Hegemony: Explorations into Consensus, Coercion and Culture

A workshop at the University of Wollongong 14 &15 Feb 2005

Panel 1
Class and Consensus

Papers by:
Kylie Smith
Charles Hawksley

Discussant:
Professor Alastair Davidson
University of Wollongong

Hegemony: Explorations into Consensus, Coercion and Culture

A workshop at the University of Wollongong
14 &15 Feb 2005

A city of rogues? Counter-hegemonic cultures of resistance

in Sydney from 1870 to 1900

Kylie Smith
PhD Candidate
Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong,
NSW 2522
Email: kyliesm@uow.edu.au

A city of rogues? Counter-hegemonic cultures of resistance in Sydney from 1870 to 1900.

Kylie Smith

From the early 1870s in Sydney, social commentators, politicians, newspapers, police chiefs and prison wardens all seemed concerned about a growing problem among the city's youth, a problem they termed larrikinism. Over the next few decades, larrikinism became something other than the 'exuberance of youth' and was transformed into a social danger and a moral evil. This paper uses an extensive theoretical framework to understand how such a process occurred and to suggest a rethinking of the phenomena of larrikinism in Australia's past. This framework uses Freud and Gramsci to make connections to other changes occurring in Australian society at this time, specifically the growth of industrial capitalism and the subsequent changes this wrought on the nature of work and everyday life. It is suggested that the threat of larrikinism lay in its rejection of this changing nature of work, and more specifically, the rhetoric of respectability and discipline which accompanied it. Larrikin behaviour can be rethought as something other than petty crime; it can in fact be understood as an active reclaiming of the self that sought to resist the intervention of the new capitalist state in all forms of working class life, culture and being.

Much has been written in Australian historiography about the socially turbulent years of the late nineteenth century in Sydney, with significant work being done on the issues of crime, policing, drunkenness, insanity and social welfare in this period.[1] Similarly, Australian labour history recognises these years as highly significant in the development of the Australian working class, and several thousands of pages tell the story of the changing nature of work and the increasing radicalisation of the workers of Sydney from 1880 onwards. However, it is rare that these two aspects of life in Sydney in the nineteenth century are studied together. This paper seeks to complicate the way we think about one particular phenomena in Australian history, and this is the set of behaviours and cultural practices referred to as larrikinism. By larrikinism, I am referring to groups of working class youth much complained about by the Sydney press and police for their attacks on 'respectable' citizenry, in the form of insults,

---

[1] See for example, Mark Finnane, <u>Police and Government: Histories of Policing in Australia</u>, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994.; Mark Finnane (ed), <u>Policing in Australia: Historical Perspectives</u>, University of New South Wales Press, Kensington, 1987.; Mark Finnane, <u>Punishment in Australian Society</u>, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1997.; Stephen Garton *Bad or mad? Developments in incarceration in NSW 1880-1920,* in The Sydney Labour History Group, <u>What Rough Beast? The State and Social Order in Australian History</u>, Allen and Unwin, Sydney: 1982, 89-110.; Stephen Garton, '*Once a Drunkard, Always a Drunkard': Social Reform and the Problem of Habitual Drunkenness in Australia 1880-1914*, <u>Labour History</u> 53(Nov) 1987, 38-53.; Stephen Garton, <u>Out of Luck: Poor Australians and Social Welfare</u>, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990.; Stephen Garton, *Pursuing Incorrigible Rogues: Patterns of Policing in NSW 1870-1930*, <u>Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society</u> 77(3)1991, 16-29.; John Ramsland, <u>Children of the Back Lanes: Destitute and Neglected Children in Colonial NSW</u>, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1986; John Ramsland, <u>With Just but Relentless Discipline: A Social History of Corrective Services in NSW</u>, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, 1996.

assaults, loitering, riots and resisting arrest. I am also referring to larrikin culture as it was described by its contemporaries: a culture of overt sexuality and high costume, drinking, dancing, gambling, violent sports and a quasi-gang organisation. This paper suggests that it is possible to see larrikins as an active resistance to changing social relations which were founded on ideas of respectability and discipline. These concepts were the cornerstones of industrial capitalism's project of transforming the human subject into a compliant force for 'the factory'. Larrikin culture, then, can be understood as an active reclaiming of collective and personal identity which sought to flout both social respectability and 'factory' discipline.

While there has been much work in the vein of social history in Australia, labour history remains largely concerned with the institutions of organised labour, and its related culture.[2] This could be problematic, because when we study only the *organised* working class, we end up talking about a particular kind of working class, where it is assumed that a 'correct' consciousness is the kind that agitates for better wages and conditions and seeks to ameliorate the working experience in general. Those who fall outside this area are at best invisible, at worst guilty of a kind of false consciousness and are accused of failing to reach their potential, or of taking energy from the revolutionary cause. This kind of history "reads history in the light of subsequent preoccupations, and not in fact as it occurred. Only the successful (in the sense of those whose aspirations anticipated successful evolution) are remembered. The blind alleys, the lost causes, and the losers themselves are forgotten".[3]

Are larrikins a lost cause, a blind alley? For the majority of Australian historians, they have fallen victim to the "enormous condescension of posterity"[4] and this is because Australian labour history privileges respectability. If there was a divide in the Australian working class[5], then it existed along the fault line of respectability, and this has been reproduced by subsequent studies of working class cultures.[6] This is not entirely a contemporary problem as it reflects the importance of respectability in the language and practice of class throughout the nineteenth century in Sydney itself.[7]

---

[2] A recent survey of research interests and projects in *Labour History* revealed that of 60 researchers surveyed, 21 expressed interest in industry studies, 20 in political movements and 13 in trade unions and activism. See Melissa Kerr, *Current Research Interests In Australian Labour History*, Labour History 87(Nov)2004,

[3] E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Penguin, London, 1991. p9.

[4] Ibid.,

[5] See Andrew Metcalfe, For Freedom and Dignity: Historical Agency and Class Struggle in the Coalfields of New South Wales, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1988. p88

[6] By this, I mean that the majority of studies of 'working class culture' revolve around the culture of organised labour, whether it is to do with 'workplace culture', adult education, trade union activities, or radical songs, poetry and literature. These are all studies that rely on good record keeping which provides documentary evidence. Studies of less formal working class culture are usually limited to sport, such as rugby league football. The most recent survey of areas under study in Australian Labour History reveal that only 4 are concerned with working class culture, one of them being this author's work and the others related to the verse and song of the goldfields and politics. Kerr, Op Cit, p250.

[7] R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving *Hegemony of the Mercantile Bourgeoisie, 1840-1890.* Class Structure in Australian History: Poverty and Progress. Melbourne, Longman Cheshire: 1992 83-125, Kylie Smith, *Radical and Class Language in "The People's Advocate and NSW Vindicator" 1848-1851*, School of History and Politics, University of Wollongong, Unpublished Honours Thesis, 2002

Unions could only hope to affect change in working conditions if they were seen as respectable, an inheritance of their skilled artisan tradition. The respectability of the working class had also long been the requirement for the extension of the franchise. Respectability, however, has always been a double-edged sword, and this is because it is so intrinsically a part of *capitalist* rhetoric and is tightly connected to the project of imposing labour discipline.

This was particularly evident in late nineteenth century Sydney. Not only did most of the complaints about larrikins come from the new middle class who needed to legitimate their new, consumerist lifestyle,[8] Australian cities were dominated by the values of this new middle class and their multitude of social and moral reform movements.[9] These movements were based on the belief of human progress and improvement, that all people were capable of being productive members of society if they were self-disciplined, hard workers, moral and proper. Human energy should be put into work and self-improvement, mastering of the mind and body, not dissipated into sexuality or alcoholism, and moral reform movements took up the cause of intemperance and prostitution with religious zeal.[10] Respectability was seen as the cornerstone of modern civilisation, an integral part of Australia's nation building. As Janet McCalman has shown, "respectability prescribed disciplines in behaviour which could alter the conception of the self. In demanding cleanliness, sobriety, extra-marital chastity, thrift, time-consciousness, self-reliance, manly independence and self-responsibility, it promoted an ego that was self-regulating, responsible and mature". [11] These characteristics should not just be seen as a drive for social reform stemming from so-called Enlightenment progressivism – the inevitable progress of the human race. This would be to ignore the way in which hegemony works, and to ignore the fact that the specifics of this doctrine can not be disconnected from the requirements of capitalism itself.

Respectability, for all its ambiguities and problematics, can be seen as an integral part of the construction of the new human subject required by industrial capitalism. In his work on the new kinds of industrialism exemplified by America and Fordism, Gramsci suggests the all-consuming nature of the modern capitalist process;

> Industrialism is a continual victory over man's animality, an uninterrupted and painful process of subjugating the instincts to new and rigid habits of order, exactitude, precision…In order to achieve a new adaptation to the new mode of work, pressure is exerted over the whole social sphere, a

---

[8] George Morgan, *The Bulletin and the Larrikin: moral panic in late nineteenth century Sydney*, Media International Australia 851997,17-23., Lynette Finch *On the streets: working class youth culture in the nineteenth century*, in Rob White, Youth Subculture: Theory, History and the Australian Experience, National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, Hobart: 1993, 75-79. Connell and Irving, *Hegemony of the Mercantile Bourgeoisie*, Op Cit.

[9] Chris McConville, *Rough Women, Respectable Men and Social Reform: A Response to Lake's 'Masculinism'*, Historical Studies 22(88)1987, 432-440. Marilyn Lake, *The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context*, Historical Studies 22(86)1986, 116-131.

[10] Lake, Ibid, p127; McConville, Ibid, p434-435. For the longer history of these movements see Michael Roe, Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia 1835-1851, Melbourne University Press, Parkville, 1965.

[11] McCalman, OpCit, p90

puritan ideology develops which gives to the intrinsic brutal coercion the external form of persuasion and consent.[12]

This is the nature of hegemony, where the factory is more than just a physical production line; it is a whole way of life. It is not just a structure, but is a whole set of social relations. The factory is everywhere, it is in culture and education, religion and leisure – all social relations and institutions become imbued with the rationality of capitalism. This entails a deliberate attempt to "to create, with unprecedented speed and a consciousness of purpose unique in history, a new type of worker and of man".[13] As E. P. Thompson shows, "the transition to mature industrial society entailed a severe restructuring of work habits – new disciplines, new incentives, and a new human nature upon which these incentives could bite effectively".[14] To effect this change, man must be persuaded, coerced or forced into accepting new kinds of morality, ideology, behaviour and discipline. For Gramsci, this process is likely to be most successful when it is part of the cultural hegemonic project – when the practices and discourses of every day life are so pervasive as to convince man that he changes himself by his own will and brings about self-discipline.[15] For most, the incentives of evolving capitalism were strong enough to bring about a complete transformation in work and social life. But as both Gramsci and Thompson suggest, there were parts of the working class who did not accept these new incentives, ideologies or disciplines, who in fact actively resisted them, and refused to cast off the traditions of their class.

How did larrikins fit into this schema? Perhaps not surprisingly, given the difficulties of sources (larrikins are always viewed through the lens of someone else's interpretation); little of any great length or detail has been written about them.[16] Despite this, the term 'larrikin' is now a common one in the Australian lexicon. Everyone thinks they know what it means, and it is now used to refer to a person, always male, who displays the much-romanticised traits of mischievous anti-authoritarianism, relatively harmless but operating outside the norms of polite society. It is assumed that we have inherited these traits from our convict beginnings, and hence it is now a term often applied to renegade businessmen or politicians. This romanticising, or trivialising, of the larrikin is a process which has defused much of its original meaning and threat.[17] This was a process actively undertaken by the press

---

[12] Antonio Gramsci (ed. J. Buttigieg), Prison Notebooks, Columbia University Press, New York, 1992.Volume 1, Note 158, p235

[13] ibid, Volume 2, Note 52, p215

[14] E.P. Thompson Time, work discipline and industrial capitalism, in Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture, The New Press, New York: 1993, 352-403.p354

[15] Gramsci, op cit, Volume 1, Note 158, p236

[16] There are, as far as I can tell, four articles, one thesis and one book on the subject of larrikins: Lynette Finch On the streets: working class youth culture in the nineteenth century, in Rob White, Youth Subculture: Theory, History and the Australian Experience, National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, Hobart: 1993, 75-79. Hillary Golder and Russell Hogg Policing Sydney in the Late Nineteenth Century, in Mark Finnane, Policing in Australia: Historical Perspectives, University of New South Wales Press, Kensington: 1987.; George Morgan, The Bulletin and the Larrikin: moral panic in late nineteenth century Sydney, Media International Australia 851997, 17-23.; John Rickard, Lovable Larrikins and Awful Ockers, Journal of Australian Studies 561998, 78-85. Noel McLachlan, Larrikins: An Interpretation, MA Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1950, James Murray, Larrikins: Nineteenth Century Outrage, Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1973.

[17] Connell and Irving, The Working Class Challenge, Op Cit; Rickard, Op Cit.

in the late nineteenth century, but larrikins were neither romantic nor trivial to the authorities who dealt with them on a daily basis. 'Roughs', 'rowdies' and 'street arabs' had existed in Australian cities before 1870 – the Cabbage Tree Hat Mob had harassed Sydney's respectable citizenry from the 1840s – and the problem of the cities 'lost youth' had been debated for some time. This was believed to have been solved to some extent by the institution of the Industrial, or Nautical School Ship system, the first of which was the *NSS Vernon*, commissioned in 1867 and anchored in Sydney Harbour. The success of this system, where children as young as seven could be arrested as criminals and sentenced to one year on the ship, even if their parents protested, was trumpeted in parliament and in the press, but the evidence suggests otherwise.[18] The boys were not given any education or industrial training on the ships but subjected to a strenuous regime of military discipline. Nautical training in particular was considered desirable because not only would it create mercantile apprentices for the colony, but would instil in the boys very particular habits of 'cleanliness and moral discipline'. Clearly, the Industrial School Ships had no real intention of creating a skilled labour force, indeed, in his annual report for 1885 Superintendent Neitenstein stated:

> In this ship no useless pretence is made to teach these youngsters a trade. Years of incarceration would be necessary to do that and the results would be problematical, so far as turning out experienced workmen…[19]

The issue of what the boys were being trained for is an important one as it goes to the heart of the changing nature of work at this time. While it must be recognised that Australia was not an advanced industrial or manufacturing country, and that the greatest intensification in labour discipline such as that exemplified by Fordism and Taylorism would not make itself widely felt until after the First World War, an important change had occurred in the Australian workforce and this was the decline in the importance of skill. The notion of skill is a slippery one, and during this period its meaning was highly contested as the divisions between levels of skill became blurred.[20] It is not that work did not require skill, but that there was an increase in 'factories' owned by businessmen, rather than 'workshops' owned by men who had once been artisans. This meant a greater division of labour, along with an increase in mechanisation and in casual employment.[21] Employment figures are disappointingly sketchy in this period, there is no real breakdown of actual occupation, nor the ages of those employed, however it can be said that in 1891, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled (what we would call blue-collar) work accounted for 56% of the male workforce, employing a total of 66, 573 men in Sydney alone.[22] It has been shown that there was little chance of upward mobility and that a large proportion of the semi and unskilled labour force were NOT native born but largely immigrants, especially

---

[18] See Grace Scrivener, Rescuing the Rising Generation: Industrial Schools in NSW 1859-1910, Dept of Sociology, University of Western Sydney, Unpublished PhD Thesis, 1996.
[19] Neitenstein, F. *NSS Vernon Annual Report*, 1885, p3, *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, 1886-1887*
[20] Ben Maddison, Skill and the Commodification of Labour in NSW, 1840-1915., School of History and Politics, University of Wollongong, Unpublished PhD Thesis, 1995.
[21] Shirley Fitzgerald, Rising Damp, Sydney 1870-1890, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1987. Connell and Irving, *The Working Class Challenge*, Op Cit, Maddison, Op Cit.
[22] Figures from NSW Census 1891, pp664-99, as quoted in Fitzgerald, Ibid, p115.

Irish.[23] Other changes in this period were in the management and organisation of labour, with management styles moving away from 'custom and practice' to more systematic forms of simple control with paternalistic and authoritative overtones.[24] This was the more so when the owners were in direct control of production and a subsequent heightening of labour discipline and labour exploitation occurred.[25] This control often took the form of increased workplace rules, heightened surveillance, dubious employment methods and "penalties for bad work, damage to property, lateness, insubordination and …attempts to reduce wages".[26] At the same time, a more organised labour movement was making itself felt, and unions in this period were increasingly concerned with these changes to the labour process and more aggressive attempts were made to wrest control of the workplace away from employers. Much of this tension was exacerbated by heightened employer control made possible by the depression of the early 1890s.

At the same time, complaints about the larrikin nuisance became widespread. In 1878, in his Annual Report to Parliament, Edmund Fosbery, the Inspector General of Police, referred to them for the first time as a distinct social group with specific problems:

> No one can read the complaints and comments in the Press respecting the increasing annoyance suffered by the Public from the disorderly conduct and petty misdemeanours of youths who assemble together in large numbers…without being aware that the nuisance of the so-called *larrikin* element is greatly on the increase.[27]

What exactly was the nature of this nuisance? It is not surprising to find papers such as the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph* throughout the 1880s lamenting "this class, whose ages range from about 15 to 22 years, and of whom it may be stated that they gain their livelihood by working in separate gangs or firms of about half-a-dozen at the occupations of loafing, gambling and petty-thieving"[28] but it would be dangerous to assume that they are correct in their descriptions or analyses of the phenomenon. It is interesting to find that the most vitriol towards larrikins came from *The Bulletin*, a journal concerned with "the problems of an emerging nation free from the crusty inheritance of empire and to represent a distinctively Australian culture."[29] This culture came to be represented, for *The Bulletin*, by the 'bush larrikin' of the Australian legend, but "it was little different from more conservative publications in its responses to what was termed urban larrikinism."[30] In 1892 it described larrikinism as epitomised by:

> Idleness, destruction of property, acts of violence, obstructing the highway, bad language, *the assumption of an aggressively disrespectful*

[23] Fitzgerald, Ibid, p120
[24] Christopher Wright, The Management of Labour: A History of Australian Employers, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995.
[25] Connell and Irving, *Hegemony of the Mercantile Bourgeoisie*, Op Cit, p112
[26] Ibid
[27] E. Fosbery, Inspector General of Police, Police Department Annual Report 1878, VPLA 1878-1879, Vol 3, p565.
[28] J. Macintosh, "Our Larrikins", *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 8 1887.
[29] Morgan, Op Cit, p17
[30] Ibid

attitude, noise, dirt, profanity, ignorance, an unshaven aspect, a retreating forehead, a fishy eye, a braided coat, a soft black hat, bell bottomed trousers, high heeled boots and a general and promiscuous cussedness of demeanour[31] (emphasis added).

Larrikins' greatest crime, according to the Press, appeared to be their blatant disregard for respectable society and for respectable leisure activities. Their propensity to be seen in public wearing garish clothes in overt displays of sexuality with equally garish women offended the moral majority no end.[32] They were more interested in boxing and dancing than cricket and rowing.[33] In their assessment of larrikins, Connell and Irving note that 'the pushes' (as larrikin 'gangs' were called) may have taken energy away from a more organised attack on property relations, "but they were still culturally the least tractable section of the working class" and were "channelled into serious crime mainly by police harassment."[34]

This is an observation borne out by a study of crime figures in this period. According to the Inspector General, while larrikinism "prevails to such an extent in some of the principle suburbs of the city as to seriously interfere with the comfort of life"[35] there was nothing particularly insidious, criminally speaking, about larrikin behaviour. Fosbery referred to a large class of the city's youth who were considered guilty of

Intemperance, obscenity and disorderly conduct…wanton injury to property and annoyance of citizens; females and feeble persons cannot walk the streets with any assurance that they will not be molested or insulted…the police are frequently subjected to serious ill-treatment in the discharge of their duties, some have been permanently injured and in Sydney alone during the past twelve months forty four members of the force have been incapacitated for duty thereby.[36]

This is an astounding number of assaults against police, if they are all true, yet initially, technically speaking, there was very little in the rest of this behaviour that was criminal. Complaints against larrikins do not mention organised crime, theft or violent assault, and the only things they could be arrested for were public drunkenness and riotous behaviour, the latter of which even the police agreed they were not guilty of.[37]

In the beginning of the period under study, a group of crimes existed labelled "Crimes Against Good Order" which included drunkenness; drunk and disorderly and indecent, riotous or offensive behaviour.[38] In the ten years from 1860 to 1870 there were 37 318 arrests of men and 11 209 arrests of women, with 20 809 male and 5 658

---

[31] *The Bulletin*, September 10, 1892, p4

[32] Lynette Finch, Op Cit, p76

[33] James Murray, Op Cit, p 53

[34] Connell and Irving, Op Cit, p112.

[35] Police Department Annual Report 1880, VPLA 1880-1881, Vol 2, p138

[36] Ibid.

[37] Police Department Annual Report 1878, VPLA 1878-1879, Vol 3, p565

[38] Satyanshu Mukherjee, Sourcebook of Australian Criminal and Social Statistics 1804-1988, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 1989. and NSW Statistical Register, 1890, Part III, 7 pp269-270.

female convictions for offences under this category.[39] By 1891, this category had been extended to include crimes such as vagrancy; threatening or abusive language; being an idle or disorderly person; gambling; prize fighting; public mischief; escape from custody; conduct lewd or scandalous; hindering or resisting arrest. Arrest rates rose accordingly – in the single year 1885 there were 32 078 arrests and 28 417 convictions of males alone. In the ten year period of 1880-1890 there were 272 364 male and 60 332 female arrests and 242 544 male and 54 692 female convictions under the Offences Against Good Order category.[40] For male arrests this is an 86 per cent increase on the amount of 10 years earlier, and convictions were increased by more than 81 per cent. Female arrests increased by 91 per cent and convictions increased by 89 per cent. This can not be accounted for simply by an increase in population, during 1880 to 1890 the population of the colony rose from 747 950 to 1 121 860[41], an increase of only 33 per cent. In the Sydney metropolitan area, population rose from 225 200 to 380 040[42], still only an increase of 40 per cent. What is most telling about the arrests under Offences Against Good Order is that whereas in 1861 arrests in this category accounted for 52 per cent of all arrests, in 1899 they accounted for an astonishing 88 per cent of all arrests.[43]

Despite the above crime figures (using the 1885 example, police arrested an average of 87 people PER DAY), the police lamented that their powers in this area were inadequate, as were the consequences for which larrikins showed little regard. As Fosbery lamented, "What dread is there of a fine of a few shillings, promptly subscribed by the defendants comrades, or a few days simple imprisonment which is deemed by the offender to be no disgrace and but little punishment?"[44] What was to be done about larrikins in terms of reform or punishment was a question that occupied successive Comptrollers General of Prisons. Early prison wardens favoured harsh physical punishments,[45] including whipping, spread-eagling, the treadmill and the use of the gag, an instrument designed to stop the tirade of offensive language that inmates were accused of. These practices existed with the idea that prisons were a place of punishment, and because of the perceived need to create prisons which acted as deterrents to larrikins. However, thinking about the role of prisons had started to change in the 1890s and debate ensued about whether prisons should not rather be places of reform than deterrent or pure punishment.[46] It was with this idea in mind that Frederick Neitenstein, who had been the Superintendent and Administrator of the Industrial School Ship, was appointed to Comptroller General of Prisons from 1896. Neitenstein brought with him an extensive knowledge of international prison systems and some of the latest penological theories, as well as strong views on the issue of larrikinism. He was more tempered in his assessment of the problem, blaming the press and popular fiction for perhaps overstating the issue:

[39] Mukherjee, Ibid, p252. Arrest and conviction statistics are not single offenders, so there are doubtless multiple arrests and convictions of the same people. The figures relate to the whole of NSW and do not provide breakdowns for suburbs.
[40] Ibid.
[41] NSW Statistical Register 1890 Part V, Table 2 p266.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Garton, *Incorrigible Rogues*, Op Cit, p22-23
[44] Police Department Annual Report 1880, VPLA, Op Cit, p138
[45] Garton, *Bad or Mad*, Op Cit.
[46] Prison Reform, Parliamentary Debates 1894-5, Vol 6, p973

> No doubt…some exaggeration occurs when the assailed tell of their woes. Quarrels occur, and the defeated parties magnify the number of their assailants, while every street disturbance is put down to larrikinism.[47]

This does not mean the Neitenstein did not believe larrikins existed, indeed he knew they did and suggested that "it is an undoubted fact that there is a great deal of undisciplined animalism on the part of certain of our young men"[48], but he believed the current prison regime would do little to put an end to their animalism. Accordingly, he amended the harsh physical punishment system and, while keeping the inmates separate, set them on a course of physical and moral improvement "on the principle of 'the sound mind the sound body' theory".[49] However, Neitenstein is quick to point out that prison was not the answer for larrikinism:

> In the suppression of larrikinism, too much has been left to the police and to the prisons; but other measures should be taken before the disease is allowed to attain full development. … In most cases there is no real vice or harm about the majority of these lads. They have the spirits and virility natural to their age. Society should consider that it has some obligation to them, and should not neglect its duty.[50]

Neitenstein was not the only official to try and link larrikinism to changes in the nature of Australian society. While Police Inspector Fosbery's calls for increased police and court powers remained consistent, his ideas about punishment also came to incorporate the need for social change as well as physical discipline. As early as 1880 he had commented that

> The idle and dissolute habits of many of the youth in large cities may I think be also attributed to a change in the tone of social organization and an absence of restraint upon the young, especially exemplified in the discontinuance to a great extent of the practice of apprenticing boys to a trade or handicraft, in substitution of which, large numbers of young people of both sexes can now find employment in factories where they can earn good wages, giving them a command of money and long hours of leisure, unrestrained by parental control.[51]

There is much in this worth considering. Firstly, Fosbery makes quite clear the link between larrikinism and the changing nature of work. This was a problem noted fifteen years earlier with the establishment of the Industrial Schools, where Neitenstein had already recognised the futility of teaching vagrant youth specific skills when there was no longer any employment for them in these areas. Hence, the forms of punishment instituted in prisons and reform schools were centred on mental and physical discipline. There is no coincidence in this. Foucault has shown quite clearly that changes in thinking about discipline are linked to changes in social requirements,[52] and I would go further and suggest that a more specific connection

---

[47] Prisons Report, 1896, JLC 1897, Vol 56, Part 1, p664 (quote from page 63 of report).
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid, report p64
[51] Police Department Annual Report 1880, Op Cit, p138
[52] Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, Penguin, London, 1991.

can be made to the creation of the new human subject required by industrial capitalism.

Neitenstein's and Fosbery's assessments of larrikins are telling in another way, and this is in the psychology of larrikinism. The problem was not that larrikins were unemployed or refused to work, it was that they conducted themselves outside of work in ways that showed they were not moral or respectable, they were not disciplined. Murray suggests that the larrikin escaped "from the scene before psychology could get its hands on him"[53] but this is not entirely true. Social reform movements were heavily concerned with the psychology of deviance and sought to act as much on the mind as on the body. This was also reflected in new forms of medical treatment for alcoholism (doctors were beginning to consider it a disease of the mind and not just a moral weakness) and in new forms of punishment in prison, which, as we have seen, became increasingly concerned with mental discipline and reform of the criminal mind rather than pure punishment. Of course, larrikins did not often find themselves on the therapists couch; however, it is true that psychoanalysis emerged at the same time as changes in the organisation of work. This is not just a consequence of the angst of 'modernity' – we need to look beyond the edifice of the modern to understand the specific connection between individual and group psychology and capitalism. Perhaps not surprisingly, Freud himself is useful here.

Like Benjamin, Freud suggests that modern life is a kind of nightmare, made bearable by 'palliative measures' which deflect, substitute for, or numb the pain of living. This is because, "Life, as we find it, is too hard for us; it brings too many pains, disappointments and impossible tasks."[54] If man is driven by the pleasure principle, and this pleasure is happiness, its attainment in the world around us is problematic. The world is not built for the unqualified happiness of every individual; to pursue it brings only suffering.[55] This suffering is twofold; it stems from the suppression of man's natural instincts, what Gramsci called his 'animality' – sexual pleasure, physical comfort, psychic joy – and it stems from the frustration of expressing those instincts in a world which has disallowed them. For Freud, "the task here is that of shifting the instinctual aims in such a way that they cannot come up against frustration from the external world."[56] These frustrations are relational, they occur because the instincts or impulses rub up against existing social relations which are working to suppress these impulses. Most people then, use substitutions to acquire happiness. They take what they can get from the world around them and consider themselves made happy by it. For Benjamin, this is the dream-world of consumption[57] and Freud considers most substitutions as provided by the external world no less a fantasy.[58]

---

[53] Murray, Op Cit, p9

[54] Sigmund Freud, Civilisation and its Discontents (1930), Hogarth Press, London, 1973. p12

[55] Ibid, p14

[56] Ibid, p16

[57] See for example, Walter Benjamin *Dream Kitsch: Gloss on Surrealism*, in Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume II 1927-1934, Belknapp Press, Cambridge Mass.: 1999. p3 and Walter Benjamin, Walter Benjamin: The Arcades Project, Belknapp Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1999. p391.

[58] Freud, Op Cit, p12.

Interestingly, Freud suggests that the idea of work has become central to man's pursuit of happiness; it is the one thing that may connect man most to reality, to other humans, to community:

> The possibility it offers of displacing large amounts of libidinal components, whether narcissistic, aggressive or even erotic, on to professional work and on to the human relations connected with it lends it a value by no means second to what it enjoys as something indispensable to the preservation and justification of existence in society. Professional activity is a source of special satisfaction if it is a freely chosen one – if, that is to say, by means of sublimation, it makes possible the use of existing inclinations, of persisting or constitutionally reinforced instinctual impulses.[59]

However, professional activity is still a sublimation. Most forms of work require an extensive repression of instinctual impulses. It is, for the majority of people, not freely chosen nor personally satisfying: "as a path to happiness work is not highly prized by men. They do not strive after it as they do after other possibilities of satisfaction. The great majority of people only work under the stress of necessity, and this natural human aversion to work raises most difficult social problems."[60]

Are larrikins then, a social problem arising from a psychological aversion to work? This may seem like a simplistic connection to make, however, it is not possible to talk about larrikins without paying attention to the sexual and gendered nature of their behaviour. While there is no room here to apply Freud's extensive psychological theories of self-development to larrikins[61], the link between respectability, sexuality and discipline can not be ignored. It has already been noted that respectability meant a transformation of the SELF, not just of externals but of the way in which people thought and felt about themselves. I am suggesting here that larrikins refused to make that transformation. It was not just culturally that they were the least tractable section of the working class, it is psychologically, and what is culture if it is not the way in which people express their experience of life, the way in which they make meaning of the world around them?[62] It is no coincidence that one of the most frequent complaints about larrikin men and women was their lack of morality, their physical and sexual aggressiveness and openness. Gramsci suggests that:

> The new industrialism requires monogamy; it does not want the workingman to squander his nervous energies in the anxious and unruly search for sexual gratification. The worker who goes to his job after a wild night is not a good worker; excitement of the passions does not go with the timed movement of machines of productive human motions.[63]

---

[59] Ibid, p17

[60] Ibid.

[61] This will be explored in greater depth in my forthcoming PhD Thesis.

[62] I am referring to E.P Thompson's definitions of culture found in The Making of the English Working Class and E.P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory, or an Orrery of Errors, Merlin Press, London, 1995.

[63] Gramsci, Op Cit, Volume II, Note 52 p217.

In his theories of the development of the self, Freud stresses the importance for 'civilisation' of the ability to control the human passions.[64] Overt expressions of sexuality, violence and aggression, the lack of self-discipline, the use of alcohol – all of these things in larrikins Freud would find interesting. If, as Freud suggests, there are three ways to deal with the repression of impulses required from work – to deflect, to substitute or to intoxicate them – then it is possible that larrikinism is a combination of all three of these responses. At one level they can be seen to be substitutions for happiness – if larrikins found their work so unfulfilling then it is not surprising that they would turn to wild forms of leisure which can be seen as "essentially a protest against their own submission to labour discipline throughout the week".[65] It is also possible to express those instincts, but as Freud suggests, this becomes increasingly difficult in a world that can not tolerate those outside the 'norm'. This norm is relational – it relies on the hegemonic nature of the social relations which guide human behaviour at any one time.[66] For Freud these relations are familial in the first instance, the importance of the child-parent relationship in self-development is primary.[67] But these relations, as well as being externally imposed, are also social relations. The point here is that there is no set human nature, but one moulded and influenced by the circumstances into which we are born.

We can not know if larrikins really submitted to labour discipline throughout the week until a more thorough analysis of workplace records is conducted. And protests against labour discipline at work also came from organised labour, who did not 'let off steam' and find themselves in gaol for doing so. Freud suggests that aggression, a natural human instinct, is an important aspect of healthy sexuality, and that the forces that would tame this aggression and sexuality, such as disgust, shame and morality, are imposed from the outside.[68] The forces that 'civilise' the instincts, then, are potentially hegemonic ones. Freud is quite clear that these are social forces at work; they come from the family in response to the dictates of society, not from something intrinsic in human nature. It is, then, the overt expression of 'animalistic' impulses, which even officials in their own time noticed, that makes larrikins so threatening. While the organised working class in Australia tried to fight hegemony on the factory floor, larrikins fought it in the street, and for this they were demonised and eventually criminalised. The fact that the forces of the state came to bear on larrikins speaks to the real threat they posed, the level of fear with which they were perceived, and the forcefulness with which they made themselves felt in Australian society.

---

[64] Sigmund Freud *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1901)*, in James Strachey, <u>The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud</u>, Vintage with Hogarth Press, London, VII: 2001, 123-243.
[65] Hogg and Golder, Op Cit, p67
[66] I am indebted to Dr Richard Howson for his assistance with these concepts.
[67] Freud, *Three Essays*, Op Cit.
[68] Ibid, p157

Primary Sources

The Bulletin

The Sydney Morning Herald

Journal of the Legislative Council, Parliamentary Papers, NSW Government Printer

NSW Statistical Register

Parliamentary Debates, NSW Government Printer

Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, NSW Government Printer

Secondary Sources

Walter Benjamin *Dream Kitsch: Gloss on Surrealism*, in Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume II 1927-1934, Belknapp Press, Cambridge Mass.: 1999.

Walter Benjamin, Walter Benjamin: The Arcades Project, Belknapp Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1999.

Antonio Gramsci (ed. J. Buttigieg), Prison Notebooks, Columbia University Press, New York, 1992.

Lynette Finch *On the streets: working class youth culture in the nineteenth century*, in Rob White, Youth Subculture: Theory, History and the Australian Experience, National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, Hobart: 1993, 75-79.

Mark Finnane, Police and Government: Histories of Policing in Australia, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994.

Mark Finnane (ed), Policing in Australia: Historical Perspectives, University of New South Wales Press, Kensington, 1987.

Mark Finnane, Punishment in Australian Society, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1997.

Shirley Fitzgerald, Rising Damp, Sydney 1870-1890, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1987.

Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, Penguin, London, 1991.

Sigmund Freud, Civilisation and its Discontents (1930), Hogarth Press, London, 1973.

Sigmund Freud *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1901)*, in James Strachey, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vintage with Hogarth Press, London, VII: 2001, 123-243.

Stephen Garton *Bad or mad? Developments in incarceration in NSW 1880-1920*, in The Sydney Labour History Group, <u>What Rough Beast? The State and Social Order in Australian History</u>, Allen and Unwin, Sydney: 1982, 89-110.

Stephen Garton, '*Once a Drunkard, Always a Drunkard': Social Reform and the Problem of Habitual Drunkenness in Australia 1880-1914*, <u>Labour History</u> 53(Nov) 1987, 38-53.

Stephen Garton, <u>Out of Luck: Poor Australians and Social Welfare</u>, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990.

Stephen Garton, *Pursuing Incorrigible Rogues: Patterns of Policing in NSW 1870-1930*, <u>Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society</u> 77(3)1991, 16-29.

Hillary Golder and Russell Hogg *Policing Sydney in the Late Nineteenth Century*, in Mark Finnane, <u>Policing in Australia: Historical Perspectives</u>, University of New South Wales Press, Kensington: 1987.

Melissa Kerr, *Current Research Interests In Australian Labour History*, <u>Labour History</u> 87(Nov) 2004,

Marilyn Lake, *The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context*, <u>Historical Studies</u> 22(86)1986, 116-131.

Ben Maddison, <u>Skill and the Commodification of Labour in NSW, 1840-1915</u>, School of History and Politics, University of Wollongong, Unpublished PhD Thesis, 1995.

Chris McConville, *Rough Women, Respectable Men and Social Reform: A Response to Lake's 'Masculinism'*, <u>Historical Studies</u> 22(88)1987, 432-440.

Andrew Metcalfe, <u>For Freedom and Dignity: Historical Agency and Class Struggle in the Coalfields of New South Wales</u>, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1988.

George Morgan, *The Bulletin and the Larrikin: moral panic in late nineteenth century Sydney*, <u>Media International Australia</u> 851997, 17-23.

Satyanshu Mukherjee, <u>Sourcebook of Australian Criminal and Social Statistics 1804-1988</u>, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 1989.

James Murray, <u>Larrikins: Nineteenth Century Outrage</u>, Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1973.

John Ramsland, <u>Children of the Back Lanes: Destitute and Neglected Children in Colonial NSW</u>, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1986.

John Ramsland, <u>With Just but Relentless Discipline: A Social History of Corrective Services in NSW</u>, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, 1996.

John Rickard, *Lovable Larrikins and Awful Ockers*, Journal of Australian Studies 561998, 78-85.

Michael Roe, Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia 1835-1851, Melbourne University Press, Parkville, 1965.

Grace Scrivener, Rescuing the Rising Generation: Industrial Schools in NSW 1859-1910, Dept of Sociology, University of Western Sydney, Unpublished PhD Thesis, 1996.

E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Penguin, London, 1991.

E.P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory, or an Orrery of Errors, Merlin Press, London, 1995.

E.P. Thompson *Time, work discipline and industrial capitalism*, in Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture, The New Press, New York: 1993, 352-403.

Christopher Wright, The Management of Labour: A History of Australian Employers, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995.

.

Hegemony: Explorations into Consensus, Coercion and Culture

A workshop at the University of Wollongong
14 &15 Feb 2005

Creating Hegemony: colonialism, the social contract and state legitimacy in Papua New Guinea

Charles Hawksley
School of History and Politics
Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong,
NSW 2522
Email: charlesh@uow.edu.au

"Creating Hegemony: colonialism, the social contract and

state legitimacy in Papua New Guinea"

Abstract

In the eastern highlands of Papua New Guinea in the period 1947-57 the Australian administration attempted to change a society where warfare was a normal state of affairs into a stable agriculturally prosperous society obeying regulations designed to ensure compliance with colonial aims and the political economy of capitalism. Colonial officials recognised that peace without 'development' would be a disaster and thus attempted to provide health, education and agricultural services to New Guineans as part of the colonial 'trade-off' of administration for economic development. Such activities may be defended from a Gramscian position as the induction of New Guineans into modernity involved both coercion at the hands of the colonial state and majority acceptance of new ways. This article examines this process through the intermediate level of colonial power, the district, to explore the practicalities of inducing the colonial state. Peace, combined with expanded economic opportunity, transformed the lives of the people of the eastern highlands. Similar processes in other districts positioned the colonial state as a central actor in the means of production, distribution and exchange within the new capitalist economy. The conditions for the hegemony of government were achieved through a mixture of methods and laid the foundations for the future independent state to govern its population with a degree of legitimacy.

"Creating Hegemony: colonialism, the social contract and

state legitimacy in post-war Papua New Guinea"

Charles Hawksley
School of History and Politics
University of Wollongong, Australia

Introduction

What is acceptable behaviour when bringing pre-modern peoples into modernity? Gramsci pondered this question in *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks* when discussing the origin of modern educational principles (Chapter 2). In note 16 he looks at the study of philosophy, pedagogy and hegemony, arguing that social change is a driven by people holding shared conceptions of the world. Those who think about issues in the same way shape the collective assumptions of a society and create a cultural 'climate'. For Gramsci forcing historical change is an issue of education, and not just the sort of education that had children listening to and taking on the 'values and experiences' of their elders and thus 'maturing'. The wider process of educational development could be applied in all areas of life, not only in the classroom. Educational relationships existed, Gramsci argued:

> … throughout all society considered as a whole as well as for each individual relative to other individuals, between intellectual and non-intellectual sections of the population, between governors and the governed, between elites and their followers, between leaders and led, between vanguards and the body of the army. Every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces that comprise it, but in the entire international and world field, between complexes of national and continental civilizations.[1]

It is not then surprising that Gramsci viewed imperialism and colonialism essentially in educational terms. In note 17 of the section on education he takes up a question posed by the philosopher Antonio Labriola, "How would you go about the moral education of a Papuan?" Labriola (as reported by Bernado Croce) felt that slavery would be the first

---

1 Antonio Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks* [Translated and Edited by Derek Bootman]: Chapter 2, Education, Note 16. Elec Books London, 1999, p. 285.

step in this process, with the possibility of beginning pedagogy in the classroom after two or three generations. Gramsci was however more impatient:

> It seems to me that historically the problem ought to be posed differently: whether, that is, a nation or a social group which has reached a higher degree of civilisation should not (and therefore should) 'accelerate' the process of education of the more backward peoples and social groups thereby appropriately universalising and translating its new experiences.[2]

Gramsci argued that British use of colonial (primitive) peoples as police still came with instruction in the use of modern weapons, even if this same instruction in its use was less technically complex. He went on to critique Labriola as backward for his assumption that pedagogy could not begin at once:

> For it may quite well be that it is 'necessary to reduce the Papuan to slavery' in order to educate them, but it is none the less necessary for someone to say that it is only incidentally necessary since there exist certain given conditions, that - in other words - this is a 'historical' and not an absolute necessity; it is necessary, rather, that there should be a struggle over the issue, and this struggle is exactly the condition by means of which the grandsons or great-grandsons of the Papuan will be freed from slavery and educated by modern pedagogy.[3]

Gramsci here is annunciating what amounts to a necessary evil of colonial rule for the ultimate benefit of the ruled. Accordingly there must be some level of unequal dealing between pre-modern and modern peoples, although this disparity should be kept to a minimum, and both parties should be encouraged to work toward the ultimate goal of liberation for the pre-modern society. Only a truly civilised society could carry out such a task, 'the moral education' of the pre-modern society, in such a way. A degree of force was therefore acceptable if the end is morally acceptable and essentially progressive.

> That a backward people or social group may need a coercive external discipline so as to be educated in the ways of civilisation does not mean they should be reduced to slavery, unless one considers all state coercion to be slavery.[4]

---

2 *Ibid*, Note 17, pp. 286-288, at 287.

3 *Ibid*, p. 287-288.

4 *Ibid*, p. 288.

Using Gramsci's emphasis on forced cultural transformation as educational hegemony this paper explores the activities of the Australian colonial state in the eastern highlands of Papua New Guinea as a way of demonstrating how legitimacy was gained at the regional level for the concept of national government. The chief sources used are the reports written by administration officers to document the progress they were making. The paper argues that the highlanders of New Guinea became active participants in a process that transformed their political, social, economic and cultural lives. This was to some extent a microcosm of a transformation that to varying degrees prepared Papuans and New Guineans for the responsibilities of self-government, independence and statehood in a complex and unequal world.

Peace and Administration in the Eastern Highlands

Australian administration as introduced in the eastern highlands of Papua New Guinea in the immediate post-World War II period aimed to change people from warriors to market gardeners. This transformation was attempted mainly through the creation of a state of peace, the enforcement of the rule of law and the provision of health, education and agricultural services. Once peace was imposed the administration attempted to make the population self-policing. These measures were not entirely effective, but they were nonetheless an attempt to transform the societies of the eastern highlands in accordance with the ideals of Australian administrators in the 1950s.

In the decade from 1947 onwards, colonial power created bonds between people and state. It conducted patrols, established centralised government, provided education and health services, created a network of roads, facilitated wage labour, distributed and purchased cash crops, and encouraged a monetised economy, property rights and the creation of social classes. The colonial state created for itself a key role in the production, distribution and exchange of commodities, and the colonial 'trade-off' permitted administrative control over previously autonomous populations in exchange for the general promise of something called 'development'. It encouraged eastern

highlanders to accept Australian rule and to participate in the transformation of their own societies.

The highlands were geographically, linguistically and politically divided, and prior to the entry of Europeans, the mobility of highlanders was mostly limited to clan and allied clan lands. Warfare and raiding were part of everyday life and in a political culture where payback killing was the norm, the occasionally deadly imposition of the *Pax Australiana* disrupted ongoing territorial and clan disputes and ossified land boundaries. The administration no longer tolerated the clan warriors of yester-year whose prowess in raids and battle had been the source of their social power and legitimacy as leaders. For those who sought to continue the unfinished business of revenge, or those who chose to instigate new attacks, their apprehension, trial and incarceration was no doubt a bewildering experience. Prisoners seldom had any notion of why they were being held in gaol, apart from the fact that they had done something of which the administration disapproved. In exchange for subjugation, colonial people were offered new opportunities for wealth creation through peaceful means.

The colonial state in Papua New Guinea divided its territory into districts, each of which was headed by a District Officer (DO), the principal government agent. Below the DOs were Assistant District Officers (ADOs), who normally took charge of sub-districts (SDs), and at the bottom of the hierarchy were the patrol officers (POs) who manned individual patrol posts. All ranks were part of the largest Department in the combined Territory of Papua and New Guinea, the Department of District Services and Native Affairs (DDSNA), and any DDSNA officer was known in tok pisin as *kiap* (captain). They were the front line of government and 'god's shadow on earth' with almost total power over the areas under their charge. In January 1951 the post of District Commissioner (DC) was created with overall responsibility for affairs, particularly development, in each district.[5] Any DC was however reliant on DDSNA

---

5 This new position added an administrative level above the DO, although it was not located within DDSNA but within the Department of the Administrator, the chief Australian representative in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea.

officers to fulfil his aims.[6] This was particularly so in the EHD where the DC had no staff of his own until 1955. The overall shape and focus of development was thus principally dependent on the officers on the ground. There was no major dispute amongst administration staff as the DCs appointed from 1951 were mostly former DDSNA officers, many of them were current DOs.[7]

In 1947 the entire New Guinea highlands,[8] which stretched from Kainantu in the east to Telefomin (near the border of what was then Dutch New Guinea) in the west, was upgraded as a sub-district of Morobe district and gazetted as the Central Highlands District (CHD).[9] This large and poorly resourced administrative and geographic entity was split into ten subdistricts, only five of which could actually be administered from existing highlands patrol posts. In September 1951 the CHD was broken into three smaller districts, the Western, Southern and Eastern Highlands Districts. The new Eastern Highlands District (EHD) was comprised of three subdistricts based around its three patrol posts. The post at Bena Bena was later moved a short distance to the area of Goroka which became the designated Headquarters of the EHD and the centre of the administrative effort in the eastern highlands. The posts at Kainantu (east of Goroka) and Kundiawa (west of Goroka) became the centres of Kainantu and Chimbu SDs respectively. Division of geography helped to concentrate resources and thus ensure that the influence of government was felt.

The consolidation of administration influence was steady. In 1948/49 the DO Jim Taylor estimated that in the three eastern highlands SDs only 1,250 of estimated area of

---

6 P. J. Degeling, *The "Role" of the District Commissioner in Post-War Papua New Guinea: The Management of Area and the Structuring of Relations in a Colonial Setting*, PhD (Government) University of Sydney, 1985, p. 397, Appendix IV Table 5.

7 The first District Officer of the CHD was Jim Taylor who had set up the first administration post at Kainantu in 1932. When Taylor retired in 1949, he was succeeded as DO by George Greathead who was later appointed as the first DC in the EHD. When Greathead retired in September 1952, another DDSNA officer Ian Downs was appointed to fill the position. When Downs left in January 1956, another former officer H P (Bill) Seale was appointed DC from then until 1964.

8 The first major exploratory trek through the highlands was made in 1930 by two gold miners, Mick Leahy and Michael Dwyer, who were outfitted and financed by the New Guinea Goldfields company and accompanied by a dozen New Guinean coastal and lowlands carriers. On this and later expeditions see M. J. Leahy, *Explorations into Highland New Guinea 1930-1935*, Crawford House Press, Bathurst, 1994. For the contact story from the perspective of the highlanders see the film *First Contact*, Ronin Films, 1982, and the book of the film by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson, *First Contact: New Guinea's Highlanders Encounter the Outside World*, Viking, New York, 1987, which utilise the original film shot by Leahy and his pictures from his expeditions. For further accounts of highlands exploration see Colin Simpson *Adam in Plumes*, second edition, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1955, which describes the expeditions of the 1930s made by Leahy and Jim Taylor into the Wahgi Valley, and Bill Gammage, *The Sky Travellers: Journeys in New Guinea 1938-1939*, Carlton South, Melbourne University Press, 1998, is an account of the epic Hagen-Sepik patrol led by Jim Taylor and John Black. Before the Pacific war, officers of the Department of District Services and Native Affairs (DDSNA) had conducted patrols that aimed to spread the administration's influence. While the eastern highlands was bombed during the war it was not a theatre of conflict and the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) devoted its limited resources to patrolling. Its efforts were chiefly in areas close to existing patrol posts, which after the war became small towns. From east to west the main centres of administration influence in the eastern highlands were the patrol posts of Kainantu, Bena Bena and Chimbu, while into the western highlands Minj and Mt Hagen were the principal points of administration control.

7,730 square miles (m²), or roughly 16 per cent, could be classed as "fully controlled". A further 42% of territory was classed as being "under government influence", and another 15 per cent "under partial influence", while 27 per cent was regarded as "uncontrolled".[10] These classifications depended on the capacity or willingness of indigenous people to conform to the legal obligations of the *Pax Australiana*. In an uncontrolled area, attacks on patrols were to be expected as first contact situations were potentially hazardous. Areas under partial influence had some experience of patrols but had not yet adjusted their behaviour to reflect the new laws. Areas under government influence were those in which the administration felt its message was getting through and there was demonstrable evidence of progress toward change, and the fully controlled regions were those closest to the patrol posts with the longest exposure to the *Pax Australiana* where the rule of law was believed to exist.

In 1948/49 the officers (*kiaps*) spent 282 days on patrol in the three eastern highlands SDs and dispensed their brand of justice as they went.[11] Kiaps had magisterial powers within the travelling Court of Native Affairs at each village, passing judgement on those deemed to have broken the law. Normally those brought before the kiap were found guilty.[12] Punishment for such misdemeanours was in the form of fines of pigs or shell money (both tradable commodities), or in compulsory labour, often used to assist the administration in its construction of dwellings or roads. Committal hearings for more serious criminal cases were dealt with at the District Court in Goroka where the District Officer was the judge.[13] If sufficient evidence was found, the culprits were remanded for trial by the Supreme Court in the colonial capital Port Moresby. All but minor offenders were therefore removed from their communities. In 1952/53 just under 1500 people were tried by the kiaps in the EHD Court of Native Affairs.[14] In 1957/58 this had risen to 3000 people with 200 cases heard at the District Court.[15] The gradual increase

---

9 Annual Report Central Highlands District (ARCHD) 1947/48, p. 2.

10 ARCHD 1948/49, p. 15.

11 ARCHD 1948/49, pp. 1-2.

12 Breaches of the peace such as "riotous behaviour" were common, with 507 cases for this offence, and 108 for assault, from a total of 744 incidents in the Court of Native Affairs for the entire CHD. Kiaps had a conviction rate approaching 100%. ARCHD 1948/49, p. 11.

13 There were cases of wilful murder (34 cases), murder (13), unlawful killing (14), rape (2) and grievous bodily harm (2), ARCHD 1948/49, p. 12.

14 Annual Report Eastern Highlands District (AREHD) 1953/54, p. 27.

15 AREHD Department of Native Affairs (AR EHD (DNA)) 1957/58 p. 12.

reflects an increase in the capacity of the government to act on information received as well as an expansion in its area of operations.

By June 1958 routine patrol work had increased the "controlled" territory from the 1,250 m^2 of 1948/49 to 6,140 m^2.[16] The amount of "uncontrolled" territory had fallen to 760 m^2, all of which was located in one inaccessible pocket of Kainantu SD south east of the Okapa Patrol Post. Where the whole of the highlands had once been imagined uninhabitable, in the three subdistricts of the eastern highlands the administration counted 313,909 people, with a further 10,000 estimated to be living in the restricted area,[17] making it the mostly densely populated district in the territory. This was done with a relatively small force of 17 DDSNA officers and about 150 'native' police.[18] The consolidation of government influence was facilitated by an increase in the number of patrol posts. Each new post in theory brought a new officer who was charged with patrolling and mapping the surrounding area. Two new patrol posts were established in 1952/53 at Chuave (Chimbu SD) and Kumiava (Goroka SD). In 1954/55, four new posts were opened at Lufa (Goroka SD), Okapa (Kainantu SD), Kerowagi (Chimbu SD), and Watabung (Chimbu SD).[19] By 1955/56 there were a further two posts at Kassam (Kainantu SD) and Gumine (Chimbu SD).

Where staffing levels permitted, patrol posts were manned throughout the year,[20] but the kiap alone could not convince all of the benefits of working with the *gavman* (government). Influence over local populations was often achieved through released prisoners who could teach others the language of *tok pisin* (pidgin)[21] that they had learned in gaol, and whatever other information they had picked up about the workings of the administration. Such knowledge was vitally important in attempting to understand why the administration wanted a village to be tidy, or be in a particular

---

16 AR EHD (DNA) 1957/58, Statistical Table 3.

17 AREHD (DNA) 1957/58 Statistical Table 5. There were more males than females among the indigenous population both for children (over 6,000 more) and adults (almost 10,000 more).

18 AREHD (DNA) 1956/57, p. 7.

19 AREHD 1954-55, p 5.

20 AR EHD (DNA) 1955-56, p 3. In 1955/56 Lufa Patrol Post (PP) was manned for 10 months, Kassam PP for 2 months, Kerowagi for 8 months and Gumine for 6 months.

21 Tok Pisin was the language widely used for communication between the administration and indigenous groups, as well as between indigenous groups,both in the highlands and in other parts of the Territory of Paua and New Guinea. It has a defined gramatical structure and uses words from Portuguese, Malay, German, English and a variety of indigenous languages.

place. The administration made use of former prisoners and appointed them as village officials with powers to inform the kiap of misdemeanours (*luluai* or *tultul*), but they were not empowered to deal with culprits themselves. By 1957/58 in villages of the EHD there were 1712 such officials.[22] They acted as disseminators of the new gospels of progress and commerce.

The village officials assisted in rallying their people for large-scale labour activity that the administration argued was in their interest. The 1952-57 period saw an enormous involvement by eastern highlanders in construction with road building and regular road maintenance. Under DC Ian Downs' direction, a road was constructed during 1952/53 from the coastal regions of Gusap in the Markham valley, over the Bismark ranges to Kainantu, to Goroka, then over the Daulo pass and down to link up with the road coming east out of the Western Highlands District from Mt Hagen. As Downs noted, the road served multiple purposes:

> Roads are the immediate basic need for development, for the spreading of health and technical services to the people, for the rapid acquisition of land offered for alienation, for the implementation of native economic development and for the rapid consolidation of control, influence and constituted authority.[23]

A road that could carry trucks could also take produce to market, bring agricultural officers and new crops, and the doctor to care for the sick. The road itself was a neutral space that allowed free and direct passage to between regions and into towns, thus removing to some extent the concept of bounded clan territories. The road also facilitated ease of access and faster movement of the kiaps and other officers of the administration. Instead of trekking from Kainantu to Goroka, about three full days with a patrol, a road trip by jeep took around three hours. By 1958/59 the EHD had 720 miles of vehicular roads and another 100 miles of motorcycle tracks, and was working towards eliminating human porterage, then still a major factor in patrol work. After the road was built communities were visited by the DO or ADOs in jeeps almost daily.[24]

---

22 AREHD (DNA) 1957/58, Statistical Table 4.

23 AREHD 1952/53, p. 38.

24 AREHD (DNA) 1958/59, p. 3.

Over the post war decade the government built up a picture of their territory. By 1958/59, regular census patrolling revealed 331,361 people, who were split into 39 census divisions.[25] Such moves were a necessary precursor to the eventual introduction of limited democracy through village government and, eventually, taxation.

Land Policy

The eastern highlands was regarded as a test case of all Administration policy; it was seen as especially promising due to its fecundity and had seemed to adopt the law faster than other districts. In his 1952/53 annual report Downs, noted:

> This is not a normal District. It is abnormal in its population, subnormal in its state of native advancement, extraordinary in its economic and defence potential and in its urgent and crying need for development — both European and native.
>
> The eventual success or failure of the Administration in this District will depend on our efforts of the next five years. If we succeed, the Territory will have something of inestimable value, economically and from a point of security. If we fail, the repercussions could be dangerous and might require ten times our present staff to handle them.[26]

The main problem was that the *Pax Australiana* denied the people of the eastern highlands the ability to acquire status and power through participation in warfare. If no substitute was provided the situation could fast deteriorate. Pressure from within colonial state at both district level and higher, led to the lifting in May 1952 of the restriction on white settlement that had been put in place in 1936 by the Territory Executive Council after missionaries and government officers had been killed in early contact.

At the 'opening' of the highlands the direct application system still operated. A prospective planter would arrive in the EHD, find an appropriate plot of land, offer money to the owners for its sale and report to the administration that he and they had reached an agreement to sell. This system allegedly allowed New Guineans a certain amount of agency and discretion in deciding whether or not they would sell their land,

---

25 Maps were produced with the assistance of the Research Geographer of the Australian National University showing the entire EHD (at 4 miles to the inch) and the EHD's Census Divisions, Administrative Areas and Sub-Districts (at 2 miles to the inch), with an alphabetical listing of the 1,696 census units.25

26 AREHD 1952/53, p. 7.

and if so to whom, but was open to abuse through inadequate provision by highlanders themselves for their own future needs. European applicants could request to be granted not more than 200 acres of land and the DC approved all such land transfers. Immediately after the war there were a number of Europeans who settled in the EHD, many of who were former administration officers who had stayed on, essentially squatting on land that they were not permitted to own.[27] The lure of the highlands and its potential was strong with Jim Taylor, George Greathead and later Ian Downs himself, all resigning their administration posts to become coffee planters.

The problem of disputed clan land could be eliminated by removing it from both parties and Downs championed limited European settlement on such land to create a white planter class growing coffee, and to have them live alongside New Guineans, sharing farming techniques. The Minister for Territories Paul Hasluck was not in favour of this centralist approach to the issue of European land settlement whereby "anybody wanting land just saw the district commissioner".[28] He especially did not approve of Downs purchasing land parcels in advance for sale later to appropriate Europeans. Downs' sought to control both the number and type of European settlers. Those who he regarded as profiteers, absentee landlords and freebooters were quickly rebuffed or not granted land. An active settler class evolved with the promise of an expanding coffee industry, and the EHD came to be seen in government circles in PNG and Australia as an exemplar of what could be achieved with careful planning, dedicated staff and limited funding. In the 1952/53 report Downs noted:

> This District is a place of hope for the future, with no past commitments and with no obligations to the past. We, who work here, have faith in this future and are doing our best to give the native people and the European settlers a chance to travel together along a road of fair progress in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.[29]

---

27 I. Downs, *The Australian Trusteeship Papua New Guinea 1945-1975*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1980, p. 178.

28 P. Hasluck, *A Time for Building: Australian Administration in Papua and New Guinea 1951-1963*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1976, p. 121. Hasluck admits that Downs was not one of his admirers and that the situation of land in the highlands was partly due to the inability of the Lands Office to ‹get its house in order›. In contrast to Downs, who Hasluck thought whas a 'prima dona', he regarded Greathead as a "quiet, good and resolute man" wholly dedicated to the indigenous people. Hasluck notes that Greathead had more of an influence on Hasluck's development of policy than any other person due to his clear, careful and exact explanation of the situation in the highlands on Hasluck's first visit to the region in 1951. Hasluck personally regretted Greathead's departure from the administration and continued to meet with him when possible when in Goroka. Ibid. p. 120.

29 AREHD 1952/53, p. 63.

This was the philosophy of 'partnership' as espoused by Minister Hasluck, and of which Gramsci may have approved in the general sense of promoting an educational and cultural transformation of pre-modern peoples. Australia saw its role in Papua New Guinea as one of benevolent paternalism; Australia's official position was that it encouraged, promoted and assisted its New Guinean neighbours. In doing so it provided peace, technical advice and commercial opportunity. Land itself became more than merely contested — it became a commodity.

After just two years as Minister, Paul Hasluck had increasing concerns about self-sufficiency in highlands food production, given that European settlement had by then developed into something of a land grab. During 1954 Hasluck introduced a new lands policy that rested on allocation by tender which involved the Lands Department acting in consultation with DDSNA and other departments of Health, Agriculture and Forests.[30] His reforms stopped direct negotiation between settler and landholders and took into account the future needs of communities for their own requirements in food production. Existing land held by the administration was examined to determine what best possible use could be made of it.[31] By October of 1954 the new system was in place and the land rush was over.[32] From 1932 to 1952 the administration had alienated 8,841 acres of land. In the first two years of de-restriction of the highlands from 1952 a further 8,834 acres was alienated. Of this, 6,500 acres went to private lease, 1,751 to the missions and 583 to the administration.[33] By June 1956 the total amount of alienated land was just over 19,000 acres but the new policy was soon effective.[34] During 1957/58 land alienation was suspended "except for those areas intended to provide

---

[30] The new procedure required administration officers to establish the boundaries of land to be alienated. The patrol and lands officers first ascertained (as best they could) who were the traditional owners, calculated the rate of population growth and prospective population in 25 years, 50 years and 99 years and the ability of available resources of the clan to meet these figures. If these calculations showed that even in 99 years the owners and their clan would not require the land for food production, only then could the administration acquire a parcel of land and rent it to a settler. Because of population density no land was available for alienation in Chimbu SD and ADO West noted that if the road could be extended south from Goroka perhaps ten small properties could be created. AR (DNA) EHD 1955/56, p 17-18. He did note however that it was unrealistic to think that vast areas were awaiting exploitation.

[31] Hasluck, *A Time for Building, op. cit.*, p. 126.

[32] One immediate result was the reduced comment on land matters by Downs in the 1954/55 report.AREHD 1954/55, p. 108 provides only figures for the total amount of alienated land, land alienated during the year and the new total whereas previous reports had waxed lyrical for several pages on the benefits to all of the direct application system.

[33] AR EHD 1952/53, p. 56; AR EHD 1954/55, p. 107.

[34] The amount of alienated land reduced dramatically: 848 acres in 1954/55, 1,162 acres in 1955/56, 10 acres in 1956/57 and 116 acres in 1957/58AR EHD 1954/55, p. 107; AR EHD (DNA), 1956/57, p. 10; AR EHD (DNA) 1957/58, p. 11.

further social services for the native public."[35] After an initial explosion of interest, land policy had been brought back under central control. It was one case where the locally held hegemonic view of how development should proceed was overturned by the centre.

---

[35] While the regulated system gave more importance to the future needs of all New Guineans, and was in theory more equitable for European settlers, eastern highlanders now had no influence over who was to be their neighbour as the selection process depended on applications submitted to the centralised administration. The new system also required a new lands ordinance that would list the ownership of land in the Territory. The crucial question of what it meant to "sell" land to the administration, and the understanding by New Guineans of this process, was initially ignored. AR (DNA) EHD 1957/58, p 12.

Colonial Services

Patrol officers were the front line of the Australian colonial state. They paved the way for specialist service providers within the Australian administration. The EHD was consistently understaffed and this situation was not rectified until Hasluck was able to convince the Australian Commonwealth Government and its Treasury that more funds should be devoted to its administration in New Guinea.[36] By June 1958 the official number of DNA staff in the EHD was 29, a vast improvement on the listed 19 for the entire CHD of ten years before,[37] but for the most part the district was actually chronically understaffed with an average 17 officers.[38] The staffing levels of specialist departments were equally inadequate, however the provision of education, health and agricultural services greatly assisted in fostering a sense of legitimacy for the colonial state.

Education

The educational needs of the children of the EHD during the 1950s were generally not met by the administration as it left the critical task of educating children to the various missions. As a result, the Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists and the New Tribes Mission devised their own curricula and instructed in whatever language they felt appropriate. While this was not the preferred position of the administration, the lack of money for education services meant that there was little point in criticising the activities of the missionaries. The Australian administration judged that the missions had more expertise in education and even provided them with grants,[39] effectively subcontracting a prime duty of the colonial state to church organisations. This was perhaps just as well as in mid 1953 there was one administration school at Chimbu with

---

36 P. Hasluck, *A Time for Building: op. cit.*, p. 64. Hasluck was able to lift the Commonwealth grant from £5.5 million in 1954 to £23.5 million in 1963 and the total territory budget from £7 million to £37 million in the same period.

37 Table adapted from AR (DNA) EHD 1957-58, p. 2.

38 AREHD 1957/58, p. 1.

39 I. Downs, *The Australian Trusteeship Papua New Guinea 1945-1975, op. cit.* , p. 49.

104 pupils.[40] In the 1954/55 year a school at Goroka was completed, able to take up to 200 enrolments and adequately supplied with stores and teachers. The existing administration Higher Village Schools at Kundiawa (Chimbu SD) and Okiufa were improved, and a new school was set to open at Kainantu (Kainantu SD) by the end of June 1955.[41] The Department of Education posted six trained European teachers and one untrained New Guinean to the EHD, as well as an Area Education Officer to the whole highlands region. Downs commented that:

> Administration Higher Village Schools should be established as a matter of urgency at Kerowagi, Chuave, Watabung and Okapa. Experience has shown that the establishment of schools at Patrol Posts leads to better co-operation and simplifies supply and administration. As Patrol Posts are all established in centres of population no useful purpose can be served by establishing schools in places where the population is less dense and the means of supply not organised.[42]

The desire to link patrol posts with educational facilities illustrates the importance of creating a pedagogical role for the colonial state so it could be distinguished from the missions. Combining a centre of administrative power with a centre of learning was a further step in the delivery of the package of 'development'. By 1955/56 there were government schools at Kerowagi, Chuave, Henganofi, Goroka and Kainantu. The Goroka and Kainantu schools had European and New Guinean staff, while the other administration schools were staffed exclusively by New Guineans, the product of the administration's teacher training programmes in other districts in previous years.[43] The administration also acted to accredit schools. In 1957/58 the District Education Officer inspected 35 schools, both mission and administration, registering two and recognising eight.[44] The rest were classed as substandard or regarded as places where people were evangelised rather than educated. Registration gave the state power over education providers and kudos to those schools nominated as pedagogically appropriate. By mid 1958 the administration was teaching 1,345 children,[45] literacy in English was estimated

---

40 AREHD 1952/53, pp. 31-32.

41 Funding increases reflected Hasluck's education directive of 1955. I. Downs, *The Australian Trusteeship, op. cit.,* p. 100.

42 AREHD,1954/55, p. 41-42.

43 AR (DNA) EHD 1955/56, p. 14. There were three New Guinean teachers at Kerowagi, three at Henganofi, two at Chuave and one at Kainantu.

44 AR (DNA) EHD 1957/58, p, 9.

45 AR (DDSNA) EHD 1958/59, p. 15.

at 1 per cent, even though some 3 per cent of the population attended recognised or registered schools while literacy in any language was estimated at 10 percent.[46]

Of the fifteen administration schools in 1958/59 six were built around patrol posts and the others were within a day's walk from patrol posts. Some 4,487 children attended the roughly 200 mission schools,[47] but the number taught in administration schools had expanded dramatically from just over 100 in 1952/53 to over 1400 by 19559. This increase represented an acknowledgment that earlier efforts had been inadequate.[48] By mid-1959 the EHD still did not have secondary education, and only one Intermediate school (middle primary) at Goroka. The mass of effort was therefore in primary education, working with very young children in whom the administration placed its hope for the future,[49] yet the rhetoric of partnership went only so far: European children were taught in a separate school at Goroka.

Health

The provision of health services did more than any other factor to position the colonial state in people's lives, yet it was a slow build-up to acceptance. The EHD health service consisted of a network of aid posts feeding into regional hospitals. In 1953/54 Williams' noted that Chimbu SD had 37 aid posts, Goroka SD 17; and Kainantu SD 16. While the aid posts were geographically dispersed, and closer to places where eastern highlanders actually lived than were the hospitals, they were "limited in their scope and value to care largely for those minor ills which may be cured by aspirin, Epsom Salts or cough mixture."[50] Their primary function was as a point of referral of serious cases to the base hospitals in the towns. These channelled patients into the four 'native' hospitals at Kerowagi and Chimbu, Goroka and Kainantu, which together treated a

---

46 Ibid.

47 AR (DDSNA) EHD 1958/59, p. 15.

48 There was some scepticism within the administration of the readiness of eastern highlanders to embrace schooling with a/DOs Tomasetti, AR (DNA) EHD 1957/58, p. 9, and Holmes AR (DNA) EHD 1958/59, p 15, believing that there was a good deal of "cult" thinking associated with education that stemmed from inter-group rivalry. Holmes further noted that eastern highlanders could however clearly see that education had its advantages and were determined to rectify the situation where many non-highlanders were employed in clerical, artisan and semi-skilled employment throughout the district.

49 AR (DNA) EHD 1958/59, p. 15. The 1959 UN Mission to New Guinea observed Hasluck's policy of universal primary education was retarding political progress toward self-government by failing to provide adequate higher schooling. I. Downs, *The Australian Trusteeship, op. cit.,* p. 129.

50 AREHD 1953/54, p. 29.

combined monthly average of 574 in-patients.[51] New Guinean Native Medical Assistants and Native Medical Orderlies staffed the aid posts. In the hospitals six European Medical Assistants joined the three New Guinean Medical Officers.

By 1954/55 the European staff consisted of the District Medical Officer, Dr Symes, assisted by two medical assistants and three nursing sisters, and Downs made special mention of the work of Sister A. Goodall of the Department of Public Health who was based in Goroka.[52] The Goroka SD alone employed seventy-nine New Guinean medical staff.[53] By 1955/56 there were 93 aid posts, each staffed by a New Guinean medical orderly who often went on patrol with the DNA officers. Some of the adult diseases among the highlands populations were imported, either from Europeans or from highlands labourers returning from the coast: diarrhoea, gonorrhoea, influenza, varicella, rubella and diphtheria were all treated. Acting DO Harry West praised the work of the Infant and Maternal Welfare sisters who were based at Goroka, Kundiawa and Kerowagi, one of whom cared for more than 2,000 infants on daily runs out of Goroka. West noted that because of their work, "...an increasing number of native women are voluntarily attending hospital for confinement, with a resultant noticeable decrease in infant mortality".[54] The benefits of European health care did much to provide the colonial state with legitimacy and enabled it to enter into the hearth and home.[55] Communal sleeping arrangements gave rise to increased risk of spreading tuberculosis, contracted from returning labourers (see below) despite treating highlands labour recruits with anti-TB Mantoux tests[56] and BCG (*bacille Calmette-Guérin*) injections. Malarial quarantine was also employed to alleviate the possibility of infecting whole highlands populations.[57]

---

51 AREHD 1953/54, p. 29.

52 Sister Goodall's rounds included stops at thirteen other centres in the Goroka region: Asaro, Korefeign, Mando, Mirima, Lunipe, YufiYufa, the SDA mission (at YufiYufa), Mohoweto, Bena-Bena, Dunantina, Henganofi, Ababe and Watabung. She treated pneumonia, influenza, diarrhoea, dysentery, scabies, sipoma (tinea), malnourished children, conjunctivitis, and malaria. In May 1955 her work brought her into contact with over 1,400 children under two years of age, and she encouraged women to come into the Goroka clinic to give birth. AREHD 1954/55 Statistical Table pp. 39-40 shows 144 children were born in the Goroka clinic.

53 AREHD 1954/55, p.37. The main diseases treated were malaria, pneumonia, dysentery, URTI (Upper Respiratory Tract Infection), Ulsus Tropicum (tropical ulcer) and Varicella (chickenpox).

54 AR (DNA) EHD 1955/56, p 15. By mid 1956 there were three nursing sisters.

55 One of the great successes of the Australian health services was the treatment of the disease yaws that left deep scaring and disfigurement on victims. Some 72 per cent of the EHD population had been treated for yaws by 1958/59 and in the following year only around 40,000 people from an estimated population of 328,000 remained untreated in the EHD. Medical expertise at the time could however do little for the victims of the disease 'Kuru' which was present in some EHD populations in remote areas. Around 16,000 people in Okapa SD, 11,000 of them Fore people, were affected by this progressively deteriorating neurological condition then thought to be similar to Parkinson's, but was perhaps more like Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease variant.

56 An intradermal tuberculin test named after French physician Charles Mantoux (1877-1947).

57 AR (DNA) EHD 1955/56, p. 15.

The Australian administration's provision of health services to the peoples of the EHD was a great boon to New Guineans. By their own standards however the administration officers working in the highlands felt that they could have done a great deal more if given adequate staff and resources. Health services got off to a slow start but eventually were widely dispersed and most EHD communities had access to aid posts that referred serious cases to the native hospitals. By 1956/57 the ratio of health professionals to the EHD population was 1:22,000 and included four qualified medical personnel and ten medical assistants. By the middle of 1958 year there were nine administration hospitals, 99 aid posts and infant welfare had further expanded. Partnership again was partial, for as in education Europeans had their own health care and hospital.

Colonial opportunities

Peace and prosperity depended on order and social stability required the removal of bored young men. Created in 1950 the Highlands Labour Scheme (HLS) was a major factor in social stability for the administration as it removed large numbers of 'potential troublemakers'. The government organised for men to undertake paid work, mainly on coastal plantations in Madang or the Islands, for periods of two years. During the period 1952-57 around 3,500 men per year exited the highlands,[58] and with the most 'difficult' elements out of the way the administration could concentrate on its message of 'development', which was primarily delivered through agriculture.

The administration banked on rapid development through cash crops. Agricultural extension thus became an important plank in the delivery of the modernity 'package' that introduced wage labour and the capitalist mode of production to the highlands, as well as linking the region to the international economy and the world commodities market. In the period 1947-1951 the Australian administration in the EHD promoted market gardening in European and native vegetables as a cash generating exercise. These

crops were consumed locally, as well as being bought for other districts of Papua and New Guinea. In the period 1952-57 cash crops that could be grown for the international market were widely promoted.

The principal cash crops promoted were passionfruit, peanuts and coffee. The length of time taken for a coffee plant to mature from the seedling, usually between five to seven years, meant that even while being widely planted among highlands communities, it was only by the end of the 1950s that coffee was emerging as a valuable export crop for both of the 'partners' in the partnership.[59] Cash crops were seen as the basis for long-term wealth generation in the highlands. Because of the intrusion of wage labour, capitalist farming techniques and the monetisation of the economy, traditional forms of wealth, such as shell money, increasingly became devalued. Returnees from the Highlands Labour Scheme were 'cashed-up', and money came to be demanded by many in the EHD as payment for both goods and labour.

Money provided a linkage between local production of agricultural commodities and the consumers of the outside world. The administration attempted to shift the emphasis from barter transactions to economic exchange using tokens accepted and redeemable throughout all districts of Papua and New Guinea and beyond. This was one step in creating embryonic capitalism. The promotion of agriculture in this process is especially important as the administration set standard payment rates and regulated the purchase of crops. The market was controlled by the colonial administration, which initially purchased all agricultural commodities and even increased the price of purchase in order to generate interest in growing cash crops. In September 1952 Downs unilaterally doubled the price to be paid to New Guineas from a quarter pence per pound of kau kau (sweet potato), corn, taro and other vegetables to halfpence per pound.[60] The administration's behaviour can only be explained by non-economic objectives as it

---

58 AREHD 1952/53, p. 51; AREHD 1953/54, p. 51; AREHD 1954/55, p. 104; AR EHD (DNA) 1956/57, pp. 15-16; AR EHD (DNA) 1957/58, p. 9.

59 Several excellent studies have been made of the growth of the coffee industry in the eastern highlands, particularly

M. Donaldson, and K. Good, *Articulated Agricultural Development: Traditional and Capitalist Agricultures in Papua New Guinea*, Avebury, Aldeshot, 1988 and B. Finney, *Big Men and Business: Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth in the New Guinea Highlands*, University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1973.

60 AREHD 1952/53, p. 27. The imperial measurement system there were 12 pence (d) to a shilling (s) and 20 shillings to the pound (£).

doubled the cost of vegetables for settlers, missions and for itself, but it also doubled the amount of money being forwarded to the agricultural producers of the EHD. Each load of *kau kau* was suddenly worth twice what it had been. Stable markets were assured for passionfruit[61] and peanuts[62] through the purchasing policies of the administration, and while these crops and a variety of vegetables[63] were honest high yield-per-acre crops the amount of money being earned by eastern highlanders remained small. On a per capita basis the money from coffee and agricultural products gave the annual average of roughly 4/3 (4 shillings and thruppence) per person, the population in the previous year being estimated at 328,000. [64] As the coffee industry developed among Europeans, New Guineans became increasingly attracted by the promise of high prices.

Despite its long period of maturation coffee became the most valuable cash crop available to highlanders. In the 1953/54 year from October to June the administration paid a set rate of one shilling per pound of parchment coffee and collected 1,345 lbs for £67.5.0. Coffee was therefore some 24 times more valuable than vegetables. In that year the single Agricultural Extension Officer for the entire EHD organised the planting of 57 plots of coffee in Goroka and Chimbu SDs for New Guinean growers and was training a squad of local Agricultural Assistants.[65] In June 1957 there were approximately 2,300 New Guineans growing coffee on 540 acres.[66] This generated around £18,500 for eastern highlands farmers and represented about 20 per cent of their potential coffee crop, many of the trees having been only recently planted.[67]

---

61 AR (DNA) EHD 1958/59, p. 7-8. The Cottees factory in Goroka employed former DC George Greathead as its agent and purchased fruit directly from growers which it then crushed and exported the pulp and juice to Australia. The purchase price for passionfruit was 1d/1 lb when the fruit was collected from villages and 3d/1 lb from the factory. Many eastern highlanders walked to the factory at Goroka to get the higher price. In February 1959 Cottees threatened to pull out, but the Department of Native Affaris (The renamed DDSNA) brokered a deal whereby a fixed price of 2d/1 lb was offered for all fruit brought to the factory, with no fruit collected elsewhere. The Assistant Administrator of the Territory presided over this conference to save the passionfruit industry in the Goroka area.

62 Peanuts were promoted for their dietary value due to their high content of oils and fats, and as a rotational crop for replenishing gardens. With three crops a year people could grow peanuts alongside sweet potato, essentially for pocket money.

63 From the late 1940s the CHD administration bought vegetables to keep away scurvy and to supply coastal towns. With the influx of a settler population, and their plantation farming techniques based on a small core labour force (the settler and his family) and large crop output, day labourers were required at times of increased activity, such as harvesting. By law, the employers were required to pay and feed their labour force and therefore sourced root vegetables (sweet potato and taro) from local suppliers, or purchased vegetables from European middle men who drove along the roads buying vegetables from the more distant communities.

64 Adapted from AR (DNA) EHD 1958/59, p 44. Statistical Table 15. Figures were adjudged to be 75 per cent accurate based on records, enquiries of commercial channels and personal knowledge of officers. Revenue from coffee represented just under 27% of agricultural revenues. On a per capita basis the money from coffee and agricultural products gives an annual average of roughly 4/3 (4 shillings and thruppence) per person, the population in the previous year being estimated at 328,000.

65 AREHD 1953/54, p. 25.

66 AR (DNA) EHD 1956/57, p. 4.

67 AR (DNA) EHD, 1957/58, pp. 4-5. New Guinean coffee plots in the EHD varied widely in size and management techniques; the smallest could contain as few as 100 trees, the largest up to 4 acres. Many plots were individually owned, but groups operated some. Certain of these groups were clan based and others were not. The larger plots even employed casual migrant labour from other clans, and from other parts of the highlands. The administration made efforts to "individualise the ownership" of group-managed coffee plots, presumably because it felt that non-clan based co-operative management would be a source of tension in the future. The diversity of approaches to the growing of coffee indicates the adaptability of the highlanders both to new crops and to the new opportunities presented them by a capitalist economy. In the face of marked social change eastern highlanders engaged with the new system at a variety of levels, and in a wide range of enterprises.

The boom years of coffee were however still some years away, even in Goroka which became the centre of the coffee industry. The annual reports for the 1954/55 year (July 54 to April 55), indicates that growers in the Goroka SD were earning sixteen times more for their peanuts (£1,356.3.0) than for their coffee (£92.12.0). While coffee was one shilling per pound, peanuts were paid at between sixpence and 1s 3d (1/3) per lb, depending on quality, but peanuts were far easier to grow than coffee and it is no surprise that they remained an important component of the eastern highlands agricultural economy until the late 1950s. Passionfruit returns (£3,297.5.6) were even more lucrative, being more than twice that of peanuts, however sweet potato sales (£4,647.0.11) accounted for over one third of all income from crops in Goroka SD. In 1954/55 across the whole district sweet potato earned people a total amount of £18,366.10. [68]

By 1959 the shift toward coffee cultivation was however in full swing. The income from coffee, miscellaneous agriculture, market gardening, mining, firewood trading, timber handicrafts, building and roadwork accounted for £114,985 of the total £116,755 derived by New Guineans from all economic activity in the EHD. The trend toward coffee farming, which accounted for just under £19,000, does not appear to have come at significant cost to other cash crops as miscellaneous agriculture and market gardening still accounted for £51,700. [69]

Commercial opportunities were still mostly restricted to agriculture but they did exist. The seed of future prosperity had been planted and was being taken up by more and more communities every year. From the twenty-five plots of 1952/53 (and the £67 worth of coffee produced in 1953/54), indigenous growers expanded their plantings to over 3,850 acres in individually owned plots by March of 1959. [70] The administration aimed to educate and assist growers in techniques for planting coffee

---

68 AREHD, 1954/55, p. 28.

69 AR EHD (DNA) 1958/59, Statistical Table 15, pp. 44-45.

70 AR EHD (DNA) 195/59, p. 7 .

and held educational field days involving the DC, officers of the DNA and Agricultural Extension Officers at central points, with people attending from up to 30 miles away. The administration felt the success of such days was seen in the large number of correctly planted, shaded and tended nurseries as well as the improved quality of bean.[71] By 1963 New Guinean agricultural production in coffee and other highlands crops had exceed expatriate plantation production.[72] The message was being heeded but the individualism of capitalism was not entirely transplanted. Contrary to the administration's desire to individualise land tenure for permanent tree cropping, communal profit sharing still accounted for over half of all coffee revenue.[73]

The Australian administration promoted agricultural diversification in the eastern highlands in an effort to create wealth. During the 1950s an increasing amount of cash circulated within the eastern highlands economy, some of which was deposited to the patrol posts (which acted as proxy-banks) and actual banks (the Bank of New South Wales and the Commonwealth Bank) that set up in Goroka and Kainantu. Consumption too was catching on and one indigenous planter used his funds from his first harvest to purchase a car as early as 1957.[74] Capitalism was catching on and by providing agricultural assistance to New Guinean highlands communities, the administration linked the district's agricultural future with commodity markets in other parts of the Territory and overseas. As a result of the diversification of agriculture, the eastern highlands was slowly incorporated into the complex commodity chains of international capitalist production, all with the participation and approval of the newly trained cash crop farmers, pushed, prodded and encouraged by the colonial state.

Conclusions

---

71 AR (DNA) EHD 1958/59, pp. 6-7.

72 I. Downs, *The Australian Trusteeship, op. cit.,* p. 181, 185. In 1965 indigenous coffee production (the vast majority of which was in the EHD) was 4,319 tons from 35,037 acres. Australian settlers produced 3,374 tons from 12,229 acres. By 1970 the figures had risen to 22,425 and 6,258 tons respectively.

73 AR (DNA) EHD 1955/56, p. 6.

74 Ben Finney, *Big Men and Business: op. cit.* p. 71.

Unlike many other colonies or territories, the Australian administration in the EHD had no economy to 'massage' into shape and thus worked to create one. It basically started from scratch and did not introduce taxation until the operations of 'good government' had been established at the end of the 1950s. Once initial pacification had been completed, Australian officials sought to rule through law and with economic incentives to induce people to embrace the variant of modernity they had created. The effect of Australian post-war administration in the eastern highlands was to create a sense of legitimacy for colonial government that rested on the pedagogical role of the colonial state. The EHD under Australian administration is perhaps close to what Gramsci would have expected of a civilised society. The Australian administration spent far more money there than it could ever hoped to regain;[75] it provided health and education services for free and stimulated economic growth. The 'partnership' espoused and cherished by Hasluck was in reality a sophisticated justification for colonial rule that was premised on improving the welfare and lives of New Guineans. The administrative colonial state as created in the EHD had an eye on international opinion. In an era of international revulsion against colonialism Australian officials created the most philosophically justifiable method of control over people who they regarded as 'primitive'. The development of the EHD into a regime of administrative colonialism based on regulation, surveillance and the promotion of services, caused eastern highlanders to change their own behaviour and operate to the new logic of social control. The actions of colonial 'middle managers', and their understanding of their role in shaping modernity, was thus crucial for the future legitimacy of central government in a rudimentary but developing capitalist state. This acceptance of governmental hegemony and capitalist production, once established, was total and irreversible.

---

75 Although it must be acknowledged that the colonial state created the conditions for private capital to prosper so while it did not benefit directly itself from the money invested in the EHD it did recoup funds from taxation and provide a livelihood for settlers, many of whom were regarded in the territory as wealthy.