

Nobonob Nius

No. 5. © Creative Training Centre, Nobonob, Madang, Papua New Guinea

'I HAVE JOINED THE MATAUNGAN'

by Herman ToRarau

As the sun was rising, old Anton ToLom was sitting on the verandah of his newly-built permanent house overlooking the picturesque Simpson Harbour. In the distance he could hear the church bell and the conch shell calling the village folk to the usual Sunday service. His little grandsons and granddaughters darted past him to have their baths. ToLom glanced back at the harbour, the peaceful harbour. To him the two "Dawapia" or rocks in the middle of the harbour were like two giant couples coming to help the Tolais solve their conflict.

ToLom, deep in his own thoughts, his eyes still gazing over the empty sea, worked his hands through his basket, picked out one betel nut, some "daka," his lime in an old container, and began to chew.

"Fapa," said a voice from the back, "I am going to be taken away by the police today." Old ToLom looked back and saw his eldest son Timon.

"Timon, why are they taking you away? You are the only one that supports me here. You are the only son that knows our traditional laws, our land tenure and all that is needed to have an honourable way of living. Your brother, ToRobert, is now teaching in Lae; he's no good to me. ToIosep, your other brother, has joined the evil police force in Moresby, and your youngest brother, ToPatrik, is still studying in the seminary. They haven't given me any help, even though they are all my sons just like you. When they were young they were a burden to both your mother and me.

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A writers' workshop in session at Raronga Theological College, in East New Britain.



"Papa, I have joined the Mataungan," Timon began. "I believe in what the Mataungan is doing. Yesterday we hunted all the disloyal councillors. They think that what they are doing is right. In fact Papa, they are betraying our own people. Soon all our customs and traditions will vanish. Now they are getting the Europeans, Chinese and New Guinea mainlanders to join the Tolai council. What a pity! The Chinese and Europeans have sucked enough money out of our little Peninsula. Now they are taking the next step. Like devils they pretend to join our local government council. In reality, papa they want to destroy our culture, customs and traditions. They want to get rid of our pride and identity. Lust and greed fill their stomachs for our beautiful women and for the money that they can make out of our land, our land, our mother land that hatched us. The people that help the government are traitors. They were indoctrinated to take that foolish step, poor fellows, they don't understand. They are blinded by the crumbs from their masters. They prefer crumbs to that honour which identifies them as being Tolais in the face of the world. Papa do not grieve for me if I'm in jail--I believe my course is right and honourable. I am determined to fight for it, suffer for it and even to die for it. Papa tell my sister IaAngnes to inform my three brothers about the situation."

Just as old ToLom was about to say something, a police van pulled up outside the house. Out of the van came three black police constables and a Tolai Sub-Inspector.

"Who is Timon ToLom?" asked the Sub-Inspector. "It's me sir!" Timon shot back.

"Well, Timon you are now under arrest."

"You, the Tolai Sub-Inspector, so you say that you were educated, educated to arrest your own Tolai brothers for the good of the white man. I bet you'll be sorry if you try to find the truth. You poor being, poor creature, cutting your own flesh into pieces!" Timon shouted in the ear of the Sub-Inspector as he was hauled into the van and locked.

Timon was brought before the court and after trial was sentenced to two months' imprisonment with hard labour. He was not the only one in jail; there were many others who were his accomplices.

While in jail Timon received three letters from his three brothers. The first was from his youngest brother, ToPatrick, who was astonished to hear the terrible news from his sister IaAngnes.

Channel College Ulapia,
P.O. Kokopo,
November 21st.

Dear Timon,

I am shocked by the sad news that you are now in jail. I am very sorry to hear that you are one of those people using violence. Violence is bad because you hurt people. You also break the law of God.

I have been in school for many years and I denounce the action that you took part in. When you break the law of the country you break the law of God.

When you return home, please support the laws of our country. I also wish to advise you not to associate yourself with the Mataungans.

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John's parents do not know whether he is alive or dead because they never knew what happened after he left them.

John says that he does not contact them because it would be too dangerous for the Indonesians to find him out. He also says that he doesn't have any intention of going back home, but will serve the government of Papua New Guinea if the government wants him after his schooling.

The Mighty Sepik

by Clement Joko

North to South is my head and mouth.
Swift and soundless, but fierce,
I capture the land as I walk,
Swallow the weak and vomit the tough.
High to low down I come.

Canoes paddle on me,
Crocodiles swim on me.
Sunrise to sunset knows my name.
Dumb and blind have heard of me.
Glassy and muddy is my blood.

Pitpits grow on my gum,
Thin-legged cranes sit on them.
I have ruined the land,
Unkind and nasty is my weight--
Blame me not, but the Creator.

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How My Island, PARAMA, Came Into Being

by Ronnie N. Pakini

Once my people lived in a place called Kudin in the mainland, approximately 20 miles from the town of Daru. Daru was not like you see it today, with roads intersecting here and there and houses everywhere. It was just a muddy old mangrove swamp. Crabs crawled everywhere with their nippers alarmingly open in order to seize their prey.

As turtle hunting expeditions were very common on those days, my people used to go out regularly in search of turtles and dugongs which still exist today. The canoes they used in those days were called Moto-Moto. These canoes have outriggers on either side, three sails and two masts with riggings supporting them. The largest Moto-Moto can be about forty feet in length and nine feet high.

One day while my people were out in the crystal clear sea, eagerly seeking the relevant mammals, they came across a whirling of the water in the deep sea. This, they thought, was some sea creature living there. So the Moto-Moto was turned and the people went home immediately in fear. The information was scattered to everyone. All the men there prepared spears, harpoons,

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and bamboo and wooden poles. Stone axes and knives were all sharpened to a razor's edge.

Early next morning while the north-west wind was blowing calmly, swaying the cedar trees gently and with the hissing of the coconut trees sounding so melodious, the one hundred warriors on board four well-equipped Moto-Motos then sailed away anxiously.

When the whirling water had been approached, the four canoes surrounded it. Then some of the men seized hold of their weapons while the others felt the bottom of the sea with the poles. While they were doing this, men in one of the canoes realised or felt that this wasn't a living sea creature, but a sand-bank. The men then placed the poles in the sand as beacons and returned home with great pride, singing, dancing, yelling, "diriomoro-diriomoro" (land).

A couple of years later, the sand-bank appeared out of the sea. Some men were then sent in one of the Moto-Motos across to the Kiwai Islands to fetch a man called Adagi, who was believed to be a great sorcerer. The men returned with Adagi two days later after crossing the milky Fly river to the Kiwai Islands. So the next day the men went across in their four Moto-Moto with Adagi to their newly found island for the first trees to be planted. Adagi then planted them with his great magic power.

They observed the sand-bank for some years until the whole island was covered with trees and suitable for them to live on. The people then commenced felling the trees for building sites, constructing houses and planting coconut trees. When all was done, everyone with their dependants shifted onto their new island, which they named Tetebe. Later the permanent name of the village became Parama.

They lived happily in this new village but later realised that there was inadequate land as the population was increasing. A quorum was called to discuss what should be done. During that meeting some people decided that they would identify land for themselves in the mainland. So they went and settled in a new place which they named Orubo-Gowo.

One sunny noon, some old and young men gathered together and began to discuss possible ways of improving the island. While they were talking, a huge heron appeared and started to dance about, looking around from side to side, endeavouring to figure out what was on the island. The children rushed out in order to slay it but were stopped by the elders, who told them that the heron was the owner of the island. This heron is conspicuous from the rest of the herons because its legs and beaks are covered all over with feathers.

All the writings in this edition are by students of Madang Teachers' College. They were produced during a five-day writers' workshop held at Nobonob, Madang, in mid-September. A second edition by MTC writers will follow.