

1. Portuguese Colonialism

First contacted by Portuguese and other European seafarers in the opening decades of the sixteenth century, it should not be surprising if the East Timorese did not suffer a similar fate as those of other peoples subject to forces unleashed by the Columbian revolution. Characteristically, the Latin *conquista* of the Americas and the peripheries gave way to massive demographic dislocations whether by the sword, disease, or through colonial dislocation. By any measure, large numbers of peoples and societies of the Americas were “genocided” within the first 50-100 years of European contact. In the Asia-Pacific region the peoples of the Malukus and the Marianas along with aboriginal Australia suffered a similar fate. The fact that East Timorese survived as a people and as a culture, at least under Portuguese contact, owes to the agency of the East Timorese themselves as actors and skillful negotiators in their dealings with *malai* or outsiders of various stripes. But also, as shown below, the Portuguese were forced to adapt to Timorese ways, to enter into alliances, and, over long time, obliged to treat Timor more like a protectorate than a colony. But Timor was also a colony in legal terms, the object of a brutal inter-imperialist conflict between 1942-45, and technically abandoned in 1975-76 by Portugal, the country charged with the decolonization of its territory, in the face of Indonesian aggression.

Periodization

The problem of periodization of Timorese history has engaged colonial historiography as much Timorese historians. From a Westernizing perspective, or at least a perspective that engages the colonial incorporation of Timor as a dependent tributary within a broader “modern world system,” several discrete stages are identifiable.

A first stage or period commences in 1515 with the formation of Christianized communities on Solor and Timor, but with the seat of religious and temporal power actually sited in, respectively, Solor and Flores. This period also coincides with Timor's incorporation into long distance trading networks reaching to Europe.

A second stage commences in 1695 with the advent of rule by the Portuguese Crown from its seat of power in Lifau in Oecusse.

A third stage coincides with the eastward shift, in 1769, of the capital from Lifau to Dili. This period also coincides with the significant Cailaco rebellion and the revolt of the Larantuquiros or Portuguese creole “topasses” of Lifau.

A fourth stage starts in 1836 with various administrative rationalizations linking Timor with, respectively, Goa and Macau and, after 1896, as a colonial dependency of Portugal. To degrees, as explained below, this period also represents a transition from indirect rule based upon the extraction of goods in kind to experimentation with pre-capitalist and even capitalistic forms of accumulation, especially in the plantation sector. This period also coincides with a series of sometimes-connected rebellions against the Portuguese or their agents.

A fifth stage is defined by the highly destructive Japanese military occupation and interregnum of 1942-45.

The final stage of direct Portuguese colonialism begins with the restoration of the colonial status quo following the Japanese surrender, and ends with the withdrawal of the Portuguese administration to Atauro island in August 1975, and the abandonment of the colony in the face of the Indonesian land, sea, and air invasion of 7 December 1975.

Timorese Rebellions

From the beginnings, the Portuguese success on the part of the island where they consolidated their rule, was because of their ability to secure alliances. This was no mean feat, especially at any given time, one *reino* may have been lined up with another, in turn in dispute with another constellation of *reino*. Again, according to period, Timorese rebellion where it took an anti-*malai* form, owed to a number of causes. According to period, the rebellions may have been anti-*finta* or against the obligatory delivery of goods in kind or, at a later date, anti-tax. While there is a logic to all the rebellions that challenged the Portuguese control over the half-island, certain rebellions may have been inspired by millenarian drives (cf. Pélissier 1996; Gunn 1999).

Also, with the possible exception of the Boaventura rebellion in the opening decades of the last century, no single rebellion embraced all *reino* or took on a global or “national” dimension. In fact, because of topography and Timor's ethno-linguistic divisioning, most rebellions were highly localized and easily defeated. Even so, some rebellions endured over long-time, and may be considered inter-generational. The introduction of muzzle-loading guns into Timor from an early

period also empowered certain rebel groups against others. But, from the mid-nineteenth century, the deployment of steam-powered gunboats, and the ability of the Portuguese to rapidly call up reinforcements from Africa or Macau (or even from Batavia/Jakarta), eventually turned the tables against Timorese along with would-be rebels among the *moradores* (1887) and others down until the end.

Of the greatest consequence for the future of Portuguese rule on the island was the rebellion of the *topasse* or Larantuqueros who, in 1769, drove the Portuguese governor and entourage out of Lifau, leading to the establishment of Dili as the seat of Portuguese government in the archipelago. This rebellion also coincided with the Cailaco rebellion (1719-39), a localized affair but which sapped away at Portuguese resources. While, by this stage, a missionary presence had touched such locations as Manatuto, the relocation of the capital to Dili required a new alignment of relations with loyal *reinos*, *rei* or *liurai*, by this stage, characteristically awarded with Portuguese military titles. Unquestionably, in the transfer of the capital, the Portuguese could not have survived without the enduring alliance with the *rei* of Motael.

While the early nineteenth century appears to have been a more pacific period for the Portuguese, the mid to late nineteenth century was punctuated by a series of rebellions, touching Vemasse, Lemean and Sariny in 1867; Cova in 1868; Maubara in 1893; and Manufahi in 1894. But, by this period, revenues from sandalwood and other products fell away, and the Portuguese state became more interventionist in the way of imposing demands upon Timor society.

The major test of Portuguese-Timorese relations in the early twentieth century was undoubtedly the Manufahi (1908-1912) or Boaventura rebellion. Whether viewed as a just rebellion or as the

betrayal of loyalty to the Portuguese Crown, the “primitive” rebel armies were crushed with major loss of life by a modern colonial army. Seemingly, however, the capture of rebel leader Boaventura spelled the end of this bloody affair. At least there were no major repetitions of revolt or acts of suppression in the interwar years. In any case, the Portuguese manipulated the line of descent of loyal chiefs to their favor, just as the colonial state expanded its system of controls (Gunn 1999, 175-89).

Down through the centuries, the Portuguese only remained on the island of Timor on sufferance. Out and out military conquest was neither contemplated nor was it possible, at least until the crushing of the Boaventura rebellion. First, the sandalwood trade was a coastal activity and, over long time, the Portuguese confined themselves to Solor island, Larantuca on Flores, and Lifau. Second, the Timorese were mean fighters, sea-borne European armies disfavored land battles, and the Portuguese could hardly match determined Timorese resistance and especially their cavalry on land. Third, the Portuguese, (as with the Dutch), struck alliances with loyal chiefs seeking a balance of power arrangement on the part of the island they dominated.

While the colonial state brooked no challenge to its power to collect taxes and impose corvées, and other obligations, the genocide of the Timorese was never on the agenda under Portugal. Moreover, Timorese society was never faced with collapse, as was the fate of, for example, Ainu society in Japan, aboriginal societies in Australia, and native Amerindian societies in more or less the same time frame. For one, Timor was never developed as a settler colony under Portugal along the lines of, for example, southern Angola. In any case, the ferocity of the Boaventura challenge may have dissuaded Portugal from this enterprise. Otherwise, in a highly creolized setting the state and the church could get on with the *missão civiladora* or civilizing mission.

We can assume a long demographic stasis on the island. But, by introducing important new food crops such as corn and potatoes, the Portuguese contact may have given impetus to demographic expansion (around 300,000) in 1860. There is no question that the cholera epidemics of the late 1800s also took its demographic toll, but malaria, TB, and other diseases were always a fact of life, not abated by the belated appointment of a public health official towards the end of the nineteenth century and the establishment of a public hospital in Lahane. For example, between December 1895 and February 1884, at least one thousand people died from the direct or indirect affects of a cholera outbreak in the Dili, Maubara area.

International Status

Internationally, in the mid-nineteenth century, Portugal, or at least Governor José Joaquim Lopes de Lima, began negotiations with the Netherlands over the future of scattered Portuguese territories in the archipelago, importantly including Larantuca on Flores, Solor, Lomblem, Pantar, and Ombai (Alor). Lamentably, under the Lisbon Treaty of 1861, the Portuguese government was obliged to ratify Lopes de Lima's derisory sale-off of these possessions. Only Atauro was retained, but the Portuguese flag was not raised on the island until 1884 and the island not militarily occupied until 1905. But Governor Lopes de Lima's illegal acts also kicked off negotiations with Holland over the status of land boundaries on Timor, including a veritable leopard spot of enclaves and inclaves and overlapping colonial claims. Maubara was duly retroceded to Portugal in 1861. Eventually, the boundaries of Oecusse-Ambeno, along with the land frontier of Dutch and Portuguese-controlled Timor, were settled under the Lisbon Convention of 10 June 1893. Following a Dutch climb-down over Oecusse, the two sides entered into the Hague Convention of 1 October 1904. All

enclaves, with the exception of Oecusse, were finally abolished with the Hague Arbitration Convention of 3 April 1913.

From Crown to Republic

Portuguese Timor survived the traumas associated with the dramatic change from monarchy to Republic in 1910 without major incident, although many Timorese were obviously perplexed at the change of flag, its symbolism, and the meaning of republicanism. No less inconsequential was the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1910, leaving fewer than a dozen religious workers in the colony. Figures offered by Governor Teófilo Duarte for the late 1920s reveal that, after 300 years of the mission, only 19,000 converts had been won. Only 1,822 could read and write, a staggering level of illiteracy by any measure (cf. Gunn 1999, 21-24).

Under Salazar's Estado Novo, commencing in 1926, a new administrative rationalization was created for Portugal's African and Asian colonies. Accordingly, Portuguese Timor was incorporated into the Portuguese colonial empire as an “administrative division” under metropolitan control. Under this dispensation, administrative control was exercised by the Minister of Colonies through the person of the Governor. No political space was created in Timor under the long Salazarist regime, (or by his successor Caetano). One feature of political life in Portuguese Timor was the dispatch of *deportado* from the metropolitan country although, as with the rest of the population, under the close surveillance of the Salazarist state and its local agents. Socially, colonial Timor mirrored that of the European empires albeit buttressed by nationalist-socialist ideology and grounded in a backward economic setting.

On the legal plane, Salazarist law described the colony as “an administrative division of the Portuguese colonial empire.” The Salazarist Organic Charter also set forth in detail the practical dispositions in which administrative control was exercised by the Ministry of Colonies through the person of the governor, local administrative agencies, and the military. Yet, unlike even Dutch Timor, where a number of political parties emerged, there was no space for political action in East Timor. Educational opportunity remained highly restricted beyond the primary level, and few, if any, Timorese went on to higher education. By this age (census of 31 December 1927), the population had grown to 451, 604 and that of Dili (8,136).

The mission system, slowly restored following the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1910, also joined the education field. But, from all accounts, the missionary presence spread thin and Catholicism never dominated in a society still rooted in local cultures and traditions, with many communities widely isolated and virtually beyond the reach of the colonial state. In this situation, very few Timorese were able to achieve the favored colonial status of *assimilado*, such as emerged in the Portuguese African colonies.

While the interwar years were a rare period of peace in the history of the colony, the absence of major outbreaks of violence cannot have been out of the love of the people, but stemmed from a familiar colonial practice of building bonds with a collaborating elite, and through the exercise of significant “coercive dissuasion.” Timorese became subject to a widening net of controls, taxes and corvees, a typical measure adopted by European colonizers of the period to enhance “primitive” accumulation and to make colonies pay for themselves. Under this dispensation, all adult Timorese males were obliged to pay a head tax, or, in default, supply labor. Modern colonies also required roads and the basic road system in Timor today is the legacy of Timorese conscript

labor, achieved without significant mechanical means. Urban dwellers also came under the net of an extensive array of imposts on cockfights, bicycles, buildings, windows, etc.

Unlike in other Portuguese colonies (and indeed, the Dutch East Indies), no challenge was mounted in Timor to Portuguese colonialism from a modernist elite. The only exception to a loyal cadre came from various *deportados* from metropolitan Portugal. Up until the pre-war period the colony hosted three prisons, Aileu, Taibesse, and Cadeia de Comarca. In 1940 Timor was designated a penal colony, therefore ensuring a steady supply of convicts from Macau. Contrariwise, Macau served as a penal colony for condemned Timorese.

The eve of war found Timor ruled by about 300 metropolitan Portuguese including 100 *deportados*. At the apex of the structure stood the Governor along with about 36 key European officials in addition to civil servants of Indian, Cape Verdian, Macanese and Timorese origin. Added to this number were around 2,000 Chinese, many active in commerce, along with a variety of other nationalities.

Yet Portuguese Timor stood out among colonialisms in the pre-war period, for its seeming non-intervention in matters of culture and tradition. In this sense, Timor was run more like a protectorate than a colony. But insofar as Timor lacked centralized state structures, there is a sense that the Portuguese never envisaged a Timorese identity outside of the Portuguese nation. Salazarism was pregnant with imperial vision, and even colonial anthropology serviced this highly mythologized view of people and nation. For example, Tetum, which could have formed the basis of a “national” identity, was never developed as a script language under the long years of colonial rule.

Rise of a Colonial Economy

All arriving Portuguese governors in Dili looked for measures to diversify the local economy, as much sources of revenue for the administration. In any case, over long time and continuing into the early decades of the twentieth century, the Portuguese administration in Timor was subsidized by an annual subvention from Macau.

By 1911, as Governor Filomena da Camara observed, coffee exports dominated, followed by sandalwood, copra, wax and cocoa. Obviously Timor's historic export, sandalwood, was doomed as the economic prop, at least by the mid nineteenth century, if not before. The Lifau period entered history and, through overcutting, sandalwood resources were gradually depleted. Sandalwood never contributed more than 10 percent of the colony's exports by value after 1920 and disappeared from records altogether by 1939.

While coffee had been introduced into Timor in the first decade of the nineteenth century, it was not until the watch of Governor Affonso de Castro in the 1860s that a systematic effort was made to expand coffee cultivation. Still, little could be done until the “pacification” of the rebellions was achieved. Notably it was Governor José Celestino da Silva who laid the foundations of a functioning plantation system in the colony after 1894. Pacification of Ermera, site of prime plantation land, was the necessary prelude. It was Celestino da Silva who established Sociedade Agricola Patria e Trabalho (SAPT), the most powerful agribusiness on the island although operated like a state within a state. Other European capitalized plantations followed, but it was Governor Filomeno da Camara who pushed ahead with a new concept of land ownership in the colony,

virtually creating the category of land as belonging to the state, as opposed to traditional or communal ownership. By the end of the 1920s SAPT forged ahead producing 200 tons of coffee a year, with an additional 100 tons a year from Timorese producers. SAPT along with the Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU) held virtual monopoly status on the eve of World War II, with overall coffee production reaching 1,522 metric tons in 1938.

The interwar years saw a small gush in exploration in the minerals and oil sector, although many ventures existed only on paper. The only operational mining venture in the pre-war period was the mining and export to Japan from Laga of manganese deposits located in Aliambata. But, in the pre-war period, Japan began to demand economic “concessions” in Portuguese Timor, widely suspected by the Australian government as fronts for future Japanese imperial advance.

The Japanese Interregnum (1942-45)

Commencing in February 1942, Portuguese Timor's neutral international status was twice violated. First, by the insertion over Portuguese protest of a small group of Dutch-Australian soldiers and, second, by a full-scale Japanese Imperial Navy and Army invasion of the island. Almost without exception, Portuguese officials and their families who remained in their positions endured incarceration during the occupation, although a privileged group of 540 mostly Portuguese and mestiços, including the Bishop and entourage, were evacuated to Australia. Additionally, a group of progressives drawn from the *deportados* joined the resistance. Altogether, some 60-70,000 Japanese forces rotated through Portuguese Timor during its three-year military occupation. While some Timorese rendered service to Australian commandos who had retreated to the mountains, and paid the supreme sacrifice for their efforts, an even greater number of Timorese

were pressed into labor service as porters or as road and airport construction workers. Some women, including Chinese, were conscripted as prostitutes. As in other parts of occupied Southeast Asia, the Japanese implanted their own administrative system, introduced their own currency, and substituted their own cultural values. The Japanese also manipulated ethnic groups in the endeavor to win allies. Certain Japanese units were also responsible for a number of specific massacres against, Portuguese, Australians and Timorese.

Until evacuated, in December 1942, some 337 Australian commandos were squared off against 12,000 Japanese occupying forces. Commencing in late 1942, Dili and other towns were subject to the full force of Allied bombings, taking many casualties amongst urban dwellers, including Chinese. At war-end, Australia insisted upon receiving the Japanese surrender at a ceremony held in Dili on 23 September 1945, although the Portuguese were insistent that the official Japanese surrender had occurred on 5 September 1945 when they were so notified. The Portuguese presence was reinforced on 27 September with the arrival of two warships bringing valuable food supplies and relief, along with a military contingent also deployed for reconstruction purposes (Gunn 1999, 223-39).

The Japanese interregnum also led to major demographic loss. The best guess is that 40,000 to 70,000 Timorese died under the Japanese occupation (1942-45) out of a total of 450,000, by massacre, through reprisals for aiding Australian guerrillas, by overwork, hunger, and through illness. This would translate into a loss of some ten percent of the population, an appalling figure and also subject to some denial and obfuscation. The occupation massively disrupted food security, separated peasant producers from their gardens, and imposed impossible burdens and hardship. The effects of the occupation lingered on through the early post-war years as matched by drastically

high infant mortality statistics that characterize the period. In terms of dislocation, social trauma, and economic damage, the Japanese occupation, along with the actions of the Australians and the US-supported bombing of urban centers, was a major prelude to what was to come some thirty years later (Gunn 1999, 223-39).

Major victims of the Japanese occupation included women, especially those from the Chinese community. But all Portuguese suffered, especially members or suspected members of the “Red” Brigade. War crimes trials were conducted at war's end by Australian military courts for Australian victims of Japanese crimes. No analogous courts were convened for Timorese or Portuguese victims (Gunn 1999, 223-39). Neither did Japan offer reparations, compensation, or apology for its illegal occupation of the neutral Portuguese territory. [see Diplomacy, Portugal] Another feature of Japanese wartime rule is that, unlike in other occupied countries and territories, Japan did not spawn a nationalist anti-colonial movement. From an international perspective, the United States basically offered no major critique of the postwar restoration of Portuguese colonialism, especially as access to the crucial mid-Atlantic Ocean Lajes air force base on the Azores Islands crucially entered Salazar's diplomacy over Timor, Macau, and the African colonies.

Postwar Economic and Social Development

Demographic losses incurred by the war are revealed in the first postwar census data. As of 13 June 1948, the population was calculated at 420,480. This figure included 1,217 Europeans (1947); 3,592 Chinese (1947); 146 Arabs (1949); and 600 mixed race (1949). Census data for 1950 reveals a total population of 442,578, rising to 517,079 in 1960, and 555,723 in 1965. The rate of increase for the 1950-60 period was 1.7 percent, extremely weak compared to a Southeast Asian average for

this period of 2.1 percent. By 1968 the population had increased to 591, 000. According to an official Portuguese source published in 1970, projections of population size for 1970 were 652,700 and for 1973, 671,600 (Gunn 1999, 242).

Broadly, development planning in the postwar period was in line with the overall metropolitan endeavor to stimulate development in the overseas colonies on the basis of a Lusophone trading and currency bloc that privileged trade between Portuguese territories and imposed artificial barriers to closer regional economic integration. At the same time, like the African colonies, Timor was also hostage to Portugal's own economic weakness and peripheralization within Europe. The legacy of the war also weighed heavily upon the first attempts at economic recovery. Almost half of the 92,000 contos expenditure budgeted for Timor's first Development Plan (1953-58) was allocated to reconstruction of the capital, with the balance divided between reconstruction in the interior and agriculture and livestock resources.

While reconstruction in the immediate postwar period was carried out with some determination, at least avoiding serious famine, changes in the various economic sectors over the 1953-62 period, according to East Timorese economist, José Mariano de Sousa Saldanha, indicated a “lack of seriousness” on the part of the colonial government in implementing the development plans. There was actually a relative decline in the banking and service sector participation in the economy in this period, even though the agricultural sector strengthened. In the 1966-72 period, Saldanha found, routine expenditure was always less than routine income indicating a failure to anticipate developmental expenditures, and a consequent failure to stimulate other productive sectors (Saldanha 1994, 66-67). There is no question that the colonial state in Timor presided over an

economy of extremely low productivity where development was a highly restricted concept based upon low productivity, and low levels of technical inputs and accountability (Gunn 1999, 248-49). However, it is the Third Development Plan (1968-73) that bears major scrutiny, not only because it was the final plan to be fully executed under the colonial order, but because it appears to represent a break with the past, at least in terms of its conception and scope in developmentalist terms. Unlike previous plans, the Third Plan threw the emphasis upon stimulating export activities and import-substitution industries especially in the area of consumer goods, along with infrastructure related to enhancing productive potential. In linking this plan to Timorese realities the emphasis was placed on increasing agricultural productivity, raising the cultural, sanitary and technical levels of the population, and expanding commerce.

One measure of the success of the economic plans was the orientation of external commerce and trade. For the 1960-68 period, Timor experienced a steady increase in the value of imports, making available a range of imported consumer and production goods. The contrast could not have been greater in this period with the bankrupt nature of the state in Indonesia (and the dearth of consumer goods available in west Timor). Exports, however, while showing an overall increase, also showed reversals. This owed to the nature of agricultural exports and market fluctuations, especially coffee but also rubber and copra (Gunn 1999, 248-49).

But the figures also reveal that foreign exchange earnings derived almost exclusively from one commodity, coffee, which increased its dominance at the expense of other export commodities down until the end of the colonial period. Very clearly, the coffee boom in Timor was linked with a situation of high commodity prices after World War II. Exports went over the 2,000 ton mark in

1963 for the first time in thirty years and, by the early 1970s, levels of 4,000 and 5,000 tons a year were reached (Gunn 1999, 248-49).

For the Portuguese state, the early postwar years were more of a drain on metropolitan resources than an asset. Such circumstances defies colonial logic, but Portuguese mission and history were also at stake. Even so, approximately half of revenues were derived from local sources. All adult Timorese were subject to poll taxes and numerous indirect “imposts.” Needless to say, these were unpopular obligations but, by 1960-68, allowed the state to present a generally balanced budget, albeit still dependent upon a metropolitan subsidy. Typically, as in other colonial situations, metropolitan subsidies often created space for the accumulation of profits on the part of certain individuals (Gunn 1999, 248-49).

All things considered, under Portuguese colonialism, it is undeniable that the East Timorese ranked among the world's poorest people, a description that also fitted long lost kin in west Timor under Indonesian rule. Statistical indices of per capita income reveal an extremely low level of development. Even so, a full picture of Timorese economic life must acknowledge that most Timorese simply lived outside the colonial economy in a situation of barter and self-sufficiency. Life expectancy was low, around 35 years, infant mortality was a staggering 50-75 percent, malaria, pneumonia, elephantiasis, venereal disease and TB were endemic. Demographic increase was also low. Church sources place East Timor's population as 674, 550 in 1974 and 688,711 in 1975. Allowing for an average of 2 percent growth a year, Durand (2002, 86) estimates the population in December 1975 at 702,000.

The 1959 “Viqueque Rebellion”

Few if any echoes of modern nationalist stirrings reached Timor in the early post-war years. This is surprising given the events of the war, and given the Indonesian revolution leading to the ouster of the Dutch and the consolidation of the Republic of Indonesia also encompassing west Timor.

Nevertheless, the events of the Permesta or Indonesian outer island rebellion of 1959 did touch Portuguese Timor in a profound way. Members of the American CIA-backed separatist movement began to arrive by sailing boat in the Portuguese colony claiming exile. According to Governor Filipe Themudo Barata (1959-63) certain of these “pseudo-*refugiados*” were allowed to settle at Uatolari in Viqueque. By this juncture the exiles had been in contact with the Indonesian Consul in Dili, Nazwar Jacob, who, in circumstances not altogether clear, encouraged them to foment dissent. This they did by conspiring with local leaders in Uato-Lari and Uato-Caribau (Barata 1998, 49-74).

Although signs of rebellion came to the attention of the authorities in late March-early April, rebellion erupted on 7 June 1959 in the village of Uato Lari and soon spread to the local administrative headquarters in Viqueque. Suppression of the revolt, accomplished within a week, was extremely bloody with between 500 and 1,000 killed. Ringleaders of the revolt including four Indonesians were exiled to Angola. Undoubtedly, the rebellion combined both anti-colonial/anti-Portuguese and tribal or clan elements. The ethnic friction was in turn exacerbated by the act of the Portuguese in raising a militia in the neighboring Lospalos area in order to combat the rebels. The ramifications of the rebellion, or “insurrectionary movement” as described by Governor Barata, were not without consequence. Consul Nazwar Jacob was expelled in what turned out to be a premonition of future Indonesian meddling. Even so, in the case of the Viqueque rebellion, there is no real evidence that Jakarta gave its blessing. Also, as a direct consequence of the rebellion, the Portuguese deported and exiled to Africa and Portugal a number of the Viqueque conspirators,

individuals who would later return to Jakarta in the 1990s adding voice to Jakarta's integrationist project. Another direct consequence of the rebellion was that the Salazar regime installed Policia Internacional e Defesa do Estado (PIDE), a repressive police agency with a brief to invigilate individuals local and foreign suspected of anti-colonial leanings (Gunn 1999, 259-60).

Political Awakening (1959-74)

We observe that educational expansion promoted by Portugal in the wake of the 1959 rebellion also proved a double-edged sword. The new educational philosophy that encouraged the formation of a small native elite also carried, towards the end of the 1960s, the seeds of an anti-colonial nationalist movement. Still, this elite was in the making. One who succeeded within the system was the future Apostolic Administrator of Dili under Indonesian rule, Martinho Costa Lopes, elected in 1961 to represent Timor in the National Assembly in Portugal. Still, there were no Timorese even “privileged” to be incarcerated in Peniche near Lisbon, as there were Goan and African nationalist-critics of the Salazar regime. Although A Voz de Timor was established after the rebellion, the only vehicle for expression outside the existing censorship laws was the Catholic newspaper *Seara*, the fortnightly publication of the *Boletim Ecclesiastico do Diocese de Dili*. Until closed by PIDE on 10 February 1973, such renown figures of the Timorese nationalist movement as Nicholas Lobato, José Ramos-Horta, Francisco Xavier do Amaral, Domingos Oliveira, Mari Alkatiri, Francisco Borja da Costa, and Manuel Carrascalão contributed articles of searching social commentary to this publication (cf. Jolliffe 1978, 56-57).

With the end of the old order in Portugal arising out of the events of 25 April 1974, Portugal speedily affirmed its obligations to the UN to offer self-determination and independence to its

colonies. Specific information on this question in relation to Timor was addressed to the UN on 5 June. [see United Nations] In Timor it would not be until the arrival in the colony in November 1974 of Governor Mario Lemos Pires accompanied by representatives of the Movimento das Forças Armadas (MPA) that any democratic concessions were made.

In his memoir, Lemos Pires has written that, unlike in other Portuguese colonies, the MFA played a special role in Timor in preparing the decolonization process. Besides being engaged in economic and social works, the MFA were also involved in preparing the electoral process, in acting as an “arbiter” between the different peoples, and in restoring order, discipline, and direction to society. Lemos Pires was deliberate in distancing himself from the Salazarist character of the colonial state. Moving with the tide of the reformist MFA movement, he was beholden to the doctrine of *apartidarismo*, a policy which asserted that the armed forces must stand above the political process. He also explains that he inherited from the outgoing Governor Alves Aldeia an untenable economic-financial situation, military indiscipline, and what he calls a reduction in Portuguese diplomatic leverage with Indonesia (Lemos Pires cited in Gunn 1999, 274).

Governor Lemos Pires explains that the 25 April movement in Portugal created great expectations in Timor. Nevertheless, he describes Timor upon his arrival as a veritable ocean of peace. Such expectations were further aroused by the creation on 13 May of a Commission for Self Determination for Timor and Law 7174 of 27 July 1974 which underwrote the law for Timor independence. The creation of political parties in Timor was a direct consequence of the 25 April Movement. Replacing Governor Alves Aldeia on 14 November 1974, Lemos Pires took up his position in Dili with a broad mandate to oversee the decolonization of the territory. Notable in this sense was the commitment of Francisco Mota and Costa Jonatas who, in December 1974,

established a government council with a view to drawing the newly sanctioned Timorese political parties into the political process. [In early May 1975 Governor Lemos Pires presided over talks with a Fretilin-UDT coalition, but this soon unraveled as UDT began its fatal dalliance with the extreme right and Indonesia.

On 26 July 1975, representatives of all the major parties, with the notable exception of Fretilin met in Macau. A constitutional law decided upon at the Macau Summit allowed for Portuguese sovereignty to continue for three years. Lemos Pires was expected to serve as high commissioner in the transitional government. According to the former governor, the UDT coup of 10 August 1975 came as a surprise not only to himself, but also to many UDT members. Nevertheless the coup was not unanticipated by the Indonesian hawks who sought to take advantage of the chaos engendered. According to captured UDT documents, the final objective after the coup was the “total eradication of communism.” Lemos Pires continues that, while UDT sought to eliminate “Marxist” Fretilin from the political scene, it did not yet totally substitute itself for the Portuguese (Lemos Pires cited in Gunn 1999, 275).

In the event, on 26 August 1975, Governor Lemos Pires relocated the Portuguese administration to Atauro. He was joined on 28 August by a Portuguese Delegation headed by Brigadier-General Rodrigues, sent by the President of the Portuguese Republic invested with full powers to solve the crisis. According to Portuguese lawyer João Loff Barreto, in making the fateful and controversial decision, Timor's last Portuguese governor, was guided by two impulses, first, the “real horror” of the destruction of Dili, although that was an exaggeration, and, second, the tenor of a cable he received from Portuguese President Costa Gomes, “In spite of the risk, try getting out of Dili to

some other part of the territory, namely Atauro. Delegates will undertake talks. You should not, at any costs, be in a position to be taken hostage” (cited in Gunn 1999, 275).

Despite repeated calls by Fretilin to Governor Lemos Pires to re-engage in the decolonization process, his failure to act placed Fretilin in an invidious position. Almost uniquely in the history of decolonization, the triumphant nationalist party was confronted, not by the intransigence of a colonial power, but by the aggressive designs of a neighboring power which refused all calls to desist its machinations. According to Jill Jolliffe (1978, 127), it was the MFA policy of *apartidarismo* or nonintervention, as opposed to active neutrality practiced by the Portuguese in Mozambique, that was unforgivable.

As an official Portuguese government commission on the first phase of decolonization of East Timor stated in 1981 after elaborate analysis:

“Timor constituted a very particular case of colonialism, where appreciable support existed from Portugal, and where Portuguese sovereignty was not the object of organized contestation. In the final analysis, a practically illiterate people, traditionally hostile to Indonesia, favored Portugalization and links with Portugal and only as alternative, aspirations for independence. Economic underdevelopment of the territory, without the possibility of self-sufficiency in the short-term, extraordinarily conditioned any immediate solution through independence” (*Relatorio da Comissao* 1981, 295).

Evaluation

Arguably, Portuguese Timor was run more like protectorate than a colony, a majority of Timorese remained animist to the end and, unlike British, French and Dutch counterparts, the paternal Salazarist state actually strengthened Timorese cultural traditions and protected Timorese identity through sheer developmental neglect. Notably, the Portuguese failed to develop a modern medical service outside of major towns and inadequate public health services left their demographic toll and infant mortality rates were high by global standards. The vicious side of Salazarism also showed up with the crushing of the Indonesian-backed 1959 Viqueque rebellion. Portugal also lagged in the development of higher education leaving the masses of Timorese cocooned in ignorance even though, inevitably, an educated elite emerged, becoming scions of the first political parties. Colonialism by default or benign neglect is no defense but it was not genocide.

Various critics of Portuguese colonialism have asserted that there was no development under Portugal and that, economically, nothing was bequeathed. Such arguments provided useful ammunition to opponents of East Timor self-determination (Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam) that East Timor was an unviable economy. But the Canberra government as with Indonesia understood the potential of Timor Sea hydrocarbon resources, and actually conspired to rob East Timor of those resources. [see Diplomacy, Australia] Proponents of economies of scale (the World Bank/Japan/Canberra) and, of course, Jakarta, argued that only Indonesia had the wherewithal to develop the territory. But, above all, back in 1975 East Timor was given no chance to autonomously develop or build upon the Portuguese legacy. To the contrary, the half-island was de-developed by military campaigns, by forced relocations, and the introduction of unwelcome trans-migrants and economic competitors. It was the Indonesian military that exploited East Timor's important coffee industry while plundering its seas and other natural resources.

The Portuguese legacy in Timor is thus significant in many ways. As acknowledged in the constitution of the Republika Demokratica Timor-Leste (RDTL), Portugal bequeathed its language and culture. No discussion of East Timor identity can ignore this fact. From an early period Portuguese seafarers introduced important food crops such as corn. Missionaries also bequeathed Catholicism, the dominant faith. It can even be said that the processes of Portugualization and creolization on the island have advanced so far that, in many instances, it is difficult to establish a datum of “pure” or truly indigenous tradition. Whatever else, Portuguese Timor was not Dutch Timor, just as Timor-Leste has emerged as a separate nation outside of the Republic of Indonesia.

