



Money Logging: On the Trail of the Asian Timber Mafia

Lukas Straumann

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Money Logging investigates what former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has called “probably the biggest environmental crime of our times” – the massive destruction of the Borneo rainforest by Malaysian loggers. Historian and campaigner Lukas Straumann goes in search not only of the lost forests and the people who used to call them home, but also the network of criminals who have earned billions through illegal timber sales and corruption.

Straumann singles out Abdul Taib Mahmud, current governor of the Malaysian state of Sarawak, as the kingpin of this Asian timber mafia. Taib's family – with the complicity of global financial institutions – have profited to the tune of 15 billion US dollars. Money Logging is a story of a people who have lost their ancient paradise to a wasteland of oil palm plantations, pollution, and corruption – and how they hope to take it back. Translated from German.

“In thrilling chapters historian Lukas Straumann gives the portrait of a clan of kleptocrats, who, through the granting of timber concessions and export licenses, have managed to become billionaires.” – Neue Zürcher Zeitung

“One of the most comprehensive and brutally honest investigations into the intrigues of the Malaysian and international timber Mafia.” – Süddeutsche Zeitung

“A unique way of life in the rainforests has been destroyed in a single generation. Read this book and weep. But then get angry.” – Wade Davis

Money Logging: On the Trail of the Asian Timber Mafia Details

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From Reader Review Money Logging: On the Trail of the Asian Timber Mafia for online ebook

Aditya Kamiso says

Every thing you need to know about the reason for deforestation in Borneo is here

If you have visited Borneo and was surprised at what happened to the lush virgin jungle of Borneo, this book will provide some of the answers. What has been lost can never be replaced but it is a good reminder on how greed and wanton disregard of other human beings and environment can doom us all. Let this be a lesson.

Richard Harvell says

I knew very little about the near-total destruction of the Borneo rainforest before I read this book. What I learned by reading shocked me not simply for the environmental disaster in Sarawak, but also for the way in which a very few kleptocrats profited enormously. Lukas Straumann does a great job of not only drawing our attention to this particular crime, but also to the ways in which, more generally, corruption is ruining many natural places around the globe. Highly recommended!

Akmal A. says

Mengetahui perkara sebenar di sebalik perniagaan balak antarabangsa sangat menyeramkan dan membacanya pada aku secara peribadi tidak membosankan malah menyegarkan kerana kita lebih faham bagaimana rasuah itu berfungsi dan kesannya pada negara dan masyarakat. Lukas Straumann membantu kita memahami dengan info yang beliau peroleh daripada orang yang terlibat dalam urusan niaga balak ini, seperti apa pengaliran wang haram itu berlaku dan bagaimana cara firaun moden memanipulasikan kuasa dan fikiran rakyat demi memenuhi nafsu serakahnya mengumpul harta bagai orang gila. Dengan tajuk terjemahan Bahasa Melayunya, Gila Balak buku ini secara lengkap menelusuri bagaimanakah pemusnahan hutan berlaku di Sarawak.

Mustahil pemusnahan hutan hampir 90% bahagian di Sarawak itu bersih daripada sebarang rasuah. Secara logiknya apa-apa yang memusnahkan keseimbangan sosial, ekonomi dan alam sudah barang tentu berlakunya rasuah disitu. Tetapi yang mengelirukan kita bagaimanakah rasuah itu berfungsi dan dapat dikaitkan dengan pemusnahan hutan dan penindasan etnik minoriti? Seperti yang dibincangkan Prof Farid Alatas pada prakata buku Rasuah : Sifat, Sebab dan Fungsi, rasuah terdapat di semua negara tetapi tidak semua negara dikuasai rasuah. Negara yang dikuasai rasuah digelar sebagai kleptokrasi, iaitu rasuah sebagai alat pengeluaran utama. Aktor kleptokrat pula bukan orang awam tetapi elit politik dan birokrasi yang menggunakan rasuah sebagai alat pengeluaran dengan tujuan untuk mengumpul modal.

Sepanjang membaca buku ini, penulis membongkarkan tentang bagaimana Taib Mahmud yang pernah memegang jawatan Ketua Menteri Sarawak, (kemudian melantik dirinya sebagai Yang Dipertua) melakukan rasuah dengan menghalalkan pembalakan haram secara berleluasa di hampir seluruh pelosok Sarawak. Sarawak yang dulunya dibanggakan sebagai antara simpanan hutan hujan tropika yang terbesar sekarang hanya tinggal kenangan yang tertulis di lembaran buku-buku sejarah. Bukan saja itu, pembalakan haram ini

tak hanya berlaku di dalam Sarawak, malah dieksport pula ke negara-negara lain seperti pembalakan di Amazon dan di Australia oleh syarikat Malaysia! Sungguh memalukan kita mengeksport budaya rasuah yang penuh dosa ini ke negara-negara lain demi memenuhi poket sang penguasa di Sarawak.

Supaya menjadikan buku ini lebih menarik dan memahami lebih dalam tentang rasuah, adalah di sarankan membaca terlebih dahulu buku Rasuah : Sifat, Sebab dan Fungsi oleh Syed Hussein Alatas sebelum membaca buku ini. Sebenarnya rasuah sememangnya berlaku di Malaysia sejak sekian lama cuma kemuncaknya kita sedar setelah ditampar dengan peristiwa 1MDB dan kesannya kita boleh rasa secara terus dengan pengenalan polisi-polisi dan akta yang mengarut. Dari sini kita mampu bayangkan seperti apa kehidupan kita sekarang **kalaulah** dengan segala sumber yang terdapat di Malaysia diuruskan dengan baik pada awalnya. Apa yang berlaku tetap berlaku dan cabaran kita sekarang ialah membetulkan dosa yang dilakukan ahli politik tamak ini bermula dengan lebih serius dengan membaca dan memahami seperti rasuah itu dan sama-sama bergerak membenci aktiviti ini supaya generasi akan datang tidak merasakan lagi apa yang kita alami.

Clare O'Beara says

This investigative look at the Malaysian logging firms and palm oil plantations on Borneo, shows that greed, corruption and humanitarian nightmares are not confined to the usual suspects in Africa.

A ruling family, by selling timber licences and permits to exploit, became billionaires. They were backed by global banking organisations on the basis that the island's economy should benefit. However the hardwood timbers have been sold to the timber trade, oil palm plantations are filling the land, sterile monocrops by comparison, and the native people have been shunted aside. The soil is eroding away and with no volcanoes, the island loses more earth in every monsoon season. Landslides are common with no major tree roots.

Oil palm trees are hugely productive of berries full of edible oil, but again the local people are not profiting from the sales. Rainforests in general are not places that are pleasant to live. They are hugely biodiverse, but in Borneo the lack of replacement minerals means that plants have evolved to be poisonous or thorny, creatures are venomous, and the large pitcher plants show that plants find fertiliser in interesting ways. The largest earthworm in the world lives here preyed upon by the largest leech in the world. We would not call this Eden, especially during monsoon. However the plants have evolved to survive here and many species of plant and animal are found nowhere else. When this island's rainforest is gone, it's gone.

For years I've been reading food labels and refusing to buy anything containing palm oil or palm fat. It's a small start. Books like Money Logging expose the true heart of the matter. This can be a challenging read, but we need to know.

Khairul Nizam says

Hebat cara bekas KM Sarawak meniti puncak karier politik as well as business opportunity....natijahnya alam semulajadi sarawak menjadi mangsa nafsu serakah...

Chris says

I received this book as part of Good Reads First Reads giveaway.

Well that was fascinating.

Money Logging tells the story of how the rainforests of the Malaysian state of Sarawak (on the northwestern coast of Borneo) are being wiped out by illegal logging that is conducted in defiance of the wishes of the indigenous peoples and enabled by the corruption of the local government.

The book covers the history of Sarawak that lead to it's inclusion in modern day Malaysia, how Abdul Taib Mahmud (the book focuses most on his corruption) came to power, the complex web of money, power and corruption that Taib and the Malaysian lumber magnates have spun across the globe and the impact on the native Penan people who's land and rainforests are being stolen.

Honestly, Straumann paints a bleak picture. There have been victories but the corruption in Malaysia and the reluctance of foreign governments to intervene against the exploitation mean that the only people willing to stand against the exploitation are the natives and NGO's like the Bruno Manser Fund. But, there have been victories.

Overall, a very interesting read on a topic that I didn't know anything about. I'd recommend it for anyone if only to learn about the kind of crap people pull in this world.

Norziati says

Satu pendedahan berani dan mengejutkan, ya mengejutkan kepada mereka yang baru mengetahui kisah ini, tentang bagaimana industri pembalakan di Sarawak berada dalam tangan individu tertentu dan mengayakan kelompok tertentu. Selama lebih 40 tahun pemberian konsesi diserahkan kepada individu terdekat dan dalam kelompok yang sama, kekayaan tidak berputar pada rakyat Sarawak manakala hutan semakin mengecil apabila balak ditebang. Kehidupan orang asal terancam manakala yang menentang menerima ancaman. Kekayaan yang dikumpul terhimpun di luar negara, dipusing ditukar dialih supaya nampak ia adalah hasil perniagaan yang sah.

Segala-galanya menakutkan kerana bukan sekadar Sarawak tetapi Malaysia sendiri menerima akibat.

Memetik ayat terakhir dalam buku ini, bolehlah dijadikan kesimpulan akan apa yang patut dilaksanakan seterusnya : memang benar, 'Rajah Terakhir' Sarawak telahpun mengundur diri. Sebenarnya, beliau tidak berhak untuk menduduki kediaman Yang di-Pertuan Negeri - beliau perlu meringkuk di dalam penjara.

Hazirah Mohamad says

Mind-blowing how a single Malay man is able to accumulate a huge pile of wealth by destroying the rainforest in Borneo, Sarawak to be specific. Amazing how the sincere, pure love of a Swiss man towards the environment paid a hefty price to save the Mother Nature. Highly recommended for environmental activists and just anyone who loves and want to save our forest, and I really think Sarawakians should read this book!

Eric Wurm says

What if politicians destroyed a national and international treasure by auctioning the right to do so for the highest bid? Everywhere in the world, this happens. The quest for money and power knows no end, only a means to an end. Destroying a pristine rain forest and the people who live there was in this true crime novel the devastating result.

The author takes us on a journey through the state of Sarawak and profiles the corrupt robber baron Abdul Taib Mahmud, a man so in love with wealth and power that he could do no other than to exploit every resource and person within his grasp. The author details the struggle in east Asia against corruption and the rape of the environment for the gain of a few. This struggle has largely been lost.

Perhaps you have read a "true crime" novel, where the perpetrator is so opprobrious as to seem to be more novel than true. This book reads that way. How can a democratic society allow such scrofulous people to drain a society of everything that it has? This book is a manual of how it is done.

This work represents the true nature of capitalism. Every resource must be turned into currency by those who have the means to do so. Everything that nature has given us is worth exploiting, apparently nothing worth saving. The next generation may decry what they have been left to exploit; the generation after that will eat pelleted food when available and wonder how the greed and lack of foresight produced 10 billion people that would consume their means.

Jiwa Rasa says

buku ini ditulis oleh Lukas Straumann, seorang ahli sejarah yang juga Pengarah Eksekutif Bruno Manser Fund, sebuah NGO yang diinspirasikan oleh Bruno Manser, seorang tokoh terkenal yang pernah tinggal dan hidup bersama kaum Penan di hutan Sarawak. Bruno Manser dilaporkan hilang secara misterius dan tidak dijumpai sehingga kini.

Buku ini sedap dibaca kerana gaya penulisannya yang menarik, bagai membaca buku non fiksi dalam gaya fiksi. Penulis menceritakan sejarah hutan Borneo dari kajian Alfred Russel Wallace(1823-1913), yang juga sezaman dengan Charles Darwin. Sejarah Borneo di zaman Brooke, penjajahan Inggeris sehingga penubuhan Malaysia diceritakan dengan baik. Kisah kepimpinan Tun Rahman Yaakob sehingga zaman Pehin Sri Taib Mahmud diselusuri dengan memberi fokus tentang industri pembalakan dan bisnes berkaitan juga isu pemilikan tanah adat di Sarawak.

Menarik dibaca, perspektif dari orang luar, yang berpusat di Switzerland, dan usaha yang telah dilakukan untuk memperjuangkan hak kaum peribumi terutama Penan, juga kaum lain seperti Kenyah, Kenyan dan Kelabit dalam mempertahankan tanah adat, budaya dan cara hidup dari dicero bohi syarikat pembalakan.

Buku ini juga memaparkan statistik aktiviti pembalakan di seluruh dunia dan saya baru tahu rupanya, majoriti aktiviti pembalakan di seluruh dunia, dipelopori oleh syarikat pembalakan dari Malaysia khususnya dari Sarawak. Rupanya, ada syarikat Malaysia yang bertaraf dunia.

Sebagai seorang yang pernah tinggal di Sarawak dan pernah ke kawasan pedalaman Sarawak, isu yang ditulis di dalam buku ini, memberikan perspektif yang berbeza, walaupun tidak semestinya bersetuju dengan setiap yang dituliskan.

Masa depan kaum pribumi Sarawak adalah dtentukan oleh mereka sendiri.

Philip Bailey says

Despicable would not be strong enough. I ran the gamut of negative emotions, outrage, disgust, sorrow. To use every day descriptive vernacular would invite censoring. Through the years I have often heard news of the shrinking rain forests around the world. I attributed it to the increasing world population. I also heard briefs on Palm Oil Plantations and envisioned farms as one might see in the bread baskets of the world. If half of the stories in Money Logging are true, the desecration of our planet by these criminals far exceed disasters such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill or the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. Imagine if you can Eden, where the indigenous people live entirely on the bounty of the rain forest. No need to raise crops or farms of livestock for consumption. Try to envision the spectacular species of flowers, birds, butterflies and other exotic gifts of nature. Now read Money Logging and find how graft, corruption, greed and every despicable human characteristic known to exist has been and is destroying these very natural resources. Day to day warnings of global warming, stories of droughts, floods, mudslides and other so called natural disasters can likely be traced in part to the destruction of these rain forests. Unknown and perhaps gone are the plants waiting for discovery that may produce medical cures. Gone are the trees known to remove carbon dioxide and other toxins. And can it be genocide when an indigenous population is deprived of their ability to obtain sustenance? Maybe not genocide by definition but perhaps extermination by deprivation. All this for the quest for power and wealth of a few of the world's bad characters, many of whom are of an extended family. These people make recent dictators of the Middle East seem like good Samaritans. The lot of them should be exiled to a snake infested Island so they can live out the rest of their lives with their resident relatives. This book should be mandatory reading for every literate being in the affected countries.

Kho Liang says

I have long known about the continuous destruction of rainforests in Sarawak, but little do I know the extent of it as described in the book. As a Sarawakian myself, I grieved upon reading the detailed accounts of the desecration of the rainforests, not only in Borneo but around the world as well. If you care about the rainforest, especially if you are from Sarawak, you need to read this. Lukas Straumann did a great job in presenting the details of how the illicit timber trade has brought about the destruction of rainforest in Borneo, and the plight of the indigenous population affected.

Steve says

Disclaimer: I received this book free from GoodReads.

Fascinating while heart-breaking. Sure, I knew the rain forests of the world are disappearing, but I had no idea HOW and WHY, nor did I realize how much corruption is involved and just who are the corrupt. You can read the other reviews for more details about the book; I just want to add one point that occurred to me while reading about the millions of dollars of kickbacks paid to government officials. We occasionally hear of the too-big-to-fail banks being fined millions of dollars by our government for their illegal activities, yet none of the individuals are charged with criminal acts and the banks continue to do business. Are such fines actually any different than the kickbacks described in this book?

Row Dela Rosa Yoon says

Hope for the Rainforest --

The rainforest of Sarawak is one of the ancient rainforests explored by British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913), a contemporary of Charles Darwin. It contains some of the most diverse flora and fauna on the planet. It has been a home of the nomads for many generations —until the loggers came.

Straumann describes the helplessness of the Penans as they watched from the sidelines heavy machinery cleared the rainforests. The last “noble savages” of Southeast Asia were robbed in a broad daylight – right before their eyes.

As of writing and publication of the book, Straumann has suggested the removal of Taib from power. But even so, what is done cannot be undone.

It could be said that the logging industry does not monopolize environmental destruction, but Sarawak is symptomatic of a bigger issue of our time. The coal, seam gas, rare earths, and other resources industries have been drilling and extracting to satisfy insatiable greed for profits. The Great Barrier Reef in Queensland, the Arctic in the North Pole, and the Pacific Ocean’s bed are but few other examples where multinational companies are destroying the environment. Grassroots around the world are now standing in the gap to pressure governments and banking institutions to stop the madness once and for all.

James Lovelock came up with Gaia hypothesis, which posits that the planet is a self-regulating entity with the capacity to keep itself healthy by controlling the interconnections of the chemical and physical environment. He likens the planet to a nurturing mother capable of renewal and regeneration. But with the scale, magnitude, and pace of destruction, scientists predict a bleak future. Humans have been destroying the planet’s life-support system beyond its capacity to regenerate.

Australia’s leading scientist, Tim Flannery, in his book ‘Here on Earth’ (2010), pleads a cause for planetary justice. He argues there is a new awakening of humanity that can give hope to the survival of the planet. He suggests people need compassion and to care more than ever before.

Straumann, however, grapples for a solution. Perhaps, the motto of the White Rajahs for the original inhabitants of Borneo would somehow help: “Dum spiro spero (As long as I breath, I hope) — for what dies

last is the hope for justice and a better future.”

The Malaysian government wanted this book banned. Taib already lodged a full probe into its allegations. Straumann, nonetheless, is unfazed.

Full Review here:

<http://asiancorrespondent.com/131707/...>

Kayla says

I know more now about how a multi-millionaire (billionaire) keeps his money around, and hidden. And the amount any of our banks may have in illegal money laundering, including my own bank. Does your bank have locations in Southeast Asia, or maybe the Cayman Islands. Yeah, big ol' question mark...
