

8. International Solidarity

On 23 May 2001, fresh from independence celebrations, a small meeting was convened in Dili to honor “international solidarity.” To an audience of some eighty, the newly sworn-in RDTL President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and the visiting President of the Sahawri (Western Sahara) Republic all offered praise to the individuals and groups who supported East Timorese in their struggle. Several days earlier at International People's Park at Lacidere UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressed a small knot of dignitaries and journalists with the words: “Without the work of UNVs, East Timor could not have recovered from the destruction, without the actions of international solidarity, East Timor could not have achieved its independence.” A plaque bears these words, “We shall never forget you our eternal friends” (Dr. José Ramos-Horta, Nobel Prize laureate).

Outside of the solidarity of states which eventually supported humanitarian intervention in East Timor after the destruction of September 1999, the international solidarity movement, as we define it, comprised the actions, dedication, interventions and labors of a variety of non-state actors. But across 24 years, even the concept of volunteerism has undergone significant change in line with shifting international currents; affluence; the end of the Cold War; the advent of electronic media; and the rise of pro-democracy movements in Asia, including Indonesia; especially after the collapse of the Suharto regime. The defining event in the reconstitution of the global East Timor solidarity movement, however, was the international response to the exposure of the Dili massacre.¹

The international solidarity movement in support of self-determination on East Timor is obviously not of a piece, but necessarily must be disaggregated by country, by political persuasion, by methods, and even by generation, as certain veterans made their mark and passed the baton on to others. Here we salute the role of such activist victims as Kamal Bamadaj, the Malaysian student activist killed by TNI bullets at Santa Cruz in December 1991. While a certain crossover also existed between international activists and their East Timorese counterparts in the clandestine – the role of Kirsty Sword Gusmão was emblematic – this story belongs to the clandestine movement of the Timorese.² The matter becomes more complex when we examine the way that certain solidarity groups morphed into national or international lobbies, monitoring groups, and aid agencies. Even so, we must further distinguish between the role of the solidarity movement and the diplomatic role of East Timorese actors such as Dr. José Ramos-Horta, Mari Alkatiri, and Roque Rodrigues. [see Diplomacy]

To be sure, the church, including international human rights organizations, are by nature global and with multiple concerns and multifaceted agendas. Nevertheless, the rising evidence of mass murder and human rights violations in East Timor gave these organizations special pause and focus. Obviously, also, there was a coincidence of interest between various lobbies and organizations concerned with stopping the trade in weapons to Indonesia. At the end, as in Portugal and Australia, there was a certain convergence of interest between state policy and the solidarity movement but even that must be qualified. Obviously, also, the wherewithal to successfully lobby Washington was more strategically important than a lobby in say, Thailand, but still there are other considerations with respect to commitment and justice that are not easily quantified and perhaps should not be attempted.

Australia/New Zealand and the Pacific

Not surprisingly, because of proximity and immediacy, the first dedicated solidarity organizations in support of East Timor self-determination emerged in Australia. First, a number of Australian organizations and dedicated individuals had been engaged in relief efforts following the UDT coup d'état. The Australian left which prided itself on support for Indonesia's struggle against Dutch colonialism also weighed in as did the “left-wing” Australian Union of Students.

The first activists also numbered the first martyrs, as that appellation certainly attracts itself to the “Balibo Five,” the five Australian and Australia-based members of an Australian television crew killed in cold blood at Balibo in October 1975. It is not so much that this team of young professionals considered themselves partisan in the conflict but that the 25-year cover-up of their fate guaranteed the five victims an iconic fame in solidarity circles. This owed much to the one women campaign mounted by the wife of one of the victims, Shirley Shackleton, but also engaged journalism (cf. Jolliffe 2001). Less feted was Roger East, the Australian freelancer who established East Timor News Agency upon his arrival in Dili. Refusing to leave his adopted people before the invasion, his death at the hands of TNI assassins was only announced over Fretilin radio on 4 January 1976.

But undoubtedly the first dedicated solidarity organization in support of East Timor self-determination globally was the Campaign for an Independent East Timor (CIET) founded in Sydney in 1974 “to support the right of East Timorese to independence.” Branches of CIET quickly emerged in major cities throughout Australia. Under the leadership of Denis Freney (1936-1995), CTET launched into anti-imperialist broadsides at the “Jakarta Lobby” in Canberra along with the

Washington government. Unabashedly pro-Australian Communist Party, Freney had earlier shown his commitment to the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Besides authoring one of the first books analyzing the situation, namely, *Timor Caught between the Powers* (1975), at a time when the Fretilin flag was flying in Dili, Freney also established the East Timor News Agency, arguably, the major source of news on East Timor during the early years of the occupation (although John Waddingham's Timor Information Service provided an additional optic from 1975-84). Freney also published *East Timor News*, a tabloid newspaper dedicated to East Timor that continued publication into the early 1980s (cf. Gunn 1997, 69-71). As told in his autobiography, *A Map of Days: Life on the Left* (1991), Freney was no armchair activist but, as mentioned below, working with Darwin-based activist Rob Wesley-Smith, faced down Australian police harassment in making first radio contact with Falintil guerrillas including Xanana Gusmão.

Sydney was host to a large and vocal East Timorese community including the East Timor Relief Association (ETRA), formed in 1992 with branches subsequently established in Darwin and Melbourne. Sydney was also host to representatives of Fretilin and UDT and, from the 1980s, a CNRT office. In 1998, ETRA established the Denis Freney Memorial East Timor Solidarity Award, and, at a later stage, the Michel Turner Literary Prize. ETRA, under the directorship of Agio Pereira, with non-Timorese Kieran Dwyer as media outreach director, was the single most effective East Timorese support group/humanitarian organization. It also published *Matabeian News*, then an indispensable source of information and key political analysis. ETRA subsequently established branches in Melbourne and Darwin.

We observe that it suited the Canberra government that East Timor would be presented as a left wing issue as radical critics like Freney, along with the generally supportive left-wing trade union

movement in Australia, could easily be dismissed, even by the parliamentary-wing of the Australian Labor Party. Not so the church and aid agency fraternity which also engaged East Timor. As mentioned in chapter 6, two Australian aid agencies had worked inside East Timor alongside Fretilin until evacuated ahead of the invasion.

Answering broad community concern in Australia at the Indonesian invasion and the Canberra government's apparent acquiescence, the Australian East Timor Association (AETA) was founded in Melbourne in December 1975 by David Scott, academic journalist Helen Hill, and lawyer John Sinnot. A major disseminator of information on East Timor over the decades, and still operational, AETA was but the first of a number of solidarity organizations established in Australian cities, which would increasingly become host to small communities of East Timorese (3,703 by 1981, rising to 10,300 by 1992).

These solidarity groups included Friends of East Timor, Perth; Campaign for an Independent East Timor (South Australia), tracing its origins back to informal beginnings in May 1975; Hobart East Timor Committee, Canberra East Timor Committee, Lismore Friends of East Timor, among others. Additionally, ETIC sent up shop in Aotearora (New Zealand) with Maire Leadbeater as major spokesperson. In January 1995 the (East Timor) Centre for Human Rights, Information, Education and Training, set up in Melbourne. Headed by Maria Bretts, it produced a number of independently research human rights reports.

Australians for a Free East Timor (AFFET) in Darwin under the tireless and creative Rob Wesley-Smith stands out not only for its longevity, tracing its origins back to 1975, but also for its ability to keep the East Timor question alive, not only in the Northern Territory of Australian but

internationally. Not surprisingly, perhaps, Wesley-Smith's name entered General Wiranto's blacklist of foreign activists, a back-handed accolade that had this activist deported from Dili in February 1995. But Wesley-Smith also became the bane of the Commonwealth police of Australia, especially for his actions, along with supporters, in keeping up sporadic radio contact with Radio Maubere, East Timor's only link with the outside world. Transcripts of Radio Maubere broadcasts entered [Freney's] East Timor News and other literature over a number of years and were also forwarded to Fretilin in Maputo. Another secret radio was set up in December 1976 and remained in place until communications ceased in December 1978. In May 1985 a transceiver was taken to Timor and the link with Darwin temporarily reestablished. The cat and mouse game to keep the radio connection alive is told by Wesley-Smith (1998, 63-102) in his essay "Radio Maubere and Links to East Timor." Over the years AFFET activists poured scorn on the Canberra government's links with Jakarta, no mean feat in the deeply conservative Australian north. Among the more high profile actions of the Darwin activists were the burning of Indonesian military flags in December 1995, and the mounting of a photo exhibition of East Timorese torture victims, both activities attracting convictions.

In the mid-1980s a discussion group called "Timor Talks Campaign," was set up by Pat Walsh of ACFOA, also engaging politician Tom Uren, David Scott, and eminent Indonesianist, the late Prof. Herb Feith. Among other initiatives, this group published an 'intellectual' newsletter, *The Missing Peace*, looking ahead to creative solutions to the impasse.

Although an early supporter of the East Timor cause, there is a sense that the Australian union movement did not keep pace, just as the Labor Party fell into the Canberra consensus on business-links with Jakarta. But the clandestine meeting with the "legendary" Xanana Gusmão in the

mountains of East Timor in September 1990 by Australian trade union official Robert Domm, the first outsider to make contact with Falintil headquarters, not only made waves in international media, but rekindled hope among solidarity activists (Domm 1998, 123-143).

As suggested, the global solidarity movement gained second wind from international responses to the Dili massacre. [see International Media]. This was also the case of the Sydney branch of AETA launched in 1992 with East Timor filmmaker Gil Scrine as first convenor (Taudevin and Lee 2000, 237). AETA emerged in the mid 1990s as the most active money-raiser and publicist of the East Timor cause especially around the hyper-promotionalism of author-media critic Jefferson Lee. Convenor, the late Andrew McNaughton, raised AETA's profile internationally with various underground sallies into East Timor making useful contacts with the clandestine movement and, especially, exposing and publicizing Indonesian documents on troop buildups.

Australia was also home to a number of author-activists and Timor experts. They include Jill Jolliffe, Helen Hill, James Dunn among others. All wrote important texts becoming the “bibles” for generations of Australian activists. Australian filmmakers Gil Scrine and Carmela Baranowska also made their respective impacts [see International Media]. Besides solidarity newsletters, such little publications as *Arena* (a Melbourne-based collective), and *Inside Indonesia* (editors Pat Walsh/Gerry van Klinken), offered informed and critical analysis on East Timor over the years, largely filling the information gap left by the mainstream media.

From a more engaged perspective, former Australian diplomat, Max Lane headed up the Indonesian Solidarity Action (AKSI), an Australia-based solidarity group in support of such organizations spearheading the pro-democracy, pro-justice movement in Indonesia as Infight and

National Youth Front. Both these organizations joined forces with the East Timor student underground, particularly the socialist wing. Lane also forged links with Solidaritas Mahasiswa untuk Indonesia Demokrasi (SMID), founded in 1992. SMID, in turn, launched the Partai Rakyat Demokratik (PRD), an organization dedicated to parallel Indonesian-East Timor struggles. The Sydney-based Democratic Socialist Party of Australia also networked with the Socialist Party of Timor. Subject to fierce military repression, SMID and PRD were behind a number of actions by East Timorese students in Jakarta, such as in the “break-ins” of the Dutch and Russian embassies on 7 December 1995. From Sydney, Max Lane also launched Green Left Weekly offering a tirade of critical commentary on East Timor issues over the years.

Some attempts were made to establish a national Australian Coalition for East Timor along the ETAN model, as discussed below. However, most solidarity groups in Australia preferred to work in their local areas, although consulting informally on questions of national strategy. Obviously the advent of Internet made this possible.

Portugal and other European Countries

The first “solidarity” organizations in Portugal in support of East Timor self-determination flowed from the activities of Timorese and their African counterparts who rallied to the revolution. For example, the Casa de Timor in Lisbon, established in March 1974 as a non-political “social cultural” grouping, emerged after the Carnation Revolution as a pro-Fretilin, pro-independence base for East Timorese in Portugal through the 1970s.

Among early groups in support of East Timor human rights and self-determination was the ecumenical A Paz e Possível em Timor Leste. Following the convention in Lisbon of a People's Permanent Tribunal in 1981, the Comissão para os Direitos do Povo Maubere (CDPM) was formed under the leadership of Luisa Pereira, which, among other activities, published a news bulletin Timor Leste and hosted an active website. Another solidarity organization was Paz e Justiça por Timor Leste. Galvanized by the Indonesian announcement of autonomy for East Timor, CDPM and A Paz e Possível joined forces to create East Timor Observatory “to monitor East Timor's transition as well as the negotiating process and its repercussions on the international level.” The Comité des Réfugiados de Timor (CRT) also became active from 1981. Timorese themselves founded the Fundação Austronésia Borge da Costa (1986). In 1997 the Fundação Paz e Democracia Monsenhor Martinho da Costa Lopes was launched with the patronage of José Ramos-Horta “to give full-time support to Timorese diplomats in Portugal, Australia, the United States and the European Union.” Joining tens of thousands of other *repatriados* from the Portuguese African countries, some contradiction existed between symbolic political support for the self-determination cause, and the sometimes-harrowing social and economic conditions facing the East Timorese arriving in the metropolitan country.

While political interest in Portugal for the East Timor self-determination cause often followed the ebb and flow of domestic politics, one individual was outstanding in raising the self-determination issue on a novel basis. This was Prof. Barbados Magalhães who, over a decade, hosted a series of international conferences on East Timor in such locations as Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra, drawing in a range of global experts and pro-democracy figures from Asia, including Indonesia, and elsewhere.

After the Dili massacre, interest in East Timor again peaked in Portugal. A national day of mourning was declared. Among other civil society actions, students linked with *Forum Estudante* magazine and *Missão Paz por Timor* established a support committee to raise money to charter the Portuguese ferry *Lusitania Express* with the intention to sail to East Timor to dramatize the abject situation. With the expected presence on board of former President Ramalho Eanes, the *Lusitania Express* venture raised major international media attention, especially as the risks involved dramatically escalated when, on 11 March 1992, the ship approached the island amidst Indonesian threats to sink the vessel (McMillan 1992, 204-05; 214-16; Gunn with Lee 1994, 192-95).

The Paris-based *Agir pour Timor*, under Carlos Semedo along with Bruno Kahn, served as the principal East Timor lobby in the French capital. Obviously, as a Security Council member, France was an important country with respect to the East Timor question. However, notwithstanding the lobbying activities of *Agir pour Timor* and the publication of two important books on the East Timor question by mainstream presses, French public policy on East Timor remained remote until September 1999. Another France-based group, was *Association Solidarité Timor-Oriental*. Italy hoisted the Latin American and Mediterranean Coalition for East Timor.

Holland is a country with a high level of awareness and concern over its former colony, turned Republic of Indonesia. To degrees, East Timor was always mainstreamed in this country's civil society organizations. Notably, Holland simply withdrew from the IGGI in protest at the Dili massacre. Support groups also existed in the Nordic countries, including the Swedish East Timor Committee, the Norwegian Cooperative Council for East Timor, the Group of Committee of 100 (Finland). Watch. Indonesia! Group based in Germany also took up the East Timor question.

The role of the International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET) requires special notation. According to its own description, IPJET was constituted in November 1991 to establish a group of specialists who could contribute to ending the Indonesian occupation of East Timor and to create the conditions for the people to exercise their own self-determination. Based in the Netherlands and headed by secretary-general Pedro Pinto Leite, IPJET excelled by hosting several international conferences on East Timor, co-hosted the 1994 APCET conference in Manila, and published several collections of conference proceedings, most with legal themes. (cf. *The East Timor Problem and the Role of Europe* (Leiden/Lisbon, 1998). IPJET also played an important role, especially in gathering support from among disparate EU nations.

United Kingdom

As major arms supplier in support of the Suharto regime, the London government emerged as a major target of civil society groups in support of democratization in Indonesia and self-determination for East Timor, just as the UK was host to a wide range of solidarity organizations that engaged East Timor. Although virtually defunct by 1979, the British Coalition for East Timor (BCET) spearheaded the solidarity movement in the UK.

The role of the London-based Tapol (Indonesian Human Rights Campaign) requires special elaboration. Founded in 1973, TAPOL or the British campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia owes largely to the initiatives and dedication of Carmel Budiarto, herself a prisoner in Suharto's Indonesia along with Liem Soei Liong, an Indonesian long resident in the Netherlands. Besides publishing *Tapol Bulletin*, a quality journal with many dedicated issues on East Timor, alongside West Papua and Aceh. Budiarto and Liem co-authored a

seminal text, *The War Against East Timor* (1984), path-breaking for its insights and revelations as to TNI methods, population control, and terror inside East Timor. Besides press releases, conference presentations, submissions to the Decolonization Committee, etc., the personal interventions of Carmel Budiardjo went beyond the usual, especially given her deep insights into Indonesian politics, expert intellectual exegesis on the East Timor question, and strategic planning, albeit in deference to East Timorese wishes. The Campaign Against the Arms Trade also became an important ally with the solidarity movement, especially exposing British arms sales to Indonesia. [see International Arms sales]

But the UK was also home of base of a number of intellectual activist writer/filmmakers on East Timor. Notable was the Yorkshire Studios production of “In Cold Blood: the massacre of East Timor” made from raw video footage shot at Santa Cruz by Max Stahl. [see International Media]. Australia-born John Pilger, maverick author and film-maker and producer of a 1994 documentary of a “second massacre,” in “Death of a Nation,” gained large audiences in the West. Individual activists included author-academic John Taylor, author of a seminal book, and Oxford Indonesianist Peter Carey. Among parliamentarians, Lord Avebery stood out as opposing the invasion and, in December 1980, pushed the debate in the House of Lords.

In the early 1980s a range of Catholic church-linked institutions and groups also commenced to take up the East Timor banner. After the Dili massacre, the British Campaign for East Timor drew in all concerned NGOs and peace groups. An East Timor Scotland Support Group also emerged. Another London-based or headquartered group which stood out for its dedication to the East Timor self-determination and human rights cause was the Nobel Peace Prize winning Amnesty International which long monitored East Timor and Indonesia through its special reporting on

prisoners of conscience, etc. Amnesty International also excelled with certain path-blazing publications, namely *East Timor: Violations of Human Rights: Extrajudicial Executions, Disappearances, Torture and Political Imprisonment* (1985), inter alia providing a map and description of the Comarca prison complex. Jardine (2000, 59-60) argues that, although Amnesty played an important role in gaining the release of political prisoners, in drawing attention to the use of torture, and in creating a human rights discourse on East Timor, the East Timor saga also revealed the limits faced by high-profile NGOs vis-à-vis the UN system. While Amnesty succinctly analyzed the structural nature of military-led violence in East Timor, “at no stage, however, did Amnesty International call for the obvious: that Jakarta should grant East Timor independence,” even if that message may have been implicit.

In a singular action that brought wide attention to immoral British arms sales, in January 1996 women activists belong to the Seeds of Hope group successfully disarmed a Hawk aircraft and, for their efforts were, famously, acquitted in a trial held in 1996. [see International Arms Trade]

Ireland

It was in direct response to a showing of “In Cold Blood” on Irish television that led to the formation of the East Timor Ireland Solidarity campaign (ETISC). As “director’ and leading personality behind the campaign, Tom Hyland wrote in 1993: “As a country that suffered under the yoke of colonialism for eight hundred years, Ireland has a unique role to play in the cause of East Timor. Irish people can easily identify with the people of East Timor” (Fitun no. 9, February 1993, 13). He was right, Catholic Ireland from its president down quickly rallied to the East Timor cause thanks in no small part to the creative and energetic role played by Tom Hyland. Importantly,

ETISC's lobbying activities with Foreign Minister David Andrews led to East Timor being placed on the EU agenda in 1996. At a later stage the EU backed the Irish role by appointing Andrews as their special envoy to East Timor.

The Americas

The Chomsky thesis of the marginalization of East Timor in the mainstream U.S. media can hardly be refuted, and actually reinforces the sense that, for long years, the East Timor question in the U.S. remained the preserve of concerned individuals, names that appeared in U.S. Congressional testimony, for example (anthropologist Shepherd Forman), maverick journalists (Allan Nairn), authors (Mathew Jardine) and intellectuals, of which Chomsky himself is representative. [see International Media]. Even so, New York had long remained the destination of East Timorese diplomats and supporters who ritually over the years lobbied in the corridors of the UN including the Decolonization Committee. Chomsky who testified in 1978 was one of the first, thanks to the efforts of Arnold Kohen. José Ramos-Horta's 1987 classic *Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor* published in the U.S., especially the chapter "The Games Nations Play," expertly exposed this fraud.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch/Asia organization also offered a major mirror on human rights violations in East Timor. Founded in 1985 Human Rights Watch/Asia launched several major reports on East Timor commencing with Human Rights in Indonesia and East Timor (1989), and Injustice, Persecution: A Human Rights Update on Indonesia & East Timor (1990). Even so, as with Amnesty International, this organization never called for a withdrawal of Indonesian troops or self-determination, as such a stance would have exceeded their respective

narrow mandates. Useful as Human Rights Watch may have been in helping to strengthen the notion that East Timor was a separate entity from Indonesia, it did not seek to challenge the basic tenets of U.S. policy (Jardine 2000, 59).

But again, it would take an event as bloody as the Dili massacre to galvanize a nation-wide solidarity movement in the United States. As Charles Scheiner has written, by the 1980s only a handful of people in the U.S. were actually aware of the atrocities committed in East Timor and the solidarity movement just about non-existent. By 1991 Scheiner, John Miller, and others had launched East Timor Action Network (ETAN), building upon existing networks and through adroit use of the Internet, developed a dozen nation-wide chapters, including a chapter in Canada by 1996. By 2000, ETAN was supported by 10,000 members nation-wide and with 27 local groups. ETAN directed its attention at Washington, finding in U.S. arms sales to Indonesia a weapon in which to mount its campaign. ETAN commenced petitioning the UN Decolonization Committee from 1992 and later emerged as the major New York-based coordinator of international petitioners for self-determination. Through to 1996 ETAN had successively pushed Washington into banning U.S. military training aid for Indonesian military. Using the method of filing off “urgent action alerts,” ETAN even successfully raised the profile of East Timor in the mainstream media. One backhanded measure of ETANs grassroots success was a counter disinformation campaign mounted by Suharto, eventually leading to the highly damaging Clinton-Riady-Lippogate scandal. [see Diplomacy, United States] ETAN/IFET also mounted an “observer project” to monitor the ballot process, and quickly moved to establish in Dili an office of La'o Hamutuk, the East Timor Institute for Reconstruction, Monitoring and Analysis, essentially a watchdog over the UNTAET and post-UNTAET process in East Timor (cf. Scheiner 2001, 109, 24).

If the hallmark of ETAN's national success was use of the Internet, it was also the ETAN-linked reg.easttimor e-mail list which steered a new generation of activists to log on and find out. From 1994 when the list commenced to gather international news media, reg.easttimor became the single most informative list and, in part, discussion forum on East Timor anywhere. Again the list became the target of – pathetically – an Indonesian disinformation campaign but at a time when the truth was unstoppable. The slanders, lies and creative deceptions of “Leo Rimba” (the jungle lion) on reg.easttimor are illustrative. As reposted on the list INDONESIA-L “Re; Leo Rimba on James Dunn” (9 February 1998) “I feel sorry for the residents of East Timor during the civil war and Indonesia's cleansing of Communism. But times of war were exceptions. We should not conclude that war-time behaviors are normal and to be endured indefinitely...observers of East Timor events should not fall into a trap believing that only Indonesian military operations could commit cruelties...” Later, Indonesian propaganda would rework the sense that East Timor was riven by “civil war” between two warring parties somehow equivalent on the battlefield, an argument that obviously circumvented the facts surrounding Indonesian intervention, destabilization and annexation of the half-island. Solidarity activists around the world worked hard to expose this disinformation in petitions, letters-to-the-editor, and through many other interventions.

But just as ETAN's key strategy was to lobby Washington, so it was the specific political environment in Washington that set the parameters for influence. Congressional Committee of Inquiries on East Timor were paradigmatic, just as individual Congressmen of conscience long made East Timor their concern [see Diplomacy: United States]. One individual who brought to bear his testimony on Congress at a critical moment was US freelance journalist Alan Nairn who on 17 March 1998 exposed continued U.S. military training of Kopassus under the Pentagon's Joint Combined Exchange and Training program (JCET), unknown even to Congress and in contravention of an earlier announced cut-off. [see International Arms Trade] On 7 May a young

Indonesian pro-democracy activists Pius Lustrilanang exposed to Congress kidnapping and disappearances of activists between May 1997 and March 1998.

Two groups from Canada were the East Timor Alert Network, established in the late 1980s by photographer and producer of the 1997 film “The Sellout of East Timor,” Elaine Briere, and the Toronto-based Canadian Action for Indonesia and East Timor (CAFIET). Answering to a different political constituency, Canada-based activists such as Sharon Scharfe, found a parliamentary ally in opposition leader-turned Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy.

From Brazil, a nation also swayed by business links with the Suharto dictatorship, such organizations as “Clamor por Timor” kept the issue alive, alongside certain congressmen and the church. For example, in August 1997, the Brazilian Committee of Solidarity with the People of East Timor (CBSPTL) hosted the “São Paulo forum” bringing together a range of delegates from around Latin America, including trade unionists, communists, socialists, and Sadhinistas, in support of self-determination for East Timor.

Japan

While individual activists long concerned themselves with the East Timor issue in Japan, concerns reaching back to the invasion, the first formal solidarity group emerged in the early 1980s in the port city of Kure. This was the East Timor Concern Group hosted by the Kure YMCA around the figure of an expatriate American, Jean Inglis. Commencing in 1983/84 this group published a Japanese language newsletter devoted to the East Timor self-determination question entitled *Higashi Chimoru Tsuchin*. In the meantime, informal solidarity groups emerged in Tokyo, Osaka,

Nagoya and Hiroshima, leading to the creation of a Free East Timor – Japan Coalition (FETJC) by 1988. But it was the Dili massacre which galvanized various community and civil society groups scattered across Japan to come together under the banner of FETJC which, at its apogee up until the ballot, counted some dozen city or regional groups from Saporro in the north to Nagasaki in the south-west. At the core of the FETJC stood the Osaka East Timor Group, which shared office space with several other concerned NGOs. Another initiative promoted by Japanese solidarity was Michio Takahashi's Tetum school in Darwin.

The visit by José Ramos-Horta to Japan in 1985 also became an opportunity to expand membership and, by 1986, the first of a series of “speaking tours” was organized. This first to be hosted was Mgr. Martinho da Costa Lopes. Other invitees actually include a small who's who of Timor-Leste society who, reciprocally, introduced East Timor to tens of thousands of Japanese through public speaking opportunities and media presentations.

Asia-Pacific

As it happened, the East Timor issue became socialized in the Pacific region long before Asia. Notably, East Timor was introduced to the first Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) conference held in April 1975 in Fiji by trade union delegates from Australia. Also, in late 1975, José Ramos-Horta was invited to attend a Fiji Counsel of Trade Union meeting in Nadi, an initiative supported by Australian trade unions. Over the years resolutions were passed at this forum in support of East Timor self-determination.

Macau, under Portuguese administration until the handover to China in December 1999, long upheld a deep historical association with East Timor. At one level, the East Timor issue was deeply socialized among the Portuguese and even the majority Chinese-speaking population of the enclave. Many Chinese residents in Macau were connected with Timor by birth, family, or business association. The East Timor issue also mainstreamed in the local media after the Dili massacre. Especially around the figure of East Timorese Father Francisco Fernandes, the refugee community in Macau, around one hundred strong through the late 1990s, found a safe haven, pending repatriation to Portugal. [see Church] But certain Timorese also became long-term residents in Macau and it is from this community that a number of solidarity or reception groups emerged, outside of the historic political parties who also hosted representatives in the Chinese enclave territory. Animated by the Dili massacre, and driven by refugee concerns, the most successful of these groups was Tatimalau de Macau, issuing a newsletter, hosting book launches and seminars and networking with visiting solidarity activists along with the local and international media. From another quarter the Grupo de Macau became active in the late 1990s in controversial diplomatic initiatives with the Jakarta government, but this was an all Timorese grouping, outside of international solidarity. East Timorese leaders also became frequent visitors to Macau over the years. Just prior to the handover of Macau to Chinese administration in December 1999, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) facilitated the return to East Timor of remaining Timorese, then numbering around sixty. [see Diplomacy, Portugal]

The East Timor question in the Philippines took a different turn, especially as it was the role of individual activists that pushed the issue onto the national agenda. Still, this could not happen until the Philippines had won its own victory against dictatorship. The Catholic Church in the Philippines was undoubtedly an actor, as more than once Cardinal Jaime Sin had spoken out in

support of East Timor. [see Church] But it was the Davao-based APCET which successively Asianized the East Timor issue, largely silent in the region's media and completely absent from the official ASEAN agenda. An exception was the Stockholm/Manila-based Journal of Contemporary Asia which, from early years, published Fretilin documents, among other texts on East Timor. Importantly, APCET and its allies in the Philippines, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and elsewhere, answered back to the powerful “Asian values” doctrine then being promoted by Singapore and Malaysia. Under this doctrine, successfully parlayed at various meetings of the UNCHR to deflect criticism of human rights committed in such Asian authoritarian regimes as Indonesia, universality of rights was portrayed as Western interference in Asian value systems of deference and obligations.

As mentioned [see ASEAN], legal and extralegal coercion used against APCET conferences attendees in Manila, Bangkok, and Kuala Lumpur helped to expose the fig leaf of “Asian values,” while actually raising, not lowering, the international profile of the East Timor question. Into this space stepped the East Timor Information Network (Malaysia).

Indonesia

Little democratic space existed in the Suharto New Order but even during periods of relative press freedom or when Indonesia came under intense international scrutiny, few in elite circles could see through the information smokescreen on East Timor. First, East Timor was a remote place, second, it was deemed a settled issue, third, even to raise the self-determination issue was viewed as, variously, subversive or an affront to notions of state sovereignty and patriotism. Besides, Indonesia could take comfort in its diplomatic, economic and military support from the United States, Japan, and Australia along with Western European nations.

In this stultifying political atmosphere, especially towards the end when military death squads stalked, kidnapped, and disappeared political and labor activists, to speak out was to court danger. To be sure, some did. The 'defection' of Indonesian academic George Aditjondro was a major loss to the credibility of the regime, especially as this journalist-turned academic turned exile to advantage by networking with the burgeoning *reformasi* movement from the outside. Aditjondro (2000, 249-60) explains that, before the Dili massacre, Indonesian sympathizers with East Timor could be counted on fingers and toes, but after the event, a number of solidarity organizations emerged in Java such as Infight Indonesia Front for the Defense of Human Rights (Infight), Lembaga Hak-hak Asasi Manusia (LPHAM) and Yayasan Hidup Baru also joined by interested students. Dramatically, LPHAM, led by famed Dutch-born human rights activist J.C. Princeton, organized a demonstration in front of the UN office in Jakarta on 19 November 1991, leading to the military interrogation of the student participants. Among them was East Timor student José Anomim Dias. Meanwhile, twelve university student senates issued a joint declaration in support of East Timor independence. In this period the first underground translations of Tapol and other reports on East Timor began to circulate.

Some eight years later Bandung-based Pusat Informasi dan Jaringan Aksi untuk Reformasi (Pijar), religious-based-Yappham, Jesuit-linked Institute Social Jakarta, and Joint Committee for the Defense of the East Timorese (JCDET) all surfaced taking cause with East Timor. In 1995 Pijar published translations of Special UN Rapporteur Bacre Waly Ndiaye's report, along with Rentelil leader Fernando d'Araujo's defense statement. It also published a translation of Michele Turner's *Telling* (1992). Pijar also supported an e-mail network carrying, inter alia, the voice of its imprisoned director Tri Agus Susanto. The socialization of the East Timor issue in Indonesia

expanded after the capture and incarceration of Xanana Gusmão, entering student and underground publications. The publication of *Saksi Mata*, a collection of realist short stories on state-initiated violence in Indonesia, including those with a palpable East Timor setting, by Seno Gumira Ajidarma was another milestone (Aditjondro 2000, 249-60).

The occupation of the American Embassy by East Timorese in Jakarta was widely studied by activists in Java. In March 1995 Partai Rakyat Demokratik (PRD) entered the picture with the creation of such groups as Solidaritas Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia untuk Rakyat Maubere (SPRIM) and Solidaritas Mahasiswa untuk Indonesia Demokrasi (SMID). These groups staged demonstrations and acts of solidarity with arrested Timorese and in support of the occupations of the Dutch and Russian Embassies on 12 November 1995 (Aditjondro 2000, 249-60).

For some Indonesians in the pro-democracy movement, the self-determination issue for East Timor became a major test of the campaign to win democracy in Indonesia. The collapse of the Suharto dictatorship and the advent of the Habibie administration made this goal feasible. The democratic space opened by the Habibie administration and the retreat of military gave way to the rise of a plethora of civil society organizations, many with East Timor on their agenda, although few if any that made East Timor self-determination their cause célèbre.

An exception was SOLIDAMOR (Solidaritas untuk Penyelesaian Damai Timor Leste), a group drawn from various professions who, professedly, “cared” for the future of East Timor, indeed even linking the future of Indonesia to the outcome in East Timor around the slogan “Tidak ada demokrasi di Indonesia tanpa pembebasan di Timor Lorosae (“No democracy in Indonesia without freedom in East Timor)” Among other activities in 1996, SOLIDAMOR translated into bahasa

Indonesia and published José Ramos-Horta's, *Funu* (1987), with preface by George Aditjondro, one of the members of this group.

One which engaged in advocacy through publication was Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat (ELSAM), inter alia, translator and publisher of texts by Inside Indonesia editor, Gerry van Klinken (1996), and a collection of writings on East Timor by legal expert, Roger S. Clark (1999). The Jakarta-based ELSAM was first established in 1993 in defense of human rights. ELSAM was also connected with Forum Solidaritas untuk Rakyat Timor Lorosae (FORTILOS) formed on 11 March 1998 from an amalgamation of eleven institutions and seven individuals to uphold human rights in East Timor as well as to defend the right of self-determination. Jakarta-based FORTILOS also took the article of the Indonesian constitution “bahwa kemerdekaan adalah hak segala bangsa” (that democracy is the right of all peoples.) FORTILOS also sponsored the publication of books (with Yayasan Hak) such as *Meyongsong Matahari Terbit di Puncak Ramelau* (2000). At a different level of engagement, well-known human rights activist Yeni Rosa Damayanti headed up an observer group called KIPER or Independent Committee for the Monitoring of Balloting.

One feature of the Indonesian solidarity movement in support of East Timor was the special role of youth (as indeed was the key feature of the Renetil activists). An older generation of journalists and spokespersons only appeared later (Aditjondro (2000, 249-60). [see International Press] Another feature of the Indonesian solidarity movement was a concern for labor rights and, of course, Indonesian democracy. Certain Indonesian activists in support of East Timor paid for their actions with military interrogation and other coercive acts.

Parliamentarians for East Timor (PET)

In June 1988 the concept of an international Parliamentarians for East Timor (PET) group grew out of a visit to Portugal by a group of UK and Japanese members of parliament. At this meeting they announced a number of initiatives and issued statements in support of East Timor's right to self-determination (Tapol Bulletin, no. 88, August 1988, 1). Lord Avebury, chair of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group in the UK, served as the first chairman of PET, pending the creation of an international secretariat located in Ottawa and directed by Sharon Scharfe. Notably PET was behind the campaign to sway the Norwegian Nobel Peace Prize committee to consider an East Timor candidate. PET then mustered more than 900 parliamentarians from over forty countries from all regions of the globe.

International Federation for East Timor (IFET)

In 1991 the International Federation for East Timor (IFET) was formed by solidarity groups from Japan, the U.S., Australia, Portugal, the Philippines and elsewhere in order to coordinate the campaigns mounted by diverse NGOs and other organizations in lobbying at the UN. Originally conceived by a retired Japanese diplomat turned NGO representative for the Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, Kan Akatani (1920-1999), the IFET Secretariat moved from Japan, to the U.S., the Philippines, and eventually Dili. According to the preamble to IFET statutes: “Affirming the central role of the United Nations in the decolonization process in East Timor, the IFET dedicates itself to effectively work as an international NGO to mobilize support to the realization of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter particularly as they apply to the decolonization process in East Timor.”

Although IFET was the only global solidarity organization concerned with East Timor self-determination, not all solidarity groups signed on, nor did IFET play a determinant role alongside the actions of individuals and national groups. Still, with some thirty international solidarity groups signed on, IFET upheld East Timor's profile at the UN in the days when East Timorese were extremely lonely travelers to New York.

Envoi

The above analysis ignores the role of thousands or possibly tens of thousands of individuals, inside and outside the formal solidarity organizations who, through myriad actions, such as writing letters to newspapers, attending demonstrations, contributing money and time, facing risk, social approbation and even ridicule, raised the East Timor self-determination issue in national and international fora. Some, such as Kamal Bamadhaj payed the supreme sacrifice, but many remain nameless. We have also tended to gloss over the Jakarta lobbies around the world that sought to manufacture elite consensus around “Jakarta links,” “Asian values” or some other doctrine that would diminish the universalism of human rights law, just as we have glossed over the often-subservient role of the press and academia (cf. Gunn with Lee 1994). The above account is also shy on the elements of crossover between East Timorese, both in the diaspora and in the clandestine, and international solidarity, a story which better belongs with the history of the East Timorese clandestine struggle.³

Notes

1. A recent attempt to theorize the East Timor solidarity movement is Davis Webster, "Non-State Diplomacy: East Timor 1975-1999," *Portuguese Studies Review*, Vol.11, no.1, Fall-Winter 2003, pp.1-28.
2. See Kirsty Sword Gusmão, *A Woman of Independence: A Story of love and the birth of a new nation*, PaxMacmillan, Australia, 2003.
3. One account of the "clandestine" by a Timorese participant is João Freitas de Camara, "IMPETU e o seu movimento de libertação na Indonésia (1982-1999)," in *Camões: Revista de Letras e Culturas Lusofonas*, 14, Julho-Setembro, 2001, pp.50-58.