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## Death of a Nation

In February East Timor gained unprecedented coverage in the British press after the televised screening of John Pilger and David Munro's new film *Death of a Nation: the East Timor conspiracy*.

**P**reviewed in full on 15 February at London's National Film Theatre, a shorter version of *Death of a Nation* was screened on 22 February on ITV's Network First. It made considerable impact: calls to the programme's helpline totalled 4,000 per minute well into the early hours of 23 February. The film has been bought by 30 countries. It has already received public screenings in the Netherlands and Portugal, with many further private screenings, including at the 1994 session of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

The film, scenes of which were shot clandestinely in East Timor in the autumn of 1993, tells the story of East Timor's betrayal at the hands of the west. It exposes the hypocrisy and double standards which continue to dominate the foreign policy of Western governments such as the United States, Australia and the UK.

Max Stahl, who filmed the Santa Cruz Massacre of November 1991, televised in Britain in February 1992, contributed to *Death of a Nation*. It is his evidence of further killings after the Santa Cruz Massacre, when injured victims of the shootings in the cemetery were apparently murdered in the military hospital, which has caused the deepest embarrassment to the Indonesian government.

### Damage limitation

The Indonesian government has denied the evidence of a second massacre. Ali Alatas, Indonesian Foreign Minister, condemned it as 'sensational and unreasonable ... not much attention will be paid to it'.

The Australian newspaper *The Age* summed



Demonstrators protesting in Bristol at BAe sales of Hawks to Indonesia.

STEVE COX

up the key questions in an editorial of 14 February: 'The United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights has been waiting since late 1992 for an explanation of the whereabouts of

207 demonstrators missing since November 12 1991. The Catholic Church in East Timor believes that there are more like 270 people still unaccounted for. Even the Indonesian authorities admit that there are more than 60 people still missing in the wake of this incident. Well where are they? ... Only a full accounting of the Dili massacre will permit the whole truth to be known. And only then will it be possible to put this whole terrible tragedy to rest. To its credit, Jakarta has permitted envoys of the UN Secretary-General to visit East Timor. But it has balked at any comprehensive outside investigation. Meanwhile, most East Timorese are fearful of talking to foreigners in the presence of Indonesian authorities and suspicious of co-operating in local inquiries. While these remain

### Summary

During the first months of 1994 East Timor has received increased international media coverage owing to the additional publicity generated by the John Pilger/David Munro documentary *Death of a Nation*, screened in Britain, amongst other countries, in February. This issue of *Timor Link* assesses reaction to the film, and looks at the British government's embarrassment over the Pergau Dam affair. We also publish excerpts from a recent report on health in East Timor.

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the only options, mystery will continue to shroud the events of November 12 1991'.

### International embarrassment

*Death of a Nation* points to the continuing failure of the international community to resolve the problem of East Timor, and exposes the economic interests at play. Ali Alatas and Gareth Evans, his Australian counterpart, were filmed toasting each other with champagne in an aircraft over the Timor Gap, where the spoils of East Timor's oil field have been illegally divided.

The film looks at Britain's role in exporting Hawks to the Indonesian airforce, and catches on camera the cynicism of the British diplomatic and military establishment, unconcerned about Indonesian 'guarantees' not to use the equipment against civilians. Former Defence Minister Alan Clark famously admits in his interview that he 'does not fill [his] mind much with what one set of foreigners does to another'. *Death of a Nation* includes two testimonies from East Timorese claiming to have seen Hawks in action in the Baucau area of East Timor since the mid-1980s. The British government denies that this is the case.

The attention devoted to British arms sales in the film has contributed to mounting government embarrassment over the linking of aid and arms sales in Malaysia in the Pergau Dam Scandal (see page 6). According to John Pilger in *New Statesman & Society* (11 February 1994), Michael Portillo, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, wrote to a constituent on 10 January that the government 'will continue to target our aid on the poorest nations' in support of 'the promotion of good government and the reduction of poverty'. The main beneficiaries of the Pergau Dam deal appear to be British corporations. Significantly, aid agencies have noted that British aid to Indonesia tripled when British Aerospace gained substantial arms contracts. In the wake of the Matrix Churchill Affair and the Scott enquiry into British arms sales to Iraq, it is hard to ascribe credibility to a British government aid policy which claims to consider the human rights record of the governments with which it trades. ■

## Health of a nation

**HELDA BUERGEL visited East Timor as a tourist in September 1991. She joined Salesian sisters for ten days, during which time she travelled into the interior, gathering information about current health problems facing the East Timorese. Her full report was published in *Medicine and War*, Vol 9 No. 2, in June 1993. A summary is printed below.**

**O**n the day of our arrival we drove with Sister P. to Venilale, which is a fairly large village in the middle of the mountains. I could already see some of the country's main problems: forest areas have been cleared and the soil is widely eroded; roadside villages are poor, with people living in often ramshackle huts made out of natural materials with a poor quality of shelter. Evidence of military activity is wide-spread: ruined houses, graveyards, police posts, heavy weapons and tank tracks on the roads. Soldiers are to be seen everywhere.

We were based in Venilale and visited Fatumaca, Lospalos and Baucau. On two afternoons I took part in the outdoor clinic in Venilale, and on one half-day I accompanied Sister P. to Badumory, a small village where she holds an outdoor clinic once a week. I visited the Puskesmas, which is the health service of the Indonesian government, in Venilale. I saw a malaria screening session in a school and had a long discussion with the doctor of the Puskesmas, who enabled me to visit the hospital at Baucau where I spoke at length with the doctors. I visited Fatumaca and took part in a surgery in a village nearby with the orderly of the outpatient unit. In Lospalos I visited the outpatient unit and met the Canossian Sisters working there. I also saw the schools of the Salesians in Lospalos and made a brief visit to the agricultural school in Fuiloro.

### Desperate conditions

It is my impression that the standard of health among the Timorese is very poor and that

Indonesian government measures are having no impact on the cycle of poverty, numbers of children being born, malnourishment and illness. On the contrary, it seems that a solution that includes the death of a large number of people, whether by disease or direct intervention, is acceptable to the Indonesian government. Local people are suspicious of all government-led projects such as immunisation programmes and agricultural projects because they are imposed on them by armed Indonesian soldiers.

In contrast, the Catholic church has credibility among the Timorese. The church has always been neutral and in its defence of the rights of the individuals has even found itself in the firing line. Although rudimentary, church facilities seem to offer the best basis for bringing about effective change and improvement for the population.

In a village school in Venilale there were four classrooms, very dark, with benches and tables and about 60 children in every classroom, all of them small and thin. I did not see a single book. The children owned copy-books with crooked letters, obviously copied without any system. I was told repeatedly that children have great difficulty in following the lessons: because of their malnutrition they cannot concentrate for long.

The large number of murdered or disappeared adults has led to an extremely high number of orphans. Some have to be fed by their relatives, impairing their living conditions, others are brought up in the continuously expanding church orphanages.

### Agriculture and nutrition

Agriculture on the meagre soils of East Timor has always been based on traditional methods: the plough was unknown and the soil was broken up by letting water buffaloes trample over the fields, or by digging with sticks. In the past, the favourable climate and well organised village structures meant that food supply in the villages was sufficient, with a good variety of edible plants. Now the effects of forced migration have left fields uncultivated, and the scorched earth tactics of the Indonesian army have led to deforestation and erosion. Military actions and intimidation have prevented people from working in the fields. New fields worked by the old methods brought insufficient harvest.

Even if peasants can grow enough food for their own needs, some of it has to be sold on the market to pay for shoes, clothing and other essentials. Small, undernourished and ill-looking women are to be seen in the markets in East Timor selling a few maize cobs, sweet potatoes or a chicken.

Many farmworkers have fled to work in the resistance, are in jail or have been murdered. Knowledge cannot be transmitted. A whole new generation has grown up under war conditions and much knowledge seems to be lost. There is a very low level of knowledge about nutrition and good practice in preparation of food. The staple diet consists of a maize porridge or plain rice with no vegetables or meat. There are very

### Journalists manipulated

In an effort to counteract anticipated bad press on the release of the documentary *Death of a Nation*, Indonesia invited foreign journalists to Dili from 14 to 18 February. According to a French press (AFP) report of 14 February, free travel was not guaranteed, and the journalists were supervised by plain-clothes security officers throughout the visit.

The nine journalists arrived in Dili hoping to interview Bishop Carlos Belo. However, the Roman Catholic apostolic administrator was nowhere to be found. In his place they were presented with an Indonesian-Chinese Jesuit, Markus Wanandi, who denied *Death of a Nation's* evidence of the second massacre in November 1991.

Markus Wanandi is the brother of Jusuf Wanandi, who was one of those responsible for planning the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975. The family are well known and influential supporters of President Suharto. Wanandi moved from a post in Central Java to Dili in 1989. According to John Pilger, in an 11 March article in *New Statesman and Society*, Bishop Belo 'had emphasised his trust in the statements of the eyewitnesses. He said he had informed the Indonesian "special commission of enquiry" about the second massacre. "They showed no interest" he said. "The military authorities [wanted] to give the Timorese people these extreme lessons. I think there is no justice.... no justice".'



few cows on the island so very little milk is available. Breastfeeding is the only source of infant food, and if the mother is unable to produce enough milk her undernourished baby will die or become vulnerable to infections.

### Health problems

The well-known problems of any third world country are complicated by East Timor's special circumstances. The two fundamental problems are malnourishment and lack of hygiene. The most prevalent diseases are tuberculosis, endemic malaria, pneumonia, parasitic infestations, skin infections and severe anaemia, especially in children and women who have gone through many childbirths. They are all related to undernutrition. Tuberculosis is widespread and the under-nourished Timorese are easy victims. In three days in the outdoor clinics I saw at least 20 cases of severe lymph node tuberculosis, some with abscesses, and several women with severe cavitation of the lung. Tuberculosis is commonly transmitted from mother to child, and entire families have been wiped out.

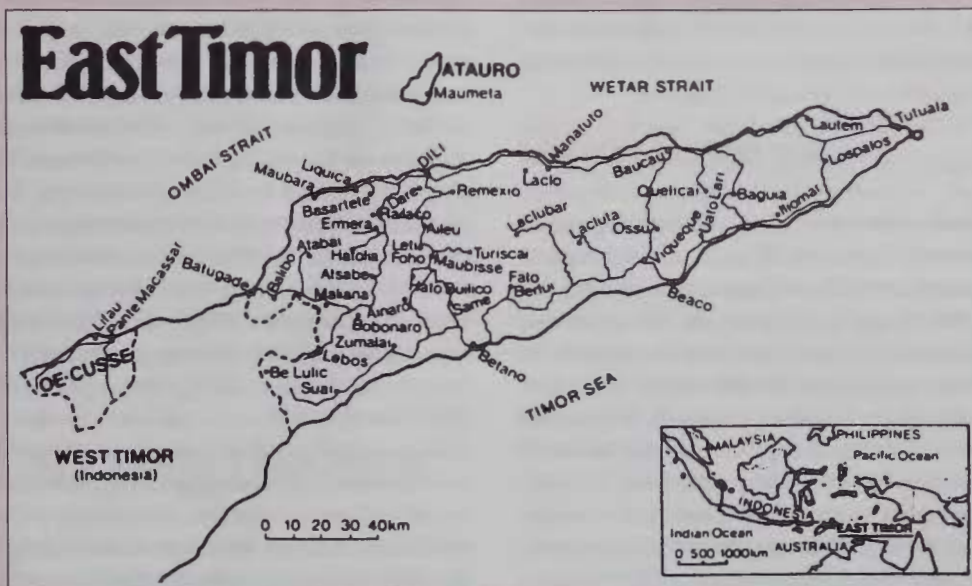
Parasites and skin infections are the results of poor awareness of hygiene. The simple grass huts standing on the bare soil are crawling with insects, while all the local animals have free access. People who have been forcibly resettled are less likely to build their huts on stilts, the traditional form of construction which gives some protection against vermin. Today domestic animals run through the open huts, there are no toilet facilities, there is hardly any running water, and children have to be raised without nappies, leading to the spread of parasites through animal and human faeces.

Child mortality is high. I saw one mother breastfeeding her second living newborn child; she had lost five other children within their first year of life. The women are exhausted at 30 after multiple pregnancies, and easily fall victim to tuberculosis. There is no gynaecological support. Birth takes place at home with ancient and often unhealthy customs. One of these is to burn an open fire in the hut until the baby is four weeks old, during which time the newborn child is not dressed. As the huts have no chimney, mother and child are living in dense smoke which damages the sensitive lungs of the newborn. A midwife is called only if there are complications in the birth. It is very difficult to transport the women to hospital, if that is needed, because of the bad conditions of the roads. Even in hospital there is too often no help. Many children suffer eye infections, some of which lead to blindness.

### Health facilities

There is a large hospital in Dili, capital of East Timor, which I could not visit but which has a good reputation. Several medical specialists practise in Dili. There is another hospital in Baucau and a smaller one in Los Palos.

At the time of my visit, Baucau hospital had three working doctors, two of whom were Indonesian students sent over by the government for two years to do their internship, not



## EAST TIMOR: Time for change

Timor, area 7,400 square miles, is one of the easternmost islands of the Indonesian archipelago and lies 300 miles north of Australia, its nearest neighbour. The western part of the island, formerly a Dutch colony, belongs to Indonesia, whereas East Timor was for more than 400 years a Portuguese colony.

In 1974 Portugal decolonised East Timor, whose newly formed political parties began discussing options for the future – federation with Portugal, independence, or integration with Indonesia. The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) initially favoured the first option but then joined a coalition with the nationalist liberation movement, Fretilin, to demand independence. A small third party, Apodeti, was used as a vehicle for Indonesian propaganda in favour of integration.

On 11 August 1975 the UDT staged a coup to pre-empt Indonesian threats to intervene if Fretilin came to power. In the ensuing civil war, 1,500 people lost their lives. By September 1975, however, Fretilin was in control of virtually all of Portuguese Timor, following the defection of Timorese colonial troops to the liberation movement's side.

Indonesia, like the United States, was worried by the proximity of an independent state with radical policies and continued to threaten East Timor, despite previous assurances that Jakarta would respect the right of the East Timorese to independence. In September 1975 Indonesia closed West Timor to journalists and on 7 December it launched a full-scale invasion of East Timor with the knowledge of the United States and the encouragement of Australia. East Timor was proclaimed the '27th province' of Indonesia.

The invasion and annexation of East Timor has been brutal: up to 200,000 people, a third of the population, have died as a result of Indonesian rule. But the majority of Timorese have not accepted subjugation: Indonesia has been unable to eliminate the desire of the East Timorese for self-determination

and an armed resistance movement still remains in the hills.

Although the invasion has been condemned by successive UN resolutions, the international community has done little or nothing to implement them, given the major economic and geopolitical interests of the United States, Japan and particularly Australia in the region. Indonesia's crucial strategic location and regional status – it has the world's fifth largest population, and large reserves of oil and other natural resources – have all encouraged the world to downplay East Timor's agony.

In recent years, however, several events have combined to break East Timor's isolation and bring its continued occupation to international attention. In 1989 the Pope visited the territory and in 1991 the planned visit of a parliamentary delegation from Portugal, still considered the administering authority of East Timor by the UN, created huge expectations of change. To great disappointment in East Timor, the delegation was forced in October 1991 to call off its visit.

On 12 November 1991 Indonesian troops shot and killed up to 300 East Timorese civilians during a funeral procession held at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, the East Timorese capital, for a victim of repression. Witnessed by foreign journalists, the Santa Cruz massacre provided indisputable evidence of Indonesian atrocities.

The Santa Cruz massacre has forced governments around the world to criticise Indonesia's brutality, injecting new impetus into diplomatic efforts to bring about a solution to East Timor's suffering. Since 1983 the UN Secretary-General has been entrusted with the achievement of a settlement to the dispute; and with the post-Cold War era providing a new international climate for negotiations, Indonesia faces increased pressure to reach a solution with Portugal and the East Timorese under the auspices of the UN.



fully trained and lacking experience. One of them is also responsible for the local Puskesmas. There is also supposed to be a paediatrician, whom I did not meet, and a dentist.

The hospital buildings are new but poorly equipped and managed. Everything is in short supply, including food. Hygiene is abysmal. Patients with tuberculosis are only separated from surgical patients by a curtain, although at the time of my visit the hospital was not full. I saw incorrectly applied plaster casts. The treatment of seriously ill patients is made impossible by lack of equipment (bladder catheters, nasogastric tubes, artificial nutrition, disposable materials). Medical supplies are only delivered every three months, always less than required. Infusions are in short supply and cannot be produced locally. The surgical emergency room was very dirty. The operating theatre was equipped with the basic necessities but was unhygienic. There was a modern anaesthetic breathing machine that could not be used because anaesthetic gases (nitrous oxide and halothane) were not available. Anaesthesia is performed with an ancient ether evaporator, if oxygen, which has to be delivered from Dili, is available. During my visit I was told that the oxygen supply was interrupted because the oxygen filling machine in Dili was broken. Only a few basic laboratory tests are possible.

Blood for transfusion has to be brought in from Dili (6 hours' drive away), so that urgent transfusions are impossible. Blood grouping and matching is inadequate, and the Rhesus factor cannot be cross-matched.

It has to be said that although the doctors are inexperienced and overtaxed under the stress of the conditions, they are willing and enthusiastic. Obviously this description would not be out of place in many third world countries, but the frustrating fact is that Baucau Hospital has potential but is being neglected. The wards are half empty although there is no shortage of patients. The Puskesmas, established by the Indonesian government in every largish town, only cover some 30 per cent of the health care needed, and 70 per cent of their work is concentrated on organising campaigns for the early detection of malaria and tuberculosis, vaccination, prevention of infections, advice on nutrition, family planning and so on. As already noted, Indonesian students are working as doctors doing their internship, working independently without medical supervision but under the control of the military. They are offered inducements to work in Timor and even higher incentives if they stay on once here. They do not speak Tetum, the language most spoken in Timor, and have hardly any practical experience. They do not have the supplies for an adequate service, and sometimes the Puskesmas doctors in Venilale have to ask the Sisters for antibiotics. In some cases the local people are too suspicious to take drugs prescribed for them by the Puskesmas. Some of the Puskesmas can perform simple laboratory checks such as haemoglobin.

Hundreds of Timorese go to the very committed church health workers in the weekly outdoor clinics and surgeries, and mostly, they fol-

low the Sisters' advice. But the Sisters are overtaxed and their work is a drop in the ocean. There are some experienced workers among them, but most are semi-skilled. Very little diagnostic work can be undertaken, and diagnosis is mainly based on verbal complaints from the patients. Even a superficial physical checkup is impossible surrounded by masses of patients and with no privacy. Sometimes antibiotics are given 'for safety's sake', often with too low a dosage to cause resistance. Some medicines, such as eyedrops or eardrops, are completely lacking in the surgeries. The best conditions I found were in the church-run surgery in Los Palos, where there is a quiet examination room, a registry, a corner for administering injections and bandages, and a dispensary. In Venilale there is one small room without electric light, but at least there are some sanitary facilities and an examination bed, divided from the rest of the room by a curtain. There are plans to convert an old Red Cross building which was commandeered by the army into a small clinic with some beds, so that patients living far away can stay for some days. The outpatient room at Fatumaka is even darker and worse equipped. The Salesians are to open a hospital in Suai with 50 beds.

Visits by doctors from abroad are very welcome, especially if they are willing to share in the work of the health teams and to advise and train health workers. Such a stay can be a very important experience for any young doctor, and provides useful support even if it does not entirely change the situation. ■

## HUMAN RIGHTS

### HARASSMENT CONTINUES

In January 1994 a number of Indonesian military were killed in Viqueque, ostensibly by Timorese guerrilla fighters. This followed the refusal of the Indonesian Minister of the Interior, Yogie S Memet, to appoint an indigenous man as the district head of Viqueque. Instead he appointed a Balinese army officer. Probably in retaliation to the killings, priests and lay activists became subject to army and police harassment and intimidation. In addition, inter-religious tensions have increased in Viqueque, where a Protestant church has been torn down by an angry Catholic mob.

### FR. DOMINGOS SOARES INTERROGATED

After giving interviews to visiting journalists prior to the screening of *Death of a Nation*, Fr Soares ('Padre Maubere'), the parish priest of Letifoho in the district of Ermera, was interrogated for 90 minutes by East Timor's Police Commander (Kapolwil) and the Intelligence Assistant of the Timorese Army Command (Korem). International human rights organisations had taken precautionary measures to protect Fr Soares, who was accompanied to his 'interview' by Fr Jose Antonio da Costa, Dili's Diocesan Vicar General. While the Kapolwil

asked Fr Soares about the murder of a village head in Atsabe, the army officer questioned him on the activities of his parish's Catholic youth organisation, Mudika. Both priests were allowed to leave after the 'interview' ended.

### TORTURE OF VIQUEQUE STUDENTS

In December 1993 a group of Timorese students from Dili held a work camp in the parish of Ossu, near the town of Viqueque. They trained the local church choir, and organised sports contests and tree-planting. Their activities provoked the local unit of the red berets, or Nanggala, to suspect them of supporting the local Falintil guerrilla fighters.

One of the students, Sarmiento, was tortured by the red berets at the SGI interrogation centre in Colmera, Dili. He refused to admit that he had led clandestine meetings in Ossu, but was coerced into admitting that the local parish priest, Fr Sancho Amaral, had planned student activities in support of the local guerrilla fighters and had organised Bishop Belo's visit to Australia.

Another student, Rui Manuel Olivera, who was head of Mukida, the local parish youth organization, was interrogated by the Nanggala in Ossu and beaten till his mouth bled. He was accused of joining clandestine meetings with the Dili students. Subsequently, on 9 February, Fr Sancho Amaral and Fr Antonio Freitas from

the parish of Viqueque, and lay-activist Maria Quintao, deputy speaker of the provincial parliament, were interrogated by the red berets in Jalan Abilio Monteiro.

### RENEWED UN CONDEMNATION FOR INDONESIA

Indonesia was again condemned at this year's session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the third time in 12 months. A consensus declaration, which noted with concern 'continuing allegations of human rights violations in East Timor', was adopted in Geneva on 9 March.

The text of the declaration acknowledges Indonesia's 'positive measures' to improve the situation. However, it calls for more humane treatment of political prisoners, continued investigation into those still missing since Santa Cruz, better cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and wider access to the territory for human rights groups.

### UN INVESTIGATION

The UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions will travel to East Timor in June 1994 to investigate the circumstances of the 12 November 1991 massacre, as well as the reports of the hospital killings brought to light in the Pilger documentary. A number of other UN thematic rapporteurs are also due to visit East Timor this year. ■



## BRITAIN

## Arms to Indonesia

In Britain East Timor received considerable press and media coverage in the weeks immediately before and after the screening of *Death of a Nation*. The film prompted the tabling of an early Day Motion No. 657 in the House of Commons, by Labour MP John Battle. The EDM, which attracted many dozens of signatures, condemns the sale of British Hawk aircraft as contrary to the government's acceptance at the European Council in 1991 of respect for human rights as one of the criteria for arms exports. It calls for the government to withhold the export licences.

A number of human rights groups and development agencies, including the British Coalition for East Timor, were deluged with correspondence, donations, and offers of campaigning assistance from a large number of concerned individuals.

In *Timor Link* 28 we published Mark's Curtis' assessment of British government policy towards Indonesia. His letter to the *Guardian* on 10 March summarises well the questions which most of the groups campaigning on East Timor's behalf would put to the government:

'with repression in the territory continuing and with greater public knowledge of Indonesian atrocities there, the pressure on the British government to cease cosy relationships with the Suharto regime is as great as Whitehall's continuing desire to sweep the whole issue under the carpet.

My understanding is that the Foreign Office has never undertaken any investigation into whether Hawk aircraft supplied by Britain have been used in East Timor.

The government says it would like 'hard evidence' to this effect but the truth is that it does not want any evidence at all. It claims that 'if we believe a prospective purchase is likely to be used for repressive purposes against a civilian population, the application is rejected'.

Yet Indonesian officials have themselves said that Hawk aircraft might be used for ground attack. The government also says it scrutinises arms sales on a 'case by case' basis. How bad does the case have to be before arms sales are rejected? Is over 200,000 deaths by Indonesia in East Timor bad enough?

The scandal over Pergau has led to some interesting admissions over British policy towards Indonesia. The Foreign Secretary has just written that 'military contacts are reasonably extensive and gradually increasing, with some training in the UK'. Asked about the police management training project funded by the Overseas Development Administration, a Foreign Office minister noted that 'some Indonesian public officials trained under our aid programme may subsequently

serve in East Timor.' In evidence to the Pergau inquiry, both the Foreign Secretary and the ODA minister have dismissed, with no noticeable embarrassment, concern expressed over human rights in East Timor.

As with arms sales to Iraq, is not complicity in genocide in East Timor sufficient for a public inquiry? Could MPs fit this around similar inquiries into Britain's close relations with a Turkish regime killing and forcibly removing Kurds and the British army's training of Khmer Rouge guerrillas in the 1980s?

## Carrying the can

On 16 March veteran campaigner Hugh Dowson of Bath organised a march by 40 campaigners from the Rolls Royce plant at Filton, Bristol, past British Aerospace into the city of Bristol. They protested about British arms sales and the complicity of British oil companies. British Petroleum, for example, is prospecting for oil in the Timor Gap, under an illegal treaty concluded by Australia and Indonesia. The march set out from Rolls Royce because this company's engines power the Hawk aircraft sold to Indonesia. On the march were local dignitaries including the Mayor, Dom Raphael Appleby, OSB, chaplain to St. Brendan's Sixth form centre, Dr Peter Carey of Trinity College, Oxford, Dr John Taylor, author of *Indonesia's Forgotten War*, representatives from the World Development Movement, CIIR, Campaign against the Arms Trade, Tapol, Chris Cole, peace campaigner recently tried for criminal damage to BAe equipment, and Estevao Cabral, president of the British Coalition for East Timor. The event prompted a full hour's discussion on BBC local radio of the issues at stake around arms sales to Indonesia and local job security.

## UNITED STATES

The US State department released its 1993 Human Rights Report in Washington on Tuesday 1 February 1994. In it China and Indonesia come under attack. Indonesia had in 1993 'a bolder and more assertive press' along with greater public dialogue on human rights, a sharp cut in the number of citizens banned from travelling abroad and fewer prosecutions under an anti-subversion law'. However, there were still 'serious abuses', many committed by the military. President Suharto's regime was described as 'strongly authoritarian ... despite a surface adherence to democratic forms'. The report asserted that 'extrajudicial arrests and detentions, torture of those in custody, and excessively violent techniques for dealing with suspected criminals or perceived troublemakers continued in many areas of Indonesia'. Security forces often employed 'harsh measures', such as summary executions of civilians and against separatist movements in East Timor, Irian Jaya and Aceh. Indonesia's trade privileges with the US have been linked to its labour policies. Wash-

ington gave Jakarta until 15 February to show advances in the labour front or else its General System of Privileges would be withdrawn.

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International (AI) has released another report on human rights in East Timor entitled *East Timor: Fact and Fiction*. It reviews Indonesia's record in implementing the key recommendations of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights made in a resolution passed in March 1993. It concludes that while the government has taken a number of welcome human rights initiatives since late 1991, it has failed to implement, either in substance or in spirit, the most important of the recommendations made by the UNCHR. According to AI's own summary, 'The measures taken so far appear to have been principally aimed at improving Indonesia's human rights image internationally rather than at squarely addressing the root causes of human rights violations. Consequently there has been no significant improvement in the human rights situation on the ground and, unless concrete measures are taken, no such improvement can be expected in the near future.' The summary says that 'by viewing the human rights situation in East Timor in isolation - and in particular by treating the Santa Cruz Massacre as an isolated incident - UN member states have overlooked the problem of systematic and institutionalized human rights abuses by Indonesian government forces throughout the archipelago'.

## PET VISIT TO UN SECRETARY GENERAL

Parliamentarians for East Timor (PET), with members from Britain, Ireland, Sweden and Australia, called upon UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali on 3 February to address the core issue of self-determination for the East Timorese, and to persuade the Indonesian government to agree to a series of confidence-building measures. The UN Secretary General apparently told them that Portugal and Indonesia had not so far agreed to discuss the substantive issue because their positions were so far apart. The next round of talks takes place in Geneva in May. The group discussed with Boutros Ghali possible examples of confidence-building measures, including free access to East Timor by human rights organisations, and compliance with last year's Human Rights Commission resolution calling for the admission of a variety of UN thematic rapporteurs. Boutros Ghali, according to the group, appeared to think that there had been an improvement in the human rights situation in East Timor.

## OIL FIND IN TIMOR GAP

For the first time, oil has been found in one of the Timor Gap Zone test sites by the company Petroz NL. The company has been prospecting under the illegal Timor Gap Treaty concluded

between Indonesia and Australia in 1989. Portugal has taken Australia to the International Court of Justice challenging the validity of the treaty. The first hearing took place on 9 December 1993, and the first full bench high court hearing has been set for August this year. The National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) has resolved to 'continue to pursue all legal avenues to protect their rights to benefit from the natural resources of their country... the oil which rightfully belongs to the people of East Timor'.

## Pergau Dam: the night managers

**IAN LINDEN, general secretary of CIIR, discusses the moral implications of the Pergau Dam scandal.**

**A**midst fears that Britain would lose up to £4 billion in export earnings to Malaysia, Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd appeared before the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee on 3 March 1994, to explain how 'for a few months during 1988' aid and arms sales to Malaysia 'became entangled'. The matter under investigation was the link between an hydro-electric dam at Pergau in northern Malaysia funded by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), part of the privatisation of the national electricity supply, and an enormous £1.3 billion defence contract.

As a news story it had sputtered on since 1990. Documentary evidence of the 'entanglement' finally broke in *The Economist* on 5 February this year, followed three days later by a parliamentary question from Labour MP Alan Williams. In reply Alastair Goodlad, for the Foreign Office, admitted that levels of aid and levels of arms sales had been linked in negotiations. Indeed, there had been a 'non-binding' protocol to this effect, agreed in Kuala Lumpur by the Defence Minister, Lord Younger, to a memorandum of understanding between the British and Malaysian governments, for the Prime Minister, Dr Mahatir Mohamad, to sign during his visit to London in September 1988.

Subsequent investigative journalism revealed that the Pergau Dam project had all the makings of a major scandal. The revelations reduced Britain's foreign policy theme of 'good governance' to the level of domestic 'back to basics'. The project was opposed by the ODA as 'uneconomic', it was environmentally damaging, public monies designated for aid had been offered as an inducement to conclude an arms agreement contrary to government guidelines, and the deal had been the product of secret diplomacy between heads of state who behaved as if they were unaccountable. Malaysian opposition leaders claimed that 'rake-offs' and backhanders had marked the transactions. In the course of 1991 both Douglas Hurd and Prime Minister John Major ratified the aid package.

By mid-February, aid and the arms trade were being discussed in the quality press, and television presenters laboriously explained to viewers the British Aid Trade Provision (ATP): the provision of concessionary aid for projects using British firms to enable them to win contracts. Few members of the general public realised that British aid was going to one of the most recent of Asia's economic 'Tigers'. Pressure groups who spend much of their time trying to raise public awareness of arms and development issues could scarcely believe their luck.

### Arms/aid relations

The origins of the dam date back to the mid-1980s when the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, 'batting for Britain' on sticky Arab and Asian wickets, was intensifying her efforts to gain British business contracts in the third world. A successful 1985 visit to Kuala Lumpur resulted a year later in the Malaysian government being given £59 million from the Aid Trade Provision for a rural water project involving the British firm, Biwater. Press reports showed that Biwater was a minor funder of the Conservative Party in 1986 and 1987, and a major beneficiary of water privatisation in Britain. The company had already participated in a similarly funded, and unsatisfactory, Nigerian water project which had failed to complete more than 5/49 of its rural water supply schemes by the time it came under scrutiny by a Nigerian judicial review in 1984.

Annual ATP figures are informative: they jump from £42 million in 1985 to £78 million in 1986, i.e. from 5.1 per cent of British bilateral aid to 9.2 per cent. The provision had been instituted by a Labour government in 1978 on the basis that it would not be more than 5 per cent of bilateral Britain's aid to developing countries, and would keep projects under the developmental control of ODA – rather than at the mercy of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). But the controls were effectively ignored by the Conservative Government. Sir Tim Lankester's testimony to House of Commons Public Accounts Committee this January showed that, while Permanent Secretary to ODA, he had opposed the hydroelectric scheme and aid package, only to see his objections overruled.

In March 1988 negotiations began between the Ministry of Defence and the Malaysian government for £1.3 billion worth of arms deals. The MOD-agreed protocol precisely linking the arms sale to aid had to be withdrawn on protest from the Foreign Office. What became of the linkage six months later when Mrs Thatcher concluded the agreement with the Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr Mahatir Mohamad, in a private one-to-one meeting, remains a matter for speculation. In any event, Malaysia was granted £234 million of concessionary finance for building the Pergau Dam, using British construction companies.

The Pergau dam saga has already thrown up far more than short-lived 'revelations' for a nation now reduced to being *fin de siècle* observers of political decline. The correlation

between arms sales and aid to Malaysia reveals a fundamental lack of coherence in British foreign policy.

There is, of course, a lot of humbug spoken and written about aid and arms. No country in the world has, or ever has had, an aid policy divorced from some conditionality or linkage with what is perceived as national interest. The USA used scarcely to bother to differentiate between military and other aid, and in the 1980s used aid as an arm of geo-political policy. Wealthy countries like Israel came out top of the aid league tables. Britain gave India between 1980 and 1992-3, £1.5 billion in overseas aid and sold it £2.4 billion in arms. ODA spending has been heavily skewed towards the Commonwealth and Dependencies, with India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kenya and Malawi taking the lion's share. But these are also amongst the world's 50 poorest countries.

The murky area of ATP also needs to be put in proportion. During the Thatcher years Britain increased its multilateral aid – money given predominantly to the European Union, UN agencies and World Bank, with small amounts to regional development banks – from 30 per cent to 40 per cent. Out of the remaining 60 per cent of bilateral aid, ATP amounted to between 5 to 10 per cent. The major beneficiaries of ATP are a small group of construction, water and energy companies like Balfour Beatty, Biwater, GEC, Davy and AMEC.

There is very little evidence to suggest that ATP does what it sets out to do: to help British companies in a highly competitive world to break into new markets in the third world in a lasting fashion. Even prior to Malaysia's retaliatory action, Britain was running a net trade deficit with it of over £400 million, and this had grown fairly steadily over the Thatcher years. Nor does it make much developmental sense for a recipient country to be tied to trade with the North rather than build up regional markets. This is not to say, or course, that all ATP funded projects are developmental disasters.

It is the suspected linkage with the arms trade that is the major cause of concern. Revenue from British military exports stood at about £5.2 billion in 1992 – the unknown number of clandestinely operating private arms dealers makes any figures approximate. Arms are the top British export earner, and over 70 per cent of these are sold to the 'third world'. Thousands of jobs are tied to military production and, in the north-west of England, whole towns depend on components production for major companies, such as British Aerospace.

With exports of conventional weapons falling by half since 1989, and with sophisticated weapons systems falling off the backs of lorries in the ex-Soviet Union, Britain is working hard through its Defence Export Services Organisation to retain its market share. As the arms to Iraq scandal and the supply of Hawk ground attack aircraft, euphemistically called 'trainers', to Indonesia indicate, efforts are made by a number of government departments to circumvent guidelines and limitations based on conditionality of an ethical kind. The impact



of job losses consequent on their rigorous enforcement are deemed more important than human rights 'overseas', or, as former Defence Minister Alan Clark succinctly puts it, 'what one group of foreigners do to another'. With minimal investment in the research and development necessary to bring about the difficult conversion of the armaments industry to peaceful production, the equation that ethical export policy equals unemployment looks set to remain the same.

### In the national interest

What then are the lessons of the Pergau Dam? Firstly, it would obviously protect the independence of British aid policy from pressures arising in the DTI and MOD if the ODA had the rank of a ministry and full participation in Cabinet. It would be naive to assume that this would dramatically alter its status but it would help a little. Secondly ATP, subject as it is to *de facto* control by the FCO and DTI, has almost nothing to be said in its favour, and much to be said in its detriment.

The vagueness about tendering, the select club of major beneficiary companies, the directors who get 'gongs' and sit on key decision-making and monitoring boards, funds going to the Conservative Party from some of the same companies, combine to suggest a set of relationships in which a subtle form of corruption can easily take hold, if it has not already done so. Douglas Hurd's 1993 reforms of ATP, capping the sums available for any one project and limiting it to the poorest countries, simply do not go to the heart of the problem.

'Corruption' is not a comfortable expression to use – and the Malaysian government has taken particular exception to it – but, contrary to popular opinion, the major problem engendering poverty in the third world is not simply corrupt governments in the South. Every bribe, backhander and kickback has a giver and a receiver. There is an interlocking, reinforcing, *North-South* system linking businessmen and the 'gatekeepers', those amongst national elites who control access to local contracts. The drain on national wealth through such gatekeeper tolls into the lucrative domains of some third world economies is prodigious. Much of the economic decline of a country like Nigeria may be attributed to it. It requires personal moral heroism to dent such a system. After debt, unfair trade and war, it is the fourth horseman of the economic apocalypse stalking low income countries.

But at an entirely different level, the Pergau Dam project has demonstrated a more persistent and lasting problem for Britain. The absence of a coherent foreign policy that implements a vision of national interest that incorporates moral goals, and amounts to more than ad hoc responses and economic short-termism. The successful pursuit of moral goals through Swedish and Norwegian foreign policy during the 1980s show that this is not a utopian demand. The end of the Cold War, which structured international relations into a superficial coherence, has illustrated the absence of such

a policy more clearly. Geo-economics now go before geo-politics. Domestic economic imperatives supersede foreign policy goals. 'Its the Economy Stupid'.

Trapped between a transatlantic nostalgia, debilitating divisions in the Conservative Party over Europe, and a fading Commonwealth, no-one pretends that formulation of such a vision is politically easy for a country in decline. Good governance, democracy and human rights are a fruitful starting point, and there has been much useful creative thinking in the Foreign Office on these topics, but they need considerably more debate about substance and content.

In this context of building national interest around a core set of values, Britain could do worse than find its identity and inspiration in the christian themes of 'justice, peace and the integrity of creation'. It needs at least to return to the UN Charter which, in article 26, charges the Security Council with establishing a 'system for the regulation of armaments' in order to foster international peace and security 'with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources'.

The implications of this will require considerable political courage. At present Germany in recession finds itself under pressure to expand its armaments production and adopt the lowest common denominator of provisions to control arms exports from the European Union. It is widely acknowledged that Russia cannot afford to cut its military production because of the civil consequences of further economic collapse – and it has to be remembered that the Soviet Union was second only to the USA in the production of conventional weaponry.

Britain's commitment to article 26 has clearly been hypocritical and inadequate. We now face certain key choices. Either seriously and consistently to enforce human rights conditionality in aid provision and create an effective, enforceable means of controlling the arms trade – perhaps along the lines of the Co-ordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM), a NATO body under US control that kept a lid on the supply of sensitive technology to communist countries. Or simply to drift into the pursuit of short term economic gain sacrificing moral integrity, all sense of direction and national purpose, and our responsibility for future generations. This describes exactly the world portrayed in Le Carré's *The Night Manager*, dominated by Roper the 'private' arms dealer:

'Real enemies were the big power governments. Everywhere you looked, big governments were there ahead of you, flogging anything to anybody, breaking their own rules, cutting each others' throats, backing the wrong side, making it up to the right side.' My fear is that Le Carré's fictional world may already be closer to reality than the one so urbanely presented to the Foreign Affairs Committee this week by representatives of the British government. ■

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## Arms or jobs?

**WILL MCMAHON, of Campaign Against the Arms Trade looks at the effects of the Pergau Dam scandal and the Scott Inquiry on UK public opinion.**

Following the Royal Navy and British Army Equipment Exhibition (RNBAEE93) in Aldershot, various government ministers, including Jonathan Aitken, Minister for Defence Procurement, spoke publicly of their pride that Britain was going to be the second largest exporter of military equipment in the world. £5.5 billion worth of contracts had been agreed in 1993 and this demonstrated that Britain is a world leader in conventional weaponry exports.

That pride can be attached to such an achievement is one thing. Quite another was the media and public acquiescence to such statements.

For 20 years, Campaign Against the Arms Trade, formed in response to the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the contribution that British arms trade made to it, has been arguing that military exports are profoundly unethical.

The reasons are as follows. Firstly, military sales contribute to the outbreak of regional wars. Secondly, sales to the third world, (and 80 per cent of British sales are to the third world), usually end up propping up repressive regimes. Thirdly, military sales to the South mean that resources for infrastructure or welfare development are either not made available or are cut in the recipient countries.

Up until the invasion of Kuwait, and the consequent mass bombing of Iraq during the Gulf War, it was an uphill struggle to win public opinion to our cause.

The night that journalists wore chemical weapons masks in Tel Aviv and were broadcast by CNN across the globe, the meaning of the arms trade was beamed into every living room. At this point the public was brought face to face with the consequences of the arms trade. The connection had still not been made, however. The official common enemy had been defeated and any questions regarding the arming of that common enemy were swept under the carpet. Yet there was a nagging doubt in some people's minds. Then came Matrix Churchill and the Pergau Dam.

The government boast about arms exports suddenly began to look somewhat self-defeating. After two decades it seems as if the arguments that CAAT has been pursuing are now at the centre of public debate. CAAT's response to this has been threefold.

First has been the launch of our campaign 'Together we can stop the Hawks'. The central idea is to prevent the delivery of Hawk aircraft to Indonesia. The hope is that this sale will further crystallise in the public's mind everything that is wrong with the arms trade.

Secondly, CAAT is producing an alternative report to the Scott Inquiry into the sale of arms to Iraq in the build up to the Iraqi invasion of



Kuwait. The importance of the Scott Inquiry lies in its exposure of government complicity in sales to a regime that was using chemical weapons against its own population and the fact that these sales were carried out under the cover of commercial secrecy.

Lastly, CAAT is stepping up work on arms conversion to counter the myth that military exports create jobs. In a nutshell, arms conversion is the use of machinery and labour used to produce military equipment for civil purposes and government economic strategies to develop the civil manufacturing base of the economy at the expense of the military industrial base. For example, 45 per cent of all government Research and Development funds is spent on the military – a government favouring arms conversion would divert all funds to civil Research and Development.

Because of the highly capital intensive nature of military production, the money invested in arms manufacture produces many fewer jobs than civil manufacture. The arms trade therefore creates unemployment in the country of origin. It also creates unemployment in the country of destination since, other than waging war (in East Timor for example), you cannot make anything with military aircraft. Tanks do not create value, they destroy it.

CAAT is beginning to sense a sea change in public awareness and this is connected to many fundamental issues in British society. There has been a subterranean debate about the British economy and Britain's role in the world which is now emerging publicly. The question being posed is: does Britain want to continue with the imperial myth through the arms trade, or does it want to have a different set of priorities which would encapsulate both a development of the UK civil manufacturing base and also a more ethical and productive economic relationship with the third world? ■



Bishop Belo: reconciliation talks negative

In general, the plight of the young people is always difficult. There are many in Jakarta; distrusted by the Indonesians, they are always harassed. I think that many are going to try to leave, making their way from here to Macau.

The meeting in London, in which Father Francisco Fernandes was also present, is seen in a very negative light by the Timorese inside. Indonesian television said that the Reconciliation Meeting was held to show support for Integration! It was too.

#### Belo accepts military funding for Seminary

Bishop Belo has accepted Indonesian military funds for the building of a major and a minor seminary in Dili Diocese this year. Army Brigadier General Sjarwan Hamid told reporters that 100 million rupiahs (US\$47,620) would be made available. According to a report in *UCANEWS* (which contained a number of inaccuracies), Hamid quoted Bishop Belo as saying that 'the two seminaries would help the church realise its involvement in building up local people's mentality and spirituality through the training of local priests'.

Bishop Belo has been attempting to fundraise for this project for some time. His attempts at obtaining sufficient funds from official church sources have not been very successful, and his decision to accept money from the military will probably have been a pragmatic one. The Indonesian military also contributed the funds to build the large Catholic Cathedral in Dili. ■

#### DIPLOMATIC

### UN officials visit Dili and Jakarta

In January two senior officials from the office of the UN secretary general in New York visited Lisbon, Jakarta and Dili. Francisc Venedrell and Tamrat Samuel were briefed to con-

sult with Timorese and to develop a new initiative for the next round of Indonesia-Portugal talks, scheduled for 5-6 May in Geneva. They visited Xanana Gusmao in his Jakarta prison, and were satisfied that they were able to talk to him freely. They also met Bishop Belo whilst in East Timor. No details of their exchange were made public.

## Reconciliation talks rejected in East Timor

A number of the East Timorese exiles who participated in the December 'reconciliation talks' held in London (see *Timor Link* 28) under the auspices of the Indonesian Embassy, have been rewarded with all expenses paid trips back to East Timor. Many, however, have received letters from their families asking them to stay away as they would not be welcome. ■

#### CHURCH

## Belo on reconciliation talks

We reprint below part of a letter by Bishop Belo to his friend Dr Paulo Remedios in Macao, where he expresses his feelings about participants at the 'reconciliation' talks held in London in December 1993 (see *Timor Link* 28).

'At the moment, General Carlos Galvao de Melo and Dr. Manuel Tilman are in Timor. Both are always accompanied by informers. The Timorese generally believe that these visits only serve to benefit the Indonesians, not the Timorese. The General's statements have been truly offensive.

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