



# East Timor Independence Committee Auckland

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## Your local committee is going into Recess

A big thank you to all for your part in the work of the East Timor Independence Committee, and for your lobbying, attendance at protests, letters, petition signatures and donations. Now that East Timor is approaching its independence we mark a major milestone.

### Work over the years:

Some early records of the work of the Auckland Committee have gone astray — so this potted summary is very sketchy — we would be very grateful if anyone has any documentation or recollection that might help us to piece the story together, and to correct any mistakes.

East Timor's leaders have regularly acknowledged the importance of the solidarity movement. Auckland ETIC was particularly pleased to be able to assist Jose Ramos Horta and Joao Carrascalao at the time of their visit to Auckland last September during the APEC meeting. Their intensive lobbying was a key factor in the inter-national pressure that culminated in the dispatch of an international force to East Timor, to bring an end to the post-ballot terror and mayhem. Auckland has had a very effective and cohesive committee and has been able to call on the help of many supportive organisations and individuals. On December 13, 1999 the Portuguese Government made a presentation to spokesperson Maire Leadbeater, acknowledging the work of the group.

### Background

Jose Ramos Horta visited this country representing Fretilin in 1975, before the Indonesian invasion. Thus alerted to the issues, a group of concerned people came together after the invasion, and worked hard to raise public awareness. Some of those involved included David Williams,

Roger Fox, Evan Audley, Peter Bradley, Phil Goff, Tim Shadbolt, Tom Newnham and Elaine Shaw (a leading Greenpeace activist now deceased). Activities included letter writing and ANZAC day wreath laying to commemorate East Timorese deaths. The Wellington group — Colin Iles and Harry Bruhms — kept the pressure on Government, most notably by inviting Jose Ramos Horta to visit in 1978. The Muldoon Government considered denying Horta a visa and then suggested he could come but not speak about East Timor. Finally after a high profile campaign permission was given for an unrestricted visit — but other work prevented Horta from coming.

East Timor work was a hard call in the late 70s — media coverage had dwindled and the Government was totally unresponsive to community concern — voting in support of Indonesia in the UN and against resolutions supporting East Timorese self-determination.

In the 70s and 80s Elaine Shaw played a key networking role from her Greenpeace office — maintaining contact and facilitating solidarity work with the colonised and newly independent Pacific countries. When in 1981 Helen Yensen approached Elaine to offer help with her load, Elaine told her of her concern that the East Timor work was not receiving the attention it desperately needed. She passed over to Helen a large file. As many will know well, Helen became 'hooked' and took up the challenge of revitalising the solidarity and networking work. Contact was resumed with other centres and regular news sheets were circulated to a list of concerned individuals and church, trade union and peace and justice organisations who would lobby on behalf of East Timor with our Government and at the United Nations. As the 1980s advanced the membership of the "East





*ETIC Auckland stall at the Sweetwaters festival*

Timor Independence Committee” grew steadily.

It was a great disappointment that the Labour Government in the mid 1980’s abandoned the supportive stance for East Timor it had earlier expressed in yearly conference remits. Consecutive Ministers of Foreign Affairs continued the line of “We are concerned about the way it was done, but the Indonesian takeover is now ‘irreversible’ and anyway the East Timorese are now better off than under the Portuguese”. The worst was the consistent public playing-down of massive human rights abuses, and the acceptance of assurances by the Indonesian Government that they were doing their best. David Lange declined to meet Jose Ramos Horta when he visited in 1985.

The Santa Cruz massacre in Dili on November 12, 1991 was witnessed and filmed by journalist Max Stahl. There was world-wide condemnation of Indonesia and a marked increase in public awareness and support for the East Timorese cause in Aotearoa. In 1994 John Pilger’s TV documentary “Death of a Nation” was screened late in the evening. A post-screening hotline staffed by ETIC supporters was besieged with callers. Offers of help and donations came flooding in. The solidarity groups in all the main centres benefited and

were able to expand the scope of their work in lobbying and networking — nationally and internationally. Groups invited overseas speakers and continued to raise public awareness.

ETIC Auckland took responsibility for the production and mail-out of most of the issues of the national newsletter, Nettalk, which was produced several times a year and supplemented by occasional Action Alerts, to a mailing list of over 1,000 nationwide. We hosted visits from East Timorese resistance leaders and international supporters (Jose Ramos Horta, Joao Carrascalao, Bishop Belo, Inez Almeida, Agio Pereira, Francisco Pang, Abel Guterres, John Pilger, James Dunn, George Aditjondro and others) and organised public meetings. Since 1998 we have cooperated closely with the East Timor-ese students studying in New Zealand. This has included joint political lobbying, NZ and international politicians, as well as cultural evenings. We supplied information to pupils in primary and secondary schools doing projects on East Timor, as well as to tertiary students doing theses. Members represented us at national and international conferences on East Timor. We worked to put pressure on the government to change its policies with respect to Indonesia/ East Timor by public protests, petitions and commemorations of significant occa-



sions, by letter writing and visits to Ministers of Foreign Affairs and MPs, as well as giving evidence at relevant Parliamentary select committees. Members spoke at schools and addressed other organisations.

Early last year hopes were raised for change in East Timor, but hope turned to horror at the time of the courageous vote for independence when the international community failed to act. Our Government initially sought to keep the focus of the Auckland APEC Conference on trade, but East Timor did take the spotlight. ETIC played a key role in the large marches, the pickets and other protest actions that dominated the week.

Auckland has been fortunate to have had a strong committee. We have worked non-hierarchically, with members taking on responsibilities from month to month as they had time and skills to offer. Inevitably, there has been a coming and going of members, but many were active over a number of years.

Special thanks to Tim Howard, Peter Archer, Peter Bradley, Joyce Browne, Dougal Ellis, John de Graaf, Stuart Sontier, Melanie Hutton, Abigael Vogt, Terry Dibble, Barry Wilson, Kevin McBride, Keith Henderson, Didi and Brian Swete, Ian Sugden, Helen Yensen, Maire Leadbeater, Trish Epati, Robin Lightfoot, Roger Fox, Murray Addison, and David May. (forgive us for any names inadvertently overlooked)

## Financial Matters

Most financial support went to the National Free East Timor Coalition account, which financed the printing and distribution of newsletters, national and inter-national communication costs, some of the costs of speaking tours, meetings with Government and administrative costs. National costs will be summarised subsequently in Nettalk.

## ETIC Auckland Accounts:

All work has been done by unpaid volunteers — ETIC has never had any paid staff. In recent years committee members have claimed for legitimate expenses. There have been three able and dedicated treasurers who have kept both the local and the national accounts. National accounts were kept separately from 1992.

Until 1991 all ETIC costs were donated by members. The donations from the Auckland Peace Forum, CND, CARE, AAP Forum, CORSO,

OXFAM, CWS, JPD Auckland, WILPF, AFIA and a number of individuals gave a better financial base. Donations from public events helped, and over the years fundraising included dinners, sausage sizzles, concerts, and stalls.

By November 1996 a special appeal to supporters was needed to help when funds were critically low.

In May 1999 the Gala premiere of the film "Punitive Damage" directed by Annie Goldson was held at the Rialto theatre (thanks to Occasional Productions, Amy West and Minette Hillyer) and netted just over \$4000.00 for us. Many donations were received during the APEC period collected at demonstrations and mailed in. Many were tagged for the vitally needed humanitarian work in East Timor.

Our running costs comprised printing, photocopying, stationery, postage, tolls, faxes, rent, resources, travel costs for overseas speakers, hire of venues, some assisted travel for members to go to conferences/visit Parliament and other sundry expenses.

Costs associated with events around the time of APEC were high. We also gave considerable financial support to visiting East Timorese during APEC. And in January this year we helped finance the collection and packing practical aid items to East Timor.

The balance of our local account allowed us to make the following final donations:

- \$2000 for Caritas for restoration projects in East Timor
- \$1500 for Timor Lorosae Contact
- \$800 for Timor Lorosae Contact Support fund
- \$1000 for ETA Wellington for assistance to the families of NZ based East Timorese
- \$700 for CAFCA for investigating Indonesian leaders' investments in NZ
- \$250.00 for ETICO for East Timorese travel to Australia (voting)

We have kept sufficient in our account to pay for the printing and mailout of this newsletter and sundry final expenses. There are no assets except some stationery and a stapler!

Inspection of the accounts is very welcome — please ring: Ian on 828-5579 or Helen on 520-0179.



# Ongoing Solidarity

The people of East Timor need our ongoing solidarity — as they rebuild their shattered country and prepare for the transition from UN administration to independent government.

Stuart Sontier on behalf of ETIC and in consultation with CNRT has co-ordinated an amazing effort collecting up computers for delivery to



East Timor where they are in high demand. The first consignment of computers has arrived and we have had confirmation that they are already being put to good use. Stuart and his team are still hard at work assembling and packing computers for the next consignment. Donations of computers, computer peripherals, cables, software, and especially printers and modems are still required. There is also a need for boxes and packing materials and for volunteers to help with a task that has grown out of sight. Stuart would also appreciate donations to help with the purchase of missing links, to make functional units. Also help with Wellington to Auckland transport. Contact Stuart on 620 6018 or on email [stu@ihug.co.nz](mailto:stu@ihug.co.nz) or Dougal Ellis on 378 8279.

Ian Sugden, also on behalf of ETIC and in consultation with CNRT, coordinated a consignment of clothes. After intense work in January, the clothes went off with the computers on the NZ Navy ship Endeavour. Thanks to all who helped.

## Timor Lorosae Support Group

With the fantastic offer made by the RNZ Navy of free transport to East Timor, the Timor Lorosae Support Group decided to help by addressing the great need for water pumps. We raised over \$35,000 in funds to purchase pumps for Timor and also collected second hand pumps. We purchased 130 new pumps with fittings and lay flat hose. Many of these pumps were offered at prices that enabled us to purchase three pumps for the price of one. We collected over 80 pumps that have varied in size from small units to very high capacity pumps (valued from \$500 to several thousand). Some of these were new pumps. Fern Engineering of Manukau City checked, stored and repaired most of the pumps free of charge and adopted the project as their own — without their help, the project would not have been as successful as it has been.

A special gift of a fully operational, self-contained cool room complete with refrigeration unit was built and donated by Mark Stolten of Danfos (NZ) Ltd. This room measures 4m by 3m by 2.4m and is in kitset form. Wooden crates for packing

pumps were provided by IPSCO. We also sent three large rolls of heavy-duty plastic sheeting for temporary shelter donated by Burrell Demolition. Decor plastics, Dave Blampied and Good Shepherd School provided goods to pack with the pumps. The pumps and goods spilled over into a third container by the time loading finished. Everything has arrived safely and is being distributed. We are continuing with our project.

The Timor Lorosae Support Group has been set up to assist with aid and development in East Timor. It is an open group — anyone willing to help is welcome. We see our work as long-term and diverse. We are guided by Jorge Teme and other East Timorese accredited to CNRT. We have the support of Phil Goff, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Matt Robson, Minister of Overseas Development Aid.

Further information can be had from: Anna McHardy, 21 Ngauruhoe St, Mt Eden, Auckland. Ph (09) 630-3610 or Terry Dibble, 21 Farrar St, Grey Lynn, Auckland Ph/Fax: (09) 378-7881. E-mail: [cttdfarr@ihug.co.nz](mailto:cttdfarr@ihug.co.nz)





## Indonesia Human Rights Committee

This new group aims to develop solidarity links with the groups in Indonesia who are working for human rights and democracy and challenging the repressive role of the Indonesian military.

The group will build on established links with Indonesian groups and will aim to develop education and awareness about peoples movements, including labour, environmental and pro-democracy movements.

The group will maintain a watching brief on NZ Government policy and will lobby against NZ support for repressive forces in Indonesia. Immediate issues will be business ties to Suharto family companies and NZ defence equipment contracts (eg for Skyhawk refurbishment). We will oppose resumption of NZ's long standing defence training ties to Indonesia which are currently suspended. We will actively encourage our Government to support the pro-democracy movement and human rights in Indonesia.

IHRC will network with groups in New Zea-

land and internationally with which we have common goals.

The new group plans to continue the task begun under the ETIC mantle, of pushing for an independent UN war crimes tribunal to try those responsible for East Timor's tragedy.

The group will have its public launch at a seminar to be held on Friday 31 March and April 1. The seminar is being held in conjunction with CAFCA and will highlight the issue of the extent to which there are Suharto assets in New Zealand.

Key Note Speaker: Dr George Aditjondro, the Indonesian academic who has been the driving force behind the effort to expose the full extent of Suharto's wealth and ongoing influence on Indonesian civil and political life. He is a most engaging and challenging speaker.

For further information about the new IHRC — please phone Maire Leadbeater 09-376-9098, or e-mail [mair@clear.net.nz](mailto:mair@clear.net.nz)



# Call for a Parliamentary Enquiry into NZ East Timor Foreign Policy

ETIC Auckland says that the new Government should set in place a Parliamentary Enquiry into foreign policy on East Timor. The enquiry should be a comprehensive analysis of New Zealand's East Timor diplomacy in forums such as the United Nations, and of our bilateral relationship with Indonesia. It should cover the entire period of Indo-nesian occupation and the events leading to the Indonesian invasion in 1975.

Our media release said: "New Zealand cannot escape from its past as one of Indo-nesia's key apologists with respect to East Timor. Our support for Indonesia was both passive and active. We voted Indonesia's way when the issue was raised in the United Nations, we trained Indonesian military personnel and we even sent a diplomat to be present when the phony integration ceremony was held in Dili back in 1976."

"In September, 1999, Indonesia accepted the inevitable and allowed international troops to end the mayhem and killing. New Zealand cannot claim credit — we played follow the leader and

did not even suspend our military ties until the United States and Australia had done so."

"An enquiry into Australian foreign policy on East Timor is well under way at Senate level in Australia — at the dawn of the new millennium it is time for New Zealand to announce a similar initiative."

CNRT President Xanana Gusmao has clearly signalled that there can be no impunity for those who caused East Timor's tragedy. Indonesia has reacted with hostility to the UN call for an independent human rights or war crimes tribunal. But there is every reason to doubt that Indonesia's fledgling human rights court will deliver a just result — it will apparently have no retrospective powers beyond October 8, 1999. Only an independent tribunal can be expected to gain the trust of the surviving East Timorese victims and witnesses.

New Zealand should be pushing for an independent Tribunal when the matter comes before the UN Security Council, General Assembly and Human Rights Commission.

## I wish to keep being involved:

If you wish to be kept informed about the activities of either or both of these groups please complete the attached coupon.

I wish to keep being involved with the following group(s):  
(tick one or both)

Timor Lorosae Support Group

Indonesian Human Rights Committee

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form to: East Timor Independence Committee, PO Box 68 419, Newton, Auckland