



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Tapol bulletin no, 124, August 1994

This is the Published version of the following publication

UNSPECIFIED (1994) Tapol bulletin no, 124, August 1994. Tapol bulletin (124). pp. 1-24. ISSN 1356-1154

The publisher's official version can be found at

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Three major weeklies closed by Suharto

Political life was thrown into turmoil when Indonesia's three major political weeklies were banned in June. The wave of protest has been unprecedented despite strong-arm tactics of the security forces against peaceful protesters. Never before since Suharto took power has there been such widespread condemnation of the regime's clampdown on the press.

The three weeklies closed down on 20 June by the Information Minister, Harmoko, on Suharto's orders, were *Tempo* which first appeared 23 years ago and now enjoys a circulation of more than 200,000, *Editor* which was in its eleventh year, with a circulation of nearly 90,000, and *DeTik*, a tabloid weekly which emerged on the scene little more than a year ago and whose punchy and audacious reporting of political developments has won it huge popularity and a circulation of around a quarter of a million.

Like many other groups overseas, TAPOL has strong reason to regret the passing of the weeklies. We have relied for years on *Tempo* and *Editor* to which we have subscriptions, and we were also receiving *DeTik* on a regular basis though we had not yet got round to taking out a subscription.

Talk about an era of 'openness' bestowed by the grace of the man who has ruled the country for nearly thirty years was shown to be illusory. When reporting began to lap around the edges of a number of top-level scandals involving cronies of the President, Suharto judged that it was time to act. The banning orders were issued eleven days after he angrily denounced the press for 'sowing discord' between members of his government and made it clear that 'measures' would be taken. Even though rumours were rife, the closure of the three publications came as a great shock.

Suharto's characteristic outburst on 9 June made it clear that his fury has been aroused by media scrutiny of a decision to purchase 39 mothballed warships of the former

More army violence in Dili

A demonstration by students at the University of East Timor was violently put down by security forces in Dili. There were many casualties with three reported dead. Once again people in Dili were plunged into a state of tension and fear, recalling the atmosphere that followed in the wake of the Santa Cruz massacre in 1991.

The army violence occurred on 14 July as some five hundred students at the University were preparing to march from the campus to the local assembly building, about 500 metres away, to tell assembly members about an incident on the previous day.

Heavily-armed troops and riot-police blocked their way and started attacking the students with knives and sticks. Most of the injured suffered lacerations, stab wounds and extensive bruising. Firearms were not used, to make sure that this would be a 'silent' operation. There were persistent reports from Dili that three people died after their throats were slashed. It has not been possible to name the dead whose bodies may have been removed and secretly buried by the security forces. Two days after the bloody incident, sources in Dili reported that nine people were missing.

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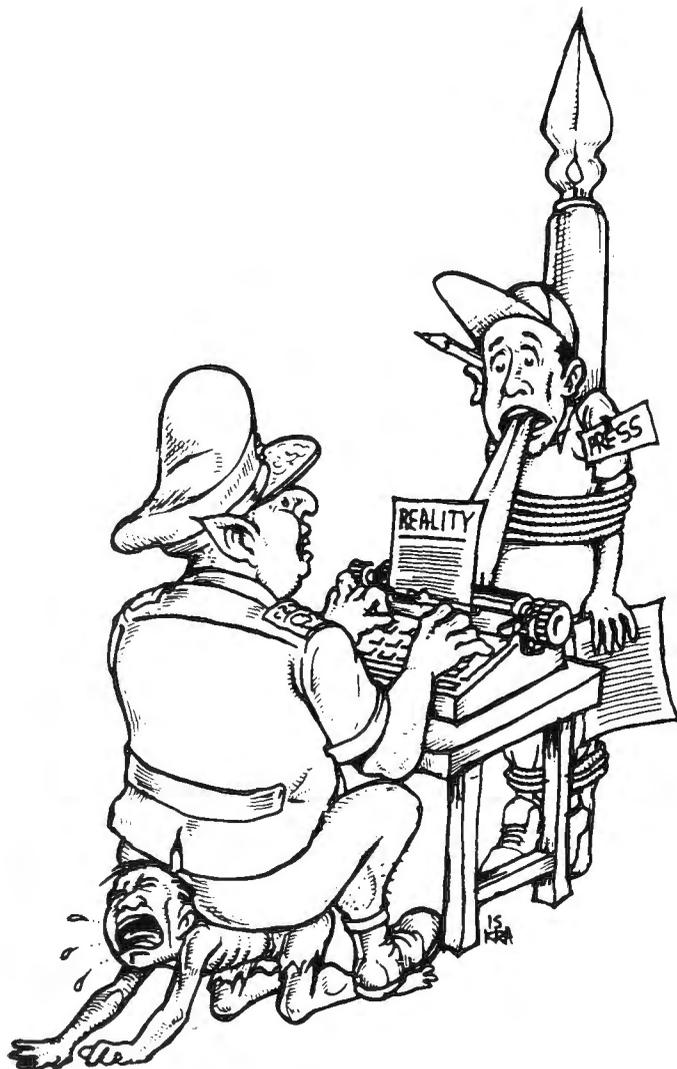
East German navy. He took full responsibility for granting his protégé, Dr. B.J. Habibie, Minister for Research and Technology, full control over this costly procurement. The deal, concluded two years ago with Chancellor Kohl, and handled by various members of the Habibie family, including B.J.'s brother who is Indonesian ambassador in London, was closely examined in several issues of *Tempo*, which was not alone in revealing a major row between Habibie and Finance Minister Mar'ie Muhammad over the former's extravagant budgetary demands. Nor was it lost on the general public that Habibie's procurement role was also resented by the armed forces leadership.

Suharto's arrogant decision to cut the lifeline of three very popular publications by revoking their publishing permits is the latest sign of the absolute power wielded by a man whose authority is on the wane and whose much-vaunted political shrewdness is now in seriously in doubt.

The bans were followed by a series of warnings to the rest of the press not to step out of line or suffer the same fate. In particular they have been warned not to publish graphic accounts or photos of the violent crackdown by security forces against peaceful protesters opposing the bans. [See separate item.]

Special ministerial powers used

The bannings have brought into focus as never before the illegality of the special powers which Harmoko, now serving his third term as Information Minister, granted himself in 1984 to revoke a press publication licence whenever he deems that a paper is acting in 'irresponsibly'.



He has used these powers on numerous occasions, the most recent being the closure of *Monitor*, a down-market tabloid, for insulting the Prophet Mohammad, in 1990. In 1986, the daily *Sinar Harapan*, lost its licence for a report about export-import regulations. *Prioritas* was banned in 1987 also for publishing economic reports deemed to be sensitive, as did the weekly magazine *Expo*, which was felled in 1984.

The 1984 ministerial decree has been challenged in a judicial review by Suryo Paloh, editor of *Prioritas*, but the Supreme Court is in no hurry to examine the complaint. The decree is being challenged because it contradicts the 1982 Basic Press Law, Article 4 of which explicitly prohibits censorship and banning. However, the Basis Press Law is not a model of press freedom; Article 11 prohibits all 'Marxist/Leninist or anti-Pancasila publications'.

For several years now, journalists, lawyers and human rights activists have campaigned for the repeal of the Harmoko decree, but to no avail. There is no such thing in Indonesia as an independent journalists' union. The PWI is a loyal government appendage as is the newspaper proprietors' association, the SPS. So far, there has been no move to challenge this, except for a journalists' forum set up last year in Yogyakarta, Central Java. When protesting journalists approached the PWI for support, its secretary-general shed crocodile tears over the fate of the now unemployed journalists, declared that it "understood" why the government had acted and advised the weeklies to apply for new licences and promise to 'tone down their reporting'.

'SIUPP' to fight SIUPP

The three latest bans have led to the emergence of a host of ad hoc groups and coalitions to fight for freedom of the press and freedom of expression. As one opposition figure has said, "this triple strike has only served to lend coherence to an otherwise diffuse political opposition". The source went on: "The Old Man has done for us in a single move what years of organising and discussion could not have accomplished." [Jeremy Winters, in *Nation* magazine, 29 June 1994]

One of the newest groups is called 'SIUPP' for *Solidaritas Indonesia Untuk Pembebasan Pers* (Indonesian Solidarity for Press Freedom), the same initials as Harmoko's press publishing licence.

Bargaining with licences

There is strong pressure on the proprietors of the three weeklies to ask for their licences back on the understanding that they accept that freedom of the press means conforming with the concept of 'being responsible'. Moreover, they would only be allowed to resurface with new names, under new management and with new editors.

Gunawan Muhammad of *Tempo* will have none of this. Leading a news magazine in Indonesia, he said, is like being "a pilot in a hijacked plane. You make one small mistake, your plane will blow up and many people will fall prey. But after your plane has blown up, you are still forced to be careful because you'll get a new plane, complete with new hijackers". [*Jakarta Post*, 28.6.1994]

He has also commented bitterly that even under the recent climate of 'political openness', the press has not behaved very boldly. "If such a careful press is banned, what else is there left?"

Press freedom 'with responsibility' is a bridled press. What the three journals were trying to do was, at best, to make their reporting of some events a bit more 'balanced'. To the

outside observer, the results have been decidedly patchy. Take their recent coverage of East Timor. On 2 June, *Editor* published an outspoken interview of George Aditjondro, senior lecturer at the Satya Wacana Christian University, explaining the reasons for Indonesia's attempts to sabotage the Manila Conference on East Timor. The role of Suharto's daughter, Tutut, in steering a new policy of 'reconciliation' was highlighted. This article could well have been the reason why this journal was closed down. On the other hand, *Tempo* recently published a grossly ill-informed and libellous article about the East Timorese resistance leader, José Ramos-Horta, which must surely have been a plant by military intelligence. [*Tempo*, 24-IV-94].

As for *DeTik*, it is widely recognised that one of its prime functions recently has been to publish articles originating from armed forces sources which have used the journal to fire political missiles at the President. This explains why top generals have not welcomed the bans, describing them as 'regrettable' and 'unnecessary'.

What of the future?

The prominent part Goenawan Muhammad of *Tempo* and Eros Djarot of *DeTik* have played in the protests suggests that neither of these journals is prepared to accept conditional resumption of publication. The managers of *Editor* on the other hand have been very quiet. The journal which was set up eleven years ago by a group of journalists who had defected from *Tempo* was in serious financial straits. Unlike the other two, it had no financial links with any politically-powerful groups and was considered to be politically and economically the more independent-minded of the three. Having been cut down at a moment of great internal crisis, it appears to have accepted the inevitable of a sell-out to one of the powerful conglomerates.

There are business tycoons waiting in the wings to fill the void. Media ownership, both print and screen has become an attractive investment for some of the richest businessmen in the country. One man who is said to be eyeing *Tempo* is Bob Hasan, the timber tycoon and Suharto crony, who has recently run an aggressive campaign seeking to demolish worldwide criticism of Indonesia's destructive forestry programme. An earlier bid came from Hashim Djojohadikusumo, related by marriage to the President. [*International Herald Tribune*, 14.7.1994]

International protest

At government level the strongest condemnation came from the US. "The US strongly supports freedom of the press throughout the world," a US embassy statement said. "We therefore regret the Indonesia government's decision to cancel the publishing licences of three Indonesian journals." The embassy later also deplored the harsh crackdown against peaceful protesters against the ban.

Australia's Paul Keating was forced, by the strength of anger in the local press, to express regrets but the ban was not allowed to marr his high-profile trade promotional trip to Indonesia. The UK said nothing publicly but did raise its 'concern' over the ban at the Paris meeting of the Consultative Group on Indonesia, as Overseas Development Minister Lynda Chalker stated in a written answer to Lord Avebury.

Article 19, the London-based International Centre Against Censorship, in a letter to President Suharto, said the ban was "a grave violation of freedom of expression and is incompatible with Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights... and Article 4 of Indonesia's Basic Press

Law". The letter went on:

"The Ministry of Information has reportedly explained that action was taken against these publications after they had ignored government warnings. These reports, if true, are profoundly troubling; they indicate an effort to establish a system of censorship, circumventing the ban on censorship in the Basic Law. Government warnings are no substitute for due process under law, a fair and open trial on specific charges, should the publications have violated specific provisions of the law, on grounds internationally recognised as constituting a legitimate exemption from the international norms protecting freedom of expression."

The New York-based **Committee to Protect Journalists** addressed its protest to Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief, General Feisal Tanjung and Information Minister Harmoko as well as to President Suharto. After outlining the alleged breaches for which the journals were closed down, the CPJ said:

"As a non-profit organisation dedicated to upholding press freedom worldwide, the Committee views the closure of Tempo, DeTik and Editor as a blatant violation of the right to 'seek, receive and impart information... as guaranteed in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We respectfully urge Your Excellency to immediately rescind the ban on the three publications, and ensure their right to publish freely without fear of government interference."

The Paris-based **Reporters Sans Frontieres** also wrote to Suharto in the strongest terms condemning the bans.

Calls for CGI meeting to be postponed

Meanwhile no fewer than fourteen leading human rights environment and development non-governmental organisations in the US wrote on 1 July to Lewis Preston, President of the World Bank, just a week before the Bank



Hadi 'Kacik' Ciptono with a bleeding head

Meanwhile, several hundred other protesters who approached the ministry from a different direction managed to reach the building. Among them were members of the Yogyakarta theatre group of W.S. Rendra, dissident poet and playwright, led by Rendra himself. They sat down and started reciting poetry but they too were set upon by the troops. About twenty from this group were rounded up and driven off in trucks, some injured and with bleeding heads.

There were many wounded, several seriously, who had to remain in hospital for more than a week.

It is clear that the armed forces were under orders from Suharto to prevent the protests from getting out of hand. The brutality was deliberately aimed at stopping the mass protest in its tracks as it became clear that it was threatening to engulf the regime. Suharto must have had in mind the numerous street rallies that forced him last year to cave in over the national lottery which had thousands of people protesting in all parts of the country.

More than fifty arrested

Altogether more than fifty people were taken into custody. The Jakarta chief-of-police, Major-General (Pol) Hindarto, used graphic language to make it clear that his men would deal harshly with all further street demonstrations. "Where are you taking them?" a journalist asked as the peaceful demonstrators were being driven away in trucks. "To hell. They deserve to be killed!"

The next day, several dozen people were charged under Article 510 of the Criminal Code with holding a demonstration without permission and fined Rp2,000 each.

The one person not released was Beathor Suryadi, an activist and founding member of *Yayasan Pijar* which has been at the forefront of many pro-democracy activities for several years. Beathor was conditionally released from prison some months ago after serving most of a three-year sentence. He has not allowed the conditionality of his release to stand in the way of continued activism. It seems now that he will be required to serve the rest of his sentence.

On 5 July, undaunted by the police threat, some 150 journalists held a rally outside the office of the Press Council, the body which is supposed to advise the minister before he takes action against a newspaper. (The Council is chaired by the minister.) Five journalists handed in a petition signed by 370 journalists from many parts of the country, demanding the lifting of the bans. The Press Council feigned sympathy but offered no support. The man the journalists spoke to, Pami Hardi, is secretary general of both the Council and the PWI and is clearly on the side of the government. Dozens of riot-police were present, armed with clubs and shields, blocking the way into the building.

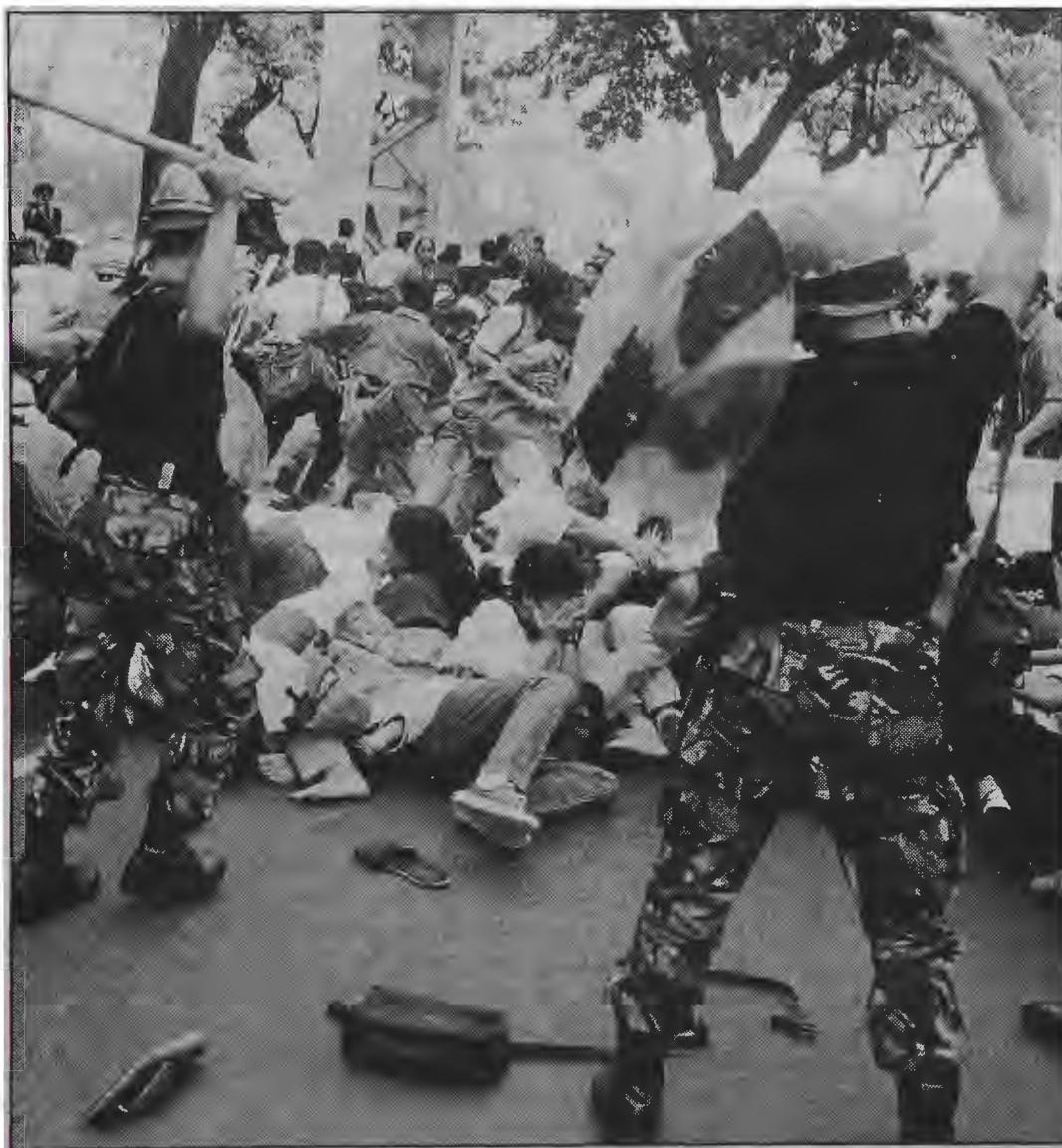
Two days earlier, in Yogyakarta, protesters unfurled banners demanding the lifting of the bans but took them down again two minutes later as security forces closed in on them, threatening to take action.

Troops violate LBH premises

The next planned protest was a gathering of some two hundred people, mainly students, on the premises of the Legal Aid Institute (LBH) in Jakarta. The LBH head office has been used on a number of occasions for discussions about action against the press bans. For much of the time, the building has been surrounded by security forces.

On 7 July, a solidarity action was launched to back two students who planned to start a hunger strike in support of the movement to lift the bans. In a statement, the students said: "The government has warned the local mass media not to report actions against the publication ban. This is tantamount to trampling on democracy and freedom to express opinions."

Soon after the action began, troops entered the premises, started beating up those present and dragged forty-three people off in police trucks. The two hunger



Special military units beating peaceful protestors

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Back to basics?

Recent events in Indonesia are puzzling the experts. Is Suharto, the cunning grey fox, losing his touch? Or has he reverted to plain old repression, the way the Orde Baru began in 1965? Thirty years on, things are more complex, the parameters are no longer the same and the way of resolving things has become more complicated. For many supporters of the regime, the crucial question is: is the old man an asset or has he become a liability?

With the death of dictator Kim Il Sung, Suharto now heads the list of long-serving dictators. Only the obscure despot of the Dominican Republic, Joaquin Balaquer, has served longer than the 73-year old Suharto. While Indonesia watchers agree that Suharto is a great strategist and master of political cunning, recent events suggest that he is losing his touch.

Signs of panic

It started with the way the East Timor conference in Manila was handled. It was obvious that Jakarta didn't like the event but the way Suharto dealt with it was like swatting a mosquito with a bazooka (see special item). The Philippine government was given no room to manoeuvre: political blackmail was used and economic sanctions were inflicted on Mindanao. The operation backfired, the conference was a resounding success and worldwide publicity rang clear with the message: Indonesia has something nasty to hide in East Timor.

At roughly the same time, huge worker demonstrations in Medan shattered the image of Indonesia as a third world country successfully dealing with poverty. Although the World Bank still quotes Indonesia as an example of good governance, Medan told a very different story. Indonesia was now portrayed in the international press as a cheap-labour boom economy in the Asia-Pacific, creating wealth for the happy few and misery for the masses. Suharto's image as *Bapak Pembangunan* (Father of Development) is now hollow.

Dilapidated ships

Probably the most disastrous event for Suharto's image was his handling of the scandal of the 39 mothballed East German warships. From the outset the deal stank. While the ships were sold at rock-bottom price, refurbishment would cost US\$1.1 billion, much more than Finance Minister Mari'ie Muhammad could allow. The conflict between Suharto and high-tech Minister Habibie (responsible for the purchase) on the one hand and the armed forces leadership on the other hand was out in the open. Many things are at stake and Suharto, usually a master at power-balancing, blundered all the way.

It was Suharto himself who made it clear that the armed forces had no say at all in the purchase of the ships; still worse, they were not even informed. In his own words, Suharto explained that he received a private phone call from Chancellor Helmut Kohl asking for a quick decision because, said Suharto, other countries were eager to snap up the ships. This is why Suharto did not inform the armed forces. People were flabbergasted by the story and everyone knew he was lying. It was clear from the start



that the deal had been handed to the President's favourite, Habibie which also meant bypassing ABRI.

Another side of the scandal, discussed at length in the press, was the woeful condition of the ships as evident from very substantial refurbishment needed, costing almost one hundred times the price of the ships, valued as scrap at US\$ 12.7 million. This hit the headlines when one of the ships capsized and almost sank on the way to Indonesia and was irreparably damaged off the coast of France. Minister Habibie tried to persuade the public that the ships were not all that bad. But he could not explain away conflicting figures about the cost of refurbishment. After saying this would cost US\$ 1.1 billion, the amount suddenly more than halved, down to US\$420 million after complaints from the Finance Department. When Finance Minister Mari'ie Muhammad insisted that he could allot only US\$ 319 million, Habibie agreed. The big question is: what would have happened to the difference of US\$ 163 million if the first amount had been approved? After the scandal of the state development bank *Bapindo*, mistrust of highly-placed

officials is rife. Yet even so, Suharto threw his political weight behind Habibie.

The drama further intensified when the print media was forced to take the rap and three weeklies were closed down. The political community in Jakarta was infuriated. None of the publications had threatened political security. On the contrary, it was Suharto's outburst that caused the havoc for which he blames human rights, pro-democracy and environmental activists.

The end of Keterbukaan?

Suharto spoke a few years ago about creating more breathing space in his political system. Indonesia's free enterprise economy should lead to *keterbukaan* (openness) in politics. *Keterbukaan* became synonymous with democratisation.

Now the signs are that Suharto has ended the period of *keterbukaan* and wants to return to a more stable period of straight-forward repression, as it was in the first twenty years of his rule. But even if he wants to do this, objective conditions will prevent him from getting the genie back into the bottle.

At the international level, despite Indonesia's chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement, Suharto remains obscure.

Bullying his ASEAN neighbours over East Timor has only blackened his image.

Indonesia is emerging as a modern nation-state which needs proper macro economic policies, prudent management of education, health-care, etc. Suharto-style one-man dictatorship jeopardises this and increasingly, Suharto's supporters at home and abroad realise that the dictator is becoming a liability.

Asia-Pacific Rim style growth has created a middle class. By curbing the press, Suharto has raised the hackles of his former supporters. The *Orde Baru* has created an affluent class and they are demanding freedoms now.

The difference with the eighties is clear. The mood of resignation and acceptance of earlier years is disappearing. Political control, clampdowns, security measures are being met with more defiance. It is no accident that the nineties slogan is: *Suharto Dalang Segala Bencana*, Suharto is the Cause of All Disasters. The banned stickers with this inscription are still to be seen in the streets of Jakarta.

Victory at last for Kedung Ombo peasants

The remarkable struggle of Kedung Ombo peasants who resisted expropriation of their land for pitiful compensation has at last been vindicated with a decision of the Supreme Court. But government officials are doing everything possible to prevent or delay implementation of this landmark decision in which the Court found in favour of the peasants.

The construction of the World Bank-funded Kedung Ombo dam led to the expropriation of thousands hectares of land forcing more than 6,000 peasant families off their land during the 1980s. Under strong pressure from the authorities backed by the security forces, most of the peasants agreed to be transmigrated elsewhere in Indonesia or accept alternative plots of land of poor quality. But 34 families (initially 54 families were involved in the lawsuit) stood their ground, rejected the compensation offer of Rp500 – Rp800 per square metre and decided to sue the governor of Central Java and the Department of Public Works for a decent level of compensation. The Legal Aid Institute in Semarang handled the case on their behalf.

The Kedung Ombo campaign was Indonesia's first major land dispute struggle; it became an international issue because the World Bank did nothing to ensure implementation of its guidelines for people displaced by Bank-funded projects. [For TAPOL's efforts and coverage, see Bulletins Nos 91, 92, 93, 95, 100, 104 and 105. See also *Occasional Reports*, No 10 issued in 1989, which reproduces our correspondence with the World Bank about the dam.]

After unsuccessful litigation in the district and high courts, the Supreme Court adopted a verdict which vindicates their struggle and should provide guidelines for all present and future disputes over land compensation. The Court decided that the peasants should receive Rp50,000 per square metre and Rp30,000 extra for land with crops. It also decided that the peasants should receive Rp2,000,000,000 in 'immaterial compensation' for distress, insecurity and other harassments which the peasants suffered during the course of their dispute. This would certainly include Suharto's public denunciation of the peasants as 'ex-PKI'.

The Court also pronounced as unlawful moves by authorities to 'consign' money to the banks for land compensation so as to foreclose any complaint about the amount to be paid. The verdict vindicates the demand for proper consultation with anyone whose land faces expropriation and recognises the right to compensation for crops.

Towards an independent judiciary?

For the first time in the history of the Suharto regime, the Supreme Court has shown an independence from the executive that augurs well for other cases now before it, including the judicial review over the Information Minister's unlawful decree on revoking press licences. For two years, the Supreme Court has been chaired by a civilian judge, Purwoto S. Gandasubrata who took over from Lt.General Ali Said in 1992.

The verdict which, for administrative reasons, was only conveyed to the plaintiffs' lawyers a year after it had been adopted, has come as a bitter blow to the authorities in Central Java which must now find the cash to pay up. The governor is insisting on a Review of the decision and will argue that this Review should also mean a Stay of Execution. But as Chief Justice Purwoto as well as many lawyers have stressed, there can be no grounds for failing to execute a decision of the Supreme Court against which there is no further appeal.

This is the first time that the government has had to face defeat in the courts. Even the military commander came to the provincial government's defence, arguing that the Court verdict 'lacks authenticity'. As several human rights lawyers have said, the verdict has nothing whatever to do with him.

One argument of the provincial authorities is that the

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Conditional release for the 3 Bs

The release of Bonar Tigor Naipospos, Bambang Subono and Bambang Isti Nugroho should not passed unnoticed. The three were members of the Palagan Study Group, one of best known student discussion groups in the eighties. Their trials were prime examples of the travesty of justice. They got heavy sentences for spreading banned books or propagating 'wrong' ideologies (Marxism or communism).

Bonar Tigor Naipospos, popularly known as Coki, spent the last few months of his imprisonment in Cipinang Prison Jakarta, where many other political prisoners are held. He was conditionally released (*pembebasan bersyarat*) on 17 May and welcomed by more than 50 people outside the prison. Coki was sentenced to 8 years and 6 months in June 1989 and was due for release in July 1997.

Earlier this year other political prisoners were conditionally released under a scheme devised by the Jakarta military commander, Major-General Hendro Priyono. Coki also benefitted from this extra-judicial procedure initiated by the security agency *Bakorstanas*. While conditional release is bound by rules, including compulsory reporting, the scheme is very much dependent on the mood and method of functioning of the authorities.

Bambang Subono (Bono) and Bambang Isti Nugroho (Isti) were conditionally released in Yogya, Central Java, which involved a more complicated procedure, including having to take an exam in vocational skills. Major-General Soeyono, the military commander of Central Java, has warned the two Bambang not to get involved in politics:

"It's dangerous for them to get together with their friends; they'll come a cropper if they start getting involved in outlawed political activities. It's up to them. They know what risks they're taking" [Bernas, 8/6/1994].

The general was commenting on a party organised by friends welcoming them back into the community.

The significance of the 3 Bs

Student activism in Indonesia is often divided into generations. The 3 Bs represent the generation of the eighties, a rigid period of the New Order when any move towards pluralism was seen as subversive. The eighties of the Palagan study group were also years of straitjacketing every political structure – a single state ideology, a single government party, a single trade union, a single youth umbrella, and so on. The trials of the three Bs became the symbol of a new generation of student activists. There were numerous demonstrations in many cities demanding their release.

The 3 Bs also became the bridge between the discussion groups and the more action-oriented activists of the nineties. The study groups created awareness of people's role in society; through involvement in campaigns against the Kedung Ombo dam and other land evictions, student participation in society became a reality. Coki as founding member of *Yayasan Pijar* can be seen as a typical example of this gradual development. Pijar underwent a transformation from discussion group to political movement and is involved in every important political issue in contemporary Indonesia. The three men's only mistake was to be politi-



Left to right: Subono, Coki and Isti

cally aware in the dark days of the eighties. They received eight and a half, eight and seven-year sentences because they were children of that period. They endured humiliation, physical torture and periods of depression, but at the same time they became a source of inspiration to a new generation of activists.

The future

Coki and Bono are planning to finish their studies. Coki only needs to take his last paper and has received the green light from the Dean of the Faculty of Political Science at Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta to go ahead. Bono also plans to finish his studies and is certain to get a sympathetic response from his faculty. It is doubtful though whether Isti who formerly worked at the university as a laboratory assistant, will get his job back.

While in prison, the three Bs were never isolated. They had many visitors, even from abroad. They were adopted as prisoners of conscience and received many letters from outside Indonesia. They followed closely what was happening on the political scene, both in Indonesia and abroad. We welcome back the three Bs as full members of Indonesian society.

[Based on newspaper reports: *Bernas* 18, 19 & 23 May, 7 & 8 June, *Kedaulatan Rakyat* 8 June, *Suara Pembaruan* 18 May 1994]

Islanders fight against a golf course

Gili Trawangan is a small island on the north coast of Lombok, the island east of Bali. Mass tourism is now taking hold in Lombok as well. Gili Trawangan has been designated to become a tourist paradise; a hotel and golf course will replace the gardens and coconut trees of the islanders.

Small islands in far away third world places are being 'discovered' by real estate developers often in cooperation with local rulers. In the case of Gili Trawangan, a tiny island of 320 ha, Kurnia Candra Kusumah, son of the former governor of West Nusa Tenggara (which includes Bali and Lombok), was given a licence (*Hak Guna Usaha, HGU, Permit to Use*) to use 100 ha of Gili Trawangan. The permit was issued in 1979, but most of the land was already being tilled by the islanders. In 1972 some islanders started setting up small coconut plantations, along with cassava and soyabean gardens. For many years the situation remained unchanged; the islanders continued to till the land while the company, PT Generasi Jaya, owned by Kurnia Candra Kusumah, was not interested because of the low agricultural yield of the land. For all those years, the islanders were oblivious of the fact that the land they tilled had been allocated to the company.

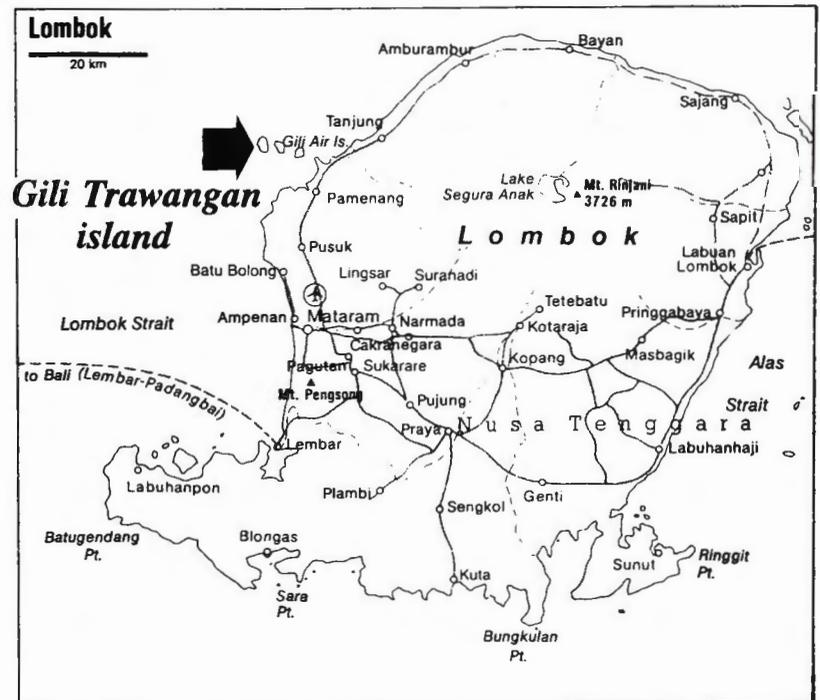
Tourism as a curse

In some cases tourism can benefit the locals, especially if the locals are the decision-makers. In the case of Gili Trawangan, tourism became a curse. Everything changed when the prospect of tourism seemed bright for the region. Parts of Bali became like Ibiza or Costa Brava in Spain so the more affluent tourists wanted quieter and cleaner beaches, which is what Gili Trawangan has in abundance. Some adventurous tourists found their way to the island and were welcomed by the islanders. They slept in primitive huts provided by the islanders. Gradually the islanders built small bungalows for the few tourists who reached the island. But it also gave some enterprising government officials bright ideas. In 1988 the *HGU* permit was taken over by another company, CV Hikmah, which had much more capital behind it.

Islanders fighting for their land

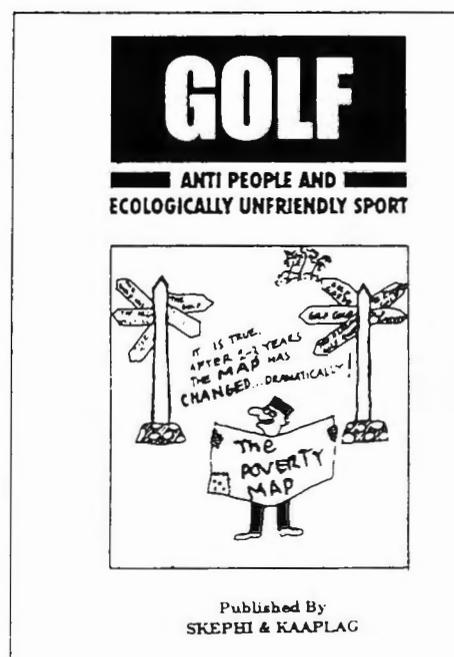
As early as 1983 the islanders approached the local authorities asking for title deeds to their land but their request was never answered. That same year the islanders received the first summons to leave their plots and homes, an area of 47.5 ha. Over the years harassment was stepped up. Out of a total of 76 families, only 29 families remain to fight on. In 1989 the islanders lost a law suit challenging the *HGU* permit of CV Hikmah. The local government was determined to turn the island into a tourist paradise. In August 1993 the district chief of West Lombok gave the order to destroy all the houses and other buildings and the area was officially designated a tourist area. Preparations to build a hotel and golf link were begun.

On 16 August 1991 a delegation of Gili Trawangan villagers went to Jakarta to file a complaint to parliament. The local government had offered them paltry compensation for the loss of their land and homes. On 14 June 1994 another delegation visited the National Commission of Human Rights to complain about the destruction of their



homes, eviction from their land and the compensation offered by the local authorities. The people of Gili Trawangan described the intimidation used to force them to accept cash compensation.

The islanders stuck to their moderate demands: that the conflict be resolved by means of two-way communication. They rejected the offer of alternative land, demanded that they be issued with title deeds to the land they have tilled for the last 22 years and want to be allowed to stay on their original sites. Perhaps the tourists who have enjoyed staying with the islanders couldn't agree more.



NEW BOOKLET

Content:

- * Conversion of Productive Land
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British aid to Indonesia leaps ahead

Amid growing criticism of Bretton Woods, the conference that gave birth to the IMF, the World Bank and GATT 50 years ago, Indonesia was allocated yet more aid this year. Indonesia is among the world's largest aid recipients and now has the second largest foreign debt. Lauded by the World Bank as their star pupil, the optimistic macro-economic figures conceal a darker picture. Of all Indonesia's creditors, the UK has massively increased its aid to Jakarta.

The Consultative Group on Indonesia (CGI) held its annual meeting in Paris on 7 and 8 July 1994 and pledged US\$5.2 billion aid to Jakarta. Gautam Kaji, World Bank Vice-President for East Asia and the Pacific who chaired the meeting conveyed the usual compliments to the Indonesian delegation led by Dr. Saleh Afiff, the Coordinating Minister for Economy and Finance. The total aid for 1994/95 fiscal year went up 1.7% compared with last year, but in real terms it fell by 4.5%, taking account of inflation.

Substantial shifts by UK and Spain

The only two countries to make substantial changes were Spain and the UK. Both shifts are clearly arms-related. Spain's aid relationship with Indonesia has been very much tied to a joint venture with IPTN, the flagship of Indonesia's arms industry. Last year's aid of US\$100.0 million went down this year to US\$25.33 million, indicating that no further partnerships are in the pipeline.

The only substantial growth is in UK-Indonesia relations. This year the UK committed US\$150.49 million, a spectacular rise from last year (US\$98.6 million), which was three times the amount allotted the year before (in 1992/93 US\$ 35.0 million). In 4 years, British aid to Indonesia has risen almost eightfold, which also reflects the rapid expansion of British economic interests in Indonesia. Britain now stands in third place as donor, after Japan and Germany. The commercial links include the recent deal for 24 Hawk fighter planes, the PT PENI polyethylene plant (a joint venture between BP Chemicals and Sigit Suharto) and PT Kaltim Prima, a subsidiary of BP Coal, Indonesia's largest coal mine.

Otherwise, few changes

Japan remains Indonesia's biggest donor and although Tokyo had no government, aid rose from US\$1.44 billion last year to US\$1.67 billion. The increase was due to the current dollar crisis and the appreciation of the yen against the dollar. The aid consists of US\$1.5 billion in soft loans and US\$170 million in grants and technical assistance. Japan was the only donor to provide US\$200 million in fast-disbursing assistance, aid that can be used to bridge the current account deficit. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank gave US\$1.5 billion and US\$1.1 billion respectively (down from US\$1.6 billion and US\$1.2 billion).

Other multilateral bodies made pledges: the Nordic Investment Bank US\$35 million, United Nations agencies US\$50.5 million, the Islamic Development Bank US\$65 million, the International Fund for Agricultural Development US\$26.07 million, UNICEF US\$14 million, and the European Investment Bank US\$54.89 million.

From the individual donor countries pledges were made



The Bank Duta and Bapindo scandals, Budget leaks 30%, Foreign debt US\$93 billion.

by Germany US\$157.41 million (last year US\$138.7 million), France US\$140.57 (US\$123.3 million), United States US\$89.60 (US\$90.4 million), Australia US\$47.66 (US\$40.2 million), Switzerland US\$23.41 million (US\$26.0) and Canada US\$25.33 million (US\$ 30.5 million).

An economy in trouble

Indonesia's seemingly stable economic performance has taken several knocks lately. The Medan riots has upset many foreign investors, in particular those in the Asia-Pacific region. The closing down of the 3 political weeklies made another dent in Indonesia's international image. But statistics portray a very worrying prospect. For the first time in 20 years, the state budget recorded a deficit of 1.8 trillion rupiahs (US\$600 million). The sudden rise in oil prices from US\$13 to US\$16 may have relieved Finance Minister Mar'ic Muhammad, but other figures give cause for concern.

Exports of manufacturing goods have been poor. The world recession is affecting Indonesia's export-oriented industry. Exports in the latter part of 1993 and the first quarter of 1994 continued sluggish. Indonesia's comparative advantage (mainly cheap labour) has created a huge

expansion of industrial complexes. But this economic 'miracle' has been achieved by exploiting and suppressing the workers. The achievements are fading as foreign investments begin to slow down and exports falter.

External debt

Indonesia's external debt is around US\$93 billion and debt service payments consume more than 30% of export earnings. Almost half is denominated in yen, creating an even heavier burden. There is now what is known as negative transfer, which means that more money flows out in repayments than comes in as aid. Indonesia has already spent 34.5 trillion rupiah in negative transfer. Indonesia's CGI creditors have no option but to provide yet more credit to make sure of getting their money back.

The sums involved would be enough to give substantial rises to the millions of underpaid civil servants and factory workers. The debt trap has Indonesia in its grip; debt rescheduling would be a relief but is no long-term solution. It is the economic blueprint of the World Bank and IMF that should be questioned. The human and environmental costs are simply too high.

Public protests in Paris

There were public protests and two press conferences in Paris condemning CGI aid to Indonesia, linked to the campaign, *Fifty Years in Enough* to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the World Bank and the IMF.

Tribal Act, an NGO which defends the rights of indigenous peoples said that years of aid from the two agencies were propping up a dictatorial military regime which is

responsible for brutal repression in East Timor, West Papua and the Moluccas. A spokesperson for the Moluccan people, said: "Lending to Indonesia heralds for us, the indigenous people, only more suffering, further marginalisation and increased deforestation."

Responding to an Indonesian minister's defence of transmigration when he said: "Contrary to what observers may think, we do not want any part of our society to be left behind in the Stone Age," a spokesperson of the West Papua People's Front rejected this insulting stereotype:

"Our people are being discriminated against in the jobs market in favour of transmigrants. Women are now too afraid to go to the hospitals because many have been injected or operated on without their knowledge to stop them bearing children."

A number of French NGOs INFID (Indonesian NGO Forum on Indonesian Development) wrote to the French government about the high level of French aid to Indonesia, mentioning non-respect of labour rights, non-respect of East Timor's right to self-determination and many banking scandals. The Bapindo scandal involves nearly half a billion dollars, equivalent to ten per cent of the CGI's annual aid to Indonesia. This scandal, says INFID, involves a tycoon associated of one of President Suharto's sons.

The closure of three weeklies in Indonesia was also raised during the protests.



Demonstrators at the CGI meeting: "From West Papua to East Timor, respect for the rights of the indigenous people are ignored by Indonesia, aided by the World Bank." [Photo: Stephane Teste]

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Indonesian Monopolies in East Timor by: *Dr. George Aditjondro*

£1.00 p&p

continued from page 5

strikers and a lawyer from the Institute were among those arrested.

Bambang Wijayanto, an LBH lawyer said that the police had threatened to close the Institute down. "The police have acted brutally. We condemn their action. The Institute has done nothing against the law," Bambang said.

The forty-three people arrested were charged in court the next day and ordered to pay a fine of Rp2,000 each. This time, however, they refused to do so and told the court they would appeal to the Supreme Court for a ruling on their right to demonstrate.

Workers against the military

Strikes are still a daily routine in Indonesia; they become the logical expression of workers' grievances against the management. Low wages and military interference have become the pattern in the booming manufacturing areas of Sumatra and Java. This time, we report on a strike at a cigarette and match factory in Pematang Siantar in North Sumatra.

North Sumatra has traditionally been at the heart of many plantation industries like tobacco and rubber, but in the last 20 years an array of new manufacturing industries have emerged in the area. Pematang Siantar, a town of 200,000 inhabitants which is 125km south-east of the capital Medan, is now at the centre of a bitter conflict of workers against management and the military.

Edwin Bingei, the philanthropist?

The strike at NV STTC (Sumatra Tobacco Trading Company) started on 1 June and has not yet been resolved satisfactorily. As with many other strikes, the workers organised themselves outside the official *SPSI* (the sole union recognised by the government). The STTC-group is part of a trust of four companies owned by Edwin Bingei known as the cigarette king of North Sumatra. He also has a reputation as a public benefactor in the city. The public library, road improvements and bus shelters have all been paid for by the philanthropist. What people do not know is that Edwin Bingei deducts Rp5,000 each month from every worker to pay for his largesse. Hence, the workers are paying an extra tax for all the public services.



The conflict first started at the cigarette and match factory but spread later to the other companies.

The workers with no official union demanded a proper specification of their wages as they were only being given cash in envelopes. Nothing was paid for extra hours worked. Their wages range from Rp90,000 to Rp150,000 a month (£30 to £50), just enough to keep a worker from starvation.

Escalation

The workers failed to get any details about their wages and still worse received no wages at all on the first day of June

so a strike was launched. The next day the wages were paid but still without any specification. On the third day a delegation of workers met the management but they received no response to their grievances. A sit-in was held in front of the office. Suddenly, security guards attacked the workers, 85% of whom are women, with sticks and knives. Eight people were injured and had to be taken to hospital. A few hours later practically the entire workforce of the four companies, about 6,000 people, walked out, demanding justice over the violence perpetrated by the security guards.

The troops arrived from the local district military command *KOREM 022/PT*. One of the strike-leaders, Abdul Siagian, was arrested by the military. That same morning the workers marched to *KOREM 022/PT*, an unprecedented act of courage. On the following days the strike continued. On 6 June the same 6,000 workers marched to the local office of the Department of Labour with their initial demands but now also demanding the release of Abdul Siagian. The same crowd marched to the local police station, *Polres*, and again to the *KOREM 022/PT*. On 7 June they held another rally in front of the *Polres* office but their colleague remained in custody. The next day, still frustrated, the workers went back to work but another incident soon erupted. A worker named Effendi S. got into a fight with a plainclothes military and was taken away.

Workers' control

A clash was now unavoidable and workers clashed physically with military and company security guards. Some 3,000 workers inside the factory managed to take control of the premises and for the next 30 hours the factory was occupied by the workers. Three foremen were also held by the workers but they were unharmed.

A huge combined military and police force then encircled the entire STTC compound. At 3.00a.m. on 9 June anti-terrorist units from Medan were dropped by helicopter on the premises of the factory. At 9.00am the anti-terrorist squads backed by other security units launched their attack. The unarmed workers were no match. The level of violence on the part of the troops was extraordinary. Some 200 workers were driven off in trucks to *KOREM 022/PT*. Later that evening most were released but 26 workers were kept in detention. Those in detention were very badly treated: kicked with jack-boots, given electric shocks, beaten with sticks or rifle-butts. The names of some of those in detention have been listed: Roince Sagala, Togar Marbun, Khairani Lubis, Edwin Sihotang, Helen Galungging, Hotmauli Situmeang, Rosmauli Sipayung, Roliance Naing-golan and Usmiadi.

In the next few days, members from some local NGOs were taken from their offices: Ronsen Purba and Dosmerita Purba from *FKPM* were taken in for interrogation.

Further clampdown

The military seem determined to crush the workers' resistance. By means of intimidation, more than 200 workers have been forced to resign from the company. Thirteen workers remain in custody at *Polres*, the local police office, and have been refused permission to receive visitors. Abdul Siagian and Ronsen Purba are still in detention and it is expected that the fifteen detainees will be brought before the courts on a variety of charges.

Although the conflict is far from over, some tentative conclusions can be drawn. Edwin Bingei is a man with clout; both the military and the police are only too ready to do his bidding as generous financial rewards will follow. The North Sumatra military command are still smarting from events in April when workers revolted in Medan. Army commanders are determined not to let this happen in Pematang Siantar. Huge reinforcements from outside Siantar

were used to crush the strike.

Another conclusion is that the workers managed to organise themselves in orderly fashion. No formal union structure exists but the STTC workers organised themselves. The workers demands were very moderate: better communications with the management could have resolved the dispute. It was arrogance on the part of the management and owners of STTC that caused the escalation, a typical example of conflict management in boom-town manufacturing in the Asia Pacific. Arrogance of power, wealthy factory owners and security forces in collusion against the population. The problems are far from over as brute oppression will never resolve anything.

Medan workers on trial

Eighty-four people are now on trial for their involvement in the Medan workers' demonstrations in April. The majority of the defendants are being charged for allegedly taking part in destroying shops, homes and factories while others will be tried for incitement.

The first trials started in early June and had concluded by the end of the month. The district court of Medan will handle altogether 44 cases; most of the defendants are being tried in groups.

The first two trials involved four people: **Sugiono, Arifin, Nobel Samosir and Usahanta Ginting**. These set the pattern for the subsequent cases. The four defendants withdrew their earlier decision to be assisted by a defence team, as a result of which lawyers from the Legal Aid Institute were told to leave the court. Press reports gave the impression that their decision not to have lawyers had not been taken voluntarily.

As is the custom in other group trials, the defendants were required to appear as witnesses in each other's trials. There was strong evidence that the trials were manipulated (*direkayasa*, a widely used expression these days in Indonesia). Some defendants said in court that confessions contained in their interrogation reports (BAP) had been extracted under duress. Usahanta Ginting complained that he had been beaten with bare fists and sticks. In another trial Suyatno, Hanafi and one defendant identified only as ST, also retracted confessions contained in their BAP. Suyatno told the court that he was illiterate and could not read his BAP.

The first men to be tried, Sugiono, Arifin, Nobel Samosir and Usahanta Ginting were sentenced to four months each. The others being charged as rioters are likely to receive similar sentences.

Despite all the obstructions, a large team of lawyers called *Team Pembela Kasus Buruh Medan* (Lawyers' Team for the Medan Workers Cases), including lawyers from North Sumatra as well as from Jakarta, has been formed to assist all the accused.

"Instigators" of the riots

Another series of trials is in preparation which will involve leaders of the trade union *SBSI* and some activists from local NGOs. Trials have also started of two members of *SBSI*, identified only as ADZ and SZ. State prosecutor

Sihotang has announced that they will be charged under Article 160 for incitement; under this article, they could receive sentences of up to six years.

Four people are at present being intensively interrogated: **Maiyasyak Johan**, a well-known lawyer from (*LAAI*, Indonesian Institute for Child Advocacy) has been under constant interrogation since 18 June.; **Jannes Hutahean** of a labour rights organisation, *YKPS*, and **Parlin Manihuruk** from a local NGO *Pondok Rakyat Kreatif*, were taken into custody on 13 June.

Mochtar Pakpahan the well-known chair of the *SBSI* was summoned for questioning by the Medan police. So far police and military intelligence have had two heavy sessions with the union leader, lasting 19 and 8 hours. Mochtar Pakpahan, who is based in Jakarta, has filed a request to the chief-of-police asking for further questioning to be carried out in Jakarta.

TAPOL Bulletin hopes to report these trials in greater detail in the next issue.

Held for questioning

TAPOL activist Liem Soei Liong was taken in for interrogation for 3 days in Jakarta in late June. As he was about to leave the country from the Sukarno-Hatta airport, he was held by officers of *BIA*, the military intelligence. After spending a day at *Wisma Sudirman*, a military compound, he was taken to *Polda Metro Jaya*, the Jakarta Police headquarters for further questioning. The following day he was taken to the main Immigration Office for the same purpose. On 1 July, he was officially deported from the country on the grounds that he was "a possible threat to security and order".

The questioning focused on TAPOL's network of contacts in Indonesia and abroad.

Batak church activist murdered in cold blood

Members of the Batak protestant church who reject the bishop appointed by the army to head the church took their protest to Jakarta when ministers demonstrated for several days outside Parliament in Jakarta. The rights of hundreds of thousands of Batak protestants to practise their religion without fear is now at stake.

The more than two hundred ministers, dressed in their black cassocks, drew attention to their grievances and managed to talk to members of some of the parliamentary groups. But conflicting statements by members of the government about attitudes towards the government appointee left the source of the conflict unresolved.

They were also protesting against the latest atrocity perpetrated by army-backed hooligans which led to the murder of a human rights activist, and also against the detention and torture of three ministers and the young relative of one of the ministers. [For background to the conflict and the military interference in HKBP affairs, see *TAPOL Bulletin*, No. 123, June 1994]

Activist murdered in cold blood

An account of the latest atrocity suffered by a member of the church appeared in one of the last issues of *DeTik*, the weekly tabloid banned on 21 June. [*DeTik*, 8-14/6/1994]

On 1 June, Herbert Hutasoit, 48, was found dead in Banualuhu, Pagaran sub-district, North Sumatra. His body was covered with wounds and there was a bullet wound in his chest. His head was partly severed and his penis had been slashed.

The victim had arrived in the village the day before, after hearing that it had been under attack by the Tiara Task Force of the pro-government Simanjuntak wing of the church. Hutasoit, who was secretary of a church forum set up to gather data about the human rights violations against church members, had come to investigate reports of atrocities at the village.

He discovered that at least thirteen homes had been destroyed. A villager named S. Sianturi, 48, told the Legal Aid Institute in Medan: "Who else could have done this but (members of) the Task Force?"

Also, on 29 May, three villagers were abducted by the Tiara Task Force. When they returned home, their faces were unrecognisable and their bodies were covered in bruises and wounds.

Things came to a head when vehicles encircled the village on 31 May. When Herbert Hutasoit saw this, he went out into the street to see what was going on. Soon after, the vehicles turned round and shots rang out. Herbert fell. His uncle saw him being dragged away by people dressed in camouflage. He saw the men stab at Herbert's head and throw him onto the vehicle.

When, the next day his body was found near a neighbour's house, fear engulfed the village. The police and army came to the village and started questioning the villagers. When Herbert's uncle said he would testify, the police disputed his claim that the person who fired the initial shot was dressed in camouflage and yelled: "Don't record that!" according to Saut Sirait, director of the HKBP Youth Department.

Sirait says he is certain the Tiara Task Force was

responsible for Hutasoit's abduction and murder. The suspicion that the police are protecting the Tiara Task Force is reinforced by the fact that no autopsy of the dead man's body was carried out before his burial on 2 June.

"This is a murder case, so why was there no autopsy? It's as if the police want to wash their hands of it."

Church ministers want army chief punished

The ministers protesting to Parliament demanded that the former North Sumatra military commander, Major-General Pramono, be punished for naming the new bishop and meddling in the church's internal affairs. They want the military to relinquish their powers to use churches to and liquidate the security units it has set up to secure the position of the pro-government bishop. They also want a democratic grand synod to be convened to elect a new bishop.

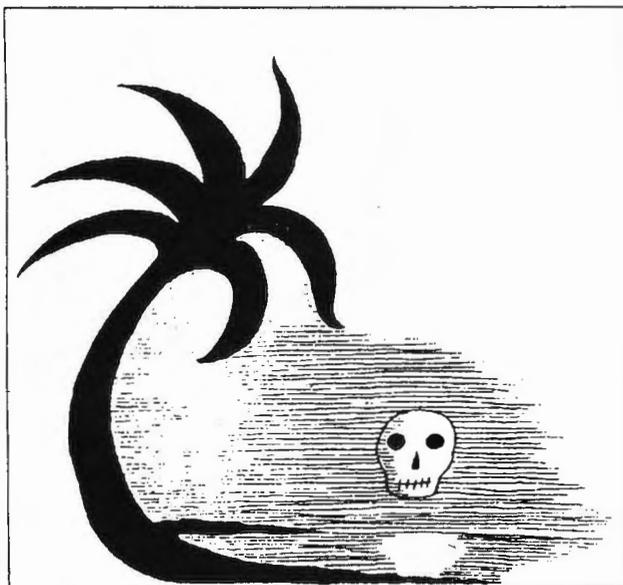


HKBP ministers go to parliament

Leading the protesting ministers, Rev. Martono Sitinjak said that to secure Simanjuntak's leadership, security authorities in North Sumatra had barred others from using the churches and were abducting and torturing dissident ministers. Since last year, 220 ministers have been tortured in detention and some of those are still being held, he said.

According to the protestors, thousands of HKBP members now live in fear as security authorities have recruited thugs to terrorise and blackmail dissident members, vandalising their homes and intimidating them. [*Jakarta Post*, 18 June 1994]

In statements to the press after the incident, the armed forces and the Department of Foreign Affairs alleged that security forces had been compelled to take action because 'irresponsible elements' incited the demonstrators into becoming 'highly emotional and brutal' and throwing stones. According to the Foreign Affairs Department, the security forces took action because the demonstrators failed to heed warnings by the security authorities.



The Foreign Minister Ali Alatas – making his first public appearance after suffering a heart attack at the height of the Manila Conference diplomatic row – responded to a statement by the US embassy in Jakarta calling for the army in East Timor to show restraint, by insisting that the army 'had shown restraint'. His words however have been contradicted by the University Rector himself.

Rector puts the record straight

Clearly frustrated that the Indonesian press published the first two official statements without checking the facts with the University authorities, Dr. Bratasudarma SJ, Rector of the University of East Timor, issued a statement on 17 July accusing the armed forces and the Foreign Ministry of giving one-sided accounts. The violence began, he said, when the security forces started attacking the demonstrators with batons, kicks, tear-gas and dogs, also striking people with their shields. The Rector said that the most serious injuries were sustained by students who fled the scene, jumped over a hedge and ran into the complex of the army's Company C. There they were severely beaten up by members of the Company.

The Rector's aim in issuing his statement, which he called his 'Right of Reply' under the terms of the 1982 Basic Press Law, was clearly intended to rectify the disinformation put about by the authorities. To our knowledge however, none of the Indonesian media has dared to publish his account which contradicts the official version. The Rector also stressed that the University was still gathering evidence and witnesses' testimony in order to obtain a fuller picture of what really happened.

It should be stressed that the University of East Timor was set up in Dili in an attempt to create a centre of Indonesian learning that would coax young East Timorese to taking a more pro-integration stance. The former and the present rectors are both Javanese. That the present Rector should have felt it necessary to issue a statement rejecting the army's version, which will probably go unreported in Indonesia, is a mark of how controlled the means of

communication are.

TAPOL has called for international observers to visit East Timor as a matter of urgency to ascertain the facts about what happened on 14 July.

Stirring up religious conflict

When students at the University organised their demonstration, they were responding to the deliberately provocative harassment of two Catholic nuns on campus on 13 July who were waiting to take an examination. Three men parading as students started taunting them with comments like, "Why don't you get married?", "Wouldn't you like to get pregnant?" Other students came to their defence and started attacking the men who, according to some accounts, were seriously wounded. Documents found on the men revealed that they were members of police and army intelligence and have been named as Abdul Hamid, Tadung Massora and Purwanto; the latter was carrying a pistol.

Infuriated by the incident, the students tried to make contact with members of the local assembly to explain their grievances but the members did not reponse which is why they decided to go to the assembly the next day. We now know from the Rector's statement that they had been granted permission for this march by the local police force. University staff, including the deputy rector, joined in the protest, including the deputy rector, Armindo Maia.

Desecrating the hosts

But this was not an isolated event. On 28 June, the congregation at St Joseph's Church in Remexio were stunned when two men, who turned out to be soldiers, participated in holy communion even though they were not Christians and the publicly desecrated the communion host, spitting out the wafers and trampling them underfoot.

This deeply offensive gesture profoundly offended the Catholic community. Eleven members of the Remexio church were later detained and maltreated for protesting against this act of sacrilege and Bishop Belo, head of the Church, strongly protested to General Feisal Tanjung, armed forces commander-in-chief.

News of the Remexio incident quickly spread and early in July, a crowd more than 350-strong staged a rally carrying banners saying, "Long live Jesus", "Long live the Catholic Church" and "Indonesia does not respect religious freedom".

East Timor's military commander, Colonel Lumintang expressed 'regrets' over the incident and said the soldiers had been disciplined and would be court-martialled. The East Timorese however are not satisfied and are demanding that the soldiers be tried in public and severely punished. They well remember the meaninglessness of 'punishments' meted out by the army to lower-ranking soldiers who were tried for their part in the Santa Cruz massacre.

This latest twist in the behaviour of the forces of occupation suggests that the army is looking for a new strategy to diffuse East Timorese opposition to their rule. The Indonesian regime has for many years used the term SARA which stands for *suku, ras, agama dan antar-golongan* – ethnic allegiances, race, religion and inter-group animosities – to characterise the activities of some groups in Indonesia. Incidents deemed to touch on alleged 'SARA sensitivities' have to be treated as a threat to national security.

It is to Jakarta's advantage to turn East Timor's revulsion against the forces of occupation into a Muslim-Christian conflict, as indeed it used provocateurs to turn the massive labour unrest in Medan last April into an anti-Chinese riot. As the East Timorese resistance movement, the CNRM said in a statement on 19 July:

... deliberate provocation of Catholics have been occurring in Java, East Nusatenggara and East Timor. Catholics are being provoked into attacking Muslims thus allowing the latter to strike back in 'legitimate' defence. A managed religious conflict would deflect attention from growing public concern with corruption, succession and

pro-democracy issues, shifting it to fundamental security issues. This would allow Suharto to reaffirm his authoritarian grip on society, which has lately been waning.

Many arrests and 'disappearances'

Reports from East Timor confirm that fourteen wounded people, some seriously, were being treated at the Wirahusada military hospital. Other wounded people are likely to have avoided being taken to the military hospital, fearing what can happen to them there. Twenty-two people were arrested and were being held either by the police or the army and nine were listed as 'disappeared'. These could well include the three persons thought to have been killed when troops attacked the students with such ferocity on 14 July.

Suharto, the regional bully

A conference in the Philippines to make East Timor an issue in the region of South East Asia succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of the organisers, all because Indonesia went to such lengths to stop it from taking place. Indonesian bullying turned what would have been 'just another conference' into the epicentrum of a major diplomatic row and an ongoing media story. As bullies never learn, the same happened a six weeks later to a seminar in Bangkok.

Plans to hold the Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor were initiated by a group called *Initiatives for International Dialogue* in 1992. Manila was chosen because, following the overthrow of Marcos, the Philippines has a more democratic constitution and certainly a more vigorous press than any country in the ASEAN (Association of the South East Asian Nations) alliance whose members consist of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

Invitations were sent to celebrities and solidarity groups around the world with every effort being made to ensure the presence of people from Asia and the Pacific. Naturally, the presence of East Timorese was of crucial importance. In the event, the Conference took place, it was well attended and produced an important resolution, but not without a great deal of obstruction.

Intense diplomatic arm-twisting

For years, Suharto has taken the lead in condemning all attempts at conditioning aid/arms sales by linkage with human rights violations on the grounds that this constitutes interference in its internal affairs. But when it came to an event in Indonesia's backyard, conditionality and crass interference was definitely 'in'.

The first signs that Indonesia was worried came when the Indonesian embassy in Manila made approaches to have it stopped. The Philippine security chief discussed the matter with R.C. Constantino, head of the organising committee. For the organisers, Constantino said there was no intention to exclude pro-integration views and the Indonesian government was welcome to take part. In the ensuing consultations, the embassy submitted the names of four Timorese who they wished to be invited. One had been invited already.

When Jakarta continued to insist that the conference should be halted, President Fidel Ramos said this was not possible as the Constitution guarantees the right of assem-



Lively atmosphere during the APCET conference

bly. So Jakarta began to tighten the screws: Indonesian businessmen pulled out of a major business conference and trade fair in Davao city promoting an industrial triangle involving Sulawesi, major contracts involving Indonesian capital would be scrapped and rights for Philippine fishermen withdrawn. Nothing, it seemed, would be left of the rapidly expanding Indonesian investment programme in the Philippines. Indeed, the extent of Indonesian economic leverage was far greater than many observers had realised. Projects worth more than \$450 million were at risk, not including a major toll-road worth more than \$200 million to be built by a company owned by Suharto's oldest daughter, Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, otherwise known as 'Tutut'.

A top political adviser, former foreign minister Raul Manglapus, was dispatched to Jakarta to explain Manila's difficulties but Indonesia was unyielding. "No conference, or else".

Then came an order from the President's palace that foreigners would be barred. This would turn the event into an insignificant local event and in particular bar East Timorese from attending. Soon a blacklist was circulated with eight names, including six top East Timorese activists, among them José Ramos Horta and the external leaders of Fretilin and UDT, and two TAPOL activists, Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong. (As it happens, TAPOL was only intending to send Liem.) Then more blacklists appeared, thick and fast; most names were Timorese, but there was an amazing assortment of international celebrities like Danielle Mitterand, wife of the French president who heads the human rights organisation, France Libertés, Mairead Maguire, the Irish Nobel laureate, Bishop Aloisius Soma (Japan), Bishop Hilton Deakin (Australia) and many more.

Indonesia's "28th province"

By this time, a few days before the conference was set to begin, the Philippine print and screen media was awash with news of the event and the wire services were buzzing with the latest reports. The Philippine press, with few exceptions, was tearing the government apart for caving in to pressure from Jakarta. Basic issues were at stake, the Constitution, academic freedom and freedom of assembly and expression. The Philippines was now being described as Indonesia's "twenty-eighth province".

Then Nobel laureate Maguire turned up at Manila airport, accompanied by Tom Hyland of the East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign. With not a moment's concern for the media impact, the two were told to board the next plane back, but not before they had held a press conference at the airport with reports of the deportation beamed everywhere. Back in Dublin, the two were given a heroes' welcome.

In France meanwhile, Madame Mitterand had cancelled her plans to attend but held a press conference instead, at which she lambasted Indonesia as an authoritarian regime which had used "tyrannical pressure" on her, a "kind of blackmail". She told the press she had received an extremely angry letter from Suharto rejecting her request to visit



Foreign delegates surrounded by a cordon of Filipino activists

Jakarta and see Xanana Gusmao.

But in Manila, foreign guests were arriving regardless of the ban. After all, who could distinguish between delegates and tourists? But plenty of people were barred from entering including several Timorese whose names had not been on any blacklist, and a group of Sri Lankans who tried – twice – to get in.

Court restraining order

Not satisfied with Manila's decision to exclude foreigners, a group of Jakarta cronies hastily created a Philippine-Indonesia Friendship Society which then convinced a judge to issue a Restraining Order preventing APCET from taking place for two weeks. Would this scupper the event after all? Again the press and supporters around the world were agog with interest. Constantino made it clear that come what may, the conference would go ahead, even though plans to use the University of the Philippines as the venue had been thrown into doubt.

Meanwhile some of the foreign delegates who had escaped the dragnet at the airport started appearing in public, on television, in press conferences. It was one thing to deport people on arrival, but quite another to order people already inside to leave. This could only take place by means of a court order. For the time being at least, they were 'safe'. (Ultimately, a court attempt to deport them fell foul of a powerful group of lawyers battling on their behalf and they were permitted to remain in the country until well after the conference came to an end.)

Triumphal opening

The legal challenge to the Restraining Order took days to prepare and was mounted on the morning the conference was to begin. The challenge was successful so the first session which began minutes later was a gloriously triumphal event.

The more than two dozen foreign delegates gathered at their campus hostel and, encircled by a double cordon of Filipinos swarming to protect them, they walked to the conference venue, surrounded by priests, nuns, monks, students, housewives, human rights activists. Said one of

the foreign delegates later: *"We could not have been plucked from safety by lurking policemen, at least not without an ugly battle. There were as many press people as bodyguards."*

Meanwhile, Japan's Bishop Soma, prevented on his first try from departing for Manila because the airline refused to allow him onto the plane, managed to spike the barring order (the Manila authorities had to relent because of his close links with the Philippines in other areas) and arrived in Manila on the second day of the conference. Preaching at Mass in the UP chapel, he spoke movingly of his recent visit to East Timor:

'Blessed are those who work for justice.' The people of East Timor are fighting for justice and they are blessed. We must not lose hope. God is raising the people everywhere to walk alongside the East Timorese. Those who work for East Timor are doing God's work. Please make the tears and suffering of the East Timorese our own.

In 1989, Bishop Belo wrote that the world has forgotten East Timor. Let us show that this is not true.

The impact of APCET in Indonesia

The huge media interest surrounding APCET was not lost on the Indonesian press and public. Why all the fuss about a conference in Manila? What about Indonesians who had been invited to attend? Would they be allowed to leave? Would they be barred from entering the Philippines? Whatever the approach taken by various sections of the press, whether concerned at this 'affront to ASEAN solidarity' as the government saw it, or bemused by this clumsy act of bullying, East Timor was again in the news.

In an editorial entitled, "Timor conference debacle", the Jakarta Post wrote:

...yesterday we read of a scuffle in front of the Indonesian embassy in Kuala Lumpur between Indonesian workers and members of Malaysian NGOs who came to protest Indonesia's 'occupation' of East Timor. Meanwhile the Manila conference itself continues to get major world media coverage.

As we watch those images on the television and read the media reports on the furor over the conference, one question keeps nagging in our minds: Is this the kind of publicity that we really want?

Perhaps it is too far-fetched to liken the damage of the "Manila incident" to that of the "Dili incident" of November 1991. But there are some similarities... that for a long time to come the world's attention will continue to focus on East Timor... " [Jakarta Post, 1.6.1994]

On the same day, *The Times* of London, as if to drive home the point *The Post* was making, published an editorial entitled: "A Regional Bully: Manila caves in to Jakarta over East Timor". It gave a brief run down of the "unsavoury story" and concluded with the words:

The only positive aspect of this episode is that it should earn vigorous opprobrium for Indonesia. International attention will return once more to the plight of those who live - and die - in that wretched "twenty-seventh province", occupied East Timor.

Aditjondro exposes Jakarta's fears

Among the many Indonesians invited to Manila was George Aditjondro, the academic who has publicly exposed the illegality of Indonesia's annexation of East Timor, and human rights activist, H.J.C. Princen. They went to the Philippine embassy in Jakarta to protest against the obstacles being put in APCET's way. They had both been blacklisted from entering the Philippines.

In a hard-hitting interview published in *Editor* (three weeks before it was banned), Aditjondro said Indonesia's wrath was prompted by the fear of a conference on East Timor being held so near to home. "The ferocity is intended to prevent Indonesians from having the courage to attend. It's a double-edged sword... to force the Philippines to knuckle under to Indonesia's wishes while dampening the eagerness of human rights activists to attend."

Aditjondro dwelt at some length on the role of Suharto's daughter in bank-rolling the East Timor reconciliation meeting in London, the travels of Lopes da Cruz, Indone-

sia's roving ambassador and visits by Portuguese to Indonesia. He also suggested that she was involved in a CIA-style operation to switch Portugal's politics to the right as the only way to end Portugal's opposition to Indonesia's integration of East Timor. The prize would be turning Portugal into an entry point for Indonesia into the European common market.

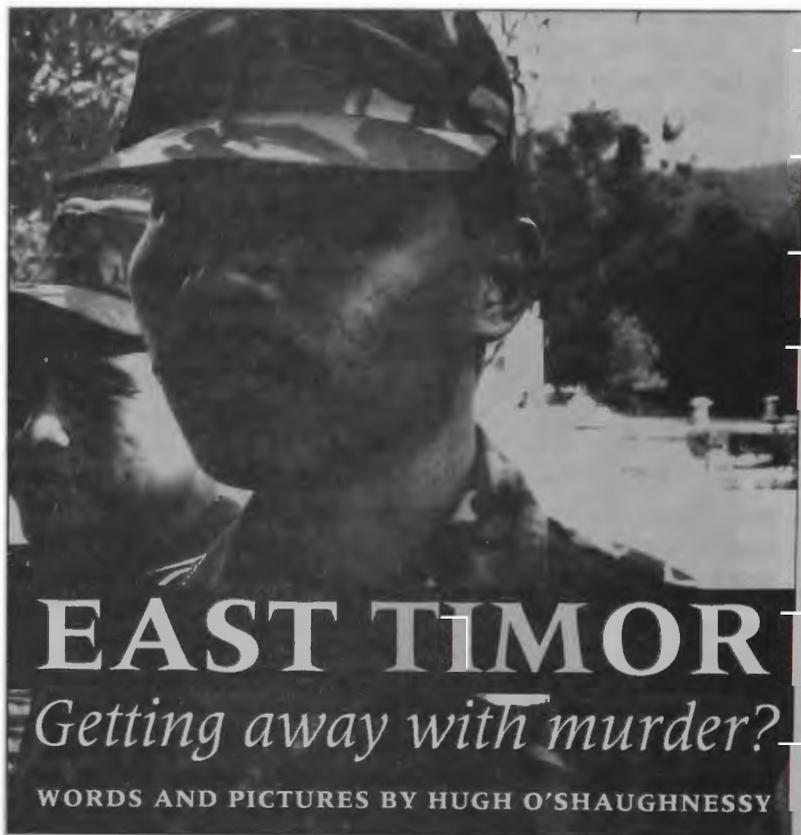
The myths befogging Indonesian perceptions

The conference gave one of its most enthusiastic welcomes to Rachland Nashidik, who chairs *Yayasan Pijar*, the Indonesian activist network. He said the decision to attend for Indonesians meant taking risks but he recalled that, back in the 1940s, some Dutch had taken far greater risks in supporting Indonesia's struggle for independence. The myths spread by the Indonesian government had turned the annexation paid for by the Timorese with blood and tears into 'integration' accompanied by flowers and joy. "It is this mythification that has caused Indonesian society to react in a very reactionary way to international criticism of East Timor ... and has placed democratic elements in Indonesia in a difficult position," he said.

Our primary reason for coming to this conference is to extend our solidarity... Our first commitment is to justice: that the people of East Timor should have the opportunity to determine their own fate. Only then can there be peace between Indonesia and East Timor, and the violence which has cost so many lives be ended.

Interference in Thailand backfires

But this is not the end of the story. Groups in other Asian countries have been affected by the mood. It was in Malaysia that the idea to have a seminar on East Timor was first mooted, soon after the APCET event. The meeting went ahead despite Indonesian protests and with no apparent effort by the Malaysian government to stop it.



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But when human rights groups in Thailand announced their intention to hold a seminar in Bangkok to discuss the human rights situations in East Timor and Burma, the Indonesian bully-boys turned on the screws.

The Thai seminar came at a particularly sensitive time, just three days before the annual meeting of ASEAN in Bangkok. The South East Asia Human Rights Network had decided to focus on East Timor and Burma. Burma was chosen because the Thai government had invited the Burmese government to attend the ASEAN meeting which Thai NGOs strongly objected to.

Some people inevitably asked: "Will they never learn?" The answer is quite simply, No. Suharto, who was certainly the one to insist on blackmailing Manila over APCET, has his mind set on keeping East Timor off the agenda throughout South East Asia, come what may. It has been for him one of the few redeeming features of international concern that Jakarta has made sure of total regional support, in the South Pacific as well as in South East Asia. This is so important to him that he will risk media exposure however negative, as long as he can keep the governments on side. But this is also one sign that Suharto is losing his touch as a deft political operator; another is his huge political blunder in banning the country's leading weeklies. They are both signs of weakness, not of strength.

A week before the seminar was due to commence, the Thai government announced that eleven delegates, all of them apparently East Timorese, would be barred from entering the country. The reason? "The meeting would damage the relationship between Thailand and Indonesia,"

a spokesman told reporters, "especially since Indonesia is an ASEAN country and we have lots of projects ... trade and investment." The trick was to insist that NGO delegates wishing to visit Bangkok would need work permits which have to be applied for 30 days in advance. All very familiar stuff.

Three people deported

As the seminar was about to get under way, three people were suddenly deported by the Thai authorities. Among them was Magherita Tracanelli, media director of the East Timorese resistance council, the CNRM. Two others, in the country with her, film-maker Frank Coorey from Australia and Lito Ocampo, a Philippine photographer, were also ordered to leave. CNRM co-chairman José Ramos Horta told the press Jakarta had threatened to delay implementing an agreed growth-triangle joint development project if Thailand allowed Timorese activists to attend the conference.

Pressure on the University where the seminar was to take place forced it to withdraw and a hotel was used instead. The organisers were beset by difficulties but, as we went to press, they were determined to go ahead regardless, reveling in the fact that every press conference they called was packed out, and the Thai press were eagerly reporting all the twists in this latest diplomatic wrangle focused on East Timor.

Belo accuses western governments of lying

Bishop Belo, head of the Catholic Church of East Timor, has accused western governments of deliberately lying about the situation in his country. "Their lies and hypocrisy," he said, "are in the cause of economic interests."

Speaking to journalist John Pilger in a rare interview by phone, the Bishop talked about the "routine nightmare that we live under". [The two-page article based on this interview appeared in the 15 July 1994 issue of *New Statesman and Society*, London, and was also published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, Melbourne.]

Bishop Belo refuted statements of western officials who have sought to cast doubt on the credibility of witnesses to a "second massacre" in Dili, in November 1991. Referring to a claim by Australia's Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, that a second round of killings did not happen, he said: "How does he know? Is he here, with us? I know well the witnesses. They have spoken the truth."

A massacre, not an aberration

Asked about Foreign Minister Evans' assertion that the Dili massacre on 12 November 1991 was an 'aberration', Bishop Belo said:

"Unfortunately, I do not have a good impression of this Mr Evans because of the extraordinary statements he makes. This was not an incident. It was a real massacre. It was well-prepared. It was a deliberate operation that was designed to teach us a lesson. To say otherwise is to deny the evidence of our eyes."

Asked whether there was a second massacre of the wounded, Belo said:

"There were certainly more killings, but I don't know how many. Some of the killings happened near my house. When I visited the hospital at 11am on the day of the first massacre, 12 November, there were hundreds of wounded. When I came back the next day, there were only 90. Witnesses of the killings have told me the killings of the wounded began at 8 o'clock that night and that most of the deaths occurred between two and three in the morning of the 13th when the lights suddenly went down in the city. I don't know what happened to these people. Maybe they were put into the sea. I told all I knew to the commission of inquiry sent by Jakarta but they weren't interested."

Belo accuses Evans of lying

When Belo was reminded by Pilger that Gareth Evans had cast doubt on the veracity of the witnesses to these later killings, Belo's reply was specific:

"It is they who are lying. This is more hypocrisy and attempts to cover the truth for economic reasons."

Bishop took over as head of the East Timor church in 1983, after Mgr Martinho da Costa Lopes was forced to



Bishop Ximenes Belo
 Photo: Hugh O'Shaughnessy

retire and leave the country because of his outspokenness on human rights abuses. Belo had been ordained in Portugal as a priest only three years earlier, in 1980, and was not in East Timor at the time of the invasion. At the time, his appointment to head the Church was resented by the local priests who had not been consulted on the choice and they refused to attend his inauguration. It was apparently the hope of the army and the Vatican's representative in Jakarta that Belo would be more pliable but it was not long before this young priest began, like his predecessor, to condemn the activities of the Indonesian occupiers.

Two attempts on Belo's life

The Bishop told Pilger that there have been two attempts on his life:

"The first time they tried was in 1989. I had just written to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Soon after that, they prepared an ambush for me but I got away. In 1991, they tried again when I went to the site of a massacre near Viqueque, where more than a thousand people were killed in 1983. It was after I had seen the graves, the evidence of the massacre, that they tried again. But they were unsuccessful and I escaped. Yes there is pressure on me all the time."

Asked about recent British Foreign Office claims that "it was wrong to suggest that the widespread abuse of human rights still persist in East Timor", Belo said: "I cannot believe they mean that. They must *know* it's not true. It has

never been worse here. There are more restrictions than ever before. No one can speak. No one can demonstrate. People disappear.... For the ordinary people, there is no freedom, only a continuing nightmare."

UN responds, at last

In March 1989, he wrote to then UN Secretary-General, Peres de Cuellar, calling for help from the international body for a referendum in East Timor. Stressing that the people of East Timor had never been consulted on their status, Bishop Belo wrote: "We are dying as a people and a nation."

The Bishop revealed in the interview with Pilger that only the other day, he received a reply from the current Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In it he wrote: "The United Nations is committed to make every effort for a final, just and comprehensive internationally-acceptable solution."

Asked how he felt about the reply, Belo said: "At least after five years, I got a reply." As Pilger comments, although containing nothing new, the reply itself is part of the momentum that is now building up on East Timor.

More films, please

When Pilger asked him what outsiders could do, Belo's answer was brief and to the point:

"More films please, more conferences, more letters... keep speaking, everyone must keep speaking about us."

Five demonstrators sentenced

Four young East Timorese who unfurled banners in front of visiting foreign journalists in April this year and staged a brief demonstration for their benefit, have been tried and imprisoned for twenty months each.

Pantaleao Amaral, 18 years old, **Isaac Soares**, 22, **Miguel de Deus**, 20 and **Rosalino dos Santos**, 20 were all charged under Article 154 of the Criminal Code for spreading hatred towards the government. They will have to spend twenty months in prison.

None of the men was accompanied by lawyers either during their interrogation or at the time of their trial, in grave violation of the Procedural Code.

The first three defendants told the court they had unfurled the banners in front of foreign journalists because they wanted their protest to be heard abroad.

The fourth man, **Rosalino**, a street trader, who was tried separately, announced after being sentenced that he refused to accept the verdict. He too said he had urged his colleagues to unfurl anti-government banners in the hope of attracting foreign support for East Timor's independence. He also said that he was a member of UJETIL, (*Juventude des Estudantes Timor Leste*), the youth organisation of the East Timorese party, Fretilin.

The last to be tried and sentenced was **Pedro de Fatima**, 24, who was described as the "mastermind".

Six long-term prisoners moved to Semarang

Six East Timorese activists who are now serving long prison sentences were suddenly moved from Becora Prison, Dili to Central Java in May without their families being notified. They are now being held at Kedungpane Prison in Semarang. This is the prison to which Xanana Gusmao was initially transferred in September last year. Alarmed by conditions there where only prisoners with criminal convictions are held, Xanana staged a hunger strike to secure his transfer to Cipinang in Jakarta.

The sudden transfer of the six occurred shortly before the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions was scheduled to visit Dili. He would certainly have wanted to interview these men. It is not clear whether he was able to visit them at their new place of detention. Shortly before their transfer, the prisoners staged a protest at Becora Prison when foreign journalists were allowed into the building.

The six prisoners are: **Gregorio de Cunha Saldanha**, serving a life sentence; **Francisco Miranda Branco**, serving a 15-year sentence, **Saturnino Belo**, serving ten years; **Jacinto das Neves Raimundo Alves**, also serving ten years; **Juvenio de Jesus Martins**, serving 6 years and ten months; and **Filomeno da Silva Pereira**, serving five years and eight months.

Their transfer to a prison outside East Timor is in violation of the 1954 Geneva Convention which prohibits the forcible removal of nationals from an occupied territory.

UN Special Rapporteur visits Dili

The UN Special Rapporteur for Extrajudicial, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, **Badre Waly Ndiaya** of Senegal, visited East Timor for a week in July. The visit is the only move so far in implementation of the resolution of the UN Human Rights Commission in March 1993 requiring Indonesia to allow UN special rapporteurs and working groups to visit East Timor for purposes of investigation.

The report will be a public document of the Human

Rights Commission, unlike that of **Amos Wako** who visited East Timor in 1992 and 1993 as the special envoy of the UN Secretary-General. Wako's report has never been made public; its contents are known only to the Indonesians.

Ndiaya told the press in Jakarta that his purpose was "to monitor the way the government has promoted the right to life... and to see whether the highest international standards of fair trial and the limitations on the use of the death penalty have been respected". He said he had been requested by the chairman of the UN Human Rights Commission to obtain information on the Santa Cruz massacre and to investigate the situation of those who have disappeared since then. [*Jakarta Post*, 13.7.1994]

It is understood that his purpose is not to mount his own investigation of the massacre but to look closely at the Indonesian investigations. He will discover for instance that none of the 18 bodies buried at Hera cemetery was identified before burial (the 19th was identified as that of **Kamal Bamadhaj**) nor were any autopsies carried out. His report, expected for next February's meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission, could make interesting reading.

While in Dili, he met **Bishop Belo**, the governor and senior army and police officials. He also visited prisoners being held at Becora Prison. While in Jakarta, before going to Dili, he had a meeting with imprisoned resistance leader, **Xanana Gusmao**. Nothing was said about whether he was able to meet the six prisoners who were so abruptly transferred from Becora Prison to Semarang.

Although he said he had full access to the East Timorese, "whether or not the people had full access to me is a different issue". The Special Rapporteur said he had not received certain documents he had requested from the Indonesian authorities to complete his assessment.

While in Jakarta, the Special Rapporteur also met members of the recently-formed Joint Committee on East Timor which is composed of lawyers from the Legal Aid Institute, human rights activists and representatives of the Council of Churches and the Bishops Conference.

Dili newspaper in trouble?

The Dili newspaper *Suara Timor Timur* [Voice of East Timor] is coming under attack from the local military for its reporting of the 14 July incident. In a malicious act of vandalism, deputy editor **Agus Johanes**' car was set ablaze after unknown persons had doused it with gasoline. [*AP*, 23.7.1994]

In its edition on Saturday, 16 July, two days after the police attacked university students, the paper published a column asking, "What sins have the people of the East Timorese committed? What have we done to keep having to spill our blood? What have we done, for some people to stab us in our hearts and leave us in a state of utter confusion, the target of yet more hostility?"

In a separate column on the same day, the paper lamented the fact that all issues in East Timor were being dealt with in accordance with the security approach.

An Indonesian journalist who was in East Timor after the 14 July incident described graphically the despondence and frustration of people there. He told TAPOL that even committed pro-integrationists have changed their views because of recent developments.

East Timor at the UN Decolonisation Committee

The UN Special Committee on Decolonisation again had East Timor on its agenda this year and heard petitions in favour of East Timor's right to self-determination from more than twenty individuals and organisations.

There were newcomers among the petitioners: a US Congresswoman, Nita Lowry [Dem. New York], the first member of the US Congress to appear before the Committee on East Timor's behalf; a representative of the Asia-Pacific Coalition on East Timor set up at the Manila conference on East Timor in June; a new group in Manila, Philippines Solidarity for East Timor and Indonesia; the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples' Organisation (UNPO); and a recently established group in Italy, the Coordination Group for Solidarity with East Timor.

Of particular interest was a petition by Maureen Tolfree, a British woman whose brother, Brian Peters, was one of five television newsmen killed by Indonesian troops in Balibo on 16 October 1975. Her petition is reported in a separate item.

The others to appear were the CNRM, UDT and Fretilin, Amnesty International, Human Right Watch/Asia,

International Platform of Jurists for East Timor, Bishop Alosius Soma of Japan, the Japan Free East Timor Coalition, Pax Christi International, International League for Human Rights, Agir Pour Timor, British Coalition for East Timor, Catholic Institute for International Relations, East Timor Alert Network/Canada, East Timor Action Network/US, the Hobart East Timor Committee and Parliamentarians for East Timor. Four Portuguese MPs also made petitions. For the first time in years, TAPOL was unable to submit a petition because of ill-health.

Another new feature was that the Indonesians, who always insist that the Committee has no right to discuss the issue, decided this year to have pro-integration East Timorese appear. These were Xavier Amaral, first president of Fretilin who has now become a regular spokesman for Indonesia, Paulino Gama, one-time Falintil fighter who surrendered to the Indonesians after attempting a coup and an attempt on the life of Xanana, and José Martins of the insignificant KOTA party who once defected from the Indonesian side but then changed sides again.

Sister of murdered newsman speaks at UN

Nearly nineteen years after her brother, a television cameraman, was murdered by Indonesian troops in Balibo, East Timor, on 16 October 1975, Maureen Tolfree has spoken at the UN about the tragedy that befell her brother and her efforts to find out what happened.

Brian Peters, who emigrated to Australia several years before his death, was on assignment for Australia's Channel Nine to monitor Indonesian army incursions into East Timor, along with four other TV journalists, when they were murdered. The hut they were operating from was clearly marked with the word AUSTRALIA and when the troops approached them, they all had their hands up and were shouting, 'Journalists, journalists'.

Until now, only Shirley Shackleton, the widow of Greg, another of the journalists murdered, has campaigned persistently on behalf of her husband and also for the cause of East Timor. Maureen Tolfree who lives in Bristol, was totally unaware of any activity on behalf of East Timor in the UK until she heard of an action in her home town in March this year, protesting against the Hawks deal with Indonesia. Since making contact with the organiser and with solidarity groups, including TAPOL, she has renewed her efforts to find out how her brother was killed and is seeking to persuade the British government to press for a full inquiry into the tragedy.

Petition to the UN

On 13 July, along with more than twenty solidarity groups from around the world, Maureen spoke at the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation meeting at the UN headquarters in New York. She told the Committee that after hearing of her brother's death, she went to Australia in late November 1975 but discovered nothing about what had happened. On her way home via Jakarta, she wanted to

make a stop-over in Jakarta but while she was in the airport waiting for permission to enter, she received a phone-call from an official of the British or Australian embassy advising her to continue her journey home as they "could not guarantee my safety".

Efforts to seek help from the British Foreign Office got nowhere. All she was told by her MP, Tony Benn, was that her brother's remains were unidentifiable and that all five journalists had been buried in Indonesia. (The British government had meanwhile been approached separately by the British Campaign for an Independent East Timor who were told that the relatives of Brian Peters and another of the journalists who had British nationality, Malcolm Rennie, did not wish to pursue the matter.)

Maureen explained that she abandoned further efforts because the issue was so upsetting to her and to her father who suffered three heart attacks between the time of Brian's murder and his own death in 1990.

Concluding her very emotional statement, Maureen said:

"What do I want? I want you to call for the people of East Timor to have an internationally-supervised referendum on their future. I also want governments, including my own, to stop lying about East Timor. I want to know why my brother and his colleagues are buried in Jakarta. I want their bodies to be re-buried in East Timor or Australia, as their surviving relatives want.

"I want a properly conducted investigation into the deaths of the five journalists. But most of all, I want everything

possible to be done for the people of East Timor. I'm one hundred per cent sure that that is what Brian would have wanted if he had not been murdered."

Foreign Office misinforms

For several months, Maureen Tolfree has been seeking the help of MPs to have an investigation about her brother's death. A Foreign official has now written to her and also to her former MP, Tony Benn, which sets out to discourage any examination of the murders, and alleges that "the house in which your brother and other members of the crew were sheltering was caught in heavy crossfire between the forces of the three internal warring parties of East Timor (UDT, Apodeti and Fretili) and set on fire". This can only be taken as an attempt by the British government to deflect attention from the real culprits, forces of the Indonesian army.

Lord Avebury has responded to this subterfuge in a letter to Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary:

Why are you so anxious to deny the role of Indonesian forces in the Balibo murders, acknowledged by every single authority?...

The reason why you would dissuade anybody from re-opening the issue today is that Britain sells Indonesia arms worth several hundred million pounds and that Indonesia is one of our best trading partners. We still seek to charge and try Nazi war criminals after a much longer interval and the idea that murder can be brushed under the carpet after 18 or 19 years is not to be found in our criminal justice system. It is indeed despicable that we tried to hush up the murders of British citizens and protect the war criminal responsible for this atrocity and that we continue to discourage efforts to reach the truth.

There may be very little hope of persuading you or your Government as a whole to change your minds on this issue but you should be left in no doubt of the fact that many people are still extremely unhappy about what they consider to be a dishonourable episode in our history.



Brian Peters

US Senate bans light arms sales to Indonesia

The US Senate has unanimously banned light arms sales to Indonesia until there is "significant progress made on human rights in East Timor". This means "complying with the UN Human Rights Commission resolution of 1993, a significant reduction in Indonesian troop presence in East Timor and Indonesia "participating constructively in the UN Secretary General's efforts to resolve the status of East Timor". Another amendment adopted would provide \$250,000 to support human rights groups in Indonesia and another \$250,000 to support environmental groups.

Senator Feingold, who has spearheaded moves in the Senate to ban arms sales to Indonesia, said: "This is a significant victory for those of us who are working to establish a firm linkage between US arms sales and the promotion of human rights around the world. This sends a clear message to the leaders of Indonesia that we will not be associated with or tolerate their campaign of repression against the people of East Timor."

For the first time, the Senate has enacted legislation conditioning arms sales to Indonesia. Although the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee approved a similar measure in 1993, the bill containing the amendment never made it to the Senate floor. Since 1992, Congress has banned US

military aid to Indonesia under the International Military and Educational Training programme.

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One argument of the provincial authorities is that the Court fixed compensation higher than the Rp10,000 demanded by the peasants. But this only signifies that the Court took account of the *actual value* of the land, not its diminished value because of its disputed status.

The Catholic activist, Pastor Mangunwijaya, who was in the forefront of solidarity actions in favour of the Kedung Ombo peasants, has stressed that the amount granted will never compensate for the years of privation and stress the peasants suffered from the moment plans for the dam began to affect their lives in 1984. [Bernas, 13.7.1994]

As for the peasants themselves, the prospect of obtaining large sums of money has not caused them to jump for joy. They are living precariously on land perched close to the dam waters which gives them little sense of security, in impoverished hovels that are a far cry from the villages that they used to inhabit before the waters submerged their homes. As one peasant told a reporter: "All we want is a decent place to live, not money." [Bernas, 12.7.1994]

BOOK REVIEW

Geoffrey C. Gunn, "A Critical View of Western Journalism and Scholarship on East Timor", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Manila, 270 pages.

I first came across the name of the author while on a trip to Portugal in April this year when I spotted a Reuters report in a Portuguese newspaper that an Australian lecturer had been dismissed from the University of Brunei and ordered to leave the country. He was being expelled for offending Indonesian sensitivities as he had written an article about East Timor which was very critical of Indonesia and was published in a newspaper in another ASEAN country.

Gunn was later interested to hear of the Portuguese press report as no newspaper in Australia had bothered to mention his expulsion, "which only goes to prove what I am trying to say in my book", he told me. Incidentally, while Brunei had conformed with ASEAN solidarity in disallowing any disloyalty within its realm to a co-member, it was *The Nation* in Bangkok that, yet again, had shown its unwillingness to toe the ASEAN line. The daily has "offended" Jakarta on quite a number of occasions, not only for its reporting about East Timor but also for publishing uncomplimentary reports about Aceh.

Gunn's impressive study sets out to examine the way in which comment and in particular media reporting in Australia has been largely determined by "the political consensus in Canberra, Washington and Tokyo that has, in the final analysis, forced a closure on East Timor, set the limits of possible debate and forced the real issues off the agenda".

The key periods of the East Timor tragedy, the pre-invasion period, the invasion, the post-invasion period and the Dili massacre, are set forth in some detail, alongside the coverage in the media. There is a clearly perceptible toning down of attitudes, with outrage and criticism giving way to acceptance of the Australian official line, whatever the party in power. In terms of the country's foreign policy requirements, East Timor is treated as an Australian-Indonesian issue, not to be multilateralised but to be handled in such a way as not to challenge the fundamental assumptions of "good relations" between Canberra and Jakarta.

Gunn's analysis is based on the model identified by Noam Chomsky in his seminal work on "manufacturing consent" which seeks to expose the media's selective presentation of newsflow. In particular, in the case of East Timor, this has meant that, whatever the event or the latest outrage, the fundamental issue - that of self-determination and the illegality of Indonesia's very presence in East Timor - is not considered as worth mentioning.

The question of media 'flak' is a key element. Hence, in the case of the Santa Cruz massacre, after an initial horror at the event, the targets begin to be re-defined. They are not the Indonesian military who are virtually cleared on the grounds that the massacre was just the result of an 'aberration', but the Portuguese (whose planned MPs' mission was aborted), the resistance and, in Australia, the protesters.

Of course, the Australian media has produced a substantial body of reporting that has been extremely unfavourable to Jakarta. After all, six Australian journalists (including British and New Zealand nationals) lost their lives for trying to monitor the early stages of the Indonesian aggression. And there are Australian journalists a-plenty who know enough about the corrupt Suharto regime to subject it to very critical scrutiny. Indeed it was an article about the Suharto family wealth by David Jenkins published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in April 1986 that all but scuppered Canberra-Jakarta relations.

But ultimately, at every stage, it is Canberra's belief that the country's political and economic priorities are directed towards its reliance on an "Asia link" with the Indonesian dictatorship at the heart. The latest instance is this month's visit by Paul Keating to Jakarta to take part in a massive trade promotional programme, less than a week after Suharto had shut down three major weeklies. Keating could not avoid expressing his "regret" at the bans but there was no way he would have heeded calls for him to postpone his visit until the bans were lifted, as some of the protesters in Jakarta were hoping.

Gunn's analysis helps us to consider the press coverage in our own country. Considering the generally low priority given to Indonesia in any of the major London papers, the media in the UK has recently published an extraordinarily helpful flow of articles about East Timor - shortly after the Dili massacre, and then this year, with the many articles that preceded and followed the showing of John Pilger's *Death of a Nation*. The weekly, *News Statesman and Society*, has published more than half a dozen articles on East Timor since March, becoming perhaps the best campaigning vehicle worldwide on the issue. Yet in *The Independent*, a substantial report published on 15 July on the crackdown on Dili university students when three people were killed is followed the day after by a tiny foreign news brief, headed "Killings denied", the source being [unnamed] "diplomats" who are described as being "sceptical of such reports". The assumption of such reporting is that diplomats in Jakarta who can only have gleaned their information from military sources are more reliable than the many East Timorese sources that have affirmed the death toll.

The only serious blemish in this work is the shoddy editing. Typographical errors abound and in one or two places, even the date given for the Dili massacre is wrong and Kamal Bamadhaj's name is misspelt. This does not however detract from the fact that this book is a very important addition to the steadily growing literature on East Timor.

Carmel Budiardjo

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