

STEVEN RATUVA

they say, a picture is worth a thousand words.

Note:

¹ Epistemology refers to the sociology of knowledge. It looks at how we generate, transmit and acquire knowledge. Cartooning is a way of transmitting "knowledge" of a particular situation between the cartoonist and the reader.

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THE UNI TAVUR TESTIMONY 1

'I couldn't stop crying'

It was dubbed Black Tuesday — the night four people were shot dead during protests against World Bank structural adjustment policies in Papua New Guinea. The University of PNG journalism newspaper *Uni Tavur* published a special edition on 30 July 2001 with several students' accounts of their experience. Here are the stories of two young women.

By WANITA WAKUS

THE SOUND of gunshots woke me from my deep sleep. I could also hear the footsteps of people running along the exposed corridors of my dormitory. I opened the door, curious to know exactly what was going on, only to hear someone somewhere in the shadows of the trees yelling at the girls to get in and shut their doors. The sound of the gunshots seemed to be getting louder, so I assumed the gunmen were coming closer. I quickly shut the door and only opened my window curtains to see what was happening.

Out in the dark, the shadows of the huge trees swayed to the rhythm of the wind. I could see figures crouching, lying and hiding behind them. They were quite visible because some were in white T-shirts and lighter colors and it was quite easy to spot them. They were about 30 meters away from where I was actually standing. The only thing that separated me and made me safe was that I was in a building with a fence around me while they were at the mercy of the gunmen.

I knew I was safe as long as I stayed inside the doors of my room but I always came close to doubting my safety every time the sounds of gunshot and with it came the screams of the male students. When the gunshots were fired, I would walk up to the window and lift the curtains to see what was happening but I always saw the same sight of the boys trying to hide in the shadows of the dark. Since I was so tired I fell asleep amidst the sound of gunshots.

WANITA WAKUS

I woke up again to the screams and gunshots but this time the sun was up. I couldn't tell what time it was but it could have been around 7.00am. I came out of my room and saw that everyone was standing with their gaze at a particular spot where the gunmen were standing. Walking towards where the group of ladies stood I saw that the gunmen were none other than the law enforcement officers, the police.

Their posture portrayed authority and they looked fearful. In their hands were the instruments of death. I compared them to their opponent and they were so different. The students seemed tired and signs of weariness were etched on their face because of the sleepless night they had had. But their eyes showed fear mixed with anger because they were unarmed and defenceless and left to the mercy of the policemen.

The sight brought tears to my eyes. Through my tears I saw some students taking their shirts off and with their hands over their head they walked to the gunmen showing a sign of surrender. Just as they were 30 or 40 metres away we heard another spray of gunshots. It must have been the guns or tear gas because seconds later gas filled the air while gunshots rang out. It was quite difficult to see what was happening.

A couple of minutes later, out of the smoke came four boys carrying the limp body of someone who would later be identified as Steven Kil who died. I was stunned. I couldn't believe what I was seeing and I cried in frustration. I felt that we were helpless.

The people we would have called first to come would be the police. But how do you tell a police person that we need help because your people just killed a man? The people you would seek refuge from are now against you. I just couldn't stop crying.

Wanita Wakus is a second-year journalism student at the University of Papua New Guinea. This article was published in Uni Tavour, 30 July 2001. She later also gave testimony to the Commission of Inquiry.

Uni Tavour

A conch shell - the voice of truth and independence

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THIS ISSUE	OK TEDI: a case of environmental nightmare - p. 8
1. Memorial for the fallen students - p. 2	Travelling broadens horizons - p. 8
2. Police force having problem - p. 3	Struggling in silence - West Papua - p. 10
3. UNIGS students deny Uni decision - p. 3	

A tragic end to a peaceful campaign & protest march!



Police shot dead 31 university students on the early hours of Tuesday June 26 following an overnight confrontation between them and the students in a rough Port Moresby city. Port Moresby came under siege. By sunrise, on this Monday Tuesday 26 June 2001, Port Moresby came under siege. Four people, including two students from the University of PNG, had been shot dead. These students were driven to the Port Moresby General Hospital morgue.

Guns of darkness left 3 dead by dawn!

31 UNIGS, automatic fire, and detaching fire-fires... (The text is partially obscured and difficult to read in detail.)



Peter John



Steven Kil



Protesting about their deaths

In recognition of the fallen students the University will establish a memorial garden area on the field where they die.

Freedom of Expression, Clean Environment, Democracy and Peace

30 July 2001 Uni Tavour 1

The special edition of Uni Tavour, 30 July 2001: Reporters Wanita Wakus and Estella Cheung tell their stories of the shootings by police.

Chronology of a protest

By **UNI TAVUR**

Friday, June 15: Students hold a Student Union Day at the University of Papua New Guinea. The day is divided into two parts. The morning session is devoted to discussing problems of not enough lecturers, outdated books in the library, limited academic weeks, an expensive bookshop and other issues affecting the university.

Student Representative Council (SRC) president Augustine Moionges is in Mount Hagen and vice-president Kalogo Gima takes charge of this forum.

Afternoon session opens debate on the World Bank (WB) and international Monetary Fund (IMF) initiated land mobilisation programme. Students express concern about the Government being used by the two monetary organisations to "sell" Papua New Guinea to foreign developers.

By the end of the day, students declared war on the WB and IMF!

Saturday June 16: SRC members travel by boat to Motupore Island outside Port Moresby and hold a secret meeting. Minutes of the meeting are unknown.

Monday June 18: Most students are unaware that a strike is looming. They prepare for normal classes; SRC president Augustine Molones returns from Mt Hagen and calls on the students to stop attending classes and to attend a forum. He terms the boycott of classes as "voluntary". Students continue heated debates on privatisation and land mobilisation issues. The forum gets emotional.

Tuesday June 19: Students decide to "voluntarily boycott" classes again and remain at the forum area. After lunch, the SRC sends out parties to carry out awareness campaigns in all major suburbs of Port Moresby. The focus of the awareness is the WB, IMF, privatisation and land mobilisation, SRC also seeks assistance from the Electoral Commission to conduct a referendum at the university.

Counting of votes takes place at the Electoral Commission's office at Boroko overnight.

Wednesday June 20: In the morning, the SRC announces the results of the counting and declares that majority voted for strike action. The strike is to

last until Friday, June 22. Students go out to carry out awareness campaigns and also to mobilise support for the strike. The university administration warns students that the strike and referendum are illegal and urges everyone to return to classes.

Thursday June 21: Students continue awareness programme and attract hundreds of people to the Prime Minister's office at Waigani. All public motor vehicles (PMV) halt operations in support of the students. Most government offices at Waigani shut down. The SRC students and the public demand that Prime Minister, Sir Mekere Morauta, come out and receive their petition.

However, Sir Mereke sends cabinet ministers Philemon Embel (Provincial Affairs), John Pundari ((Foreign Affairs), Peter Ipatas (Mining) Ben Micah (Privatisation Commission chairman) and Police Commissioner John Wakon, but the crowd refuses to give them their petition.

Still the Prime Minister does not show up. The crowd decides to spend the first night around the old Pineapple building and outside Morauta House where Prime Minister's office is located.

Friday June 22: The crowd wakes up and waits for the Prime Minister all day. Police block vehicles from entering the Waigani government offices. PMV routes 7,8,11 and 15 had to be detoured. All buildings in the Waigani government offices have closed doors and hundreds of public servants stay out from work.

By 6pm, it becomes evident that the Prime Minister would not meet the people. But the crowd is determined and decides to spend the second night sleeping outside on the car park and PM's office. In the night, police attempt to disperse the crowd but the crowd ignore the police presence and continue praying and singing the national anthem and police give up.

Saturday June 23: Over the weekend, there is no communication between the PM and the SRC. The crowd keeps growing — reaching to about 15,000 — and the SRC reminds the people that they were to spend this night outside the PM's office as well. This is the third night; the crowd sleep outside the PM's office.

Sunday June 24: The large crowd still waits at the gates of Morauta House.

CHRONOLOGY OF A PROTEST

The university is almost deserted as students decide to take up temporary residence at the PM's office gate.

SRC arranges transport for students to travel between the campus and Morauta House. Students return to the campus for shower, rest and meals before they return to the PM's office. Students and their supporters spend the fourth night outside.

Monday June 25: This time, the crowd is even bigger than before — about 20,000 plus as they wait for the Prime Minister. Around 12 noon, the Prime Minister sends word out that he would be meeting the protesters. Finally, Sir Mekere is escorted under very heavy guard.

The SRC presents its petition and gives the PM 24 hours to reply. While receiving the petition, the Prime Minister explains to the protesters that he will give some but not all answers the next day. Sir Mekere tells the crowd that some of the decisions have to be made by the Cabinet. In the meantime, he urges them to return to their homes. After the Prime Minister leaves, the SRC leaders tell the crowd that they were to spend the night outside and get their answers tomorrow. The protesters again agree to sleep outside Morauta House.

12 midnight: Heavily armed police personnel arrive at the Waigani government offices and order the people to leave the area within 15 minutes, but the protesters still maintain their positions. After three warning shots, the police fire tear gas canisters into the crowd and forcefully chase the crowd out of the area.

As the crowd disperses, it becomes violent. Along the way at the Administrative College near UPNG, two cars are burnt. Another car is burnt at the university's main entrance. Around university's main bus stop, a fourth car is burnt. Stones, bottles, and bricks being thrown by angry protesters damage many cars travelling along the main highway. The Big Rooster outlet at Rainbow is burnt down by arsonists and fire fighters travelling to fight the fire get stoned. Plants, signposts and streetlights along the Waigani Gerehu road are destroyed.

Police arrive at the scene and chase both students and members of the protesting public into the university premises.

It is during this period that students are eventually shot and some are

CHRONOLOGY OF A PROTEST

wounded. Police concentrate heavy gundfire into the air and sometimes directed at the students.

The gunshots are heard in many parts of the the city. Police also fire lots of gas canisters into the campus. The bullets and tear gas do not deter the students.

The gunfire continues until 7am Tuesday morning, when the police withdraw and take up position at the Waigani police station.

Tuesday, June 26: The city of Port Moresby comes to a standstill as students continue to fight police with saticks and stones. A large crowd from Gerehu (stages 1-6), Rainbow, Moarata (1, 2 and 3), Ensisi, Waigani and Tokarara join the students. People from other areas too come in large numbers and demand the police allow them through to the Prime Minister's office for answers to their petition.

There is general disorder, destruction and looting in all parts of the city. However, the police refuse to let the crowd pass. Tensions between police and protesters mount and finally the crowd go on a rampage. Police fire rubber bullets and tear gas into the crowd and chase the thousands of people away.

The Governor-general declares a curfew in Port Moresby.

Wednesday, June 27: Students mourn the death of fellow students and anxiously await the news of those in hospital.

Wednesday, July 4: Funeral attended by about 3000 plus students, city residents, friends and relatives.