do they altogether fail to appreciate the advantages of peace, and when they have grown more or less familiar with our ideas of civilization, they become law abiding and, not infrequently, industrious people". (40)

This attitude assumed the innate inferiority of the natives, and the automatic suitability of the whites to rule: as late as 1938 he wrote:

"I think that the best Papuans are superior to the worst Europeans, but that Europeans as a whole have an innate superiority over Papuans". (41)

Murray's belief in the inferiority of the natives meant that they could never be given any responsibility:

"I do not think that we should attempt to give the Papuans anything in the nature of a higher education; nor do I think that we should ever dream of conferring upon him any political rights. He is inferior to the European, and, if we wish to avoid trouble, we should never look upon him as a social and political equal". (42)

Murray's native policy reflected his concept of civilization. "Civilization" was equated with the Australian, Christian lifestyle and was regarded as the ultimate aim of native policy; "savagery" was equated with the present state of native life, with all its customs which militated against western values. Murray believed that the ultimate aim of native policy was "civilizing" the natives, by which he meant imposing on them the Australian way of life at the

village level. Such a policy of grassroots assimilation assumed that native culture was totally inferior, It therefore meant a radical departure from MacGregor's precedents, despite Murray's assertions that he was following the "spirit of Indirect Rule", as it denied the inherent worth of native institutions. No native participation in government could be allowed even when total assimilation had taken place, because of the insurmountable difficulty posed by native innate inferiority. Murray even regarded the Village Constable system as dangerous, and revealed his distrust of the natives when he wrote:

"Members of the Armed Constabulary have their faults, and some of these are rather serious; they are capable, for instance, of extortion and blackmail if they are not watched, and they are, to put it mildly, somewhat addicted to gallantry". (43)

Native administration became a rudimentary administrative device, and a system of police rule came into being, with white men holding all judicial, legislative and executive powers.

Murray's ideas of justice were based on the assumption that Australian law was superior to native law, which was barbaric, and that it should therefore be imposed on the natives. Instead of pursuing MacGregor's aim of codifying native law, Murray believed that native custom should be allowed for by concessions as to punishment:

"We must not forget that it is our social custom and law, and not that of the primitives, that will eventually survive. So what we regard as crime must be suppressed, even though it is committed under the aegis of native custom".

As no native could have an understanding of Australian legal systems, this belief prohibited native participation in the judicial system:

"I do not know of any part of Papua in which a native administration of justice could be introduced with any prospect but the certainty of complete failure". (45)

To Murray, "failure" to imitate Australian legal processes was certain, and his refusal to recognise indigenous processes prevented any alternative. He reported one instance where it had been attempted in the Mekeo district:

"The Councillors formed themselves into a District Court Martial and tried and convicted a man on a charge of owning a dilapidated house. Such a charge is, in fact, unknown to the law but this did not deter the so-called Court from sentencing him - i) to be flogged, ii) to have his hair cut short, iii) to have his armlets taken from him, iv) to be imprisoned for three months in Kairuku gaol. Such zeal was obviously embarrassing and the members of the Court Martial were appropriately dealt with". (46)

Murray did not discern here an obvious need on the part of the Council to have some judicial powers operating within a traditional context, but held it up as an example of the disaster he felt would ensue if they did.

When Native Assessors were eventually created in 1932, they were intended, not to be trained in Western legal procedures so that they could eventually become magistrates but only to relieve the workload of European magistrates by doing some of the hackwork, Murray's long-term aims were severely limited.

He hoped that:

"In the future, perhaps only in the very distant future, we shall be able to hand over petty acts of administration and trivial native cases to Papuans". (47)

Murray retained the system of village constables which tended to create role conflict where the constable had traditional authority; produce nonentities who had no real authority in the village; alienate villagers from the government as it denied consultation; and force indigenous law underground. (48) It gave natives no responsibility in the running of their country.

The belief in Papuan inferiority led to a policy of gradual extension of native responsibility to fourth-class roles in administration. Murray wrote in 1924:

"I think we are justified in expecting that in another generation the lower positions in the Government service will be largely filled by native. I do not think that they will be capable of filling any of the higher positions until they have developed a sense of responsibility which so far has hardly been awakened (49)

It was partly for this reason that Murray opposed education higher than a level of basic literacy, for he held that it would create a Papuan intelligentsia which could not be employed because of the "colour bar" to positions. (50) However, he maintained this discrimination in his own Public Service! This was the reverse of MacGregor's aim of encouraging a native elite by education and participation in government.

Murray's system of native taxation and native plantations introduced in 1918 as a "variety of the Dutch 'culture' system" (51) (abandoned by the Dutch in 1870!) meant that native participation was required to a previously unknown degree.

Murray therefore appointed village councillors supposedly to act as agents who would explain to the natives how benevolent the government's apparently dictatorial measures were:

"There are two main difficulties in native administration i) that we do not always understand the natives, ii) that they understand us very much less. The Councillors can assist, especially, in surmounting this second difficulty. It is possible for the magistrates to explain to the Councillors that we really have a consistent policy, and that it is intended to be for the assistance of the natives generally - that the tax, for instance, does not go into the pockets of the tax collectors, but goes to pay for medical attention, hospitals, schools, etc., and eventually all comes back to the native in one form or another. When once the Councillors have grasped this they will have no trouble in explaining it to the rest of the village". (52)

Murray's system of village councillors was a far cry from MacGregor's attempts at native participation in government, which aimed at ensuring a two-way relationship between the natives and government. Murray's councillors, intentionally, had no real powers, (53) and were intended solely to disseminate propaganda for already-determined government policies. The gap between village and government values was widened in the effort to impose the latter on the former. No wonder Murray complained

"Some of them cannot get it out of their heads that they are not village constables". (54)

Not only did Murray reject the precedents set by MacGregor but he ignored the example of men such as Gordon in Fiji and Lugard in Africa, as he wrongly maintained that Papua was unique in having no systems of chieftains or rank and no clearly defined native law through which to work. He wrote:

"In the details of our native administration we have

been under the disadvantages of having no precedents to follow. There were of course precedents in Africa and in Asia, but the conditions of Papua were so different that one had to be careful how one followed these precedents. Of Lugard's 'The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa' I have found but little in the book that can be of direct assistance in the administration of Papua". (55)

In fact, as West has pointed out, Murray simply could not grasp the nature of indirect rule, but believed that it meant

"to conserve such of those customs as appear to be useful or harmless, and make use of them, so far as may be, as an instrument of good government". (56)

Murray believed that he was following direct rule, simply because he did not interfere with all native custom!

Murray's attitude to the natives determined his educational policy, which was entirely primary and technical and run by the missions, and by 1940 was appallingly backward compared with other colonial countries. (57) In administration it created a vicious circle of lack of Papuan opportunities for higher education, consequent lack of skilled educated Papuans who could accept responsible positions, leading to further categorizing by whites of the Papuan race as irresponsible, backward and illiterate, and further unwillingness to allow Papuans any participation in the administration of their country.

Murray supported white settlement and believed that it would benefit the natives, firstly, because work on the white men's plantations would overcome laziness and:

"If the natives won't work it appears to me that they are doomed; idleness does not do them any more good than it does to white men". (58)

White settlement would also introduce the natives to the benefits of civilization:

"Every white man is in himself a centre of civilization which spreads gradually through the influence of local natives whom he employs, or with whom he comes into contact". (59)

Yet he realised that natives often suffered at the hands of white settlers (60) and that plantation work necessitated a destruction of traditional native life. (61) Murray hoped Papua would become a land of prosperous white plantations run by native labour, although he spoke of "native plantations" run by the Government:

"You get a bit of land and make the natives cultivate it, you supplying seeds, tools, supervision, etc., then when the crop is gathered you (that is, the Government) take a share or you can say, if you like, that it all belongs to the natives and make them sell to you at a price below the market price". (62)

Murray's hope for "native plantations" was that they would only develop the country where white plantations could not:

"I advocate it principally as a means of fully developing the territory - my point is that you should have not only capitalistic enterprise but also native cultivation as well - the latter to occupy places eg., in the mountains which it would not pay a European company to take up". (63)

Such an aim made no allowance for native participation in the economy except as labour in private or government-run "native plantations" and no encouragement was given to natives to become entrepreneurs or owners of their own plantations.

Murray stated in 1906:

"The natives have been treated extremely well, perhaps too well. I think they have been placed on a pedestal for too long with absolutely no result". (64)

He then greatly relaxed MacGregor's protective ordinance on native labour and land acquisition, with the resulting massive increase in white settlement. (65) He was prevented in his original aim to make all lands Crown Land, and allow compulsory purchase of land from natives. (66) Unlike MacGregor, who had eventually tried to encourage large-scale development by large companies, Murray preferred small settlement on the Australian model. (67) Murray's economic policy resulted in much land alienation and widespread denuding of villages of young men and a consequent strain on traditional village society. (68)

Hasluck's period as Minister for Territories saw a massive increase in the size of the Australian grant to Papua New Guinea (69), and a huge growth in the white bureaucracy there, (70) at a time when other colonial countries were stepping up their preparations for independence in an era of ecolonization. (71) Under Hasluck, too, authority was increasingly centralised in Canberra. Hasluck ruled, as Murray had done, as an autocrat (Whitlam called him a 'benevolent despot')(72), but his decisions were not formulated with any respect for local conditions, and became irrelevant to the actual circumstances in the Territory. Hasluck believed in the same assumptions as Murray, and continued his policies of direct

rule by white expatriates throughout his rule. His policies ensured that decolonization was greatly retarded; and he aimed at postponing independence indefinitely.

Hasluck justified his continuation of Murray's policies on the grounds that New Guinea was merely an extension of Australia:

"We cannot regard the Territory as a distant colony. The Territory is no more remote from the national capital and the heart of the Australian population than the outlying states of the Commonwealth. Hence the administration of the territory can be in the clearest and most direct sense an Australian administration, as distinguished from a colonial government". (73)

This meant that its interests were identical with those of Australia (74), and its future lay with Australia, possibly as a seventh state! Hasluck seemed to hold this notion when he wrote:

"I envisage a future time when the people of Papua and New Guinea will seek self-government and SOME MEASURE OF independence". (75)

Hasluck argued, exactly as Murray had done in rejecting the precedents of Lugard, that Papua New Guinea was unique and couldn't be compared with other colonies, he spoke of:

"the error that is often made in talking about it as if it were some other place--as though it were an African colony, or a backward rural community, in the U.S.A. or U.S.S.R. Papua and New Guinea has its own characteristics and its own problems. We have to get out of the habit of thinking that every dependent area is like every other dependent area and that all primitive societies are identical. It is a unique situation, and most of the comparisons that are sometimes made between the situation in Papua and New Guinea and situations that may have existed in the past in the newly-independent countries in Asia and Africa are inexact". (76)

Hasluck, unlike Murray, never explained exactly how it was "unique". His argument is not only illogical, muddling the crucial difference between "like" and "identical", but false, as a piece such as the Solomons Islands, for instance, was very similar to Papua New Guinea in topography, social structure, general lack of traditional hereditary leadership, and history. (77)

As the territory was only a part of Australia, Hasluck believed, it should conform culturally to the rest of Australia, and he was therefore justified in continuing Murray's policy of basic assimilation of the natives into the Australian way of life. Up to 1962 Hasluck was able to get away with such obviously backward ideas, because of the apathy of the Australian public and parliament with the Territory, (78) and because of the United Nations which was too concerned with decolonization in Africa to concentrate upon the Territory. The publication of the Foot Report (1962) coming as it did after Tanganyikan independence, meant that the Territory came under concentrated world attention for the first time: Hasluck resigned not long after.

Murray's gradualist statements are repeated in Hasluck's ministerial statements: He made it clear that he regarded independence as a far distant future aim, and that there was no need for urgency or of time running out in Australian policy. He wrote in 1958:

"For the next thirty years at least a large part of the task of the administration..will be the establishment and maintenance of law and order". (79)

Murray's policy of basic assimilation, which assumed the superiority of Australian civilization, was extended by Hasluck into a precondition for independence. He wrote:

"Before a Territory-wide political change can come about, the people will need to develop a sense of communication which is now lacking.. The common language will be English, as for a common stock of ideas, they will gain them from the teaching of Christianity, and the example and precept we give them in administration". (80)

New Guineans were to be united by accepting the Australian lifestyle! Hasluck believed naively that it was still possible for the natives to "preserve all that is best in their cultural heritage" while becoming:

"a Papuan people, living at a common standard of material well being, and with a common culture, strongly influenced by Christian teaching and by Australian social, economic and political practice". (81)

At least Murray had been perceptive enough to realise that assimilation was incompatible with the preservation of native culture, and to accept that his policies should eventually lead to its destruction when he wrote:

"It is true that in any case most of the old customs must go sooner or later..most of this custom and belief has no real social value". (82)

Hasluck's attitude to the natives was in essentials identical to that of Murray. Although he nowhere stated outright that he believed that the natives were innately inferior to the white man, it is obvious that his policies assumed this. Murray's refusal to allow Papuans any responsibility, his paternalism and his mistrust are clear in such statements of Hasluck's as:

"Gradual transition has to be made from the stage at which a truly effective local council may come into being. There is not, at present, and cannot be for many years to come, any possibility of a Territory-wide franchise for native peoples". (83)

Hasluck's ideas of justice were identical to those held by Murray: he believed that Australian law and civilization were superior, and his view of indigenous law as barbaric underlay the policy of complete assimilation into the white man's judicial system. In 1955 he finally abandoned the Native Courts Ordinance (established by the Papua-New Guinea Act of 1949) because, as the Annual Report stated:

"it is the policy of the Australian government to encourage the people to turn to the existing statutory judicial system, which provides the highest measure of justice". (84)

Hasluck, like Murray, believed in total assimilation with allowance for ignorance of the white man's law with regard to punishment:

"While there is nothing in the primitive way of life on which a council could build a system of justice which would be acceptable to the civilized world, yet there is a need in establishing our own system of justice to recognise that native custom and the compulsion of their own primitive culture may have to be taken into account in any measures taken within our system of justice". (85)

The direct opposite of such a policy was being applied in the British Solomons where native courts were established in 1941 after a two year trial period, based on the recognition of the importance of native law and the need to integrate it with the administration's judicial framework. (86)

Hasluck's use of words such as "primitive" and "civilised" indicated that his concept of civilisation was similar to that of Murray, and the same policies which assumed the innate inferiority of the natives were continued. Thus natives could not be given responsibility in such positions as magistrates in a white man's court (judging native cases) because they could never be "civilised" to the same level as a white man. Any attempt to train natives in Australian justice was dependent upon an educational policy which aimed at producing a group of natives who could undergo this training. This was not forthcoming, and native participation in the judicial system was postponed to the far distant future. (87) Such a gradualist policy was doomed to failure. The split between indigenous and Australian law, which had begun in Murray's time, was not reconciled by a bridging institution such as a native courts system, with the result that natives continued their own system of justice underground. (88) The consequences of the alienation of natives from the law of the land are now obvious in recent discontent with land rights in the territory.

Under Hasluck the system of native local government councils was slowly introduced, although the allowance in the 1949 Act for native advisory councils met the same fate as the native courts. (89)

The slow growth of the system was not due to local resistance (based on the taxation it necessitated, and a

continuation of old power rivalries within villages such as lay behind the Navuneram incident) but due to Hasluck's gradualist policies which enforced the principle of voluntary participation in the councils. (90) Ignoring widespread discontent, Hasluck maintained that

"political activity is of far less concern to the people themselves than health, education or economic progress". (91)

and that the nature of Papua New Guinea society necessitated slow growth:

"The forbidding topography, sparcity of population and lack of common interest throughout the territory have resulted in marked political fragmentation, a pattern of independent village groups and a bewildering number of dialects, all of which continue to militate against the introduction of local government". (92)

Instead of unifying native people, Hasluck's councils meant "divide-and-rule", as Hasluck believed that local conditions militated against the growth of larger administrative units such as regional councils. (93) Murray had used the same argument to prevent the formation of councils based on the principles of indirect rule in his period.

The council system was strangled at birth by its concept: as simply an organ of central administration. On the Austral model, the councils had little power and such functions as they could perform were rigidly defined. (94) Along with the tight supervision of the District Officer at council meetings, the way they were organised (95) and the lack of finance from central government, it is no wonder that many prominent native

regarded the Councils as impotent. (96) Consultation was denied by the tight administrative control over the councils. (97) The reality of the councils is even more laughable when one considers Hasluck's belief that they were political training centres for natives and would form the basis of further political activity:

"Insofar as it entails working upwards from the village population, the system of village councils is slower than one which concentrates on the advancement of an educated elite only, but, because it means education in citizenship for the people as a whole, the gains it makes are more likely to be sound". (98)

Hasluck's councils were merely an extension of Murray's system of village councillors, and were equally powerless.

Hasluck preferred Murray's grassroots approach to government participation by natives because of his fear of a political elite and his policy of "uniform development" which meant that native participation in government had to be at the lowest level. Murray had set down this policy when he wrote:

"in another generation the lower positions in the Government service will be largely filled by natives". (99)

and when he set up native Assessors to take over the lowest judicial positions.

These ideas formed the basis of Hasluck's educational policy which put into practice Murray's statement in his 1937 Annual Report:

"I am quite opposed to the development of a Papuan intelligentsia, and would rather aim at the diffusion of an elementary education, with a knowledge of English, as far as possible". (100)

Hasluck opposed the establishment of secondary or tertiary education, as it would, he believed, lead to the creation of an intellectual elite. He feared such an elite, not on the grounds of racism on which Murray had opposed it, but because he regarded them as potential "native demagogues" who would become politically aware and constitute a threat to continued Australian political rule and white domination in the Territory:

"Already we face a situation where a small minority of the people might be regarded as advanced while the majority are still living in a primitive state. This situation is one which gives unusual and dangerous opportunities for the native demagogue who claims on behalf of himself or of a minority rights and privileges which should belong to the whole of the people. It is also one that requires us to call on the advanced native people to accept with patience and moderation a wider good for the whole of the people rather than an early serving of their own sectional advantages. We sometimes talk of an 'elite' and our own special responsibility to it. They need to earn that title by the standards they set themselves". (101)

Education was assimilatory, based on Murray's belief that education should "civilise" the native. The teaching of the English language and Christianity became the main aims of primary education, along with the vague "blending of cultures", by which Hasluck meant not a blending at all but total assimilation:

"to change from the social habits and customs of a primitive society to those of a civilised society". (102)

However, Hasluck's fear of an elite prevented natives from becoming totally assimilated and assuming responsible positions in politics and administration: thus Murray's vicious circle was perpetuated. This contradiction was necessitated by Murray and Hasluck's racism: because they believed in white supremacy and native innate inferiority, they were forced into a policy of grassroots assimilation which resulted in neither assimilation nor association. Hasluck's educational policy meant that in the 1960's there were no natives who could assume responsibility in posts which required more than basic literacy, thus no localization could be effective and the emerging political leaders lacked experience. (103)

Like Murray, Hasluck supported white settlement in the form of Australian business interests, whom he believed would be given the dominant role in the "development" of the territory. (104) He too believed that native economic participation would take the form, chiefly, of labour on white plantations, and mistrusted the co-operatives. He wrote:

"the natives will be able to engage in economic activities as soon as their economic interest is awakened and they have achieved the capacity to do so". (105)

Native economic schemes lacked finance and protection and guidance by the government, and Hasluck's policy of government encouragement of expatriates (which Murray had begun in 1906) ruled out this possibility. (106) Hasluck assumed that natives in industry would have very subordinate roles (107)

and in agriculture he wanted natives to become small freeholders producing cash crops, identical to the Australian model. (108) He provided no means whatsoever for this to happen, however, and dismissed the thought that such a change would cause massive social problems:

"there will have to be major movements of people, involving hundreds of thousands of people, if we are all to have a higher standard of living". (109)

This was the opposite of MacGregor's humane refusal to dispossess natives of their land.

Hasluck's policy of white development, which he continued from the Murray period, retarded native economic development, and by creating a class with vested interests in the status quo (that is, in maintaining Australian monopoly in economic, political and administrative fields) created barriers to independence.

MacGregor's aim of establishing a system of indirect rule in British New Guinea was forced into the background, after the failure of his native magistrates system, by the unfavourable conditions under which he worked and the pressure upon him by the Queensland Government to extend his administration. His humane concern for native welfare determined all his policies. Murray rejected MacGregor's aim in the form of a direct, police rule based on the belief that the native was innately inferior and should be given no responsibility in administration. His policy of grassroots assimilation was continued by Hasluck in the form of the concept of uniform development, which was

founded on the old Murray assumptions. Hasluck's native administration was identical to that of Murray in aims, assumptions and practice. Consultation was denied in his local government councils, and his education system, based on a fear of a native elite, meant that effective self-government was retarded indefinitely.

- - - - -

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- (1) Malinowski's work on the Trobriand islanders was done in the early Murray period, and Murray had the benefit of a trained government anthropologist. On Lugard, see Kirke-Greene, A.H.M. The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria 1900-1947. (London, 1965). Also Nicholson, I.P. The Administration of Nigeria 1900-1960. (Oxford, 1969). On the prejudices of MacGregor's time see Bolt, C. Victorian Attitudes to Race. (London, 1971).
- (2) An idea of the direct methods used by MacGregor's unruly staff can be gained from Monckton, C.A.W. Some Experience of a New Guinean Resident Magistrate. (London, 1920).
- (3) Regulation No. 1 of 1890 provided for an Armed Native Constabulary, Regulation No. 1 of 1892 set up the system of Village Constables.
- (6) ENGAR, 1890-1, p27.
- (7) Cited Joyce, R.G. Sir William MacGregor. (London, 1971) p159.
- (8) Cited Miles, J.A. "Local Administration in British New Guinea and Papua". South Pacific. Jan-Feb., 1959, Vol. 10, No. 3, p64.
- (9) ENGAR, 1888-9, p23.
- (10) See Healy, A.M. "Paternalism and Consultation in Papua 1880-1960". A.N.U. Historical Journal. No. 4. Oct. 1967, p21-22.
- (11) ENGAR, 1890-1, p78. Appendix T.

- (12) BNGAR, 1891-2,p34. Appendix I. Ibid,pxx.
- (13) BNGAR, 1892-3,p39-40. Appendix I.
- (14) BNGAR, 1993-4,p52. Appendix L.
- (15) BNGAR, 1896-7,p46. Appendix L.
- (16) BNGAR, 1891-2, pxxxii.
- (18) Cited Joyce, op cit,p126.
- (19) Hair, L.P. Australia in New Guinea. (London, 1948)p24; Hastings, P. New Guinea: Problems and Prospects. (Melbourne, 1969)P48 "MacGregor enthusiastically chased offending cannibals up rivers and across swamps, relentlessly pursued murderers of prospectors and missionaries and laid waste to villages without compunction".
- (20) Minute from the Administrator to Government Secretary. BNGAR, 1890-91,p55.
- (21) MacGregor to Musgrave, Minute No. 185,192,193. PRO records on micro-film 1003(4) Nov-Dec. 1888. "About 1,500 actively concerned, some thousands of sympathisers". Also BNGAR, 1888-9,p12.
- (22) Minutes of Executive Council, January 23, 1891, PRO records on micro-film 1008(1).
- (25) See Wolfers, E.P. "Trusteeship without Trust". in Stevens, F.S. (ed) Racism: The Australian Experience. Vol. 3, Colonialism. (New York, 1972) p66,
- (27) Ibid.
- (28) It is clear that he was thinking in terms of such an elite when he wrote: "It will be my wish to give a small salary to such natives as from their position or intelligence or both can be employed in native administration". MacGregor to Musgrave, September, 1888. IRO records on Microfilm, 1003(4). Enclosure No. 7,126.
- (31) Introduction to Murray. op cit, p27

- (32) "When we arrived there a small number of leading men were seated..on a small platform. On landing, I took possession of this, turning them all off, and allowing no-one there except the two principal chiefs". BNGAR 1891-2,p4. "I did not intend to make my visit to Enamakala one of complacent politeness, as he had done but little to further government work.. The chief was seated on a high bench..with three or four of his principal men sitting in front of him. These I at once turned out and took the high bench, while Enamakala was warned not to interfere.." BNGAR, 1896-7, p.37.
- (33) Ibid,p37.
- (37) See BNGAR, 1891-2. pxxxi;1890-91,pxxvii. Regulation No. 11 of 1894 provided for compulsory planting of coconuts by natives. MacGregor commented on the regulation: See Joyca, op cit, p198.
- (39) Annual Report for the Territory of Papua. 1910-11, p17.
- (40) ARTP. 1906-7,p11.
- (41) ARTP. 1937-8,p20.
- (42) Cited. Dickson, D. "Murray and Education" in New Guinea. Vol. 14, December, 1969, p17.
- (43) Murray, J.H.P. Papua of Today. p63.
- (44) Appendix to ARTP, 1926-7 "Native Custom and the Government of Primitive Races". p124.
- (45) ARTP, 1927-8,p84.
- (46) ARTP, 1927-8,p84.

- (47) ARTP, 1932-3,p23.
- (48) Belshaw, C.S. "The Native Administration in South Eastern Papua". Australian Outlook. Vol. 5. No. 2, 1951, p108-9. His comments apply equally well to the 1960's.
- (49) ARTP, 1924-5,p20.
- (50) ARTP, 1937-8,p20-21.
- (51) West, F.J. Letters of Hubert Murray. (Melbourne, 1971) April, 29, 1918, p101.
- (52) ARTP, 1925-26,p20.
- (53) See Miles, J.A. "Local administration in British New Guinea and Papua." South Pacific, Vol. 10, No. 3, Jan-Feb, 1959, p70-71.
- (54) ARTP, 1931-2,p17.
- (55) Papua of Today, op cit, p218.
- (56) Appendix to ARTP, 1921-2. "Anthropology and the Government of Subject Races." p108.
- (57) See Dickson, op cit, Also: Miles, J.A. "The Development of Native Education in Papua and New Guinea." "South Pacific Vol. 10, No. 6, July-Aug., 1959,
- (58) Letters, Op cit, p52. December 14, 1908.
- (59) ARTP. 1908-9, p11.
- (60) Letters, op cit., p78. November, 3, 1918.
- (62) Letters, op cit, p101. April 29, 1918.
- (63) Ibid.
- (64) 1906 Royal Commission Report. CPP Combined Volume. Murray's evidence. p85.
- (66) Royal Commission Report, op cit, p87.
- (69) As economic development was given top priority, however, most of this aid went to expatriate business interests in the Territory, and back to Australia. "75% of export production is by expatriate companies or individuals and a large proportion of the profits from the export income derived from this sector does not find profitable outlets for investment in the Territory and consequently is repatriated to Australia and elsewhere". "The Economic Development of Papua and New Guinea, p22-23.

- (71) During Hasluck's period most of the new African states gained independence.
- (72) CPD, 30 September, 1959, p1854.
- (73) "Australia's Task in Papua and New Guinea". P.4
- (75) Wilkes, op cit, p78
- (76) CPD, 23 August, 1960, p1453.
- (77) For comparisons between New Guinea and the British Solomons, see: Healy, A.M. "The Comparative Approach"; "Native Administration in the British Solomon Islands". Hogbin, H. "Local Government for New Guinea"; "Native Councils and Native Courts in the Solomons Islands"; "Notes and Instructions to Native Administrations in the British Solomons Islands", Oceania, Vol. 17, Vol. 14, Vol. 16 respectively.
- (78) See Mitchell, G. "Australian Politicians and PNG", New Guinea. April, 1974.
- (79) Wilkes, op cit, p12.
- (80) "Australia's Task in Papua and New Guinea", p21-2.
- (81) "Australia's Task in Papua and New Guinea", p23.
- (82) "Anthropology and the Government of Subject Races" op cit, p125.
- (83) "Australia's Task in Papua and New Guinea", p12.
- (84) ARTP, 1953-4, p38.
- (85) "Present Tasks and Policies" in Wilkes, op cit, p189.
- (86) Healy, A.M. "Administration in the British Solomon Islands", p199.
- (88) Hogbin, H. "Local Government for New Guinea", op cit, gives examples of this practice.
- (92) ARTP, 1956-7, p26. This argument was destroyed in the native administration of the British Solomons, where, with similar conditions, district councils were introduced in 1950, and proved active and effective. See Healy, op cit, p202-3.
- (98) ARTP, 1953-4, p22.

- (100) ARTF, 1937-8, p20.
- (101) Wilkes, op cit, p88.
- (102) "Australian Policy in Papua and New Guinea" p.80.
- (105) Wilkes, op cit, p93.
- (109) Ibid, p20.