

# NEWS DOSSIER

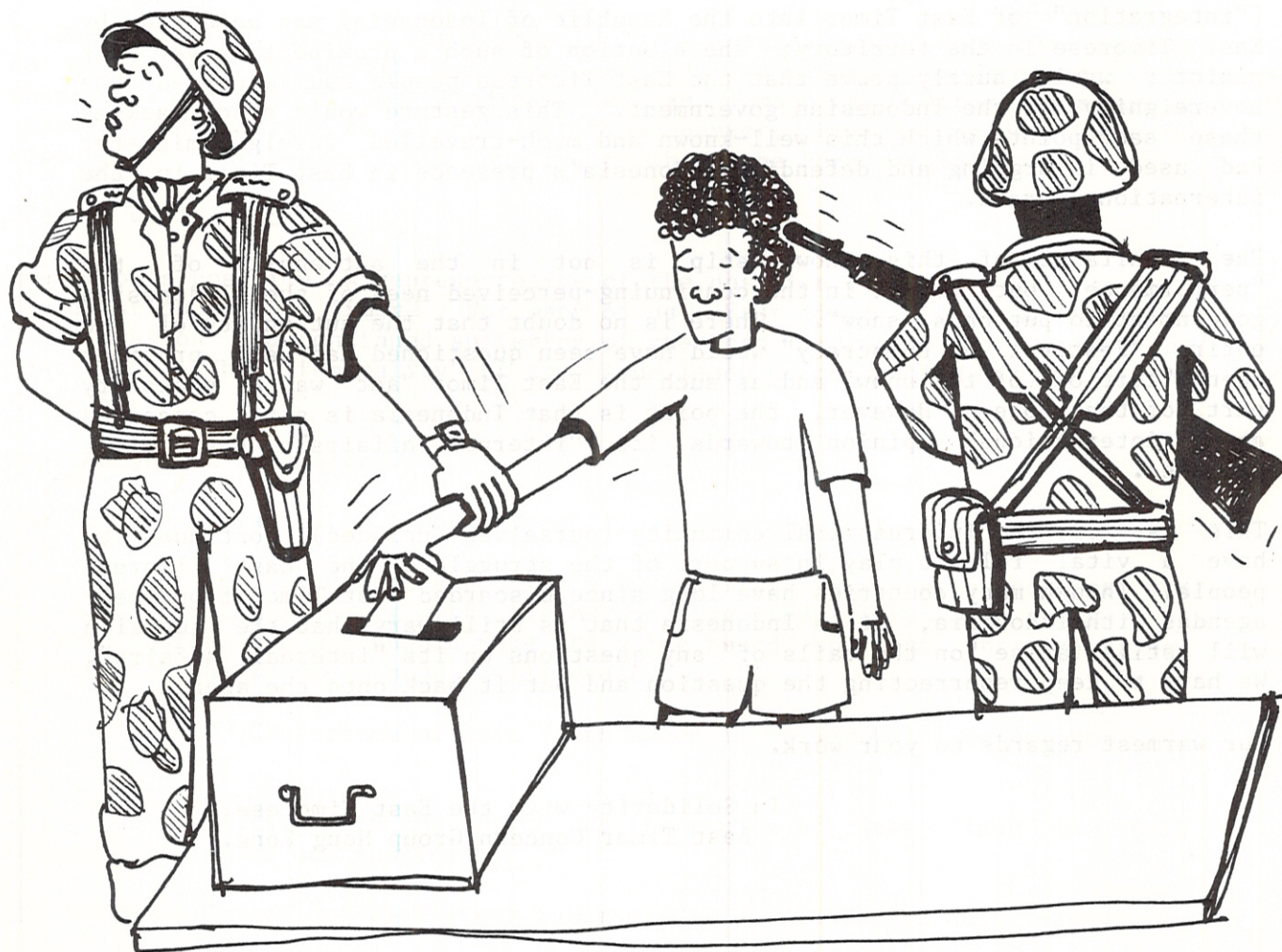
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EDITORIAL

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"DEMOCRACY IN EAST TIMOR"





# EDITORIAL

May 1987.

Dear Friends,

Greetings. We hope that you are still reading.

This is the third issue of the "East Timor Concern Group" 's (ETCG) "News Dossier". This signifies a mid-point in our first trial year of publication. We hope that you have found the dossier useful. We welcome your comments as it will help us in the evaluation of this effort at the end of this year.

In this issue we continue with the second part of the article on the "Christian Response to the Issue of East Timor". In this issue we see the response of the international Christian community and we reprint suggestions that other concerned Christians may wish take up in acting on these concerns. As usual we will also have a news section giving some short write-ups on the current situation in East Timor.

One of the articles in the news section concerns the recent elections in Indonesia. From the short article and as witnessed in the press in Hong Kong, the Indonesian government put much effort in showing that their "Festival of Democracy" was participated in by the people of East Timor. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, foreign minister and prominent Golkar (government party) politician was even a candidate for the elections in East Timor. This supposedly-courageous gesture seemed to be aimed at proving that "integrasi" ("integration" of East Timor into the Republic of Indonesia) was accepted by East Timorese in the territory; the election of such a prominent government minister would surely prove that the East Timorese people had accepted the sovereignty of the Indonesian government. This gesture would also back-up these same points which this well-known and much-travelled foreign minister had used in arguing and defending Indonesia's presence in East Timor in the international arena.

The signigance of this showmanship is not in the authenticity of the "performance" but rather in the continuing-perceived need of the Indonesian government to put on a "show". There is no doubt that the authenticity of the entire "Festival of Democracy" would have been questioned had any province been "left out of the show" and as such the East Timor "act" was a necessary part of the whole. However, the point is that Indonesia is still concerned about international opinion towards its "internal affairs"; East Timor included.

This is where the international community (ourselves included) continues to have a vital role to play in support of the struggle of the East Timorese people. Though many countries have long since discarded East Timor from their agendas with Indonesia, it is Indonesia that is still wary that the question will still arise "on the tails of" any questions on its "internal affairs". We have to keep resurrecting the question and put it back onto the agenda.

Our warmest regards to your work.

In Solidarity with the East Timorese,  
East Timor Concern Group Hong Kong.



### Christian Response to the East Timor Issue (Part II)

There have been many positive responses from the Christians outside East Timor to the plight there. The responses have mainly been statements issued on aspects of the issue by heads of churches, local churches and Christian organisations.

#### Position of the Pope:

In 1984, Pope John Paul II said,

"\_ \_ \_ the Holy See continues to follow the situation in East Timor with preoccupation and with the hope that particular consideration will be given in every circumstance to the ethnic, religious and cultural identity of the people \_ \_ \_ it is the ardent wish of the Holy See to see every effort be made to lighten the sufferings of the people by facilitating the work of relief organisations and by ensuring the access of humanitarian aid to those in aid".

In June 1985, when the Apostolic Administrator of East Timor, Monsignor (Mgr.) Belo, was received by the Pope, the Pope told him,

"\_ \_ \_ work for the church, to fight the suffering of the people, and seek for a right solution for peace in Timor \_ \_ \_ now \_ \_ \_ Timor represents the world's most difficult problem".

In December 1986, after a Papal Mass in Perth Australia, the Pope, upon moving to section of the crowd, was approached by Fr. Francisco Fernandez, the chaplain of Perth's East Timorese refugee community. After introducing himself and referring to a large East Timor banner, Fr. Fernandez asked the Pope to pray for peace in his country, to which the Pope replied,

"Yes, I will do so".

The Pope's position is representative of the position of many Christians to the question of East Timor. For many of us, East Timor is a moral question. The invasion and continued suffering of the East Timorese people cannot be justified. The "immorality" of the issue leads us to a solidarity with the victims.

#### Expressions of Solidarity:

The Portuguese Bishops in Lisbon, March 12, 1984 wrote that,

"The Portuguese Episcopate cannot help but manifest in a public document its living and deep solidarity with this martyred country, victim of a tragedy \_ \_ \_ The church can and should make its voice heard so that the injustices suffered by the Timorese people will cease \_ \_ \_"

The Christian Conference of Asia Youth Assembly in New Delhi on October 10, 1984 expressed,

"\_ \_ \_ solidarity with the church and the people of East Timor in their struggle for peace and justice \_ \_ \_"

The National Council of Religious Superiors in Australia, in July 1984 wrote,



"We write to you as a neighbouring church \_\_\_ in response to your repeated calls \_\_\_ to recognise your struggles for justice and a peaceful resolution"

On July 21, 1986, Jaime L. Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila wrote to Mgr. Belo and said,

"I wish to express my sentiments of deep solidarity with you as you aspire for the authentic liberation of your people. Please accept my pledge of continuing fraternal support as you endeavour to liberate your people from the shackles of an oppressive system \_\_\_"

The immense suffering of the people of East Timor was sufficient to encourage the Indonesian Bishops to also express their solidarity despite the dangers that may present. On November 17, 1983, they wrote that,

"The Catholic Church in Indonesia, inspite of all restrictions, has made every possible effort to express its solidarity and friendship with the faithful and the people of East Timor who are being deluged by most bitter trials both physical and spiritual. We struggle so that with respect for all persons and with urgent haste we may attain first and foremost: a return to peace for all those who are now at war. We struggle through various ways to enforce acknowledgement and respect for those things which are considered most sacred by the people of East Timor: their religion, their family and their land."

#### A "Summary":

Pax Romana (Geneva) on February 15, 1985 best summarised the situation in East Timor.

"East Timor is one of the most tragic and solitary exceptions in recent history to the provision in international human rights agreements that peoples have the right to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

This statement also concretises the direction our solidarity must take.

#### Just Settlement/Calls For Self-Determination:

In July 1985, 109 Church groups from various denominations from Asia and the Pacific endorsed a letter on the issue. The letter expressed that a just settlement could only be possible if they,

" \_\_\_ 1) Involve representatives of the East Timorese people including those who resist the present occupation.

2) Secure an end to hostilities which prevent the people of East Timor and their representatives from contributing freely to negotiations leading to self-determination.

3) Provide internationally acceptable conditions of access to relief and development agencies and to independent visitors, journalists and diplomats.

4) Include an act of self-determination, which is free from inteference and verified by international observers acceptable to the East Timorese people."

This was similarly echoed in a Resolution from the Portugese Ecumenical Council to the Ninth Conference of European Churches held in Stirling, Scotland from September 4-11, 1986 which (as its fourth point) said,



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"\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ Defend the rights of the East Timorese people to express their will for self-determination. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_"

#### A First Step:

A first step towards securing a just peace and an end to the torment of the East Timorese people was suggested by Pax Christi on February 15, 1985.

"The moment has come for the international community to intervene before it is too late. This conflict cannot be resolved by armed force but only by negotiations around the conference table in which all parties, including Fretilin, are involved."

This was most recently reiterated by the same, before-mentioned Portuguese Ecumenical council Resolution.

"\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ 3) Call for a ceasefire and opening of negotiations with the resistance movement. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ 5) Involve representatives of the Timorese people in the conversations being held between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the United Nations. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_"

#### What You Can Do:

There is no shortage of statements of solidarity or calls for just resolutions for the people of East Timor. However, the Indonesians remain in East Timor without a hint of wanting to negotiate with the resistance movement. Many local and international church groups remain unconcerned or unwilling to be concerned about East Timor. Many more have not gone beyond words uttered and statements made. The church is a congregation of the people of God. If these people continue voicing, on behalf of their brothers and sisters in East Timor, then the hierarchy, which exists must listen and finally must act; Words uttered and statements made must be realised by genuine action.

#### Some suggestions to you:

- 1) Talk to others and circulate information like our "News Dossier".
- 2) Inform your local clergy, church leaders, parish and church organisations.
- 3) Set up a group like our "East Timor Concern Group".
- 4) Encourage church organisations and conferences to adopt strong resolutions on East Timor and convey these to the media.

Source : Christians In Solidarity With East Timor, Timorlink, "East Timor"-  
Commissie Justitia et Pax Nederland, newspaper clippings.



# NEWS

## EAST TIMOR STUDENTS STILL IN DANGER

The four East Timor students who have been trying since last October to leave Indonesia seem as far as ever from their objective. The Indonesian government declared that Indonesia cannot allow them to leave with Portuguese passports because this would be tantamount to admitting that East Timor is not part of Indonesia. Then, the Dutch embassy in Jakarta announced that they were abandoning their efforts to help the students leave.

The Portuguese government have now taken the matter into their own hands and are believed to be discussing the East Timor question with Indonesia through contacts at the United Nation.

Source : "Tapol" (4/87)

## LIVING IN A STATE OF FEAR

A Japanese journalist in Jakarta who has spoken to the students, reports that they continue to be in a state of great anxiety and under the constant watch of the security forces who visit them several times a week. He writes that they are thought to be Fretilin supporters who have sent information about conditions in East Timor to support groups in Lisbon and Australia.

"We were told that corresponding with people abroad is regarded as subversive. We decided to seek refuge abroad because our personal safety is no longer guaranteed."

They visit the Dutch embassy and the International Red Cross office almost every day but feel that there has been no satisfactory progress in their case.

There are about 110 East Timorese studying in Jakarta but they have no organisation to support each other, so the four are alone in their resistance.

Source : "Tapol" (4/87)

## DUTCH RESPONSIBILITY

In a telex to the Dutch Foreign Minister on March 1. Lord Avebury, chair of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, urged Holland to give the students Dutch travel documents to make their journey to Lisbon, but this idea has been rejected.

Source : "Tapol" (4/87)

## PORTUGAL'S DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE

The Portuguese government has vetoed a move by the European Community to upgrade its office in Jakarta to embassy level because of Indonesia's illegal occupation of East Timor. She also boycotted the April meeting in Jakarta of the EEC-ASEAN Joint Commission at which senior officials will discuss trade and economic relations between the two blocs. Portugal boycotted last October's meeting of EEC-ASEAN foreign ministers and is certain to boycott the next ministerial meeting later this year.

Portugal's latest move is symptomatic of the diplomatic offensive which now characterises Portugal's position internationally on the question of East Timor, and is in contrast to the country's former position which was far less assertive and principled.

Source : "Tapol" (4/87)

## ARMS SALES TO INDONESIA ATTACKED IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

In a debate on the arms trade and human rights, initiated in the House of Lords by veteran Labour politician, 97-year old Lord Fenner Brockway, Lord Avebury, chair of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, strongly condemned the British government's promotion of "trade in weapons of mass destruction with evil dictatorships such as those of Indonesia and Chile".



He dealt in particular with the present military situation in East Timor where, according to reports in the second half of 1986, a renewed military offensive had been launched. Lord Avebury quoted from a letter of January 16 he received from the Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, which in effect confirmed these reports. The Foreign Secretary wrote : "Military activity continues in both East Timor and Irian Jaya.... We do.... believe Indonesian military activity to have been stepped up in those areas where low-level conflict persists."

Lord Avebury accused the British Government since 1978 of spreading deception about the level of Indonesian military operations over the years. He quoted from a letter sent in June 1978 by a Minister of State at the Foreign Office to Russell Johnston MP who had condemned Britain's decision to sell Hawk aircraft to Indonesia. The letter claimed that "certain foreign observers who have been allowed to visit the territory have reported that the scale of skirmishing there has been greatly reduced."

"It is not entirely accurate," Lord Avebury continued, "to refer to a war in which at least 100,000, probably 200,000 people died as 'skirmishing.'"

Lord Avebury was equally scathing about foreign observers who, with very few exceptions, have visited East Timor since the occupation "as stooges of the regime .... prepared to accept the lies and propaganda fed to them by the Indonesian forces." Requests by the Parliamentary Human Rights Group to visit East Timor had, by contrast, been refused point-blank by the Indonesian government. "I suspect the Indonesians would like entirely to prevent the outside world from knowing what they are doing in East Timor. Particularly, they do not want anybody to observe the military operations that are currently taking place in the territory."

Source : "Tapol" (4/87)

#### WHY THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT CHANGED HER ATTITUDE

Since Mario Soares was elected president

in 1986, he has been even more outspoken on East Timor than his predecessor, using every opportunity to press the issue, in international gatherings, at the European Community and in meetings with other heads of state.

It may be that Mr. Soares now sees East Timor as the one major issue on which he, as president, has a special responsibility. But it is also acknowledged in Lisbon that he was deeply impressed by a private conversation he had in Lisbon in the summer of 1985 with Monsignor Carlos Ximenes Belo, head of the Catholic Church in Dili, who told him that Fretilin was not communist but nationalist and enjoyed widespread support.

But former president Eanes whose party is the third largest and holds the balance of power in parliament is just as determined, out of office, to keep East Timor in the public eye. He declared, in a speech to foreign correspondents in Lisbon on 10 February, that Portugal had a moral obligation to help East Timor achieve independence and he called upon the government to support the independence movement financially. He seems to be trying to push Portugal politicians even further in support of East Timor.

There is today in Portugal a striking unanimity between parties of the right and left on the question of East Timor. No party, it should be said, has ever opposed the just demand for self-determination for East Timor, but until the early 1980s, East Timor was often less a question of principle than of recrimination between parties. The right-wing parties, not unlike right-wing parties in the other former metropolitan countries, have tended to have a paternalistic loyalty towards former colonial people, and blamed the left, in many cases not unjustly, for failing to support East Timor in the early years of the Indonesian invasion.

Source : "Tapol" (4/87)

#### PORTUGAL IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Portugal's accession to the European



Community in January 1986 has provided politicians at all levels with an important international forum to fight for East Timor. President Soares has made use of it, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister have made use of it, particularly by boycotting EEC events in Jakarta, and Portuguese members of the European Parliament have used the Parliament to particularly good effect. The importance of this forum should not be underestimated as Lisbon now has regular consultations with West European countries two of whom (Greece and Ireland) supported the 1982 UN resolution on East Timor while the other seven abstained.

Portugal can be expected to lobby much harder than hitherto with its EEC partners in the likely event that a resolution is taken this year at the UN. Portuguese membership of the EEC has markedly improve the international prospects for East Timor.

Source : "Tapol" (4/87)

#### ELECTIONS IN EAST TIMOR

The Indonesian Ambassador to the U.N., Ai Alatas, has claimed that the April 1987 elections "will again prove that the East Timorese have recognised the fact that they are also part of Indonesia ("Jakarta Post" February 11, 1987). However this has been directly disputed by the Portuguese government who told the U.N. Human Rights Commission in February that Indonesia was able to conduct elections in East Timor thanks only to its military occupation of the country. The elections, they claimed had nothing to do with the exercise of any right to choose by the people of the East Timor.

No-one doubts that Jakarta will claim a near complete turnout. In the 1982 elections, the initial count gave a 104% vote to the ruling party. This was subsequently corrected to 99%.

Anyone refusing to vote is accused of supporting the resistance.

Source : "Tapol" (4/87), Reuters.

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