

and statistics of their changing size and distribution. There are statistics of the number of principals in each firm, but not of the employees. There is nothing on the number and distribution of qualified lawyers in salaried employment—surely an important trend since the 1950s. And, as with all institutional histories, there is the problem of the recent past. Personalities a hundred years ago seem more heroic. Indeed Dr Cullen concludes that, from the 1920s, Otago produced 'fewer practitioners of supreme ability compared with the earlier periods'. How can we measure this?

These are to some extent carping comments. This is a fine work within its compass, and certainly the most valuable we have on the New Zealand legal profession. Indeed social historians will find much that throws light on larger themes of regional and national history. In particular the theme of centralisation—the shift in the balance of power from Otago to the north—is encapsulated in the evolving relationship between the regional society and the reborn New Zealand Law Society. Also valuable is the analysis of patterns of recruitment to the profession in Otago. Those who see the last thirty years as a time of increased social mobility may find here grist for their mill.

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Rich and Poor in New Zealand. A Critique of Class, Politics and Ideology. By David Bedggood. George Allen and Unwin, Auckland, 1980. 178pp. N.Z. price: \$8.95; *Social Policy and the Welfare State in New Zealand.* By Brian Easton. George Allen and Unwin, Auckland, 1980. 182pp. N.Z. price: \$8.95.

DAVID BEDGGOOD regards Marxism as a 'science of society'; his aim, in this book is to demonstrate its validity in the case of New Zealand. He also aims to 'explain, within a Marxist framework, the causes of class inequality in New Zealand society'. The reader is in for a heavy dose of Marx and Marcuse, with endless Marxist and sociological jargon. Bedggood argues from the secondary sources; he has not, it seems, done any research into poverty. This is in no sense a scholarly book; it is fiercely dogmatic and assertive. It reads more like a work of religion than of research. He tries manfully to shove our history and society into a Marxist mould which proves Procrustean. Our small farmers become the 'peasantry' so that our society may resemble those Marx knew: the word 'peasant' has a quite different meaning here. We learn that poverty is endemic in the welfare state, indeed, we now have 'mass poverty'. This is because of 'cuts in social spending'. Although there was in the past an undisputed rise in real wages and living conditions, nevertheless, because of 'relative impoverishment' (i.e. the rich grew richer faster), the workers have experienced a growing 'immiseration'. The result of National cuts in social services has been a growing gap between rich and poor and 'the rediscovery of poverty'. The class war is in full swing and has embraced the Maoris: 'The actual process called juvenile offending is a euphemism for class struggle. This is because Maori youth are actively criminalised by the capitalist

authorities, that is labelled a *criminal class* in order to "individualise" the collective sub-ideology represented by Maori Gangs.'

This is great stuff and there is much more of it. We learn that 'The authorities are the biggest [drug] pushers of all because they guarantee a market monopoly for the hard-drug heavies. Marijuana presents a much greater threat to bourgeois hegemony.' Other interesting non-information and startling insights include the following: William Rolleston was a missionary; the post-war boom ended and a decade of stagnation began in 1967—and not, as one believed, in 1974; the contribution of the runholders to the world economy was 'rural only in the sense that livestock eat grass'; the King movement had its roots in pre-European society—when the Maoris had no kings and had no word for their society as a whole. One of the best bits is the assertion that we are short of markets, whereas during the depression of the thirties the farmers did have markets. In fact, there was a calamitous drop of some 65 per cent in the volume of world trade and our only significant market was too depressed to make exports pay a dividend. Today our exports are at their peak.

Bedggood believes that in the 1890s workers posed a great threat to the free market. How anyone who has read about 1890 and 1913 could believe that it is hard to say. However, we are told that the state had to regulate the labour movement through the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act which 'forced the labour movement to restrict its field of class struggle . . . to legal channels. . . .' The state 'made any form of organised working-class resistance to this domination illegal. . . .' Elsewhere Bedggood has asserted that this Act held down the workers' share below what could have been obtained by unions outside the jurisdiction of the court.¹ All this is nonsense. No union was obliged to register under the Act. Almost all of them did because they assumed that they would get more, not less, from the Court. Moreover, the unionists did not, in 1894, fear that the court would be a 'leg-iron': that remark was made much later. In the early 1890s the unions suggested the Act.

Sometimes the argument or illustrations are unbelievably simplistic, like the illustration of the *law of value* (p.61) or, worse, the attempt (pp.100-101) to prove that the redistribution of income through graduated income tax is cancelled out by indirect taxation. Even Bedggood concedes in a footnote that this is 'a very crude estimate'.

Nothing would be more welcome and interesting than a scholarly and intelligent Marxist study of New Zealand, presenting an alternative view. All we have here is New Zealand as seen through red-tinted glasses; he sees what he expects to see. On the basic assertions about poverty in New Zealand we learn nothing. Dr Bedggood is aware of, and cites, the evidence discovered by Brian Easton that, in fact, the distribution of income between rich and poor was becoming more equal and not less equal, and so was the distribution of wealth, at least in the period 1950-1976. The share of the total income taken by the top ten per cent of adults, by income, declined from 38.5 per cent to 34.6 per cent. This fact tells us more about rich and poor in New Zealand than Dr Bedggood's book. He quotes Dr John Macrae as saying that Easton's data 'merely creates "noise" '.

Brian Easton discusses the welfare state and poverty in a rational way. He says that the welfare state was needed because the unregulated private market failed to attain the social goals required by the public. Poverty in an affluent society, he says, must be thought of as concerning those below the meat line, not the bread

line. One of his remarks astonished me: there are more British born living in New Zealand than there are Maoris.

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1 D. Pitt, ed., *Social Class in New Zealand*, 1977, p.119.

German New Guinea—The Annual Reports; German New Guinea—The Draft Annual Report for 1913-14. Edited and translated by Peter Sack and Dymphna Clark. Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1979. 403pp., 170pp. Price: \$A29.00, \$A5.95 respectively.

WHENEVER a would-be editor embarks on a project such as this he knows he is obliged to state in his introduction the principles upon which the selection of documents was based as well as the general aims of the exercise. This Peter Sack (a German trained in law now at the Australian National University) has done with exemplary proficiency. The documents are those relating to the so-called 'Old Protectorate', omitting the less important material on the 'Island Territory'. This means in effect that we have a general official survey of what the Germans tried to do during their short tenure as colonial masters in mainland New Guinea as well as the Bismarck Archipelago. This rendition into English is intended for the edification of both the New Guineans themselves and for Western researchers, all of whom are expected to acquire a more just assessment of the German colonial record than the editor thinks they have at present. So far so good. But when an editor makes in his obligatory introduction gratuitous slights on Australian scholars in the field he detracts considerably from the merits of his own efforts. Assertions which are not backed up by substantial arguments (what are footnotes for?) reveal more about the writer than about those he is trying to put down. One bristles at the following: 'Moreover, western research into the history of New Guinea under German rule is still very much in its infancy, and interest is likely to wane rather than wax in the future. So far there exists not one thoroughly researched western version of the overall history of German New Guinea, nor is there anyone in sight who will produce such a history within the next ten years or so.' If Sack finds the not inconsiderable scholarly output of scholars such as Stewart Firth and Peter Hempenstall inadequate he owes it to the profession to state why. Sack's introduction would have been an admirable opportunity to engage in a reckoning with the existing western scholarship on German New Guinea whereby he could have indicated its possible strengths and weaknesses and suggested what might be the 'correct' line of approach. So what we have is a large book of documents the product of great strength and determination, but not explained or justified in a manner which a professional historian has the right to expect.

The usefulness of the Annual Reports of the German New Guinea Company which administered the area until 1898-99 and thereafter of the official German colonial administration is obvious. What the white masters tried to achieve, their