

Chapter 6 :

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis has been to gauge the overall effects of Indonesian hegemony on the West Papuans, and to evaluate the interplay of the three types of domination that are imposed on them : economic pressure, physical coercion and cultural imperialism.

Of overriding concern is the breakdown of the structures of traditional family and social life and the associated loss of identity and negative self-image engendered by the denigration of Papuan culture through 'civilization' projects. The deprivation of ancestral land for development and transmigration programmes and for multinationals must be considered a prime determinant in this social disintegration. Not only cultural denomination affects the West Papuans, however, but also physical and economic domination. Physical coercion takes the form of forced labour and compulsory resettlement, as well as intimidation and repression. Economic domination, in particular, interacts with the other two, in that it embraces such broad issues as exploitation; forced labour for community 'development' projects; the acquisition of land for 'development'; under-representation in the labour force (and rising - and dashed - expectations for urban Papuans); as well as forced change of agrarian techniques and production, away from the so-called 'primitive' subsistence level.

The question remains as to how to reconcile the paradox of how a country that has laboured so arduously for its own independence from colonial domination can impose similar repression on the people on its periphery. Although formulated in a South African context, Wolpe's (1975) notion of internal colonialism is potentially useful here.

By internal colonialism is generally meant the application, within the borders of the same state, of the same mechanisms of cultural domination, political oppression, and economic exploitation which have, at an international level, engendered the development of the advanced capitalist states, through the imperialist underdevelopment of the colonial satellites. This is achieved through the subordination of ethnic and racial groups and the geographic areas they occupy within the boundaries of the state, and corresponds to the structure of the social relations of domination and exploitation among distinct, culturally heterogeneous groups (Casanova, in Wolpe, 1975 : 231; Wolpe, 1975 : 229). Characteristically the colonizers exploit the land, the raw materials, the labour, and other resources (Blauner, in Wolpe, 1975 : 231). However, racial and ethnic entities have tended to be seen as homogeneous, and their internal class structures not analysed.

Wolpe contends that the relationship between

capitalist and pre-existing non-capitalist modes of production is critical in the establishment of internal colonialism in South Africa. The very existence of non-capitalist modes of production, he argues, provides the basis for control and exploitation by capitalism, since it relieves the capitalist sector from the necessity of providing 'indirect wages' or benefits as a supporting means of subsistence for when labour is not required (Wolpe, 1975 : 248). Thus "the mode of political domination and the content of legitimating ideologies assume racial, ethnic and cultural forms" (Wolpe, 1975 : 244).

In West Papua it has been shown that indigenous labour is appropriated for *kerja bakti*, but seldom is called upon for paid employment, and even more rarely for reasonable wages. So subsistence production and self-sufficiency (as well as, to some extent, the reproduction of labour) is essential to the support of the indigenes, for those times when labour is not required by the capitalist sector. Therefore, maintenance, and indeed improvement, of subsistence production (through village development programmes) can be considered intrinsic to the functioning of capitalism, as Wolpe suggests. This, then, produces the paradoxical situation in which subsistence production is crucial to the smooth running of capitalism, but is also denounced as 'primitive' by the dominant group. To reconcile this paradox, the dominant value-system falls back onto

categorizing the particular racial/ethnic/cultural group - in this case, the West Papuans - as 'primitive', thereby taking on racist and chauvinistic characteristics, as Wolpe found in South Africa. Thus as similar mechanisms to Wolpe's internal colonialism of South Africa are to be found in West Papua, it appears that the notion of internal colonialism is to some degree applicable. Internal colonialism as formulated by Wolpe may therefore have an aspect of cultural imperialism intrinsic to it. Since Wolpe's model focuses primarily on economic and political domination as it relates to race and ethnicity, the destruction or transformation of cultural forms by the dominant capitalist sector in the colonial relationship is not examined. Imposed identity through forced cultural assimilation is, however, an integral part of the West Papuan experience, as it may be on a wider scale.

"Those who experience discrimination, exploitation and oppression react against a domination which always includes cultural domination by generating their own forms of cultural self-expression" (Worsley, 1984 : 55). Therefore, perhaps the most significant consequence of Indonesian domination is the reaffirmation of distinctive traditional values and customs as a political force. Although at the moment very much appropriated by the elite stratum of West Papuan nationalists, this force is increasingly becoming the focus for an overarching sense of Papuan nationalism, as a counter-balance to inter-group antagonisms and divisiveness.

This revival of 'primordial attachments' functions in direct opposition to Indonesia's strategy of nation-building, and, as such, is a major component of West Papuan recalcitrance. However, there are still elements in West Papua, particularly amongst the more powerful elite, who are, for obvious personal gain, in favour of the 'diluting' of the Melanesian culture that is Indonesianization (41). For instance, Isaak Hindom, the Jakarta-appointed West Papuan governor, made the symbolic statement that "within a decade all Irianese would have straight hair" (cited in Hastings, 1984 : 14).

And what of the future ? Clearly, a likely contingency will be further imposed acculturation and cultural disintegration for the West Papuans, leading to, as Hindom infers, a thoroughly Indonesianized population of 'Irian Jaya' (or 'Irian the Victorious'). Indonesia does not have the fighting military strength, given both the role of the military in administration and in other conflicts elsewhere, to trounce defiance in West Papua once and for all. It is doubtful nonetheless that the New Order would allow an irredentist region on the periphery to secede, lest it act as a catalyst for all other dissident groups. Furthermore, control of West Papua enhances Indonesia's influence and strategic position in the Pacific.

Another possibility is conditional on an expanding resistance movement and a heightened recalcitrance by Papuans

to Indonesian rule across class lines (42). These, together with strong, international pressure, may produce a just and impartial act of self-determination. However, as Ellwood (1981 : 23) points out :

"Self-determination has been the rallying cry of Third World independence movements for the last 50 years. But few have opted to apply the same standards to their own internal politics."

Notwithstanding, if a plebiscite were to eventuate, resulting in a break with Indonesia, there are three possible scenarios : complete, non-aligned independence; unification with Papua-Niugini; and a pan-Melanesian federation. Complete independence is the goal of the majority of OPM members. To this end, the OPM has implemented, in 'liberated' zones, a village advancement programme - **program kemajuan desa**. The programme involves political and general education, literacy, health and welfare, agriculture and co-operatives, and knowledge of commercial enterprise (Rumkoren, in TAPOL #62, 1984 : 7-8; Rumakiek, 1985b : 24). The desire for independence is made all the more sweet by the fact that the Papuans across the border have shown the world that they are able to rule themselves successfully.

Savage and Martin (1977 : 343) contend that few of the 'cadres' speak in terms of pan-Niugini-ism. Nonetheless this notion carries favour with some villagers, especially those who live in the border region and have clan affiliations with PNG citizens. According to an article in

the Bulletin of 16 July 1985, the five West Papuan refugees who arrived at Boigou Island were reportedly members of MUSGAS ('Melanesian Union from Gas [Gag ?] to Samarai' - Gas apparently being in the Bird's Head area of West Papua and Samarai in southeast Papua-Niugini). However, the PNG's Somare Government's tough stance with refugee and OPM member alike, coupled with the leftist political position of the OPM, makes the realization of pan-Niugini-ism indeed improbable.

The last of the three alternatives entails a pan-Melanesian Federation including, it is anticipated, countries such as Timor, the South Moluccas, West Papua, Papua-Niugini, the Solomons, Vanuatu (who already recognizes the OPM), New Caledonia and Fiji. This would provide a viable economic and political unit in the area (Report on the Liberation Struggle, 1977 : 247). This proposal, put forward by the more conservative Senegal-based arm of the PRG, has been rejected by Savage (1980 : 41) who claims that any attempt to implement such an alliance would be constrained by the *realpolitik* of international capital in the region.

The final eventuality to be examined involves the Indonesians' lessening the repression imposed on the West Papuans, in the hope of 'winning their hearts and minds'. But the total disregard for anything 'Papuan', in the

interests . of so-called 'Indonesian national identity', combined with ill-defined and destructive development projects that sacrifice the poor, 'primitive' and powerless, have all left their mark on the West Papuans. It is doubtful, therefore, that a modus vivendi between West Papuans and Indonesians can be reached, for, as Rumakiek (1985b : 26) points out, "every second West Papuan has his or her own story to tell about Indonesian oppression".

The West Papuan experience in relation to Indonesia is but one of the latest instances of a phenomenon that has been repeated throughout history with the growth of nations. Whereas, on the one hand, centralized nation-states have needed to expand their influence and control to their peripheries as a mechanism of self-defence and survival, on the other hand they have, to achieve this, oppressed marginal minorities. Up to now, Indonesia has reacted largely at the negative end of this process. A comparable situation has occurred for the Armenian people of Western Turkey where :

"The negative face of nationalism, 'chauvinism', could easily be whipped up ... when the victims' possessions were available for distribution to the ethnic majority. Being a member of an ethnic minority might thus carry with it the constant fear of death and despoliation. More usually it meant a less dramatic second-class citizenship in which one was condemned to lower-class occupations not necessarily by force or by law, but because one did not command the resources of the hegemonic culture, the language or the social connections, rather than because one wore different clothing, ate uncivilized foods or worshipped bizarre gods at unbusinesslike times."

(Worsley, 1984 : 273)