

CHAPTER 1: EXAMINING THE LITERATURE:

- ◆ **West Papuan Nationalist Struggles**
- ◆ **Militarism and Gender Violence**

Introduction

This review comprises two main sections. The first section, is an historical overview of the literature on West Papua, focusing on material which covers political developments since the 1950s. This includes various forms of resistance to Dutch colonial rule and the Indonesian occupation. Both armed opposition to Indonesian rule by the OPM (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka* or Free Papua Movement), and uprisings in the form of millenarian movements, are indicative of intermittent waves of repression and subsequent resistance on the part of West Papuans. Recent political moves to gain national independence by West Papuans are discussed in light of the changes in the Indonesian political landscape. As the focus of my research is on how women relate to nationalist movements, I was particularly interested in how West Papuan women have been portrayed in the literature. However, with a few exceptions, women are rarely the focus in this body of literature.

The second section explores the literature on the issue of women and nationalism, including women in other resistance movements. The issues of militarism and gender violence, and how these impact upon women's lives are examined, as well as the relationship between nationalism, militarisation and gender power relations. Most of the literature covered pertains to other resistance struggles. However, these are useful and relevant in understanding the West Papuan situation, about which, as I have discovered, very little written has been written.

Histories of West Papuan Struggle

Nonie Sharp's 1977 publication of *The Rule of the Sword, the Story of West Irian*, was one of the early books to consider what happened following Indonesia's annexation of West Papua, and as she says, sought to 'break through the silence surrounding Papua Barat' (Sharp, 1994:xiv). Robin Osborne's *Indonesia's Secret War: The Guerilla War in Irian Jaya* was published in 1985. It comprises an in-depth account of the war between the Indonesian military and the OPM, giving a graphic picture of the atrocities perpetrated by the military upon the civilian population in its attempts to wipe out organised opposition to its control. *West Papua - Obliteration of a People*, by Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, was

published in 1988. With a strong human rights focus, this text discusses the killings, dispossession, alienation and human rights violations of West Papuans associated with the Indonesian occupation, as well as organised resistance to it. It describes the plundering of natural resources including timber, and minerals, relating in particular, to the largely American owned Freeport McMoran Gold and Copper mine in the Grasberg Mountains; and the impact of transmigration of people from other parts of Indonesia to West Papua.

In my search for mention of West Papuan women's resistance to occupation, I found evidence of women's involvement in the West Papuan struggle, both illustrated in photographs, and referred to in Budiardjo and Liem's text (1988). Women OPM guerrillas are shown in that text (p.99), and reference is made to a group of women who raised the Morning Star flag outside the provincial governor's office in Jayapura in 1980, with 'enthusiastic support' from onlookers (p.83). These women, whose photograph appears on page 82, were all jailed without trial in August 1980 (p.83). Shortly after this incident, three women, who according to an OPM situation report, were members of the underground Papuan Women's Intelligence Group, met the same fate (Osborne, 1985:84).

In February 1984, an OPM led uprising in Jayapura, and the subsequent military reprisals, led to a mass exodus of around 12,000 West Papuans across the border into PNG. This included hundreds of people from the Jayapura area, amongst them deserting military personnel, civil servants and academics. This was the beginning of a larger exodus of rural people, a flow which 'came to include over half the population of the communities near the border...' (Bell, Feith, Hatley, 1986:6). This led to much media attention in both Australia and PNG, the deportation of OPM leaders to third countries, and the involvement of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in the border camps (MacQueen, 1989:532-533). This period is well covered in Robin Osborne's 1985 text, and in Ron May's 1986 edited text, *Between Two Nations: The Indonesia Papua New Guinea Border and West Papua Nationalism*. Also, the issues are addressed in the ACFOA (Australian Council for Overseas Aid) collation of published *Irian Jaya Australian News Clippings February - May, 1984*.

In April 1984, the prominent anthropologist Arnold Ap was murdered by Indonesian authorities (Sharp 1994:xv), and became a martyr to the cause of West Papuan cultural and political identity. Nonie Sharp's 1994 book *The Morning Star in Papua Barat* is dedicated to Arnold Ap amongst others, and is important in its recognition of oral history in indigenous

cultures, in this case that of Biak. The second part of the book is the life story of Markus Wonggor Kaisiepo, who according to Rex Rumakiek (Sharp 1994:xii), was ‘the last remaining authority on Koreri’, a Biak word meaning renewal or transformation (Sharp, 1994:5).

The significance of Koreri and other millenarian movements is explored in Sharp (1994) and other publications (Giay, and Godschalk, 1993). These texts develop links between antipathy towards the status quo, nationalist sentiment, and millenarian movements. In a substantial piece entitled ‘Waiting for the End in Biak: Violence, Order, and a Flag Raising’, Danilyn Rutherford (1999) draws some interesting parallels between the Koreri Movement of the World War II period, led by the traditional singer and healer Angganeta Menufandu, in which the Morning Star flag first flew in 1942, and the July 1998 flag-raising event in Biak, led by Philip Karma.

One of these parallels is the fact that both coincided with ‘the fall of a seemingly permanent regime’ (Rutherford, 1999:55). Another is the dancing, singing and praying engaged in by the participants during the flag-raising of both periods. A third parallel is the importance placed on outside recognition of their demands. In the earlier uprising, there was an expectation that the Japanese would recognise Papuan political parties. In the 1998 scenario, there was a belief that ‘powerful outsiders’ would support them. This was in part a response to a letter, widely circulated in Biak (p.56) from several US Congress members to President Habibie, in which they called for political dialogue on the status of both East Timor and Irian Jaya (p.42). In October 1943, the Japanese navy massacred hundreds of followers, and in 1998, the Indonesian military opened fire on some two hundred demonstrators, resulting in deaths as well as torture and disappearances (p.40).

This harsh reaction was not uncommon until the fall of Suharto in May 1998. Since then flag raising and demonstrations have been met with a degree of government toleration. It is only very recently that West Papuans have been able to openly organise politically and demand independence. There was an important breakthrough when 100 of them met President Habibie in February 1999 to make such a demand (Chauvel, 2000:5, King, 2000:2, Rutherford, 1999:42-43).

The literature suggests that amongst the emerging West Papuan leadership we are yet to hear women's voices. However, one of the leading spokespersons in the struggle against the Freeport mine, is Yosepha Alomang (Mote, 2000). This Amungme traditional healer and member of LEMASA, the Amungme Tribal Council, has consistently spoken out against human rights abuses by the security forces in the Freeport concession, as well as the environmental devastation caused by the mine (Survival International, 1998, n.p.). In December 1999, a group of human rights organisations in Jakarta awarded her the Yap Thiam Hien Human Rights Award, and in January 2000, she and Rev. Isak Ondawame led a group of people from Timika to the regional assembly in Jayapura, to demand the withdrawal of security forces from the mine area (Imran, 2000, n.p.).

Militarism, Gender Violence and Nationalist Movements

Military violence against West Papuan women, in particular rape, has been well documented by various groups investigating human rights violations, including the Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Memorial Centre For Human Rights, and the Institute for Human Rights Studies and Advocacy (IHRSTAD) in their May 1999 report, 'Incidents of Military Violence Against Indigenous Women in Irian Jaya (West Papua), Indonesia'. Prior to this, human rights reports had been released by the Catholic Bishop of Jayapura in 1995, and in May 1998 by the Catholic church, and two Protestant churches based in the subdistrict of Mimika (RFK Centre and IHRSTAD, 1999:2).

According to Joy Balazo (2000), the Secretary for International Human Rights with the Uniting Church in Australia, who recently visited the area, the Amungme women who have been displaced from their land as a result of the Freeport copper and gold mine, are under continual surveillance by the military.

One mother has three children out of constant rapes, whilst another two had been raped whilst working in their gardens. Their pain as they shared their stories was deep and is constantly exacerbated by the awareness that there is nothing they can do to protect their children, who are also abused by the military (Balazo, 2000:24).

The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy in her 1999 report to the UN Commission on Human Rights, concluded that rape was used by the Indonesian security forces 'as an instrument of torture and intimidation' in Irian Jaya, Aceh

and East Timor, and ‘torture of women detained by the security forces was widespread’. She found that no perpetrators had been brought to justice, nor had any compensation been given to victims (Coomaraswamy, 1999:1).

From the literature I have surveyed, it appears that gender violence is a significant aspect of Indonesian rule. How then are women responding to and resisting this violence? To start looking at these issues, I have concentrated on writers who have dealt with women of the South, including women in other liberation struggles against oppressive regimes.

Whilst women have played important roles in many nationalist movements, in her text *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, Kumari Jayawardena’s (1986), discussion of such movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, concludes that these roles were ‘contributive’. Men organised and set the agendas of nationalist movements, and ‘were the main movers of history’ (p.260-261).

In discussing the tendency amongst men in nationalist movements to tell women to ‘hold their tongues until after the revolution’, Anne McClintock (1995) argues that historically women who have been disempowered during nationalist struggles, will continue to be disempowered after the struggle. She says: ‘If nationalism is not transformed by an analysis of gender power, the nation-state will remain a repository of male hopes, male aspirations and male privilege’ (p.385). Even in cases where women have been actively involved and valued in resistance struggles, once the ‘state is won’, a common occurrence is the ‘forgetting’ of women’s contribution, and their return to a subordinate status in society (Pettman, cited in Wilford, 1998:3). A recent example of this is the case of around 20,000 women who fought in the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front, which achieved its goal of independent statehood in 1991. Lamenting this regression, one of these women made the rather ironic comment: ‘It was better when we were in the field - we were equal with the men and we got good treatment’ (cited in Wilford, 1998:4).

McClintock (1995:360) applauds Frantz Fanon’s early recognition of gender as a ‘formative dimension of nationalism’, and the inherent link between military violence and gender power in the family. As Fanon (1967:141-142) writes in *Black Skin White Masks* ‘Militarization and the centralization of authority in a country automatically entail a resurgence of the authority of the father’. According to Cynthia Enloe (2000), ‘Even leaders of movements opposed to

militaristic regimes can become militarized, making decisions that militarize their movements in ways that privilege masculinity and thereby marginalize some men and most women' (p.292). When this occurs, Enloe argues that women tend to be relegated to the roles of 'supporters' and 'admirers' of the 'men in the front lines' (p.292).

Jacklyn Cock's analysis of militarism (based on her work in South Africa) is relevant to the case of Indonesia, particularly the highly militarised areas of Aceh, West Papua and till recently East Timor. She says that militarism and militarisation comprise three distinct social phenomena: the military as a social institution, militarism as an ideology which legitimates state violence, and 'militarism as a social process that involves the penetration of the military into more and more social areas until the military have a primacy in state and society' (cited in Waylen, 1996:97-98). This is an accurate description of what occurred in Indonesia under the Suharto regime (Siapno, 1997:28-29), and what the new President and some of his colleagues are attempting to change. However, according to Herb Feith¹, controlling the actions of the military, particularly in areas like West Papua and Aceh where they have acted with impunity for so long, is proving problematic (Personal Communication, May 2000).

Anne-Marie Hilsdon's, '*Madonnas and Martyrs Militarism and Violence in the Philippines*' (1995), contains extensive analysis of the processes of gender violence, in the context of the armed conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the New People's Army. It examines the ways in which military training builds on the social constructions of masculinity, and notions of sexual conquest are combined with military conquest in military discourses (p.93). Hilsdon concludes that in the Philippines, the violation of women's bodies is consistently 'sex(ualis)ed and gendered, and is powerfully interwoven with discourses of shame and honour' (p.82).

In her fascinating dissertation 'The Politics of Gender, Islam and Nation-State in Aceh, Indonesia: A Historical Analysis of Power, Co-optation and Resistance', Jacqueline Siapno (1997), asserts that some of the worst cases of military abuse have occurred in *kampung janda* (widow villages), where rape, mass rape and torture have been reported (p.29). In discussing the way in which the Suharto regime criminalised political dissent and the independence movement, she writes: 'military terror and surveillance strategies have

¹ Herb Feith, scholar of Indonesian affairs.

succeeded in the demonization of widows of so-called “GPK² terrorists”...’(p.34). Siapno met many women in Aceh who told her they were fearful of picking up the dead bodies of their husband or brothers, as they would then be accused of being ‘GPK terrorists’(p.34).

It is clear from the above mentioned published reports, that gender violence is a critical aspect of the pattern of human rights abuses perpetrated in West Papua, so far with impunity, on the part of the Indonesian military. In his speech ‘Indonesian Nationalism Today and in the Future’ given in March 1999, Ben Anderson argued that the ‘pervasive practices of sadistic brutality’, have over the past thirty years become ‘normal’ activities of the state apparatus, which has come to view people in remote regions like Aceh and West Papua, not as Indonesians, but as ‘objects’, ‘possessions’, ‘servants’, and ‘obstacles’ for the state. For the West Papuans, it was logical that they would feel they were being colonised and respond (Anderson, 1999:5). As one woman delegate said at the February 2000 Consultation in Jayapura:

We are victims of Indonesia, and others are too. But our feelings are like a needle penetrating our bodies - only a good medical operation [merdeka, of course--PK] can take out the needle (cited in King, 2000:2). (Peter King notes that this implies independence)

The literature clearly illustrates that militarisation and militarism impact violently upon women, and that women suffer extraordinarily because they are viewed as the ‘symbolic bearers of the collectivity, identity and honour, both personally and collectively’ (Yuval-Davis, 1998:29). Thus, Yuval-Davis argues that ‘systematic rapes in war are aimed not just - and often not primarily - at the tortured women, but at the enemy collectively’ (1998:29). Similarly Fanon, (cited in McClintock, 1995:364) wrote of colonial thinking as indicating that ‘if we want to destroy the structure of Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women’.

To conclude, the literature I have reviewed, suggests that there is an ongoing nationalist movement in West Papua in which women’s voices and perspectives have yet to be heard. The growing literature on the relationship between gender and militarism, and gender and nationalist discourses, suggest that these interconnections must be recognised, if genuine respect and human dignity is to be achieved along with the goal of national independence.

² *Gerombolan Pengacau Keamanan*, or Gang of Security Disturbers, is an Indonesian government term used to denote terrorists. In Aceh, it refers to the Free Aceh Movement (Siapno, 1997:4).

