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# 'REALLY RATHER LIKE SLAVERY': LAW AND LABOUR IN THE COLONIAL ECONOMY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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*Colonization . . . contained every expression of communal life and every action that seemed to limit or threaten its grip, irrespective of the forms of native political society and the colonial regimes that organised their domination.*

Georges Balandier<sup>1</sup>

THE CLAIM HAS often been made that Australia as a colonist was possessed of a particular, humanitarian virtue. Indeed, in relation to Papua New Guinea, it appears that Australians did not consider themselves colonists at all.<sup>2</sup> However, a look at the reality rather than the rhetoric of its administration in Papua New Guinea shows Australia to be a colonist much like any other. Australia may have been ostensibly a more humane colonist than many, but its record on this can be explained in terms of its position as a late and little imperialist. Contrary explanations in terms of Australian subjective morality and good intentions do not stand up to the facts. This essay will try to illustrate and support this argument in relation to the colonial regulation of wage-labour—an area that is of central importance to the type of colonialism that operated in Papua New Guinea.

The indenture system has been basic to the supply of wage-labour in Papua New Guinea. First, that system and the official view of it will be described here. The official view is then contrasted with the actual operation of the system to show that it was used to tie Papua New Guinea societies into the colonial economy in such a way as to ensure and maintain a supply of cheap labour to that economy. However, it is then suggested that explanation in terms of supply does not fully account for the colonial regulation of labour; one must look also at the threat to the colonist of non-traditional organisation that has a potentiality for class

action. After applying this last type of explanation to the indenture system, it is then applied to more recent colonial labour laws dealing with trade unions and 'industrial relations'. The essay concludes with a brief look at the neo-colonial situation.

### The Indenture System and its Ideology

The indenture system was inherited from the Germans in New Guinea and from the British in Papua; the Australians did not make any basic changes in its legal provisions or in its operation, but initially they did modify the system in the interests of planters.<sup>3</sup> There were two main aspects of the system. First, it was recognized that the 'native' had to be forced to work: he was seen by planters and officials as 'lazy'<sup>4</sup> but even those who apologise for the system now acknowledge that force was needed to some extent because Papua New Guinea generally preferred village life to working on plantations or at mining sites.<sup>5</sup> In any case, the result was that the worker in the indenture system was subject to criminal penalties if, among other things, he 'deserted' his employer or failed to work diligently. To this extent the system was 'really rather like slavery' as Lieutenant-Governor Murray of Papua described it.<sup>6</sup> Unlike slavery, the entry into employment was, in theory, voluntary. The other main aspect of the system—the gesture at justice' as Rowley has put it<sup>7</sup>—comprised measures that purported to protect the 'native' and to assure his welfare. In terms of the Covenant of the League of Nations (which was binding on Australia in the case of New Guinea and accepted as policy in Papua) 'the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation'.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, labour law in Papua and in New Guinea made provision for such things as maximum hours of work and minimum wages and for health, dietary and accommodation standards. The law also provided for the protection of the worker against fraud and cruelty on the part of employers and labour recruiters. A recent academic study says that the law was mostly complied with, and so the system 'on the human level . . . was neither brutal nor particularly oppressive'.<sup>9</sup> As the same account shows, Australia was also concerned to fulfil the 'sacred trust' by seeking to preserve traditional<sup>10</sup> Papua New Guinea societies—to prevent 'detrribalisation' and the creation of a 'landless proletariat'.<sup>11</sup> Hence labour law provided that after a certain period in employment the worker had to be returned to his village and not 're-engaged' under indenture for a certain further period.<sup>12</sup> As well, limitations were, from time to time, imposed to prevent over-recruiting of labour in some areas.

As will be shown later, most of these various protective provisions in the system did not fit the reality of its operation but it should also be mentioned that the provisions themselves were not always beneficent and humane. For much of the colonial period, the minimum wage (which was in practice a maximum wage) was five shillings a month in New Guinea and ten shillings in Papua. To take only one more of many possible instances, the death-rate among labourers, especially on the

goldfields, was frequently extremely high<sup>13</sup> and this was mainly because of the inadequate dietary standards; yet despite official recognition of this, little was done to correct the situation.<sup>14</sup>

More generally, the 'native' must be '[raised] . . . eventually to the highest civilisation of which he is capable' but the process must not be rushed.<sup>15</sup> It was believed by the colonists (ostensibly anyway) that requiring the 'native' to work on plantations and at mines was part of the 'sacred trust' because to so work was a civilising influence and the best sort of education the 'native' could get. As for 'economic development', this could only be developed by Europeans; apart from some limited cash-cropping, the only role the Papua New Guinean could play in development was that of labourer for the European.<sup>16</sup> Altogether, this was a neat and omni-sufficient ideology.

### The System in Operation

Mair has said of 'conditions in practice' in New Guinea:

Where conditions of work were concerned the pressure of economic demand was stronger than humanitarian considerations. Rapid development, it was argued, was in the interests of the whole country, and therefore of course in those of the native population; it must not be hampered by pedantic insistence on the letter of the law. The plantations had had to encounter every kind of difficulty, and should not have their burdens increased beyond what they could bear. Inspection was in any case inadequate, and officers who were anxious to enforce the prescribed conditions felt that they could not count on support from headquarters.<sup>17</sup>

Papua was basically no different. In fact, in Papua and in New Guinea, breaches of the law by employers were flagrant, widespread and usually uncorrected, and in the early days of Australian rule, labour-related atrocities were common.<sup>18</sup> Rowley, a knowledgeable and sensitive observer, saw 'the (long illegal) use or threat of violence as the basic labour incentive'.<sup>19</sup> Nor is all this of the past. For example, breaches of the minimum-wage provisions have in recent times been common in the Highlands and perhaps also in the rural areas generally.<sup>20</sup> Officially-recorded complaints by workers that on the face of them could warrant prosecution, run into hundreds and sometimes thousands each year, but prosecutions of employers are few.<sup>21</sup>

The ethos in which the law operated was hardly conducive to compliance with it or to its adequate enforcement. The employer had ready access to a white man's court to enforce his side of the labour laws, but the Papua New Guinean had, in practical terms, almost no access to courts to enforce his side. Enforcement of his side depended on a system of official inspection which was grossly inadequate.<sup>22</sup> As Rowley has noted, it was 'all too commonly the case for officials to regard as their duty assistance to employers'.<sup>23</sup> Generous allowance was made, sometimes in the law and always by officials in its enforcement, if employers found it difficult or impossible to comply. Even where they were inclined to take action, officials have always operated on a 'warning' basis that gives

the employer a chance to rectify his breach of the law.<sup>24</sup> If the law or the officials were not adequately sympathetic, then planters could resort to their pressure group associations and their usually strong representation in colonial legislatures.<sup>25</sup>

The plantation itself (and to a lesser extent the mine) was a 'total institution'—a 'small state'—with the employer as the ruler.<sup>26</sup> As an illustration of this, there was legal power given to employers for a time in Australian New Guinea, to mete out 'disciplinary punishments' (confinement or fines).<sup>27</sup> The worker could only participate in the wider economy through the employer;<sup>28</sup> this position was emphasised in the law which said that, whilst indentured, the worker could not enter into any other contract apart from his contract of employment. Generally, and in terms of preserving a correct order in the 'small state', it was for some time an offence for a worker 'to create or foster a bad influence among his fellow workers', and such has usually been a sufficient ground for terminating his employment contract.

The practice of the system is vividly reflected by the people's response to it. Usually they chose not to 'sign on'<sup>29</sup> again after a period under indenture and, on the available figures, almost 4 per cent of the indentured workforce 'deserted' each year. Desertion is particularly significant for there were so many pressures on the labourer to stay: as well as the standard criminal sanctions against 'desertion', the 'deserter' stood to lose his deferred pay (half of his wages were, by law, accumulated for payment on expiry of the indenture). He would usually find himself in a strange and hostile area; even if he got home he could be in trouble with the traditional leader who perhaps had him recruited, and there would still be the economic pressure of the 'native tax' forcing him to return or to find work elsewhere.

As for enforcement, if the available figures are taken for the whole colonial period (which means confining the figures to New Guinea), the 'native labour' laws were, up to and including the year 1950-51, enforced ten times more against workers than against employers.<sup>30</sup> After 1950-51 (most of the penal sanctions against workers having been abolished at the end of 1950), convictions of employers decreased sharply. The average number of convictions of employers then was 7.56 a year with long periods when there were hardly any at all.<sup>31</sup> For the whole of Papua New Guinea there were only three employers convicted between December 1969 and March 1976 inclusive.<sup>32</sup> Nor did conviction for an offence under the 'native labour' laws hold much terror for an employer. He was fined but never imprisoned. For the available figures from New Guinea the average fine per conviction of an employer was A\$5.80. Fines have increased recently but not very significantly. The average fine per conviction of an employer for Papua New Guinea between December 1969 and May 1976 inclusive was A\$53.00.

### Maintaining the Labour Supply

Development theory of the conventional varieties sees traditional society

as eventually being transformed and replaced in the process of 'modernisation' and as, in the meantime, being a block (in many ways) to such progressive change. However in the perspective of theories of 'underdevelopment'<sup>33</sup> the advance of the capitalist economy 'partly derives from the extraction of cheap factors of production from the . . . [traditional] sector thereby maintaining its backwardness'.<sup>34</sup> More particularly, colonialism (or at least colonialism of a variety relevant to Papua New Guinea) involves 'using the economic basis characteristic of lineage society to establish the conditions of transition to capitalism'.<sup>35</sup> But the transition is and remains ambiguous for, as Bettelheim has put it, 'the main tendency is not to dissolution of the non-capitalist modes of production but to their *conservation-dissolution*'.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, and in contrast to only transforming traditional society, capitalism has 'imparted a certain *solidity*' to it, as Banaji has put it. Further, Banaji would see the capitalist and traditional elements as forming a distinct, interdependent combination in a 'colonial mode of production'.<sup>37</sup> Meillassoux has put the emphasis on labour supply as the reason for conserving traditional society and this emphasis fits the Papua New Guinea case. For him, 'the agricultural self-sustaining communities' form 'an organic component of capitalist production' in, basically, performing the 'functions of social security' that capitalism avoids in the colonial situation.<sup>38</sup> To elaborate on this: the worker's wage is enough for his sustenance while working and for his and his family's tax (and there is sometimes a small savings component); traditional society continues to support the worker's family, to support the worker when he is not under indenture as a result of compulsory repatriation, illness or old age and, generally, it bears the cost of maintaining the supply of labour.

In Papua New Guinea, capitalist penetration and the indentured labour system in particular have certainly made in part for the 'dissolution' of traditional society.<sup>39</sup> But traditional society has reacted in ways that make for, or are consistent with, its 'conservation'. The introduction of time-saving technologies in the period of initial trade and also later in the colonial period, as well as the reduction in warfare in the latter period, led to the strengthening of traditional forms of organisation.<sup>40</sup> These factors also created space, as it were, in the village to accommodate the absence of some men under indenture.<sup>41</sup> The indenture system, as Rowley has indicated,<sup>42</sup> helped in the 'conservation' of traditional society. Admittedly, restrictions on recruiting were not always enforced, but the repatriation laws were closely administered, and it is indicative of their adequate enforcement that employers constantly complained about them. The tendency of workers not to 'sign-on' for a further period under indenture, combined with the application of these conservation-oriented laws, had the effect of pushing the 'labour frontier' further and further back.<sup>43</sup> So whilst a new frontier was being tapped, pressure on supply within the frontier was lessened, and this development greatly facilitated the aim of conservation. Other important aspects of the 'native labour' laws can be explained in terms of conservation,<sup>44</sup> and it is also in the light

of such an explanation that the basis for the Australian ideology described earlier becomes clearer. As Wolpe has put it:

Indeed, it is in part the very attempt to conserve and *control* the non-capitalist societies in the face of the tendency of capitalist development to disintegrate them and thereby to undermine the basis of exploitation, that accounts for political policies and ideologies which centre on cultural, ethnic, national and racial characteristics.<sup>45</sup>

The colonist was also able to build on and 'solidify' particular aspects of traditional society that helped in supplying labour. This was done through using existing inequalities<sup>46</sup> and patterns of authority in Papua New Guinea societies.<sup>47</sup> It was common practice for labour recruiters to use persons in authority to put pressure on young men to 'sign-on' and for this purpose a 'bonus' was paid and, it would appear, some leaders became very wealthy in the process.<sup>48</sup> In this way traditional authority lent itself also to the maintenance of the labour contract: the returning 'deserter' could incur the displeasure of the traditional leader who had him recruited and this leader would often be or would have control over a *luluai* - a 'native' official appointed by the colonial administration. This factor should be added to the earlier description of the worker's dependence and isolation (he was usually far from the labour frontier where he was recruited), to explain why he served out his contract. On the figures mentioned earlier, convictions of New Guineans under the 'native labour' laws averaged (up to 1950-51) 652 a year, and 93 per cent of these convictions were for 'desertion' or failure to work or 'perform duty'. The number of workers convicted in any year was only a very small proportion of the total number under indenture, but this factor does not exhaust the significance of these laws. As shown earlier, the law, in its enforcement and administration generally, was almost totally biased in favour of the employer; this patent bias would have made the isolation of the worker more than geographical, and would have underscored his dependence. Other legal measures were influential on the supply side. The 'native tax' was used to create a need for cash and thus force people into wage-labour.<sup>49</sup> Also, and in contrast to the German record, for much of the colonial period, Australian legal measures discouraged cash-cropping and cash-crop processing among New Guineans, and this restricted a source of money to pay the tax--a source that successfully competed, in attractiveness, with wage-labour.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps similar supply considerations lay behind the provision, for a time, of a legal *maximum* wage (ten shillings a month) in New Guinea, since a higher wage would enable the tax of more people to be paid, and thus decrease the pressure on the people to seek wage-labour.

#### The Colonist and Non-Traditional Organisation

The fact of the labour frontier indicates that 'native labour' laws, in seeking to conserve traditional society, were not just concerned with preserving the source of the labour supply. To the extent that labour continued to be supplied from within the frontier, it would often be the case

that such a limited supply would not threaten particular traditional societies, if the repatriation laws were not applied. Yet, in the face of contrary pressures from planters, the colonial administration continued to enforce the repatriation provisions without distinction. Dealings in land were also strictly controlled with the aim of preserving the traditional society as a supplier of labour, yet such control was also exercised within the labour frontier.<sup>51</sup> For the towns a detailed system of laws dealing with curfews, migration, 'vagrancy', residence location and recreation was used to restrict severely the extent to which Papua New Guineans could stay and could associate together in towns.<sup>52</sup> These laws can be explained in terms of facilitating repatriation of workers, but in this regard they import such a high element of 'overkill' as to prompt further examination.

The explanation suggested here is grounded in Australia's position in Papua New Guinea. Australia was a relatively 'weak' colonist.<sup>53</sup> Despite rapid economic expansion in the early days of Australian rule both New Guinea and, especially, Papua were economically stagnant and weak, and very little interest in them or support came from Australia until the rapid expansion of Australian involvement after the second world war.<sup>54</sup> This weakness was aggravated by the ever-receding labour frontier, and other related factors which resulted in the capitalist economy being too widely dispersed.<sup>55</sup> Australia, in its typical colonial concern to protect its own monopoly, kept out non-Australian or non-British interests.<sup>56</sup> Britain was past its expansionist phase. Australia itself, so it has been said, was preoccupied with its own continent and lacked the 'surplus energy' necessary for external colonisation.<sup>57</sup> A more incisive explanation could explore the limitations arising out of Australia's own dependence or 'satellite' status as a colony and neo-colony.<sup>58</sup>

The Australian colonist, with some accuracy then, perceived his position as weak and precarious.<sup>59</sup> Several events could serve to instance this perspective but perhaps the most powerfully indicative was the Rabaul strike of 1929. This was a 'peaceful and purposeful'<sup>60</sup> strike of almost all the New Guinean workers in Rabaul (including the New Guinean police) which was so effectively organised in terms of solidarity that no white resident knew of it until it had happened. The Australian response was swift, fearful and furious and resulted in the infliction of draconic punishments on the leaders of the strike. This response indicated that what most concerned the colonist was the ability of the people to combine across ethnic divisions.<sup>61</sup>

It is well recognized that migratory labour systems make the class organisation of workers difficult if not impossible.<sup>62</sup> What the foregoing points to show is that one aspect of the indenture system or 'native labour' laws, and of other functionally related colonial laws, is a concern to counter organisation outside of the traditional context and independently of the colonist—a type of organisation that could be said to have potentiality for class action. The actual threat involved to the colonist was doubtless much less than that perceived by him, and it would now

seem that, given Australia's relatively 'weak' colonial penetration and the geographical dispersal of capitalist economic development, it was most unlikely that any potent working-class organisation would have emerged anyway.

### The Emergence of Free Labour and The Quasi-Indenture System

To be an effective means of containment and control, the indenture system had to cover all or almost all employees. But the law did allow some very limited exceptions—sometimes for employment near the worker's home and other times for short periods of employment. Through these exceptions a non-indentured or 'free' labour force emerged, and the exceptions themselves were progressively widened. After the greater Australian involvement from the end of the second world war, the indenture system could no longer meet the demand for labour. It was also inconsistent with investment in the needed development of a more skilled workforce. The non-indentured workforce grew fairly rapidly and by 1950, it has been suggested, a 'free' labour force had emerged, 'forced to rely on the European for existence'.<sup>63</sup> This would fit neatly with the abolition of the indenture system at the end of 1950. It might be said that with 'free' labour the legal controls of the indenture system were no longer apposite or needed, but other more appropriate legal controls may be seen as needed to contain this new labour force.

This needs some qualification. The labour force was not free in the classical (and paradoxical) sense of being totally dependent on wages; even to-day it seems to be the unusual case where land and subsistence livelihood are not available to the Papua New Guinean.<sup>64</sup> Also at this stage 33 per cent of the total workforce was still under indenture.<sup>65</sup> The abolition of the indenture system was a consequence of the 'new deal' promised by the Australian Labor Government after the second world war. However, this abolition of the system and its replacement by the 'agreement system' amounted to little more than a change in name. The basic structure of the system (especially the repatriation provisions) remained unchanged, but most of the penal provisions, such as those requiring workers to be diligent and not to desert, were repealed. To a considerable extent, at least initially, the system 'survived by bluff'; officials would act as if the penal provisions still existed and the worker, not having heard otherwise, would usually fall into line. Further, an alternative type of sanction was then introduced: this involved a simple type of court action whereby, on certain grounds, an employer (and, on other grounds, a worker) could apply to the court to have the employment contract terminated and to have 'damages' paid out of the worker's deferred pay. The grounds included such as being absent from work for more than seven days, and 'exerting a bad influence on his fellow workers'. Taking the New Guinea figures referred to earlier, the average number of court orders of this type made annually in favour of employers was 549 (the average number a year in favour of workers was five) and this figure

was quite on a par with the pre-1950 level of convictions of workers under the penal provisions of the indentured labour system.<sup>66</sup>

Any foreseeable risk in 'abolishing' the indenture system was more than off-set by the opening up of the Highlands—the greatest labour frontier of them all. The Highlands Labour Scheme was introduced because the supply of indentured labour was drying up.<sup>67</sup> It was a massive recruiting operation run by the colonial administration.<sup>68</sup> Although the scheme did not formally come into operation until the end of 1951, it had, effectively, been operating on a trial basis for two years before that. By the time the indenture system was purportedly abolished and replaced by the 'agreement' system at the end of 1950, 14 per cent of the indentured workforce had been supplied through the Highlands Labour Scheme; within a further fifteen years more than half the indentured or 'agreement' workforce was supplied through the Scheme.<sup>69</sup>

The 'free' or non-indentured labour force increased in the 1950s (from 33,927 in 1950 to 41,746 in 1960), and the increase was much more rapid in the 1960s (to 93,771 in 1968). Changes were made in the 'native labour' law in 1958 to broaden the exceptions under which employment could be entered into outside the indenture or agreement system. The number of workers in the indenture system peaked in 1960 and thereafter gradually declined.<sup>70</sup> On 28 March 1963, all restrictions in the 'native labour' law on entering into employment outside the indenture system, were abolished. On the same day new legal methods of controlling labour came into effect—the trade union and industrial relations legislation.

### Trade Union and Industrial Relations Legislation

The first Papua New Guinean trade union was an organisation of workers based in the capital and founded in 1960; it emerged out of an ethnic association set up in 1958. These bodies had political as well as 'industrial' aims and they strongly (for the times) asserted both.<sup>71</sup> Hasluck, the then Australian minister with responsibility for Papua New Guinea, was quick to provide assistance for the union in pressing its industrial claims. As a result, the union was instrumental in obtaining, in 1960, a doubling of the minimum wage in certain urban areas. In 1960, also, a union based in Madang was formed arising out of a prior ethnic association. Soon after, unions were formed in Lae and Rabaul and in the next few years several more were formed in other urban areas.<sup>72</sup>

Of these first two unions the colonial administration said that 'special attention is being given to such organisations to ensure that they are founded on sound principles and develop along constructive lines . . .'<sup>73</sup> Until these unions were formed, it was officially thought that the time was not ripe for trade unions, basically because the people would not be able to organise them, and so administration 'protection' of the worker would have to continue. On 15 August 1961, Hasluck announced a major change in approach. He said that 'new labour measures' would be introduced; these would be of particular 'interest' to an emerging group of

'urban workers' who were not greatly in need of protection. These changes quite explicitly anticipated the accelerated 'development' that Australia would promote in the sixties.<sup>74</sup> Hasluck instanced co-operatives and local government councils (previously successful efforts at colonial containment<sup>75</sup>) as indicating that reliance could be placed on officials 'to give impartial and disinterested counsel and guidance to those wishing to form a trade union, and to arrange for the training on accepted lines of their union officers'. He saw the measures themselves as being 'the minimum necessary' and as leaving 'as much room as possible' for Papua New Guineans to work things out their own way. Dr Gunther, the then Deputy Administrator, in introducing the new measures to the colonial legislature in 1961, was even more disarming:

Quite simply the purpose of this ['industrial organisations'] Bill is to recognize the existence of such formal organisations, and to regulate their existence so that they will best serve the purpose for which their members came together . . . It can be said that the Bill generally is a fairly standard piece of industrial legislation providing for the prevention and settlement of dispute.<sup>76</sup>

But he did add that registration as an 'industrial organisation' would be compulsory because of the 'relatively great degree of supervision, and perhaps assistance', that trade unions would need, and because without this compulsion there would be 'a strong likelihood' of unions being used 'for purposes which were basically non-industrial, perhaps subversive'.<sup>77</sup>

It was quite clear by 1960, that the rapid growth of trade unions in the Third World after the second world war was due more to growing demand of colonised peoples for freedom than to 'industrial unrest' narrowly conceived.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps as a result, we find in this 'fairly standard piece of industrial legislation'<sup>79</sup> that political affiliation by trade unions is obliquely but effectively prohibited, and strikes by organised workers are in effect prohibited.<sup>80</sup> The 'industrial organisations' law makes it an offence for any person to manage or act for an unregistered trade union. The Registrar of Industrial Organisations has wide powers of supervision and control over registered trade unions. In their internal ordering, trade unions are subjected to a system of complex and detailed legal rules. For various and numerous infractions, individual unions can be de-registered by the Registrar and thus it would become an offence, then, to manage or act for them.

The actual operation of these new laws followed and refined their general orientation. Under the guise of the new policy 'to facilitate the growth of industrial organisations',<sup>81</sup> officials became closely involved in the affairs of trade unions, sometimes going to great lengths to sustain trade union organisation. Trade unions were clearly meant to integrate organised workers into a controlled system of 'industrial relations'.<sup>82</sup> Officials typically claim that were it not for their involvement unions would not exist at all. A former head of the Department of Labour has said that the colonial administration could not wait for trade unions to

develop 'entirely from below' because opposing political views could otherwise gain a foothold;<sup>83</sup> and another former head has said off the record that his aim was to create 'tame-cat' unions. Moderate observers find the system under the new measures repressive and restrictive; they see the legislation and its enforcement as smothering and hindering rather than helping union activity.<sup>84</sup>

### The Neo-Colonial Situation

Following through on a few significant themes, it can be said that the capitalist economy in Papua New Guinea in the neo-colonial situation leans only somewhat less heavily on traditional society for maintaining its labour supply; the dependence of traditional society for its own maintenance upon the capitalist economy (and on wage-labour) has increased.<sup>85</sup> So the two are now more 'naturally' integrated, and many of the colonial legal controls can be and have been eased. But the economic basis and the structures of containment and control remain unchanged in some important ways. As Meillassoux has noted generally 'through low wages and precarious employment the labourer is periodically expelled from the capitalist sector and sent back to the rural areas', so conservation of traditional (or some other alternative) society remains an 'absolute requirement' for these labourers.<sup>86</sup> The rural subsistence alternative appears to remain open generally to the Papua New Guinean worker. As indicated earlier, the conservation of traditional society was rationalised ideologically by the colonist in terms of racial division. Such an ideology is no longer conspicuously admitted, but it may be that the new ethnological ideology emphasising 'Papua New Guinean ways'<sup>87</sup> can serve a similar function.

Looking in more detail at the continuing exploitation of traditional society, it is evident that the minimum wage, from its inception in 1960 until 1972, was related to the needs of a 'single man' only.<sup>88</sup> Since then, some allowance has been made for a worker's family but the basic dependence on the traditional society remains, especially for rural workers. Moreover 'equity' and other arguments used by economists now serve to legitimize the holding down of urban wages, by comparing them to the actual and notional income of the villager in traditional society.<sup>89</sup>

New legislation purportedly doing away with the 'agreement' or quasi-indenture system is said to be imminent. Yet legislation with a similar aim has been in the system for many years—despite which, the changes it provided for were basically ones of nomenclature. What makes it further unlikely that the indenture system will really be done away with soon is that the Highlands Labour Scheme has been vigorously defended by the Minister responsible for labour in terms more than reminiscent of those of his former colonial rulers.<sup>90</sup> Other legal changes have been more substantial.<sup>91</sup> Most of the repressive colonial system regulating migration to, and residence and association in, towns was done away with in the 1960s and some of the last vestiges went in 1976. However 'vagrancy' laws continue to be rigorously enforced against those having

'insufficient lawful means of support' which, in practice, appears to mean those without formal sector employment.<sup>92</sup> The colonial trade union and industrial relations laws continue to apply, and there appears to be no substantial move on foot to liberalise them.

From the end of the second world war, the Australian administration encouraged Papua New Guinean capitalist-type farmers and, later, pastoralists (again building on the traditional base). Less enthusiastically and less successfully, from the early sixties it encouraged urban 'businessmen'. The considerable number of Papua New Guinean employers emerging through these developments appear to be just as exploitative of their workers as the Europeans.<sup>93</sup> In order to encourage such 'entrepreneurs' the Department of Labour has a policy of not prosecuting them for breaches of legislation protective of workers.<sup>94</sup> Moves have been made by some Papua New Guinean employers and by officials on their behalf formally to allow them to pay less than the otherwise required minimum wage.

*Those who are certain to gain by the offering  
Demand a spirit of sacrifice.*

Brecht

### NOTES

- 1 Georges Balandier, *Political Anthropology* (Allen Lane The Penguin Press, London, 1970) p.160. In preparing this paper I have been indebted in various ways to Robert Wanji, Ken Good, Donald Denoon, Rex Mortimer, Utz Wellner and Hank Nelson.
- 2 For some examples see *Report . . . on the Administration of the Territory of New Guinea for Years 1914-21*, p.14 (hereafter referred to as *New Guinea Report*, with the appropriate year or years added); and Hank Nelson, *Papua New Guinea: Black Unity or Black Chaos?* (Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1974), p.84, quoting a former Minister in the Australian government with responsibility for Papua New Guinea. See also C.D. Rowley, *The New Guinea Villager: A Retrospect from 1964* (Cheshire, Melbourne, 1972) p.7; W.J. Hudson, Introduction in W.J. Hudson (ed.), *Australia and Papua New Guinea* (Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1971); and E.P. Wolfers, 'Trusteeship Without Trust: A Short History of Interracial Relations and the Law in Papua and New Guinea', in F.S. Stevens (ed.), *Racism: The Australian Experience* vol. 3 (Australia & New Zealand Book Company, Sydney, 1972), p.75. Of course Australia is far from unique as a colonial power in the belief in its superior benevolence.
- 3 For New Guinea see *New Guinea Report 1914-21* p.12, and R.F. Salisbury, *Vunamami: Economic Transformation in a Traditional Society* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1970) p.40; and for Papua J.D. Legge, *Australian Colonial Policy: A Survey of Native Administration and Development in Papua* (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1956), pp.156-7.
- 4 H.N. Nelson, 'European Attitudes in Papua, 1906-1914', in The University of Papua and New Guinea, *Second Waigani Seminar: The History of Melanesia* (Research School of Pacific Studies, Canberra and The University of Papua and New Guinea, Port Moresby, 1969), pp.600-1. Generally Lieutenant-Governor Murray put it that for 'people at so low a stage of evolution . . . argument and moral suasion [do not] have very much influence. . . [and] advance must be made with the sanction of Ordinances and Regulations', (*Territory of Papua, Annual Report for . . . 1919-20*, p.111). This was from a presidential address to the Anthropology Section of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science.
- 5 For example, D.W. Smith, *Labour and the Law in Papua New Guinea* (Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1975), p.20. This acknowledgement is implicit here in the acceptance of 'primitive affluence' as a factor in restraining supply.

- 6 Hubert Murray, *The Scientific Method as Applied to Native Labour Problems in Papua* (Government Printer, Port Moresby, 1931), p.9.
- 7 C.D. Rowley, 'The Occupation of German New Guinea', in W.J. Hudson (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.66.
- 8 B. Jinks, P. Biskup & H. Nelson (edd.), *Readings in New Guinea History* (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1973), p.121.
- 9 D.W. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp.31, 33, 37.
- 10 'Traditional' is used throughout the essay but this or any other 'fixed' category must be unsatisfactory in this context.
- 11 D.W. Smith, *op. cit.*, chapter 2. This concern could be seen as legitimised also by the similar thrust of the I.L.O. *Recruiting of Indigenous Workers Convention* No. 50 of 1936.
- 12 The law on this has changed often, but generally in Papua a worker had to be returned to his village after no more than three years and, in New Guinea, after no more than four and a half years.
- 13 For example, 'expressed as a percentage of the average number of labourers in the Northern Division [of Papua] the death rate varied from about 30 per cent in 1898/99 to 10 per cent in 1903/04, and even in later years it was probably never less than 5 per cent'. (H.N. Nelson, *Black, White and Gold: Goldmining in Papua New Guinea 1878-1930* [Ph.D. Thesis, Department of History, University of Papua New Guinea, 1975], p.313.)
- 14 See *Territory of Papua, Annual Report for . . . 1915-16*, p.25. *New Guinea Report 1924-25*, p.11; and J.D. Legge, 'The Murray Period: Papua 1906-40' and Margriet Roe, 'Papua-New Guinea and War 1941-5', in W.J. Hudson (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.89 and 144 respectively.
- 15 B. Jinks *et al.* (edd.), *op. cit.*, p.118 quoting Murray, and Don Woolford, 'Blacks, Whites . . . and the Awful Press', *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 8, 4 (January 1974), p.15.
- 16 See A.P. Power, *A Study of Development in Niugini from 1880 to 1940* (M.A. Thesis, Department of History of Science and Technology, University of Papua New Guinea, 1974), pp.5, 91, 186.
- 17 L.P. Mair, *Australia in New Guinea* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1970), p.184.
- 18 For some general indication see for Papua, H.N. Nelson, *loc. cit.*, footnote 13 and, for New Guinea, Ian Willis, *Lae: Village and City* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1974), pp.70-1.
- 19 C.D. Rowley, *op. cit.*, p.115.
- 20 For the Highlands see H.C. Brookfield, 'Native Employment in the New Guinea Highlands', *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 70, 3 (1961) p.306, and J.E. Isaac *The Structure of Unskilled Wages and Relativities between Rural and Non-Rural Employment in Papua and New Guinea* (Port Moresby, 1970), p.24. For rural areas generally see Public Service Association of Papua New Guinea, *Submission to National Minimum Wage Enquiry* (no date), p.5: this is an analysis of 1972 figures submitted by employers to the Department of Labour which strongly suggests widespread breaches of the minimum wage law in rural areas. One cannot be categorical about the figures because the classifications used in collecting the information are too crude. They do not include the actual minimum wage figure as a wage-level category marker and no allowance is made for part-time and piece-work arrangements.
- 21 For example in New Guinea for the year 1959-60 there were 2286 such complaints and seven prosecutions (*New Guinea Report 1959-60*, pp.237-8).
- 22 The New Guinea law for much of its history provided merely for an annual inspection of the plantation or mine but even this requirement was often not complied with. See also D.W. Smith, *op. cit.*, p.31.
- 23 C.D. Rowley, *op. cit.*, p.104.
- 24 Here and in a few places later I am relying on information supplied by officers of the Department of Labour. The information was not supplied with publication in view so, unsatisfactory as it may be, I cannot adequately attribute these points. Cf. on softening criminality for employers, E.H. Sutherland, *White Collar Crime* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1961), p.35.
- 25 Heather Radi, 'New Guinea under Mandate 1921-41', in W.J. Hudson (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.121, and A.P. Power, *op. cit.*, pp.180, 188-9.
- 26 G.L. Beckford, *Persistent Poverty: Underdevelopment in Plantation Economies of the Third World* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1972), p.19.
- 27 *New Guinea Report 1914-21*, p.51 (section 49).
- 28 The worker depended on the employer for the basics of life (provided as part of his wage in kind) and, besides tax, often the only outlet for his cash wage was the employer's

- store.
- 29 Here and elsewhere in the text there is a deliberate ambiguity in talking about people not 'signing-on' again. In New Guinea a worker could renew his contract for a further period before returning home. On the figures in the *New Guinea Reports*, the great majority chose not to do this. One reason could have been that they wanted to go home but would still sign on later. But there was a fairly general aversion to working under indenture once experienced.
- 30 This figure and the rest of the New Guinea figures in the paper are derived from a necessarily hefty sample of half the years of Australia's rule in New Guinea. The figures (where available) for the years so selected were then extracted from the Annual Reports covering those years and the calculations in the text were derived from those figures.
- 31 For all of Papua New Guinea from 1961 to 1970 inclusive there were only four convictions of employers.
- 32 This figure comes from a survey of Labour Department files. It is possible but unlikely that all of the relevant files were not found.
- 33 Most notably propounded by A.G. Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1971), and Keith Griffin, *Underdevelopment in Spanish America: An Interpretation* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1969).
- 34 Henry Bernstein & Michael Pitt, 'Plantations and Modes of Exploitation', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 1, 4 (July 1974), p.516.
- 35 Georges Dupre and Pierre-Philippe Rey, 'Reflections on the Prevalence of Theory of the History of Exchange', *Economy and Society* 2, 2 (May 1973), p.147.
- 36 Charles Bettelheim, 'Appendix 1: Theoretical Comments by Charles Bettelheim', in Arghiri Emmanuel, *Unequal Exchange: A Study of the Imperialism of Trade* (Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1972), p.298 (his emphasis).
- 37 Jairus Banaji, 'Backward Capitalism, Primitive Accumulation and Modes of Production', *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 3 (1973), p.395 (his emphasis).
- 38 Claud Meillassoux, 'From Reproduction to Production: A Marxist Approach to Economic Anthropology', *Economy and Society* 1, 1 (February 1972), p.102.
- 39 See for example Mervyn Meggitt, 'From Tribesmen to Peasants: the Case of the Mac Enga of New Guinea', in E.R. Hiatt & C. Jayawardena (edd.), *Anthropology in Oceania: Essays Presented to Ian Hogbin* (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1971), and for the indentured labour system, Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of "Cargo" Cults in Melanesia* (Granada Publishing, London, 1971), p.50.
- 40 Perhaps the best known study on this point is R.F. Salisbury, *From Stone to Steel: Economic Consequences of a Technological Change in New Guinea* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1962).
- 41 Peter Lawrence, *Road Belong Cargo: A Study of the Cargo Movement in the Southern Madang District New Guinea* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1964), p.228.
- 42 C.D. Rowley, *op. cit.*, pp.90, 102, 104.
- 43 H.C. Brookfield with Doreen Hart, *Melanesia: A Geographical Interpretation of an Island World* (Methuen and Co., London, 1971), p.264.
- 44 To take one instance, the colonial administration has basically only ever allowed the 'signing-on' of 'single' men and this despite a professed concern with homosexuality on plantations and despite occasional pressure from employers to promote the recruitment of families. The law did make provision for wives to accompany workers but this provision was so hedged about and put such greater obligations on the employer that it was rarely availed of. Allowing families to reside near the workplace would tend more towards the dissolution of traditional society and the creation of a permanent wage-labour force.
- 45 Harold Wolpe, 'The Theory of Internal Colonialism: The South African Case', in Ivar Oxaal, Tony Barnett & David Booth (edd.), *Beyond the Sociology of Development: Economy and Society in Latin America and Africa* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Boston, 1975), p.244 (his emphasis).
- 46 This may be thought somewhat of a heresy as it is common to assert that Papua New Guinean societies are, or at least were, equalitarian but even in those societies (the great majority) where 'status' is said to be 'achieved' rather than 'ascribed' there are deep inequalities. See for example, Andrew Strathern, *The Rope of Moka: Big-men and Ceremonial Exchange in Mount Hagen, New Guinea* (The University Press, Cambridge, 1971), p.205-8.
- 47 See R.F. Salisbury, 'Despotism and Australian Administration in the New Guinea Highlands', in James B. Watson (ed.), *New Guinea: The Central Highlands* (Special Publication, *American Anthropologist*, 66 (1964) and cf. Paula Brown, 'From Anarchy to Satrapy', *American Anthropologist* 65, 1 (1963). See also A.L. Epste, *Matupit: Land,*

- Politics, and Change among the Tolai of New Britain* (Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1969), 18-19.
- 48 See C.D. Rowley, *The Australians in German New Guinea 1914-1921* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1958), pp.124-5, and L.P. Mair, *op. cit.*, pp.193-4. S.G. Firth, *German Recruitment and Employment of Labourers in the Western Pacific before the First World War* (D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford, 1973) notes (p.146) that the village 'chief' selected by the Germans in New Guinea could be relied upon for a reasonable offering of 'free recruits' for planters. E.W. Docker, *The Blackbirders: The Recruiting of South Seas Labour for Queensland, 1863-1907* (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1970) has instanced alliances between recruiters and chiefs in the New Hebrides (p.149) and the Solomons (p.234).
- 49 This was done explicitly in New Guinea (S.W. Reed, *The Making of Modern New Guinea* [The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1943], p.149). But the claim has been made that this was not the intention (even though it was the effect) in Papua (Legge, *loc. cit.*, as in footnote 14, p.47). Murray, *op. cit.*, p.4 supports a similar claim by pointing out that in Papua the worker whilst under indenture does not have to pay the tax. Surely this would be an added incentive to 'sign-on'.
- 50 See Peter Lawrence, *op. cit.*, pp.45 and 227, Heather Radi, *loc. cit.*, 107-8, and J.K. McCarthy, *Patrol into Yesterday: My New Guinea Years* (Cheshire, Melbourne, 1963) pp.79-81.
- 51 C.D. Rowley, *The New Guinea Villager: A Retrospect from 1964*, p.90. From the colonist's perspective, controlling land dealings could be explained in terms of the 'sacred trust'. The reason most commonly given was that 'native' land had to be protected from predatory Europeans. To fit that reason however, it would only have been necessary to control dealings between 'natives' and Europeans as was done in British New Guinea. However, no dealings outside 'customary' transactions were allowed unless done under the control of the colonial administration.
- 52 For a general account see R.T. Jackson, P. Fitzpatrick & Loraine Blaxter, 'The Law and Urbanisation' in Richard Jackson (ed.), *An Introduction to the Urban Geography of Papua New Guinea* (University of Papua New Guinea, Department of Geography, Occasional Paper No. 13, 1976).
- 53 The most apt contrast would be with the 'strong' colonisation within Australia itself—a colonisation that totally dominates the indigenous population. But this is not to deny that the degree of Australia's penetration in Papua New Guinea was quite extensive. 2.08 per cent of the land was alienated to Europeans and most of this was alienated in the early days of colonisation, but probably only about 12 per cent of the total land area is suitable for cash-cropping. On the 12 per cent figure, see Tony Barnett, *Land and People in Papua New Guinea: A Discussion Paper* (Central Planning Office and United Nations Development Programme, 1976), p.8.
- 54 A.P. Power, *op. cit.*, pp.82-6, 228. Overall, Australia does not seem to have been a case of profitable colonialism (E.K. Fisk & Maree Tait, 'Aid', in W.J. Hudson (ed.), *Australia's New Guinea Question* (Nelson, Melbourne, 1975), pp.116-17).
- 55 H.C. Brookfield, *Colonialism, Development and Independence: The case of the Melanesian Islands in the South Pacific* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1972), pp.51-2.
- 56 Edward P. Wolfers, *Race Relations and Colonial Rule in Papua New Guinea* (Australia & New Zealand Book Company, Sydney, 1975), pp. 143-4, H.C. Brookfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-8, and Heather Radi, *loc. cit.*, p.75. There were other restrictions besides those mentioned in these references. Even British investment was on occasion restricted in Papua (A.P. Power, *op. cit.*, p.71.)
- 57 See C.D. Rowley, *The New Guinea Villager*, p.121, and as to the 'energy' point see F.W. Eggleston, 'The Mandate and the Australian People', in F.W. Eggleston (ed.), *The Australian Mandate for New Guinea* (Macmillan and Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1928), p.7.
- 58 E.L. Wheelwright, *Radical Political Economy: Collected Essays* (Australia & New Zealand Book Company, Sydney, 1974), p.257.
- 59 The relatively enlightened Murray wrote, in justifying capital punishment, of 'the Territory of Papua, where a small white community, is surrounded by a barbaric population hardly out of the stone-age' (Amirah Inglis, 'Not a White Woman Safe': *Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Port Moresby, 1920-34* [Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1974], p.109). See also Peter Fitzpatrick 'No Stronger Law: Colonial Rule and the White Women's Protection Ordinance', *Melanesian Law Journal* III, 1 (April, 1975).
- 60 B. Gammage, 'The Rabaul Strike, 1929', *Oral History* III, 2 (February 1975) p.23.
- 61 See for example, A.L. Epstein, *op. cit.*, p.29:

... the entire episode indeed must have been highly disconcerting to those who, like the Administrator himself, 'knowing anything of the native mentality' found it 'quite inconceivable that the natives who belong to different tribes, and who nurse hereditary enmities against each other should sink their differences and combine in a general demonstration'.

The *Rabaul Times* in the same vein said, 'the alarming thing is that the matter was well organised' (Woolford, *op. cit.*, p.16).

- 62 Peter Worsley, *The Third World* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1967), p.153.
- 63 See the quotation in Chris Gregory, 'The Concept of Modern Monetary Sector as "Engine for Development" in Underdeveloped Dual Economy Countries', *Seminar on Industrial Democracy in Papua New Guinea* (University of Papua New Guinea, July 1975), p.2.
- 64 Michael Wright, Ross Garnaut and Richard Curtin, 'Employment and Incomes in Papua New Guinea Towns', *New Guinea Research Unit Discussion Paper No. 2* (New Guinea Research Unit, Boroko, May 1975), p.47; and Michael Wright, 'Towards an Understanding of Being Without Formal Employment in Papua New Guinea Towns', *New Guinea Research Unit Discussion Paper No. 9* (New Guinea Research Unit, Boroko, November 1975), p.12, n.
- 65 Territory of Papua and New Guinea, *Report of Board of Inquiry . . . Investigating Rural Minimum Wages . . . Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery and Related Matters* (1970) (the 'Cochrane Report'), p.33.
- 66 Such convictions averaged 652 a year but the number of people under indenture for most of the pre-second world war period exceeded the number under indenture or under 'agreement' post-war. However it has not been possible to take account of the pre-war civil actions against workers for damages and this should be done for a valid comparison. It is not likely that such actions were significant.
- 67 G.D. Collins, *An Appraisal of the Highlands Labour Scheme* (Department of Labour, Port Moresby, no date), p.1. By 1940 recruitment of indentured labour was close to saturation point (Legge, *loc. cit.*, p.48, and Heather Radi, *loc. cit.*, p.132). The unparalleled (in Papua or New Guinea) severity in labour matters of the Australian military administration during the second world war probably had an effect in further decreasing the post-war supply.
- 68 Employers were charged a 'handling fee' but this was below the cost of the operation to the administration (G.D. Collins, *op. cit.*, pp.4, 24).
- 69 'Cochrane Report', *op. cit.*, as in footnote 65, p.33. As elsewhere, however, people in the Highlands generally did not renew their contracts: see for example Sachiko Hatanaka, 'Leadership and Socio-Economic Change in Sinasina, New Guinea Highlands', *New Guinea Research Bulletin No. 45* (The New Guinea Research Unit, Port Moresby and The Australian National University, Canberra, 1972), p.35.
- 70 'Cochrane Report', *op. cit.*, p.33. However for recent years separate figures for workers under indenture have not been collected by the Department of Labour. They form part of an inconsequential category embracing all people with a written employment contract.
- 71 Albert Maori Kiki, *Kiki: Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime* (Cheshire, Melbourne, 1968), pp.97-9. See also A. Maori Kiki, 'Development of Trade Unions in the Territory', in Marion W. Ward (ed.), *The Politics of Melanesia* (The Research School of Pacific Studies, Canberra and The University of Papua and New Guinea, 1970), p.616.
- 72 Michael Stevenson, 'A Trade Union in New Guinea', *Oceania* XXXIX (1968), p.114, *New Guinea Report 1961-62*, p.118.
- 73 *New Guinea Report 1960-61*, p.118.
- 74 *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, H. of R.*, 15 August 1961, pp.11-12. Hasluck said:  
I suggest that we will see the situation more clearly if we recognize the present measures as indicating the direction of changes which are just beginning and which will gather pace in the next ten years. What we do now is less for to-day than for the decade ahead of us.
- 75 Peter Fitzpatrick, 'A New Law for Co-operatives', *Annals of Public and Co-operative Economy*, 46, 3 (1975), and David Simpson, 'Local Government Councils and Political Development in Papua New Guinea' (Department of Political Studies Seminar, University of Papua New Guinea, August 1976).
- 76 Territory of Papua and New Guinea, *Legislative Council Debates* (5th Council, 3rd Meeting of the First Session, vol. VI, no. 3, 1961), pp.229, 232.
- 77 *ibid.*, p.230.
- 78 See William H. Knowles, 'Industrial Conflict and Unions', in Wilbert E. Moore & Arnold S. Feldman (edd.), *Labour Commitment and Social Change in Developing Areas*

- (Social Science Research Council, New York, 1960), p.311.
- 79 See, for example, Joan Davies, *African Trade Unions* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1966), pp.40, 42, 76. Of course even a 'fairly standard' Australian model in this area would be comparatively restrictive.
- 80 The industrial relations law prohibits the organising of a strike when an award applies as one would to most urban workers. Almost all other organised urban workers would be prohibited from striking by specific legislation covering their occupation such as the Public Service Act. Except for some recent efforts in the Sepik area, rural workers remain unorganised.
- 81 *New Guinea Report 1960-61*, p.109.
- 82 R.J. Worsley, *The Developing System of Industrial Relations in Papua New Guinea* (thesis for Bachelor of Commerce Degree, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 1966), pp.41, 60-1. See also John Paterson, 'New Guinea's Trade Unions', *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 4, 1, (March-April 1969), p.28.
- 83 R.J. Worsley, *op. cit.*, p.43.
- 84 R.M. Martin, 'Tribesmen into Trade Unionists: the African Experience and the Papua-New Guinea Prospect', *Journal of Industrial Relations* ii, 2 (1969), pp.159-61, and N. Seddon, 'Legal Problems facing Trade Unions in Papua New Guinea', *Melanesian Law Journal* III, 1 (April 1975), p.103.
- 85 The degree of dependence varies among different societies and takes different forms. For one of the best accounts of the present context of this dependence, see the strong but not unusual case described by Thomas G. Harding, 'Wage Labour and Cash Cropping, the Economic Adaptation of New Guinea Copra Producers', *Oceania* 41, 3 (1971).
- 86 Claude Meillassoux, 'The Social Organisation of the Peasantry: The Economic Basis of Kinship', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1, 1 (October) 1973, p.89.
- 87 For example, that is the heading to the fifth goal of the Constitution, which goal is to achieve development primarily through the use of Papua New Guinean forms of social, political and economic organisation. Department of Labour and Industry, *Submission to the Urban Minimum Wages Board* (June 1974), part B, pp.2, 3, 5.
- 88 Department of Labour and Industry, *Submission to the Urban Minimum Wages Board* (June 1974), part B, pp.2, 3, 5.
- 89 Allowance has been made for a worker's wife in some urban areas and for a wife and one child in others and also there has been a small loading added to the single man basis of the rural minimum wage: See National Minimum Wages Board, *Reasons for Decision and Determination* (June 1976), p.15.
- 90 *Post Courier*, 8 August 1973.
- 91 The position with land administration is not covered here because it is now so complex. Very generally, government land administration remains predominantly and strongly focused on conserving the traditional base but there are strong tendencies toward individualisation of rural land tenure and these tendencies are aided by government extension and lending agencies.
- 92 There is currently a government Bill before the legislature which would do away with the vagrancy offence but the Bill is being continually delayed.
- 93 There are numerous instances in the literature. For minimum wage standards see, for example, T.S. Epstein, *Capitalism, Primitive and Modern: Some Aspects of Tolai Economic Growth* (Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1968), p.104. B.R. Finney, New Guinean Entrepreneurs, *New Guinea Research Bulletin No. 27* (New Guinea Research Unit, Port Moresby and Australian National University, Canberra, 1969), p.38, and Louise Morauta, *Beyond the Village: Local Politics in Madang, Papua New Guinea* (Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1974), p.55.
- 94 See footnote 24. Protective legislation here means not only minimum wage laws but all laws administered by the Department of Labour, including safety laws. The policy was slightly departed from with some recent prosecutions (which themselves had trouble getting through the system) of some Papua New Guinean and expatriate employers for failure to lodge information returns with the Department. Also the New Guinea Development Corporation on the Gazelle, a comparatively radical organisation, has been prosecuted for failure to insure its workers.