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THE ANNEX ECHO

The response of a human community to its challenges is the true measure of its success.
June 1995



Photo: Ian Kert

Wild Dogs of the Annex

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WALK A MILE IN THESE SHOES :

East Timor and Bata

Roberto Verdecchia (with files from the East Timor Alert Network)

Last month, the Bata Shoe Museum, on the corner of Bloor and St. George, opened to the public. Many watched the building being constructed over the past year, trying to figure out when the recognizable shape of something akin to a "museum" would appear. Regardless of what you think of the design, it's all ready to go and you're invited to browse around inside as much as you like.

I imagine that there would be much to learn about shoes in the Bata Shoe Museum. But how much is there to learn about Bata itself?

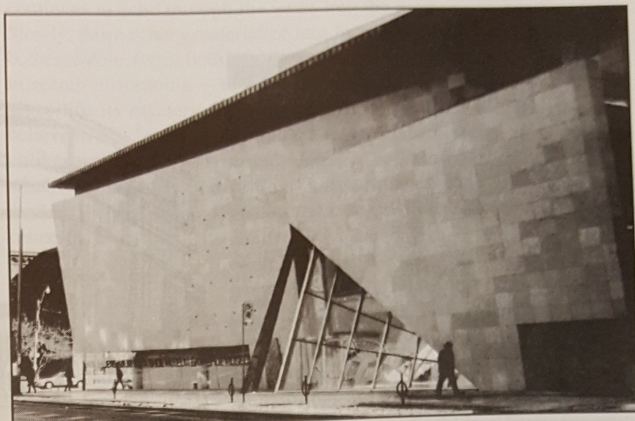
While the Bata Shoe Museum is not the Bata Corporation, there is obviously a link. And it's this link I think about every time I pass the museum. I think about shoes, I think about Bata, and I think about Indonesia and East Timor.

Indonesia invaded East Timor on December 7, 1975 and although the UN Security Council unanimously called on the "government of Indonesia to withdraw without delay all its forces from the Territory", East Timor remains an occupied country to this day. Since the invasion, over 200,00 East Timorese have died (a third of the population) and war and resistance continues.

Most countries have not been prepared to give up their "beneficial" economic ties to Indonesia by supporting East Timor in its struggle for self-determination. For its part, Canada has voted against self-determination for East Timor in UN votes ever since 1980. During his time as External Affairs Minister, Joe Clark said, "Canada believes that the situation has become irreversible and accepts East Timor's status as the 27th province of Indonesia." So much for Canada being a neutral and peace-promoting country on the world stage. Peace for whom?

According to information from the East Timor Alert Network, more than 300 Canadian companies have invested over \$2 billion in Indonesia since the invasion. While the largest investor is the INCO mining company, Bata Shoes has "extensive investments in Indonesia" as well.

"Bata likes to promote itself as a Canadian success story. But its investments in Indonesia represent the darker side of the Bata story. The 2000 workers at Bata's two factories in Java are the lowest paid workers in the 70-country Bata empire, getting just \$2 a day for their work."



Big Shoe on Bloor

These investments by Bata and Inco, among others give legitimacy, resources and financial support to the repressive Indonesian regime and its continual oppression of not only the people of East Timor, but its own people as well.

In opposition to apartheid, Bata pulled out of South Africa. It is only logical that they do the same in Indonesia. But of course, the kind of logic that argues that human rights should exist is not the same kind of logic that runs the global economy -- one sees human beings as the priority, the other, the dollar.

The East Timor Alert Network is calling for a consumer boycott of Bata Shoes until they pull out of Indonesia.

And of course, our local Liberal MP should hear our protest over Canada's inaction and complicity. Jean Chretien apparently "raised the East Timor issue during bilateral talks with (Indonesian) President Suharto" at the Asia-Pacific Economic Summit in Jakarta in November 1994 during which time large protests and riots occurred in East Timor's capital. I'm sure Chretien and his Liberals are following up the "issue" closely, with all their hearts.

So call Tony Ianno, our Liberal MP at 533-2710 and urge government action against Indonesia. Call the East Timor Alert Network at 531-5150 and see what you can do to get involved. And do go to the Bata Shoe Museum and enjoy the collection. But somewhere in your mind, remember the not-so innocent connections linking our new 'neighbourhood attraction' to the oppression-supporting investments of the Bata Corporation.



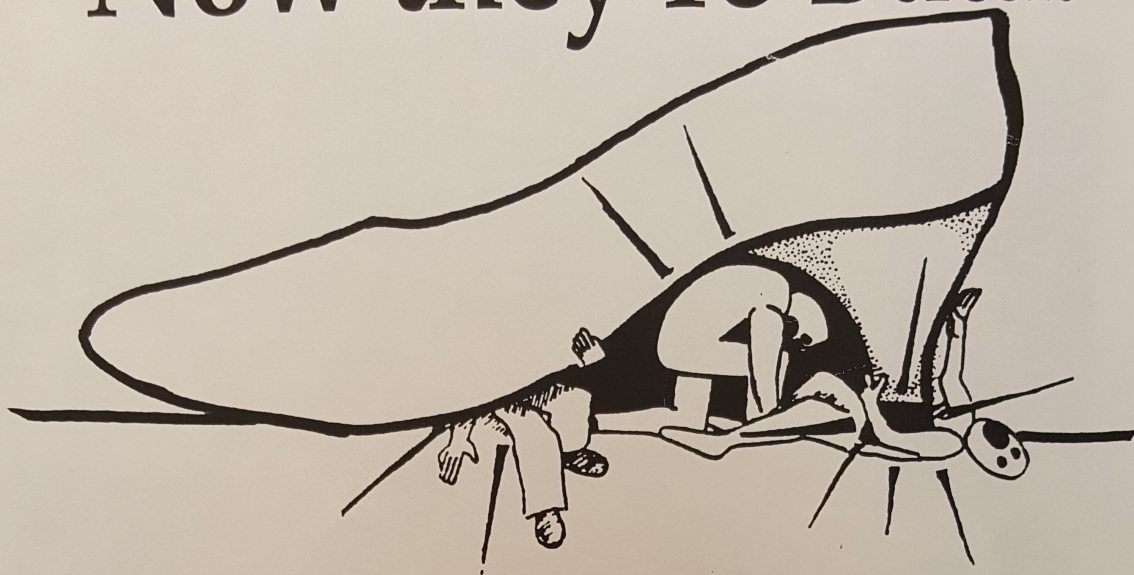
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line of facial, body and
hair care products

Things were Bad. Now they're Bata.



EAST Timor is a tiny, easily forgotten island near Australia, populated by a peaceful and largely tribal society. In 1974, the industrialized nation of Indonesia swooped down from the north and began an invasion that has exterminated more than 200,000 Timorese, *one third of their entire population*. Despite repeated United Nations demands to leave East Timor, Indonesia continues the killing.

During this time, some 300 Canadian companies invested over \$1 billion in Indonesia. Foremost among them is Toronto-based **Bata Shoes**.

Bata likes to promote itself as a Canadian success story. But its investments in Indonesia represent the untold half of this story. The 2000 workers at Bata's two factories in Indonesia *are the lowest paid workers* in the 70-country Bata empire, getting just \$2 a day for their work. Any attempt by these impoverished men, women and children to improve their condition, has been

met by force, including the 1979 use of Indonesian troops against these civilians.

By spreading news of this boycott, you are increasing the pressure on the Indonesian army to stop the killing in East Timor, and this effort has been successful in the past: it was boycott and public outcry against racist apartheid that forced Bata to pull its money out of South Africa. Now, we are demanding that Bata also divest from Indonesia and we ask that you help enforce this demand by not buying Bata shoes.

ACT for Disarmament

736 Bathurst St., Toronto, M5S 2R4
(416)531-6154

David: Sent this letter to Thomas Bata. Note the
phony "innocent bystander" pose. I figured this would make
it seem like they had just lost a potential customer who
previously had no idea that Bata ^{June 3, 1995} was involved in such things.
Best wishes, Steve

Dear Mr. Bata:

While attending the opening of the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto a few weeks ago, I was handed a flyer which informed me that Bata is a large investor in Indonesia.

I have been appalled by Indonesia's genocide against the people of East Timor since seeing the National Film Board of Canada's documentary "Manufacturing Consent" a couple of years ago, so I was unhappy to learn that your company would do business in a country like Indonesia.

When Bata withdrew from apartheid South Africa, you did the right thing, and along with other morally responsible companies and governments, helped end apartheid there.

I know that linking trade and human rights has become less fashionable these days, but it's still the right thing to do. Bata should provide an example to other Canadian companies and withdraw from Indonesia.

I will certainly not be buying any Bata products until you do so.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Willett
26 Harvest Moon Drive
Scarborough, Ont.
M1X 1H6

ACTION PROPOSAL

BATA SHOES BOYCOTT NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

This proposal involves focussing on Canadian corporate involvement in Indonesia and encouraging the more than 300 Canadian corporations to divest from Indonesia as long as it continues to occupy East Timor and West Papua. The overall model for the campaign is based on the mass divestment campaign in the late 80s around South Africa and apartheid.

The idea is to focus on a couple of the major investors that would be vulnerable to consumer pressure. The best one is Bata Shoes, which did finally agree to pull out of South Africa after a boycott in the 80s. We would hope to repeat this success. Bata is very sensitive to its image, and therefore very vulnerable to a visible national boycott.

Bata is also vulnerable and worth boycotting because of their atrocious labour practices throughout the Third World.

Campaign Goal: To get Bata to pull its investment out of Indonesia (2 factories in Jakarta).

Methods: A national petition campaign, with signatures being collected outside malls with Bata Shoes stores by a small number of people holding signs or banners with the Boycott Bata slogan. Petitions should be available, minimally, in English, Portuguese and French.

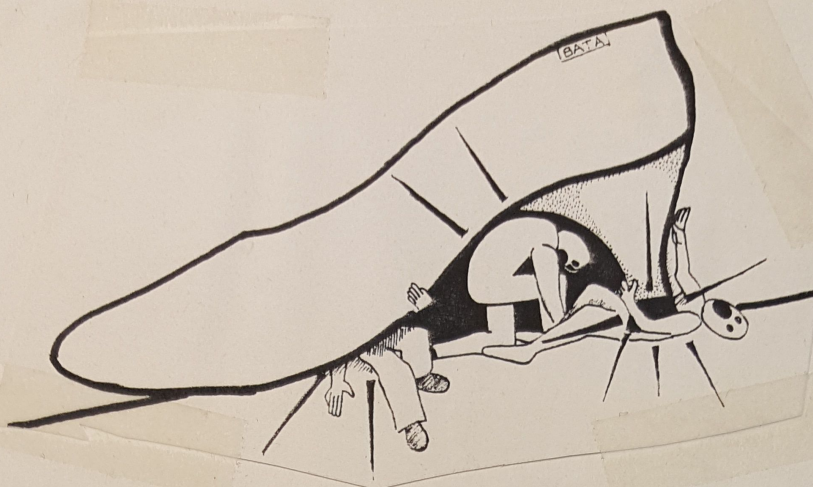
-- Disruption of special events featuring members of the Bata family: eg. the opening of the Bata Shoe Museum which Toronto members disrupted last year to great media attention.

-- Publication of articles that point out Bata's role in perpetrating genocide

-- A NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION, to be organized by ETAN across the country, sometime in the summer or fall. As many groups as possible would take part in creative actions around local Bata shoestores. Possible actions include a mass return of shoes, creating a visual of a mountain of bloodstained shoes, etc.

Outreach constituencies: Other boycotts (eg. California Grapes, General Electric, Nestle); labour unions; churches; those who boycotted Bata over South Africa. This is a good campaign for bringing East Timor to the attention of unions and Third World solidarity groups that haven't been big supporters before, since Bata is essentially exporting jobs to virtual slave labour facilities in the South.

Cost: Minimal. Most of the necessary materials are already prepared, with a boycott logo, petition, and basic materials for a leaflet ready. The only cost would be photocopying it all.



BOYCOTT BATA SHOES

More than 300 Canadian companies have invested over \$1 billion in Indonesia — a military dictatorship that is committing genocide in East Timor and West Papua. These companies include Bata Shoes, Inco, Gulf Canada Resources, SNC-Lavalin Inc., General Electric Canada, Pratt and Whitney, and many others.

Canadian money invested by these companies helps to prop up the Indonesian dictatorship. Workers in Indonesia are paid extremely low wages (Bata workers are said to get just \$2 a day) to work in appalling conditions, because these Canadian companies are not willing to pay a fair wage in Canada.

Bata Shoes claims to be a socially responsible company — it divested from South Africa to protest against apartheid. Now, it's time Bata gave Indonesia the boot too.

Until Bata takes a step for human rights by ending its support for the generals who rule Indonesia, we ask consumers not to shop at Bata.

**Information Picket
of Bata Shoes
Saturday, June 20**

12 Noon

**Dufferin Mall Bata store
(Dufferin St. south of
Bloor, Toronto)**

**For more information:
ACT for Disarmament,
531-6154**

DIVEST FROM INDONESIA



FREE EAST TIMOR BOYCOTT BATA SHOES



Since Indonesia invaded the tiny Southeast Asian island of East Timor in 1975, a forgotten genocide has claimed the lives of at least one third of the East Timorese people (according to figures from Amnesty International and the Catholic Church).

Contrary to its policies elsewhere, the government of Canada supported this brutal invasion. Indonesia ranks among the top recipients of Canadian overseas aid. **More than 300 Canadian companies are operating in Indonesia today, with total investments well over \$2 billion.**

Canadian corporations in Indonesia can pay their workers as little as \$2 a day. In effect, they are exporting jobs from Canada to the Indonesian

"investor's paradise."

One of the leading Canadian investors in the Indonesian economy is Toronto-based Bata Shoes International. Bata's investments in Indonesia allow the Indonesian military regime to pursue its policies of genocide in East Timor.

Join us in calling for Bata to walk out of Indonesia until the Indonesian government stops the killings.

NEWS FRONT



T.O. activists say East Timor report is a whitewash.

BLOOD PROTEST TRIAL

Activists who poured vials of human blood on the doors of the Indonesian consulate in Toronto to protest the killing of demonstrators in East Timor by soldiers of the

Asian government last fall, will find out June 27 whether they will be fined or sent to jail.

Maggie Helwig and Joanne Young appeared in provincial court last Friday (May 29) on mischief charges for their part in the February incident. The activists were protesting the killing last November of an estimated 200 demonstrators by

Indonesian soldiers outside the gates of a cemetery in Santa Cruz.

The crown attorney's office is proceeding with mischief charges against Helwig and Young on the grounds the blood caused more than \$1,000 damage to the doors of the University Avenue office building housing the Indonesian consulate.

"Given the extremely serious situation in East Timor and the relatively minor nature of what we did, essentially our right to freedom of speech and public expression and our need to communicate what is happening in East Timor far outweighs the damage we may have done to the door," says Helwig. "I spend most of my time working as an activist and part of that involves civil disobedience."

Recently, a report of an Indonesian government enquiry into the Santa Cruz massacre concluded that the incident "clearly did not occur because of any command or policy of the government or the armed forces. The demonstrators, the majority of whom were young, behaved savagely, emotionally and destructively."

Both Amnesty International and Asia Watch have condemned the report. Amnesty also reports that an

Indonesian court in Jakarta has sentenced **Joao Freitas de Camara** and **Fernando do Araujo** — two of the demonstrators — to prison terms of 10 and nine years, respectively.

"The report is a whitewash," says **David Webster**, a spokesperson for the **East Timor Alert Network**. "It's largely produced for the benefit of western governments so that they will be able to justify continually giving economic aid to Indonesia."

The federal government, meanwhile, which withheld \$30 million in aid to the Indonesian government in the wake of the highly publicized massacre, is deciding whether to reinstate the aid — part of a \$76-million package to the Asian country.

External affairs spokesperson **Dennys Laliberte** says, "We saw the report as a commitment by the Indonesians to do something about this massacre. Canada is the only country in the world to impose sanctions on Indonesia because of the massacre. Our aid program to Indonesia is going to the poorest people in the country."

The Indonesian consulate did not return NOW's phone calls.

— EDM

May 21/92

Protesters disrupt opening of Bata Shoe Museum Collection

The Globe and Mail

TORONTO — Protesters interrupted the opening of the Bata Shoe Museum Collection at the Colonnade shopping complex in midtown Toronto yesterday. Sonja Bata, wife of Thomas G. Bata, president of the Canada-based multinational footwear manufacturer, was welcoming reporters and guests to a temporary exhibition of highlights from her collection of 8,500 shoes and related artifacts when activists suddenly moved in front of the podium, unfurled banners reading

"Indonesia Free East Timor" and handed out leaflets headed "Bata Kills."

Bata employs about 67,000 people in 70 countries. The leaflet did not document Bata killing anybody in any of those countries. What the six protesters, members of the Toronto-based human rights group ACT for Disarmament, were objecting to was the fact that two of Bata's 71 factories are located in Indonesia. "Bata pays its Indonesian workers \$2 a day!" they shouted in the direction of the television cameras as security

personnel hustled them from the building. "The Indonesian military helped break up a strike at Bata!"

Before resuming her speech, Sonja Bata commented, "I know nothing of these charges."

Outside the Colonnade, ACT member Maggie Helwig said her group was calling on Bata to pull out of Indonesia immediately. She said ACT objects to Bata's having plants in Indonesia because that country's government has been accused of genocide in the former Dutch colony of East Timor, now occupied by Indonesia.