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## The West's 'dirty wink'

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*In 1975 Indonesia invaded East Timor. Like Saddam's attack on Kuwait, the occupation was declared by the UN to be illegal. But no action ever followed. In the last 18 years a third of the East Timorese population has been killed, while Western governments have remained silent, or, like Britain, have sold arms worth hundreds of millions to Indonesia...*

Ghost gum trees rose out of tall grass; then without notice this changed to a forest of dead, petrified shapes and black needles through which skeins of fine white sand drifted like mist. Such extraordinary landscape reminded me of parts of central Vietnam, where the Americans dropped ladders of bombs and huge quantities of chemical defoliants, poisoning the soil and food chain and radically altering the environment. In East Timor this is known as the 'dead earth'.

It is an area whose former inhabitants are either dead or 'relocated'. You come upon these places on the plateaux and in the ravines of the Matabian mountains, in the east of the island, where the Indonesian pilots in their low-flying US and British fighter aircraft have had a bonanza. "They made the rocks turn white," said a man who lived here and survived. On the rim of these places, which lie like patches of scar tissue all over the body of East Timor, are the crosses.

There are great black crosses etched against the sky and crosses on peaks, crosses in tiers on the hillsides, crosses beside the roads. In East Timor they litter the earth and crowd the eye. Walk into the scrub and they are there, always, it seems, on the edge, a riverbank, an escarpment.

The inscriptions on some are normal: those of generations departed in proper time and sequence. But look at the dates of these normal ones, and you see that they are prior to 1975, when proper time and sequence ended. Then look at the dates on most of them, and they reveal the extinction of whole families, wiped out in the space of a year, a month, a day. 'RIP. Mendonca, Crismina, 7.6.77 . . . Mendonca, Filismina, 7.6.77 . . . Mendonca, Adalino, 7.6.77 . . . Mendonca, Alisa, 7.6.77 . . . Mendonca, Rosa, 7.6.77 . . . Mendonca, Anita, 7.6.77 . . .'

I had with me a hand-drawn map showing the site of a mass grave where some of those murdered in the 1991 massacre of 250 people in Dili, the capital, had been dumped; I had no idea that much of the country was a mass grave, marked by paths that end abruptly, and fields inexplicably bulldozed, and earth inexplicably covered with tarmac; and by the legions of crosses that march all the way from Tata Mai Lau, the highest peak, 10,000 feet above sea level, down to Lake Tacitolu where a Calvary line of crosses looks across to where the Pope said mass in 1989 in full view of a crescent of hard salt sand beneath which lie, say local people, countless human remains.

What has happened in East Timor is one of the world's great secrets. "Does anyone know where East Timor is?" asked Alan Clark, the former Defence Minister, on Channel 4 not long ago. When I repeated this to him recently, he said, "I don't really fly my mind much with what one set of foreigners is doing to another." It was a typically blunt Clark riposte, which itself was instructive, for it allowed a glimpse of how the unthinkable was normalised: how decisions taken at great remove in distance and culture had unseen and devastating effects on whole nations of people, albeit foreigners.

East Timor, half of an island 300 miles north of Australia, was colonised by Portugal 450 years ago. The Portuguese partly Latinised and insulated the territory from the upheavals of the western half of Timor, which was part of the Dutch East Indies that became Indonesia in 1949. In 1974, the old Salazarist order in Lisbon was swept aside by the 'Carnation Revolution' and Europe's last great empire began to disintegrate virtually overnight. With the Portuguese preoccupied by events at home, the Indonesian military dictatorship of General Suharto invaded East Timor in december 1975, and have illegally and brutally occupied it ever since. The result: some 200,000 Timorese dead, or a third of the population.

Few places on the planet may seem more remote than East Timor. Yet none has been as defiled and abused by murderous forces and as abandoned by the 'international community', whose leaders are complicit in one of the great unrecognised crimes of the 20th century. I write that carefully: Not even Pol Pot succeeded in killing, proportionately, as many Cambodians as the Indonesian generals have killed East Timorese.

Britain's role is also little-known. As the minister responsible for 'defence procurement' under Margaret Thatcher and John Major, Alan Clark approved a sale of ground attack aircraft to Indonesia, valued at more than pounds 500 million. At the time he told Parliament, "We do not allow the export of arms and equipment likely to be used for oppressive purposes against civilians." When I asked him how this worked, he explained that it applied to "police-type equipment (such as) riot guns, CS gas and anti-personnel stuff", but that "once you get into military equipment, you're into a different category of decision".

I said, "Hawk low-flying attack aircraft are very effective at policing people on the ground." He replied, "No, they're not . . . aircraft are used in the context of a civil war. Now depending on which side you support in the civil war, you tend to regard the other people as being oppressed or repressed."

"But," I said, "East Timor isn't a civil war. This is an illegal occupation, which the British Government acknowledges to be an illegal occupation."

"I'm not into that. I don't know anything about that."

"Well you were the minister."

"Yeah, but I'm not interested in illegal occupations or anything like that . . . I mean you call it illegal . . ."

"No, the United Nations does."

I said ministers had often talked about receiving guarantees from the Indonesians that the Hawks would not be used in East Timor.

"Well, I never asked for a guarantee. That must have been something that the Foreign Office did . . . a guarantee is worthless from any government as far as I'm concerned."

When Jonathan Aitken, who today has Alan Clark's job at the Ministry of Defence, was asked in Parliament: "How many dead or tortured East Timorese are acceptable to the Government in exchange for a defence contract with Indonesia?" he replied, "That is a ridiculous question." But of course it was not.

Eyewitnesses have now described in detail Hawk aircraft attacking civilian areas. Jose Gusmao, presently exiled in Australia, said, "I watched a Hawk attack on a village in the mountains. It used its machine-guns and dropped incendiary bombs. The Hawk is quite different from the American planes; it has a particular nose. You can tell it anywhere."

Other eyewitnesses, who cannot be identified, spoke about the distinctive noise made by the Hawks, and of people being trapped in rockfalls during bombardment.

"I first saw the Hawks in 1984," said Jose Amorin. "They were standing at the airport at Baucau, where they are based. They are a small aircraft, not at all like the OV-10 Bronco and the Skyhawk from the US. They are perfect for moving in and out of the mountains. They have a terrible sound when they are coming in to bomb, like a voice wailing. We immediately go to the caves, into the deepest ones, because their bombs are so powerful. They fly in low . . . and attack civilians, because the people hiding in the mountains are civilians. Four of my cousins were killed in Hawk attacks near Los Palos. Most people in East Timor know about the British Hawks. Why doesn't the British Government send a fact-finding mission and ask the people?"

The British connection with the horrors of East Timor is a scandal arguably as great, if not greater, than any - including the Scott Inquiry - currently appearing on the front pages. Shortly before the massacre in the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, on November 12, 1991, Douglas Hurd urged the EC to "cut aid to countries that violate human rights". Shortly after the massacre the British Government increased its aid to the Suharto regime to pounds 81 million, a rise of 250 per cent. The Minister for Overseas Aid, Baroness Chalker, claimed in Parliament that this was "helping the poor in Indonesia". In fact, a large proportion of all British aid to Indonesia is made up of Aid for Trade Provisions (ATP); and much of this is the supply of weapons: British Aerospace, maker of Hawk aircraft, is among the British weapons companies helping Indonesia's poor. (In January last year, the Armed Services Minister, Archie Hamilton, claimed that the sale of Hawks was "providing jobs". British Aerospace has since laid off 4,000 workers.)

The British war industry has provided a vital prop for the Suharto dictatorship since 1978, when Foreign Secretary David Owen dismissed estimates of East Timor-ese dead as "exaggerated" and sold the Indonesian generals eight Hawk aircraft. Britain has since sold, or agreed to sell, a further 40 Hawks. These are in addition to Wasp helicopters, Sea Wolf and Rapier SAM missiles, Tribal Class frigates, battlefield communications systems, seabed mine disposal equipment, Saladin, Saracen and Fernet armoured vehicles, a fully-equipped Institute of Technology for the Indonesian army and training for Indonesian officers in Britain. In 1992, Margaret Thatcher received an Indonesian award for 'helping technology'. She said, "I am proud to be one of you."

James Dunn, the former Australian consul in East Timor and adviser to the Australian parliament, has made a study of census statistics since the Indonesians invaded. "Before the invasion," he told me, "East Timor had a population of 688,000, which was growing at just on 2 per cent per annum. Assuming it didn't grow any faster, the population today ought to be 980,000 or more, almost a million people. If you look at the recent Indonesian census, the Timorese population is probably 650,000. That means it's actually less than it was 18 years ago. I don't think there is any case in post-World War Two history where such a decline of population has occurred in these circumstances. It's incredible; worse than Cambodia and Ethiopia."

Where are all these missing Timorese? The estimate of 200,000 dead was first made in 1983 by the head of the Roman Catholic Church in East Timor. A report last month by an Australian parliamentary committee referred to 'at least' 200,000 deaths.

How they died has been Indonesia's and its allies' great secret. Western intelligence has documented the unfolding of the genocide since the first Indonesian paratroopers landed in the capital, Dili, on December 7, 1975 - less than two months after two Australian television crews were murdered by the Indonesian military, leaving just one foreign reporter, Roger East, to witness the invasion. He became the sixth journalist to die there, shot through the head with his hands tied behind his back, his body thrown into the sea.

As a result, in the age of television, few images and reported words have reached the outside world. There was just one radio voice at the time of the invasion, picked up in Darwin, Australia, 300 miles to the south, rising and falling in the static. "The soldiers are killing indiscriminately," it said. "Women and children are being shot in the streets. We are all going to be killed. I repeat, we are all going to be killed . . . This is an appeal for international help. This is an SOS. We appeal to the Australian people. Please help us . . ."

No help came. According to the historian John Taylor, people were subjected to 'systematic killing, gratuitous violence and primitive plunder'. The Bishop of Dili, Costa Lopez, said, "The soldiers who landed started killing everyone they could find. There were many dead bodies in the street - all we could see were the soldiers killing, killing, killing."

At 2pm on December 9, 59 men were brought on to the wharf at Dili harbour and shot one by one, with the crowd ordered to count. The victims were forced to stand on the edge of the pier facing the sea, so that as they were shot their bodies fell into the water. Earlier in the day, women and children had been executed in a similar way. An eyewitness reported, "The Indonesians tore the crying children from their mothers and passed them back to the crowd. The women were shot one by one, with the onlookers being ordered by the Indonesians to count."

As in Pol Pot's Cambodia, the first to die were often minorities. The Chinese population was singled out. An eyewitness described how he and others were ordered to "tie the bodies (of the Chinese) to iron poles, attach bricks and throw the bodies in the sea". On the north-west coast, the Chinese population was decimated. The killing of whole families appeared at first to be systematic, then arbitrary. Soldiers were described swinging infants in the air and smashing their heads on rocks, with an officer explaining, "When you clean the field, don't you kill all the snakes, the small and large alike?" 'Indonesian troops,'

wrote John Taylor, 'had been given orders to crush all opposition ruthlessly, and were told they were fighting communists in the cause of Jihad (holy war).'

Western governments knew in advance details of virtually every move made by Indonesia. The CIA and other US agencies intercepted Indonesia's military and intelligence communications at a top secret base run by the Australian Defence Signals Directorate (DSD) near Darwin. The information gathered was shared under treaty arrangements with MI6. Moreover, leaked diplomatic cables from Jakarta, notably those sent in 1975 by the Australian Ambassador Richard Woolcott, showed the extent of Western complicity in the Suharto regime's plans to take over the Portuguese colony.

Four months before the invasion, Ambassador Woolcott cabled his government that General Benny Murdani, who led the invasion, had 'assured' him that when Indonesia decided to launch a full-scale invasion, Australia would be told in advance.

In a remarkable cable sent to Canberra in August 1975, Woolcott argued Indonesia's case and how Australian public opinion might be 'assisted'. He proposed that "(we) leave events to take their course . . . and act in a way which would be designed to minimise the public impact in Australia and show private understanding to Indonesia of their problems." He added, "We do not want to become apologists for Indonesia. I know I am recommending a pragmatic rather than a principled stand but that is what national interest and foreign policy is all about . . ."

There was not a word of concern for the interests or the fate of the East Timorese, who were, it was apparent, expendable.

Sir John Archibald Ford, the British Ambassador, recommended to the Foreign Office that it was in Britain's interests that Indonesia should "absorb the territory as soon and as unobtrusively as possible". The US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, having recently watched US power and his own ambitions humiliated in the 'fall' of Saigon, indicated to Jakarta that the US would not object to the invasion. Kissinger and President Ford arrived in Jakarta on December 5, 1975, on a visit which a State Department official described to reporters as 'the big wink'. Two days later, as Air Force One climbed out of Indonesian airspace, the bloodbath in East Timor began.

On his return to Washington, Kissinger sought to justify continuing to supply them by making the victim the aggressor. At a meeting with senior State Department officials, he asked, "Can't we construe (East Timor as) a communist government in the middle of Indonesia as self defence?"

Told that this would not work, Kissinger gave orders that he wanted arms shipments 'stopped quietly', but secretly 'started again' the following month. In fact, as the killing increased, US arms shipments doubled. According to the Centre for Defence Information in Washington, had it not been for the supply of Western arms to Indonesia, the East Timorese resistance movement, Fretilin, might have beaten off the Indonesians.

Five days after the invasion, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution that 'strongly deplore(d)' Indonesia's aggression and called on it to withdraw its troops 'without delay'. The governments of the US, Britain, Australia, Germany and France abstained. Japan, the biggest investor in Indonesia, voted against the resolution. Ten days later, as Western intelligence agencies informed their governments of the scale of the massacres, the Western powers reluctantly supported a Security Council resolution that unanimously called on 'all States to respect the territorial integrity of East Timor'.

The Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, dispatched an envoy to East Timor, who was so restricted by the Indonesian military that his visit was worthless. The Portuguese offered the UN a warship in which to take the envoy to a Fretilin-held part of the island. 'The Indonesians,' signalled the CIA, 'are considering whether to sink this vessel . . .'

This was enough to frighten away the UN. In striking contrast to action taken against Iraq in 1991, neither the Secretary-General nor the Western powers uttered a word in condemnation of Indonesia for failing to comply with a Security Council resolution, and for violating almost every human rights provision in the UN Charter.

On the contrary, in a secret cable to Kissinger on January 23, 1976, the Ambassador to the UN, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, boasted about the "considerable progress" he had made in blocking UN action on East Timor. Later, Moynihan wrote, 'The Department of State desired that the UN prove utterly ineffective. This task was given to me and I carried it forward with no inconsiderable success.'

Since 1949, when Indonesia won its independence from the Dutch, its 'potential' as an 'investors' paradise' has been an article of faith in the West. "With its 100 million people, and its 300-mile arc of islands," declared Richard Nixon, "Indonesia contains the region's richest hoard of natural resources (and is) the biggest prize in South East Asia." Indeed, in the seabed off Timor lies one of the world's great oil and gas fields.

In the bloody events that brought Suharto and the generals to power in the mid-Sixties, estimates of the number killed range from 300,000 to almost a million, most of them landless peasants accused of being members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). The then US Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, said that America was prepared to back a "major military campaign against the PKI". This was passed on to the generals by the US ambassador in Jakarta who told them that Washington "is sympathetic with, and admiring of, what the army is doing". In 1990 a former US official in Jakarta disclosed that he had spent two years drawing up a 'hit list' for the generals. The bloodshed of Suharto's coup almost 30 years ago was a precursor of the genocide in East Timor.

Thereafter, events proceeded with an unshakeable, terrible logic. In 1974, after Portugal decided to leave its colony, the prime minister of Australia, Gough Whitlam, met Suharto and told him that East Timor was "economically unviable" to be independent and should become part of Indonesia.

As the fate of the Timorese was being decided by others, the Portuguese literally stepped aside, retreating to nearby Atauro Island, the aptly named 'Isle of Goats'. The infant independence movement was left to decolonise itself and to defend the nation against one of the largest military powers in Asia.

Almost a year after the invasion, Gough Whitlam's successor, Malcolm Fraser, flew to Jakarta. He said his government now "acknowledged the merger", but "only for purely humanitarian reasons". Fraser was accompanied by the managing director of BHP, Australia's biggest corporation. BHP had recently acquired a controlling share in the Woodside-Burmah company, which had been drilling for oil on and offshore East Timor - a country recently dismissed as 'economically unviable'.

Other Western governments vied with each other to 'sympathise with Indonesia's problems' by selling Jakarta arms - which, not surprisingly, were used in East Timor. When Foreign Secretary David Owen signed the first deal with Indonesia for Hawk aircraft, he said that not only were the estimates of the killings "exaggerated", but that "the scale of fighting . . . has been greatly reduced".

The opposite was true. The genocide was then at its height. Eyewitnesses to the onslaughts in East Timor spoke of scenes reminiscent of Dante's *Inferno*. 'After September (1978),' wrote a priest, 'the war intensified. Military aircraft were in action all day long. Hundreds of human beings die daily, their bodies left as food for the vultures. If bullets don't kill us, we die from epidemic disease; villages are being completely destroyed.'

With film director David Munro, cameraman Max Stahl and aid worker Ben Richards (the last two are pseudonyms), I filmed secretly in East Timor shortly before Christmas. By remaining most of the time in the mountains, David Munro and I avoided the main military routes. At first, people seemed absent; but they were there. From the highest crest the road plunged into a ravine that led us to a river bed, then deserted us. The four-wheel drive forded the river and heaved out on the other side, where a boy sat motionless and mute, his eyes following us.

Behind him was a village, overlooked by the now familiar rows of whitewashed slabs and black crosses. We were probably the first outsiders the people here had seen for a very long time. The diffident expressions, long cultivated for the Indonesians, changed to astonishment.

The village straddled the road, laid out like a military barracks with a parade ground and a police post at the higher end. The militia were trusted Timorese. The remoteness might have explained this; the Indonesians remain terrified of the guerrillas of Fretilin, the nationalist resistance still fighting on without any help, after 18 years. In the late Seventies and early Eighties, famine claimed many thousands of lives in such camps, as people were denied adequate land on which to grow subsistence crops. Although we saw no starvation, most people were terribly malnourished.

After we had turned south, we saw other camps where many of the faces were Javanese: the produce of a 'transmigration programme' aimed at unravelling the fabric of Timorese life and culture, and reducing the indigenous population.

A curious militarism seemed to invade all life. Traffic stopped for marching schoolgirls, jogging teachers and anthem-singing postmen ('Tanah Airku: My Fatherland Indonesia'). Signs announced the 'correct' way to live each day 'in the spirit of Moral Training'. In an Orwellian affront to the Timorese, one sign told them, 'Freedom is the right of all nations,' quoting Indonesia's own declaration of independence.

"It is the Indonesian civilisation we are bringing (to East Timor)," said the Indonesian military commander in 1982. "And it is not easy to civilise backward people." Timorese occupy few jobs other than as drivers, waitresses, broom-pushers and, of course, officials in the puppet administration. The teaching of the Timorese language is banned. "Before the invasion we lived a typical island life, very peaceful," said Abel. "People were always very hospitable to foreigners. The Portuguese mostly let us alone.

"It is difficult to describe the change since then, the darkness over us. Of 15 in my immediate family only three are left: myself, my mother and a brother who was shot and crippled. Up until 1985 or 1986, most of our people were concentrated in what they called the central control areas; we lived in concentration camps for a long, long time. Only in the last three or four years have some of us been allowed to return home, but we can be moved again at any time. Indonesians use local people to spy on the others. People usually know who the spies are and they learn to deal with it. Certain things are not to be said widely even within the family.

"You see, we have got to pretend that everything is okay. That is part of finding a way to survive for the next day. But a human body and mind have limitations and can only take so much. Once it boils over, people just come out and protest and say things which mean they will find themselves dead the next day. I suppose you can compare us to animals. When animals are put in a cage they always try to escape. In human beings it's much worse. I mean, we the people in East Timor call it the biggest prison island in the world. You must understand that. For us who live here, it's hell."

Was it Primo Levi who said that the worst moment in the Nazi death camps was the recurring fear that people would not believe him, when he told them what had happened, that they would turn away, shaking their heads? This 'radical gap' between victim and listener, as psychiatrists call it, may well be suffered en masse by the East Timorese, especially the exiled communities. 'Who knows about our country?' they ask constantly. 'Who can imagine what has happened to us?'

In 1989, Bishop Carlos Belo, head of the Catholic Church in East Timor, appealed directly to the world in a letter to the then UN Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar. 'We are dying as a people and as a nation,' he wrote. He received no reply.

Today there are probably no more than 400 guerrillas under arms, yet they ensure that four Indonesian battalions do nothing but pursue them. Moreover, they are capable of multiplying themselves within a few days, for they are the focus of a clandestine resistance that reaches into every district and has actually grown in strength over the years. In this way they of course continue to deny the fact of 'integration' with Indonesia.

Domingos is 40 and has been in the jungle since 1983. "My wife was tortured and burnt with cigarettes," he said, "She was also raped many times. In September this year (1993), the Indonesians sent the population of her village to find us. My wife came to me and said, 'I don't want to see your face because I have been suffering too much . . .' At first I thought she was rejecting me, but it was the opposite; she was asking me to fight on, to stay out of the village and not to be captured and never to surrender. She said to me, 'You get yourself killed and I shall grieve for you, but I don't want to see you in their hands. I'll never accept you giving up!' I looked at her, and she was sad. I asked her if we could live together after the war, and she said softly, 'Yes, we can.' She then walked away."

Domingos and his wife came from a village now known by the Timorese as the 'village of the widows'. During the summer of 1983, almost 300 people were massacred here. Their names appear on an extraordinary list compiled in Portuguese by the church. In a meticulous script, handwritten in Portuguese, everything is recorded: the name, age of each of the murdered, as well as the date and place of death, and the Indonesian battalion responsible.

Every time I pick up this list, I find it strangely compelling and difficult to put down, as if each death is fresh on the page. Like the ubiquitous crosses, it records the Calvary of whole families, and bears witness to genocide . . . Feliciano Gomes, aged 50, Jacob Gomes, aged 50, Antonio Gomes, aged 37, Marcelino Gomes, aged 29, Joao Gomes, aged 33, Miguel Gomes, aged 51, Domingos Gomes, aged 30 . . . Domingos Gomes, aged 2 . . . 'shot'.

So far I have counted 40 families, including many children: Kai and Olo Bosi, aged 6 and 4 . . . 'shot' . . . Marito Soares, aged one year . . . 'shot'. . . Cacildo Dos Anjos, aged 2 . . . 'shot'. There are babies as young as three months. At the end of each page, a priest has imprinted his name with a rubber stamp, which he asks 'not to be used in the interests of personal security'. In handwriting and with a typewriter whose ribbon had seen better days, he introduced the list with an eloquent, angry appeal to the world.

'To the commercial governors,' he wrote, 'Timor's petroleum smells better than Timorese blood and tears. So who will be the one to take the truth to the international community? Sometimes the press and even the international leaders give the impression that it is not human rights, justice and truth that are paramount in international relations, but the power behind a crime that has the privilege and the power of decision. It is evident that the invading government would never have committed such a crime, if it had not received favourable guarantees from governments that should have a more mature sense of international responsibility. Governments must now urgently consider our case!'

We drove into Dili in the early afternoon. It was too quiet: not the quiet of a town asleep in the sun but of a place where something cataclysmic has happened and which is not immediately evident. Fine white colonial buildings face a waterfront lined with trees and a promenade with ancient stone benches. The beauty of this seems uninterrupted. From the lighthouse, past Timor's oldest church, the Motael, to the long-arched facade of the governor's offices and the four ancient cannon, the sea shines all the way to Atauro island, where the Portuguese administration fled in 1975. Then, just beyond a marble statue of the Virgin Mary, the eye collides with rusting landing craft strewn along the beach. They have been left as a reminder of the day Indonesian marines came ashore and killed the first people they saw: women and children running down the beach, offering them food and water, as frightened people do.

Moving east, we reached Baucau in darkness. Baucau is a former Portuguese resort that once claimed a certain melancholy style and where holiday flights used to arrive from Australia. ('Come and get a whiff of the Mediterranean,' says an old Trans-Australia Airways brochure.) Today, the airport is an Indonesian air force base and Baucau a military 'company town', surrounded by barracks. On the seafloor stands the Hotel Flamboyant. We climbed the long staircase in darkness and called out. A Timorese man emerged from the shadows limping and coughing terribly. "What do you want?" he asked. "A room?" I said. He turned and struggled along a deserted colonnade and flung open two doors. There was no water, a fan that turned now and then, a mattress coated with fungus and a window without glass. He left us with our echoes. The Hotel Flamboyant was, until recently, a torture centre.

"My father was tortured several times," said Mario. "He refused to join the new administration. They took him to the police headquarters, then sent for me and my sisters and brothers to see him being tortured. They said to us that if we followed our father's example, this is what would happen to us. They beat him with iron bars at first, then they did something to him that you learn in karate. They put their hands on his stomach and manipulated his organs and intestines. Indonesian soldiers are trained in these methods. They did this to him in four sessions."

Back in Dili, an old man approached me in the hotel courtyard, asking me in a whisper to contact his family in exile in Australia. I walked away at first, then turned back and drew him into a passageway. "All my children are in Darwin," he said, "I sent them out. It cost a lot in bribes. Now I long to see them." I asked him if he had ever tried to leave. He shook his head and ran a finger across his throat. "Will you take a letter for me?" he asked. "Post it anywhere but here. They open everything. I have not had a letter for eight years." I agreed to collect the letter that evening.

The massacre of mostly young people who marched peacefully to the Santa Cruz cemetery on November 12, 1991, remains like a presence in Dili. They had set out to place flowers on the grave of a student, Sebastiao Gomes, who had been shot dead at the church two weeks earlier. When they reached the cemetery, they themselves were shot down by waiting troops, or they were stabbed or battered to death.

What was different about this massacre was that foreigners were present, including the very brave British cameraman, Max Stahl, who hid his videotape among the gravestones and has been back to East Timor to film with us. In our documentary, *Death Of A Nation*, we will show that a second, unreported massacre took place, that day and the following day.

The Australian foreign affairs minister, Gareth Evans, described the 1991 massacre as "an aberration". There is remarkable film of Evans and his Indonesian counterpart, Ali Alatas, toasting each other in champagne flying over the Timor Gap oil fields, having just signed a treaty to exploit East Timor's oil and gas. When asked about the moral basis of the treaty, he replied, "What I can say is simply that the world is a pretty unfair place." Within two months of the Dili massacre, 11 contracts were issued under the Timor Gap Treaty.

According to Professor Roger Clark, a world authority on international law at Rutgers University in the US, the Timor Gap Treaty also has a simple analogy in law. "It is acquiring stuff from a thief," he said. "If you acquire stolen property from someone who stole it, you're a receiver. The fact is that (the Indonesians) have neither historical, nor legal, nor moral claim to East Timor and its resources."

Hours before I left East Timor, I met the old man who wanted me to post a letter. After all the years of separation, he said, with tears in his eyes, he had not been able to compose his thoughts and put them on paper in time for my departure. Instead he gave me a telephone number in Darwin for Isabella, his eldest daughter. I telephoned the number when I got to Bangkok. A recorded voice said it had been disconnected.

None of these terrible events had a place in the vision of those who fought and died to free Indonesia from European colonial oppression. Their struggle for independence from the Dutch produced great popular movements for democracy and social justice. For 14 years Indonesia had one of the freest parliamentary democracies in the world. Today many Indonesians understand this and are silent out of necessity. But for how long? The slaughter in East Timor is unworthy of such a nation.

As to the future, the US has, as ever, pivotal power. A proposed Congressional action to ban arms sales represents a perceptible change in American outlook and understanding. In 1993 the UN Human Rights Commission called on Indonesia to allow international experts on torture, executions and disappearances to investigate freely in East Timor. This month, the UN Commission will summon Indonesia into its dock. There are fragments of hope, which public opinion, directed at Jakarta's sponsors and arms suppliers, can transform into real action. By all accounts, the Timorese resistance should have been wiped out years ago; but it lives on. Recent opposition has come most vociferously from the young generation, raised during Indonesian rule. It is the young who keep alive the nationalism minted in the early Seventies and its union with a spiritual, traditional love of country and kinship. It is they who bury the flags and maps and draw the subtle graffiti of a sleeping face resembling the tranquil figure in Matisse's *The Dream*, reminding the Indonesians that, whatever they do, they must one day reckon with a Timorese reawakening.

When Amelia Gusmao, wife of the resistance leader Xanana Gusmao, was forced into exile, young people materialised along her route to the airport and stood in tribute to her, then slipped away. The enduring heroism of the people of East Timor, who continue to resist the invaders even as the crosses multiply on the hillsides, is a vivid reminder of the fallibility of brute power and of the cynicism of others.



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