

*Our Young Men Snatched Away: Labourers in PNG's colonial economy, 1884-1942.* By Rod Lacey. Occasional Paper in Economic History no.3, History Department, University of Papua New Guinea, 1983. 61 pp. Price K1.80.

ALL TOO often economic history is history with a plethora of numbers and no people. Happily this is not the case with Lacey's succinct but richly informed study. Like those of most tropical colonies the commercial economies of Papua and New Guinea depended on an indentured labour supply, either indigenous or imported. In the cases under review it was mainly indigenous. As his topic requires, Lacey first establishes the number of labourers involved — and where they came from and where and how they were employed. But he then goes beyond that to discuss (a) the labourers' experience of participating in the colonial (mainly plantation) economy and (b) the effect of the prolonged absence of many young men on village economies and ceremonial. The result is a fine example of 'history from below', much of it told in the words of participants.

The book, meritorious in itself, is also a good advertisement for the series to which it belongs. The cheap format is no indication of the worth of the contents but is designed to facilitate wide distribution at low cost. Other papers in the series are *Mining in the Economy of Papua New Guinea, 1880-1980*, and *A History of the Milne Bay District Workers Union*.

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*Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere.* By Donald Denoon. Oxford University Press, 1983. 280 pp., index, 12 tables, 4 maps. U.K. price: £22.50.

THERE IS nothing new in comparing New Zealand with Uruguay, or Australia with Argentina, or in talking about 'colonies of recent settlement' as a distinct group of countries. There has, been however, surprisingly little systematic comparative scholarship on this group of countries, and what there is has tended to focus on one or another 'pair' of countries.

Denoon's excellent book provides a well-informed guided tour through the national histories of six white-settler countries: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile. There is little material that is new in the individual national stories, for Denoon chooses to rely on the work of a couple of established historians in each country, supplemented only marginally by reference to monograph literature. The novelty and interest lie in the insights arising from juxtaposition and comparison. Denoon embarks on his voyage armed with a set of hypotheses about what it is that makes these societies distinct from the rest of the non-industrial world, and what forces have led their individual histories to diverge. Again many of the hypotheses are familiar, but it is a change (and a