



PRIME MINISTER
MALAYSIA

3rd March 1992

Mr Bruno Manser
CH-2616 Renan
Switzerland

Herr Manser,

If any Penan or policeman gets killed or wounded in the course of restoring law and order in Sarawak, you will have to take the blame. It is you and your kind who instigated the Penans to take the law into their own hands and to use poison darts, bows, arrows and parangs to fight against the Government.

As a Swiss living in the laps of luxury with the world's highest standard of living, it is the height of arrogance for you to advocate that the Penans live on maggots and monkeys in their miserable huts, subjected to all kinds of diseases. It is fine for you to spend a short holiday tasting the Penan way of life and then returning to the heated comfort of your Swiss chalet. But do you really expect the Penans to subsist on monkeys until the year 2500 or 3000 or forever? Have they no right to a better way of life? What right have you to condemn them to a primitive life forever?

Your Swiss ancestors were hunters also. But you are now one of the most "advanced" people living in beautiful Alpine villages, with plenty of leisure and very high income. But you want to deny even a slight rise in the standard of living for the Penans and other Malaysians.

The Penans may tell you that their primitive life is what they like. That is because they are not given a chance to live a better life like the other tribes in Sarawak. Those of the Penans who have left the jungle are educated



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and are earning a better living have no wish to return to their primitive ways. You are trying to deny them their chance for a better life so that you can enjoy studying primitive peoples the way you study animals. Penans are people and they should be respected as people. If you had a chance to be educated and live a better life, they too deserve that chance.

Stop being arrogant and thinking that it is the white man's burden to decide the fate of the peoples in this world. Malaysians, the Penans included, are an independent people and are quite capable of looking after themselves. Swiss imperialism is as disgusting as other European imperialism. It is about time that you stop your arrogance and your intolerable European superiority. You are no better than the Penans. If you have a right to decide for yourself, why can't you leave the Penans to decide for themselves after they have been given a chance to improve their living standards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a cursive representation of the name 'Dr. Mahathir Mohamad'.

DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD