

# JAPAN EAST TIMOR MEMO

No. 7 (November, 1989)

## To Our Readers

Heartfelt thanks for your letters with news, ideas, and challenges for us! When the Pope visited East Timor in October we received various information, one of which was the disturbing news that forty young people were arrested and tortured after the Pope left. The following is part of a press release of Oct. 15 by the Australian Coalition for East Timor.)

### Demonstrators Arrested, Tortured after Pope's Departure

"The Bishop of Dili, Monsignor Carlos Belo, said today (Sunday morning) that 40 East Timorese demonstrators who had unfolded independence banners and chanted freedom slogans during a papal mass in Dili on Thursday were being detained and tortured by the Indonesian military. A further five demonstrators had taken refuge within the confines of the bishop's residence.

"Bishop Belo said in an interview that the demonstrators, some of whom were catholic students from Fatumaca Secondary College, 110 km east of Dili, had been beaten brutally and had been forced to make false confessions under torture.

"The bishop was outraged that the Indonesian military was trying to implicate the catholic church in the demonstration. 'I am shocked that the military is extracting false confessions under torture. The boys were trying to express their discontent with the situation in East Timor. It is a lie that the church is in any way involved in the demonstration.'

### A First! Japan Backs Resolution on East Timor at UN Human Rights Meeting--Resolution Wins!

In August a United Nations Human Rights Commission sub-commission, meeting in Geneva, adopted a resolution which expresses concern over human rights abuses in East Timor. The resolution, which passed by a vote of 12 in favor, 9 opposed, calls on the Human Rights Commission to take up the issue of East Timor at its next session in February, 1990. Although the balloting was secret, it is known that the Japanese delegate voted in favour and was one of the sponsors of the resolution. This was a stunning reversal: hitherto Japan has been among the staunchest supporters of the Indonesian position on ET.

However, since the delegates participate in the sub-committee sessions as individuals, their votes do not indicate how their governments will vote at the February Human Rights Commission session. To realize a pro-East Timor resolution in February will require a major effort to highlight in every possible forum--and in all of our countries--the on-going abuses in East Timor.

### Three Japanese Petition UN Decolonization Committee

On August 14 the United Nations Decolonization Committee, meeting in New York, held a session on the East Timor issue. Three Japanese were among the petitioners from various countries. Bishop Aloisius Soma of the Nagoya diocese and president of the Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, made a strong appeal in support of Bishop Belo, the East Timor Catholic leader who wrote in February to UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar urging the UN to hold a referendum in East Timor.

In her petition, Nakanishi Tamako, a member of the House of Councilors of the Japanese Diet, representing the Diet Forum on the East Timor Issue, called for the inclusion of East Timorese in the negotiations under U.N. auspices taking place between Indonesia and Portugal, or, the holding of a referendum in East Timor. She also said that Japan's ODA to Indonesia was disadvantageous to the Timorese people. Representative Tamanishi, a leader of the movement in the Diet to reform Japan's ODA system, predicted that with the growing power of the political opposition in Japan, an ODA reform bill would soon be passed in the Diet.

Furusawa Kiyoko of the Free East Timor Japan Coalition focused her remarks on the highly coercive birth control program in East Timor as a violation of the rights of Timorese women. She cited information on the harmful side effects of the contraceptives being used and expressed regret that the United Nations Population Fund had given its Population Award to President Suharto.

Other petitioners included members of NGO's and/or parliamentarians from Canada, U.S.A., Great Britain, the Netherlands, France, and Portugal. Jose Luis Guterres of Fretilin also testified.

### Bishop Soma Takes Over 1,000 Signatures to UN in Support of Bishop Belo

President of the Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, Bishop Aloisius Soma, took over 1,000 signatures in support of East Timor's bishop, Msg. Carlos Belo, to the UN in August.

The action was in response to Msg. Belo's letter of February, 1989 to the UN Secretary General, Dr. Perez de Cuellar, urging the UN to hold a fair and democratic referendum in East Timor to allow the East Timorese to decide their own fate. Bishop Soma sent an English translation of Msg. Belo's letter to the bishops of the Asia-Pacific region and said that "by giving this letter our support we can, in however small a way, stand beside our brothers and sisters in East Timor in their appeal for peace and justice." Within a month, Bishop Soma received some 1,300 signatures to a letter to de Cuellar which said, "The Catholic Church in East Timor, under its former leader, Msg. Da Costa Lopes, and its present leader, Bishop Belo, has consistently stood by the people in their suffering and shared their aspiration to one day live in freedom and dignity. Bishop Belo's appeal should be seen, not as being motivated by personal or sectarian interests, but as embodying the wishes of the people as a whole.

"I fully support Bishop Belo and add my voice to his in urging you to do everything in your power to realize a referendum in East Timor that will allow the Timorese people to freely choose their own fate."

Although Bishop Soma addressed his letter to the bishops of the Asia-Pacific region, besides signatures from 117 bishops, over 1000 religious and lay people from all over the world sent in their signatures as well. A number of people sent their own messages to de Cuellar which they asked Bishop Belo to convey to the Secretary General.

Bishop Soma entrusted the letters to United Nations Under-secretary-general Farah in the absence of de Cuellar and was assured they would be given to the secretary general.

UN Takes Beating in Major Japanese Weekly  
for Giving Population Award to Suharto

When it was announced earlier in the year that the UN Population Fund would give the Population Award to President Suharto of Indonesia, many of us in Japan shook our heads in disbelief. In East Timor, Suharto gave his blessing to a genocidal war that is still going on, and on top of that has sanctioned a birth control program for the purpose, Timorese fear, of reducing the Timorese population to a minority in their own land. The fact that the U.N. has the sacred duty to work for a just solution to the East Timor issue makes the choice of Suharto even more bazarre.

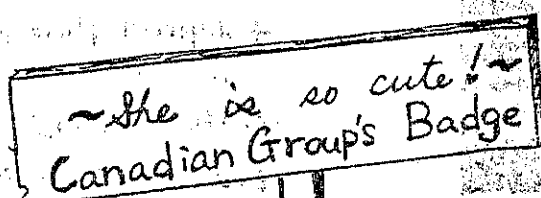
Well, the award ceremony on June 6 came and went, but not long after, a leading Japanese weekly, Asahi Journal, attacked the UN's choice of Suharto in the lead article of its July 21 edition.

"UN Bestows Award on Genocide Policy" headlined an in-depth report on the birth control program in East Timor compiled by Furusawa Kiyoko, a lecturer at Tokyo Women's University. Besides data from the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association which suggests coercion and overemphasis on injections in East Timor, the article provided detailed information on the contraceptive drugs being used and included interviews with Timorese women who have recently left their homeland.

On Japan's role, the article says the following.

"Japan, which gave 7 billion yen to the UN Population Fund in 1989, is the latter's largest donor country. In 1981 Japan was one of the countries which contributed to set up the Population Award and this time was one of the member countries on the award selection committee. Japan is the largest member of the Asia Development Bank and the second largest contributor to the World Bank. (These, as the article explains, are major funders for birth control programs. Ed.)

"The big economic power Japan is being called on to further increase economic aid to the Third World through international agencies. But as an aid-giving country it must be responsible for the kind of aid that it gives. Japan has the duty to make a study of the damage that is caused by mass injection of depo provera in East Timor and to come up with a plan to remedy it."



### Roque Rodriguez in Japan for PP21 Meetings

Fretilin leader, Roque Rodriguez, was in Japan for three weeks in August to attend the Indigenous People's Conference and other events in the PP21 program.

PP21, People's Plan for the Twenty-first Century, brought over two hundred people from the Asia-Pacific region together with thousands of Japanese working for change in various fields and in various parts of the country to discuss people-oriented alternatives for the future.

After participating in the Indigenous People's Conference in Hokkaido, sponsored by a group of Ainu people, Roque spoke at several gatherings in northern Japan before going to join the PP21 International Symposium in Kanagawa. Then on to Minamata in Kyushu where the PP21 participants climaxed the month's activities by issuing the "Minamata Declaration" and an "Action Programme" which pledged the participants to, among others, "actively support the struggles for independence in the Asia-Pacific region especially those in East Timor, West Papua, Kanaky (New Caledonia) and Tahiti-Polynesia (French-Polynesia).

PP21 activities ended with a 3-day "Asian Festival" in the city of Fukuoka that attracted 100,000 visitors. The Japan East Timor Coalition had an East Timor tent at the festival featuring the beautiful 1974 photographs of East Timor by Canadian photographer, Elaine Briere. Roque was on hand to talk with the visitors, for many of whom the festival offered their first introduction to the issue.

Roque wound up his Japan schedule with meetings in Tokyo, then bid us good bye, promising to return.

### Two East Timorese Coming for Speaking Tour

Joao dos Reis, now living in Lisbon after leaving East Timor last year, and Isabel Guterres, living in Melbourne since 1984, will speak in various cities throughout Japan from November 18 to December 9 as part of the Free East Timor Japan Coalition's 1989 Campaign. Isabel will go to Bangkok from Japan to attend the Asian Student Association Congress before returning to her nursing studies in Melbourne. The Coalition hopes to widen the base of understanding and support in Japan for the East Timor independence struggle through the speaking tour.



山荘の風景

Hill tribe family, 1974

Photo by Elaine Briere

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