

EAST TIMOR

The Inside Story

June 1993 NO.8

Xanana condemns Indonesia

In his statement to the Dili court, Xanana Gusmao, leader of the East Timorese resistance whose trial started on 1 February, delivered a stinging indictment of Indonesia and its backers, acting in the finest accusatory tradition of political defence in the courtroom. The court, clearly under instructions from the military, stopped him from delivering the statement after he had read only two pages.

The court handed down a life sentence at the end of a trial which Amnesty International, Asia Watch, the International Commission of Jurists and many others have condemned as blatantly unfair.

His statement, hand-written in prison and completed on 27 March this year, was smuggled abroad, reaching the outside world in time for publication as soon as the verdict was announced.

He explained how he had pretended to collaborate with his captors in their attempts to use him, in order to be able to speak at the end of the trial,

free from coercion of any kind. I have always insisted in all my conversations including the one I had with the Indonesian ambassador to the UN, Mr Nugroho, that, under the circumstances in which my earlier statements were made, no credibility can be given to them.

It is now clear that everything Xanana said following his arrest was aimed at keeping up the appearance of collaboration so that he could speak publicly in what he thought would be an open forum.

He reveals that his captors were ready to acquit him, had he collaborated with them in the trial.

On 22 November last year in Denpasar, I signed a document in which I affirmed that, according to international law, I continue to be, like all Timorese, a Portuguese citizen and in my own conscience I am a citizen of East Timor.

I reject the competence of any Indonesian court to try me, and particularly the jurisdiction of this court which has been implanted by force of arms and crimes committed against my homeland, East Timor.

As for Sudjono, the lawyer who became his defence counsel, Xanana described how he had been prevented from making contact with the Legal Aid Institute. A letter he had written to them accepting their offer to defend him was intercepted and he was forced to write another reply, refusing their offer.

The heavy hand of the military

Xanana devoted much of his statement to laying bare the degree of army control in East Timor, in particular BAIS, the intelligence agency, and KOPASSUS, the red-beret elite troops. Stressing the contrast between his experiences in the bush, always among his own people, and his experience now in captivity, he said:

I feel like a foreigner in my own land. In prison at Polwil [the police command] I am surrounded by Indonesians; officers from BAIS and Kopassus are my warders. Here in court, I see only Indonesians, mostly men from BAIS and KOPASSUS... some of them the very men who have handled my case throughout my imprisonment. The Timorese, my compatriots, are out on the street under strict surveillance.

In Polwil where they try to flatter me with special attention, the inscriptions written on the prison walls by the prisoners, my companions, remind me constantly of the sufferings of many of my compatriots, victims of torture, and remind me constantly of the unforgettable 12 November 1991. What did the peaceful demonstration of 12 November want? To remind Jakarta and the world of the need for dialogue, to remind Jakarta and the world that there is something profoundly wrong in East Timor.

In the dock of international opinion

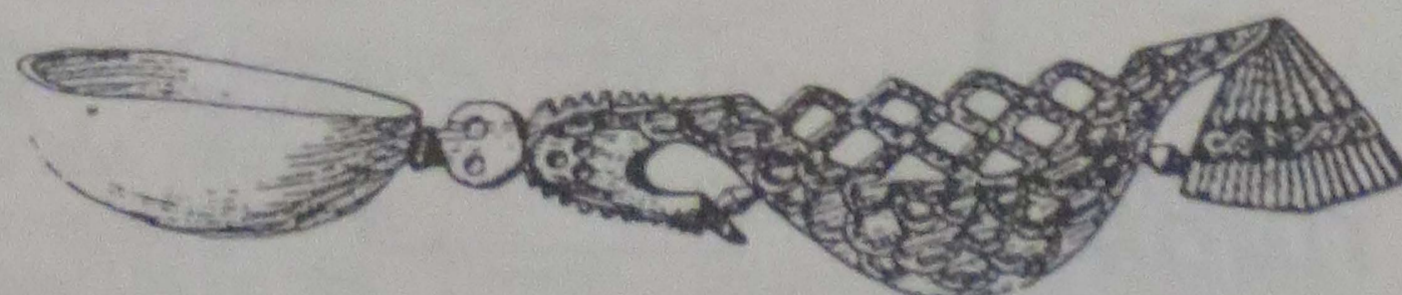
Rejecting the farce of being tried for crimes against the Indonesian state and the illegal possession of firearms, Xanana said:

The ones who should be standing before an international court are:

- the Indonesian government for crimes committed in the past 17 years in East Timor;
- the US administration which gave the green light to the invasion on 7 December 1975 and have since given military aid and political support for Indonesia's genocide in East Timor;
- the governments of Australia and western Europe for their policy of complicity towards Indonesia;
- and finally, the Portuguese government for its grave irresponsibility in the decolonisation of East Timor.

The UN recognises as legitimate all forms of opposition to the colonial presence in any part of the world where people are fighting for liberation. My struggle and the resistance of my people and of Falintil [the armed forces of the East Timorese resistance movement] should be placed in this context, and stand above Indonesian law.

continued on page 2



He had bitter words for the Indonesians with whom he has been in contact since his capture, of his disgust with a West Papuan officer who spoke to him enthusiastically about 'the great Indonesian family', of the Sumatran interpreter who had nothing but praise for his 'Javanese brothers', and of officers from Sulawesi who tried to impress him with their talk about 'Indonesian values'.

The concept of realpolitik has acquired a new dimension for me. Political realism is political subservience, the denial of the individual conscience, the death of the conscience of a people.

Every Indonesian bound by the policy of their own nation and their understanding of East Timor is a reproduction of how their government sees it unless they can open their ears to their own consciences and commit themselves to the principles of justice, freedom and the rule of law.

He had been lectured a great deal about the backwardness of Portuguese colonialism "as if I had not experienced it myself". His captors tried to impress him with statistics about development in East Timor but, he asked, "can colonialism be quantified as good or bad?"

Indonesia's claim soaked in blood

Xanana accused his accusers in court of going to far in their claim that Fretilin "had dared to impose its will on people of East Timor".

Until this moment, the UN does not recognise Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor, which was imposed by force, by violence and the systematic violation of the most fundamental human rights.

The court mentioned 17 December 1975 as the day on which a provisional government and local assembly were formed. But since all the Indonesians have forgotten, I must remind them here of that tragic day, 7 December in that same year, the day of the cowardly and shameful Indonesian invasion [when] Indonesian troops indiscriminately massacred the defenceless population of Dili, killing thousands, including elderly people, women and children and also including an Australian journalist.

While the Balibo statement [of 30 November 1975] was signed with the blood of Australian journalists who were murdered by Indonesian troops during the attack on Balibo, the so-called Indonesian provisional government was formed over the corpses of the Timorese massacred from 7-17 of that same December.

How can a government that was established to the accompaniment of the sound of sea and land shelling of a defenceless population and the sound of advancing tanks and cannons claim to have any juridical standing?

Timorese witnesses as victims

Xanana also spoke about the pressures on Timorese who were forced to testify at his trial, all of whom had been inhibited from speaking the truth. All had been forced to say that they had surrendered "of their own free will". He accused the security forces of treating them inhumanely - "See how thin they are!" - and asked: "Were those responsible for the (Santa Cruz) murders ever brought to trial to answer for their crimes? What is the worth of a law which

shuts its eyes to the ghastly crime of 12 November 1991? Which moral values, which patterns of justice do the Indonesians uphold when they proclaim the criminals as heroes and condemn the victims?"

He recalled the valour of the witness, Saturnino da Costa Belo, who shouted "Viva Timor Leste" in court, describing him as an example of the heroism of the East Timorese people. "The farce of the hastily drafted medical certificate certifying that he was ill should make all you gentlemen here blush with shame, because you know very well that the problem rests on your shoulders."

Everything connected with my trial is in the hands of BAIS and Kopassus whose officers fill this room, watching everything and everybody. Jakarta should be ashamed of its criminal behaviour in East Timor and should have recognised long ago that it has lost in East Timor. The Indonesian generals should be made to realise that they have been defeated in East Timor. The moment has come for Jakarta to recognise its political defeat on the ground.

He went on:

Here today, as commander of Falintil, the glorious armed forces of national liberation of East Timor, I acknowledge military defeat on the ground. I am not ashamed to say so. On the contrary, I am proud that a small guerrilla army has been able to resist a large nation like Indonesia, a regional power which invaded us like cowards and want to dominate us by the law of terror and crime, violence, persecution, prison, torture and murder.

Appeals to the world community

Xanana concluded his unread defence with appeals addressed to many who hold the power to force the military regime to change its policy in East Timor:

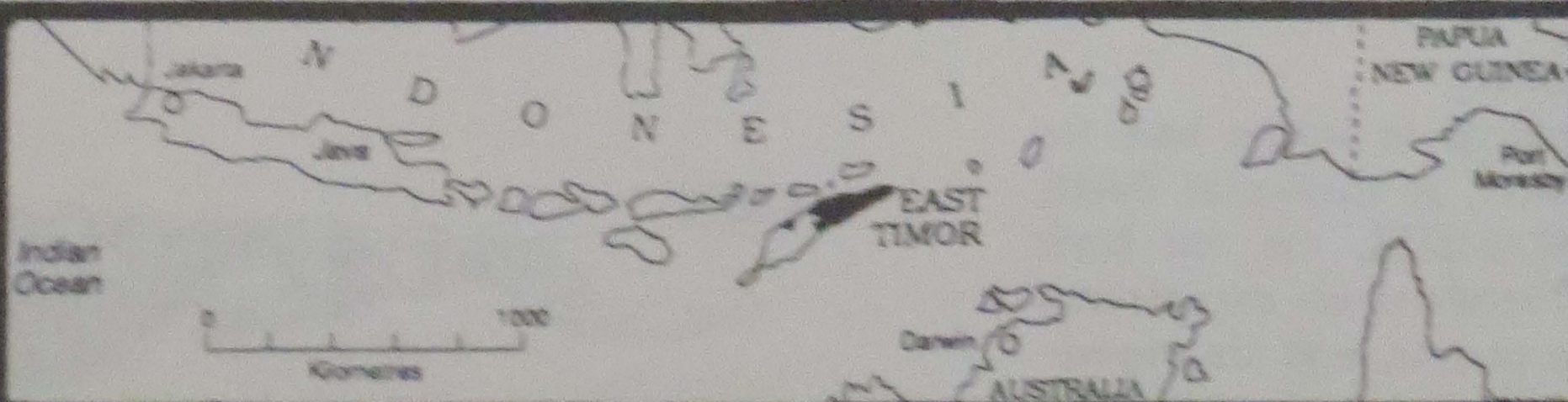
** I appeal to the new generation of Indonesians to understand that the people of East Timor attach more value to freedom, justice and peace than to the development which is carried out here with help from Australia, the US, and European countries which have close economic relations with Jakarta.*

** I appeal to the people of Indonesia to understand that according to universal principles and international law, East Timor is a non-autonomous territory in accordance with the norms that govern decolonisation. I appeal to the Indonesian people to understand that East Timor is not a threat to Indonesia or a threat to its security. The story they tell you, that East Timor is communist, is old hat. We don't want to dismember Indonesia. The fact is that East Timor was never part of Indonesia.*

** I appeal to the international community to understand that it is time to show that the New World Order requires acts that will bring to an end the situation inherited from the past*

** I appeal to the European Community to be true to its own resolutions and all the resolutions adopted regarding East Timor.*

**FRIENDS
OF
EAST
TIMOR**



P.O. BOX 661

DOUBLEVIEW 6018

WEST AUSTRALIA

** I appeal to the friends of East Timor, parliamentarians in Europe, America, Japan and Australia, to go on pressing their governments to stop applying double standards to similar cases where systematic violations of UN resolutions occur, as in the case of Indonesia's behaviour regarding East Timor.*

** I appeal to President Bill Clinton to reconsider the problem of East Timor and to press Jakarta to accept dialogue with the Portuguese and the Timorese in the search for an internationally-acceptable solution.*

** I appeal to the Portuguese Government never to abandon its responsibility towards East Timor.*

** I appeal to the UN Secretary-General to ensure that the solution he seeks for East Timor is based on universal principles and international law.*

** Finally, I appeal to the government of Indonesia to change its attitude and to realise that the moment has come to understand the essence of the struggle in East Timor.*

After saying to the UN Secretary-General that he is ready "to participate in the negotiating process at any time or in any place", he ends his statement with the following words:

As a political prisoner in the hands of the occupiers of my country, it is of no consequence to me if they pass a death sentence here today. They have killed more than one third of the defenceless population of East Timor. They are killing my people and I am worth no more than the heroic struggle of my people who, because they are a small and weak people, have always been subjected to foreign rule.



Xanana Gusmao being taken into the Dili court-house.

New Church clampdown

Latest reports indicate that the Church and specifically priests are being targeted in a new clampdown by the Indonesian military. The military is attempting to discredit the leadership of priests among the people and to drive a wedge between the Church and the people.

Belo disbelieves military

In a telephone interview conducted by *O Publico*, published on 4 December 1992, Bishop Belo was in no doubt as to what he felt had happened to Xanana after his arrest in November. Asked whether he thought Xanana was telling the truth, or lying in his video statement, Belo said: 'I don't know for certain what happened, but for the past 17 years, if any prisoner spoke in the way that Xanana has spoken, it happened as a result of torture.'

Disinformation

Belo went on to reveal his anger at disinformation being spread by the military about a pastoral letter he was supposedly going to release, calling on the guerrillas to give up their arms at seven selected churches. 'It's quite false. This was cooked up by the military so that the people would believe it. There is nothing whatsoever about any church being specified for this. I have not yet taken the decision on whether to issue a Christmas pastoral letter. It's all lies. It's all military propaganda.'

He confirmed that he would not make any appeal to the guerrillas, as he feared that they would be killed if they gave themselves up, as in 1979 and 1980.

Lastly, he reaffirmed his belief that a referendum in East Timor would be the best solution.

Courtroom gag

When Xanana rose to speak on 17 May, the courtroom was packed. Several diplomats were present but the UN representative had again been prevented from boarding a plane in Bali. Seats in the front rows usually reserved for the foreign observers were all occupied when they arrived so they had to sit in a nearby corridor. Normally anyone sitting in this part of the court-house could follow the proceedings through a loud-speaker, but on this day it had been switched off so they heard nothing.

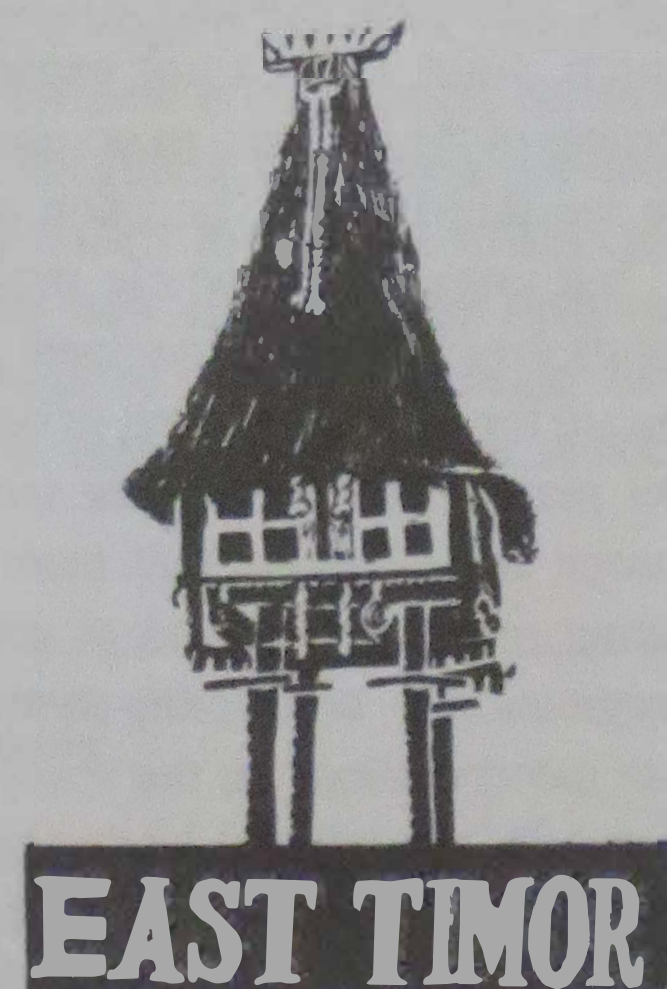
The most conspicuous men in court were Major-General Theo Syafei and other senior officials, no doubt knowing what would happen and making sure nothing would go wrong. The judges and the prosecutors had copies of the Indonesian text and were ready to pounce.

As Xanana read the first two pages, the prosecutor protested several times. When he reached page three, the judge ordered him to stop, claiming that the defence was 'irrelevant'. As soon as they realised what had happened, the diplomats protested to the judge.

Army strategy in disarray

Xanana's stand had thrown the army's strategy into confusion. The army, having told the world Xanana was repentant and would now side with Indonesia on East Timor, was now exposed as flagrant liars who, as CNRM representative overseas, Jose Ramos-Horta, had "come to believe their own propaganda". As he says in his defence, Xanana had decided to use his court appearance to convey his true stand to the world. It was a wise decision. Held incommunicado for so many months, he knew that anything he did from his prison cell would be manipulated by his captors.

The regime could only respond by silencing him in court, an unprecedented event in the history of political trials in Indonesia. However unfair they are, "never in living memory", according to Asia Watch, had a court prevented a defendant from reading out his own defence. As an Australian academic has said: "Judge Godang's ruling is not only out of line with Indonesian practice but also with articles 52 and 153 of the Indonesian Code of Criminal Procedure." [These grant the defendant "the right to speak freely to the investigators and the judge" and stipulate that the "head judge must ensure that nothing occurs... which obstruct either the defendant or witnesses from speaking freely".



"All people have the right to self-determination."

- UN Declaration on Colonialism

imagining 'east timor'

Why has Indonesia's attempt to absorb East Timor failed? And how does one explain the very rapid development of Timorese nationalism since 1975? Benedict Anderson, author of *Imagined Communities*, argues that Indonesia cannot imagine the East Timorese as Indonesians. Their relations with them are those of colonizer and colonized, producing East Timorese nationalism as Dutch colonialism once produced Indonesian nationalism.

I WANT TO ASK TWO quite concrete questions which nevertheless involve a certain common theoretical problematic. The first question is: Why has Indonesia's attempt to absorb East Timor failed? Was the failure inevitable or did something happen between 1975 and 1990 which could have been avoided? What is the nature of the mistakes that were made, if there were indeed mistakes made? The second question is in some ways the reverse: How does one explain the very rapid spread and development of Timorese nationalism? For me this second question is very serious. My theoretical writings on nationalism have focused on the importance of the spread of print and its relationship to capitalism, yet in East Timor there has been very little capitalism, and illiteracy was widespread. Moreover, East Timor is ethnically very complicated, with many different language groups. What was it then that made it possible to 'think East Timor'?

The first question came to me while I was in Portugal in May 1992. Among my Portuguese colleagues a discussion was going on about the memoir of General Costa Gomez. He was one of the key players in the Portuguese governments of 1974-76, at the time of the collapse of the Portuguese empire, and one of those most responsible for decision making with regard to East Timor. In his memoir, he said that he and his friends thought East Timor would be like Goa — that it would be peacefully and easily absorbed into big Indonesia, just as little Goa was absorbed into big India. He argued that if only Jakarta hadn't been so brutal, if the Indonesian Army hadn't been so oppressive and exploitative, there would be no East Timor problem today. Hence, the tragedy of East Timor was neither his fault nor that of the Portuguese Government. East Timor could easily have been a happy, vibrant, participating part of Indonesia. Yet Costa Gomez's account in the end doesn't help us very much, since it does not explain the brutality and the exploitativeness of the Indonesian occupation.

Here we are faced with a question which relates not only to Indonesia, but engages the whole problematic of how nations imagine themselves in the late twentieth century and what the real possibilities are for nations growing in size rather than breaking up into smaller pieces. We have been seeing a lot of the latter in Eastern Europe and I suspect that more is going to occur in the future in other regions, in a kind of general scaling back of the national imagination — an inability to move towards inclusiveness and genuine incorporation. In the specific case of Indonesia, one needs to ask how the military leadership in Jakarta thinks about territory and peoples which they have determined to be 'Indonesian'. Clearly, the great difficulty has been to persuade themselves that the East Timorese 'really' are Indonesians. If they were, there would be only the simple task of scraping away a kind of superficial strangeness attributable to Portuguese colonization, revealing a 'natural Indonesianness' underneath.

Indonesian nationalism self-consciously sees itself as

incorporating or covering many different ethnic-linguistic groups and many different religious cultures, precisely those agglomerated over centuries into the Netherlands East Indies. The commonality of 'Indonesia' is fundamentally one of historical experience and mythology. On the one hand, there is the conception of centuries of struggle against Dutch colonialism. On the other, there is the myth, powerful but also potentially divisive, of grand pre-colonial states, most notably that of Majapahit in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Majapahit 'empire' has the advantage that its ill-defined extent can be read to include the whole of Timor, as well as regions today solidly part of Malaysia and Singapore. Yet it has the great disadvantage that it is closely identified with just one of Indonesia's ethnic groups, the Javanese. Hence state leaders have been very cautious about using it as a prime basis for the historical identity of modern Indonesia.

FOR JAKARTA, THEREFORE, the question is how to recompose the national people narrative so as to incorporate the East Timorese. It cannot be done in terms of resistance to Dutch imperialism. Nor can it be done in terms of the solid historical connections and contacts with the rest of the archipelago, for one of the peculiar characteristics of Portuguese colonialism was that it kept East Timor extremely isolated, except for links between Portugal, Macau, Mozambique, Angola and Goa. The obvious alternative to a historicized nationalism is of course, a biological-ethnic essentialism. In principle Jakarta could say: 'After all, we have the same physical features, our languages are connected, our original cultures were identical'. But this line of argument is tricky, for it leads to claims, unacceptable today, to the Philippines and Malaysia.



Pro-independence demonstrators at the Santa Cruz cemetery, shortly before the massacre

I think the result has been a deep inability to imagine East Timor as Indonesian. And if you can't imagine the East Timorese as really and truly 'brothers', what then? I was talking recently with a very intelligent East Timorese about his conversations with East Timorese students in Indonesian universities. There are at least a couple of thousand such students. Many of them drop out, partly as a result of language problems, but mainly because of what they experience as an intolerable social climate. He told me that what really enrages East Timorese students is that they are always being told how ungrateful they are. 'Look at all we have done for you! Where is your gratitude?' is what they hear day in day out from deans, professors, fellow students, and so forth. Is it likely that in the heyday of Indonesian nationalism people ran around the country telling fellow Indonesians whom they were enlisting to the nationalist cause that they should be 'grateful'. Even in the 1950s when Indonesia was shaken by many regionalist revolts, the accusation of ingratitude never emerged. The accusation then on all sides was typically that of 'betrayal' of a common historical project. By contrast, 'ingratitude' was a typical accusation by Dutch colonial officials against 'native' nationalism: 'Look at all we have done for you, down there, in terms of security, education, economic development, civilization'. The language is that of the superior and civilized towards the inferior and barbarous. It is not very far from racism, and reveals a profound incapacity to 'incorporate' the East Timorese, an unacknowledged feeling that they are really, basically, foreign.

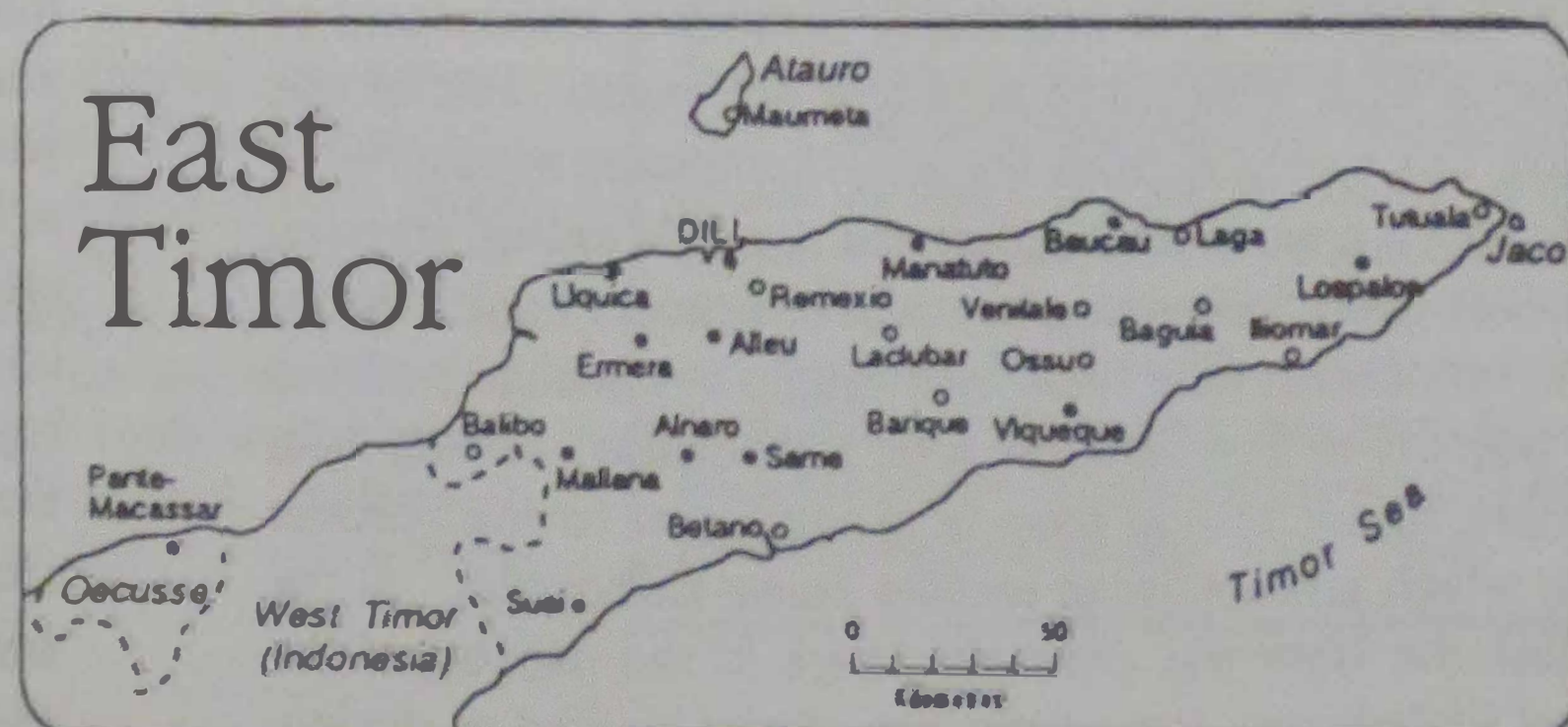
One could argue this stance is evidenced by the extremist methods of rule that were used in East Timor after the invasion of 1975. The vast scale of the violence deployed, the use of aerial bombardments, the napalming of villages, the systematic herding of people into resettlement centres leading to the terrible starvation famines of 1977-80, have no real counterparts in Indonesian government policy towards, as it were, 'real Indonesians'. They seem more like policies for enemies than for national siblings. It is true that there was massive violence in the anti-Communist campaign of 1965-66. Yet the bulk of that violence was local in character, fuelled by the panic of millions of people about what was going to happen to themselves, their families, and so forth, 'if Communism prevailed'. It had its cold, planned elements certainly, but nothing comparable to the coldness and the plannedness of the ravaging of East Timor, which reminds me very much of the horrific depredation of Leopold's 'spectral agents' in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad made the point that for these agents all civilized rules were abandoned in 'Africa'. There atrocities they would never get away with back home in Belgium were permissible.

It is true, of course, that East Timor posed very special problems for Jakarta. A substantial part of the population had long been Catholicized. Furthermore, because of Portugal's membership of NATO, the East Timorese resistance had better weapons and military training, at the start, than any previous local opposition to Jakarta. It put up a very stiff fight, and many thousands of Indonesian troops were wounded or killed in the struggle, stimulating a strong battle-zone atmosphere in the territory. On the other hand, the war has gone on now for seventeen years — longer than any war Jakarta has conducted. This has meant that East Timor has been crucial in the careers of Indonesian military officers in a unique way. Most of the most successful and ambitious officers have fought in East Timor, and their promotions have depended in part on their success in conducting merciless repression and control.

The Indonesian Government has been unable to incorporate East Timor imaginatively, in the broader, popular sense. I have been very struck over the years by the extraordinary degree to which East Timor has been shut off, not merely from the outside world, but also from the rest of Indonesia. Until fairly recently, ordinary Indonesians could not go to this official part of their own country without special permission. Newspaper coverage of East Timor was exceptionally meagre, and even less truthful than the media coverage of other parts of Indonesia. It was thus possible for many Indonesians not to think about East Timor very much at all, let alone know about it.

One last question to raise before turning to East Timorese nationalism itself again relates to the problem of imagination. Did the Indonesian military leaders ever consider the possibility that they were replaying, in reverse, the final trajectory of the colonial relationship between themselves and the Dutch? The Dutch have been in the archipelago since the start of the seventeenth century, but a recognizable nationalist movement did not appear until the very end of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth. Its rise was clearly tied to the decisions of the Dutch colonialists to start educating people, particularly in Dutch, to the spread of the modern mass media, to massive 'development' projects, and to the growth of a professionalized secret police and intelligence apparatus. For the first time, after 1900, natives were aware of themselves. People were targets of a systematic and centralized security apparatus. They were now conscious of being subjected to a single developmental project, and of having in common, in the minds of their rulers, their ineradicable 'nativeness'. They came to understand, through the Dutch language imposed on them in new schools, the very idea of colonialism as a system, and the modern means to emancipate themselves from it. Why did the Indonesian Government not see that Education-Repression-Development in East Timor followed exactly the logic of earlier Dutch policies, and that their failure was 'foretold' by Indonesia's own modern birth?

NOW WANT TO TURN to the question of why East Timor has become so nationalist so quickly. The answers here are much less clear. Begin with the name itself: 'East Timor'. It is an expression which comes from the Mercatorian map, on which a pencilled administrative line divides Timor in half. How did this 'aerial' demarcation become so real a reality that it is possible for young people in Dili to think it is perfectly normal to call themselves 'East Timorese', as if these two words were one, no longer immediately pointing to 'West Timor'. In the video of the Dili massacre the kids' placards show slogans like 'Viva Timorleste' — all one word. The origins of this new consciousness certainly derive in part from a bureaucratic imagining which long pre-dates the invention of nationalism. It parallels the way in which (as I have argued in chapter nine of the new edition of my *Imagined Communities*) the Irianese were imagined or came into being, only perhaps in the last thirty years. Yet 'mapped imagination' is not a sufficient explanation.



What about social formation? If one looks at the situation up to 1974-75, one finds a typically Iberian colonial social order. Underneath the Portuguese ruling stratum were, by rank, wealthy, apolitical Chinese, the then *niestizos* of mixed African, Arab, Portuguese and local ancestries, and a plethora of 'native' ethnolinguist communities. One might expect to emerge from such a social order something like what one finds in the Philippines: leaders with an ambiguous political consciousness, very much aware of their mixed ancestries and external ties. Indeed, among the older East Timorese leaders of the 1970s one did find, quite often, a kind of unsureness of identity, and a resentful attachment to things Portuguese. East Timor was as real a place, but was there then a real 'East Timorese' community for which they were the natural leaders? My sense is that in 1974-75 true East Timor nationalism was still quite thin on the ground; perhaps only a small percentage of the population could then really imagine the future nation-state of East Timor.

Since 1975 this situation has changed dramatically. The question is why, given the virtual absence of print-capitalism, and the still substantial illiteracy? In a recent interview with *Editor*, a major Jakarta magazine, General Sjafei, the East Timor military commander, said something very revealing. Describing the intensive measures that were taken to head off the *Dusitania*, the ship that tried to go to Dili from Darwin with a group of students and reporters aboard, he noted that the ship itself was not dangerous, but said that if it managed to anchor in Dili harbour, 'it could be that I would be facing 120,000 inhabitants of the city of Dili', and 'under the circumstances I could not guarantee that there would not be an explosion of the masses'. This language is completely new. Never before has the Army talked about 'explosions of the masses' in East Timor or that it faced '120,000 people in Dili'. For years it has claimed that only a few dozen diehard opponents existed deep in the mountainous interior. Sjafei's statement is precisely that of a colonial power suddenly aware of its impending demise. It is just like the Dutch recognition in 1946 that Indonesia had changed completely since 1940 when their power had seemed impregnable.

We here return to the ironical logic of colonialism. If you look at the official speeches about East Timor, you will never find Suharto or the generals talking about its people as anything but 'East Timorese', even though there are at least thirty ethnic or tribal groups in the region. In the same way, the Jakarta regime never talks about Asmat or Dhani, but always about Irianese. This exactly parallels the late colonial Netherlands East Indies, where the colonized knew they were all 'natives' together in their rulers' eyes, no matter what island, ethnicity or religion they belonged to. A profound sense of commonality emerged from the gaze of the colonial state. Indonesian power is infinitely more penetrating, infinitely more widespread, than Portuguese colonial power ever was. It is there in the smallest villages, and is represented by hundreds of military posts and a huge intelligence apparatus. Thus the consciousness of being East Timorese has spread rapidly since 1975 precisely because of the state's expansion, new schools and development projects also being part of this.

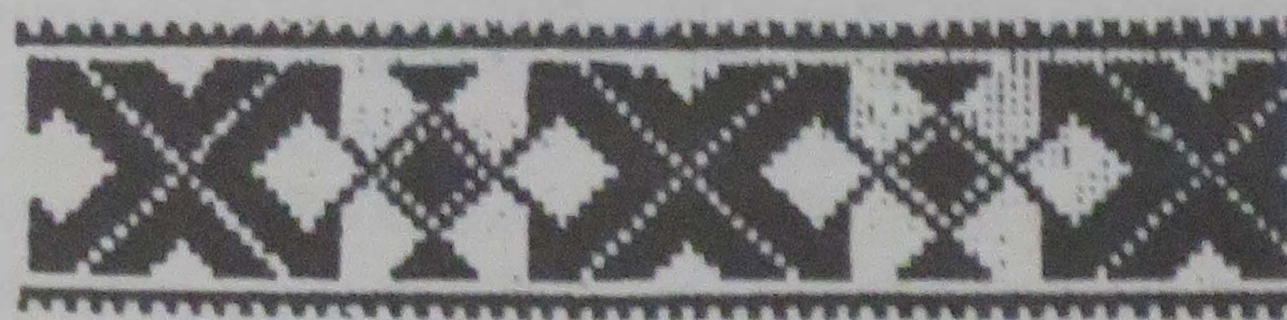
One of the main projects of the Suharto state has been to 'develop' Indonesia. This necessarily involves a certain kind of definition of what it means to be a real Indonesian. Part of this definition has emerged from the anti-Communist massacres of 1965-66, which were understood in part as a fight against atheism. Hence today every Indonesian has to have a proper book-religion. Here the Indonesian state finds itself caught in a strange bind. In 1975, a majority of East Timorese were still animists. Making them 'Indonesian' meant 'raising' them from animism to having a proper religion, which given existing realities meant Catholicism. At the same time the state was perfectly aware of the dangers of the spread of Catholicism, particularly since Rome insisted on dealing directly with East Timor, bypassing the conformist Indonesian Catholic hierarchy.

So the Indonesian regime has been both wanting and distrusting Catholicism's spread. In the last seventeen years, the Catholic population of the territory has more than doubled in size. In East Timor, everyone is aware that if you are a member of the Catholic Church, you enjoy protection according to the state's own logic; at the same time a popular Catholicism has emerged as an expression of a common suffering, just as it did in nineteenth-century Ireland. This Catholic commonality in some sense substitutes for the kind of nationalism I have talked about elsewhere, which comes from print-capitalism. Moreover, the decision of the Catholic hierarchy in East Timor to use Tetun, not Indonesian, as the language of the Church, has had profoundly nationalizing effects. It has raised Tetun from being a local language or lingua franca in parts of East Timor to becoming, for the first time, the language of 'East Timorese' religion and identity.

But there is a further colonial irony at work. For young Indonesian intellectuals at the turn of the century, the language of the colonizer, Dutch, was the language through which it became possible to communicate across the colony, and to understand the real condition of the country. It was also the language of access to modernity and the world beyond the colony. For one generation at least, Dutch performed the absolutely essential function of getting natives out of the prisons of local ethnic languages. In the same way, the spread of Indonesian in the Jakarta-sponsored school system has created a new generation of young Timorese who are quite fluent in Indonesian, and who, through Indonesian, have found access to the world beyond Indonesia. Indonesian is not the language of internal solidarity among the East Timorese young but it is one of the important languages of access to modern life. Indonesian/Tetun corresponds in 1990 to Dutch/Indonesian in 1920.

Thinking about nationalism at the end of this century, we may have to think more about situations like East Timor, where nationalist projects can turn into 'colonial' projects, thereby contributing to the fragmentation of the post Second World War new states that were inherited from European dominion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Benedict Anderson teaches Indonesian politics at Cornell University. He is author of Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins of Nationalism. This article is based on a lecture at Monash University in 1992.



Maryknoll Justice and Peace Office

Reports coming out of East Timor since the beginning of 1993 indicate that the level of brutality by Indonesian security forces exceeds anything experienced by the Timorese for many years. Central to the strategy currently being employed is an attempt to thoroughly demoralize the people of East Timor so as to destroy their will to oppose integration into Indonesia. A key element in the campaign is the staging of 'loyalty ceremonies' attended by the media where people are forced to declare their loyalty to the Indonesian republic. By creating the impression that thousands of Timorese rebels have 'surrendered', Indonesia hopes to present the international community with a fait accompli, making further diplomatic efforts in support of Timorese self-determination irrelevant.

E.M. visited East Timor recently. He writes under a pseudonym to preserve his identity and for security reasons is unable to name anyone he met.

Eyewitness account

Arriving in Dili, you gain a sense of how cut off East Timor is, its isolation compounded by an apparent atmosphere of lazy calm. But as you walk the streets, soldiers pick you out with their eyes as you walk. No sooner have you escaped the inspection of one military gaze, you are captured by another.

The army seems to outnumber people on the street. Soldiers are the only ones who can walk erect, boldly for all to see. As an outsider with previous knowledge of the situation in East Timor, you can only guess where the East Timorese are, huddled in their homes, planning, keeping the fires burning so that one day they will be free.

From the voices that are willing to speak to you, you learn that people are frightened. So many people have disappeared and the November 1991 massacre at Santa Cruz has shaken everyone. The army remains undefeated and its added column of spies apparently outnumber each East Timorese family two to one.

Here oppression has a darker, hidden meaning. It is the silences that speak of the blood and pain of struggle. Romantically, East Timorese activists in the outside world may want to hear of defiance, struggle and victories. But while such resistance exists, it is not immediately apparent in everyday life; the smoky heat seems laced with terror and silence.

Walking the streets of Dili, in the wide open spaces, the large roads clear for the trucks, you feel you are walking in the footsteps of the dead — the 200,000 Timorese who have been killed for wanting to be free and who have left the streets of Dili with their shadows and ghosts.

Despite its beauty and calm, it is a fearful place. There is a poignant sense of unnaturalness screaming in the background. On the streets people are too frightened to talk to you; talking to you means a visit from the army. I remember the face running away scared as I asked for directions. Those who do speak to you could be spies ready to trap you. Walking along the water's edge, the tranquil fishing boats are under the mighty presence of the military ships with their guns pointed inwards towards the bay.

Resistance in East Timor would appear not to provide the firework displays against oppression that our television screens show of the struggle taking place in South Africa or Palestine. Yet in the unremarkableness of everyday life, you get the feeling that something remarkable is taking place. Behind their silent, calm exterior and the iron curtain of surveillance, people are working clandestinely and dreaming of freedom.

When you ask them about their lives, they think you want to hear something spectacular — tales of brutal repression or of banners for freedom being unfurled every day in full view of the world. They forget to tell you of the humiliating daily reality of checkpoints, of the passes everyone has to carry, of how they are registered and counted as they enter or leave every village and town. Only after questions do they talk about the rapes by soldiers and the babies born or women being taken away for service from husbands and children. To defend and protect themselves the East Timor desperately need our solidarity.

Towns and villages seem like islands among a sea of soldiers. Soldiers are in doorways, in shops, strutting the streets, at bus stations and on the buses. Always armed, they dominate the people into silence.

But the voices that are brave enough to trust and speak to an outsider, tell of what lies behind that silence. They talk of the East Timorese people's need for the world to devote proper attention to their continued suffering. The Santa Cruz massacre has shown them that they are still killed in spite of the presence of the world's cameras, and that, notwithstanding a momentary expression of disgruntlement, the world seems to carry on as before. How much more suffering can they endure when when the outside world does not seem to notice it?

Since Xanana Gusmao's arrest the Timorese feel it is up to the international community to draw attention to his plight during his trial. For the East Timorese, Xanana should be a focus of attention just as Nelson Mandela was in South Africa. But this is now up to us.

People said that the situation now was in some ways worse than in the past. In the past, repression had been explicit, brutal and bloody and had cost thousands of lives. Now it was more insidious, but no less pervasive. People are being stifled. Their language and culture is being taken over, replaced in schools by those of Indonesia. Thousands of transmigrants are being encouraged to work and live in East Timor, in a move which is no different from the oppressive settlement policies of the Israeli government.

Most shops are owned by these newcomers, ensuring that Timorese money goes elsewhere. The settlers come from Flores, Sulewesi and Bali, pawns to the Indonesian leadership's policy of annexation. Whole villages are transplanted with new facilities; tin roofs and artificial streets break the Timorese traditional understanding of the land of which they form part.

Throughout East Timor people were being rounded up randomly — in Viqueque, Baucau, Manatuto, Same. The Indonesian government sought to present this as proof that people were surrendering and that the resistance was broken, in a further effort to further demoralise the Timorese and lie to the world.

The people that did speak, were telling the world to do something. But as the major international powers push for United Nations action on Iraq, Indonesia is being allowed to silence systematically East Timor.

As I left East Timor, I felt as if I was in a corridor between two worlds, that I was carrying the East Timorese people's story away. I felt for for all the exiles who could not go home.



What future for East Timor?

FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW

Indonesia has entered into a US\$5 million contract with the US public relations firm Burson-Marsteller to help improve the country's human-rights and environmental image. Sources say the company will be tasked with the job of presenting government views on issues ranging from human rights, the environment and the situation in the former Portuguese colony of East Timor — all areas where Jakarta has come under increasing criticism from Western aid donors. Another US public relations firm, Hill and Knowlton, has been helping Jakarta present the government's economic reform programmes for some years.

BOOKS

	PRICE
<u>EAST TIMOR: A WESTERN MADE TRAGEDY</u> [Mark Aarons & Robert Domm] A concise coverage of the East Timor issue. The Left Book Club, Sydney, 1992, 96 pages. Paperback.	\$6.00
<u>INDONESIA'S FORGOTTEN WAR: The hidden history of East Timor</u> [John J. Taylor] Zed Books, Sydney, 1991, 230 pages. Includes 14 page chronology. Highly recommended. Paperback.	\$25.00
<u>DEATH IN DILI</u> [Andrew McMillan] Hodder & Stoughton, 1992	\$15.00
<u>TELLING: EAST TIMOR</u> [Michelle Turner] Personal stories 1942-1992 NSW U. P. 1992, 218 pages, paperback.	\$20.00
<u>EAST TIMOR: AN INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY</u> C.I.I.R., 1992 28 pages, a brief and concise overview.	\$3.00

CASSETTES

EAST TIMOR: Talk by Helmi Fauzi (90 min.) 1992. Helmi is an Indonesian intellectual and representative of the Indonesian Forum for Human Dignity

EAST TIMOR 1974-1982: Talk by Gordon McIntosh (25 min.) 1993. Gordon was an ALP Senator from 1974-1987. He visited East Timor before and after the Indonesian invasion. (Includes notes).

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"XANANA" is the name given to a new documentary produced in Melbourne by Louise Crowe. It lasts only 30 minutes but it briefly portrays the history of the life Xanana Gusmao beyond politics. It was released about the time Xanana himself was given the life sentence verdict by the generals of Jakarta.

"Xanana"

Producer: Louise Crowe

Directors: Louise Crowe and Bruce Dynan

Contact: Louise Crowe tel.03 417 7800 fax: 03 419 8959



German warships for Indonesia occupied

The following is a translated summary of a report (original, Indonesian) from Watch Indonesia, Berlin, issued on 29 May 1993:

Seventy demonstrators encamped in the Peenemunde harbour, on Friday succeeded in occupying Indonesian warships, a follow-up to a similar action the day before. Up to midnight, German security forces were unable to remove seven demonstrators who had chained themselves to an Indonesian corvette.

The action was organised by groups in the East German Peace Movement, which spearheaded the 1989 resolution, and Watch Indonesia in West Berlin. The demonstrators strongly condemned the sale of 39 warships from the former East German navy to Indonesia.

Announcing that they were holding a people's festival for Whitsun at the Peenemunde Harbour, the base of the former East German Navy, some two hundred demonstrators marched towards the wharf where the warships were tied. Four corvettes and a landing-ship were occupied.

Banners and scrawled slogans rejecting the German Government's decision to sell the warships to the Indonesian military dictatorship blanketed the five warships. Canvas covering the guns and rocket-launchers on deck were thrown asunder to expose the policy of the German Government which has told the local population that the ships being sold to Indonesia are merchant ships, not warships.

"The situation in Indonesia is comparable to the situation in East Germany under the communist regime," said the East German Peace Movement. It therefore felt bound to prevent any German participation in strengthening a military regime that violates human rights and reaps profits from the blood of some 200,000 East Timorese.

The plan is to continue the occupation until such time as Bonn discontinues plans to sell the warships. According to the police, the demonstrators have inflicted damage worth half a million German marks on electronic equipment on the ships.

East Timor: The Hidden War