

# EAST TIMOR

## The Inside Story

No. 18 June/July 1996

### East Timorese Women: Fighting for Justice

East Timorese women have always been in the forefront of their country's fight for freedom, both inside the territory and abroad. They have also borne much of the suffering of the occupation, being particularly targeted by Indonesian soldiers for intimidation, rape and torture. Yet they continue to resist across the territory. For example, the unit of the armed resistance which successfully attacked the Indonesian military base at Viqueque last May is commanded by 'Maria', who previously lost her entire family in the war. Outside East Timor, many of the activists continuing the struggle are women. Maria Silva, who works for East Timor from exile in Australia, recently wrote an open letter (see page 2) to the Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland, on

the eve of her state visit to Indonesia last September. It is possibly the most devastating testimony written to the continuing horror of the Indonesian occupation.

#### Timor Woman

*Timor woman manacled by your misery  
Timor woman your spirit bound in servitude  
Timor woman forced to bear invaders' children  
Timor woman raped, abandoned in concentration  
camps.*

*Timor woman your feeble honesty your strength  
Your bloodless voice a weapon of war  
Your fragile chant the hymn of freedom.*

*Timor woman. Companheira. Bashed. Imprisoned.  
Your song a cry for justice. Your soul anticipating  
death.*

*Timor woman. You weep warm tears of blood  
Your blood, our blood  
Your face the record of our struggle  
Your determination the story of our resistance.*

by Xanana Gusmão, translated from Portuguese by Agio Pereira, Rob and Peter Wesley-Smith.



Photo by Steve Cox

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FOET is the WA Affiliate of the *Australian Coalition for a free East Timor (ACET)*



## Open Letter to Madame Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway

Dear Madame Prime Minister,

I am an East Timorese woman, mother of two children, living in exile in Australia since 1985. Like thousands of East Timorese, I was forced to leave East Timor by the repressive military regime which has ruled my people for the last two decades.

Madame Prime Minister, I'm writing to you on the eve of your visit to Indonesia. As you well know, Indonesia, under the leadership of President Suharto invaded my country on December 7, 1975. It was an illegal act still not accepted by the United Nations to this day. Since then, the East Timorese People have lived through horrors perpetrated by the occupying armed forces. More than one third of the East Timorese population, estimated at 700,000 people in 1975, have perished as a consequence of a brutal and unjust war.

Western weaponry sold to Indonesia has contributed to the genocide of a defenceless people. Massive bombardments and Napalm bombs have wiped out entire villages and their inhabitants. The environment has been severely damaged, causing widespread famine, malnutrition and the outbreak of diseases previously unknown by the East Timorese people. Despite all this, the Indonesian government claimed to the World that they

went into East Timor "to protect their brothers and sisters from the Communists"! During the last twenty years, the East Timorese population have to face daily arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, rape, confinement in resettlement camps, repression and violation of the most basic human rights.

Yet the international community shamelessly turns a blind eye to these horrendous atrocities, for the sake of profitable trade with the corrupt government of President Suharto and the exploitation of the underpaid Indonesian labour force. The continuing of foreign economic aid and the sales of Western arms to Indonesia regardless of how ruthlessly the regime uses brutal force to repress its own people, is an affront to human decency and justice.

In spite of all tribulations, the East Timorese people continue to resist heroically all attempts by the Indonesian military to crush their spirit. We refuse to yield to brutality and inhumane treatment. We continue trying to uphold human dignity. Above all, we refuse to give up our right to Self-determination and Independence.

By invading East Timor, Indonesia has violated not only

International law but also its 1945 Constitution which states "That independence is the right of every nation and therefore colonialism must be eliminated from the world as it is incompatible with humanity and justice".

Madame Prime Minister, I was 18 years old when the Indonesian army invaded my country. Words fail me to express or describe my true feelings about the tragedies that I have witnessed along these years.

One of my cousins was arrested the day after the Indonesians landed in Dili, the capital of East Timor. She was taken to the military intelligence quarters for intensive interrogation, following torture with cigarette butts on her pregnant body. Her fiancée had been shot dead the previous day in front of her. A

high school colleague had her head chopped off by the invaders and hung on a tree facing her house, in order to terrorise her family and the neighbourhood. The reason for this barbaric behaviour was that the two women were members of the 'Fretilin' pro independence movement.

Thousands of East Timorese women have faced similar and even worse circumstances. Three other acquaintances of mine were thrown out alive from a flying army

helicopter, to their deaths, because their husbands had fled to the mountains to fight against the occupying forces. Many of our women are presently being held in inadequate prisons set up by the Indonesian army all over East Timor. They have been tortured, raped, abused, and deeply humiliated.

Madame Prime Minister, in 1980, more than six thousand East Timorese prisoners of conscience were transferred to the Island of Atauro, which is located 45 km north of the capital Dili. Eighty per cent of this number was comprised by women and children! These people were sent to the Island by the Indonesian military after being accused of supplying food for the guerrillas. The Indonesian military seemingly forgot that the guerrillas were fathers, husbands, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters of those people.

Their transfer to Atauro was carried out without any humane consideration. The Indonesian army shifted these people like cattle. They were forced to leave their homes, traditional land, and belongings behind, without being told about their destination. Worst of all, there were no basic housing, sanitation and hygiene facilities awaiting them. The consequences of this policy were horrendous.



Graves at Maubisse

PHOTO © FOET (WA)



Nursing mothers lost their breast milk, which dried up suddenly as result of shock and trauma. Their babies were screaming of hunger! Inevitably, diseases such as diarrhoea and dysentery broke out and the babies died like flies. I helped to bury the innocent babies who passed away ahead of time. At the peak of the crisis, we buried 5 babies in one week! At the time I almost lost faith in humanity. The horrific situation settled down a few months later, after the International Red Cross arrived on the Island with basic human necessities, medicines and food.

Madame Prime Minister, how can such crimes against humanity be perpetrated with impunity in the 20th century? How will those mothers ever forgive and forget the loss of their children in such macabre circumstances? How can they recover from the depth of their sorrows and trauma with their sanity intact? You madame, as a woman and mother of 4 children, will probably understand my feelings regarding this. I will never be able to forget the mothers' state of desperation and anguish at breaking point, holding their screaming babies against their dried breasts. This painful memory is engraved in my mind for the rest of my life. It gives me all the strength I need to fight till justice is done.

Madame Prime Minister, you will be visiting a nation whose leaders kill their own people including their women and children, as well as the populations of smaller neighbours.

You will shake the blood stained hands of the President and the Vice President of Indonesia, and toast them. You will surely not forget that Suharto is responsible for the death of more than one million Indonesians, killed by his troops after the alleged 'Communist' coup of 1965. Sutrisno was the commander of the Indonesian army in 1991, when his troops gunned down hundreds of East Timorese youths at Santa Cruz cemetery, Dili, during a peaceful demonstration. After the massacre, he publicly stated that the "delinquents", the East Timorese protesters, "must be shot. And we will shoot them".

Suharto's son in law, Prabowo, who currently holds the post of vice commander of the Indonesian elite troops, Kopassus, ordered a cold blooded massacre of more than 300 hundred civilians in the village of Kraras in East Timor in 1983. The pregnant women of the village had their unborn babies ripped from their wombs with knives which then had their heads smashed against rocks! Heavens must have wept!

Madame Prime Minister, last week, East Timor was once again rocked by riots caused directly by mass anger over the action of an Indonesian jail official at the jail in Maliana. This official made defamatory statements about Catholicism, the religion embraced by the majority of the East Timorese. He is typical of the attitude of many other Indonesian transmigrants. Demonstrations erupted in many cities of the territory and in

most suburbs of the capital Dili. Indonesian officials arrested 80 people, most of them junior and senior high school students. The attack against the Catholic Faith in East Timor by Indonesian Muslim settlers, is another strategy fomented by the Indonesian military to crush the last bastion of East Timorese resistance. The Catholic Church in East Timor has consistently denounced the violation of human rights perpetrated against the Timorese. In the darkest hours of our tragic history, the Church has stood up against the aggressor as a symbol of hope for its oppressed people.

In 1989, the Suharto government opened the doors of East Timor to the world after 13 years of complete isolation. This happened as a result of international pressure. Ever since, news and accounts about the tragedy that has been going on in East Timor has reached the outside world. Unable to conquer the minds and hearts of the East Timorese, Indonesian authorities encouraged mass colonisation by transmigrants from Indonesia to East Timor.

The majority of the new settlers are Muslim traders, 'bugis' from the island of Sulawesi. They take over the traditional lands of the natives, they occupy most of the public service positions and are granted business deals and financial assistance with support from the local military authorities. The East Timorese are discriminated against in job applications, the allocation of scholarships for tertiary education, housing subsidies, and relevant government social and economic policies. In a short period of time, the East Timorese have found themselves at the bottom socio-economic stratum.



Near Mt. Matebian at Sunset

Madame Prime Minister, these new developments have created increasing ethnic tensions between the locals and the settlers. These regularly erupt into riots and demonstrations, staged by the East Timorese in response to insults and provocation from the settlers. Why East Timor has to become the reservoir of Indonesian ethnic and religious problems?

Having said all this Madame Prime Minister, I humbly appeal to you to raise the issue of East Timor when you meet the Indonesian leaders. Please suggest to President Suharto that allowing the East Timorese people to assert their Self-determination, does not mean acknowledging a failure for Indonesia. On the contrary, Indonesia will raise its international profile as a respectable leading Asian Nation which contributes to world peace. Respecting international law, and acting justly, allowing the people of East Timor the independence they will continue to try to pursue, will not result in 'winners' or 'losers'. All will win, including Indonesia.

Madame Prime Minister, as a leading figure on issues of World Security, Disarmament, Environment and Development, you have the authority to remind the Indonesian leaders, that the problem of East Timor is an obstacle to political stability and peace in the Asia Pacific region. Oppression and abuse of human rights are not tools normally used by wise governments



## Letter (Cont)

to achieve lasting development for a nation. They will backfire, as history has repeatedly shown.

Before I end, I would like to thank you profusely Madame Prime Minister for devoting part of your busy time to read this letter. I sincerely wish your trip to Indonesia will be a successful one bringing fruitful results for the Peoples and Governments of Norway and Indonesia.

On behalf of the East Timorese people, in particular the

Timorese women I thank you beforehand, hoping very much that East Timor will not be forgotten during your Indonesian visit.

With great respect  
Sincerely yours,

Maria Silva, 15 September 1995

## Timorese Women Standing Up To Be Counted

"Our people today live with constant fear and oppression. Like every war, women not only become victims in the sense of losing our loved ones - close friends, husbands, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters - but they are also subjected to inhuman treatment including rape and other kinds of humiliation ... The involvement of the female population in the struggle for self-determination and independence is crucial ... Looking back to the Portuguese colonial rule and taking into account the barbaric occupation by the Indonesian government of East Timor, we have indeed reasons to celebrate women's achievements. We women have taken part in all levels of the struggle on our own rights and terms. We suffered the conse-

quences of our patriotism but we refused to sell our soul. Because in these 20 years of resistance and struggle for self-determination, we women of Timor have stood up to be counted."

Ines Almeida, East Timorese activist in Australia.

From *Matebian News* - an East Timorese produced newsletter in Australia -

contact MN at  
PO Box 23,  
Fairfield NSW 2165,  
or  
phone (02) 891 5861

## Rape continues unpunished in East Timor

For many East Timorese women, a right they have yet to enjoy after 20 years of Indonesian rule is freedom from rape.

Maria (not her real name), 25, carries the bulk of her unborn child under a dirty T-shirt, her long curly hair and dark features unmistakably Timorese. She is six months' pregnant by an Indonesian soldier who allegedly forced his way into her house in a village near Los Palos, past her mother and father, and raped her. "He had a gun and I was afraid," she said, crying. Pathetically, she adds, "I have not heard from him since. Not a letter or anything." Her story and others are denied by Indonesia, which says no such abuses exist. East Timor Police Chief Andreas Sugianto told Reuters such stories were "incorrect, crazy and a provocation. There's no chance for such a thing to happen here ... It seems that someone wants to create an impression that this region is worse than Bosnia. That's not true," he said.

According to British author John Taylor, Timorese women have endured a prolonged campaign of forced sterilisation and contraception. Timorese sources say the programme continues, although Sugianto denied any such programme beyond government-sponsored family planning available in every province. But the most immediate threat to women comes from the Indonesian army in East Timor, which officially numbers seven battalions but which defence sources put much higher.

Isabella (not her real name), 29, lives in the same village as Maria, a primitive but picturesque hamlet of leaf and mud huts

perched on East Timor's craggy northern coast. Isabella is perhaps unusual. She has two daughters, one seven years old and one two years old, from two fathers, both of them soldiers who she says raped her.

The girls have Indonesian names in bitter memory of their fathers. "I have no protection because I live alone with my younger sister, as my parents are already dead, and one of my brothers was killed by the Indonesians," she said in an interview.

Trying to work out how widespread such abuses are is hard in a territory where fear keeps most people quiet. Aid workers say the issue of rape is also muddled by strong traditions that press victims to conceal their experiences. But a local church worker, Fernando (not his real name), 26, has tried to keep a tally. "I have been writing down the names of the women and the names of the soldiers who rape them, and the battalion they come from," he said. He says he knows of 50 women in the neighbourhood who have between one and three children each after being raped by Indonesian soldiers. No soldier has been punished, he said.

(Reuters, 3/9/95, via reg.easttimor email conference)



Catholic Orphanage at Venilale



On January 25 1995 *The Australian* (p14) published a letter from Ian MacDougall, from Canberra, under the title "The little guy just asks for trouble". Ian has since forwarded the unabridged version to FOET. It is a scathingly elequent satire of Australia's morally bankrupt approach to the East Timor issue.

I am walking down the street one evening when I encounter Louie the Hornet, an identity well known in the neighbourhood. Louie and me, we go back quite a way. As a matter of fact, he owes me a few for certain aid I have given him in times past. He does not forget this, he always says.

It does not escape my attention that at the time of this encounter Louie is engaged in an altercation with some guy in the shadows of a doorway. Louie has this guy's neck in one fist and is beating his brains out with the other. Hey, I know this victim. It's Angelo Timores, aka Easter Timorese, of Portuguese extraction. Timores and me, we go back even further. I don't mind admitting that Timores helped me out many years ago when I was in big trouble, and I mean big. We call him Easter because he's always getting crucified. By Louie.

Just then, Louie says to me: "Hey, you got a knife, pal? I sure could use a knife right now. Spot cash for your best knife." An understandable request in the circumstances. Now I happen to be a man of high principle, the principle being doing

whatever maximises the day's take. And besides, if I don't sell Louie a knife, someone else would. So I extract the best of the blades I keep in my belt and pass it to Louie. He gives me the price I want, on the spot. Then he says: "Thanks pal, I won't forget this. And I tell you what. When I finish takin' this sucker apart, you and me's gonna split whatever he has on him."



Now I must admit that I feel a certain queasiness in the stomach over what Louie is doing to Timores. But Louie has a difficult reputation, and in my opinion needs to be humoured. Besides, I want no trouble with Louie. So I explain to Timores that I am taking a softly-softly approach regarding his problem with Louie. He tries to repeat that, but it comes out through all the gore in his mouth as "wimpy wimpy". But I do not think that was his intention, or that it was disparagement directed at me. I think he was asking Louie not to hit him so hard, and to remember his human rights.

Now I have been telling Timores for years that he should just shut up and pay protection to Louie. But he is stubborn. Keeps wanting to go it alone. In Louie's precinct. This is unrealistic, and bad for Louie and me who are working more and more together these days.

## FOET Resource list - Books for sale

*A Critique of Western Journalism and Scholarship on East Timor* \$20.00  
By Geoffrey C. Gunn (with Jefferson Lee). Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, Manila 1994. 265 pages.

*A Travesty of Justice: East Timor's Political Prisoners.* \$1.50  
Australia-East Timor Association. Melbourne 1994. 8 pages.  
Profiles of East Timorese political prisoners in Indonesian jails.

*Distant Voices* \$14.95  
By John Pilger. Revised Edition. Vintage London 1994. 625 pages, of which 61 are devoted to East Timor. Paperback.

*East Timor: An Indonesian Intellectual Speaks Out* \$8.00  
by George J. Aditjondro, edited by Herb Feith et al. Australian Council for Overseas Aid, 1994. Includes "Lateline" transcript. 65 pages. Paperback.

*A Traveller's Dictionary in Tetun-English and English-Tetun from the Land of the Sleeping Crocodile: East Timor.* \$6.95  
By Cliff Morris. Baba Dook Books, Melbourne 1992.  
Contains an introduction to Timorese culture, grammar, pronunciation, phrases for travellers. 77 pages. Convenient pocket size paperback with durable plastic cover.

*East Timor: An International Responsibility* \$3.00  
Catholic Institute of International Relations. "Comment" series booklet. London 1992. 28 pages. Single copies only.

*East Timor: Getting Away With Murder?* \$15.00  
By Hugh O'Shaughnessy. British Coalition for East Timor, London 1994.  
Features many excellent photographs by the author. 32 pages. Paperback.

*East Timor: The Silence and the Betrayal.* \$4.75  
New Internationalist. Oxford 1994. This issue of NI, a magazine on North/South issues, focuses on East Timor. Highly recommended. 36 pages.

*Death in Dili* \$4.95  
By Andrew McMillan. Hodder and Stoughton, Sydney 1992.  
An Australian tourist from Darwin gets involved in Timor's politics while holidaying on the island. A documentary account, told in a racy style. Paperback. Great value - was \$15.95.

*East Timor: Betrayed But Not Beaten - The Ongoing Struggle for Independence in East Timor 1975-83* \$1.00  
by Ian Bell et al. Australia-East Timor Association, Melbourne 1983. 33 pages. Paperback.

Many other titles available...



# East Timor and the Trade Unions

by J. R. Gandini

In preparation for the lobbying campaign carried out during the March Federal Election, *Friends of East Timor* analysed the distribution of its membership in the various electorates of Western Australia. The results were interesting.

In the electorate of Canning, covering some of the more blue collar suburbs, there were only four members. In the electorate of Curtin, where the population is more campus orientated, middle-class and professional, FOET has over seventy members. In addressing this disparity the work of the WA TRADE UNION EAST TIMOR SUPPORT GROUP obviously can make a significant contribution.

This group was formed in April 1995 and is made up of ten trade unions covering both blue and white collar workers. Although it is not part of FOET it has organised publicity among trade unionists in support of the various FOET campaigns. For example, a number of unions took part, with their banners, in the demonstration to commemorate the Dili Massacre last November. The Group operates within the policies of its constituent unions and its initiatives are subject to their agreement.

One of its main achievements so far has been to sponsor a resolution strengthening the policy of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) on East Timor. While this policy, prior to the ACTU Congress in September 1995, condemned the Indonesian annexation and recognised the inalienable right of the East Timorese people to self determination and independence it omitted any criticism of the Australian government's role. The Group requested its participating unions to propose the following amendment as an addition to the existing policy: *Congress calls on the Australian government to reverse*

*its policy of recognising that annexation and to cease the training of, and the supplying of arms to, the Indonesian military and security forces.* Despite opposition from some ACTU leaders, this amendment was adopted by the Congress and now forms part of ACTU policy.

The Group in January of this year sponsored a resolution critical of the new Australia-Indonesia Security Agreement which was then forwarded by the constituent unions to the Trades and Labor Council of W.A. and their federal bodies. This resolution pointed out that the Agreement betrayed the Indonesian trade unionists, peasants, journalists, students and others whose interests are constantly sacrificed for the profits of the multinationals and the wealth of the Suharto and other families. Its final paragraph stated *Above all, the Security Agreement, in the name of pragmatism, worsens that disgraceful blot on our country's international and human rights record - Australia's betrayal of our Second World War allies, the East Timorese.*

The Group is currently attempting to develop publicity work among shop stewards and at workplaces. Discussions have been held with shop stewards of the CEPU at three different training courses, a similar opportunity is being arranged by the CPSU (PSU) and representatives of FOET and the East Timorese community addressed this year's State Conference of the AMWU.

The possible production of a brief video suitable for use at

worksites is being investigated. As part of the Australia wide protests on July 17, when Suharto is expected to visit East Timor to mark the 20th anniversary of its 'incorporation' as Indonesia's 27th province, the Group has suggested the widespread distribution and use of the car sticker **INDONESIA OUT OF EAST TIMOR - NOW!**

## The unions that make up the WA TRADE UNION EAST TIMOR SUPPORT GROUP are :

ALHMWU	Miscellaneous Workers Union
AMIEU	Meatworkers Union
AMWU	Manufacturing Workers Union
ANF	Australian Nursing Federation
ASU	Australian Services Union
CEPU	Communications, Plumbing & Electrical Union
CFMEU	Construction, Energy, Forests & Mining Union
CPSU (PSU)	Community & Public Sector Union
MUA	Maritime Union of Australia
SSTU	State School Teachers Union

## Indonesian trade unionist calls for referendum

Muchtar Pakpahan, leader of the largest free trade union organisation in Indonesia, the Indonesian Prosperous Labour Union (SBSI), has called for a referendum in East Timor, in a meeting with Indonesian 'parliamentarians' in March. He was reiterating the opinion he put forward in his recent book "Portrait of the Indonesian State", in which he writes:

"the people of East Timor should be given the right of self-determination through a referendum, to decide whether they want to be integrated with Indonesia or get their own independence. This referendum should be done under the supervision of the United Nations. ... Indonesia should accept it with grace, because Indonesia is a nation based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. ... Everlasting peace and social justice is the prin-

ciple, and democracy and the protection of human rights is the solution."

Pakpahan was sentenced to three years gaol in November 1994 in an attempt by the regime to repress free trade unionism. He was released six months later pending appeal, after there was a local and international campaign by trade unionists and solidarity activists on his behalf. The harassment and repression of SBSI continues, however, and many organisers remained behind bars. Pakpahan's brave opinions are an indication of the growing awareness of the East Timor issue among the Indonesian pro-democracy movement.

Rob South



## Upcoming East Timor Exhibition!

Don't miss the upcoming East Timorese art and photographic exhibition in Perth!



*Abandoned (III)* from Maria Madeira's *East Timor-Land of Crosses* Exhibition.

The striking work of FOET committee member and exhibited East Timorese artist Maria Madeira will be launched as *East Timor: Land of Crosses* at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) on **Wednesday 19th June 6-8pm**, and will be on display until July 21. (Please note that the PICA "What's On" guide has incorrect dates). The exhibition is to be launched in conjunction with a brilliant photographic exhibition at the same venue, entitled *East Timor 1942-1992* - "the most comprehensive collection of photographs on East Timor ever assembled in Australia", presented by Community Aid Abroad.

When eight years old, East Timorese artist Maria Madeira fled her homeland as invading Indonesian troops began a nightmarish reign of terror. After eight further years in the grinding poverty of a refugee camp in Portugal, she migrated to Australia with her family. Her artwork, comprising sculpture, drawings and paintings, expresses darkly yet vividly the tremendous suffering and cultural genocide inflicted upon the East Timorese people. The traditional beauty of East Timorese woven cloth (*tais*) is here torn apart over stark wire and metal, just as the fabric of East Timorese life has been rent by occupation, murder, rape and torture. Her paintings of her homeland are of a desolate abandoned place devoid of the human warmth of her early childhood. More than just a striking eulogy for a martyred people, Maria's work realises a profoundly personal sense of loss and schism - the fractured faith of a homeless one condemned - as the East Timorese say - to *namkare lemos rai seluk-seluk* (wander aimlessly throughout the world). Maria hopes her work will "strike a resonance among some of the millions of refugees, migrants, and indigenous people under threat who struggle daily for their human rights, their freedom, their sense of belonging and their self-identity."

Coupled with the photographic exhibition, this event is not to be missed!

## East Timorese woman speaks out

In addition to her exhibition, Maria Madeira will be speaking about her life, activism, artwork and of the plight of East Timorese women at the annual conference of the Network of Women Students of Australia Conference in Perth on July 12. The full conference runs from 8-12 July (see inset), billets for interstate women are still needed, contact Jeanne on 360 2158 for more details.

# CHALLENGE CHANGE CHOICE

## NOW SA

**8-12 July 1996**

**Network of Women Students of Australia Conference**  
 Contact Kim (09)273 8228, Jessica (09) 443 1414, Tina or Jeanne(09) 360 2158  
 Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia



## Last Letter from a murdered man

In late 1995, and some months after it was written, *Friends of East Timor* received a letter from the head of the Clandestine resistance in East Timor late last year. It was chilling because on 1 June 1995, Pedro Nunes (codenamed Sabalae) was captured by the Indonesian military. Sabalae was last reported seen, barely alive and almost unrecognisable from his horrific torture, at the KOPASSUS DEN-85 barracks in Jakarta. The resistance have confirmed that he was murdered under torture by these Red Berets, after resisting all attempts to extract information. The military have denied ever capturing him. Written in Portuguese his letter (excerpts translated below) thanks *Friends of East Timor* for our work and angrily condemns the role of many governments, particularly Australia. It is a testament of defiant despair. The clandestine resistance has since appointed Sabalae's replacement. The above information and the excerpts below were checked for security and cleared for FOET to publish openly, by the East Timorese resistance in Australia.

*National Council of Maubere Resistance- CNRM  
Executive Committee of the Struggle / Clandestine Front -  
CEL/FC*

Excellence Mr. (deleted)  
Perth - Australia

In the name of CEL/FC and myself, I send you our warmest and cordial greetings of the fight. ...

The man who they accuse of leading the demonstration on January 9, was the one who received more punishment. During the bashing in SGI [military intelligence] in Kolmera, he became unconscious twice with the blood running down through his mouth, through his nose and through his ears. When they transferred them to POLWIL, he was again beaten until he was half dead, as the idiots wanted to get information from him.

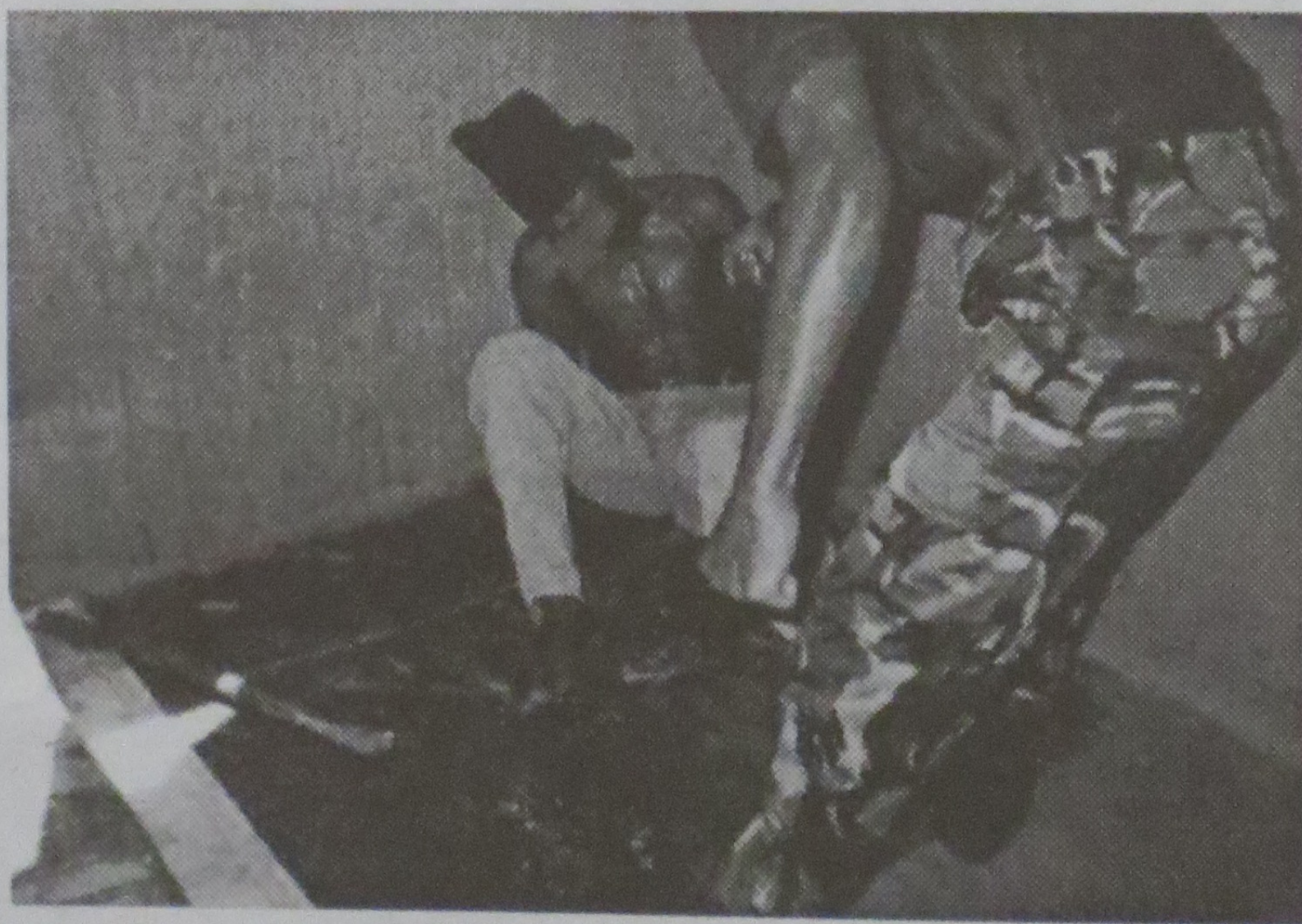
Apart from him there are others who are also constantly subjected to the violence of the occupiers; for example, Matias Gouveia Duarte (nurse) and Henrique Belmiro in POLWIL and in SGI, there is Joao Araujo already with a paralyzed arm, and Jose Pereira with broken ribs because when they applied or apply violence, the arms and feet are (or were) tied up or handcuffed before they are bashed with long sticks and kicks, etc!

If there is no news of the significant changes [the escalation of military violence] it is because no disposition exists to correct or punish the violent methods on the part of the occupied military; it is because the Australian Government and the Governments of other countries are continuing to be indifferent; are continuing to be deaf and blind in the face of the crime and the terror perpetuated by the occupiers against our people.

Apart from this, we trust in the efforts of all of our Australian friends of solidarity, in the diverse organisations of defence of our homeland and, in particular, of your organisation *Friends of East Timor* to continue your fight in pressing your

government in the sense of acting more in accordance with the moral principles of its country in the face of violence prevalently exercised by the Indonesian occupying military against the East Timorese people. These people are small and defenceless, but a thousand times more heroic than the powerful nation of Indonesia together with its powerful allies of the region such as Australia, who have joined forces in every aspect to exterminate us!

But if justice exists, she will be done one day in her own time! It is true that we have been forgotten by the world, and that



Young boy being tortured by the Indonesian Military

no one has the dignity to support us, because they know we are poor and if anyone supported us how are we to repay the debt? But our people feel proud as the people have known how to utilise all means and forms of action, within our limits and potential, always counting on our own forces alone, we have managed to keep alive the flame of our resistance because we have always known that on this resistance is dependent our freedom, or our eternal enslavement and gradual extermination. These 20 years of war against the pow-



erful Indonesian nation only shows that we are capable of continuing our struggle for as many years as Jakarta wishes. These 20 years still prove that we can scream to the world that we still exist, that we have not been exterminated and that Australia and other countries allied to Indonesia can redouble their efforts in helping Jakarta to continue killing us, because you have not exterminated us completely, so Indonesia should continue its killings! And when the day of our total extermination arrives, undoubtedly Australia will say: "Thus the Indonesian government, like the government of Canberra, managed to accomplish its mission from beginning to end in the fight against the malicious East Timorese pest!"

Although knowing that one day we will be exterminated but while we are still not, we will pursue our fight for our survival, and, in this we will continue to count only on the unconditional support of our friends of solidarity of the whole world, especially those from the various non-governmental organisations of Australia. Counting on the efforts of these friends, and trusting in ourselves, with all the success already accomplished by the solidarity as well as by ourselves, we will march forward continuing the fight until our total extermination, or until we conquer the murderous and cowardly occupier.

When the military denies the use of violence it is the same as denying its own existence. Likewise, the mas-

and of the resistance of the East Timorese people to this presence. There can be only one solution to the whole conflict between the solid resistance of the East Timorese people and the foreign occupiers; only one solution which can end the brutal violence of the Indonesian military, and this presupposes the withdrawal of the Indonesian foreigners from our homeland.

Without this, the fight shall continue, peace is impossible, these



Another torture victim



The bodies of the torture victims being dumped

sacres and other types of violence should be taken as a direct consequence of the presence of the military in our homeland,

prisons, the massacres, the tortures, the disappearances, the electric shocks, etc. etc. ... in short, the violence, the extermination of our people will proceed because the Indonesians also know that they are not isolated nor alone in their efforts in every aspect of the war, in that it has all the support of the Australian government, of America, of Japan, of Europe and the whole of ASEAN! After all, it seems that we must truly continue to be a malicious pest to all these countries who continue to reinforce their support in every way to Indonesia in order to annihilate us!

I think that is all for today, we wish you long life and more successes by your organisation in support of our cause. And, thank you for your attention!

With respect, I subscribe

KERI LARAN SABALAE  
Secretary of CEL/FC

In the hell of East Timor, on the 8 of April 1995.

Pedro Nunes (Sabalae)  
1956-1995

Murdered by occupation forces  
*Greater love hath no man*

The photographs accompanying this article were recently smuggled out of East Timor by the resistance and released internationally. They were stolen from an Indonesian soldier who participated in the torture and murder of two young unnamed East Timorese earlier this year. While we do not believe in shielding people from the reality of Indonesian military atrocity, FOET apologises for any distress caused to readers.



# New Australian Government

by Rob South

## East Timor - The Challenge for Downer

What does the election of the Howard Government on March 2 mean for the East Timorese people and for their supporters in Australia? Will we see a fundamental shift in Australia's orientation to the continuing outrage on our doorstep?

The victorious Liberal and National parties were at pains during the election campaign to portray themselves as listening to the views of the Australian people, in contrast to a 13 year old Labor government that was said to be aloof, out of touch and arrogant. In terms of East Timor, that characterisation of the previous government was surely accurate. As Ced Simpson, Amnesty International Australia's campaign director, wrote just after the election: "It is hard to imagine any other single issue on which the gap between Australian Government action and the will of the Australian people is greater than on the policy of accommodation with respect to East Timor." A new government represents an opportunity for a fundamental reorientation of policy, to encompass new realities, including that opposition by the Australian people to the Indonesian occupation of East Timor has markedly increased, particularly since 1991, with little sign of this issue going away.

However, we are yet to see any signs of a fundamental reappraisal from the Howard government. Indeed the stance appears to be ominously the same. This is not to say that there will be no difference between the two governments on the issue, nor that the change cannot offer new opportunities for supporters of East Timor in Australia. But it is clear that it will take continuing and increasing public pressure to bring Australia to a moral and principled stand on the issue in line with international law.

Prior to the election, Alexander Downer (now Foreign Minister) made much of what he criticised as Evans' weak position on human rights, but some post-election comments suggest he may prove to be similar. The launch of the new foreign policy 'road-map' on April 11 omitted human rights altogether, leading an AP journalist to write that Downer had 'deleted human rights from the list of top Asia-Pacific concerns'. Questioned later Downer said of East Timor "we obviously want to see political evolution in East Timor, there is no question of that, but in the end the Indonesian government is going to make decisions about that". (Needless to note 'evolution' is a million-year sort of process!). Yet he saw fit to state that his government "is committed to universal standards of human rights, there is no question of that." (Reuter 11/4) However, in 1995 Downer proposed a regional human rights charter - a suggestion which Human Rights Watch/Asia

spokesperson Sydney Jones condemned at the time as "neither feasible nor desirable - it would inevitably represent a weakening of current international standards rather than the affirmation of them ... It would be a far better use of time and resources to encourage ratification of the international covenants and to encourage campaigns on the part of local NGOs for such ratification by their own governments." (Australian 5/7/95). Thankfully there has been little said about this proposal of Downer's since the election.

## Refugees - the main difference?

**Introduce yourself to the new government by writing expressing your concerns on East Timor to:**

**Alexander Downer MP (Min. Foreign Affairs),  
John Howard MP (PM)**

**and on the refugees to**

**Philip Ruddock MP (Min. Immigration &  
Multicultural Affairs) -**

**c/- Parliament House CANBERRA ACT 2600.**

One of the main concessions exacted by the East Timor support movement from Downer prior to the election concerns the over 1300 East Timorese asylum seekers currently in Australia. Under the ALP government, these people were facing deportation to Portugal, under the ridiculous assertion that while the land and resources of East Timor clearly belonged to Indonesia (through Australia's recognition of sovereignty and subsequently the Timor Gap Treaty), the East Timorese who escaped were mostly considered to be Portuguese, and therefore not eli-

gible for asylum in Australia based solely on "a well-founded fear of persecution" under Indonesian rule. The rank hypocrisy of this position was recognised by Downer, quoted in *The Australian* (12/10/95), as saying: "The fact is Australia has never considered the people of East Timor as anything but Indonesian since 1979 - the latest claim by Mr Keating that they are Portuguese is simply absurd and hypocritical." In a meeting with Downer during the election campaign, Friends of East Timor were told categorically by him that under a Coalition Government, Australian authorities, in assessing the claims of East Timorese for refugee status, would consider these claims solely against Indonesia, without reference to the dubious issue of Portuguese citizenship. As yet, however, no official announcement has been made by the new government on these people, many of whom have been waiting for a decision for over a year. Without strong public pressure, the government may feel this is a promise that they could break ...

### Want to ring FOET?

Please note that reaching FOET on phone/fax number 361 4678 **will not be possible between the 15th and 26th of June 1996.**

Please only use the alternate 350 5549 during this time.  
Thanks!



## British bombers to the Indonesian air force.

On Monday July 22 1996, a remarkable trial will commence in the Liverpool Crown Court, England. Four women are charged with conspiracy, and three of them with criminal damage - to the tune of 2.4 million pounds. Their crime? To disable a British made Hawk jet fighter aeroplane, destined for the Indonesian airforce. Previously supplied Hawk fighters have been consistently used in the war against East Timor. Inspired by the biblical injunction "to beat swords into ploughshares", they entered the British Aerospace test site in Lancashire on January 29, and disabled the Hawk fighter with household hammers. They then gave themselves up peacefully to security.

In June 1993 a 500 million pound contract was granted to BAe for the supply of eight Hawk 100 advanced trainer/light attack aircraft and sixteen Hawk 200 single seat fighters with spares and training. In the leadup to the 1993 deal, Indonesian Air Marshal Sibun noted that "the planes will be used not only to train pilots, but also for 'emergency' air-to-ground attacks. In fact, the Hawks were made especially for air-to-ground assaults".

The women's action was part of a huge ongoing campaign in the UK to *Stop the Hawk Deal*. Their defence under British law will be interesting. They will be arguing that the Indonesian regime is directly violating the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, as are: 1) The UK government, which should be preventing genocide, not being complicitous in it (Articles 1 and 3e), and 2) British Aerospace which is also aiding and abetting genocide, contrary to the Aiders and Abettors Act (1851) and the 1969 Genocide Act. The women state that under international law we all have a duty to refuse to have any part in war crimes (Nuremberg Principle VII), and that under British law everyone has the right to use reasonable means, not excluding force, in the prevention of a crime (Criminal Law Act 1967, s.3). This, they will argue, is precisely what they did on January 29.

The defendants have been denied bail, and would appreciate letters of support in their prison cells. You can write to:

Lotta Kronlid VD0087, Andrea Needham VD0088, Joanna Wilson VD0089 and Angie Zelter VD0184 at HMP Remand Centre, Risley, 617 Warrington Road, Risley, Cheshire WA3 6BP, UK.

Source: TAPOL Magazine (PO Box 121, Clifton Hill, Vic 3068)

## Swedish Government to betray the East Timorese?

### Action needed

On April 18 1996 the new Swedish government decided to issue an export permit to the arms manufacturer Bofors, to export 3 or 4 naval cannons to the Indonesian Armed Forces. Up until this time the Swedes have always been strongly supportive of the East Timorese, and arms sales to Indonesia had been banned for some time.

This decision is meeting considerable domestic opposition, but the Swedish East Timor Committee has requested that people worldwide protest this decision by the Swedish administration. The decision clearly sends the wrong message to the Indonesian regime, particularly the military. The Indonesian navy has stepped up patrols around East Timor and made strong threats against any East Timorese who try to flee by boat, as was successfully attempted last year, and has been unsuccessfully attempted since.

It should be noted that this arms sale comes at a time when Australia and Sweden are cooperating to promote themselves to the UN Security Council, and attempting to exclude Portugal, the country most supportive of East Timor.

Please put your concerns about this disgraceful arms deal, in the face of ongoing atrocities under the Indonesian occupation, to:

The Ambassador of the  
Kingdom of Sweden  
Swedish Embassy  
Turrana St  
YARRALUMLA ACT 2600  
ph: (06) 273 3033

Please ask him/her to respond to your concerns, as well as forwarding them to the Swedish Government.

## PUZZLE TIME!

PIT YOUR WITS AGAINST  
BRITISH INDUSTRY'S TOP  
DECISION-MAKERS IN THIS FUN  
BRAIN-TEASER QUIZ...

## CAN YOU GUESS WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- 1 INDONESIA INVADES EAST TIMOR, MASSACRING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE...
- 2 INDONESIA THEN OCCUPIES EAST TIMOR, KILLING THOUSANDS MORE...
- 3 INDONESIA BUTCHERS EVEN MORE EAST TIMORESE...
- 4 BRITISH AEROSPACE AGREES TO SELL INDONESIA SEVERAL OF ITS HAWK GROUND-ATTACK FIGHTER PLANES...
- 5 THE AIRCRAFT ARE DELIVERED TO THE INDONESIAN MILITARY...
- 6 ..??????????



Cartoon by 'Polyp',  
New Internationalist #268, June '95



# Travelling in East Timor- A personal account

*What follows is a series of diary extracts from a FOET(WA) member who recently visited East Timor.*

## East Timor - 20 Years Later: The War Goes On ...

Flew into Dili from Denpasar on a Merpati 737. One flight in and out per day. Also on the plane was a northern European businessman (German, Dutch?) and an American in Ray Ban sunglasses, crew-cut, and chinos. Surely the American secret service (CIA, Army Intelligence, National Security Agency, etc) aren't that obvious. At the small airport, I was greeted by a uniformed official demanding my travel documents, saying he was with 'Immigration Control'. I told him not to worry, as I had already gone through the immigration and visa process in Bali - this was just a domestic flight, after all. He didn't appear to comprehend what I was saying but it was clear that I wouldn't be leaving the airport until I surrendered my passport to him. Another official asked if I was really a tourist in an accusing tone. He took the passport and laboriously entered the info into his ledger and returned the passport with a reminder that I must leave within 60 days.

After checking into my accommodation, I venture into the streets of Dili. It reminds me of pictures of Darwin and North Queensland towns. Sleepy, tropical, and in disrepair. There isn't the omnipresent uniformed military presence that I had expected. I am greeted by several passers-by who pose a standard battery of questions: "What is your name? Why are you here? Are you really a journalist? What do you know about the history of Timor Timur? Where you go after Dili? When you go back to Australia?"

Having trouble adjusting to 'Dili Time': wake-up at 6am, siesta from 12-4pm, defacto curfew after 8pm - after which black-clad Javanese migrants stalk the streets with the tacit backing of the military (ABRI). Visited the Dili tourist office. Apparently East Timor has averaged fewer than 100 non-Indonesian 'tourists' a year - though this number dropped off significantly after November 1991. There is also some concern that many tourists are actually 'trouble-tourists' - like Robert Domm and John Pilger. And me. As I'm told this, I wonder how many of those 100 'tourists' are really here to see Portuguese ruins (a stock reply to inquisitive probes) and a cheap Asian holiday. Perhaps the "Hello, Tourist" greeting of the kids should be "Hello, Activist".

I'm warned away from Same - "no tourist infrastructure". (Same has only recently been opened to visitors. It has a tradition of fierce resistance since Boaventura led a failed revolt against the Portuguese here last century). Mental note - visit Same. I enquire about safety in regions such as Lautem, Viqueque, and Same (known for their strong FALINTIL presence). I am assured that the military has the 'bandit' problem under control. So why then are there at least twenty infantry battalions here, I wonder? [Indonesian military battalions average 650 troops.] I'm given a glossy brochure. Sample passage: "In the afternoon and in the evening, visitors are able to suck fresh air at the beach of it while seeing the activities of cargo ships in the Harbour of Dili." Uh-huh.

Walked past the University. A young student approaches me and tells me that the campus is full of army spies so he can't talk for long. He warns me to be careful who I speak to, and to tell the people of Australia about the situation in Timor Leste. Over the next three

weeks, I hear many Timorese refer to *The Situation* - a local euphemism for the genocidal military occupation and repression of their nation. The young student adds that "the world must know what the Indonesians are doing to us".

In the morning, I stopped by the old 'Portu' cannons on the harbour. A tranquil shady spot to sit down and relax - at least that's how it looked. I sat there, gazing out through the morning mist at Atauro Island (site of an infamous ABRI concentration camp that was eventually closed down under pressure from the Red Cross). Soon, I was surrounded by a group of youngish Timorese who talk to me about the Australian flora and weather. I also notice a poorly disguised Military Intelligence (Intel) officer sitting on the periphery of the group taking notes. When one of my companions sees me looking at the spy he smiles, nods and continues his monologue on the local weather. I also notice some figures in the shadow of a nearby tree with walkie-talkies. Time to leave.

After 24 hours in Dili, my stress levels are going through the roof. I'm getting real tired of rude and arrogant Indonesians asking me the standard battery of questions everywhere I go. I've been amusing myself by trying to spot my tail - usually some guy driving back and forth on a motorcycle glaring at me. I decided I had to take a break from the Dili tension - time to spend a few hours swimming and laying on the nearby white beach. The water is warm and the sun is bloody hot.

As I move back to the shade of a changing stall, four Timorese road workers wander over and stand in the shadows of the stall. Between fearful glances to the road, one of the ditch-diggers says, in struggling English, "I love independence; I love Xanana". He adds that if the Indonesians were to hear him talking politics .... he makes a cut-throat gesture across his neck. When I mention the Santa Cruz massacre, he says something to his friends: one rolls up his shirt to reveal a scar on his stomach (bullet or bayonet), another displays a broken tooth (rifle butt), a poorly treated and

healed shattered toe (legacy of a favourite Indonesian torture technique), and a scarred nasal passage. The latter was explained to me in graphic sign language: another favourite torture technique - one electrode on the nasal septum, the other on the testicle, and a massive-voltage electric shock. They also point out a 4WD with tinted windows slowly cruising the street - Intel. As I walk back to the city center I laugh at my attempts to find sanctuary from the horror that has engulfed East Timor. Then I cry.

I met with two young clandestine activists today. They warned me to be careful of spies. I asked how I could recognise these spies. It doesn't sound too hard: they have short hair, dark skin, were born in Java or Kupang, and ask a lot of questions. They also don't have any scars and haven't had their family decimated. They left fairly quickly when it became very apparent that we were under surveillance. Very apparent. My two friends told me before they left that they like having foreign 'tourists' visit their country. They are concerned about the Indonesian attempts to portray to the world a peaceful picture of East Timor. Indonesian propagandists have yet to reach the level of Dr Goebbels. These teenaged freedom-fighters are very interested to hear about the

## Timor Travel Tips...

**Foreign visitors to East Timor can be of assistance. Your presence can discourage overt human rights abuses, and give hope to the East Timorese that the outside world has not forgotten them. Sharing your experiences, photos, and relayed messages with the outside world can help others learn about East Timor. And no one can visit East Timor without returning with a burning desire to get active on the issue - a good cure for apathy! But always remember that travelling there carries extra responsibilities. You will be able to leave, as the Indonesian military (with notable exceptions - 1975, 1991) generally do not kill foreign tourists. But for those you meet it is a different story - East Timorese who talk to travellers are routinely questioned. Let them take the initiative and don't make unreasonable requests. Always think carefully, don't take risks with others' lives, and have the most eye-opening trip of your life!**



various solidarity groups around the world and the work of the Timorese outside the country. One compares the situation in East Timor to that of occupied France or Holland in the early 1940s. I agree with the choice of analogies.

As I walk away, I am questioned by an Indonesian with a Swiss-cheese story: He is 29 and has always lived in Dili. He is a high school student, his father works in Jakarta, he doesn't speak a word of Tetum, always refers to this country as Timor Timur or just Indonesia. He has a crew-cut, a camouflage t-shirt, and is riding an expensive motorcycle. He is very friendly. Go figure. He asks: "If you are a student, then who is paying for you to be here?"

**Baucau.** The bus ride from Dili took us through some of the most breathtaking scenery I have ever seen. It is a beautiful country. The eucalyptus trees and the dry scrub reminds me of that neighbouring island to the south: Australia. I'm staying in the Hotel Flamboyant: managed by the military and used up until recently as an interrogation/torture chamber. While these horrors now take place in the Army HQ, the euphemism 'staying a night at the Hotel Flamboyant' is still used when someone is snatched off the streets for 'questioning'. Almost all of the buildings are Portuguese. An acquaintance notes that, particularly outside of Dili, the only building projects initiated in the last 20 years have been military bases and cemeteries.

A young East Timorese high-school student offers to show me around Baucau. When we pass any of the ubiquitous army units patrolling the streets he becomes noticeably pale. I ask him to translate some graffiti on a nearby wall. He pretends not to hear my question and looks rather nervous. I ask him how the market place was burnt down. He mumbles something about Indonesian migrants taking all the jobs. He is clearly uncomfortable talking about The Situation. I assume that he has been beaten and intimidated into submission. He sneaks me into his home and shares coconut juice with me. His whole family are very pleased to meet me. As I leave, he pulls my ear down to his mouth and whispers: "I hope you have an enjoyable visit in East Timor and that you tell your people what you have seen here". He then runs away in a blind panic. One cannot be neutral in a War-zone.

While out walking later in the day, a young kid saw me, smiled, and yelled out a warm "Hello Meestairrr". I walk over to say hi. I didn't notice another shady character closing in behind me. The kid's expression changes from one of youthful exuberance to unchecked fear as his eyes dart between me and the plain-cloths Intel officer behind me. With tears welling up in his eyes, his trembling voice gets out: "I think maybe Mister please go now. When they see me talking to tourist I must answer questions and get in trouble". I'm out there in a flash, feeling a mixture of guilt and rage. The sense of fear and repression is much more apparent outside of Dili.

**Los Palos.** Within hours of arriving, I met 'Nicolau'. His father was an officer in the Portuguese army. He attended officer training near Lisbon. When the Indonesians invaded, he and his wife, along with the rest of the old colonial army, joined with the national FALINTIL armed forces. Using their modern Portuguese weapons and conventional warfare tactics, they were able to halt the Indonesian advance at the outskirts of Dili and Baucau. It wasn't until 1977, when the invading army were able to utilise their newly acquired inventory of American built napalm carrying jets that the FALINTIL army was forced to retreat further into the mountains. There they were forced to adapt to a new style of warfare: the hit-and-run guerilla tactics which they have mastered over the past 15 years.

In that same year, two-year old Nicolau and his mother were captured in a skirmish with an Indonesian paratroop battalion. After extensive torture, his mother was killed and Nicolau was sent to a Jakarta orphanage as a 'victim of Fretilin atrocities'. He was adopted by a wealthy family and grew-up speaking Bahasa Indonesian and knowing little of his past. However, his light coloured skin and European features always reminded others of his background - making it impossible for him to fit-in with his class-mates in his private school. He returned to his homeland six months ago to find his past. His family name no longer exists - all records have been destroyed or altered. He

eventually found a friend of his father's who recounted Nicolau's family history: his father was killed in a large battle in 1989; his older brother died in the famine of 1983; his older sister was murdered by Intel in the mid-1980s - suspected of aiding the resistance; many members of his extended family are buried in a mass grave in the scrub near Lautem. I was shown a photo of one of these 'grave' sites.

Nicolau took me to see a cock-fight. On the way there, the bus stopped at the local brothel (next to the army barracks). The employment rate in Los Palos is around 20 to 30% - of which the majority are non-Timorese. There are only three means of economic advancement for Timorese in Los Palos: gambling (the poor taking money from the poor); prostitution; spying for the Indonesian army. He pointed out several known spies. They're not hard to spot: they have money but no work, they ask everyone questions and hang around in the streets, they often visit the local police station. He estimates that, in his town, 1 in 15 Timorese people are on the payroll of the occupying military.

I ask Nicolau how many people fight against the Indonesians. He repeats: about 1 in 15 Timorese are spies. The other 14 fight against the invaders... The war has scarred everyone. There is no middle ground.

I ask my friend about politics. He tells me he doesn't really care about politics. That is something to think about when the war is over.

Nicolau asks me to tell the people and the government of Australia what is happening in his country. He can't believe that the world governments actually know what is happening and have chosen a 'pragmatic' approach to genocide.

**Lautem.** I sit next to the driver on the ride out of Los Palos. When he sees me looking at the Terminator-2 sticker on the windshield, he points to the muscular Schwarzenegger with rocket-launcher and whispers with a smile "FALINTIL". Went for a walk along the beach: First, we pass an old Portuguese fort; then a Japanese bunker; then a post-war Portu bunker; then the Indonesian army base. Like a walk down a historical time-line of colonialism.

**Tutuala.** From Los Palos to Tutuala should be about a half hour drive. It took us four hours. The roads are very bad. Indonesia's greatest contribution to the standard of living in East Timor has been to seal several of the major roads. Of course, this has not been an altruistic, humanitarian act. The roads had to be improved to handle the increasing military supply convoys heading East and South of Dili and Baucau, in search of the illusive resistance army. Tutuala's resident military, on the other hand, receives its supplies from the nearby docks. Hence, the road in to Tutuala is pot-holed and corrugated - and this is the dry season! First of all, we reported to the Los Palos police that we were going to Tutuala. We then had to report to the regional command in Lautem. Then to the paratroop battalion. Then to the Special Forces. Then the Tutuala police. Once there, Intel officers stalk us in their vehicle. Tutuala offers some breath-taking scenery which we took in for a few minutes before getting back on the bus and heading back to do the rounds again. It turned-out that our bus driver may also have been an agent.

**Viqueque.** It was here that I met 'Carlos'. His grandfather had fought the Japanese with the Australian troops in Timor. Forty thousand Timorese gave their lives fighting alongside their Australian mates. Carlos's father was a public servant in Portuguese Timor. After the invasion, Carlos's grandfather, mother, and father joined the FALINTIL army. His grandfather fought for four years. His mother was captured soon after and imprisoned on Atauro island. His father acquired a reputation as a fearless fighter and a respected leader. When his recurring bouts of malaria, compounded by amoebic dysentery and asthma, put him on the brink of death, his comrades took him to a Catholic mission for medical aid. He was discovered in his sick-bed by Indonesian soldiers and taken away.

Carlos was raised in the seminary. He studied hard, learning English, Portuguese, Indonesian, and Japanese as well as the three local dialects he already spoke. The Indonesians were having great difficulties breaking his mother's spirit in the Atauro hell holes. They brought a young



Carlos to her in an attempt to break her will. She relished the brief minutes she was allowed to spend with her son. When the guard came to take him away, she astonished her captors by grabbing Carlos's hand and saying in a firm voice, "I will always love you, my son. Never give up hope; never stop fighting!". Young Carlos was dragged out of the cell hearing the muffled screams of the military going to work on his mother. He escaped capture at the Santa Cruz massacre with the aid of Bishop Belo. He was then forced to go into hiding for several years. He has been in and out of the interrogation rooms most of the past five years. He fully expects to die in the fight to free his people. He probably will. He won't be the first or the last.

**Maubisse.** In response to a season of unrest, two platoons of armed soldiers march in eerie silence through the streets to intimidate the

population. When they near the town square, they break into a double-time shuffle, singing a traditional fighting hymn, holding their American-made rifles across their chests. Scare the shit out of me.

After three weeks, it is with a mixture of sadness and selfish relief that I board the Merpati ('it's Merpati and I'll fly if I want to, die if they want me to...') flight out of East Timor.

When I returned to Australia, I came across a statement from a Darwin human rights group. In one week alone, it has been confirmed that two Timorese were tortured and released; seven were executed - some after being tortured; forty-two have been taken by the military - whereabouts and condition unknown. The war in East Timor goes on ....

## FOET(WA) Coordinator's report

Christine Faithful

Firstly, huge apologies to all members for the delay in getting this latest issue of our newsletter out! Busy FOET and personal commitments for members of the "Publications" group meant the newsletter went on the backburner for a while, but now it's back with a vengeance, and we'll be getting it out far more regularly from now on. What follows here is a report on the highlights for *Friends of East Timor* in 1995, and early 1996.

1995 was the year of the 20th anniversary of the Indonesian invasion, and pressure was stepped up internationally and nationally on Jakarta and Canberra. Here in WA FOET did our fair share in keeping the issue more than alive and kicking.

Early last year the Australian Government's arms manufacturer (Australian Defence Industries) made moves towards selling state-of-the-art Steyr rifles to Indonesia. FOET and other groups acted swiftly, working at the media and harnessing public disgust which undoubtedly contributed to a non-sale situation. The Indonesian military said they never wanted our guns in the first place, but public outrage would have made such a deal very difficult. This experience was probably one of the reasons why Keating kept the recent Security Agreement such a big secret 'til the 11th hour.

FOET's Education sub-committee organised a well-attended Information Forum and several school talks; including Leeming and Hollywood Senior High Schools, and St Stephens and Scotch Colleges.

April saw the first meeting of the East Timor Trade Union Support Group. This group has continued to grow in size of member unions and has successfully improved individual union policies on East Timor, Trades and Labour Council policy, and led the improvement in ACTU policy (see elsewhere this issue for details).

It was also about this time that we put together urgent action kits on the detained José Antonio Belo, arrested with 16 others for holding a pro-independence demonstration in Dili. Human rights groups around the world were sent José's photo and

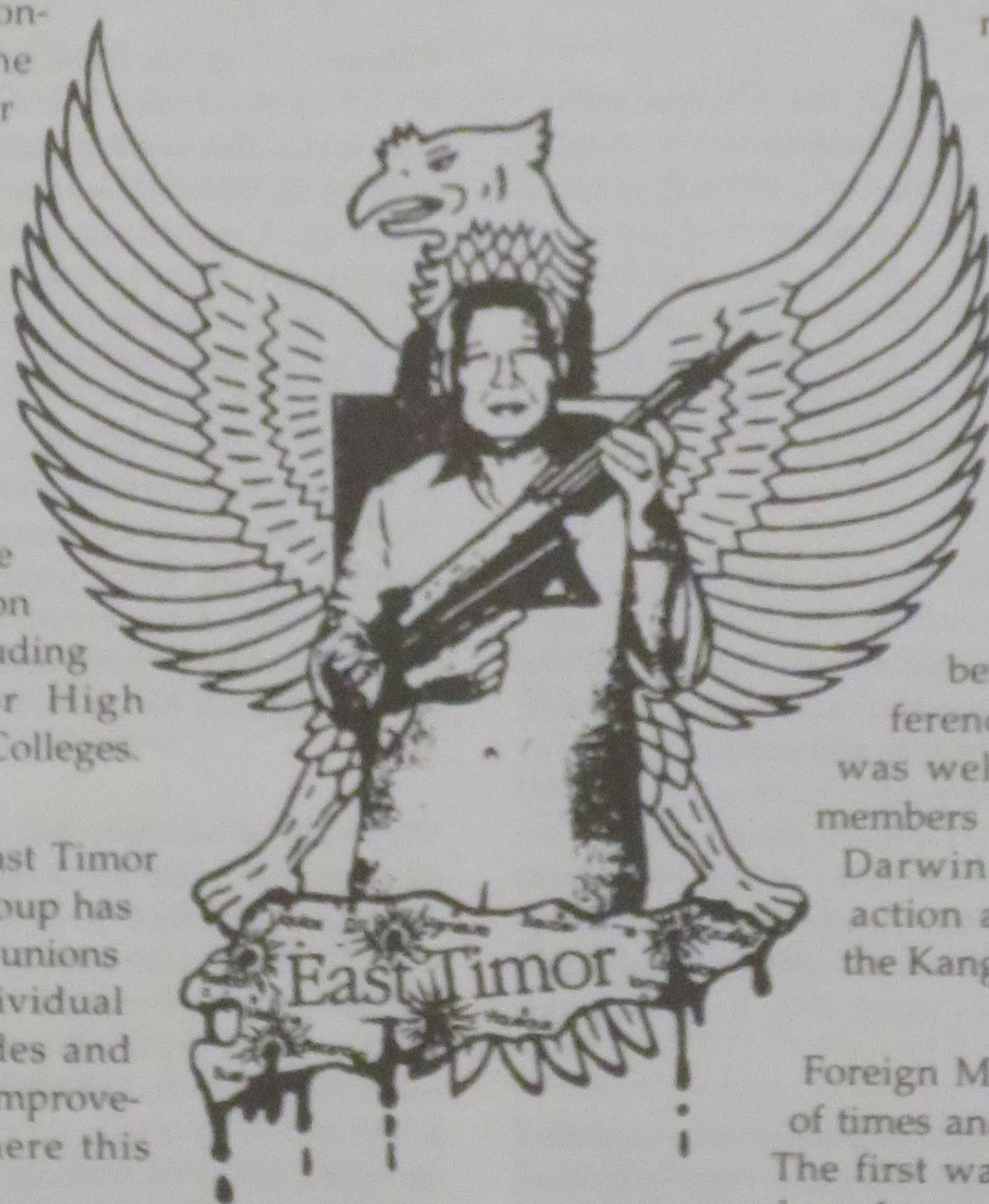
Amnesty International has since deemed him and the others arrested prisoners of conscience. News of our support reached their prison cells and FOET received a letter saying "we have received copies of your Bulletin already about our capture, and it was a wonderful one for us!" Latest reports indicate José has been released, to an uncertain future, but some others arrested that day remain imprisoned.

Our Habibie demonstration in May has to be one of the main highlights for 1995. With only forty eight hours to organise, FOET succeeded in organising a two hundred strong reception for the astonished senior Minister Habibie, one of Suharto's closest confidantes. Shopping for weapons, we had the pleasure of seeing Habibie's eyes practically pop out of his head from behind the tinted windows of his car as he pulled into the hotel. Our angry reception was reported extensively through-

out the Asia-Pacific and was later to result in the two highest-ranking Indonesian military officers switching their accommodation from the luxurious and central Hyatt to the not-so-opulent Pearce Air Base at the last minute - miles away from anything, including us!

A national structure for Australian solidarity groups was formalised with the reformation of the Australian Coalition for a free East Timor (ACET) and many member groups met up in Darwin for a conference on regional issues in July. FOET was well represented with five committee members attending and lending a hand to the Darwin based group who had organised action around Indonesian participation in the Kangaroo '95 military exercises.

Foreign Minister Evans visited Perth a couple of times and we greeted him on both occasions. The first was a public meeting where we were pleased to see many new faces firing questions at Evans about East Timor. The second was at Murdoch University where about fifty demonstrators made his private cocktail session and press conference most uncomfortable for him. The soundtrack of the Dili Massacre was played loudly outside the building. Again during his public address to law





## Coordinator's report (cont)

students, it was not only FOET members who asked the hard questions and expressed contempt at his contradictory and vacuous positions on East Timor.

August saw the 50th anniversary of the end of W.W.II and FOET displayed the excellent photo exhibition we had brought down from Darwin. The *Your Friends Will Not Forget You* exhibition, including testimonies from Timorese, Australian and Japanese war veterans was displayed at the Wesley Arcade and the Royal Show. It was a powerful account of Australia's and Timor's shared history.

This led to Indonesia's Independence Day when we demonstrated (early in the morning!) outside the Indonesian consulate. Members worked hard this day distributing thousands of well-produced info leaflets explaining the hypocrisy of one nation celebrating its independence while brutally denying it to its small and peaceful neighbour.

Funds were significantly boosted by a benefit gig at the Planet Nightclub which was packed to maximum capacity. We financed the distribution of information leaflets throughout Broome, sent money to East Timor and paid for the public space for the photographic exhibition.

We worked quite closely with Community Aid Abroad on a couple of events, one being the CAA State Convention in Rockingham (a fun and informative weekend for CAA members and the public) plus the University of WA Autumn School (which was booked to maximum enrolments). On both these occasions, Australian guests were impressed and moved by the powerful presentations given by many from the East Timorese community here in Perth, and of course by the professionalism of FOET, not only from our speakers but also from our quality literature.

The improvement of our newsletter - while still not as regular as we plan! - has been something the committee is very proud of. "East Timor - The Inside Story" rivals in quality some of the best publications put out in Ireland and the US.

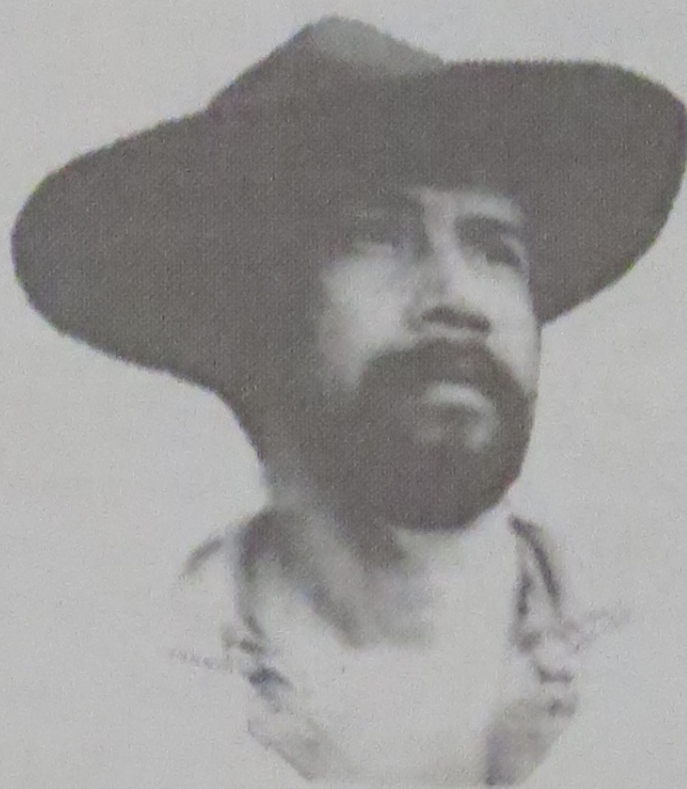
Our input to the media has been consistent and we have built strong links with several key journalists and media agencies, not only in WA. East Timor has featured regularly in our own *West Australian* newspaper. Via email we have kept close tabs on what the Indonesian Government Antara newsagency report (or rather, misreports) on East Timor. Daily monitoring of the email has been time-consuming for a couple of the committee members, but has paid off with us becoming well-known as a reliable source of up-to-date information for the insatiable media.

On November 12 we commemorated the Dili Massacre with a rally of 700 people in the Northbridge Cultural Centre where the "Ahi Naklakan" (flame of freedom) was lit. The FOET

branch in Derby lit candles in support and the following weekend we took the flame down south to Bunbury where a network of East Timor activists has been consolidated.

By December 7, invasion day, we are all always exhausted as it comes so soon after November 12. Despite it being a weekday afternoon, the 20th anniversary of Indonesia's annexation of East Timor was loudly protested outside the consulate building. East Timorese and their supporters spilled out onto the road as the invasion was innovately and passionately re-enacted. Numbers at such protests have grown swiftly and significantly throughout the past couple of years; and predictably so has monitoring and hassling from the police, protective services and other government bodies. I guess when these people ask you for formal meetings, you know you are having an effect somewhere.

So far in 1996 FOET has held two major events - firstly the "Boogie for East Timor" Dance Party fundraiser at the Portuguese Club in February, where despite a smaller attendance than the Planet gig, we all had a rolling good time! In a more serious vein, FOET held a booklaunch for a new publication by the East Timor Relief Association: "A Travesty of Justice - Xanana's Defence" on May 17. This was a great success, attracting over 120 people to the intimate Maltings Gallery. Out of many good moments that evening, the highlight would have to be the impassioned speech of prominent WA writer, Tom Hungerford, supporting Xanana and the East Timorese and condemning as shameful the position of successive Australian governments.



So that's just some of the FOET highlights - what I haven't detailed are the copious meetings, phone calls and correspondence with politicians, their advisers, diplomats, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the UN, and other solidarity groups. Not to mention our fiery committee (and general) meetings where we thrash out the issues and debate tactics. It's been a dynamic and challenging time and I feel we have done well in our solidarity work.

Coming up are two important days - July 17 and August 17. The first is the twentieth anniversary of Indonesia proclaiming 'integration' of East Timor into the Republic, and Suharto may well visit Dili for the first time in years - fireworks of the worst kind may well proceed this to 'settle' the populace in preparation. August 17 will be Indonesia's Independence Day, and as in previous years, we will be politely but loudly pointing out the hypocrisy of the current situation. Please get involved in these - more details as they come to hand.

So, from now on we've got to do things bigger, better, slicker, and come ever closer to the day of self-determination, when we can fold up FOET and book our tickets for the biggest party ever on the beautiful Dili foreshore!



## Upcoming Events

### Exhibition

June 19 1996

East Timor exhibition at PICA (see page 7)

### Australian Coalition for a free East Timor (ACET) National Days of Protest

Wednesday July 17 1996

National Day of Solidarity in Support of East Timorese Self-Determination. 17 July will be the 20th anniversary of Indonesia's 'official' annexation of East Timor as its 27th province. Suharto to travel to Dili.

Saturday August 17 1996

Indonesia's Independence Day - What About East Timor? Anniversary of the 1945 Declaration of Indonesian independence. True independence and freedom cannot be achieved while Indonesia enslaves its neighbours.

October 16 1996

Balibo Murders - Day of Commemoration 21 years since 5 Australian-based journalists were murdered by Indonesian troops

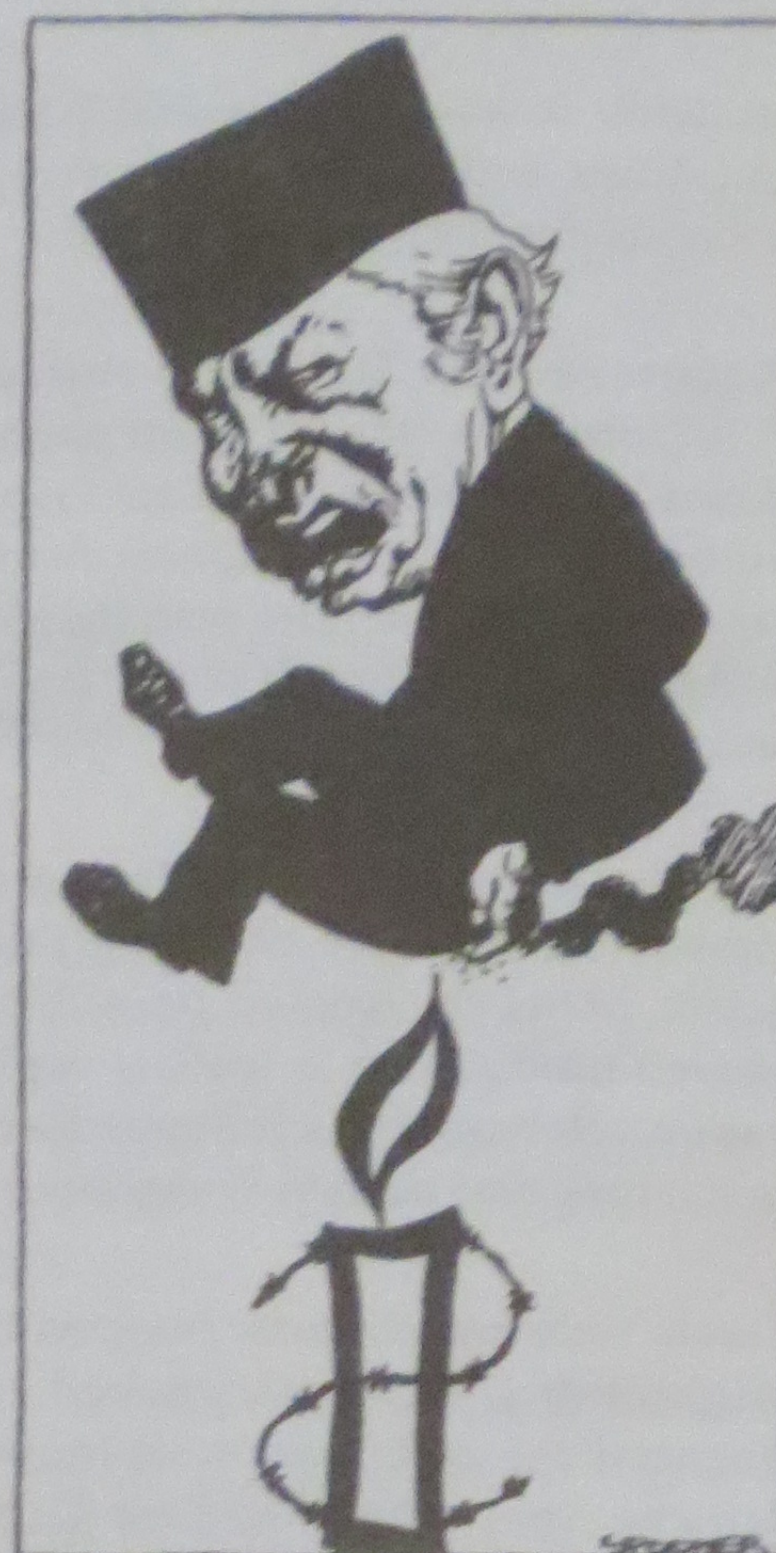
November 12 1996

Dili Massacre - East Timor National Day of Mourning 5th anniversary of Santa Cruz Massacre

December 7 1996

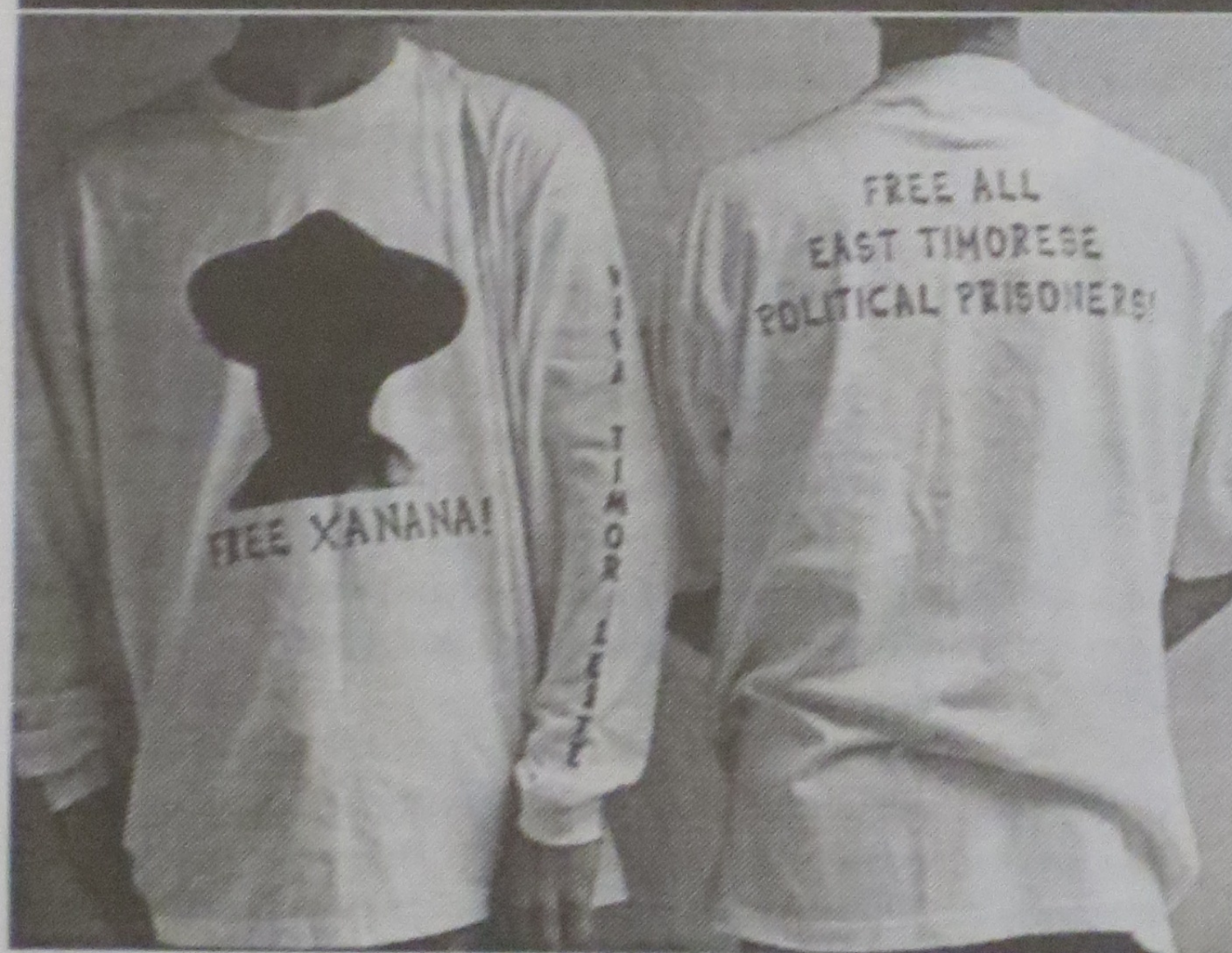
Anniversary of the full-scale invasion of East Timor, 1975

(more details will be sent to members soon)



SPOONER

### Hot new Xanana T-Shirts available!



FOET (WA) are proud to announce the release of a new T-Shirt, featuring Xanana Gusmão. The front shows a large photo of Xanana resplendent in his 'diggers' hat, with the caption 'Free Xanana!' The back says 'Free All East Timorese Political Prisoners!' Down the arm of the long-sleeve version is 'Viva Timor Leste'.

These high quality shirts were created by FOET as part of the national campaign launched by the Australian Coalition for a free East Timor (ACET) on May 17, to raise the profile of Xanana and other prisoners. The shirts are a heavy 100% cotton with two-colour print, and are available in long-sleeve (\$25) and short sleeve (\$20), on white, grey or oatmeal. Sizes are M, L and XL.

Pick one up at the next FOET event, phone (09) 444 5885, or write to: FOET T-Shirts, 43 Selkirk St, North Perth, WA 6006. Postage within Australia is free. Cheques payable to Friends of East Timor. Discounts available for bulk orders. Long-sleeves selling fast - so get in quick and visibly show your support for Xanana and his courageous companions!

### National lobbying campaign planned

FOET is drawing up plans on behalf of ACET for a national lobbying campaign, targeting particular federal electorates. One of the main aims is to have a motion on self-determination moved in Parliament, but along the way to raise the issue with a far broader spectrum of the community in these electorates through visits, radio talkback, letters etc. This campaign is not counterposed to the many other forms

of action FOET carries out or endorses, but is aimed at ensuring we extend beyond 'preaching to the converted'. Thirty FOET members put their names down at the March General Meeting to help with this campaign. If anyone else has ideas or would like to be involved, please call Christine on 350 5549 or John and Pat on 361 4678.

Are you on Email ? If so email FOET <foetwa@perth.dialix.oz.au> for a list of resources on East Timor available on the Internet.