

EAST TIMOR ALERT NETWORK

FOR IMMEDIATE NEWS RELEASE

(416) 531-6154/531-9589

March 6, 1992

STUDENTS RESIST GOVERNMENT PRESSURE TO QUIT PEACE MISSION

Representatives of Canada's High Commission in Australia have told Canadians planning to board an international "peace ship" that will leave for East Timor this Sunday to abandon the peace mission. Three Canadians are taking part in the "Peace in Timor mission," an international effort to remember the massacre of nearly 200 unarmed Timorese by Indonesian soldiers last Nov. 12 by laying flowers on the graves of the massacre victims.

More than 100 students from 21 countries are on board the Lusitania Expresso, a decommissioned car ferry hired by Forum Estudante, a Portuguese student group that organized the mission.

Several Western governments have issued warnings to their citizens who are participating in the international peace mission to East Timor. Representatives of the Canadian, British, and Australian governments have all issued statements warning of the risks involved and advising their citizens not to participate in the mission.

Despite these warnings, the Canadians remain set on sailing to East Timor to lay wreaths at the Santa Cruz Cemetery, site of the massacre.

John Millard, one of the Canadians, said that "No amount of pressure from our governments will stop us from going. This is a question of human rights and we feel a moral obligation to show our support and solidarity."

Yesterday in Darwin, Australia, where the mission is currently based, a representative of the Canadian High Commission in Australia personally delivered a statement to Canadian participants that urged them to "consider their actions carefully" and advised them "not to proceed on board the Lusitania Expresso."

The other Canadians that will sail with the Lusitania Expresso are Genevieve Appleton, a film student at Ryerson Polytechnic in Toronto, and Peter Monet from Ottawa. International figures on the mission include General Ramalho Eanes, a former president of Portugal (1976-86), Shambhu Chopra (president of the Society of Human Rights in India), David Mitchell Targan (dean of Brown University, USA) and a considerable number of Australian and Portuguese political and Church figures.

Indonesia has set up a special task force to prevent the mission from landing in occupied East Timor, and dispatched five warships to the area to head off the Lusitania Expresso. Organizers stress that the Peace in Timor Mission is non-violent, but point out that the United Nations does not recognize Indonesian jurisdiction over East Timor.

For more information on the mission, contact +61/(89)816-864 or fax +61/(89)917-687.

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8 March 1992

Attention: Foreign Editor

Canadians refuse to leave peace mission Peace ship sails for East Timor Sunday

A representative of the Canadian High Commission in Australia has flown to Darwin to urge four Canadians not to join 120 international students and journalists in a peace mission to East Timor that leaves later today. The representative, **Rejean Tissier**, delivered a statement expressing the concerns of the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Barbara McDougall, urging the Canadian participants to "consider their actions carefully."

The East Timor Peace Mission will set off for Indonesian-occupied East Timor by boat later today (Sunday morning, Australian time; Sunday night, EST). Indonesia has already informed the mission it will not be allowed to land in East Timor, and deployed five warships in the area to enforce this order. The mission plans to lay flowers on graves at Santa Cruz cemetery, site of the massacre of between 100 and 200 people by Indonesian soldiers last Nov. 12.

Despite the strong warning from the government and pressure from the Canadian High Commissioner, the four Canadians are determined to make the trip.

David Stewart, one of the Canadians, said: "None of us will be dissuaded from making this trip and carrying out the mission, no matter how much it may embarrass the Canadian government. It is not a question of economics, but of human rights."

According to **Peter Monet**, a documentary film-maker from Ottawa, "The Canadian government's investment and trade with Indonesia is so high that they don't want to do anything that would jeopardize the economic relationship between the two countries."

Although \$30 million in Canadian government-to-government aid to Indonesia was suspended in light of the November massacres, \$46 million in existing aid was left

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untouched. Last month, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas met with McDougall, who expressed her "satisfaction" with the Indonesian government's investigation of the Nov. 12 massacre. Monet said: "Based on this tacit acceptance of the investigation — which Amnesty International has called 'fatally flawed and unacceptable' — full bilateral aid is likely to be reinstated."

In 1991, Indonesia was the third-largest recipient of Canadian aid.

The Canadian government statement on the East Timor Peace Mission noted that the students on board would "violate Indonesian law" by entering the waters surrounding East Timor. According to international law as laid down by the United Nations, the waters are under the administration of Portugal, the colonial ruler of East Timor until the 1975 Indonesian invasion. Tissier said that although Canada does not recognize Indonesia's de jure possession of East Timor, with the presence of their military forces Indonesia "has the means to enforce their laws in East Timor."

"The clear implication of all this," according to **Geneviève Appleton**, a student at Ryerson Polytechnic in Toronto representing the Ontario Federation of Students on the mission, "is that our government recognizes that Indonesia has the right to use force against a peaceful mission, whereas in fact it has no jurisdiction under international law to do so at all."

Monet sees the strong diplomatic and economic relationship between Canada and Indonesia as the central factor motivating the Canadian government to pressure its citizens not to join the boat. "For the first time," he said, "the Canadian government is going to be forced to publicly defend its position of support for Indonesia's illegal occupation of East Timor. They are trying to sweep the issue of East Timor aside and want to avoid any incident that might push East Timor back into the spotlight."

Canada has actively lobbied against UN resolutions condemning Indonesia's occupation of East Timor and its repeated violations of human rights, including the Nov. 12 massacre. Most recently, Canada opposed a European Community resolution on East Timor at the UN Commission on Human Rights which last week concluded its annual meeting in Geneva.

For more information, please contact:

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Peace mission turned back but focused attention on massacre

By SCOTT WHALEN
Examiner Staff Writer

A week ago, 21-year-old Genevieve Appleton of Toronto was sailing on a peace mission to East Timor.

She never got there.

Appleton, who gave a seminar last night at Trent sponsored by the university's East Timor Alert Collective, was part of a group of 120 students and journalists who tried to get to the troubled Indonesian country last week.

They wanted to lay flowers on the graves of 100 Timorians killed when soldiers opened fire on 3,500 mourners at a funeral in the East Timor capital of Dili.

"We left from Darwin, Australia. But when we got to the 12-mile territorial zone around the island, the Indonesians stopped us."

Appleton said three frigates and a helicopter approached the ship. They were fully armed and threatened to shoot unless the students and journalists turned back.

"The captain would not sail any further," Appleton said.

But she points out that despite the



Genevieve Appleton

fact the group didn't make it to East Timor, the peace mission did accomplish its goal of bringing international attention to the plight of the people there.

Appleton said the atrocities characterized by the shooting deaths last year are continuing in East Timor.

The horror stories of executions, disappearances, child rape, mass sterilization of women and forced

abortions are still going on, Appleton says.

"The culture, language and religion of the Timor people is being completely suppressed. It is basically a fascist state."

Besides speaking on the peace mission, Appleton also updated people on the current situation in East Timor where some natives have been charged with subversion for simply handing out pamphlets on human rights.

"Many of these people are facing death sentences and torture for no offences," she said.

Appleton also wants people to know the peace objective for East Timor is continuing. Creating a network of supporters for the Timorians throughout the world is a continuing goal and there are plans for a major protest in the spring in Amsterdam to focus on the international money pouring into the Indonesian-run country.

Work is also continuing through the network to celebrate East Timor Day in December for worldwide recognition of the troubles there.

Canadian High Commission



Canada

Haut Commissariat du Canada

Commonwealth Avenue
Canberra ACT 2600

March 4, 1992

Ms. Genevieve Appleton
c/o Lusitania Expresso
Darwin, AUSTRALIA

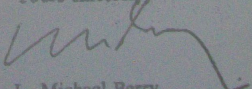
Dear Ms. Appleton,

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mrs. Barbara McDougall, has asked me to write to you personally to advise you not to proceed on board the Lusitania Expresso to East Timor, as I understand is your intention. The reasons for asking you not to do so are the following:

- 1) There is a real risk of violence if passengers land and confrontation develops;
- 2) If passengers violate Indonesian law by entering illegally or demonstrating, they could face serious consequences under Indonesian law;
- 3) The new military commander in East Timor has stated that he will not tolerate illegal demonstrations;
- 4) East Timor is regarded by the Indonesian Government as part of its sovereign territory; and
- 5) If trouble erupts in Indonesian waters or territory, you may be subject to the provisions of Indonesian law.

We would urge you to consider your actions carefully with respect to this matter.

Yours sincerely


L. Michael Berry
High Commissioner