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Transcript of Interview: Sir Paul Lapun and Gill Andrew
Mabes Village, Boku Sub-district, Bougainville, 14 April 1988

(Also present were Patrick Bano, Deputy Chairman of the Panguna Landowners' Association, Methodius Nesiko and Thomas Kobuko, both of Bougainville Copper).

All text bracketed [...] was inserted after editing by Sir Paul.

GA: Sir Paul, where were you living in the sixties when Ken Phillips the geologist walked up from Kieta into the Panguna Valley?

PL: I was at Kuka Village in Kieta.

GA: What were you doing there?

PL: I was elected to the 1964 House of Assembly, so as the elected member I was going around all the time seeing the people.

GA: You knew that *potentially* there was a big copper orebody in the Panguna Valley?

PL: It was before that, in 1963, before we had our House of Assembly open. At that time, what ~~was~~ the government in the country was called the Legislative Council.

GA: You were a member of that?

PL: No, I wasn't. We were represented by Nicholes Brokam from New Ireland at that time - two districts had one representative at that time.

GA: The man from New Ireland represented you Bougainvilleans as well as the New Islanders?

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PL: Yes, that's right, because they were selected by the Administration.

GA: That was big district.

PL: Yes, that's right. That was not a free choice at that time, you know?

GA: No, exactly, I do understand. You had known for many years there was gold at Kupei?

PL: That was long before - there was a man, I don't know from where - he was mining gold at Kupei, but I don't know when he started. I suppose I was not yet born at that time, I don't know.

GA: You knew the gold was there?

PL: Yes of course.

GA: And you knew that there was something also in the Fanguna Valley?

PL: No, I had no idea at that time - what we said at that time "Santing bilong ol masta" - that's what we said.

GA: You called it "bilong ol masta"?

PL: The 'save', the knowledge, the know-how, how to do things - something bilong white people, you know? We had no *idea* at that time!

GA: You people yourselves weren't in the rivers panning with tins or anything like that?

PL: We had no idea, no education at that time, okay?

GA: *You* were educated - there were other educated people?

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PL: Oh. I was educated, at the Catholic Mission. By the Administration at that time I don't think there was very much education.

GA: Okay So when Ken Phillips came into the valley, did he come and talk to you people at all?

PL: No, he didn't.

GA: Who *did* he talk to?

PL: Must have been one of the ADO's at that time, I don't know who it was then.

GA: The ADO at the time was Max Denehy, but all I want to establish is, you didn't meet Ken Phillips in the 1960s?

PL: I might have met him, but personally I don't think I did.

GA: Do you remember what your thoughts were, how did you feel about the possibility of a big development occurring in that valley?

PL: I had no idea at that time!

GA: You didn't think about it?

PL: No.

GA: When did it first really start to sink into your head that there was going to be a huge change in that valley?

PL: Well at that time, during the life of the 1964-68 House of Assembly, there was a Bill brought up in the House by the Leader of Government Business in the Administration at that time. The Bill was to agree to the prospecting authority, and I do believe that was already arranged in Canberra at that time, you know?

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GA: It was already pre-arranged?

PL: That's right!

GA: But they just made you feel better by allowing you to present it - is that what you're suggesting?

PL: No, not me ...

GA: No, not *you*, personally, I understand.

PL: The Leader of Government Business at that time in the House of Assembly

GA: By this point you were not yet a Ministerial Member of the House?

PL: No, no, no! We had no idea at that time, we hadn't yet formed political parties at that time. I think that was the beginning of, or in the middle of 1965. So I was involved about that when I stood for the people to get royalty for the landowners.

GA: What year was this - 1968, 69?

PL: No, before that - 1965. Well, I got the idea that landowners must be compensated, or they must get a percentage of royalty that the Administration will get. At that time it was the Administration of the Australian Government which was governing the two territories, okay? Well, I got the idea to press on for the royalties. So the answer I got was, "There is no way for the landowners to get royalties, because in Commonwealth countries, the minerals, gold and silver and so on, belongs to the Crown".

GA: Right, yes, I've heard this before!

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PL: Yes! Well, I was *really* disappointed at that time, okay?

GA: Of *course* you were, I understand.

PL: Yes - "This is *our* land"! This is not Australia, America either or any other place - this is *our* land, yes? And afterwards we are under the United Nations Trusteeship Council okay? And we are self-governing territory, not like Papua where they're called a *non*-self-governing territory, understand?

GA: Right, yes.

PL: So I have to stand there - quite all right! Whether I win or not, I was going to make a good lose or a good win, anyway!

GA: All your people of course were behind you all the way?

PL: Of *course* they were, even today - you should have seen them some days ago, I don't know when - last Monday (11 April 1988 when Panguna Landowners confronted BCL in Panguna). You could see them then, shouting, "THIS IS OUR LAND"!

GA: At that time you were in Port Moresby arguing the case?

PL: Of course, we were there all the time. So I had to go to Australia and other places to see the mining, how very well off they were - that's okay! But I wanted Bougainville, my land - you must respect the rights of my people on their land, that's all. But we were very strong at that time.

Anyway, before we attempted to [approach] the High Court of Australia, before that, we wanted a percentage, okay? I went up very high - fifty percent of the royalty that will go to the government must go to the landowners! Of course they said, That's too high! Too high, for maybe very very few landowners - maybe 200 of them - and millions of dollars, (at that time), is going to very few people in that area.

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GA: Roughly how many people would there have been at that point?

PL: Would be more than 500 people at that time. But anyway, they said, Good argument! They said, Okay, you must think of the country as a whole! You cannot just fight for the benefit of a few people, but for the *whole* country it will be very good!

GA: Who said that to you?

PL: Administration people. Of course I *did* believe that we must think of the country as a whole, but afterwards, the landowners in that area must get something.

Well, then I came down to 40 percent; still they said, Too big. Then - better than nothing - five percent of royalty going to the landowners. So that was agreed to by the House, or by the Administration at that time. So I got the five percent royalty paid to the landowners from that which will go to the government, okay? Now whether they *still* get it, or not - I don't know.

GA: It was five percent - you'd asked for fifty and you got five

PL: At least they still got it! Fifty was too high; forty too high. I said, Better than nothing! Because I lost the first move, and anyway the [procedure] and Standing Orders said, If you nearly got it you have to move a second time. So I was only short of 8 votes! So next time, after 6 months, I went back.

GA: And brought the motion again?

PL: That time I did, because the others had got some idea now eh? That's why they supported me! So we got the five percent. Not only for Panguna, but the whole country - to change the law that was imposed on us by the Administration.

GA: You reintroduced *another* mining law at some point later on didn't you?

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PL: I had to change the New Guinea mining law and then the Papua law. At that time I had to sign all these things; at that time you can see my name appearing - signing the Agreement of Bougainville Copper - that time, when I changed the laws.

GA: By that time you were the Ministerial Member for Mines?

PL: No, I was not yet. Before 1972, no, I was just nothing - they called us Under-Secretaries or something! I was Under-Secretary for Forests, because there [was a big area of forest in Tonolei] bought by the government, or something like that.

GA: This is down in the south here?

PL: Yes, in the south, a big area. So for that again they said, All right, Paul will be Under-Secretary for Forests, and when the copper mine was found, so that time they made me Minister for Minerals, and about that because I was fighting very hard for the rights of the people.

GA: Now what about the visit of the Minister Charles Barnes when he was asked by the Bougainville people, What's in it for us? and he said, There's *nothing* in it for you, in this mine. He was very firm about that?

PL: That's right, he was!

GA: That was in 1969, before the mine went into production.

PL: Mine production started in 1972, but in 1969, that was a very bad time for us in Kieta.

GA: Can you tell me about that time?

PL: While we got 5 percent royalty, and the damage compensation - it was not very much at all - about \$2 or something was agreed to by the House. Yes, \$2 per acre at that time. Sir John Guise

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came up with that, supported me on that, and moved that from \$1 50 - we must at least get \$2 per acre.

GA: Bill Conroy helped you out there too didn't he?

PL: Oh yes, he did - when he was Director of Agriculture - he was *good*.

GA: Can you go on telling me about 1969 and the Rorovana land dispute please?

PL: Well, again the Administration came up with a move, what they called 'Land Acquisition', okay?! *Land acquisition!* Whether you like it or not, okay!

GA: Did they tell you what they wanted to 'acquire'? Did they give you a *list* of what they wanted to acquire?

PL: I told you, we'd got no *idea* at that time! So we just wondered: What is the Government or the Administration doing! Oh, it's very very sad that time. Tony Newman at that time was the economist - we were fighting, we wanted to *know* - that the Administration can tell us, where are they now, and which way they move, because we didn't know what they were doing now.

GA: What you're telling me is that they told you nothing, they treated you as though you *knew* nothing, you understood nothing?

PL: That's right!!

GA: And they imposed all of their ideas on you?

PL: That's right, yes.

GA: They took your land and gave you \$2 per acre?

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PL: Well, we were helpless at that time. It was very good anyway - we got the Public Solicitor on our side at that time, Peter Lalor.

GA: He was a great man for the land himself, wasn't he?

PL: Yes, that's right, he was *with* us. So anyway, through him we went down to Australia. [In] Australia there was a group [of people] ...

GA: Moral Rearmament?

PL: Ahh, that's the right group - Moral Rearmament. They met us, waited for us at the airport at Sydney.

GA: That was you and Raphael Bele and so forth?

PL: Yes that's right, *you* know!! You know all these things anyway but you want to get *more* from me, okay!

GA: What advice did they give you Sir Paul?

PL: The Moral Rearmament man was Jim Coulter, he's still alive in Australia. He was there - he ran to us and said, Is that you Mr Paul Lapun? Oh it was very good! They brought us to the house of Eric Andrew, something like that, in a Sydney suburb, somewhere round Mosman - I don't know exactly where that place was - and we stayed there.

He said, That's not a good idea. We must try to see which way we can approach, in the *right* way, instead of pressing on very hard for something that might be very difficult later, something like that. We sat down, and because they were kind of religious people - all kinds of denominations joined together

GA: Civil rights wasn't it, that's really what it was about?

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PL: That's right, yes, civil rights. So we sat down with them and planned what to do, and from there we went on to Canberra the next day.

GA: Who did you see in Canberra Sir Paul?

PL: We went to the CRA building (25 storeys), in Melbourne, and in Canberra we had the idea to meet the Prime Minister - Mr Gorton at that time. But we went on to Melbourne to see Mr Maurice Mawby

GA: The Chairman of CRA - you met with him did you?

PL: That's right - yes. At that time too they were not happy about the pictures of Rorovana people!

GA: When the women were pulling out the marker pegs - *big* trouble?

PL: That's *right*, yes! So, that helped us too, the pictures of Rorovana women!

GA: Yes, it got what was happening to the eyes of other people in the outside world, but did it achieve much for the Bougainville landowners do you think?

PL: Well, not very much. We got *something*, at least. If we didn't *stand*, and *fight*, we wouldn't have got what we've got today. It's not much, but anyway, better than nothing.

GA: On that visit did you also meet Donald Mackay from Sly & Russell.

PL: That was in Sydney. Mr Newman [made] us very sad, and he said, If you can find a lawyer who will stand on your side, Defence Counsel for us. *Here* we couldn't find anybody because we had no idea to whom we could go - all of this.

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GA: Who helped you with that one?

PL: Peter Lalor, and we went down there, and Jim Coulter helped us too that time [to find a lawyer from] the best firm in Australia. So he said that the best firm was Sly & Russell and Don Mackay was from that company.

GA: And Don came up later on that year?

PL: Yes, we came together, him and the economist from Australia.

GA: He came back with you when you returned?

PL: Yes, Mr Tidex was the economist; he and Don Mackay came together.

GA: So you came back to Bougainville with Don, and did you start then to try and aim for higher compensation for your trees and your land?

PL: Yes, that's right, yes.

GA: How long did that take, those negotiations?

PL: It was about two weeks; they stayed in Kieta.

GA: This was concerning the acquisition of Arawa Plantation?

PL: Yes.

GA: And the Rorovana people ...?

PL: We didn't care very much about Arawa Plantation, but we were most unhappy about Rorovana land and all this Kobuan land, where they had the idea to shift all these people out on the coast down to Mabiri, or somewhere!

GA: Shift them far away?

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PL: Yes, that's right! And use their land for the town site!

GA: I hadn't heard they were going to move them right away from their original place - whose idea was that? Administration's?

PL: *Ohh* yes, that's *right!* They stood on this land acquisition law, all of this. We got the lawyer from Australia, and also Public Solicitor in TPNG itself, Peter Lalor - well - some people too from the Administration.

GA: What about the Company people - what did *they* have to say to you personally about all of this?

PL: They got no idea what they were saying! "We got nothing to say - we just do the work! You want something - you approach the government"! That's what they said - still say today! At that time too, when we went to Maurice Mawby. *He* said, I am just working as a company manager or director of this! You have to go to the government!

So, that's what they say! They *cannot* say. This is what we think, and together we approach the government and find a way.

GA: That is really all they can do, go to the government, unfortunately.

PL: That's right, yes! I know they *put* everything to the government - at that time, the Administration, okay. No, they themselves cannot say too. Okay, we sit down, compromise in what way we can go.

GA: No, it doesn't really matter what the company wants - the company could want completely different. But the company *has* to say. Talk to the government, because the government is what runs the country - that's the unfortunate situation you had.

PL: That's right, yes.

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GA: If the company and the *people* negotiated, it might be an entirely different situation, but it *hasn't* been like that.

PL: No, no, you know that very well of course!

GA: Overall though, do you think that the mine, and the benefits its brought to Bougainville, have been worthwhile, or would you rather it had never happened? How do *you* feel about that personally?

PL: Well, we see it, we feel it. Without the mining we could live on, make money, something, out of what we've got - copra, cocon timber - we've got more.

GA: You've got enough, you've had enough? Do you sometimes wish that it had never happened Sir Paul?

PL: Well, it's a good thing - but only what we are very sorry for is the tailings.

GA: And the pollution?

PL: Yes, that's right.

GA: And what's happened up the coast?

PL: If they did *something* to protect the environment, something like they do it in other places like Australia - because a big part of Australia is desert - that's why they direct all these things; no worries about it. But in other places they do build dams where they direct all these tailings.

GA: Yes, but I understand that up there near the mine site the ground itself is unstable, which is why they sent it down the river.

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PL: That's right, but if there are no people along the coast and the river there, they could do that. But they didn't think of the *people*, the *life* of the people - *they* didn't think of that!

GA: Do you think they gave very little consideration to those people?

PL: *Very very* little consideration! I don't think they *did*.

GA: Now they're putting the tailings pipeline in, which is going to be finished next year ...

PL: That is going to make it *worse*!

GA: It's going to take it out to sea, going to fill the whole area rather than just along the coast?

PL: Well this is what I mean. If they direct the tailings somewhere, to a swampy area ...

GA: ... that's not used, not inhabited by people? Yes, I see your point. But *where* is there, that sort of an area, west of the mine site? There isn't an area like that is there?

PL: Well, there are other areas on the east coast there, yes, somewhere between Rorovana and Manetai.

GA: Have you and your people talked to the government and the provincial government about these options?

PL: No, we had no idea! When we see the effects of all these things, area affected by the pollution, *then* we come out to talk about something! But before thinking something - tell the government and the company beforehand - that was no idea at all! But *now* we come out!

GA: It's been getting worse over the years?

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PL: *Yes!*

GA: But it's only now, in 1988, that ...

PL: *Now* we come to realise something bad is happening!

GA: But all these years had you *not* realised Sir Paul how bad it was?

PL: *No, no!*

GA: You *haven't*?

PL: The people in the government itself, those who know things about this mining, how bad the pollution can be - *they* didn't tell us.

GA: What's happened to the fish - are there still fish around this area at all?

PL: *No!* No fish - *nothing!* The Jaba River there is all eroded, and still now the sea shore is becoming silted - that will be *worse* when they direct the pipeline to the sea, right? The sea bed along the coast [will] be silted in that time [and will] be high up like that. And where we are, we would be lower than that.

GA: What's happened to the villagers who were down there? Have they been moved?

PL: They are still there, somewhere there - near the Jaba River, or the mouth of the river - they were moved up. It's very bad too there, but along the coast, two or three villages are still there. I heard the other day they stopped them from drinking the water from the well, which they were drinking for years and years!

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GA: Because it's been polluted, the drinking water's been polluted?

PL: *Yes!* So they are wondering what they are going to do with them *now*, eh?

PB: They have to travel some miles away from their normal villages to get their drinking water.

GA: How has this affected the gardens - they no longer exist there?

PL: Gardens now - this is what we are *crying* for. You see the leaves of the tapioca there - that's how it comes.

GA: That's caused by the pollution? (Dry, brown and papery leaves were pointed out to GA).

PL: Yes, it is!

TK: One of the villages down there was just next to the sea bed, and the village now is moved about 1.2kms away from the original village; that's because they fear some of the erosion caused by the tailings sinking into the Augusta bay is hitting the soil.

GA: How often do you get this sort of effect in the trees? How far away from the Jaba are you here - some kilometres?

PL: Oh, quite a long way!

TK: From here down to the coast is about 5.5kms - from *here* - and the Jaba from here to there is about 45kms from here to Jaba. But when you look at the layout of Jaba it goes something like this, and this is only about 7kms away from Jaba.

GA: From the Jaba directly - but also you've got the water table effect haven't you, that seeps underneath the ground? You've had agronomists and people like that here, looking at your trees?

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TK: They do them to the nearest parameters from the actual tailings flow. We haven't done anything from outside our normal leases.

MN: But there have been some experiences that all the people from up here and around the Siwai areas and that, where they are complaining about it, saying, Before we used to get a lot of like cocoa seeds, we used to get a lot of pods; but now they don't get those seeds.

GA: Do you mean there are less pods on the bushes now Methodius?

MN: Less pods on the trees, yes.

GA: And that's an effect of this pollution?

TK: What they see is, when the tailings go down, the evaporation of the tailings goes up into the air and it's blown out by the wind and scattered all over the atmosphere here, and when it rains it falls in the form of rain down to the crops, and that's how it's affecting them.

GA: Like you have in Europe - acid rain, which affects the forests of Europe? So you have a similar thing here?

PL: But we still have the cocoa bearing pods, but when you've got - what's it called - "black pods"; from down to the top, that's all black.

TK: When the new small pods are trying to bear in the trees.

GA: It's like a fungus is it?

MN: That's right; a fungus growing in it, and then all the tree will end up with black pod - that's what they call it.

GA: This is caused by pollution from Bougainville Copper?

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PB: *Yes!* It *must* be caused by pollution, because it never happened before!

GA: But the company must know about this Sir Paul, or the government?

PL: If I'm company (I am a storekeeper), I don't worry about this; I worry about who is coming to buy something, a customer!

GA: I understand!

TK: The point he's making is, *company* doesn't have to worry about causing that!

GA: But the company *should* have to worry don't you think? The three of us here are company people - shouldn't the company worry about that?

PL: That's why we must put pressure on the government - the government can tell the company what to do to protect the people.

GA: But you've been putting pressure on *governments*, plural, for *fears* Sir Paul, you and your people, and where has that got you? What has happened is that provincial government and national government are still a long way apart?

PL: We just started this year, now.

GA: This is the recent uprising, yes? With the current situation in Port Moresby also, it may be even *worse* difficult, mightn't it? (The suspension of Parliament on 11 April 1988).

TK: We normally send all the reports to Environment & Conservation Minister almost four times a year, and that's why the company is reluctant to answer direct to the landowners here, because that will interfere with some of the relationship that we

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have with the government. So, when the landowners ask us, we direct them to the right channel to go to the government.

GA: Right, and what has been the response of the Minister Perry Zeipi recently? Has he visited you, has he come here?

TK: Embarrassed!

PB: Yes, I talked to him, and the provincial government, about a lot of things happening here.

GA: What's his attitude?

PB: He told me, Okay! I will see it! He said, I will see it! But I will see it I don't know when, because last year when Paias Wingti came here, I gave him all the black pod - I put it in [a] plastic [bag]!

GA: Paias Wingti came here to your village and you gave him black pod?!

PB: *Yes!* I gave him!! And I did not forget the journalist! He told me, You're going to have to find a scientist! And the last time I told the Minerals Minister here, I told him, I'm *myself* a scientist!!

GA: You had the Minister John Kaputin here?

PB: I met him somewhere. But I told that Minister, I said: I'm myself a scientist! You people - governments, companies - talk about the scientists; you are wasting your time! I said, I **KNOW!** I was *born* here! And I know a lot of silt is happening here today - I can see it with my eyes, and I will compare it!

Today, these people here in this area, we're really *poor* - nothing, no toea in our hands - because only the cacao.

GA: That's all you have - cocoa - to make money from?

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PE: Yes, to make money from - this is *nothing*!

GA: You don't fish do you - you have nothing else then to make money from?

PE: *Nothing*! Only one cash crop is cocoa, and copra.

GA: How have the coconut trees been affected by the pollution here? Have they suffered?

PL: Coconuts too, yes.

TK: It's taking a bit of time with coconut trees - they're a little bit resistant to what's happening at the moment. But the lifetime of cocoa trees is much shorter than the lifetime of a coconut tree; that's why it's taking a fair bit of time to affect the coconut trees.

GA: But also your *cash* crop is cocoa, because you can turn that over much faster?

TK: That's right.

PL: We've got no other cash crop here, only cocoa.

GA: You don't farm cattle, you don't farm anything else do you?

PL: No, nothing.

MN: What it is with national government is, because they don't have proper testing places, and that's why I think it's always for those years, they used to take whatever ECL says is okay, they just nod their heads! Because the government cannot do all those tests by themselves - they probably know that it's going to cost them a fortune just to *do* the tests on all these complaints by the people. And then they just rely on BCL - okay, BCL do the

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tests - and we just say 'Yes' to what BCL says. That's my personal opinion.

GA: That's *your* opinion. But they haven't done any testing anywhere else you're saying?

PL: NO!

MN: I don't think so.

TK: That's the way I myself see it. Because normally BCL itself, it does this almost every day.

MN: BCL do all the tests and then they ask either government to come and watch, then government will just turn around and say, Yes! That's working good! And if (the way I see it), BCL do it's own tests, and the government take their own samples, and they do their own, then they can compare these tests - what results the government gets and what result BCL gets.

GA: What you're saying is that they leave it *all* to Bougainville Copper, and they don't do any comparisons at all?

PL etc: That's right.

GA: Then if anything goes wrong they blame Bougainville Copper?

MN: That's right.

TK: They should get an independent person to assess it on behalf of them, but when the people go to the government, they say, We've got no money to carry out just things like this.

GA: And the provincial government attitude is much the same?

TK: That's right, much the same.

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GA: There have been no comparisons done with copper mining areas in Africa or South America, with pollution of crops?

MN: There might have been a bit going on some years back, but I don't know lately whether they have.

GA: Nothing recently?

MN: Maybe in previous years there were some comparisons with the mining companies in Africa, but lately I haven't heard anything along that line.

GA: Sir Paul, when you eventually became Minister for Mines, at *that* point were you worried about pollution, did 'pollution' enter your mind? The fact that the Jaba river was going to take all these tailings out to sea - did you think about that *then*, did you talk about it with your people?

PL: No, I'd got *no* idea at that time.

GA: It hadn't been explained to you or your people what would happen to the effluent coming from the tailings?

PL: No.

GA: So pollution actually was not a factor in all of your minds in the seventies?

PL: Nobody knew anything! As I stated before, we had *no idea* about mining at that time.

GA: No, of course; you *couldn't* have, you had nothing to compare it with. Did you visit the mine, did you have a look over it, did you have explanations given as to what was going to happen, how long the mine was going to last, that your royalties would increase, that your compensation would continue?

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PL: This is no good when you saw only one side of the picture, okay? The 'good' of it. That's what they were doing to us!

GA: They were giving you the 'good' picture?

PL: So we knew the *good* side of the picture! The *bad* side - NO! That was hidden from us, okay? But - the negotiations - they would sit down and tell the people, this is the 'good' of the mining, and the 'bad' side of the mining is this. So how are we going to avoid this, or try to do something to avoid the pollution doing damage on our environment?

GA: And it would have meant nothing to you? "Environmental consciousness" in the 1970's meant nothing to *any* of us really, did it?

PL: *No, nothing!*

MN: I remember during the early days, I think it was Ross Anderson, he was a patrol officer; he used to come to the village, and he used to try - we used to argue. Not *me*, but Gregory Kaupa and them, and my sisters back in the village. They used to argue, and he used to say, Oh, it's going to be a big hole in the ground! That's what he said! He *never* mentioned about the tailings or where the rubbish was going to go. He just said there was going to be a big hole in the ground and you people have to move out from where you are! That's what he used to say.

GA: And that's *all* you were told?

MN: Yes, that's what we were told - I always remember that.

GA: What would you Bougainvilleans do with it if it stopped - what would be the options?

Huch laughter!!

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GA: Sorry Methodius - I interrupted you; you were going to finish?

MN: Then they used to say, we're going to dig a big hole and they never said what is going to be done with all the rubbish. At that time I was going to school in Deomori, and we used to follow the Kawerong river, and by that time I can remember the Kawerong river was polluted, because they were digging at the top of the river, and all that water started becoming milky. Then all the fish were dying at that time, and then they said, We're going to dig the place out, and your village, this Moroni Village is going to be relocated somewhere where you people will pick it up.

GA: And three times you've been relocated?

TK: And we are trying to move them again!

GA: Where to *this* time?!

TK: They're trying to find out where we will move them!

GA: It must be quite unstable, from what you were saying the other day Methodius - there must be instability now at the base of some of those mounds?

TK: I think the fault was at the beginning when the country was desperately in need of such development. That's why they could not bring out the bad side, the destruction, because we needed the development at the time.

GA: Oh yes, we all understand that. You did in fact need economic development in Papua New Guinea at that time. It's just unfortunate that it happened to be on an island, in an agricultural economy such as this one, because you've got nothing to replace it with now. If your gardens are being killed by pollution, what else do you do? I have this awful thought that in 20 years' time there's going to be nothing here - it's all going to be dead. *You* probably worry about that too?

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PL: Yes - *more* worried!

TK: It's going to be a real problem in the next generation, especially, say, if the mine closes now. All of us - the Bougainvilleans - we have to go back to our own land, and what will we get out of the land when it's all been polluted and is affected by the mine?

GA: What do you do with this polluted land in 15 years? It's all very well to be "rich now", and get your royalties and get your benefits; but in 15 years, you've got no land to go back to.

PL: Are you still recording?

GA: Of course.

PL: Well, I should tell you. Before the Second World War, we were living by taro, not cocoa as we do today. Taro, yams - that was the main food for us. So, after the war we cannot plant taro and the other food we had before, because all the soil is destroyed by the poison from the bombs - American mostly!

GA: How did *that* poison?

PL: Well, the powder they used in the bomb - that's *poison*!

GA: That stopped taro crops growing?

PL: When we tried to grow the taro after the war why couldn't it grow? The leaves got dry, so still, now, we still cannot grow taro any more.

GA: So, for 45 years your land has been polluted, one way or the other, by other people?

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PL: Well, that's *right!* So on top there, on the hill, they still can plant taro because the poisons washed down through the flat land here, so we got the worst part of it!

GA: And taro *still* won't grow down here?

PL: *No, nothing!*

GA: It hasn't cleansed itself over the years - the ground is still poisoned? Well, of course, if you've got pollution in the atmosphere ... ?

PL: So when we still have *that* problem now, pollution adds up now!

GA: It's quite extraordinary to hear you say that, because this is an island that's been producing millions of dollars in the last 15 years, millions of kina, and this is the way it is?

I mentioned to Methodius on Monday when I flew in - I said it would be different if there were roads everywhere, and lots of houses and big multi-storeyed hotels and banks - but for all the money this island has earned for the country, there's not a lot to show for it here in Bougainville, is there? There are not a lot of roads, there are no *sealed* roads except the Espie Highway - so all you've had is "poison" poured on you for years?

PL: Yes, that's right!

GA: And not a lot of compensation for it?

PL: *Nothing!*

GA: And you've got 15 years of mining ahead of you - is that what they say now?

TK: Yes, the lifetime of the mine is about 15 years.

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GA: And the possibility of recovery technology improving the recovery from the waste dumps ...

MM: That's into new technology.

GA: Another 10 years beyond that then? So say you've got another 20 years; what do you do in 20 years' time, when it's all over? What do you leave your children - *four* children who will by then be grownups?

PL etc: Yes, that's right - *nothing!*

GA: When you were finally out of government Sir Paul, when you retired, you came straight back here to the village - when was that?

PL: Of course - 1977. Third general election.

GA: You decided to retire?

PL: No, no! I was defeated at the elections!

GA: Did you maintain contact with anybody from the company: is there anybody in the company that you've talked to, that you've shared your worries with at all?

PL: No, no. I was completely *out* from the people, you know? I said, Okay, because *you* decided to replace me in the parliament, okay - you put your trust in that fellow, okay - go to him. Because I was at that time, when the people used to come to me, asking me all kinds of questions. So I have to carry their worries and questions, bring it to the House of Assembly. So when I was replaced, or defeated, I said, Okay! Very good, I escaped, do my own work. So from that time I stayed back now in the village.

GA: That's now 11 years?

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PL: It's only this year, *now*, they come to me, you know? They were talking about all these things, gardens not growing all these food plants - all this, you know? They were talking in our community government assembly; many times they brought up agenda items among these food plants, telling the assembly, or the secretary, to write to the Dept of Agriculture to go and inspect their gardens. Then I said, I don't know if these people can help us or, as far as I know, these people can *not* help us in anything, because this is affected by the pollution. So the Dept of Agriculture cannot do anything, or any official from the department cannot do anything to help us on this.

So we started to form a group; we call ourselves a 'pressure group', and then from that time the women from the mining area, they took it up too.

GA: And these women who are now part of the pressure group, are they from all over the southern part of the island?

PL: No, no, just the mining area. But anyhow, they speak for us *all*.

GA: They speak for everybody?

PL: Yes, that's right.

GA: You mentioned a few minutes ago the 'community government' - that's entirely different to provincial government?

PL: Well, the community works within the provincial government.

GA: Does each community have a group of councillors?

PL: Yes, that's right.

GA: That they send to provincial government?

PL: That's right.

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MN: Another way of councilloring.

GA: Like they have councillors?

MN: Councillors before, then they changed it.

GA: In local government councils?

MN: Now they're sending them to community government - do you get me?

GA: Right, yes I do, but what I see is 3 different governments - national, provincial and community?

PL: Yes, like in Australia, you've got - what?

GA: Federal, state and local, and borough.

PL: And county councils.

GA: *Over* government - too *much* government!

PL: Yes, too much government and nothing to do! *Here* we're over-governed anyway!

GA: Reading the papers recently in Port Moresby I get the feeling the government wants to cut out provincial government - they want to *review* it?

PL: I don't think it would ever be better anyway. They could *improve* the provincial government.

GA: You have an election here in June. I suppose you're too old to stand for Premier, Sir Paul?

PL: No, I gave it up - I'm happy! If you are in the public eye you get all kinds of criticism!

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