



News and Views
on the Pacific Islands
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East Timor Votes for Independence



FEATURING

- ★ **Tragedy or Betrayal: The UN Consultation in East Timor**
- ★ **The (In)Security Agreement & Post-Vote Violence**
- ★ **Women & the Vote for Independence**
- ★ **The Road to an Independent Timor Lorosae**
- ★ **A New Nation & a New Order**
- ★ **"Special Report"**
Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific Conference

Tok
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Pasifik

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Cover Photo:

Pro-independence street rally in Baucau, East Timor
Photo by Erin McQuillan



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ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

Tok Blong Pasifik is a phrase in Pidgin, a language used in parts of the Pacific. A rough equivalent would be "News from the Pacific". **Tok Blong Pasifik** (ISSN: 1196-8206) is published by the South Pacific Peoples Foundation of Canada (SPPF). Our aim is to promote awareness of development, social justice, environment and other issues of importance to Pacific Islanders. Through the magazine, we hope to provide readers with a window on the Pacific that will foster understanding and promote support for Pacific Island peoples. SPPF gratefully acknowledges support for this publication from the Canadian International Development Agency.

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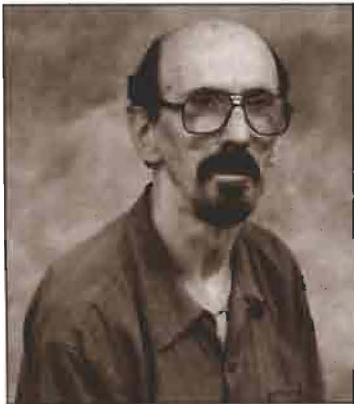
We welcome contributions to **Tok Blong Pasifik** and readers' comments. A priority is placed upon contributions from Pacific Islanders and others living in the Islands. As an issues focused magazine, **Tok Blong Pasifik** often includes material that is contentious. Views expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of SPPF or financial supporters of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit material.

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Tok Tok

East Timor's Tortured Road to Independence

SPPF thanks our supporters for contributions they made between October and December 1999.

Individuals: Al Aoyama, Sandy & Margaret Argue, Rachel Bourne, Dr. James Boutilier, Stuart Bristow, Gavin Brown, Laura Burkhart, Kathy Cook & Andrew Faulkner, Bob Crane, Phyllis Creighton, Doan Dinh, Joan & Russ Donaldson, Joy Gillett, Margie Gollick, Michael Halleran, John Harper, Sylvia Harron, Scott Kroeker, Leslie Lamb & Ken Jansen, Paul Laurin, Ian Mackenzie, Stuart Maxwell, Dolly McIntyre, Alleen McLaren, Naomi McPherson, Erin McQuillan, Brian & Sharon Misener, John Mowbray & Kerrie Strathy, Carole Munden, Barbara Riley, Fran Rose, Megumi & Allan Saunders, Robert Solenberger, Catherine Sparks-Ngege, Richard & Jean Sparks, Mike Stacey, Dawn Sutherland, Frances Tanner, Bob & Betty Tennant, Wing K. Yung.

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We salute and congratulate the courageous people of Timor Lorosae (East Timor) for having finally achieved their independence, though still in an interim stage, from the most brutal 24 years of Indonesian occupation. At what terrible human cost!

After the August 30 referendum, when the people voted overwhelmingly for independence, Indonesia to its eternal shame left the country almost totally devastated, with 80% of the infrastructure destroyed, the whole population displaced, forced evacuation of thousands and scores of people killed. Since the invasion 24 years ago, at least 200,000 people have been killed by the brutal Indonesian military.

The long and painful process to rebuild the shattered nation is going on. There is the colossal task of rebuilding destroyed homes, schools, clinics, churches, bridges, public buildings, etc. But physical rebuilding can be restored relatively quickly, especially with many pledges of help from the international community. There is the more painful rebuilding of shattered and traumatized human lives - families having lost fathers, mothers, children, many of which are still unaccounted for. This will take a very long time, for the terrible nightmare of inhumanity will last a lifetime, even beyond. There is also the enormous challenge to reconcile East Timorese with those East Timorese who were organized and supported by the Indonesian military to pillage and kill. This was not a civil war, but the result of the oppressive and brutal occupation by Indonesia.

SPPF has supported the struggle of the East Timorese people for many years and supported the participation of several Canadians in the International Federation for East Timor (IFET) observer mission that monitored the referendum process. SPPF Board member Randall Garrison was co-coordinator of the IFET mission and has provided an article analyzing events leading up to and beyond the referendum. Other mission members have written articles providing eyewitness accounts of the referendum process and the Indonesian military supported militia violence. This timely issue of *Tok Blong Pasifik* also includes

articles by East Timorese - Arlindo Marcal and Ceu Brites - on post-referendum developments in Timor Lorosae and the prospects for future Timor-Indonesia relations.

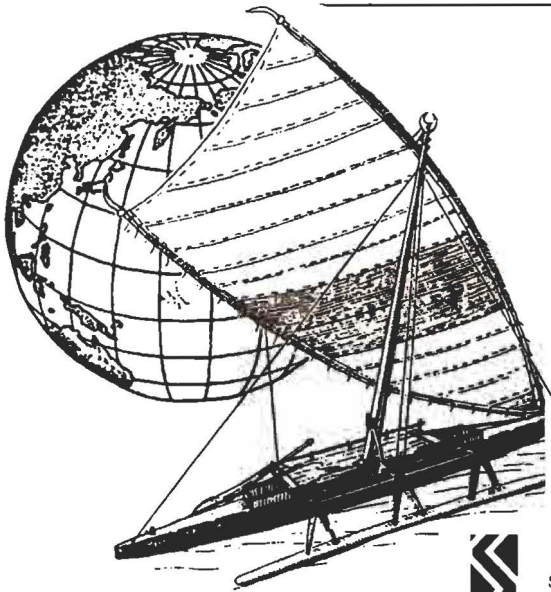
There are of course also updates from other parts of the Pacific, including my report on the triennial conference of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement which I recently had the privilege to attend (pages 27-29) - a very full and good issue indeed.

Timor Lorosae's reconciling with Indonesia will be a painstaking and long process. The military is doing its utmost to prevent an accounting of its horrendous role in the destruction of life and property in East Timor. There has to be a change of heart, but indications at this time suggest this is unlikely, even while East Timor shows good will in spite of what it has suffered at the hands of the Indonesian military. Thousands of refugees have been prevented from returning. The resignation of General Wiranto from the cabinet, on the surface an important move, is clouded in mystery with President Wahid stating that Wiranto will be pardoned if found guilty! Incredible!

Indonesia can not avoid responsibility for its terrible deeds in East Timor if it is to regain its self-respect and the respect of the international community. It is not the whole Indonesian nation that has perpetrated these crimes. It is the doing of past Indonesian governments and the Indonesian military, which has also perpetrated crimes with impunity against the people of West Papua, Aceh and other parts of the country. There are indications lately that the UN Security Council will not support a war crimes tribunal due to a veto by certain countries, this even with the recent visit to East Timor of Secretary General Kofi Annan, who was visibly moved at the destruction. We must continue to press for a war crimes tribunal, which will put pressure on the Indonesian government to bring its military to account.

There have been disturbing comments from apologists for the UN and other governments to the effect that there is no evidence of 'mass killings' having taken place.

con't on page 22



SPPF in action

New Programmes Focus on Indigenous Peoples

SPPF Becomes PPP AGM Approves New Name

After over 24 years of existence as the South Pacific Peoples Foundation, our Annual General Meeting in October approved a name change to Pacific Peoples' Partnership. The new name is intended to better reflect the nature of our work and to distinguish PPP more clearly from other organisations working in the Pacific. Our legal name will actually be Pacific Peoples' Partnership Association, but our operating name, which comes into effect on February 18, will be Pacific Peoples' Partnership.

The AGM also featured a panel presentation on developments in East Timor. The panel included keynote speaker Rev. Arlindo Marcal, moderator of the GKTT (Christian Church in East Timor, Timor Lorosae's largest Protestant denomination), speaking on the prospects for an independent East Timor and future Timor-Indonesia relations. Two SPPF supported members of the International Federation for East Timor observer mission during the UN supervised referendum, Randall Garrison and Drew Penland, spoke about the referendum and Indonesian orchestrated post-referendum destruction in East Timor. SPPF member, Leslie Butt, spoke about prospects for West Papua given recent developments in East Timor.

SPPF/PPP launched two major new initiatives in 1999 that seek to build stronger links between Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the Pacific. Both programmes build on our gradually expanding work in this area over the past several years.

The Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Science and Sustainable Development Project (IPSP), which began in April, was a logical next step in our work of recent years on issues related to traditional knowledge and indigenous intellectual property rights. The earlier work culminated in our 1998 Pacific Networking Conference - "Our Knowledge, Our Rights: The Traditional Knowledge of Pacific Peoples" - which led in turn to suggestions that we develop an ongoing programme in this area. The IPSP was the result and has received funding so far from the Canadian International Development Agency, the United Church of Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Indigenous Peoples Programme at the University of Saskatchewan.

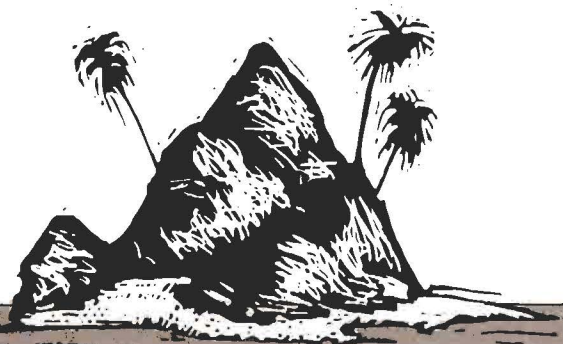
Troy Hunter, IPSP coordinator, is a member of the Ktunaxa First Nation in BC, Canada. He has already expanded SPPF/PPP's networks with Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Major IPSP initiatives in 1999 included an August trip to Fiji and Vanuatu by Troy and Snuneymuxw First Nation Elder and Healer Ellen White. In Fiji they were guests of WAINIMATE, a women traditional healers' association funded by SPPF. Their time in Vanuatu was spent as guests of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and included attending a meeting of the Pacific Islands Museum Association, an indigenous network of Pacific museums and cultural centres. September featured a month long visit by two WAINIMATE representatives to Canada, including a reciprocal visit with Ellen White. The WAINIMATE tour included three Canadian provinces - BC, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

The other new initiative is our Indigenous Internships Programme (IIP), which places indigenous persons from Canada with indigenous organizations in the Pacific. IIP coordinator, Mutang Urud, is a Kelabit indigenous person from Sarawak, Malaysia. We currently have four First Nations interns serving overseas:

- * Candice Hopkins (Carcross-Tagish) is working with WAINIMATE in Fiji.
- * Katsitsaronkwaw Jacobs (Mohawk) is working with Ecowoman, an SPPF supported women and science network based in Fiji.
- * Connie Saunders (Nuxalk) is working with the Walarano Rural Training Centre in Vanuatu.
- * Lee Wittmann (Haisla) is working with Yayasan Citra Mandiri, an Indigenous Peoples support organisation in Sumatra, Indonesia.

The IIP is funded by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade and is also supported by CUSO.

For further information about either of these programmes, contact Troy or Mutang at the SPPF/PPP office.



PACIFIC NEWS UPDATES

Regional

Pacific Greet Year 2000

Pacific Island countries rushed to welcome the new millennium (ignoring purists who insist that January 1, 2001 is the real beginning of the new millennium). Kiribati was the big winner in the battle to garner international attention in welcoming the dawn of 2000. "Millennium Island" (formerly Caroline Island) is actually 30 degrees to the East of the International Date Line, but with the whole country on the same time zone, Kiribati stole a jump on the competition to be first in welcoming the new millennium's first sunrise. Television and print media were present to record the dancing, singing and speeches on the normally uninhabited island. Tonga, Fiji and New Zealand's Chatham Islands were also among the first to greet 2000. [From: *New York Times on the Web*, Dec 31/99; *Pacific Report*, Dec 29/99]

Pacific Nations Document Climate Changes

Representatives of eight Pacific island countries presented detailed evidence of climate change problems at the Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany. They provided evidence of unusual changes in climate and sea level due to global warming and severe environmental effects which are being attributed to these changes. These include accelerated coastal erosion, increasingly severe droughts and agricultural crops poisoned by rising sea water seeping into the groundwater under atolls. [From: *Radio Australia*, Nov 3/99]

Melanesia

West Papuans Look for Political Change

With recent developments in East Timor, West Papuans are pushing for a reconsideration of their status within Indonesia. The 1969 "Act of Free Choice" (often referred to as the "Act of No Choice" by critics), under which West Papua was incorporated into Indonesia with UN approval, has long been criticised for its non-democratic character and violation of UN provisions for self-determination. West Papuans are hoping that, with the Cold War consigned to history and the change in East Timor's status, there may be room for a reconsideration of West Papua's status. West Papuans living in exile and supporters have begun a campaign to get the UN to reconsider its 1969 decision, while activists within West Papua have staged pro-independence demonstrations. Indonesia's new reformist president, Abdurrahman Wahid, has signaled some flexibility on the West Papua question - agreeing to a name change from Irian Jaya to Papua, visiting West Papua to apologize for past human rights abuses, and ordering Indonesian military forces to not use violence against unarmed activists campaigning for independence. However, Wahid has ruled out autonomy or independence for West Papua and even his modest reforms have been condemned by many government and other critics within Indonesia. [From: *Pacific News Bulletin*, Jan/2000, *Islands Business*, Dec/99, unpublished sources]

Renewed Violence in Solomon Islands

Several outbreaks of violence on Guadalcanal have broken the relative calm of recent months. The incidents have included an attack on a police post,

the burning of Forests Minister Hilda Kari's home and a shootout with government security forces at the Gold Ridge mine. Government and police authorities were not sure if the recent incidents were evidence of a concerted outbreak of renewed conflict or isolated incidents of banditry. The violence on Guadalcanal through much of 1999 has created thousands of refugees and has been a severe strain on the finances of the government and country. The attack on the mine was of particular concern to the government. It has become a critical revenue earner since the violence forced the closure of Solomon Islands Plantations Limited, the country's major palm oil producer and a major foreign exchange earner. The government also worries about the impact on future foreign investment of the continued violence.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Dec 31/99 & Jan 7/2000]

Bougainville Negotiations Continue

Representatives of the Bougainville Provisional Government have warned the PNG government about the negative consequences of continued delays in negotiating a resolution to the Bougainville situation. The warnings follow further delays in setting up an interim government to be headed by John Momis as governor and the PNG government's decision to postpone important meetings to negotiate the future status of Bougainville that were set for January. The latest developments follow a mid-December agreement by the PNG government to consider two key demands from Bougainville's leaders: that Bougainville be granted the highest possible degree of autonomy from PNG as an interim measure; and that there be an eventual referendum on independence. December also saw the acceptance of Momis as Bougainville governor following a political compromise between most Bougainville leaders, previously opposed to Momis' appointment, and the PNG government.

[From: *Pacific News Bulletin*, Jan/2000; *Radio Australia*, Dec 14/99, Dec 15/99]

PNG and World Bank Agree on Aid Package

The PNG Government and the World Bank agreed in November on a new US\$500 million aid package for Papua New Guinea. The aid, mostly in the form of loans, will come from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other international lenders/donors in

exchange for further economic reforms on the part of the PNG government. The agreement was condemned by a range of trade union and NGO leaders as a sellout of PNG's interests, benefiting the rich and foreign interests at the expense of most Papua New Guineans, and for burdening future generations with further huge debts.

[From: *PNG Post Courier*, Nov 15/99]

Pension's for Fiji's Nuclear Veterans

The Fijian soldiers who were involved in Britain's 1950s nuclear weapon tests at Christmas Island have been granted pensions by the Fiji government, following passage of a bill through Parliament in December. The announcement was welcomed by Lopeti Senituli, director of the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre. PCRC published a book earlier in 1999 on the situation of Fiji's nuclear veterans and is supporting Pita Rokoratu, one of the veterans, who has launched a case in the European Court of Human Rights seeking compensation from the UK government for illnesses he attributes to radiation exposure during the tests.

[From: PCRC press release]

Fiji's Kuini Speed Holds on to Party Leadership

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Fijian Affairs Adi Kuini Speed held on to her leadership of the Fijian Association Party in a closely fought party election in October. Adi Kuini won over Ratu Tu'uakitau by a margin of 1323 votes to 1239. The dispute began in September when a party faction led by Ratu Tu'uakitau ousted Adi Kuini at a party meeting. Adi Kuini took the issue to court, which ruled in her favour, leading to the vote at the party's annual meeting.

[From: *Fiji Sunday Post*, Oct 24/99]

Polynesia

King's Son Becomes Tongan PM

King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV appointed his youngest son, Prince Lavaka Ata 'Ulukalala, as Tonga's new prime minister, effective January 3. While a change in the prime ministership was expected, many assumed that the king would give the nod to his eldest son, Crown Prince Tupouto'a. However, the king reportedly

passed over Tupouto'a because of the prince's insistence that he be allowed to choose his own ministers. The prince has been critical of the current government for inertia and lack of accountability. The previous and long serving prime minister, Baron Vaea, is retiring from politics. Tonga's new prime minister is a staunch conservative on social and political matters and a strong opponent of the pro-democracy movement in Tonga.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Jan 7/2000]

Micronesia

Marshall Islanders Get First Commoner President

Kessai Note, former speaker of the Marshall Islands Nitijela (Parliament), was elected president on January 3. Note, a member of the United Democratic Party (UDP), is the first commoner to be elected president in Marshall Islands. The first two presidents, Amata Kabua and Imata Kabua, were both paramount chiefs. The UDP won a strong upset victory in November elections, bringing the most significant political changes since independence. The UDP campaigned against corruption in government and against gambling and the storage of nuclear or toxic wastes in the Marshall Islands, both policies associated with the previous government. Kabua and his supporters reportedly received strong financial support during the election from Taiwan, following the previous government's diplomatic recognition of Taiwan. Two prominent ministers associated with that move and other unpopular policies of the previous government, Finance Minister Tony deBrum and Foreign Minister Philip Muller, lost their seats in the election. Wilfred Kendall, a former minister for Internal Affairs and ambassador to the US, is one of only two new cabinet ministers with previous ministerial experience.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Jan 7/2000]

Taiwan Wins Another Convert

The diplomatic ping pong in the Pacific between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) continues. The latest "victory" in the ongoing battle for recognition goes to Taiwan with the announcement at the end of December that Palau has extended diplomatic recognition to Taiwan. Taiwan also

has formal diplomatic relations with Marshall Islands, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Dec 31/99]

Canada

Nanoose Agreement Renewed

The Canadian government has agreed to renew for another 10 years the agreement that allows United States use of the Canadian Forces Maritime Experimental and Test Ranges facility at Nanoose Bay on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The existence of the facility and US use of it has been a target of local opposition and protests for many years. A move by the BC government to block renewal of the agreement led to the Canadian government's recent appropriation of the land and sea area making up the facility. The US navy uses the facility to test new weapons and navigation systems.

[From: unpublished sources]

Canada Imports Plutonium Despite Opposition

Ignoring opposition from First Nations, local non-indigenous communities, and anti-nuclear/environmental activists within Canada and around the world, the Canadian government gave its go-ahead for Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. (AECL) to import and test burn weapons grade plutonium from the US and Russia. The plutonium will be evaluated as a future fuel for Canadian nuclear reactors. The government claims that Canada can contribute to making the world safer by taking plutonium from decommissioned nuclear weapons and using it as fuel. Critics argue that it is importing a US and USSR made problem into Canada and endangering communities nearby to the transport routes for the plutonium. The Canadian plutonium imports were the subject of a critical resolution passed at the Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific Conference in Tahiti in September. The initial shipment of US plutonium was sent by truck to the Canadian border, then flown by helicopter on January 14 to AECL's facility north of Ottawa to avoid protesters (despite US regulations prohibiting air transport of plutonium for safety reasons).

[From: *Calgary Herald*, Oct 7/99; *Your Earth*, Jan 21/2000; *Edmonton Sun*, Jan 19/2000]

Tragedy or Betrayal?

The United Nations Consultation in East Timor

by *Randall Garrison*

Randall Garrison was in East Timor from the end of July to early September 1999 as the Co-Coordinator of the International Federation for East Timor (IFET) Observer Project (see box below).

At 4:30 AM on August 30 the sound of gunfire broke the still of the night at the IFET Observer Project headquarters near the centre of Dili. As we struggled out of sleep and toward an assessment of the danger, smoke rose from a house down the road. A quick decision had to be made as to whether our teams should fan out across the city to finish the job they had come to do, to observe the vote on the question of independence for East Timor. Or had the situation become too dangerous? Were a few gunshots and a house afire evidence of one last attempt at intimidation before the vote or did they foreshadow a bloody and horrible day to come? If this was happening in Dili with its heavy international presence, how much worse might it be in the countryside where there was only a handful of observers to act as the eyes of the world?

The IFET contingent had begun to arrive in East Timor more than a month earlier to observe the consultation process to determine whether East Timor would remain part of Indonesia or become independent. The situation was odd in that the parties to the agreement regarding the consultation were Portugal, the former colonial power in East Timor, and Indonesia, the nation that had invaded East Timor twenty-four years earlier. No East Timorese had been part of the

talks. Instead, Portugal and Indonesia had agreed that East Timor would be offered a choice between remaining within Indonesia as an autonomous region or embarking on a transition to independence under UN supervision. Stranger still was the provision whereby Indonesia would be responsible for security during the consultation. This meant that the same Indonesian security forces who had invaded East Timor and been responsible for the deaths of over 200,000 people were now to keep the peace to ensure that a free and fair vote on East Timor's future could be held.

It was surprising that the CNRT, the pro-independence coalition in East Timor, had accepted the May 5 agreement given its obvious flaw on the security question. Yet after more than twenty years of resistance to Indonesian rule, the CNRT concluded that this might be the only opportunity to find a peaceful end to the conflict. So the CNRT supported the UN-run consultation process, even though its leader, Xanana Gusmao, would remain in prison in Jakarta during the campaign. Gusmao ordered Falintil, the armed wing of the East Timorese resistance, to withdraw to designated areas and maintain a cease-fire throughout the consultation.

Even more surprising was that Indonesia had agreed to a vote on the future status of East Timor at all. Indonesia continued to insist that it had rescued East Timor from chaos and civil war in 1975 and that the Timorese were now happy to be part of Indonesia and benefit from its generous assistance. Government

International Federation for East Timor Observer Project

IFET is an umbrella coalition of more than 30 NGOs which has been accredited at the United Nations as an observer on the question of East Timor. It was founded in 1991 by East Timor solidarity groups as a clearing house for NGO initiatives on East Timor at the UN.

Following the signing of the May 5 Agreement in New York, IFET organized the IFET Observer Project in order to provide an independent international observer group for the UN Consultation on East Timor. IFET-OP had three objectives:

- to observe the election process;
- to report on the human rights situation during the consultation; and
- to provide accompaniment to groups feeling unsafe to participate in public activities in the absence of an international presence.

IFET-OP set up a headquarters in Dili in June and had 17 field teams operating in East Timor on the day of the polling. IFET-OP was the largest UN-accredited international observer group in East Timor, with the participation of more than 150 volunteers representing 17 countries.

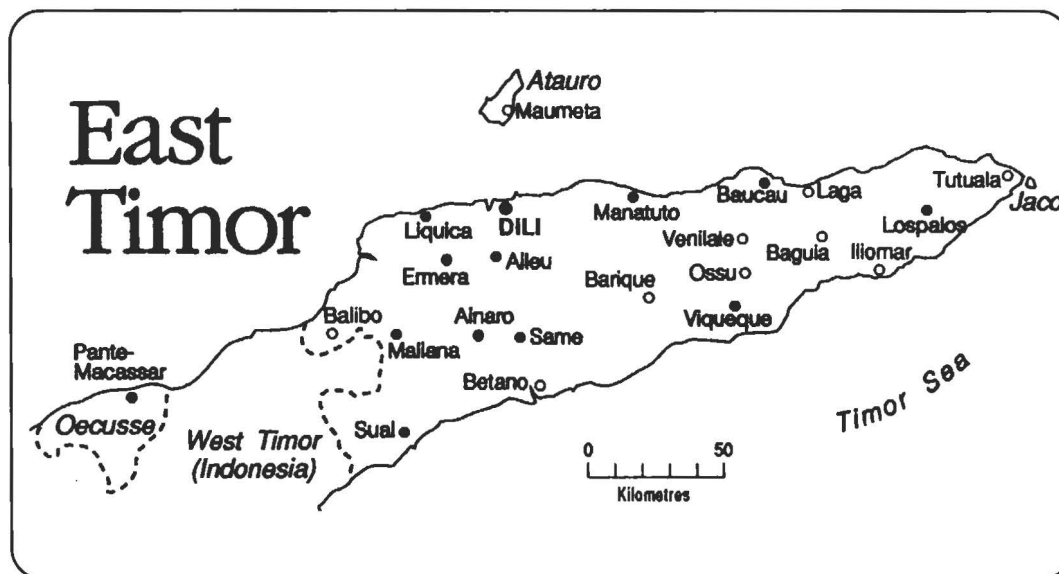
ensorship had ensured that little or no information contradicting this view ever reached the public in the rest of Indonesia. This situation persisted even after the 1991 massacre in which Indonesian

security forces killed more than one hundred people in Dili. Indonesia had little to gain internally from such a vote. Even if East Timor opted to remain within Indonesia, allowing a vote in East Timor seemed guaranteed to inflame pro-independence sentiment in other troubled provinces like Aceh and Irian Jaya/West Papua. The Indonesian army feared the vote would threaten national unity and its own prestige.

So why did Indonesia cave in to outside pressure on East Timor? The international community had remained virtually silent when Indonesia seized the former Portuguese colony. For developed nations like Canada and the United States, the resources and markets of Indonesia were clearly more important than the fate of the East Timorese people. Even in the aftermath of the Dili massacre only a few nations suspended aid to Indonesia and all of those did so only temporarily. Indonesia had never before faced a serious threat of international economic sanctions as a result of its actions in East Timor.

Yet in 1999, things had changed. Indonesia found itself desperately in need of international financial support as it continued to reel from the 1997 collapse of the rupiah. For President Habibie the vote offered a way to keep international financial support flowing and provide a boost to the reform image he so badly needed if he were to have any chance of retaining power in a future election. General Wiranto reluctantly ordered the Indonesian army to withdraw to its barracks and to turn over responsibility for security to the Indonesian police.

Under the May 5 agreement, the United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was mandated to conduct the entire consultation process, from



the registration of voters to the counting of ballots. The international community was invited to provide independent observers to monitor implementation of the agreement. IFET had to move quick-

ly as the vote was scheduled for August, little more than three months after the May 5 agreement had been signed in New York.

The IFET coalition accepted the invitation to provide observers based on a commitment to support East Timor's right to self-determination. In publicising their findings, observers would help validate both the fairness of the UN-run process and the outcome of the vote. By providing an international presence in East Timor, observers also hoped that violence during the process would be less likely. But would the Indonesian government or conditions on the ground in East Timor allow observers to do this work?

At 4:30 PM on July 30 I took my first walk around Dili with the other newly arrived Canadian observers. IFET had an office up and running in the capital, yet the IFET team still numbered less than a dozen. Neither the still tiny international presence nor the recently announced delay in the vote were encouraging. Could a vote actually be held safely and were we, as volunteers, really prepared for the task ahead? We stood on the waterfront, daunted by the challenge before us and chilled by the atmosphere in Dili, which was a curious mix of hope and fear.

A sense of hope was conveyed in the sincerity with which the East Timorese spontaneously thanked international observers for coming, from the children shouting "Hello, Mister" to those who simply shook our hands with tears in their eyes. Yet in any contact beyond initial greetings, what inevitably followed was a plea begging observers not to leave after the vote. It was clear that having observers present provided confidence in the consultation process and a measure of reassurance about security. But it was also clear that

the Timorese feared violence from those who opposed the consultation and its likely outcome.

It was clear that there was some support in East Timor for maintaining ties with Indonesia (the 'autonomy' option on the ballot). But it was also clear that leaders of the pro-autonomy forces were most often those with close personal ties to Indonesian government officials or security forces. Indirect government support for the pro-autonomy forces was apparent. There is no other possible explanation for the financial resources at their disposal, nor the open use of government facilities and vehicles for their campaign. Yet it was clear to all that pro-autonomy forces were a minority and could not win without violence and intimidation.

In March of 1999, when rumours that Indonesia might agree to a referendum began to circulate, the Indonesian army began to assist in organising militias. The military financed, armed and trained some twenty private, paramilitary groups across East Timor. These groups were made up of local East Timorese, mostly young, unemployed men. They were given little more than T-shirts, sometimes a gun, more often a machete. But more importantly, they were given the lead role in the army's desperate campaign to avoid a vote for independence.

For us as observers it was easy to see that this was not an ethnic conflict nor a civil war in any ordinary sense. It is true that fear of violence had caused many non-Timorese to flee earlier in the year. By July most of the transmigrants were already gone. Many professionals had also left, leaving classrooms unattended and a

severe shortage of doctors. Yet there were no reports of attacks on the many non-Timorese who remained in Dili. Nor did Catholic-Moslem differences play a role in the conflict. Never did I hear pro-independence feelings expressed as anti-Indonesian on a personal level. Any hostility expressed by pro-independence supporters was directed at the Indonesian government, its security forces, or their Timorese accomplices.

From the outset, fear in East Timor was as visible as hope. It was evident that the pro-autonomy forces were running an escalating campaign of violence and intimidation with the goal of derailing the consultation process. If that was not possible, then they hoped to intimidate enough pro-independence voters to turn the results in their favour. Militia members spread rumours that the Indonesian government would know how each person voted, with the obvious implication that retaliation could be expected for voting against Indonesia. By mid-August pro-autonomy forces were threatening a blood bath if the independence option won.

At 10:00 PM on August 21 the IFET coordinating group met. We had reports in hand from the twelve teams we now had in the field. Tensions in the group were high. The UN had announced that the vote would proceed on August 30. IFET had a difficult decision to make. Could we justify proceeding with a vote in the conditions we had observed? Could the outcome of a vote conducted in a climate of violence and intimidation ever be described as 'free and fair'? At the same time, the registration of voters had, in fact, been carried



Photo: Erin McQuillan

A pro-autonomy campaign rally



Photo: Erin McQuillan

A pro-independence campaign rally

Despite extensive violence and intimidation, it was clear to observers that support for independence was much higher than that for 'autonomy' under continued Indonesian rule

out successfully by UNAMET despite intimidation. As well, there were no calls from East Timorese to delay the vote, except by those who had opposed the consultation from the beginning. We also had to take into consideration that many Timorese feared that if the vote were further delayed, it might never be held.

Indonesia not only failed to provide security as it had promised in the May 5 agreement, throughout the consultation the militias operated with the open complicity of the Indonesian security forces. It is illegal to possess arms in Indonesia, let alone carry them publicly. Yet as IFET observers, we all witnessed militia members brandishing weapons in public, often in the presence of security forces. Militias were openly in control of many towns and maintained road blocks which allowed them to control traffic in and out of most towns. On more than one occasion the police privately excused their lack of action saying they could do nothing because of the militias' connection with the army.

An impression may have been created by the international media that the situation in East Timor was one of a peaceful campaign followed by a sudden explosion of violence. Nothing could be further from the truth. IFET observers had already witnessed shootings in Dili and an attack on student and refugee groups in the town of Same during broad daylight in the presence of the Indonesian police. There were nighttime attacks on pro-independence offices in Dili and virtually every other town in East Timor. Key community leaders had been assassinated, including the traditional chief of Los Palos. IFET had reported these incidents to the UN and to the international media. We had privately expressed our concerns to UNAMET senior officials about security on the day of the vote and about the uncertain period that would follow.

As the vote approached, observers began to be targeted directly. Many times IFET observers were threatened with violence at militia roadblocks. Twice our local drivers were kidnapped. Nevertheless, on the night of August 21 IFET volunteers began our discussion and decision-making with a common position. We unanimously agreed that we would stay through the vote and as long as we could afterwards. Having com-

mitted ourselves to providing an international presence, we could not simply pack up and leave. But could we continue to support holding the vote? Well after midnight we ended our discussion by agreeing to support proceeding with the vote on August 30.

In a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan dated August 24 we publicly expressed our alarm about the security situation in East Timor. We called for Indonesia to disarm the militias before the vote, noting the obvious capacity of Indonesia to control the groups it had created. We stressed the need to bring in armed peacekeepers for the day of the vote and to provide an ongoing international presence in the event of a pro-independence outcome. As much as both precautions were needed, we knew neither were likely to be taken; nevertheless, we agreed to support continuing the process. Would we regret this decision? Were we sanctioning a disaster?

At dawn on August 30th thousands began to stream to the polls. The mood was more grim than festive as voters waited in long lines to cast their ballots. Despite the campaign of intimidation, by the end of the day an unbelievable 98% of East Timorese had voted. IFET teams were able to observe the voting at two-thirds of the polling places in East Timor and reported only one major incident of violence. Despite the many flaws of the UN system, on the ground UNAMET had many dedicated international and local staff committed to making the consultation process work. They carried out their responsibilities effectively in most difficult circumstances. Despite insinuations by the militias of pro-independence bias on the part of the UN, not a single incident of UNAMET staff attempting to influence the vote was documented.

The actual count was to be delayed for a few days as all the ballots were to be mixed together and counted in Dili so that no one would know regional or local results. Immediately after the polls closed, however, the situation rapidly deteriorated outside Dili. There was an attack on the ballot boxes in Ermera and our observers in Oecussi reported much of the town was on fire. By nightfall IFET was forced to begin emergency evacuations of teams from Oecussi, Ermera, and

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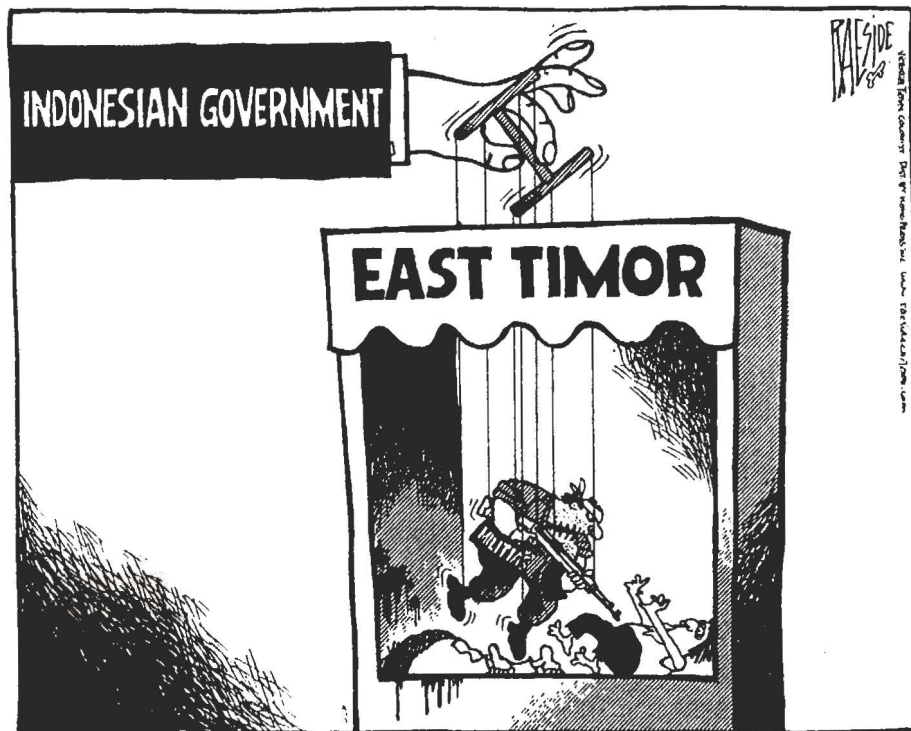
Aliu. We also began preparations for evacuating other teams and perhaps the observer project as a whole.

The delay before the announcement of the vote created an eerie period of calm in Dili. IFET tried to remain as visible as possible to show that international observers were still present, though an exodus of journalists and UN officials had begun. The day after the vote Aaron Goodman and I went round East Dili. In talking with ordinary people we found universal fear, with virtually every family planning to leave for the hills. Packing had already begun. As soon as the count was known violence was expected.

It was no surprise when it was announced that more than 78% had voted in favour of independence. And it was no surprise that the wave of violence that had begun in rural areas now engulfed Dili as well. However, this was not random violence. UN local staff were attacked and the UNAMET headquarters was besieged. Community leaders were targeted, including priests and nuns. Militia members went house to house setting fires until more than 80% of the buildings in East Timor had been destroyed. More than 100,000 East Timorese were driven across the border into West Timor at gunpoint, apparently so that it would appear that thousands were fleeing independence.

At 3:00 P.M. on September 1 Aaron and I left for Bali on a chartered plane crowded with journalists. We were among the first of our group to leave. Many IFET volunteers were reluctant to go, arguing that we, like UNAMET, had made a commitment to stay. Yet it wasn't clear whether observers could do any good at this point. It was now unsafe for observers even to leave the houses where they were staying. However, I believe that during the consultation we had been able to provide independent confirmation that the outcome of the vote did, in fact, reflect the will of the Timorese people. As well, I believe the presence of IFET along with other observer organisations helped restrain violence. But the time came when we could not be effective because it was no longer safe to do our job. The last of the IFET volunteers were evacuated from Baucau by the Australian air force on September 7.

The violence and destruction that followed the independence vote on August 30 raises many difficult



Cartoon: Adrian Raeside, Victoria Times-Colonist

questions. Could a less violent outcome reasonably have been expected for a conflict that had already resulted in the loss of over 250,000 lives? Or was the process agreed upon for the UN Consultation so flawed from the outset that this nightmarish outcome was inevitable? Were there things that those in charge failed to do that could have prevented the explosion of violence? Or were the East Timorese simply misled by the world community with the promise that their security would be guaranteed during and after the vote?

Debate on these questions will go on as the rebuilding of East Timor under UN control begins. The UN Human Rights Commission has begun an inquiry to answer what, for me, is the central question, which is not could things have been different, but who was responsible for things as they were? Before we can turn the page of history on the UN Consultation in East Timor we must find a way to hold accountable those who were responsible for hundreds, if not thousands, of deaths and the complete destruction of the social and physical infrastructure of a nation. We must begin that quest by looking at the actions of the Indonesian security forces.

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East Timor and the (In)Security Agreement

by Bob Crane

Like others, I was elated when Indonesia signed the May 5 agreement allowing the East Timorese to determine their own future, but this was tempered with trepidation about the terms of the agreement that put Indonesia in charge of security during the process. The same army and police forces responsible for intimidation and violence against the East Timorese for 24 years were now charged with ensuring their safety. This made it especially important to have a large contingent of observers there to document, and hopefully deter, breaches of the agreement. Regrettably, we were kept very busy.

I was assigned to the Aileu district, a mountainous area south of Dili. Part of our team's work was to establish contact with key authorities both inside and outside of government in order to understand the security situation and determine how much freedom people actually had to campaign and vote. It quickly became apparent that police and army operations were under tight control of the bupati, the chief Indonesian government administrator. We also learned that he was the head of AHI, the local militia.

On my first full day in the district, our team was driving to Namalecu, a remote mountain village, to investigate reports of house burnings, when we encountered a militia roadblock. Along with the militia, there were three uniformed police officers present who made no effort to protect us, even though militia members were threatening to kill us. Two UN vehicles arrived and were also detained. A man who turned out to be the kepala desa (village head, a government appointee) threatened to shoot the observers and UN personnel if we didn't turn around. More police arrived, including the officer in charge. The UN civilian police officer reported the threats to the officer and demanded he take action. The officer dithered and acted confused, saying he didn't know who we were and that he would have to radio for instructions. My interpretation of his behavior is that the roadblock had official sanction and he knew there would be trouble with his superiors should he intervene in the militia's operations. A pro-independence rally was being held in town and the militia was there to ensure no one from outside could attend. Although we were eventually allowed to proceed, our Timorese driver was fearful and we returned to Aileu.

Indonesian administrators made it clear that the kepala desas and government employees were expected to support the pro-Indonesia (autonomy) side and ensure that people within their jurisdictions attended its campaign events. One day, we were approached by a kepala dusun (a local official subordinate to a kepala desa) who told us that a militia gang had appeared at his house one night firing weapons into the air and making threats because he wasn't getting enough people to pro-autonomy rallies. We hated being confronted with such stories because we had no helpful way of responding.

Our standard line was to tell people we would report the incident to our headquarters and that they should also report it to the police. In this instance, the kepala dusun advised us that several members of the police force were, in fact, part of the militia. A police station was the last place most East Timorese would go to for protection.

There were occasions when the police actually did their job. After the Namalecu incident, we complained to the chief of police about the roadblock. Two days later, when another independence rally was held, the police provided an escort for the independence campaign convoy. It was a most incongruous sight - trucks festooned with Che-like portraits of Xanana Gusmao and full of people shouting independence

slogans, followed by a truck full of Indonesian police. Subsequent events proved just how artificial that spectacle was. The barrier at the militia post was up and the militia members who had threatened us smiled and waved as we drove past, as if we were old friends.

Several people at the pro-autonomy rallies told us they were there because they had been warned of the consequences of not attending. House burning was one of the favourite measures to keep people in line. We visited sites in the countryside where the militia had delivered on their threats. We were given a smuggled letter from the kepala desa of one village to his kepala dusuns instructing them to get the voter registration card numbers from those who had registered. Such information was useless to them, but the purpose of the exercise was to intimidate voters who, unfamiliar with the process, thought there would be some way of tracking their votes.

During the week leading up to the election, we heard

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about a militia member who was being hunted, suspected by his colleagues of having pro-independence sympathies. The day after the election, we heard gunfire from the militia post near our house and went to discover a man in a militia jacket being severely beaten by several militia members. He ran toward us and we took him back to our house for first aid. A message was relayed to the police, who eventually arrived at our door. We carried the victim, now going into shock, to the police vehicle and asked that he be taken to the clinic operated by the Maryknoll Sisters. The Sisters later told us that he had not made it to the clinic; the police had taken him to the station to be interrogated. Luckily, the Sisters were able to stay with him. I don't know if this man was the one we had heard about, but this would help to explain the treatment he received. To my knowledge, none of the perpetrators were detained nor questioned by police.

The next day, a Timorese man who worked for the UN said he had been informed that the bupati was very angry about the militia attack. The bupati apparently said that the militia was not to have started shooting until the vote result was announced at which time it would be free to kill independence supporters. I've read an Amnesty International report, however, describing an organised campaign of retribution against independence supporters that began the very same day as the militia attack. It says that in Liquidoe, the sub-district where we had encountered the militia roadblock, police entered four villages firing into the air, ahead of squads of militia members who ordered people to leave their houses which were then set on fire. People were asked how they had voted. Those claiming to have voted for autonomy would be taken forcibly to West Timor as 'refugees', while anyone admitting support for independence would stay and die.

On September 1st, we witnessed events that may be evidence of another aspect of the campaign reported by Amnesty International. Because we had given assistance to the militia victim, it was no longer safe for our host family or us to stay in the house. Three members of our

observer team had evacuated the family and our driver to Dili following the attack, but two of us stayed behind because there wasn't enough room in the van. It was lucky that we were able to get them out that day. The next morning, we managed to get a ride with some Timorese who were headed to Dili, but when we hit the militia post on the way out of town, they refused to let the Timorese through. Again, uniformed police officers were present at the roadblock and appeared to be liaising

with the militia. It now seems that a noose was being drawn around the town in preparation for the organised campaign of murder, deportation and destruction that took place after the result of the vote was announced. A report I received from Aileu talks about "a destruction of 98%", with the church being the only building left intact.



Funeral procession in Dili for man killed by militias in early August

Photo: Aaron Goodman

The incidents we observed in Aileu were not isolated events. They were part of a pattern across East Timor. From the beginning, there was an organised and concerted effort within the military to sabotage the vote. I remember remarking to another observer, when we were discussing an intimidation incident, that sometimes I thought the Indonesian establishment in East Timor didn't get it; their tactics weren't going to stop people from voting for independence. At other times I wondered if we were the ones who didn't get it, that they had no intention of letting people get away with voting for independence. I've read a chilling interview with an ex-militia leader who claims he attended meetings with the Indonesian military in Bali between October 1998 and March 1999 where plans were made for "total annihilation" beginning May 1. The date was dropped, but evidently the plans themselves weren't put on the shelf.

Bob Crane describes himself as "an ordinary guy who's never done anything like this before". He is a housing policy analyst with the British Columbia provincial government and has been a member of East Timor solidarity groups since 1992.



Post-Vote Violence - A Coordinated Campaign

by Drew Penland

The destruction and violence that levelled East Timor in September 1999 brought the sudden emergence of the issue on the world stage through the media. Television clips revealed chaos in the streets of Dili. The Indonesian authorities called it a 'civil war' between pro-independence and pro-Indonesian factions while they maintained their neutrality. However, there are serious questions about the nature of the violence and the role of the Indonesian military and police in the aftermath of the overwhelming call for independence by the East Timorese.

Violence is deeply rooted in East Timor's history. It has been a constant in East Timorese life since the Indonesian invasion of 1975. Such violence continued during the UN referendum process. The results of the atrocities became clear to me when I witnessed the burning of the pro-independence office, a home and the village market by militia members in Los Palos in August 1999. In that incident, the traditional king of the region, a prominent independence figure in the community, was hacked to death in his home. This is but one example of the widespread violence, terror and intimidation that characterised East Timor during the entire UN consultation.

This example is useful in illustrating the lack of security. Although the Indonesian police force was to provide security, it continually reneged on this responsibility in the face of worsening militia violence. I was forced to flee from the scene of the Los Palos incident



Photo: Drew Penland

Street Commemoration for pro-independence man shot by militias

11 hours after the attack. Indonesian authorities did not even secure the area for a full 14 hours, although both the army barracks and police headquarters were less than one kilometre away. It would not, however, be accurate to state that the Indonesian authorities did nothing for security in East Timor, for they worsened the situation, actively undermining peace and security. There is overwhelming evidence that the military and police were behind these atrocities.

Pro-Indonesian militias were blamed for much of the violence during and after the vote, but to what extent were they the creation of the Indonesian military? The formation of the militias by the Indonesian military through 1999 has been widely documented, and even acknowledged by military leaders. These leaders defended the establishment of the militias, stating that they were for "civil defence" and "security" of the local population. In terms of recruitment, a number of East Timorese said that the military offered money and power to "frustrated illiterates" and "known thugs" to tempt them into joining up. If these attempts were not successful, their lives and the safety of their families were threatened. New recruits were trained by the Indonesian military, often using its facilities. Our observer group witnessed both men and women being trained as anti-independence militia members. Weapons were highly valued as they gave the militia power to threaten and intimidate the community. Some militia members regularly carried arms, but arms were stockpiled at local military barracks for distribution on specific occasions. The announcement of the vote results in Dili was such an occasion when suddenly many militias were heavily armed and travelling about the city carrying out atrocities.

The decimation of East Timor has been overwhelming. It is estimated that over 70% of the structures were leveled in a span of two weeks. In some areas every building, home and hut were destroyed. The military played a prominent role in this destruction, going to great lengths to destroy anything that could be considered part of the wealth of 24 years of Indonesian 'development'. The destruction was not only telling in its magnitude, but also in its nature, and both pointed to massive involvement of the Indonesian military.

The nature and magnitude of the refugee problem is perhaps East Timor's most tragic challenge at present. It is important to make a distinction between people who moved voluntarily and those who were forced.

The vast majority of refugees from East Timor fall into the latter category. This was not random voluntary movement of people, but an organised campaign to move people en masse under threat of death. I talked to several pro-independence people who did not want to go to West Timor, but they had little option. Travelling to the mountains around Dili was unsafe and the fate of those who did make it was tenuous at best. Remaining in their homes was not an option as houses were methodically destroyed and people were threatened with death if they did not leave for West Timor. Consequently, hundreds of thousands of people gathered at police stations and army barracks to be forcibly removed at gunpoint in military and police vehicles.

The number of refugees is now considered much higher than was first anticipated with estimates up to 300,000 in West Timor, and 400,000 if one includes those stranded on other islands. The numbers fluctuate without complete information and with many refugees as yet unaccounted for. Nonetheless, the number of refugees is immense. Both the number of people and manner in which they were forcibly moved provide overwhelming evidence of military involvement. Military trucks, cargo planes and naval ships don't just happen to be available to move several hundred thousand people over a two week period.

With this in mind, one can revisit what appeared to be mayhem after the announcement of the result and assess what was really happening. Chaos was not spontaneous, but was a concerted campaign of revenge carried out by the militias, Indonesian military and police against the 'ungrateful' East Timorese who overwhelmingly rejected the Indonesian government's offer to remain within the Republic. Indonesian authorities wanted to send a message to other Indonesian independence movements that Indonesia would not allow regions to separate and prosper. They also felt that by devastating the country, 'transmigrating' much of the population, and refuting the objectiveness of the UN vote, they could deny its validity and force East Timor to return.

The people of East Timor, who supported independence, did not resist the atrocities committed against them. There was no civil war, as only one side wanted to fight. The people recognized that the armed pro-independence wing, Falintil, was in no position to fight the 20-30,000 strong Indonesian military. The East Timorese also invested, mistakenly, in the guarantees of



Photo: Drew Penland

Shirt reads: "Autonomy the blood will drip; Independence the blood will flow"

the international community and UNAMET. During UNAMET voter education, I witnessed East Timorese villagers voicing their concern about militia threats that pro-independence supporters would be killed after the vote when the UN had left.

A UN District Electoral Officer replied, "The UN will not abandon you. We will be here however you vote. Just worry about the day of the vote. After that the UN will take care of things."

Unfortunately, the international force arrived several weeks too late to prevent massive destruction in East Timor. Angry Indonesians said they would remove all the "development" in which they had invested over the past 24 years, but they actually surpassed their highest expectations. The majority of buildings from the Portuguese era have been destroyed, untold hundred of thousands are suffering in West Timor, and thousands are dead.

In the post-announcement period, coordination between Indonesian authorities and the militias was even more blatant than before, but this was only the culmination of a long-standing, concerted campaign to destroy East Timor and its people. The militias that appeared to be at the root of the violence were merely the hands of the real perpetrators, the perpetrators of an ongoing genocide since 1975 - the Indonesian authorities.

Drew Penland was one of the SPPF supported members of the International Federation for East Timor observer mission during the East Timor referendum. He is a graduate of Pacific & Asian Studies at the University of Victoria, BC. He has travelled, studied and worked in Southeast Asia, primarily Indonesia.



Women and the Vote for Independence

by Erin McQuillan

Having joined the IFET Observer Project, I departed for East Timor in July along with other Canadians. After a few days of orientation in Dili, I moved to Baucau, three hours East of Dili, with three other observers. As observers our responsibilities included attending political meetings, rallies and meeting with local leaders. Before long, however, I became aware that more often than not I was the only woman present. This did not surprise me although I had not really known what to expect. At several meetings I attended with local groups, leaders and organisations, I recall feeling frustrated as eye contact was consistently diverted from me to my male observer colleagues. I became acutely aware of gender distinctions and as I left one meeting I caught the sympathetic smiles of two young women serving tea. These women were, in fact, members of the organisation, but for whatever reason seemed to be excluded from the activities.

As the Popular Consultation, or referendum, approached we decided to join with the local observer groups. This would enable us to pool our limited resources and to cover all the polling stations in the District of Baucau. While we were working out the details, a leader of one of the local groups turned to me and said that he had recruited some women for me, so that I could have female observers. While I appreciated his attempt to address the absence of women, I was taken aback by his reason, wherein these women observers were recruited for me so that I would not be alone. I pointed out, and he was quick to agree, that the role of these observers was not to support me, but

rather the consultation process as a whole. While I frequently found myself in similar situations, I conceded it was better to internalise my frustration and accept the 'cultural differences'. Thus, as the day of the referendum approached, my perception of East Timorese society was that men had roles in public and government affairs, while women were excluded from these activities.

One morning before the campaign period began, I attended a meeting in a remote subdistrict of Baucau. As I reached the mountain village, I was pleasantly surprised to meet the only woman *camat* (subdistrict leader) in all of East Timor. Because time and other constraints took precedence, I unfortunately didn't have the opportunity to talk with her about her experiences and the challenges she faced as a community leader. I would have appreciated her insight into women's role in the referendum because I thought it unfortunate that at such an important political time, over half the population did not seem active in the process. I was wrong, however. Although their role was more subtle, women were politically active and played an important part in the referendum.

The day after the referendum, before the militias mounted their full-scale rampage, we visited some UN electoral officials. Among the responsibilities of the electoral officials was to go to the villages to conduct voter education. Since the campaign period overlapped with the voter education schedule, on various occasions the UN staff found that most men were away from the village to attend campaigns and rallies. This

left primarily women, old and young, as well as older men and children, in the village. The UN official who related the story found that women were most eager to participate and took voter education very seriously. For some of the older women, the exercise involved learning how to use a pencil. The same official also found that virtually all the women in the villages who were eligible to vote had long since registered.

Had I known the extent of women's participation before-



Photo: Erin McQuillan

Taking a rest after voting in Quelicai



Photo: Erin McQuillan

Women in Baucau preparing a feast

hand, I would not have been so surprised on the morning of the referendum. It was truly moving to see so many women of all ages walking, some for many hours, carrying their voter registration cards towards their polling station. Some women, too elderly to walk, were driven in the back of trucks and carried right up to the polling booth in their chairs. My amazement reminded me that for the past six weeks I had been primarily in male company in contrast to this particular morning. I was touched when I saw women older than my grandmother who had come through fields, mountain passes and down partly washed-out roads, determined to exercise their franchise.

The political role of women has not escaped the attention of the militias. The tragic consequence of both the Indonesian Government's and United Nations' failure to provide adequate security is the highly political nature of the violence targeted at East Timorese women. Such violence includes sexual assault, rape, torture and murder. What is the vengeful message the militias are conveying through such actions against women? It seems to be more a twisted admission of their own failure to sway the vote. Whatever is motivating the militias, there is a systematic theme suspiciously reminiscent of other political tactics employed against women by the Indonesian military. The links between the military and the militias are no longer questioned and it is

important not only to recognise the political nature of this violence, but also to treat it as such.

Nevertheless, the referendum took place and women were a part of it. The result of the vote was clear - 78.3% of voters called for an end to Indonesian occupation. While women's role was not as overt or central as men's in the campaigns and public events, they did take part in the most critical aspect of the process. On August 30th, women throughout East Timor bravely turned out to vote, most arriving at the polling stations hours before they opened. Women voted despite the constant terror of threats, intimidation and violence by armed militia groups. Granted, this was no ordinary electoral process and many women in East Timor have been waiting twenty-three long years for a

chance to vote for independence. However, from this chance emerged a truth fundamental to human rights, that each vote is of equal value and is blind to distinctions based on gender.

There is no denying the political role of women in East Timor and it will now be interesting to see if this mass political exercise will draw women further into political participation in the future.

Erin McQuillan was one of the SPPF supported members of the International Federation for East Timor observer mission during the East Timor referendum. She is a graduate of the University of Victoria, BC, and has worked in Indonesia.

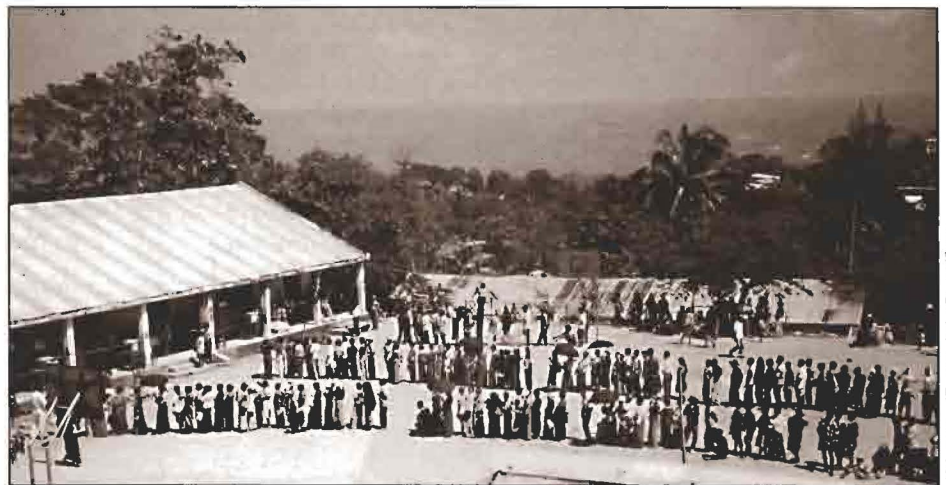


Photo: Erin McQuillan

Voting day lineups in Quelicai

East Timor Snapshots

Excerpts from the Diary of Aaron Goodman

Aaron Goodman, a Vancouver writer, was one of ten Canadians in the IFETOP mission. He kept a journal during his time in East Timor, from which the following excerpts are taken.

Saturday, August 7

Across a field from the voter registration site at a Catholic school, people fan out like fireworks from the entrance to a church. Students, chased by militias waving blood-licked machetes run toward us. "We are going to kill everybody," the militia yell, cracking machete blades on the doors. Two hundred people cram in to a classroom seeking shelter while armed Indonesian police do nothing to stop the attackers. Three nuns help a man, his arm wrapped in white cloth. He is barely able to walk. I help the man in to the classroom. His wrist is cut so deeply through the bone and muscles, I do not know if his hand will fall off as I try to stop the bleeding. Another slash opened his shoulder like the gill of a fish. His blood pours onto the floor.

Sunday, August 8

Some say that before it attacks, the militia here in the town of Same forces their members to drink dog blood infested with rabies and tuac, palm wine, mixed with drugs known as ecstasi and anjing gila, or 'crazy dog'. Our second night here, a town where only dogs go out at night, a man rapped on our door at two in the morning. We stay in bed. A neighbour tells us the next day our nocturnal visitor was a naked man, out

Kitu Marcal, an East Timorese independence supporter, and Aaron Goodman

of his mind on these drugs.

Militias have stepped up their attacks. The armed militia groups known as ABLAI, formed in April as fronts for the Indonesian military, wear green T-shirts and march through the market and centre of town, past children and old people. The Indonesian military provides weapons (sold to them by the US and Canada) to militias and orders them to kill, terrorize and intimidate pro-independence citizens in an attempt to hold on to East Timor. The Indonesian generals, I have heard, have land, money and prestige invested in East Timor. There is a saying that Indonesia planned to eat breakfast in Dili, lunch in Los Palos, and dinner in Viqueque. To let go after 24 years would be to lose face.

All houses are forced to fly the Indonesian flag. Facing threats and intimidation every night, many families sleep in the woods behind their homes. Indonesian police, responsible for security, have failed.

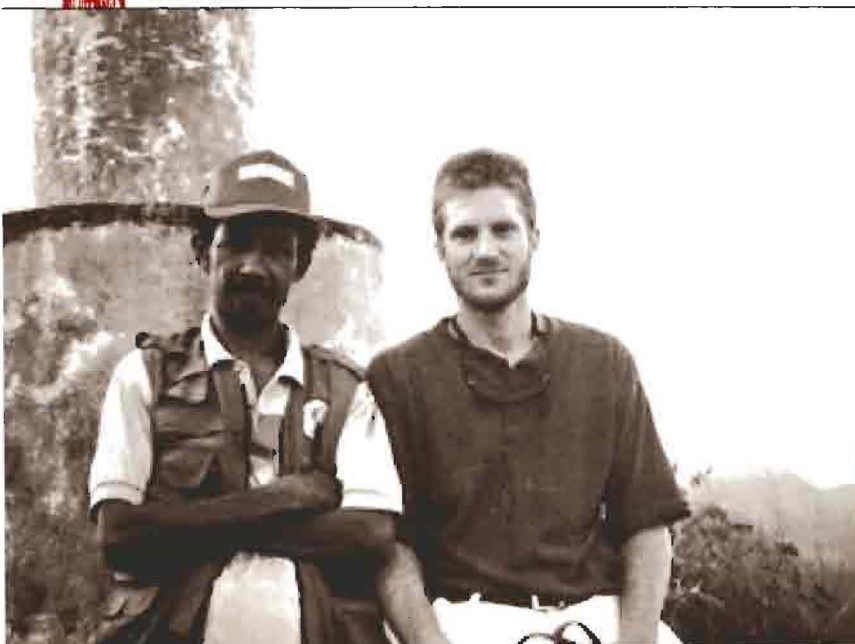
Same, a town of 10,000 people, lies south of Dili on a road that winds like super-mie, or Indonesian instant noodles, as the East Timorese like to joke, through the tallest mountains of an island territory roughly the size of Vancouver Island.

Most East Timorese people are joyous to see foreigners. An old man, speaking only Portuguese, like most born during former Portuguese colonial days, approaches me in the market. Without a common language between us, we stand facing each other for several moments. His eyes fill with tears. Some children kiss my hand, a gesture I feel I do not deserve, yet I am touched by their welcome and generosity.

A 65-year-old man tells me when UNAMET personnel first flew in by helicopter to Same for a few hours one day in May, people rushed to greet them. Relieved to see foreigners, people were crying. A few hours later, when the helicopter flew away, they were chased by militias into hiding.

Meanwhile, despite terror and violence, the process chugs along. Twenty-two days of voter registration ended last Friday. Here in Same, people lined up for up to 5 days to register. Many slept in hiding at registration sites, afraid they

Photo: Aaron Goodman



would be killed if they returned to their homes.

An Indonesian observer from Jakarta tells me the East Timorese are uneducated and do not know how to stand in line. He asks me how people in Canada view line-ups. I answer that in Canada people do not like line-ups, but we stand in them when we have to.

Tomorrow, the campaign period, considered the most dangerous time of all, kicks off. Militias plan to start-march from all sides of Same through the streets and parade in the centre of town.... With automatic weapons supplied by TNI (Indonesian military) hidden away, machetes remain the weapon of choice for militias. A body was found in a nearby riverbed, the victim's hands and feet tied together, electric wire ringing his body, machete wounds along his spine in parallel chops.

I wrestle with my own fears, evaluate my commitment. The violence tends to break out quickly and without warning. If I am killed in East Timor, my death will not lead to better security or an improvement in peoples' lives here. I carry in my notebook a message from my brother encouraging me to "keep my head up" so I can "put it down quickly if I need to". I've written a goodbye note to my family, left it for safe-keeping with a friend in Dili.

Wednesday, August 25

One week before the vote, I am asked by our team in Dili to switch teams and head to Maliana, a hot spot close to West Timor. I set out the next morning. It is an 8-hour drive through Suai where 3,000 refugees live in the skeleton of a semi-constructed church, abandoned by its architects who fled to their native Java. Last week, the bupati, or mayor, here cut off water and food supplies to the refugees.

Thursday, August 26

In Maliana. The last day of campaigning. We are in the hot seat. On TV: riots in Dili; three people are killed; a mother crouches beside her dead son - his eyes wide open, white, gleaming, staring straight at the ceiling. Foreign journalists are attacked and armed militias control the streets in Dili. German

Photo: Aaron Goodman



Nuns help a man cut by militias to a UN voter registration site

radio reports our team in Ailieu was threatened for disclosing that BRIMOB, Indonesian riot police, furnished weapons to militias. In Maubisse, a woman asks our group to stay after the vote, repeating that on August 28th, the militia will come and gun people down. No one knows what to expect this week. East Timor has become a rumour mill.

The will of the people is the only sure thing. One man tells me the vote is like hunting deer: "The people here only get one shot. If they miss, the deer could run away."

Others say a vote for independence is as important as marriage in the life of an East Timorese person.

Last night, fifty trucks carrying militias piled in from Dili. There are rumours UNAMET will be attacked today as it was 2 days ago. We witness police escort 17 trucks full of militias from Maliana to the village of Memo just 20 minutes away. Police wait outside Memo for all the trucks to arrive and then turn back, leaving militias to burn 25 houses and kill two people.

The day before last, I walked through a village where 12 houses were burned and 3 destroyed. Nineteen refugee families now live in an abandoned school with only the clothes they were wearing at the time they were attacked. At the school, children kiss my hand. I feel overwhelmed. I can barely stop from crying. I give the children a few candies I have in my pocket.

Friday, August 27

I wake up at 11:30 PM. There is movement throughout the house. Shots are fired in the town. We call for police protection. They tell us to call back if

we are attacked. The students in hiding are attacked. Many flee to unarmed CivPol houses.

A man, kidnapped and tortured three times, explains to me that the East Timorese survived for 24 years under Indonesian occupation because they have "no definition of boundaries". In East Timor, everyone is each other's brother and sister.

Saturday, August 28

In the morning we head to Don Bosco where an attack on students took place during the night. Indonesian police took 52 minutes to arrive at the scene. Once there, they marched students in single file with their hands on their heads.

One woman cooks rice over firewood for 180 refugees and 35 students trying to get to Dili. Her 5-year old son, Alphonso, who weighs about 40 lbs., climbs into my arms. Her husband fled to Dili months ago and has not been heard from.

A wave of terror is washing through Maliana. Threats of attacks are thrown like daggers. Almost all shops are closed and most people have fled to the mountains or West Timor. Our team coordinator comes from Dili to take 3 of us out of Maliana. With only one vehicle, we need to be fewer people - 5 - to be able to evacuate if necessary.

I sit beside Joanna, the woman of the house we stay with. Her head rests on the edge of the sofa, a handkerchief covers her eyes, silent. I force myself to keep my tears inside. The children are bawling. I did not know it would come to this - that I would have to leave people behind in such a state of insecurity. In the bathroom, I let my tears come, and my rage. At who? Who is responsible for this suffering? It is the Indonesian generals, former president Suharto, who will die a wealthy man, and even my own country, Canada, and others which have sold weapons, done business and given aid to Indonesia while the East Timorese have suffered through 24 years of occupation.

Joanna sneaks a hand-woven blanket into my bag. In East Timor, cloth is like gold. I have no words to thank her. Where does my responsibility end? Where does it begin? I know that human relationships have broken any mandate.

We are leaving amidst reports that UNAMET may pull out of Maliana. This would be the worst eventuality, leaving a vacuum. The people of Maliana - the refugees, my host family, everyone - would be the next victims.

Joanna tells me, "We have had enough time in the mountains. If they want to kill us they can."

Sunday, August 29

The bells at Dili's main cathedral ring. People sway into Bishop Bello's mass on the eve of the referendum, perhaps the most significant day in the history of East Timor. I

think of Jose, our friend and driver, who lost 2 friends the day before last, killed in Dili, one by BRIMOB. A woman in a yellow dress prays on her knees a pew ahead of me - alone in the church overflowing with people. Who is she praying for? Hundreds of people stand in the grounds outside the building to hear the service. People line up for communion. No one can tell me the East Timorese do not know about standing in line.

A friend tells me, "If we chose right, we are in paradise. If we chose wrong, we are in hell."

Another man tells me, "We have been living in fear for 24 years. We will be strong to vote."

Wednesday, September 1

The vote in most of East Timor two days ago went ahead peacefully. In Dili, 99 per cent of voters turned out.

Kevin, an observer from LA, says, "Coming from the US, I never knew democracy could be so beautiful."

At 6:00 AM I accompany 300 people under threat to their polling station. On the way, a young woman tells me all the women were raped. Another woman says her husband will wait at home until she returns before he goes to vote, afraid of an attack on their house.

My last night in East Timor, I pass through Santa Cruz Cemetery, the sun setting through palm trees casting amber on white, blue, and grey crosses and monuments to the dead cluttered side by side. There is hardly room to walk except on a soft path through the centre of the graveyard enclosed by grey walls. Were the bodies of the students murdered in the massacre in this cemetery in 1991 - shot by the Indonesian military - buried in the places they fell? Is there room for more bodies here?

Wednesday, September 8

September chills. A week away from East Timor, I am back in Canada. One observer still there sends an e-mail, calling the situation "our worst nightmare". Dili has effectively been depopulated. Tens of thousands of people are trucked to West Timor and put in militia-controlled refugee camps. Xanana Gusmao, East Timor's political leader reports genocide.

In Same, I am told, our team flees after direct orders from Kopasus and Nangala, Indonesian secret police, are intercepted on a friend's radio, commanding militias to "kill the foreigners in the green truck". Hundreds flee to the mountains, their houses burning behind them. Our group in Baucau evacuates with Nobel Laureate Bishop Bello under heavy gunfire in a 60-seat plane crammed with 116 people to Darwin, Australia. In Sau'i, Father Holario is murdered on his knees begging militias not to kill the refugees in his church.

Timor Lorosae, I pray for better days.



Canada's Foreign Minister on East Timor

SPPF has over the years written many letters to the Canadian government concerning East Timor, including several urging Canadian action as the situation unfolded

in 1999. This November letter is the response our president, Jack Lakavich, received from Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Minister of Foreign Affairs



Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

Ministre des Affaires étrangères

November 4, 1999

Dear Mr. Lakavich:

Thank you for your E-mail message of May 26, 1999, concerning East Timor, to which you attached a joint letter from several Canadian organizations. I regret that recent developments and the rapidly evolving situation in East Timor, as well as a heavy volume of mail, have prevented me from responding as soon as I would have liked.

This past year has been one of great achievement but also great tragedy for the people of East Timor. Canada applauded the people of East Timor's courage in the face of adversity for participating in the August 30 ballot. Unfortunately, what should have been a triumphant event was quickly overshadowed by the appalling and devastating violence carried out by pro-Indonesian militias.

Canada was one of the most active countries assisting East Timor in the period both before and during the ballot. In preparation for the ballot, I spoke with then Indonesian Foreign Minister Alatas on the margins of the meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Singapore in late July, when I stressed the need to improve security in East Timor to ensure a free and fair ballot and the safety of East Timorese and the international presence. Canada provided electoral and civilian police support to the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), including 26 Canadians to administer the polling process for several thousand East Timorese who were eligible to vote, but who lived in Indonesia, Portugal, Macau and Mozambique. Canada also provided four Canadian police officers to assist the mission. My colleague the Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), the Honourable Raymond Chan, led a Canadian delegation of observers, including Ms. Raymonde Folco, MP, to East Timor for the ballot. Mr. Chan raised with Indonesian authorities in East Timor Canada's concerns about the security situation and the modalities of the ballot. Earlier, during an October 1998 visit to Jakarta, Mr. Chan discussed the situation in East Timor with the East Timorese independence leader Xanana Gusmao.

At the UN Security Council, Canada was the first to call for contingency planning for the deployment of a peacekeeping operation in East Timor, despite opposition from

other Council members. In September, Canada conceived of and led the effort to convene a meeting of foreign ministers from 20 countries on the margins of the APEC meeting in Auckland, New Zealand. This meeting was of pivotal importance in convincing the Government of Indonesia to accept an international peacekeeping operation in East Timor. It also helped the international community procure the consensus needed to obtain Security Council approval for a multinational peacekeeping mission. Canada supported UNSC Resolution 1264 authorizing a multinational mission for East Timor and is contributing some 600 peacekeepers to this mission. The Canadian Ambassador to Indonesia, Mr. Ken Sunquist, led a delegation of donor countries in discussions with the Indonesian government concerning humanitarian assistance for the East Timorese. This initiative, along with my call to then Foreign Minister Alatas, resulted in humanitarian access to the camps in West Timor which the Indonesian government had established for East Timorese refugees.

In addition to the deployment of the multinational force and delivery of humanitarian assistance, Canada supports: the return of UNAMET staff to the territory; the transition to a UN administration; the early turn-over of the international force to a UN-commanded peacekeeping operation; and reconstruction and reconciliation efforts for and by the East Timorese people. The international community must also ensure that those who have committed atrocities in East Timor are brought to justice. Canada strongly supported a resolution passed in emergency session at the UN Commission on Human Rights regarding the establishment of an International Commission of Inquiry to investigate these atrocities. My colleague the Minister for International Cooperation, the Honourable Maria Minna, recently met with Xanana Gusmao and discussed how Canada could assist efforts towards peace and reconstruction.

Thank you again for sharing your concerns with me.

Sincerely,

Lloyd Axworthy

A New Nation and a New Order A Pebble in the Shoes of Indonesia

by Rev. Arlindo Marcal

East Timor was colonized by Portugal for 450 years. In those years, what did Portugal do? We know and have to realize that, in fact, the Portuguese government did almost nothing. It did not do what should be expected of a colonial power. It left East Timor destroyed by a civil war and poor. In this condition, East Timor was invaded by the Indonesian military in 1975. In one short week, it took over the country and declared East Timor to be 'independent' as an annexed province of Indonesia. The Portuguese government must be held responsible for failing to prepare East Timor for independence. However, after the Indonesian invasion, Portugal never gave up defending East Timor in international fora. Portugal became East Timor's hope to defend its right to self-determination. For this reason, I believe that the East Timor government will seek a strong political relationship with Portugal.

What about Indonesia? Indonesia invaded East Timor and occupied the country for 23 years. During this occupation, more than one-third of the population was killed. Our culture and our identity have been buried. Our fauna and our forest have been devastated. Although Indonesia has provided East Timor with a lot of money, this money has been used and abused by Indonesian officials. Economically, East Timor has never been supported to achieve self-sufficiency.

In May 1999 Mr. Habibie announced that Indonesia would let East Timor go, if the East Timorese were to

refuse the relative autonomy offered by the government. Mr. Ali Alatas, the Indonesian foreign affairs minister, said that Indonesia would not leave East Timor as Portugal had in 1975. He claimed that Indonesia is different than Portugal in that Indonesia is not a colonial power. At the time of Mr. Alatas' statement, my understanding of his meaning was that Indonesia would leave East Timor in peace should we reject the offer of autonomy.

However, just after the announcement by Mr. Alatas, the Indonesian military created the so-called militia. The presence of the militia has created great insecurity in people and has destabilised the country. Many people have been intimidated, terrorised, and kidnapped. In this way, the Indonesian military has sought to provide the world with the misleading idea of 'civil war' to portray the events in East Timor. At the same time, using 'civil war' as a rationale, the military could wash its hands of what it had done. During this brief period, many people were killed and disappeared.

Nonetheless, due to the strong presence of international observers, East Timorese decided to vote for independence. Why did East Timorese vote for independence despite the intimidation by the Indonesian military and the militia? The answer is that this was the only opportunity we had to determine our own future.

After the announcement of the outcome of the ballot, which was in favor of independence, the military and the militias immediately began rampaging all over the country - killing, destroying, burning and looting whatever and whomever they found. Many people have been forced to leave East Timor for Indonesia. Even the UNAMET staff have been forced to leave East Timor. The Indonesian military, helped by the militias, have destroyed everything. This is exactly what they wanted to do before they left - destroy everything that had been built during the last 23 years - houses, roads, bridges, even the intellectuals who were educated during the occupation. East Timorese leaders from various churches, NGOs and political parties were targeted so that East Timor would be left unable to govern itself.

Indonesia has left East Timor in ruins just as it was left in 1975, indeed even worse. Now at last

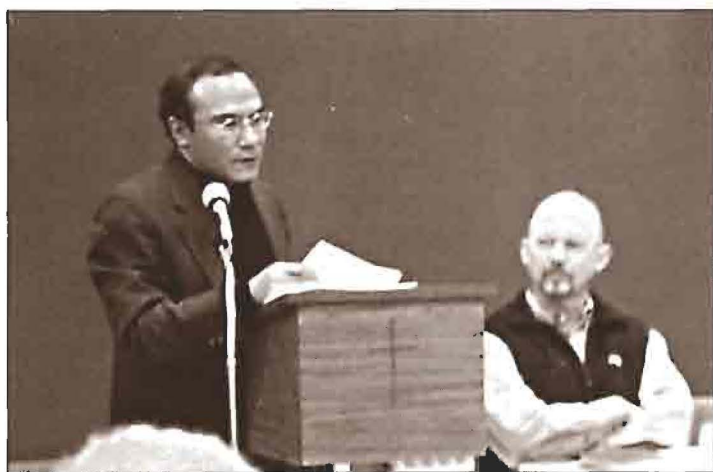


Photo: Troy Hunter

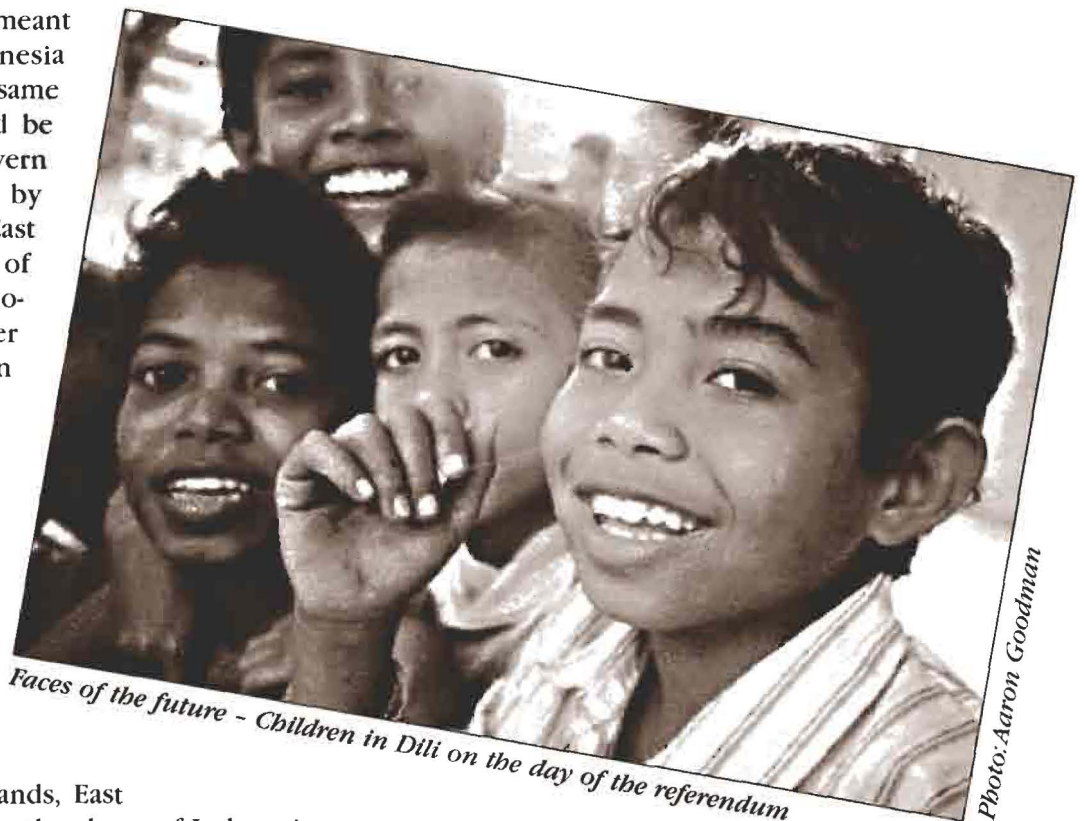
Arlindo Marcal speaks to SPPF members at 1999 Annual General Meeting

I understand what Mr. Alatas meant when he said that Indonesia would leave East Timor the same as in 1975, namely it would be destroyed and unable to govern itself. What has been done by the Indonesian military in East Timor exceeds the level of destruction caused to a colonized people by any other colonial power in the modern world.

Indonesian diplomats say that East Timor is merely a pebble in the shoes of Indonesia. This means that East Timor is only a small problem for Indonesia; nevertheless, it needs to be dealt with. Because of its location as a small point in the middle of thousands of Indonesian islands, East Timor will remain a pebble in the shoes of Indonesia. Whatever happens in the future, therefore, will depend on the political will of Indonesia.

For the time being, East Timor has been totally destroyed. Although East Timor does have some mineral resources, these will take time to exploit. The recovery of the East Timorese economy will take many years. To rebuild the country, East Timor will need international support. Who will be willing and able to help East Timor? Is there any possibility that, for example, East Timor will receive economic support from other Asian countries, particularly those of ASEAN? Although it would be good to pursue a strong economic relationship with ASEAN countries, East Timor is unlikely to get such support for two reasons. First, the economies of the ASEAN countries are themselves experiencing difficulty. Second, the ASEAN countries have thus far been indifferent in their attitude towards East Timor. No ASEAN country openly supports East Timor, citing the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of another state, Indonesia. In international fora, ASEAN countries have failed to support any resolution on East Timor.

What about Indonesia? It would be good if Indonesia, as our closest and largest neighbour, had the good will to help rebuild East Timor. This would create a new and strong political relationship between East Timor and Indonesia. However, I do not think that Indonesia will do this because Indonesia itself has not



Faces of the future - Children in Dili on the day of the referendum

Photo: Aaron Goodman

yet recovered from its own economic crisis. Politically, the decision of East Timor to separate from Indonesia has hurt the national pride and aspirations of many Indonesians. If Indonesia cannot help rebuild East Timor, Indonesia will lose even more of its political and economic influence over East Timor, despite the fact that such influence is precisely what Indonesia has always wanted. The result is that East Timor will likely become more influenced by Western countries such as Australia and European nations, a situation, I believe, that Indonesia will not like. So East Timor will continue to be a pebble in the shoes of Indonesia.

Another point that should be mentioned concerns politics. What will be the political relationship between the new nation, East Timor, and the 'new order' of Indonesia? As Xanana Gusmao has mentioned, East Timor likely will be built in the style of Western countries. This means that East Timor will be governed like Western countries; that is, democracy, human rights, religious freedom and equality will be respected. I think that Indonesia will not be happy with these developments because they will allow East Timor to be even more influenced by Western countries. Here, too, East Timor will be a pebble in the shoes of Indonesia. Can you imagine East Timor with a different political style smack in the middle of thousands of Indonesian islands? For this reason, our relationship to Indonesia

will become problematical and will be characterised by indifference to one another.


Another point is the complexity of the relationship between two countries that have been enemies for years. I know that Western countries, as colonial powers, already have experience in learning to relate to their former colonies following independence. Indonesia will have to learn this same lesson, although it has always claimed that it is not a colonial power. So, in the beginning, it may be difficult for Indonesia to deal with East Timor as a newly independent country. The success of this depends on the willingness of Indonesia's new order to learn how to deal with a new, small and poor nation.

The future political relationship between Indonesia and East Timor depends on what we mean by the term, 'New Order'. If this new order is the order established by Mr. Suharto, it will be difficult to forge a strong political relationship. Such a relationship would depend upon how Indonesia's political system is developed, particularly how it deals with the issues of democracy, human rights and religious freedom. Unfortunately, rather than democracy and respect for human rights, Indonesia still depends on a strong military to keep Indonesia united as a country. The military has impeded Indonesia from becoming a true democratic country. As long as the military controls Indonesia, it will be difficult to have a good relationship between East

Timor and Indonesia based on mutual respect. Because the Indonesian military never agreed to leave East Timor, its departure has been a humiliation. Our real enemy in East Timor for the last 23 years has been, in fact, the Indonesian military.

Finally, a word about reconciliation. What do I mean by reconciliation? Thus far, people understand reconciliation as a process between different groups of East Timorese, those who are pro-independence and those who have been pro-autonomy. For me, reconciliation in East Timor means that we recognize that there has not been a civil war in East Timor. Although the Indonesian military tried very hard to turn this conflict into a civil war, in fact we have been fighting against the Indonesian military and not other East Timorese. In this case, what would reconciliation mean? Quite simply, we need to reconcile Indonesia and the people of East Timor. We want to forget everything that has been done by the Indonesian military in East Timor over the past 23 years. We want to look to the future and to the hope of a strong relationship with Indonesia.

Rev. Arlindo Marcal is the Moderator of the GKTT (Christian Church in East Timor), the largest Protestant denomination in Timor Lorosae. This article is adapted from a speech he gave at SPPF's Annual General Meeting on October 24, 1999.



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This is irresponsible and unconscionable when so many killings were perpetrated, when people were forced at gunpoint to leave, when women were raped, when homes were burned to the ground, when practically the whole of the population had to flee. How many bodies in one place constitute a 'massacre' when in reality a whole nation was massacred?

The international community must remain vigilant in the face of these unconscionable political posturings and press for justice to be done. While the Canadian government's record over the years on East Timor has been a sorry one, we commend the government for having responded in a number of positive ways - including action at the UN level, providing personnel for the international intervention force, support for monitoring of the referendum process, and committing funds to relief and reconstruction. However, we must also let our governments know that they must not let down their guard in pressing the Indonesian government for justice for East Timor.

The East Timorese people have given us all hope for a better future for the next century. Their courage, long-suffering, and indomitable human spirit are a great example to the whole world, especially for those still struggling for freedom. Bravo Timor Lorosae!

*Jack Lakavich, President
Pacific Peoples' Partnership*

The Road to an Independent Timor Lorosae

Assessing the First Three Months

by *Ceu Brites*

This first period since the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) landed in Timor Lorosae is probably the most tense and controversial due to two reasons. One is the uncertain situation regarding security, which resulted in 'Operation Stability' led by Australian forces under the INTERFET umbrella. The second problem was the issue of mandate. No-one knew exactly what the United Nations Assistance Mission for East Timor (UNAMET) was supposed to do in Timor Lorosae, no-one knew exactly what was the role of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), no-one knew exactly what was the role of Portugal, and no-one knew exactly who was supposed to be in charge of law and order in the territory.

In a way, the situation has improved. Gradually the former UNAMET personnel have returned to their posts, although there was an initial period of uncertainty as they had to sign new contracts to continue work in East Timor. But UNAMET's role has become increasingly clear.

'Operation Stability' has also improved its game. In mid-November, INTERFET moved into the wider western region of East Timor, took over Oecusse and gradually stabilised the political and military situation there. The CIV-POL (civilian police force) received instructions as the UN passed clearer resolutions to establish the United Nations Transitional Administration for East Timor (UNTAET) and to define its role. Law and order has not been clearly solved, but concrete actions have been undertaken.

In Darwin, about twenty Timorese lawyers received intensive training to conduct work related to prosecution and judging. These 'emergency law officials' placed in East Timor will fill the gap of prosecution and unclear guidelines for arresting people, interrogating them and putting them on trial to prove their guilt or innocence. This is a positive step forward.

The arrival of Sergio de Mello, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, has added to the positive environment. Prior to his arrival, there was reluctance from the UNTAET leadership to deal with CNRT in a formal capacity. His arrival appears to have changed this. After only two days, he appeared with the President of CNRT, Xanana Gusmao, in public meetings and instigated meetings with CNRT personnel. Time will

tell more about his influence and capacity to deal with CNRT.

The agreement between the Indonesian Armed Forces, INTERFET and CNRT/FALINTIL to jointly control the border has also contributed to a better environment of trust.

The success of these moves can be measured by the declining level of international media interest in East Timor. There were about 120 media personnel at the time of the INTERFET landing, but now there are only 20.

Humanitarian crisis complicated by outside agencies

The humanitarian crisis includes a lack of food, shelter, security, electricity, water, public transport, hospital treatment and basic health conditions. Although this seems to be a standard humanitarian crisis inventory card, solving this crisis has proven to be more complex than many expected. One reason for this is that not all the NGOs and UN humanitarian agencies were familiar with political developments in East Timor, while others had never had experience in real crisis situations.

Even with this lack of understanding of the political realities on the ground, most NGOs refused to contact Timorese political organisations, such as CNRT, to liaise with them and understand what is what and why. Only two or three NGOs took that initiative and these did not face major problems in delivery of their services.

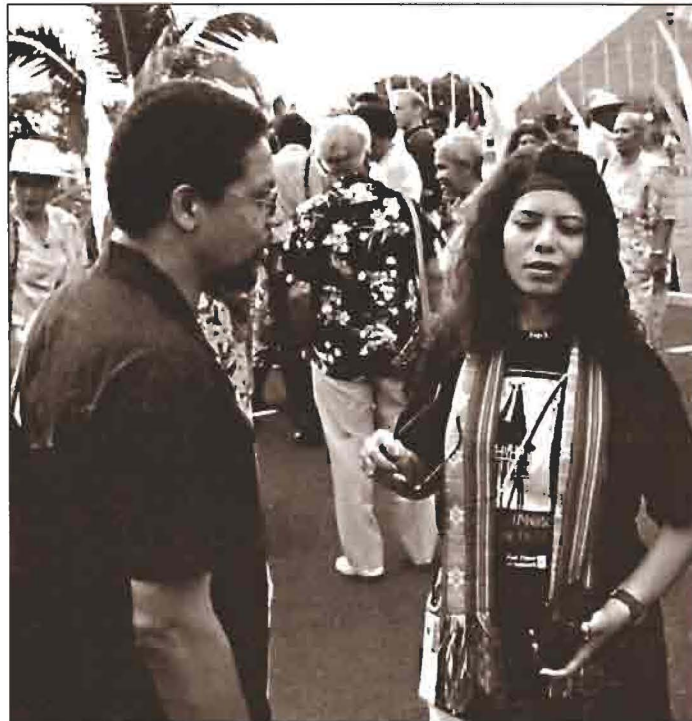


Photo: Jack Lakavich

Ceu Brites (right) at the Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific Conference in Tahiti-September 1999

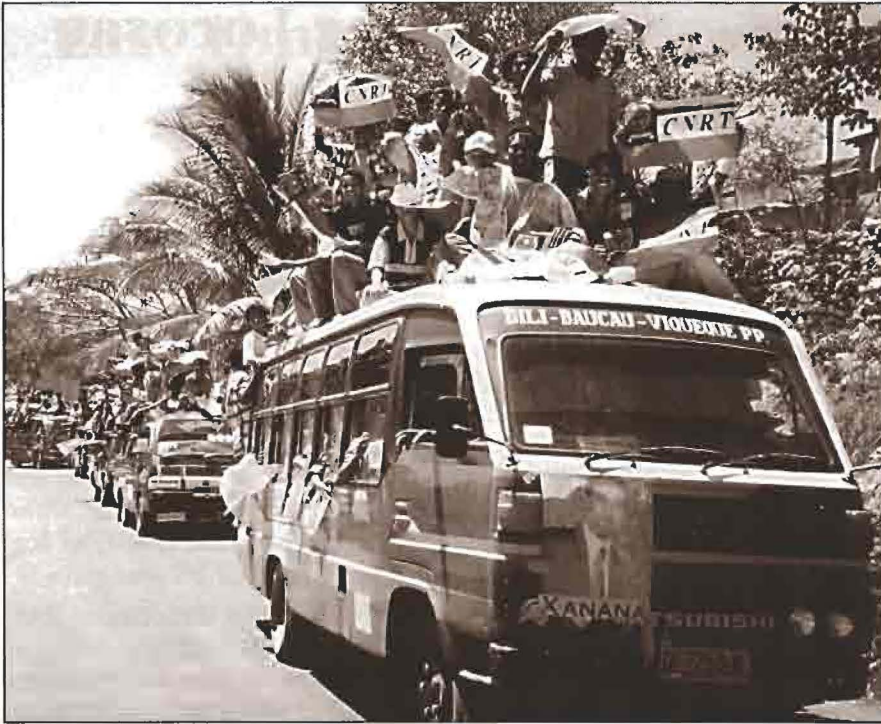


Photo: Erin McQuillan

CNRT pro-independence rally - August 1999

OCHA, the coordinating body for the UN humanitarian agencies, did not want to work with CNRT, only the Catholic Church. The first rice distribution was chaotic because the political structures on the ground, led by CNRT, did not get involved. Although it is fair to say that even CNRT in the early period was devastated due to the attacks against its cadres by the TNI and their militias, the in-principle refusal to work with CNRT did not help the situation. Now it seems Sergio de Mello might have overcome this political impasse.

Shortages of everything led to price inflation in the country. The shortage of water continues. Sanitation problems remain unsolved. The shortages of food were gradually overcome with imports of goods for general consumption. Health problems continue to be a threat to the future of East Timor. TB, malaria and dysentery coupled with malnutrition constitute a real problem.

The crisis of 'refugees'

Thousands of people are still without emergency shelter. Those in the West Timor camps, initially 300,000 in number, have been assisted by UNHCR to return home. However, only 115,000 have returned. The remaining 185,000 are either still in the camps or elsewhere in Indonesia. There have been reports of transmigration plans for these Timorese held hostage in West Timor and this needs to be investigated properly.

Of the 300,000, more than 185,000 were held in the camps of West Timor, whereas the rest either disappeared or were taken away to other islands. Many have been killed. There are reports of male Timorese forced into

boats that went away for half an hour and returned empty. Numbers are difficult to establish, but the above figures were supplied by a health worker, part of the international and Asian teams who managed to enter the camps in September and reported to the East Timor Relief Association about the number of refugees in each camp.

Xanana Gusmao stated on December 10 that 110,000 Timorese 'refugees' wanted to return to their homeland and that 60,000 others, believed to be pro-Indonesia, were less interested. The same source quoted Francois Fouinat, director of the Asia and Pacific Bureau of the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), as saying it appears that original estimates that 220,000-270,000 have crossed the border were too high and more than 115,000 Timorese have since returned home.

On top of the above information, add the number of Timorese who possibly have been killed. On December 7, a UN investigator stated in Jakarta that her team found evidence of 'systematic' murder in East Timor. Just imagine what would have happened to Timorese who crossed the border. In my view, all this information must be taken into account to access the real loss of lives and to find all those who were forced away to other Indonesian islands.

One can only register with skepticism what UNHCR said about the "improvement" of the situation in the camps of West Timor. Francois Fouinat of UNHCR after his tour to the West Timor camps said, "My impression now is that we are entering a new situation, where aid workers have struggled for two months to get proper access to refugee camps, in a way receding - not disappearing completely but certainly the situation has eased up quite a lot."

So the situation has not really changed, but somewhat 'eased up' only.

Refugees in the Atambua camp are returning. One problem is that many of those who were in Atambua were seen as pro-integration, so their return is causing problems. In Lospalos for example, there are already problems between those returning and known as pro-Indonesia and those who came down from the mountains, where they went to escape the militia and TNI killing spree in September-October.

Rainy season compounds problems

The wet season is increasingly being felt because of the heavy rain and difficult access to roads outside the capital, Dili. Emergency shelters have not arrived. Right now

the CNRT's own Emergency Commission, with help from Australian friends, is setting up 200 emergency shelters in Oecusse and more are expected to be set up in Lospalos and Manatuto, totaling 10,000 shelters. These shelters are a result of the creativity of our Melbourne supporters. They brought in a machine to make parts of these shelters and are training Timorese to make them, acquiring raw materials from Australia, and to set them up. Another plan from the Australian trade union CFMEU will provide much needed temporary shelter for those who are returning and those who come down from the mountains, but have nothing left of their previous houses and villages. These emergency shelter plans are supported with a water purification system, also from Melbourne supporters, to provide clean and safe-drinking water for the refugees.

UNHCR and OCHA are also looking into providing some support to the CNRT Emergency Commission. Equipment valued at up to Au \$250,000 may be made available soon to the Commission to undertake its tasks and work towards a longer lasting approach to the current emergency situation.

Education

No school is functioning at this time, but many schools have been running 'informal classes' in Portuguese and English. These classes warrant support from the outside world since their students are so enthusiastic that many have been carrying their own chairs and tables from home to the schools.

Development and reconstruction

The World Bank met on December 17 in Tokyo to consider the proposals of the World Bank/CNRT Timorese joint assessment teams. World Bank members expressed their commitment to grant (not lend) financial assistance to East Timor. The World Bank appears to be committed to the creation of a lean and efficient public service for East Timor. The size of the public service is approximately the same as under the Indonesians.

Small business and private investments are beginning to appear, but there is a need to recognize these initiatives to avoid an environment of uncertainty for future investments. Postal and telecommunications services are also being established with Portuguese and Australian assistance.

CNRT reality and NGO work

The work of NGOs in East Timor is not easy. Communication infrastructure doesn't exist, schools are not functioning and community meeting places do not exist. Timorese NGOs suffer the same situation as the

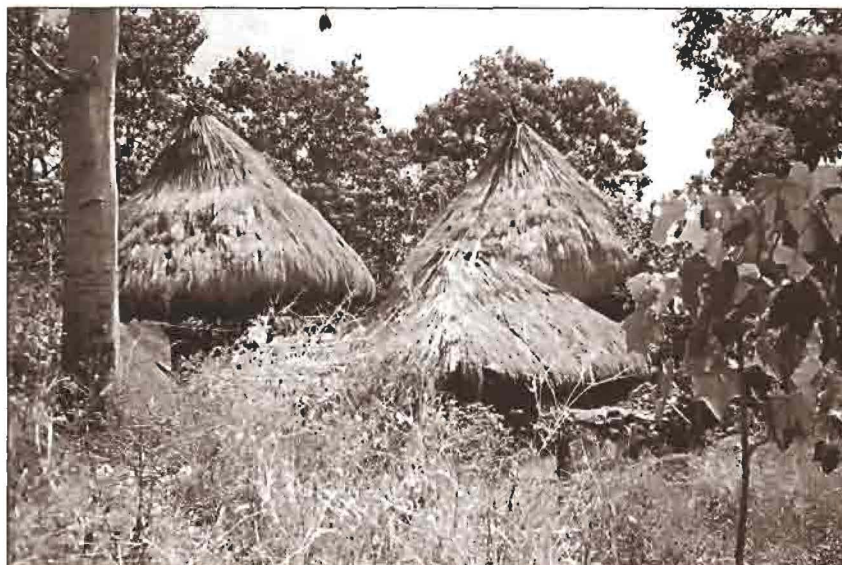
Timorese people, without much-needed basic survival conditions, let alone working conditions to become viable partners with foreign NGOs. The foreign NGOs enter with material and financial capacity which transcends any capacity of the Timorese NGOs. This in part contributed to the ill-feelings about international NGOs reported in the media.

It is true that Timorese NGOs rarely attend NGO meetings. Some say they lack transport; others say they lack financial assistance; others simply do not like to be 'followers' of international NGOs who 'suddenly' (as they see it) occupy their space. The international NGOs are not solely to blame for the uneasiness in the environment of NGOs in East Timor, but there is a need to tackle this problem in a serious manner so that long term relations between international and national NGOs can improve.

CNRT is now looking into strengthening Timorese civil society. As an umbrella organization, CNRT does not see its role as just waiting for the UNTAET to do what needs to be done, but to take serious and professional initiatives to prepare the Timorese civil society for a sustainable independence and prosperous democracy.

NGO capacity building in East Timor is now top of the priority list. Timorese NGOs, including those that may be formed soon, need support. Technical skills, trades skills, accounting, skills in reporting and meeting procedures, are all needed. You can contact the CNRT office in Dili to request information regarding plans and programmes.

Ceu Brites works for the East Timor Relief Association, which comes under the umbrella of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT). Ceu returned to Timor Lorosae in late September to help with the rebuilding of Timor Lorosae. This article is adapted from a report which was printed in the January 2000 issue of Pacific News Bulletin.



Traditional houses in Quelicai, Baucau

Photo: Erin McQuillan

East Timor NGO Forum Statement to International Donors

On December 17, international donors including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and national governments met in Tokyo to discuss reconstruction and development priorities for East Timor. Timorese non-government and community organisations are anxious that the rebuilding of East Timor focus on the needs of the Timorese people and prioritise human-centred development. On December 16, 24 East Timorese NGOs met with 20 international NGOs and issued the following statement.

The East Timorese people had one chance to vote for independence and they paid a high price for it. After 25 years of neglect and compromise, the international community has its chance to help rebuild East Timor at the donors' meeting in Tokyo on December 17. EAST TIMORESE and international NGOs consider the meeting of 17 December vital to establish the mechanisms by which the international community must support the successful transition of East Timor to independence. Independence must include the reconstruction of physical and social infrastructures, and the reconciliation of its people. The safe return of refugees is also a precondition to the independence process.

East Timorese NGOs, with the assistance of their international partners, will play an important part in this process by delivering programs at the local level, enhancing the skills of community groups and individuals, re-establishing Timorese institutions, and monitoring that macro-level policies and commitments are effectively implemented at a community level.

The NGOs are concerned that:

- A dual economy marginalising East Timorese is beginning to emerge;
- Current development proposals appear predominantly urban biased, when rural development and agriculture should be stressed;
- A large disparity exists between estimated administrative expense budgets and development budgets.

The NGOs consider it imperative that:

1. East Timorese Participation

East Timorese from all sectors of society and from both sexes must determine the development of East Timor, not external donors and policy makers. Participation means that decision-making and resources are decentralised to urban and rural areas outside Dili, also to reflect regional differences in needs, resources and perspectives.

** Mechanisms must be created for local participation in all decisions concerning the composition and nature of assistance, and development planning and implementation. Priority should be given to creating effective means for the dissemination of information to communities, using educational institutions, community groups and public media.*

2. From Emergency to Reconstruction

The reconstruction needs of East Timor are large. So are the urgent ones associated with the current emergency. On the basis of more than 30 assessments, the UN has made an appeal for \$199 million to cover the cost of emergency and transi-

tional programs for the nine months from 15 October until the end of June 2000. As of 12 November, little more than one third of the appeal has been funded. Less than 20% of the needed funds for transport of returnees, medical screenings, registration to help families be reunited, and the provision of emergency assistance including food and water, non food emergency items, and shelter materials have been pledged. But support for humanitarian assistance does not mean exemption from support to long-term development.

** The international community must provide the funds to avert a serious humanitarian crisis and for reconstruction work, to avoid protracted dependency, especially in terms of food security.*

3. A Debt Free East Timor

East Timor must not start its independent future as a nation in debt. Over the last 25 years the international community has consistently failed the East Timorese people. In Tokyo it has the opportunity to discharge its obligations and give support to this critical phase of reconstruction, and beyond.

** Development assistance at this stage must be in the form of grants, not loans.*

4. Building the Future

The rebuilding of East Timor will be an immense task. The international donor community must now guarantee that the priorities identified by the World Bank Joint Assessment Mission are translated into practice.

** The quantity of aid must be sufficient. Development assistance must be appropriate and coordinated, and built on a coherent model and a strategic vision.*

4.1. Human Rights and Reconciliation

Donors must contribute to the establishment of institutions and programs necessary for the realisation of civil, political, cultural, social and economic rights, to which CNRT has made a formal commitment. Labour and land rights, and the local control of assets should be at the heart of economic recovery. The rights to a safe and voluntary repatriation of the East Timorese still displaced in West Timor and other parts of Indonesia must remain a priority. Tangible support to human rights is an integral part of the process of justice, reconciliation and peace building. Education is one of the main routes to reconciliation, and to the full understanding of human rights by the East Timorese people.

** Donors should prioritise human rights and justice, peace-building and reconciliation initiatives at government, civil society and especially at the community level. Without this, long-lasting peace and sustainable development are not possible.*

4.2 Encouraging Civil Society

Civil society has an important actual and potential role in East Timor. Such potential cannot be realised without the necessary resources. In the short term a strong civil society will help ensure that UNTAET, CNRT and other public institutions

cont'd on page 30

Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific (NFIP) Movement Meets in Tahiti

by Jack Lakavich

The NFIP Movement brings together Pacific Peoples, predominantly Indigenous, some still struggling against colonial powers, from throughout the region to network and act in concert on common issues. It is a truly remarkable coalition bringing together Aboriginal Australians, Maoris and other Polynesians scattered throughout the Eastern Pacific, Melanesians in Vanuatu, Kanaky, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, West Papua, Bougainville and East Timor, Micronesians, Ainu in Japan, First Nations in Canada, Native Americans and the Inuit people. Participants come from environmental, human rights and women's groups, liberation movements, Indigenous Peoples' organisations, students, the churches, trade unions, etc., all working together for justice and human rights in a nuclear-free and independent Pacific.

The NFIP had its beginnings in the protest movement against nuclear testing in 'French Polynesia'. France, in typical colonial fashion, completely ignored the pleas and cries of the people of Te Ao Maohi, which it seized in 1842. The nuclear tests began in 1966 on the atolls of Moruroa and Fangataufa, ending 30 years later in 1996 after an enormous international outcry. The terrible damage to the environment from the 41 atmospheric and 152 underwater blasts is the French legacy to the Maohi people which will last for thousands of years. The Maohi people are sitting on a "time bomb encased in nuclear coffins" and believe that France must be called to account for their actions.

Hiro Tefaarere, from the Tavini Huiiraatira Party, states, "We must pursue the French in all the relevant international courts for their crimes against humanity.... Democracy is not only a word, it rhymes with human rights!"

The movement against the tests spread rapidly not only in the Pacific, but also worldwide. The Nuclear Free Pacific Movement, as it was initially

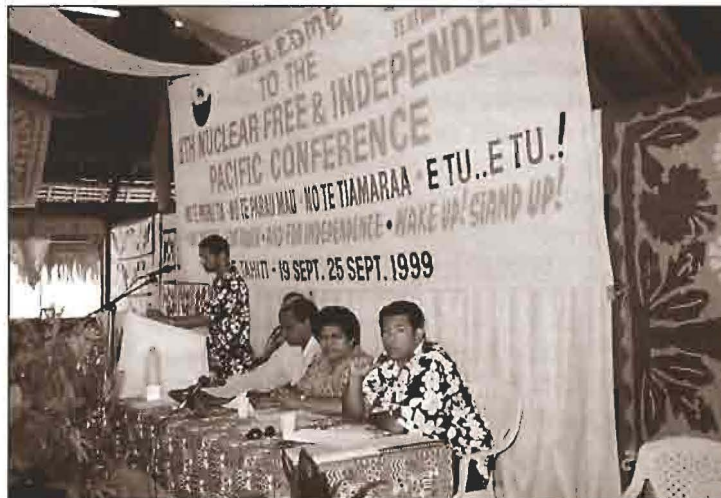
Pacific cannot be really free as long as there are peoples who are not free."

To reflect this reality, the movement's name was changed in 1983 to the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) Movement, which accurately reflected all the other crucial issues already being addressed - decolonisation, demilitarisation, land issues, globalisation, the environment, etc. Decolonisation became a major focus and remains the major focus today.

The NFIP movement generally meets every 3 years in different countries of the Pacific to share concerns, evaluate campaigns and action on resolutions from the previous conference, and plan action for the following three years. The 8th NFIP Conference was held in Arue, at the Conference Centre of L'Eglise Evangélique de Polynésie Française, on the island of Tahiti. There

were 120 participants from 33 countries, including sister organisations from around the world. This was truly a significant historical event in support of the Maohi people's struggle for self-determination, and coincided with another momentous event, the move towards independence in East Timor.

The conference was hosted by Tavini Huiiraatira, largest of the 5 Maohi independence parties, which won 30% of the vote in the last territorial election, giving it 11 of 41 seats in the Territorial Assembly. The theme was geared to Maohi independence - "For Justice, for Truth, and for Independence! Wake up! Stand up!" The first day was devoted to the Maohi independence movement. An



NFIP staff report to conference

Photo: Jack Lakavich

called, was formalized at a conference in Suva, Fiji, in 1975. Subsequent NFP/NFIP conferences took place in 1978, 1980, 1983, 1987, 1990 and 1996. The latest conference took place September 19-25 in Te Ao Maohi, the first time that it has been possible to hold the conference in a French controlled territory.

In spite of the protests in Te Ao Maohi, the Pacific region and worldwide, France unrelentingly continued with its nuclear weapons tests. With such arrogant colonial behaviour being displayed by France, it became clear that the Pacific could not be nuclear free when there were territories still under colonial rule. Father Walter Lini, President of newly independent Vanuatu declared, "We in the



Photo: Jack Lakavich

Opening ceremony at NFIP conference

impressive array of Maohi people shared their stories and cries for justice, dignity and human rights - pro-independence political parties, the Human Rights League, L'Eglise Evangélique de Polynésie Française, Hiti Tau (see box on page 29), medical people, trade unions, mayors and others.

"Please help us in our struggle for independence and human rights... Colonial 'justice' has no place on this earth!", was the resounding cry echoing again and again.

The NFIP conference serves as a venue for story telling and discussion amongst NFIP members concerning their struggles for justice, peace and liberation. Knowledgeable resource persons are also invited to present papers. Coming together in these conferences serves another unique role, perhaps the most important. It strengthens links between members, building confidence and strength to carry on the struggle for justice. It is a time of awakening and standing up. Participants know that they are not alone; they have the solidarity of others not only from the Pacific region, but from around the world.

This was poignantly reflected in a comment by Nui Ben Teriitehau, the NFIP Board member from Te Ao Maohi: "My experience in meetings of NFIP helped and strengthened me to work for the independence in my country."

This was echoed throughout the conference in many different ways, including moving words of gratitude and appreciation from many participants for Lopeti Senituli's inspiring leadership, a clear witness to the importance of the NFIP. Lopeti, executive director since the early 80s, has contributed immeasurably to the movement's growth, importance, and influence. He is retiring at the end of this year and is being replaced by an equally capable person, Motarilavao Hilda Lini, a human rights and independence activist and former Minister of Health and Justice in Vanuatu. The NFIP Movement is also supported by its secretariat, the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, based in Fiji, which has a dedicated and able staff.

The theme served as a springboard for the following sub-themes:

1. **The Struggle for Self-Determination and Independence in the Pacific into the New Millennium** - keynoted by Dr Carlyle Corbin, Minister for State for External Affairs, US Virgin Islands, and by Dr. Hjalmar Dahl, Special Assistant, Inuit Circumpolar Conference, Greenland;
2. **The New Arms Race in the Pacific** - keynoted by Corazon Fabros, Secretary-General, Nuclear Free Philippines Coalition;

3. **Human Rights and Good Governance in the Pacific** - keynoted by Motarilavao Hilda Lini, former Minister of Justice, Vanuatu;
4. **Globalisation and its Impact on Pacific Economies** - keynoted by Fata Koroseta To'o, Activist, Samoa; and
5. **Conserving our Environment for our Children** - keynoted by Clark Peteru, Lawyer and Activist, Samoa.

Other resource persons, adding to the incredible wealth of information, further expanded each of the sub-themes. For example, under Human Rights and Good Governance, presentations were made on the health of indigenous communities, radiation and nuclear testing, women's health and the environment, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the Pacific. All these areas were considered as human rights issues. It is refreshing to note that NFIP views human rights from the perspective that any injustice suffered by persons is a denial of human rights. Human rights are seen, not just as individual rights, but also as collective rights of all peoples in the Pacific. French nuclear testing and colonial subjugation in Te Ao Maohi is understood as a denial of the human rights of the Maohi people.

Towards the closing days of the conference, plans and actions were formulated, resulting in 50 resolutions encompassing the issues raised in the presentations and discussions. Many resolutions had to do with protection of the environment.

Reflecting NFIP's continuing focus on decolonisation, a resolution was passed to extend the UN Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism until all non-self-governing territories have exercised their right to self-determination. There is a concerted effort by some UN members with vested interests - the US, Chile, France, Russia and Indonesia among others - to abolish the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation. One of the maneuvers was to deny any funding to the Committee! There was also a call in

the same resolution for the following territories to be added to the UN Decolonisation Committee list: Te Ao Maohi, West Papua, Ka Pa Pae' Aina (Hawai'i), Bougainville and Rapa Nui (Easter Island). To strengthen this move, another resolution was passed to convene country and regional seminars of these non self-governing territories to help them in their struggles for self-determination.

Another resolution pressed for the establishment of a permanent forum for Indigenous Peoples within the UN system. The conference congratulated the people of East Timor for their courage in the historic vote for their independence and reiterated its support for an international war crimes tribunal to bring the Indonesian military to account for its killing and laying waste of East Timor. One resolution expressed opposition to the

Canadian government allowing MOX nuclear fuel through First Nations territories in Ontario without prior consultation; another resolution condemned Japan for moving MOX fuel through Pacific waters. Opposition to the Johnson Atoll Chemical Agents Disposal System (JACADS) in the Pacific was reiterated in a further resolution. To add clout to the concern about the rise of militarism in the Pacific, the conference moved that the NFIP conduct a study into the current state of military affairs in Pacific countries.

The 120 participants returned to their various countries armed with great amounts of new and updated material, strengthened and inspired to work in solidarity, with a strong hope that one day there will indeed be justice and peace in a nuclear free and independent Pacific.

As stated by Corazon Fabros, an NFIP Board member from the Philippines: "History has time and again shown that it is not the size or might alone of the aggressor that determines the outcome of the fight, but the determination of a struggling people that ultimately spells the difference we have witnessed in the struggles for independence of the peoples of Vanuatu, and now the peoples of East Timor.... These are inspirations we carry in our hearts and we look forward to independence for our brothers and sisters here in Te Ao Maohi, West Papua, Bougainville, and other colonised Pacific Island nations."

Jack Lakavich is the president of the SPPF/PPP Board of Directors. He attended the NFIP Conference as SPPF's representative.



Maohi NGO Promotes "Decolonisation of the Mind"

by Jack Lakavich

Following the NFIP conference, several of the North American participants extended their stay in Te Ao Maohi to visit with members of Hiti Tau, a network of local non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Hiti Tau had its beginnings in the anti-nuclear protests in Te Ao Maohi, as well as protests against land expropriation to benefit foreigners. Since its formation in 1993, it has grown rapidly as a national network of local organisations. It is the most important NGO working and organising on a national scale to restore the dignity and rights of the Maohi people in this crucial stage of their struggle for self-determination from French colonialism.

Hiti Tau is dedicated to the independence of its people from France. To achieve this it works on "decolonisation of the mind" by going back to Maohi roots and culture. This is done in a very practical and concrete way through sustain-

able development projects at a community level. Many of these projects are based on traditional practices and knowledge, and include vanilla growing, monoi oil processing, crafts, fishing, pearl culture, horticulture and eco-tourism. These are all organised and managed by the local people.

Hiti Tau involves all sectors of Maohi society - men, women and youth. The women's movement (Hiti Tau Tahini) gives strong leadership by developing human resources involving the whole village.

The visit was a positive one and will hopefully lead to further contacts with Hiti Tau.

There is a 25-minute video describing Hiti Tau and its work, available from the PPP office and from Jack Lakavich in Kelowna, BC



Photo: Jack Lakavich

Visiting a Hiti Tau vanilla growing project

Indigenous Peoples in WTO Protests

by Priscilla Settee

It is estimated that over 50,000 people converged on Seattle for the World Trade Organization meeting. Established in 1995, the WTO is a powerful new global commerce agency which transformed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) into an expanded and enforceable global commercial code. The WTO is one of the main mechanisms of corporate globalisation. Under the WTO, economic efficiency, reflected in short-run corporate profits, dominates other values. Decisions affecting the economy are to be confined to the private sector, while social and environmental costs are borne by the public.

First Nations and Native Americans from Canada and the US - through the sponsorship of Indigenous organisations such as the Indigenous Environmental Network, the Seventh

Generation Fund and the Indigenous Women's Network - spent five days in sessions educating their members and the broader public about ways that the WTO and international trade agreements will impact the globe's Indigenous Peoples. While they were left out of formal representation, the Indigenous people present wasted no time in educating others. They were joined by Indigenous people from Central and South America.

Front and center on the Indigenous agenda are such issues as forestry, biodiversity and biopiracy, persistent organic pollutants, self-determination and treaties, militarisation of Indigenous lands, agriculture, fisheries, human rights/Indigenous rights, and lands and territo-

ries. While some chiefs of communities were present, it is clear that Indigenous community issues were not part of formal WTO talks. This is particularly disturbing as the majority of the world's valuable natural resources exist on Indigenous lands.

Organisers of the parallel Indigenous event say that economic globalisation policies endanger Indigenous cultures, communities and traditional subsistence lifestyles by clear-cutting forest, destroying fisheries, displacing populations and undermining Indigenous Peoples' power over their land and natural resources.

"The liberalisation of trade policies and mining laws allows the free entry of corporations to take over Indigenous lands, evict Indigenous Peoples and claim rights over their resources," said Victoria Tauli-Corpuz of the Indigenous Peoples Network for Policy Research & Education, based in the Philippines. Representatives from Colombia and other South American countries say that the current WTO policies have encouraged murder, genocide and the dislocation of Indigenous populations.

The rally on November 30 was attended by an estimated 50,000 people and brought Indigenous Peoples, trade unionists, environmentalists, and nationals from Tibet, Philippines and Vietnam together. Youths from all parts of the nations dominated the rally. As we marched next to Lynda Chavez, the daughter of United Farm Workers of America leader, Cesar Chavez, another trade unionist was heard to say, "This march brings a lump in my throat; it is just an amazing

show of solidarity among the world's people, all colours, all races, it's just amazing."

The one thing that united everyone was that the WTO must be stopped until the interests of ordinary citizens are considered. It is felt by all these 'unofficial' members of the WTO meeting that further 'behind closed doors meetings' by the world's leaders must stop as the consequences of WTO decisions will greatly impact all the world's citizens. These feelings were evidenced when the WTO official meeting was prevented from happening and many official delegates were prevented from entering and leaving their hotels and other places.

Large areas of Seattle's downtown were cordoned off by the police and National Guard as a state of civil emergency was declared by the City of Seattle and the Governor of the State of Washington. Police used the unruly behaviour of some people to shut down through aggressive measures the voices and presence of all people. Unfortunately, many of the pictures which the media focused on were of broken windows and mayhem, rather than the issues which united people.

What is evident from Seattle is that ordinary citizens want a say in how events impacting their communities, jobs and lands will unfold.

Priscilla Settee is a member of the Boards of Directors of the Indigenous Women's Network and the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre.



cont'd from page 26

are effective, transparent and accountable. In the longer term, it will provide a means for East Timorese to gain wider experience in plural politics. Support for local initiatives will also help cultural and spiritual rebuilding.

** The international community must assist local NGOs and community structures to build their own capacity and to build human resources in the country.*

4.3 Women's Perspectives and Needs

Women have experienced much violence - including domestic violence - and human rights abuses. They also experience discrimination in health, education, land ownership and agricultural production, and participation in public life. Gender based inequalities and their root causes must be challenged through appropriate institutional means. Children's rights have been severely undermined.

** Donors should give active support to women's organisations and women leaders, in all development sectors. Children's rights must be urgently considered.*

4.4 The Environment

Years of neglect and misguided development have severely damaged the rich and varied natural environment of East Timor. Sustainable economic recovery requires the conservation and protection of natural resources.

** Donors must support programs containing enforceable mechanisms for the conservation and protection of natural resources, and include strategies for environmental and occupational health.*

4.5 Social Impact of Aid

The World Bank Joint Mission's report warns that the presence of the UN and of other international agencies creates distortions in the allocation of capital and labour, and brings other adverse social impacts. Salary levels, rents, and local sourcing are important issues that must be resolved. Culture, local languages and other expressions of East Timorese identity, in all its diversity, must be respected.

** Systems must be instituted to monitor and address the social impacts of development assistance.*

4.6 Donor Coordination

As the Joint Assessment Mission recognized, donor coordination is essential for effective reconstruction, and to avoid gaps, duplication and inefficiencies in the use of external resources.

** Donor coordination and the support of indigenous and other models for cooperation within and between legitimate social groups must be given due consideration and support.*

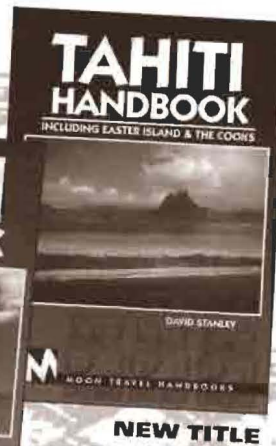
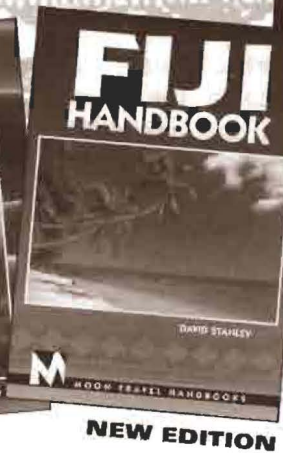
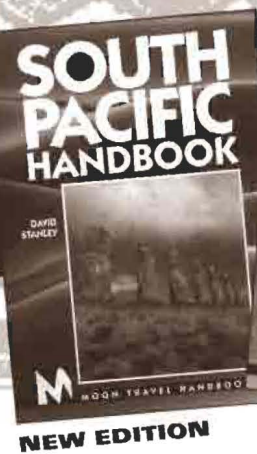
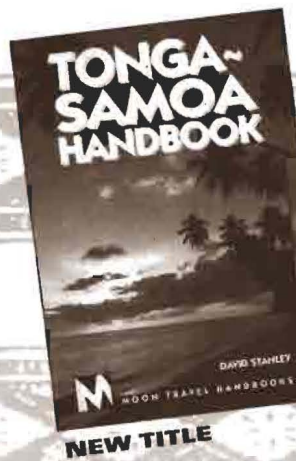
5. Conclusions

The international community has the obligation to assist East Timor in its efforts to stem the current humanitarian crisis and to lay the foundations for a smooth transition to reconstruction. It also has the duty to meet timely and fully the costs of reconstruction and development. This Tokyo meeting is the international community's chance to make amends for the years of neglect and broken promises, and to invest in the stability and viability of a just new East Timorese state.

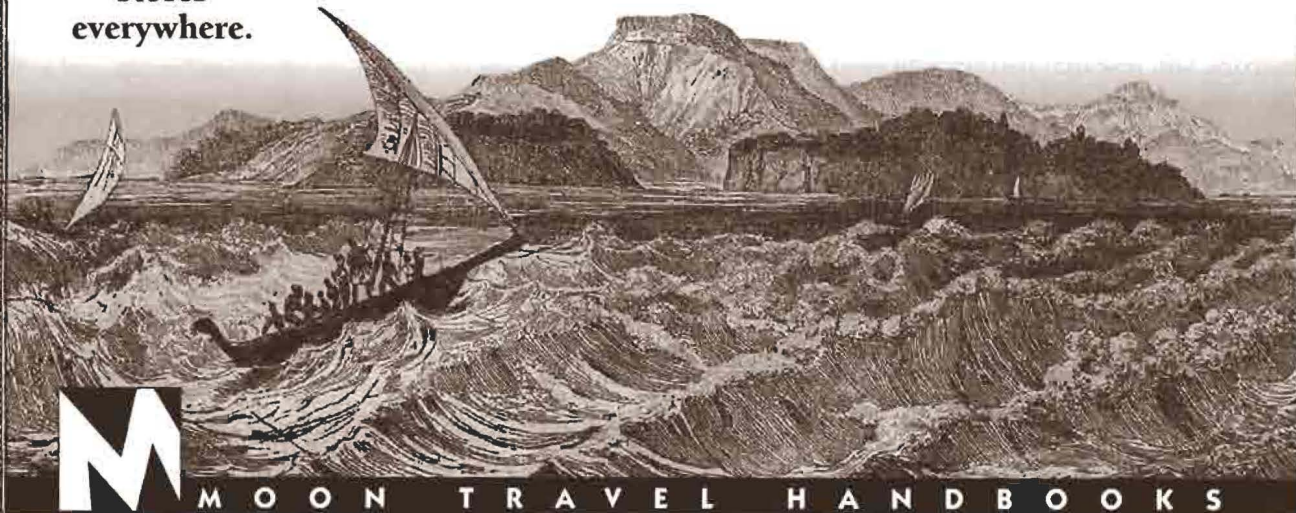
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Over-Harvesting Threat to Shellfish in Kiribati

by Lilian Fay-Sauni & Jennifer Robinson

The demands of a growing population are placing an ever-increasing strain on the traditional marine resources of the Republic of Kiribati. But, despite report after report being produced, findings from research examining the situation aren't reaching the people - namely fisher women - involved in the everyday harvesting of marine resources. The involvement of women at the grassroots level in workshops or community consultations related to resource management and conservation is therefore becoming increasingly important.

Made up of 33 islands surrounded by the largest Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Pacific, Kiribati relies almost exclusively on marine resources for food and income. However, an annual population increase estimated at 2.2 per cent is placing growing stress on the country's marine environment. According to a 1995 census, the population is about 80,000.

The strain on Kiribati's marine resources is illustrated in anecdotal evidence from fisher women in South Tarawa. For example, in recent years women who harvest the arid bivalve *Anadara* species have noticed a reduction in the size and number of ark shellfish available. Lilian Fay-Sauni, along with her husband and research partner Samasoni Sauni, made the observation after interviewing 97 women in South Tarawa for a thesis on women's involvement in the *Anadara* fishery in Kiribati and Fiji.

Known generally throughout the South Pacific as 'te bun', *Anadara* is the most important shellfish resource in many Pacific countries. In South Tarawa alone, approximately 1,400 tonnes of the shellfish are caught on a yearly basis. Inhabiting the intertidal mudflats and sub-tidal areas seaward of mangrove forests, the *Anadara's* importance stems from its abundance, large size, and accessibility. The shells are trapezoid in shape and reach a maximum length of 70 millimeters. They are black or brown in color and the interior of the shell is a non-lustrous white.

The harvesting of the shellfish, strictly for subsistence purposes, has been around for centuries in Kiribati. Women, as the predominant providers of a regular supply of food for the family, collect the ark shells in a number of ways. Along with spotting the half-covered shellfish at low tide, women also wade out from the beach at high tide and use their feet and hands to search for the organisms buried in the muddy sand.

On average, women catch approximately two to five kilograms of *Anadara* within three hours. The recent research indicates that this is much less than in past years, when mean daily catches averaged nine kilograms each for the gatherers. Though many women are aware of the declining state of the resource, they are unaware of any conservation ideas.

More than 350 commercial divers working from canoes in the offshore beds are also estimated to catch 111 kilograms each of ark shells a day.

The research findings were that 46 per cent of the women surveyed fish for *Anadara* three times a week for subsistence purposes and six times a week for selling. Increasingly, more women are catching fish to sell at roadside markets in five-kilogram rice bags or cooked with breadfruit and coconut. On average, women earn approximately \$167 every two weeks, with the majority selling at the markets six days a week.

Despite first hand knowledge that stocks are decreasing, the need for alternatives to earn cash far outweighs the need for conservation ethics among fisher women in Kiribati. Unless there are incentives for women to engage in other sectors, recovery in terms of *Anadara* abundance and possibly other marine resources in near shore areas will not happen.

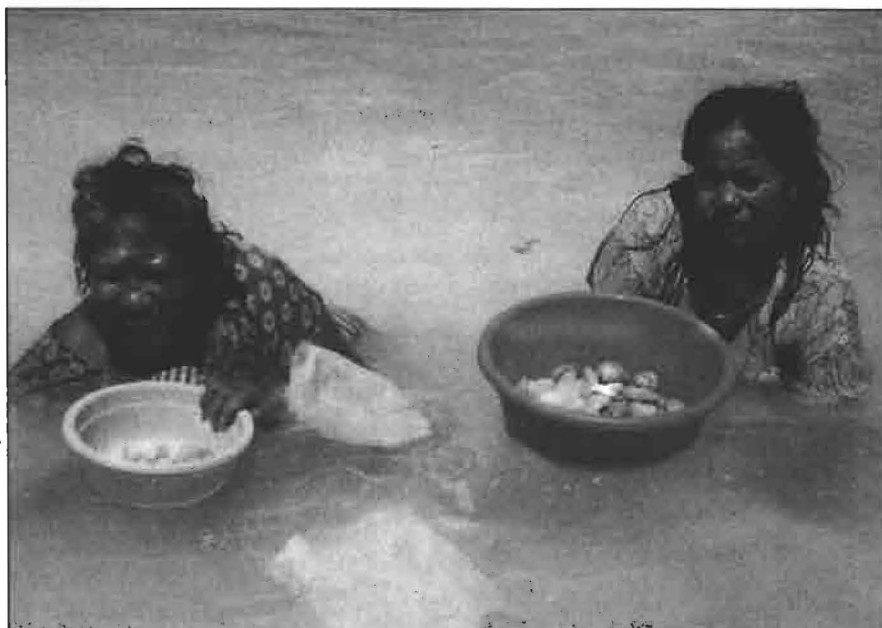
Another important factor missing in sustaining the ark shell fishery is involving women in the monitoring of stocks. With non-participation in results sharing and management decisions, fisher women are not encouraged to employ or adopt sustainable harvesting.

However, researchers are hopeful that their research and recommendations will reach the women most affected. If not through regular channels, opportunities may exist to reach the women through the Women in Fisheries Network, and for researchers to spread their results by returning to the villages where they conducted their studies.

Lilian Fay-Sauni is a M.Sc scholar studying the ark shell fishery in the Republic of Kiribati. The Canada-South Pacific Ocean Development Program funds her work as a graduate student in the Marine Studies Programme at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. In 1998 she won a gold medal for her studies. She expects her research and report to be finished next year.

Jennifer Robinson, BJH, is the Media Relations Assistant for the Canada-South Pacific Ocean Development (C-SPOD) Program. She is based at the South Pacific Forum Secretariat in Suva, Fiji.

Photo: Lilian Fay-Sauni



Local women in Tarawa, Kiribati, collecting Anadara shellfish

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Canada Funds New Pacific Marine Projects

by Jennifer Robinson

Canada is helping South Pacific countries usher in the new millennium by committing C\$2-million more towards marine projects. Officials with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) announced the funding for three new marine projects, following their approval at a meeting of the Program Management Committee for the Canada-South Pacific Ocean Development Program (C-SPOD) held recently in Suva, Fiji. Supplemental funding for current programmes was also approved.

The new additions are joining 10 other approved projects, which are worth more than C\$6-million, under Phase 2 of the C-SPOD Program. Since 1988, CIDA through C-SPOD has committed C\$28-million to finance marine projects throughout the South Pacific.

"These new projects are following up on the success of previous projects," said Dr. Kenneth MacKay, C-SPOD field programme coordinator. "They will allow the regional partner agencies to expand their benefits to more Pacific Island countries."

Under the programme's guidelines, all projects must help strengthen institutions and increase skills of Pacific Islanders, provide gender equity, promote environmental sustainability and the management of natural resources, and establish links with the private sector.

The new funding is enabling the Fiji Islands-based Forum Secretariat to link trade and environmental sustainability goals through a project focusing on the certification and export of marine organisms for the growing aquarium industry. The regional organization is launching pilot projects in three Pacific Island countries.

The Forum Fisheries Agency, located in the Solomon Islands, is receiving support to continue its work helping Pacific Island countries develop their own tuna management plans and efforts to improve fisheries laws and regulations.

Funding for the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji is being used to increase skilled manpower in the marine sciences and the development of an aquaculture training programme.

Members of the Program Management Committee, which approves and manages all projects, are the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the South Pacific Forum Secretariat (ForSec), the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the University of the South Pacific (USP), and CIDA.

Pacific Island countries affected by the new programmes include: Federated States of Micronesia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Tonga and Vanuatu.

C-SPOD is Canada's major regional development assistance commitment to the Pacific Islands. It reflects the Canadian and South Pacific viewpoint that ocean development is a key priority. The second phase of the project is slated to run until 2004. C-SPOD is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and coordinated by the South Pacific Forum Secretariat and LGL Limited, Canada. C-SPOD projects are developed and implemented by the participating Regional Organizations - the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency, the South Pacific Forum Secretariat, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the University of the South Pacific.

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See Pages 32-33 for more on C-SPOD.



Photo: Jennifer Robinson

Emma Sale-Mario analyzes a sample of her research project at the University of the South Pacific. She is one of several students who are receiving funding for their postgraduate work through C-SPOD.