

Dipuntian Update

When SSP came into existence in 2002 one of our main objectives was to provide support to Friends of People Close to Nature's work with the Agta tribe in the Philippines. In January 2003 some of us went to volunteer at Dipuntian, the land bought by FPCN for Agta people to live on. It soon became clear that the project was not at all what we had been led to believe and we eventually made the decision to withdraw our support, and published our criticisms in our last newsletter.

Since then the project's founder and organiser, Hartmut Heller, has died and FPCN have stated that the project will continue with a new co-ordinator. They have also written a response to our article which we have decided not to print here in full due to its length. What follows is a brief covering of their main points:

FPCN state that: "The work of fPcN in buying land for the Agta people gave them the first possibility in history to live somewhere without fear of the land being taken away. This security is essential if they are to continue their tribal life. After we bought the land we invited the Agta to live there if they want to respect our rules. The Agta who agree with them live now on the land."

The growing of crops is permitted on the 2 hectares of un-forested land at Dipuntian. Non Agta are banned from the land to prevent the "assimilation of Agta into mainstream society without economic justice". The school project is running under very difficult conditions, it needs help to succeed, "not people who criticise and destroy everything". It is necessary that the land be owned by FPCN and not by tribal members/other individuals, to prevent corrupt individuals from selling it. Some Agta do want FPCN to buy more land, especially those who live elsewhere on the peninsula.

Our decision not to support the project is unaffected by their reply, much of which we disagree with/believe to be inaccurate. However, we do not want to waste our time and theirs' with further criticism/debate so anyone wanting to find out more can do so by getting in touch with us, or with them at: fPcN intercultural, 33 Gould Close, Welham Green, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL9 7EB. www.fpcn-global.org

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Earth First! Groups in the Philippines
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Lucena - larm_solidaridad@yahoo.com
Manila - efm Manila@darksites.com

West Papua
DeMMAK - demmak@melanesianews.org
Koteka Prisoner Support at westpapua.net
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SSP email list
Subscribe at - www.eco-action.org/ssp

Pawa na Pipel!

Extracts from this new pamphlet - an Interview with a Melanesian Solidarity activist from Papua New Guinea about strikes, land struggles and fighting the IMF.

"Well, Papua New Guinea now, to put it very frankly, is more a colony of Australia than during colonial times... So if you look at PNG now, there's political independence, but in reality, there has been a re-colonisation; it's been economically re-colonised. And now the Australian government is pushing even for political colonisation through the South Pacific forum and through the intervention force they now implement in the Solomon Islands. They are using the same excuse in PNG; they are saying PNG is on the verge of lawlessness, it's going to succumb to the control of international terrorists, so they need to intervene. They want to directly control; they want to put the civil servants in, they want to put the police in, they're probably going to control the army as well. The reality is, in Papua New Guinea, nothing happens without the Australian government."

"In PNG many people go to church because they provide a lot of basic services. The government can hardly run services for people; the basic medical services, the schools - they are provided by the church. They have the best schools, they are providing medical centres, so people have these reasons for believing in the church. And there's no reasons to believe in the government!"

On protests during the Sandline crisis: "The government at the old city were circled by

police. But we had to do something so went to break down the police barriers. When we came close to the army barracks, we saw this vehicle with about 10 fully armed soldiers, They said

'Where are you going?' and we said 'We're going to break down the police lines' so that's what we did, we invited the soldiers to come with us and we came to the first police line and we just broke it down. We knew we were going to force the government down because once we broke the police line, the people got confident and they just marched on the parliament, from everywhere in the city. Like a sea of people coming into the parliament."

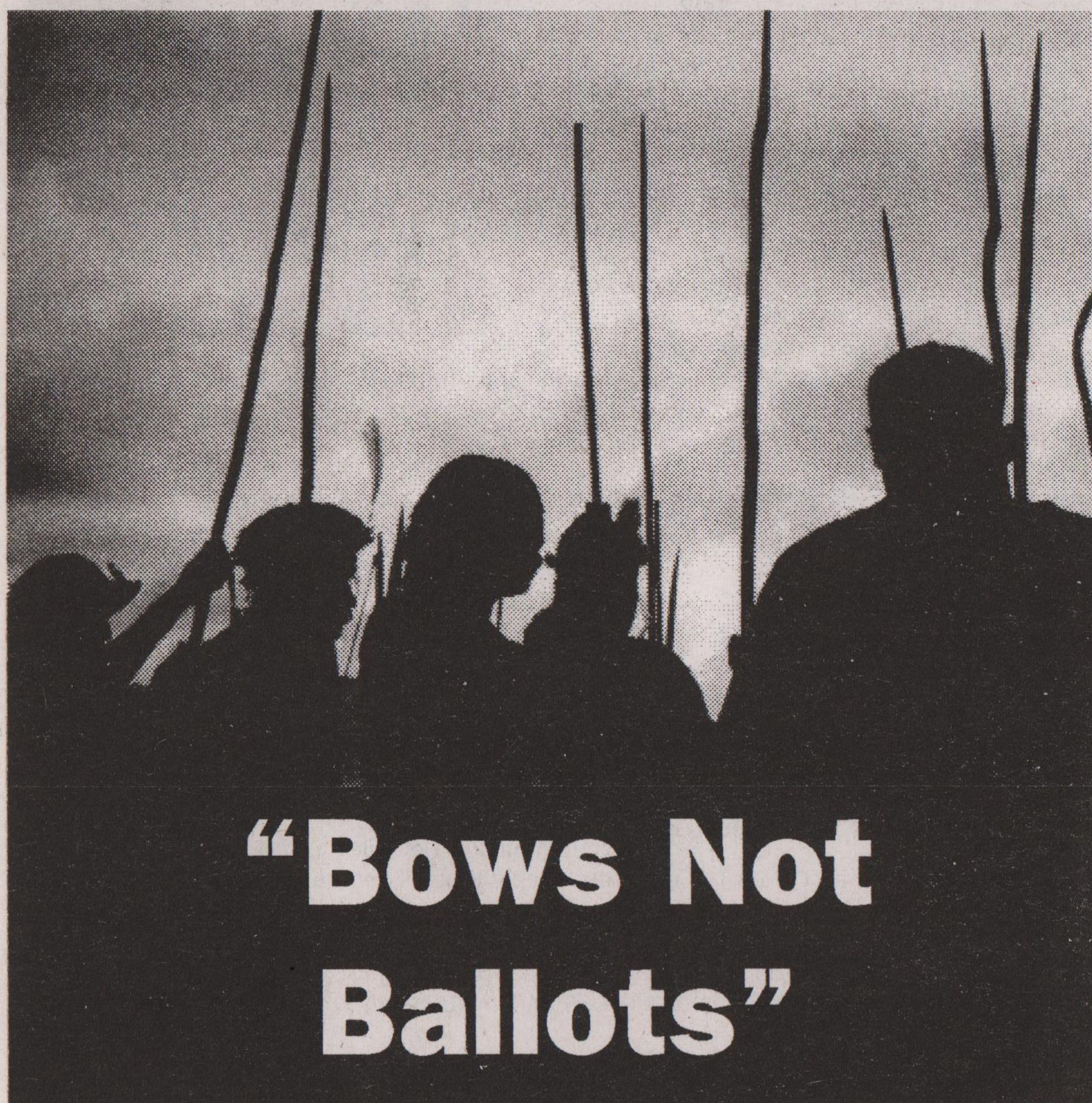
"I think in 10 years time if we don't put a brake on it, PNG will be just like any other country; landless, resourceless, polluted, no money, poor. And we should not be in that position, because when we started the interview we recognised the unique position Papua New Guineans were in, that unlike in other countries we own the land. Through our clan lines, from the past through to the future, we own the land. Therefore we should benefit most from it, but at the end of the day what will people be left with? Just barren land; the rivers will be polluted, all the trees will be cut down, the fish gone."



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Solidarity South Pacific

Newsletter Number 2 Spring 2004



"Bows Not Ballots"

"For me democracy, autocracy and dictatorship are all the same. All are used to control and manipulate people. All are to exploit. They're all tools of the "nation state" that does not exist in tribal communities. Therefore promoting democracy is not the solution for tribal communities."
- Wiwa Wewo, Lani tribesman, 'Just Leave Us Alone!'

Rocky months ahead for Indonesian establishment as Papuans and Acehese declare election boycott.

Ever since the Indonesian insurrection in 1998 brought down the military dictatorship of Suharto Papuans have been forced into the face of voting for their own oppressors. That's democracy!

Voting is obligatory in Indonesia and heavily enforced by the police. In an act of defiance against the increasing repression of the Indonesian state plans are in place to blockade polling stations and for mass abstentions during both the 5th April parliamentary elections and the 5th July presidential elections.

The last time people dared not to vote in Papua was in 1977. Following years of terror at the hands of the Indonesian military thousands of Papuans refused to place their votes, the response was terrifying. Suharto unleashed the biggest massacre ever seen in West Papua, bombing highland villages and forcing thousands to starve in the jungles. People still

talk of watching their families being thrown into mass graves and how the Baliem river ran red with blood.

Papuans have been in touch with us requesting international solidarity action to help stem a backlash this time round.

International Days of Action

International solidarity groups are being asked to mobilise in support of the election boycotts. In the UK there are plans for pickets of the Indonesian Embassy in London.

It is also requested that during the weeks before the elections people phone or fax the Indonesian Embassy. The London Embassy phone is 0207 4997661 fax 0207 74914993

It is quite possible that if the boycotts are successful the Indonesian state will react by attacking demonstrations and hunting down organisers. **If this happens we should be prepared to support Papuan resistance with real solidarity and take action against Indonesian companies - see corporate details on our website.**

UK Companies Back out of Indo Timber...Activists Face Trial

2003 saw a wave of pickets, office actions and sabotage aimed at decreasing Britain's imports of rainforest timber from Indonesia. The campaign spearheaded by Greenpeace UK successfully pressured two of Britain's biggest retailers, Jewsons and Travis Perkins to back out of Indonesian hardwood products.

In three towns across the UK timber merchants dealing in Papuan and Filipino timber were targeted with window smashings and graffiti. At Tilbury Docks Greenpeace activists sprayed timber marking it as illegal and elsewhere local groups leafleted and picketed stores.

Norwich eco-activists occupied the Bury St Edmunds offices of Cipta-Eurindo, stopping work for over an hour. Two are now facing trial under section 5 of the public order act from 2nd April 2004. The activists intend to turn the trial around by bringing in witnesses to logging in Papua, thus putting the guilt on Cipta-Eurindo! A 'Junglists for Junglists' benefit and SSP talk will be held in Norwich the weekend of the trial.

THROUGHOUT the Pacific rim wild nature and wild culture are under attack. Loggers tear down the forests. Mining corporations rip open chasms in the earth. Free tribal societies are either exterminated or assimilated. In this century over half of the earth's diverse forms of life are facing extinction - these are critical times. The Pacific rim with its rainforest expanses, surviving pockets of wild peoples and coral reefs is a critical field of battle. Against the death culture rebellion grows. The victorious eco-insurrection in Bougainville and the strengthening resistance in Papua are just two examples. For ten years the British radical ecological movement has taken inspiration from Pacific struggles and in return carried out sporadic solidarity actions against companies and embassies. In the middle of 2002 some of us behind these actions decided we needed to consolidate to make sure we can give more consistent support to struggling wild peoples in this region, so the SSP network was formed. We aim primarily to support the West Papuan tribal resistance, Earth First! and indigenous people in the Philippines and bring attention to the revolution on Bougainville. We carry out solidarity actions here, raise money to send as direct aid and produce publications bringing the voices of rebels in the South Pacific unmediated. At the beginning of the 21st century we all have to choose sides. Do we remain on the side of industrial civilisation, or do we stand with wild cultures and radical social movements - in defence of our living earth?

Also available from Solidarity South Pacific (prices include UK postage)

Pamphlets	Videos
Pawa na Pipel! £1.20 This new pamphlet is an interview with a Melanesian Solidarity activist from Papua New Guinea. See above for extracts.	The Coconut Revolution £6.00 Bougainville, with a population of only 160,000 has managed to close and keep closed one of the biggest mines in the world. Despite fighting the Australian & PNG armies, they have held their ground for a decade with antique weapons and homemade guns. Improvising with alternative technology and herbal medicine these people have taken on the biggest mining company in the world and won.
Rumble in the Jungle £1.20 An interview with a representative of the Free Papua Movement (OPM) originally printed in Do or Die: www.eco-action.org/dod. It covers: traditional Papuan culture, multinational mining scam, the OPM and resistance to Indonesian rule, women in the struggle, and what the future holds.	Freedom For West Papua £6.00 This video is a cut together compilation from a number of films with voice commentary by a Papuan activist. This is a good introduction to this border conflict between tribal culture and civilisation.
Leave Us Alone £2.40 A very unusual pamphlet. Here you get the opportunity to see civilisation through the eyes of one from beyond its borders. The Papuan Lani tribe sent the author to find out 'what this europe thing is that's attacking us'. Read Wiwa Wewo's report back on the west. Subjects covered include: What is wrong with the modern world?, The four enemies of tribal people and not least of all, plastic plants.	CD
From Mactan to the Mining Act £1.20 A report from one of the SSP group who went to the Philippines in 2003. It describes everyday stories of devastation and resistance among the indigenous people.	Katribu Collective £3.50 This CD is from the Katribu Collective in the Philippines playing indigenous instruments from different tribes around the Philippines and the world. Katribu's collective idea is to encourage the youth to participate in restoring the vanishing culture of tribes in Mindanao. All money will go directly to helping these tribes via the Philippine EF! groups.

Send payment ONLY as blank payee Postal Orders to: Solidarity South Pacific
c/o SDEF!, Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton, E. Sussex, BN2 2GY, UK

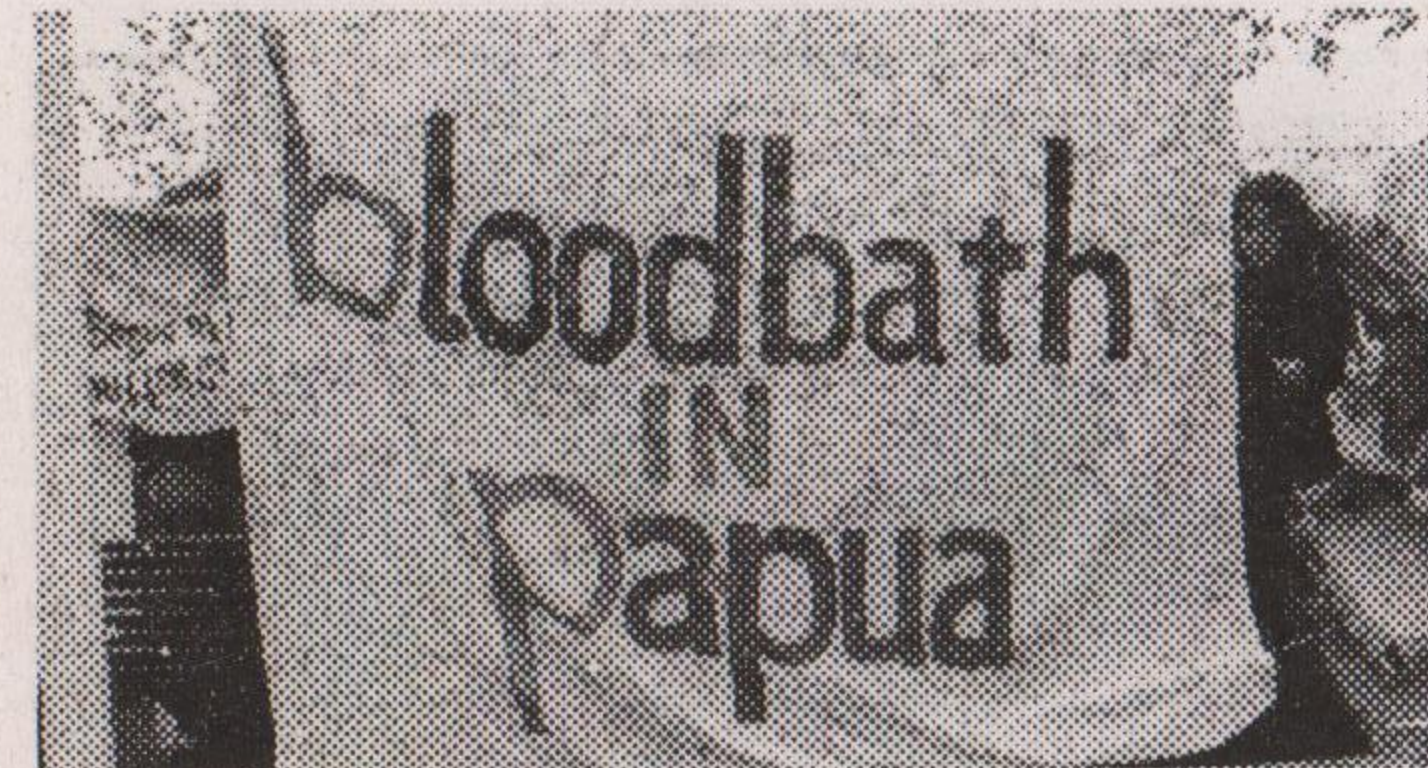
29th Jan - Demo at PNG Embassy

The Papua New Guinea High Commission was picketed the day PNG intended to launch attacks on West Papuan refugees and OPM camps. News of the demo got to the PNG press and government. Despite being small the demo harassed the staff enough for the High Commissioner to be hysterical about it six months later at a meeting of Papuan mission organisations attended by a solidarity activist.



24th March - Protests at BP AGM

BP's Tangguh Gas project in West Papua was one of the many issues that brought a large protest to the BP AGM. BP's Liquid Natural Gas project in Bintuni bay threatens one of the largest mangrove areas in the world and is already meeting with resistance from the local fishing population. The AGM was partly disrupted by some disgruntled 'shareholders' throwing stinking liquid everywhere and shouting in the meeting. A large alternative AGM was held outside.



24th Oct - RTZ Picket

In solidarity with the week of action organised by Papuan students in Jakarta against the Freeport/RTZ mine (see news section) thirteen people picketed the offices of RTZ in London. Top corporate staff were harangued as they went in and out for their lunch break and leaflets were distributed to the public.



25th Oct - RTZ windows smashed

The following night the windows of RTZ's corporate headquarters in London were smashed shattering the 'greenwash' illusions of this murderous multi-national.

ALF Attack on Primate Importers

The Animal Liberation Front Supporters Group recently reported the firebombing of specially adapted vehicles that were being used to transport macaques from Indonesia and the Philippines. The vehicles belonged to

Prisoner Support

Since our last newsletter there has been ongoing work to provide support to prisoners across the Pacific and particularly in West Papua.

Benny Wenda the Chair of DeMMaK, was arrested in West Papua in 2002. Fearing he would be disappeared or tortured many phone calls were made directly to the prison and local police offices, money was sent via his friends and a small protest was held outside the Indonesian embassy in London. Later, after multiple attempts on his life, Benny was able to escape and is now seeking asylum in the UK!

On arrival in the UK, Benny told supporters how he had heard of our actions via prison guards and how as a result he felt safe and his conditions were improved from being manacled in an overflowing toilet without food or light to a normal cell. His friends were also able to buy drinking water (which he was not being provided with) and safe food with the money that was sent.



Raul Zapata was freed on 19th Sept 2003 when his case was turned over in a Supreme Court review! In our last newsletter we reported that Raul was serving a life sentence for killing the mayor and injuring his bodyguard in an act of self-defence. Raul was a Philippino Department of Environment and Natural Resources Strike Force worker and as part of his job he had regularly detained illegal logging trucks belonging to the mayor. Frustrated by this the mayor attacked Raul who shot back, killing him. During his time in prison we sent him letters and money so that his family could travel over hundreds of miles to visit him. SSP activists visited Raul in jail as part of their 2003 visit to the Philippines and we also wrote letters to the Supreme Court in support of his case being reviewed. After his release we received this letter of thanks from Raul's wife:

"We are very thankful to all of you who have endeavoured to help Raul. It is our victory and a VICTORY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND MOTHER EARTH. To all of you thank you very much."

Money and support to West Papuan prisoners - We have been supporting Papuan prisoners by phoning prisons immediately after people are arrested when there is the greatest fear of torture, writing to prisoners and collecting money for prisoners and their families.

Following an attack last year on an armoury in the highlands there was brutal retaliation by the Indonesian military; many people were arrested and tortured and one killed in custody. Immediately many supporters from around the world were on the telephones direct to the prisons and police and army chiefs alerting them to the fact that the world is watching. We have had numerous reports that this sort of action is effective in preventing torture and mistreatment of prisoners. Soon after, most of the prisoners were released and we heard of no more torture.

Many people have sent letters and cards to OPM and other Papuan prisoners and money has been collected and sent to them. In particular, following the recent life sentencing of seven Papuans in connection with the above armoury attack Brighton Anarchist Black Cross sent over £100 directly to these prisoners and their families.

ex Shamrock Farm employees making weekly runs to Paris airport collecting the primates for experiments at Huntingdon Life Sciences.



8th Nov - NTM Demonstration

A demonstration was held at the headquarters of the New Tribes Mission in Lincolnshire. The NTM are an evangelical group

of missionaries whose scary aim is to 'plant a church in every uncontacted tribal village by 2025'. They fly over jungle and mountains looking for tribes to convert to their extreme brand of Christianity. The village of North Cotes, where NTM is based, was leafleted the morning of the demonstration giving the local information about NTM's activities.

This received a mixed reception - some villagers were very welcoming to the other side of the story, whilst others were on the side of the missionaries. The leafleting caused some alarm to the missionaries as back in the 1980s they were driven out of their old premises by a hostile local population. The local people asked the demonstrators to return and give a talk about NTM's activities at a later date.

A previous action against NTM in 2002 resulted in major property damage and theft.

What You Can Do!

There are plenty of things you can do to support resistance in the Pacific. Here are just some ideas of things you can do and projects we need help with...

Exposing the Struggles

Organise an event in your town. Put on a film night, host a talk or discussion, put up an exhibition, hold benefit gigs. The following resources are available for organising events:

Ideas - in addition to those on the back page we can also supply other films about the West Papua tribal resistance and a fascinating series of videos following the story of highlanders in Papua New Guinea featuring original footage of their first meetings with white people in the 1930's through to "Black Harvest" when in the 80's coffee growing erupts into tribal war!

Exhibitions - we have available a framed photo exhibition of the Bougainville struggle and can supply images and text for an exhibition detailing the West Papuan struggle.

Speakers - someone from SSP will always be willing to travel to speak and we can put you in contact with Benny Wenda who is wanting to speak to groups about the West Papuan struggle.

Music - we have CDs of music from New Guinea and the Philippines which can be played at events. We can also put you in contact with West Papuan musicians who may be willing to come and play a gig.

Merchandise - all the merchandise on the back page can be provided for you to distribute at events.

Write an article - If you edit a 'zine, newsletter, journal or the like, put in an article about the pacific. Given notice we can write one for you.

For any of the above please e-mail ssp@eco-action.org or write us at the Brighton address.

Direct Cash Aid

One of the most useful things you can do. It is easy to raise some money and a few pounds from here go a long way over there. Organise benefit gigs or lunches, fundraising stalls, put us in contact with potential donors or simply donate to one of our direct aid funds.

We are currently raising money for the following projects:

- Medical aid to West Papua and Bougainville
- Cash support for prisoners
- Funding for 'Watch Papua' to help them print books. Future publications include DeMMaK's concept of 'Tribal Democracy'.
- Providing anarchist/ecological literature to aid the setting up of info shops and the like in Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Bougainville. This work is crucial as in many of these areas the only written material available is the Bible. We need donations of books or money for this project.
- Providing equipment to tribal patrols of threatened forest in the Philippines, and to enable Philippine Earth First! activists to travel to tribal areas and support their resistance.
- Funding to help a few Papuan activists abroad with travel and communication costs.

Harassing the Attackers

Genocide and ecocide in the Pacific is rooted in the global industrial system. Britain is the base for many of the organisations responsible. Check out our corporate fact page to see if any are near you www.eco-action.org/ssp/corp.html. Make sure to tell us of any demonstrations you carry out - we will pass it on to the Pacific peoples concerned. News of even small actions can really raise the spirits. While Pacific struggles will be won or lost by the strength of peoples there, timely, targeted action here both against proposed developments and as a reaction to repression has had a real effect.

Subscribe to the SSP email list by following the links from our website.

Prisoner Support

In addition to cash support for prisoners you can send letters and cards to them and join in urgent alerts. Subscribe to the SSP email list for updates. For information on West Papuan prisoners and how to support them see www.westpapua.net/cases/hr/prisoners or email koteka_prisoner_support@westpapua.net



Prisoner Support Week

10th - 14th May, a week to support West Papuan prisoners. Raise funds, send a card and phone the prisons. Latest prisoners arrested following the April armoury attack:

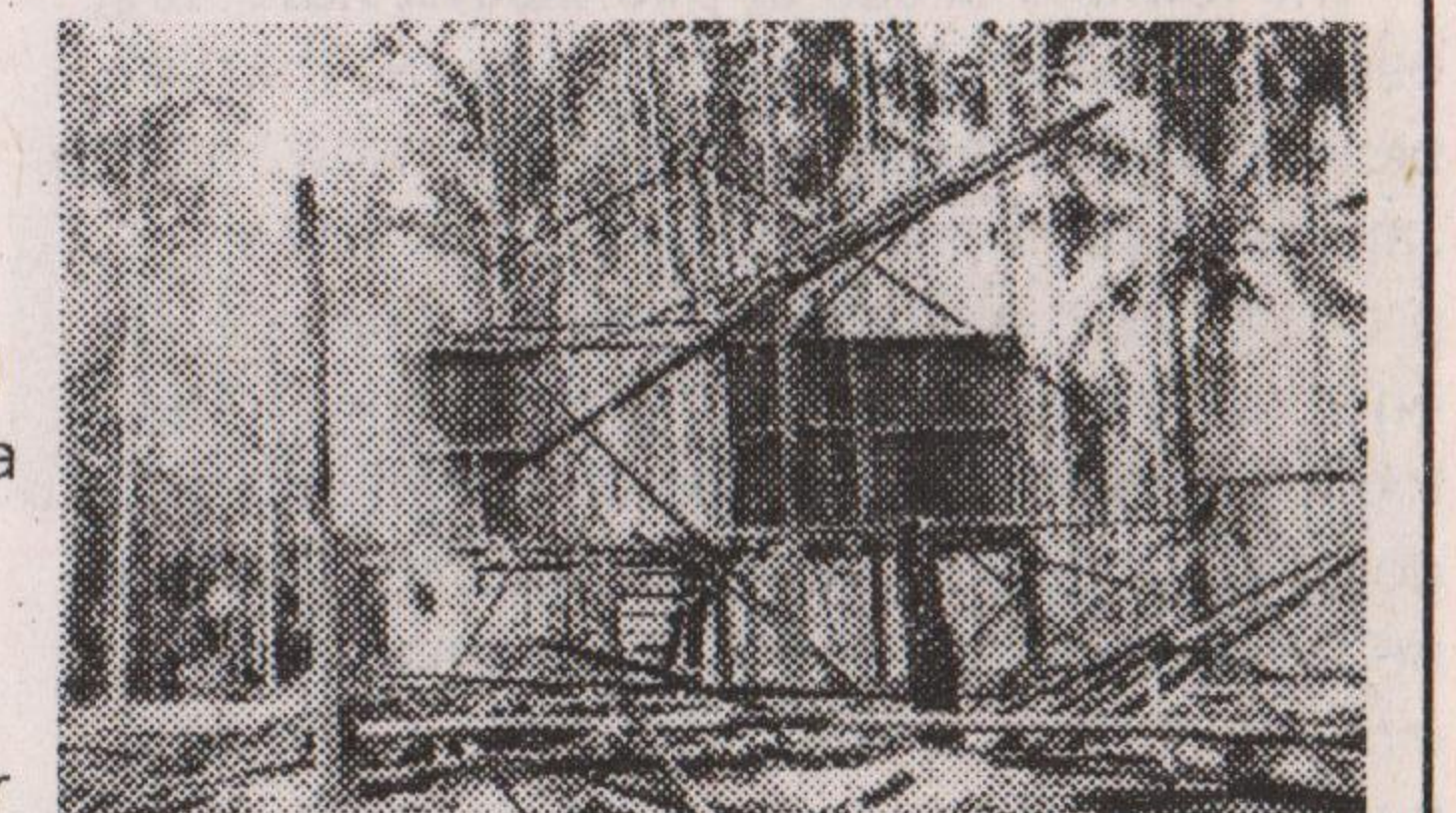
- Kanius Murib - life
- Nungunga Telenggen -life
- Yaprai Murib - life
- Kimanus Wenda - 20 years
- Des Wenda - 20 years
- Michael Heselo - 20 years
- Apot Nagolik - 20 years

All the above are being held in Wamena prison. Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Wamena, J1 Hom-hom, Wamena, Papua, Indonesia
Phone: +62 96932586.

Direct Aid Projects Provide Medicine, Books, Funding and Friendship

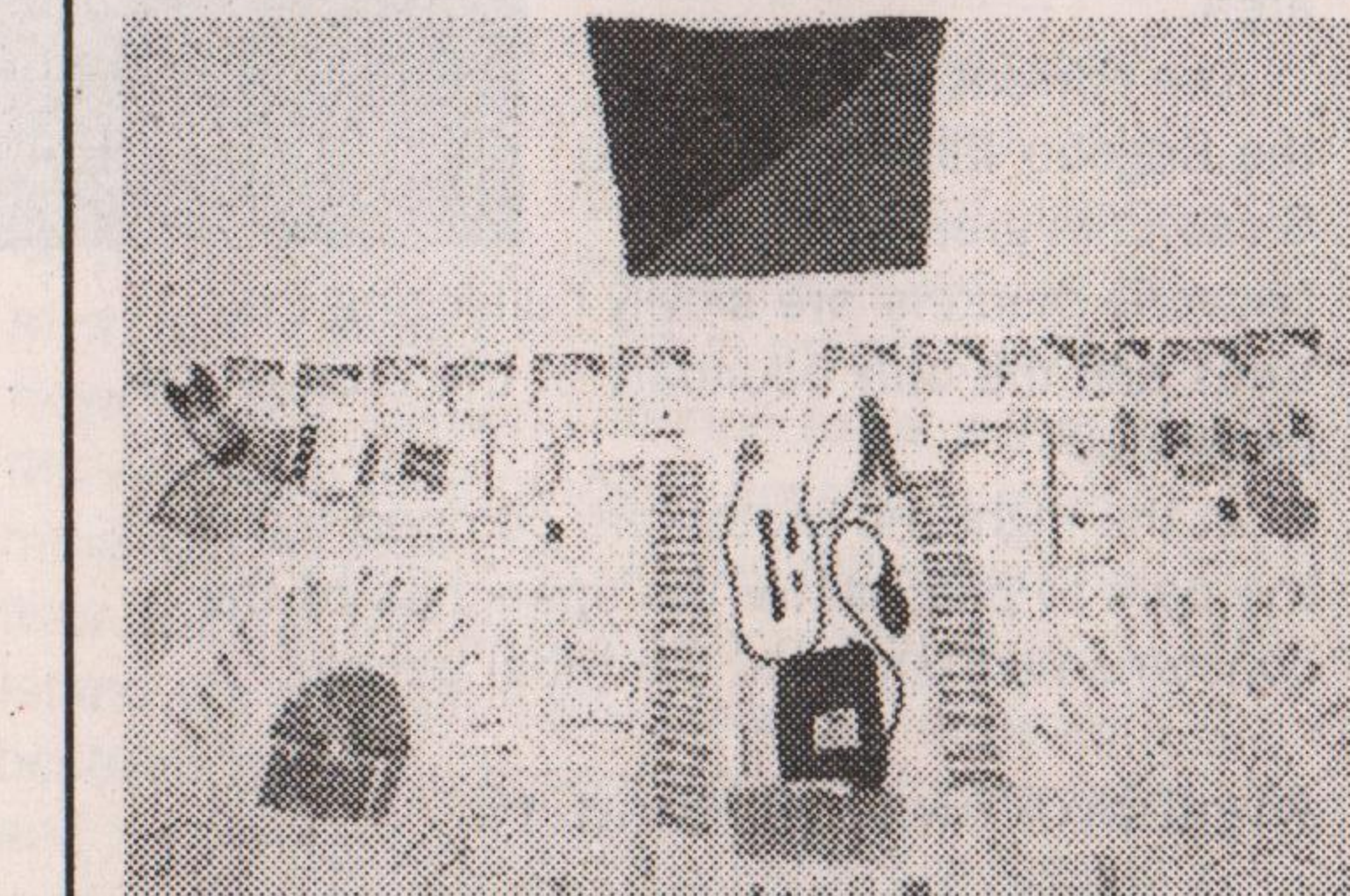
One of the main things people do as part of SSP is raise money to provide direct aid to tribal struggle.

In recent years merciless repression following demonstrations and acts of resistance has forced thousands of Papuans across the border to Papua New Guinea. Many die en route and when they arrive they are given little support. Last spring after fleeing villages razed to the ground by Indonesia, West Papuan settled across the border where the PNG police showed their support...by torching the newly built houses of the refugees (see right). In Autumn 2003 an SSP activist delivered thousands of pounds worth of medical equipment to these refugees. Training was run so that the equipment (for war wounds, malaria and infections) could be used by the people themselves. This was accompanied by discussions on Western and traditional tribal medicine. The aid is not intended for general day to day use for which their traditional medicine is more appropriate. Instead it is to treat those wounded by the military, as well as anti-malarials for those who have been forced down from the mountains and have no natural defenses against malaria. Another smaller shipment of medicine was sent to Central Bougainville with an activist attending a Bougainville Women's Gathering.



Elsewhere we have sent money to fund Filipino Earth First! activists to visit tribes defending their ancestral land and have sent literature for their occasional infoshops. We are currently raising money to help equip the Manobo tribe's Protection Volunteer Groups which regularly patrol their forests to prevent illegal logging(see news section).

While some direct aid can cost thousands, small easily achievable amounts can have a solid effect too. For instance, recently an SSP week in Brighton raised £115 with a Sunday roast lunch, which has been sent to Watch Papua to fund the printing of a Bahasa language version of 'Just Leave Us Alone' (see back page) for distro across Indonesia; this follows funding for a Lani version. Other fundraising has included gigs, donations from workers co-ops and selling lager at squat parties - 'Defend Wild Nature - Quid a Can!'.
One of four medical kits distributed to Papuan refugee communities. Some were smuggled across the border to aid evacuation of trauma victims.



One of four medical kits distributed to Papuan refugee communities. Some were smuggled across the border to aid evacuation of trauma victims.

Plantations and Logging Threaten Filipino Tribes



UNLIKE mining and logging, banana plantations are not often thought of as major threats to eco systems and tribal communities. In the Toril district of Mindanao, in the South of the Philippines, however, the expansion of one such plantation is set to pollute drinking water, destroy crucial habitat and further displace members of the Bagobo tribe.

The lowland areas of this district have long been dominated by the monocultures that are banana and pineapple plantations. Now, due to Japanese consumer demand for bananas grown at high altitude, the plantations are encroaching into the upland areas, on to the foothills of Mt Apo. Mt Apo is recognised by dozens of bodies, including the United Nations as being of immense ecological importance, even by Philippine standards. It is home to a huge variety of habitats and diversity of species, including the endangered Philippine Eagle. Its foothills are also home to the Bagobo and Manobo tribes, and it is on to the Bagobo's ancestral land that the banana plantations are now headed.

Despite the dependence of much of the tribe on the plantations for work, there are many who want to fight any expansion. They speak of a deep spiritual connection to their ancestral domain and will resist any attempt to turn it into just another resource for corporations. Of course they too farm their land, and would farm more of it if they had the resources, but the contrast between their use of the land with that of the plantations could hardly be greater. They grow subsistence quantities of various vegetables, without chemicals in clearings in the forest. Whole areas of forest are used by them only for hunting, limited to a few days a year so as not to exhaust the game, or are set aside as sacred areas where you may visit but in no way disturb. Emerging back in to the plantations there is none of this respect for the land. The monocultures stretch for miles. As we gathered some young banana hearts (flowers) to eat later we were warned off by locals - so many chemicals are used on the plantation that they are not safe to eat. Local NGOs have warned

that continued use of so many chemicals will soon render the water in nearby Davao City unsafe to drink.

Local environmentalists, small farmers and tribespeople are fighting the expansion of the plantations. People from Davao Earth First! have been in communication with the tribe for several years, and are trying to gain support from climbers and mountaineers who visit the area. They have picketed the city hall (see below) and plan further visits to the tribal areas. The Katribu collective have produced a CD to raise funds to this end - see back page.

Filippino Eco-Rads Mobilise

Dec 11, 2003 EFi Davao, Freelance Mountaineering and Katribu Collective organised a picket of the city hall office in Davao City to protest against banana and pineapple plantations and to fight for the ancestral domain of the Bagobo tribe in Tamayong. There were around 20 participants out in the streets saying "Corporations will not help the tribal people. Stop the development of the upland area."

The current situation of the Bagobo Tribe led by Datu Sicao is in great danger because planters are slowly bulldozing the trees and the only boundary of the tribe is the small river.

In the night the protesters camped out in the park to prepare for the speeches by the concerned citizens and the tribal people.

Manobo Forest Defenders

As Bagobo tribespeople fight the banana plantations on the Eastern side of Mt Apo, so the Manobo struggle to protect their land among the Western Foothills. In 1998, the Manobo tribe living in Barangay Ilomavis and

Balabag, Kidapawan City organized themselves and put in a claim for their ancestral domain, as provided for by the Indigenous People's Rights Act. This act theoretically allows for Indigenous People to claim ownership of their land 'within the framework of national unity and development'. Its flaws are many and well recognized by a lot of indigenous people, but in this case the Manobo viewed it as offering a useful means to gain some control over their land. The Ilomavis - Balabag Apo Sondawa Manobo Ancestral Domain Claimants (IBASMADC) Organization was born.

As IBASMADC started to apply the ancestral domain, they also set up other projects to promote the welfare of the tribe, the reclamation of its culture and the conservation of its land. These projects include communal fishponds, model organic farms to promote more sustainable farming, and tribal gatherings to practice and often to re learn traditional dances, crafts and spiritual practices. They also organised the Bahani, their traditional warriors, to protect their territorial area from illegal logging and other threats. There is no legal logging in this area and illegal logging is a major blight. The Bahani, now renamed the Protection Volunteer Groups, mount patrols of the forest to monitor and prevent logging. This can be dangerous work as loggers are often armed, and may be backed up by powerful vested interests. Whilst on patrol the PVGs also collect endemic seedlings for the re-planting of denuded areas.

The PVGs have appealed for funding to provide their 30 members with equipment and training. The patrols, which usually involve spending several days and nights in the

mountains, are currently carried out with virtually no equipment. All in all around £4,000 is wanted to provide tents, boots, torches and so on, as well as training to implement a bio-diversity monitoring scheme.

SSP is currently raising money towards this. Cheques should be made payable to 'Agta Support Group' and sent to the SSP address with a note specifying that they are intended for the PVGs.

For more information about the Philippines contact leedsssp@yahoo.co.uk



West Papua

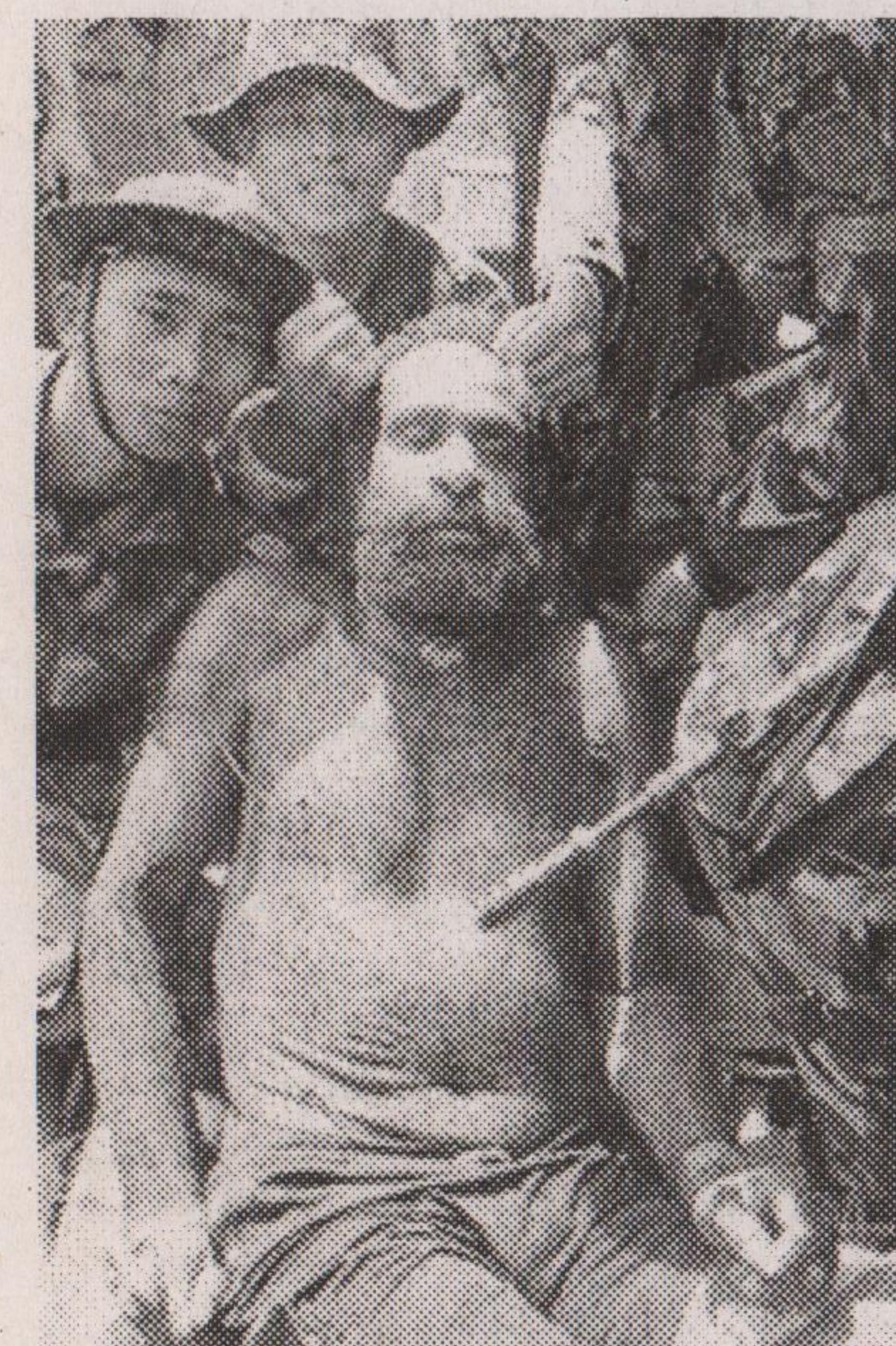
The last year has seen an increasing determination from the Indonesian government to create tensions and break the West Papuan resistance but it has mostly just strengthened peoples desire for freedom.

A planned ruling to divide Papua into three separate provinces centred around the capital and the BP and Freeport investments has been shelved after huge demonstrations across Papua and days of bloody rioting in Timika near the Freeport mine.

At the same time students in Jakarta held a week of action against the Freeport mine, demonstrating outside the company offices. These actions were supported in London by simultaneous solidarity actions (see previous section.)

On 3rd November, the OPM struck another blow against 'development' when two construction workers who were building colonial schools and offices were killed in the area of Enarotali. Two policemen were kidnapped in the attack and later found dead. Over their forty year struggle the OPM have repeatedly stated through word and action - 'Just Leave Us Alone'.

Sadly just two days later on the other side of the central mountain range in the village of Yallenga six OPM fighters and four other villagers were shot dead by the Indonesian army in an early morning raid. The body of Yustinus Murib who led the group was printed throughout the Indonesian press, held like a hunting trophy by grinning Indonesian soldiers in a horrible reminder of the Indonesian state's attitude to the tribal people of West Papua.



In December Indonesia set their agenda for 2004 by installing former East Timor police chief Timbul Silaen, as new police chief in Papua and at the same time allowing notorious East Timor militia leader Eurico Guterresto to set up in the central highland town of Wamena where he is openly recruiting people to his pro Jakarta militias. Both of these men have been implicated in the massacres that swept East Timor during the 1999 elections.

In February another disaster befell West Papua when a huge earthquake struck near Nabire, leaving up to 40 people dead and hundreds injured.

For regular news updates about West Papua see www.westpapuanews.com

Bougainville

Australian peace monitoring groups have pulled out and many factions, including the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, continue to negotiate in the peace process and are involved in disarming. Thankfully Francis Ona and the Makemue Defence Force continue to occupy the central highland 'No Go' zone and refuse to either negotiate or disarm. In a rare interview on Australian television Ona states that Bougainville should have independence now and shows a paper which raises allegations that the UN and the PNG government have been trying to restart hostilities in order to retake the Panguna mine. The program can be seen here

http://203.15.102.143:8080/ramgen/medi a/dl_170703c.rm and a transcript is available here <http://www.sbs.com.au/datetime/index.php3?daysum=2003-07-16#>

Papua New Guinea

In an overt move to take control over the Pacific, Australia has plans to send hundreds of police and officials to PNG to control "law and order problems". This comes on the back

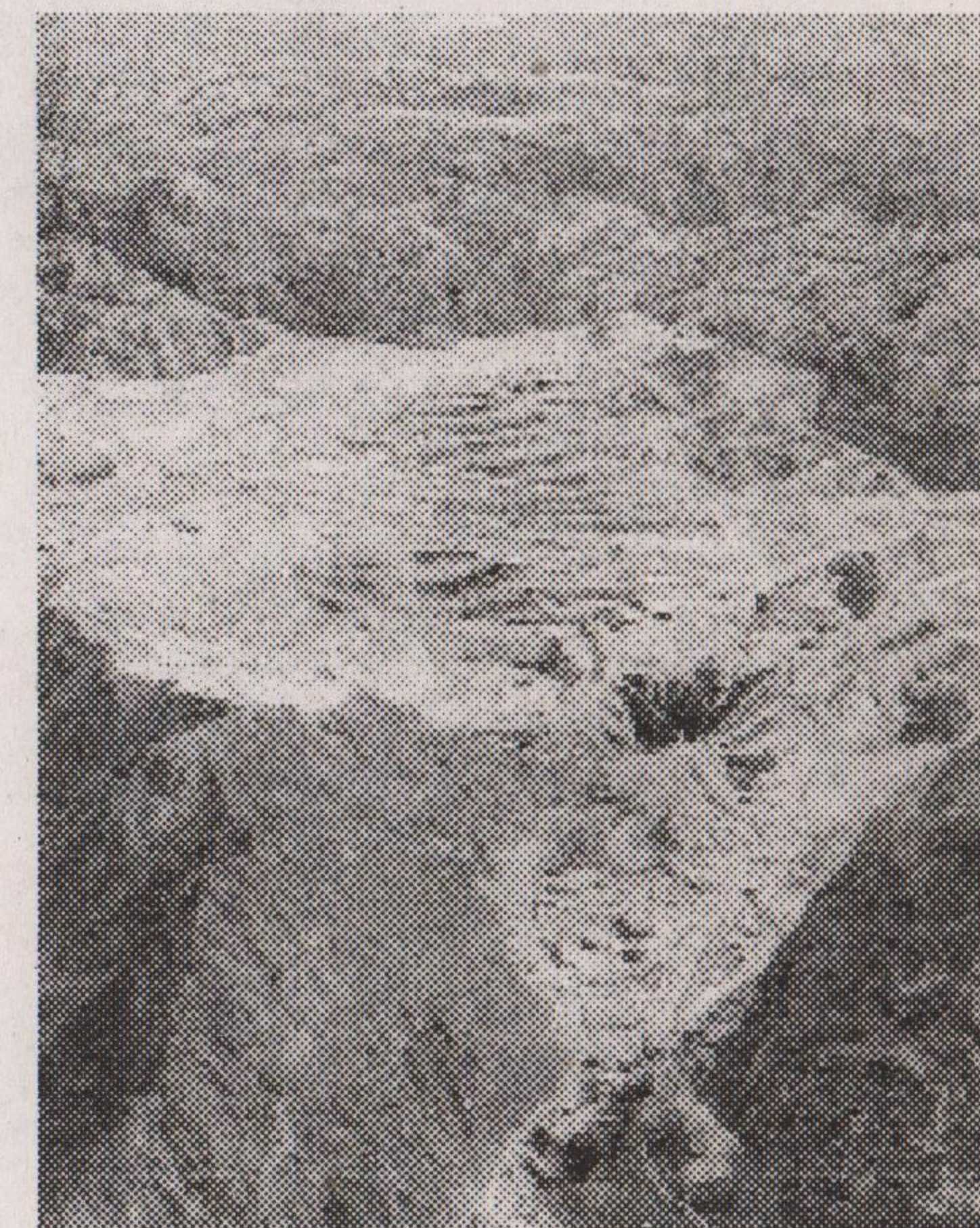
Digging Their Own Graves...

In the past few months there have been serious stoppages at both the Ok Tedi mine in PNG and the Freeport mine in West Papua. On 9th October and again in December huge landslides at the Freeport mine killed 8 workers and buried millions of dollars worth of equipment whilst blocking access to much of the best quality ore. This has massively delayed work at the mine which continues at the time of writing. In January at the OK Tedi mine copper output was cut by 40% for at least three months following mechanical failures at its mills. All these incidents have brought global copper shortages!

Unfortunately recent legal proceedings by locals against BHP Billiton, the previous owners of the OK Tedi mine, have been overturned. 50,000 landowners sought to hold the company to account for environmental damage caused mostly by tailings dumping in the Fly River. The locals continue have vowed to continue their resistance to the mine. Ownership of the Ok Tedi mine was recently turned over to the PNG government when BHP Billiton walked away from the costs of cleaning up the vast pollution they caused, despite this most of the profits remain in private hands. However BHP Billiton continue to be a threat in the area with their plans to develop a Nickel mine on Gag Island a hundred miles west of New Guinea. The waters surrounding Gag Island are an underwater paradise, an area believed to be the richest source of coral reefs and containing the highest marine bio-diversity in the world. A recent study by a UNESCO expedition found hundreds of previously undocumented fish and coral species, significantly the coral reefs were found to contain an incredible 64% of the world's total coral diversity. The area is currently being

of last year's invasion and take over of the Solomon Islands with a deployment of 2000 troops. Rumour is that Vanuatu will be next on Australia's list of Pacific islands to re-colonise.

In PNG, a country of cultural extremes - subsistence villages in the forest and skyscrapers in the city - struggles continue. A strike against privatisation by Telecom workers in October '03 resulted in the following newspaper report: 'City Sabotage: Telikom Cables Severed, Half of Capital in Chaos...[strikers] poured petrol into a cable-main and set it alight, destroying international and domestic communication links.' Most government buildings, banks and all weblinks went down for days. Unsurprisingly the workers achieved most of their demands. Meanwhile in the forests a major confrontation over logging has been won by a coalition of local clans and environmental groups. A huge swathe of primary forest and in the Collingwood area has been saved by the use of diverse tactics - landrights litigations in the courts and logging blockades on the ground. Having achieved this victory 'Alotau Environment' is spearheading a new campaign in the Milne Bay Province against the spread of oil palm plantations. AE have called for actions here in the UK...watch this space. Stories like this show that Australia will not find full re-colonisation an easy task.



considered by UNESCO for world heritage listing. BHP Billiton and the Indonesian government signed a contract of work in 1998 but amazingly operations were stalled after the Indonesian government enacted Forestry Law No. 41, which prevents open cut mining in protected forests, of which Gag Island was declared one. But the government are coming under intense international pressure to remove the law, leading the Oxfam CAA Mining Ombudsperson to say that "industry sources now believe that mining on Gag is inevitable."

Despite initial difficulties finding buyers for the gas the Tangguh Liquid Natural Gas project in Bintuni bay in West Papua plans to start production in April 2004. Overseen by BP the project is expected to cause serious damage to one of the world's largest mangrove areas.

When The Nature Speaks

An editorial posted on westpapuanews.com by a Papuan tribesman in response to the recent earthquake in West Papua and the landslides at the Freeport mine.

All beings that share this planet earth are natural beings; we are from the nature, in the nature, with the nature, part of it. But the only problem we have is that although almost all of the beings speak the language of nature, human beings do not anymore. Human beings began to speak a different language since what we call Renaissance and industrialisation. This particular being of the beings thought of himself or herself as superior to other beings. This particular misconception has changed the face of the world and the fate of our planet.

We have already separated ourselves from nature itself, starting from speaking a different language, behaving unnaturally, and living unnaturally. We thought it was development, progress and modernism. We began to lose our contacts with other beings in this planet. We started with colonising and domesticating other beings, seeing them as inferior. Human beings even came to the conclusion that certain races of humans are inferior to others. It is not surprising to learn that selling and buying other human beings has painted the face of our humanity.

Human suffering, be it famine or be it poverty, underdevelopment or overdevelopment, unemployment or debt, are all human-made disasters. We have also created social and natural phenomena, including terrorism, suicide, depression, floods, drought, famine, and climate change.

Yes, we are the "superior beings", that are bringing disaster to this planet. We have done so in the name of development in the forms of colonisation, modernisation, de-colonisation, civilisation, and now globalisation. We have done so "successfully", because we are in fact, not ashamed of it, but we are unfortunately, proud of it.

We should not forget that this planet does not only belong to human beings, it belongs to all the beings that share her, but also this planet owns all of us. However, we have so far regarded other beings as "nothing". Should we assume that other beings are just inferior beings and should not react to anything that the "superior" beings do? Wait a minute! The reality is, that "When the nature speaks!", humans become nothing, and nobody.

Human-Made or Natural Disasters?

We have ended up by categorising disasters that this planet faces into two: one is human-made and the other is natural. But should we see the disasters differently? Aren't all these disasters created by us human beings? Should we, because we are "superior" beings, then blame the nature for bringing disaster? Or is a natural disaster just something that is not categorised based on cause-and-effect interpretation? Should we say that there is a difference between human-made and natural disasters? Are we not part of the nature, or the nature ourselves? Who is making the differences? and Why?

What is real is that in fact we started perceiving ourselves as separate from the "nature" since we invented machines and began to destroy the earth. That is why we call some disasters human-made and those beyond human-intervention are referred to as natural.

Does the Nature Speak?

If humans do speak, if nature does speak, then what is wrong here is "Why can't we understand each other?" or "Why can human beings as the 'superior beings' not understand the language of the 'inferior beings'?" Again, we come back to the original comments; "Humans have separated ourselves from the nature!" For the sake of human rights, we have sacrificed the rights of other beings. For the sake of our "development", "modernisation", and "progress" we have violated the rights of other beings, who are supposed to share this planet equally with us. For the sake of these activities, we further sacrificed our own human rights. Wars in varieties of forms are basically started from violations of the rights of the nature.

Recent Proofs in West Papua that the Nature Does Speak

We only need to learn some lessons from some proofs in West Papua, to glimpse the reality that nature does speak.

Sometime ago, we were surprised when five top-level government, military and police officials in Papua Province died in a plane crash. Despite all the skills and modern knowledge no one was ever able to explain why or how it happened.

Another example was the "natural disasters" in Manokwari (2001) and Biak (1998). In both incidents, hundreds of people died, and hundreds of others were hospitalised. One was called El Nino and the other was earthquake.

Last year, we were also told of another natural disaster at the Freeport Mine. Some people died due to landslides and mining was suspended for months. Is this particular incident really a natural one? Typical human nature, blaming others and other beings.

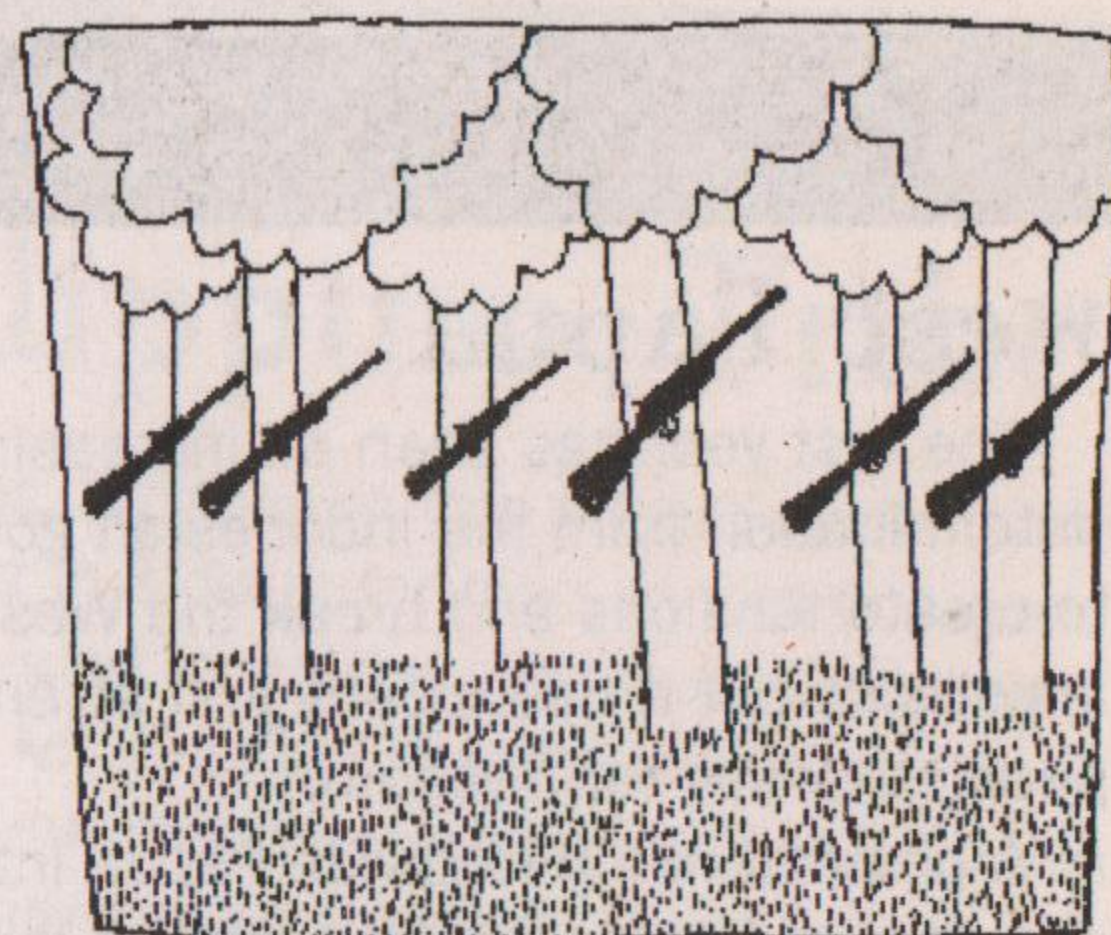
Headline news on the Indonesian media today is about yet another natural disaster in Nabire, near the neck of New Guinea Island. The office of meteorology and geophysics in Papua Province gave its explanation of the earthquake. Did the office predict the possibility of the earthquake? No, and never, nowhere whatsoever. Why? My answer is, "Of course, they do not understand the language of nature. Even though we are humans, the "superior beings", we have limitations, because we are just natural beings.

Will we Understand the Language of Nature?

The answer is simple, "We must understand it!" If not, we are going to kill ourselves. Human beings are reporting news on suicides in the world, as if it is different to what we are all doing as the human race.

The other beings that share this planet are not just sitting and watching the madness we are bringing to this planet. They are not "inferior" as we think. They are in fact, equal to us, and in some ways superior.

We know that the nature does not have verbal languages like ours, but it has the basic and natural language, the language of signals: floods, famines, earthquakes, El-ninos, plane-crashes, forest fires, climate change and



global warming are examples for us.

Yes, there are human beings on this planet, who do understand the language of the nature. They are the ones who live with and as part of the nature. They are natural beings themselves, they are part of that simple, basic, and natural lifestyle that the developed people call primitive, cannibals, underdeveloped, and so on.

But one thing is for sure, if we are still on this planet and if we are the owner of and owned by this same planet earth, then we are supposed to accept this absolute reality that all beings are 'beings', with the same and equal rights to inhabit and enjoy this planet. We all should speak to and understand each other. And more importantly, we human beings, as "superior" beings are supposed to understand and speak to other beings in the way we govern our countries, the way we develop our communities, the way we manage our world and its resources, and the way we live in it. We should, as "superior" beings, be able to become the examples for other beings.

But the reality is that in fact we have failed. This is really why this planet is speaking again and again in varieties languages; in different places, and at different times, telling us to be natural and humane, i.e., to be ourselves. And we have failed because "When the nature Speaks!" no one is able to answer. We are unable to understand, let alone respond to it.

We are in fact accepting these as realities, as natural disasters. That is the point where human beings are just human beings. Not more than that.

Enough signs in West Papua have spoken to us that we Papuans need to re-position ourselves; in the way we see ourselves and the way we behave, as part of and as the nature itself. We need to forget the rhetoric of development, modernisation, progress, civilisation and globalisation. It is shameful to be proud of such suicidal acts. It is embarrassing to claim that doing the business of managing ourselves and our worlds in the Western way is a good example, and therefore it is our way forward. And, it is more than shameful to say that we Papuans want to be alike and behave like those killers of this planet and all its inhabitants. Because when the nature Speaks, we become Nothing, and Nobody! What we do is we die, don't we?



OPM - Free Papua Movement

Is the original, longest lasting and best known independence 'organisation' in West Papua. Started in 1964 it has mainly carried out guerrilla operations in the form of attacks on the Indonesian military, taking international hostages and sabotaging corporate activity including attacking loggers and the Freeport mine. It is said that all Papuans are members of the OPM and certainly you'd have to look very hard to find any who did not support the OPM. In recent years diplomatic aspects of the OPM have become more visible and there are a few representatives around the world.

OPM/TPN

TPN is the military wing of the OPM, based in the jungles of West Papua. TPN has at least 9 regional commanders, who are independent and autonomous, tribally based with little or no communication with other regions (mostly due to the vast mountainous jungle terrain). Although numbers of 'soldiers' must be in the thousands, the TPN are very poorly armed, mostly with traditional weapons.

Due to the autonomous nature of the different regional commands confusing and conflicting statements often appear regarding leadership and strategy, most notable of which are recent statements (hugely amplified by western liberals and Papuans in exile) which claim that OPM/TPN has ended armed struggle in pursuit of peaceful dialogue. At the same time we have seen OPM/TPN attacking Indonesian border posts, kidnapping loggers, killing construction workers and raiding an armoury. Confusing statements will continue to appear, but we can view the OPM/TPN by their actions and be sure that almost everyone in Papua supports them in their mission...

"To liberate and free West Papua from colonialism in any kinds and any forms."

DeMMaK - Koteka Tribal Assembly

Formed in 2000, DeMMaK was initially set up to bring together the common voices of the highland (koteka wearing) tribes. Soon after, many of the lowland and island tribes felt a commonality with DeMMaK and joined. Strictly speaking DeMMaK is an assembly of tribes that works through traditional tribal ways of decision making and organisation. It exists to provide a unified voice and strength to these tribes and to help them work together in their common aims, be it organising demonstrations, supporting each other when attacked or imprisoned or just trying to live their lives the way they want.

DeMMaK is also trying to promote the idea of "tribal democracy": a system of tribal governance they believe may be acceptable to the powers in the world but may also offer hope to protect their tribal lifestyle and the forests they live in.

Who's Who?

Most readers will be thousands of miles from New Guinea and the plethora of groups mentioned can be confusing. Here we aim to give some background on the main ones. One warning though; 'group biographies' can give the illusion that all struggle is carried out by structured organisations and that these groupings are separate. In reality the same person may wear a different headdress depending on the occasion and often resistance is carried out by communities and clans with only a symbolic connection to resistance elsewhere.

Those of us working under the banner of SSP have supported the more insurgent and libertarian elements in both West Papua and Bougainville, while condemning 'next years cops like the PDP and their ilk' (West Papua Action Update, No2, 2001). Judgements have to be made over who to support. We have come to our conclusions through a combination of eco-anarchist analysis, advice from trusted friends from the region - both exiles and those still on the ground - and direct experience during visits to the South Pacific. (For more from us on this tricky subject see 'Tribal War NOT National Liberation.' www.eco-action.org/opm)

Next Issue - who's who in the Philippines.

PDP - Papuan Presidium Council

This organisation was also formed in early 2000 with the consent of the (then more soft) Indonesian government. It is probably best seen as the provisional government of West Papua and certainly has all the failings: it is mostly undemocratic, it is distanced from the people and most of its leading figures are in the pockets of the corporations. Notably, the President, Thom Beanal, once long term critic of Freeport, now enjoys a seat in their board room. Most Papuans have now lost trust in the PDP.

HAMAK

Directed by the strong and inspiring Mama Yosepha, HAMAK is the largest Papuan women's organisation which has often been able to find a voice where men have not. It is mostly concerned with the welfare of women and children and in resistance to the Freeport mine. HAMAK has successfully organised direct action against the mine and famously Mama Yosepha verbally attacked scumbag Jim Bob Moffet, CEO of Freeport, reducing him to tears when he tried to hand her an environmental award and funding!

AMP - Papuan Student Alliance

AMP works closely with DeMMaK, organising demonstrations and networking with other groups in Indonesia and internationally. Many AMP students are based in Java whilst those at university in Papua have to work underground. In 2002 AMP successfully mediated a hostage release with the OPM.

Watch Papua

Legally established in Java by AMP and DeMMaK in 2002, Watch Papua has enabled Papuans to print books and record music in Indonesia. These include books in tribal languages teaching Papuans about the dangers from the West and advising them on strategies for their struggle. One book exposed the Indonesian governments role in the murder of PDP President Theys Eluay. They are currently requesting funding to print more of their publications - see Take Action section for more info.

ELSHAM - Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy

ELSHAM is a Papuan run organisation producing consistent and mostly accurate human rights reports across West Papua.

Mamta - Mamberamo-Tami Tribal Council

Has the same roles and functions as Demmak. It represents tribal groups in Mamberamo River and Tami River Territories.

AE - Alotau Environment

AE is a small but forceful radical environmental NGO in the Milne Bay region of Papua New Guinea. They help mobilise communities in the forests and use landrights legislation against the corporations. They have had big success in halting logging and are now organising against oil palm plantations.

Mel-Sol - Melenisian Solidarity

Arising from a student left group at the University of Papua New Guinea in the late '80s, Mel-Sol is now a diverse movement of activists across PNG. It was the network behind a wave of anti-capitalist street actions that successfully restricted land privatisation and the IMF in the '90s. They also played a key role in the insurrection that ended the PNG war against Bougainville and actively support the OPM. They are not allied to any particular left faction internationally and are keen to get news of the 'global anti-capitalist fight.'

BRA-Bougainville Revolutionary Army

The British mining giant RTZ dug the worlds biggest copper mine on the island of Bougainville. In 1988 local villagers - led by Francis Ona - used company explosives to blow up electricity pylons leading to the mine - effectively closing the installation. PNG sent in the army to restore order and in reaction the BRA was formed to 'contain what the army was doing to us'. With no outside aid they largely won a 11 year guerrilla war against PNG. Ceasefire was declared in '98. However...

MDF - Makemue Defence Force

...Francis Ona (who as well as founding the BRA is also a medic and gardener) always worried about 'winning the war but losing the peace'. Splits in the BRA have developed. The biggest faction has partly disarmed and negotiates with PNG while the core villages around the mine have declared a no-go zone. From within this zone Ona leads the MDF (Makemue means both Bougainville and Mother Earth), which has refused to disarm or negotiate. Ona has described his aims as 'firstly, balance between man and the environment and secondly, Independence'.