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Realpolitik and Resistance - The Birth Pangs of Timor Loro Sa'e -

"Peace? Why would we want peace? If the vote is for independence we'll just kill; kill everybody"
Filomeno Orai, Leader of the FPK (pro-Jakarta) militia, East Timor, September 1999.

Joel Andersson

Realpolitik and Resistance- The Birth Pangs of Timor Loro Sa'e

by

Joel Andersson

Abstract

During the turbulent times surrounding the independence of East Timor the writer of this thesis was working in Jakarta with the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees. It was in this position the writer got the idea to study the transformation of East Timor from an occupied territory within the Republic of Indonesia to an independent state, and what the main reasons were for this change to take place.

The thesis starts off by explaining East Timor's historic setting. The thesis continues by looking into the actions and policies of the big political actors such as United States of America, Australian and the UN. This is followed by a close look on the role of the East Timorese people in general and some of the leaders such as Xanana Gusmao and Jose Ramos Horta in particular.

When examining the relationship between the international communities, the independence movement and its leaders the writer uses theories developed by Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison in their study "Social Movements – a Cognitive Approach". This approach clearly shows how the leaders of the Timorese independence movement are a product of the movement and not vice versa.

<u>1. Introduction</u>	5
<u>2. Approaching the field</u>	6
<u>2.1 Initial Preparations</u>	6
<u>2.2 In Jakarta (1) - Establishing a base</u>	7
<u>3. The aim of the thesis</u>	10
<u>4. Theory</u>	12
<u>5. Literature and Method</u>	15
<u>6. Early History</u>	18
<u>6.1 The Majapahit</u>	18
<u>6.2 The Portuguese rule</u>	20
<u>7. The modern history of East Timor</u>	21
<u>7.1 The Suharto administration before Santa Cruz</u>	21
<u>7.2 The Santa Cruz Massacre</u>	24
<u>7.3 The end of the Suharto era</u>	26
<u>7.4 Development under President Habibie's administration</u>	28
<u>7.5 Towards Popular Consultation</u>	31
<u>7.6 In Jakarta (2)- Caught in the middle</u>	34
<u>7.7 The result of the ballot</u>	37
<u>7.8 UN and Timor Loro S'ae</u>	38
<u>7.9 Summary</u>	39
<u>8. The International Players</u>	41
<u>8.1 United States of America</u>	41

<u>8.2 Portugal</u>	44
<u>8.3 Australia</u>	46
<u>8.4 ASEAN</u>	48
<u>8.5 Summary</u>	49
<u>9. East Timorese Players</u>	50
<u>9.1 Bishop Belo and the role of the church</u>	50
<u>9.2 Xanana Gusmão, José Ramos Horta, and popular resistance in East Timor</u>	54
<u>9. Bringing it all together</u>	59
<u>11. References</u>	66

1. Introduction

“A writer cannot serve today those who make history; he must serve those who are subject to it.”

These were the words of Albert Camus upon accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957, and these words had a strong meaning for me while I was writing this thesis. The story of the people of East Timor is one of courage, tenacity and faith; they stood up and set their own course of history, and this thesis aim to show how the road to an independent Timor Loro S'ae (East Timor) was laid.

The area of East Timor is 11,728 sq. km; the length of the territory is 265 km and its width is 92 km. East Timor is the eastern part of the island of Timor, which belongs to the Sunda group of islands in the Indonesian archipelago. Timor is situated about 500 kilometres north of the Australian town of Darwin. It can be reached by aeroplane from Jakarta by a three-hour flight. Dili, the local capital, is situated in the northern part of the territory.

My deep interest in the life and development of Asia led me to apply for Lund University's Master's of East and South East Asian Studies. In the fall of 1998 I was, to my great happiness, admitted. Before starting on the Master's programme, I had studied Sociology for two years. I also had one highly rewarding semester at Malmö Högskola where I studied International Migration and Ethnic Relations. In addition to this, I had also taken courses in History and Philosophy.

Even before my University years, I already had a keen interest in human rights and strongly believed in the importance of equality among all people. My deep sadness over the repeated violations of human rights in the World has greatly influenced my choice of educational path. One of the requirements of the Master's programme was to write a thesis. The struggle of the people of East Timor was on obvious choice to me. I had studied Indonesian Language and History for one year during the Master's

programme; thus Indonesia was an ideal subject for my thesis. The struggle of the East Timorese against Indonesian occupation had, to my mind, some interesting aspects that had not yet been adequately dealt with.

In the last few years, East Timor and its people have from time to time been on the headlines of every major newspaper and have been extensively covered in news programs of most television networks. Thus, many people were appalled by the violence from the Jakarta backed militia and the apparent lack of initiative from the world leaders. The story of East Timor's struggle against oppression, however, goes back more than these last couple of years, and the more I read about the tragic history of East Timor the more upset I was with the cynicism that is called *Realpolitik*. At the same time I started to admire a people that wouldn't give up in spite of the fact that the world around them, with a few exceptions, apparently had turned their back on them. The story of East Timor also includes the story of remarkable leaders like Xanana Gusmão, José Ramos Horta and Bishop Carlos Belo, whose efforts have been vital for the struggle for independence and for keeping the Timor question on the international agenda.

2. Approaching the field

2.1 Initial Preparations

Fieldwork is normally an integral part of writing a thesis. However, in the case of writing a thesis on East Timor, I was faced with many obstacles. Firstly, access to the field was not at all easy. Indonesia was at the time just emerging from an oppressive dictatorship where critical academic research had, if at all allowed, been strictly controlled for the last 30 years. Secondly, I had difficulties obtaining the proper visa. To be allowed to do research in Indonesia one needs a special research visa that is quite a hassle to procure. Usually one needs to apply at least six-month in advance. The application must include specific details on the subject and duration of the study. In addition, a researcher needs permission from several government agencies and a sponsorship from an Indonesian university. This is all obtainable if you

have the patience to deal with Indonesian bureaucracy, as it can take more than a year, and then on the condition that your study does not include any political, social or otherwise sensitive issues. East Timor is a very sensitive issue, so obtaining a research visa for studies on East Timor would be quite impossible. Therefore I did my research in Indonesia on a tourist visa, thereby violating the above mentioned regulations.

It was a risk to do this and there are several examples of scholars who have been banned from entering Indonesia for doing what Indonesian authorities label as illegal. Benedict Anderson was banned for more than 20 years after writing a book on the coup of 1965, and the Swedish scholar Anders Uhlin was put on the black list for taking pictures in West Papua, just to mention two such cases. I was aware of the repercussions my actions could have led to, and so were my sponsors at the Centre for East and South East Asian Studies. We therefore concluded that if I could manage to do any interviews at all, it would be great, but I should be prepared for the worst, namely that I would have to depend on secondary research material.

2.2 In Jakarta (1) - Establishing a base

I arrived in Jakarta on the 10th of June 1999, just after the first democratic election in Indonesia in over 30 years. Upon arrival, I moved into a small apartment on Jl¹. Imam Bonjol. By a mere coincidence, my apartment was situated just across the street from the National Election Committee, (NEC). This location was a hotspot for student demonstrations after the Indonesian general elections. The location of my apartment gave me the opportunity to view firsthand the anger and frustration that many Indonesians felt over the seemingly endless vote-counting, and the fear that the delay in revealing the election result could mean that the ruling Golkar² party had tampered with the

¹ Jl. is short for *Jalan*, which means *Street* in Bahasa Indonesia.

² Golkar is short *golongan karya* or functional groups in English. Already in 1964 a number of Anti Communist groups had been formed and in 1967, Suharto announced that Golkar should be the new political wing of the Government. These "functional groups" was an assembly of hundreds of smaller groups, which were basically groups of farmers, labourers, unions and so forth. The bureaucracy, the military and the military's civilian wing would later dominate Golkar.

result. All these emotions led to a general feeling of unrest and on several occasions to riots and police violence. On one day in particular I found myself standing together with my flatmate Martin, seeing Indonesian military firing into the angry crowd outside the NEC building ten meters away from us. That event had a deadly outcome when a female student was shot in the head; several others were injured³.

Clashes between the public and the Armed Forces were at the time by no means uncommon in Jakarta, and residents of the Indonesian capital could read about them in the National papers almost every day.⁴

I had arrived in Indonesia one month ahead of the scheduled time to familiarise myself with Jakarta and its institutions, so the first month I spent travelling in the city and getting to know places and people. Since the focus of most foreigners, and Indonesians alike, were focused on the long overdue outcome of the General Election, the East Timor ballot seemed far away and had taken the backseat for the moment.

In late June, keeping in mind that I did not have a research visa, I decided that the best course of action to access my research agenda was through an international organisation such as the United Nations. Therefore I went to the UNHCR⁵ regional office in Jakarta to offer my services as an unpaid intern. I was admitted the next day. Apparently the UN refugee body was heavily understaffed and my knowledge in the Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) and my background as a student of South East Asian Studies apparently qualified me for the position.

³ For the interested reader I would like to make a personal note concerning the riots. It is true that on many occasions the persons involved in protesting against the vote counting delay, corruption and nepotism were sincere students urging for *reformasi*. It is also equally true that the Indonesian armed forces have never had any problems with orders giving them the right to shoot students. Be that as it may, sometimes the intentions of the protesters could be doubted and speculations that many of the so called students was in fact paid hooligans hired by somebody to create unrest and destroy the election procedure. Who paid these people and why, is nevertheless another issue.

⁴ This being, in an odd way, a sign of reform since during the Suharto era all this would have been censored in the papers.

⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

My supervisors at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) told me that apart from one research project on ethnic Chinese in Indonesia that I was asked to do, my work would mainly focus on assessing East Timor issues. It was even suggested that I might have to travel to East Timor with the UNHCR. So I waited, quite certain that my position at the UNHCR would provide me with access to the field of study, enabling me to conduct interviews that would otherwise have been difficult to carry out. While awaiting the prospect of flying to East Timor, I conducted two other research projects. The first was to analyse the extent to which the ethnic Chinese minority in Indonesia was subjected to statelessness and how this influenced the absence of legal protection that was during the May riots in 1998 when over one thousand people were killed. For the second project, I was to investigate cases of involuntary disappearances.⁶ (I was also requested to conduct interviews with refugees from countries like Afghanistan, Nigeria and Iraq.)

Although it annoyed me that my trip to East Timor was postponed several times, it did not however matter much at the time since the above mentioned research projects kept me fairly occupied and gave me much needed work experience in the country. In the course of my work, I interviewed government officials as well as several Human Rights workers. I also managed to do library research at both the Perpustakaan National⁷ and Universitas Indonesia and collected articles from newspapers, international magazines and the Internet. It was, in fact, required of the UN staff that we read the newspaper every morning. I photocopied all the articles I found relevant to my planned thesis. These articles eventually numbered over a hundred.

When these projects came to an end in the beginning of August, I was at finally able to concentrate my efforts on East Timor. The first thing I did was to update the UNHCR office file on East Timor. Having done this, I wrote a lengthy paper on the history of the territory and the events that had led to the

⁶ See Report concerning Working group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances 58th session: 30 August – 3rd September 1999, Geneva, By Andersson, Joel (During my work on this report I was actually quoted in The Jakarta Post)

current situation. This report was subsequently used to brief new staff members before they departed for the different local offices in Timor. I also prepared a briefing kit for Mrs Sadako Ogata, The UN High Commissioner, when she visited Indonesia and East Timor. Unfortunately, my own visit to the troubled territory was still being delayed. Several reasons were given to me for the continual postponement, including the acute shortage of accommodation in Dili and the unstable and potentially dangerous situation in Timor. The UNHCR could not accept responsible for my safety.⁸ I finally realised that if I was to collect sufficient empirical material for my thesis, I had to do that on my own. However, as I will explain later, I eventually found myself being a participating observer with all information I needed just outside, and even inside, my office. By that time I had given up the hope of doing any planned interviews for my thesis, as I was caught up in a chaotic situation where my thesis would have been considered a somewhat trivial matter by any interviewee.

These events will be detailed in Chapter 7.

3. The aim of the thesis

Coming back to Sweden, I realised that my initial aim with the thesis had to be changed, and I called on my supervisor, Gudmund Jannisa, for assistance. We both agreed that changes had to be made to my initial approach. On the one hand, I had not got the opportunity to do the interviews I had wanted, while on the other hand I had experiences from Indonesia which had led me to view the situation from a new perspective. This new perspective I found far more interesting and challenging than my previous approach.

What I found during my time in Jakarta was that the independence of East Timor was not due to one single factor or event, but a mix of several concurrently occurring events and processes on different levels that during

⁷ The National Library

⁸ At this time it was quite unsafe to go to East Timor without the company of the UN or some other International organisation. It was also impossible to get a seat on the only air service there was at the time. In addition to this all the hotel rooms were booked several weeks in

the 1990's had come together to transform the Indonesian province Timor Timor into the soon to be independent nation of Timor Loro S'ae.

Back in Sweden, I presented this idea to my supervisor and he thought that it was a good idea. We agreed that my comprehensive bibliographic work, my collection of articles and my direct involvement in the East Timor case provided me with good research material for the thesis. We decided that I should focus my thesis on the study of two levels of society; i.e. on the global level and the local level. When studying the local level, I concentrated on events on the regional and international level, for example the political repercussions of the fall of communism in the late 1980's and the Asian economic crises in the latter part of the 1990's. At the local level, I covered processes that had occurred through face-to-face interaction. At this level, I deemed it important to study the role of certain members of the Catholic Church and of the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor, *Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor Leste (FALINTIL)*.

After examining the different aspects on these two levels, I have attempted to explain how the different levels interacted and influenced each other. For this interaction to occur, people need to journey between the different levels. Nobel Peace Prize laureates Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo and José Ramos Horta are herein presented as examples of such travellers. Resistance leader José Alexandre "Xanana" Gusmão is of course also another important example. Before Indonesian forces captured Xanana, he was significant mainly in a local context, but once captured and put in prison in Jakarta, he took his agenda to the global level. The Nobel Peace Prize award was also an event that marked a journey between the two levels for the laureates Horta and Belo. It can indeed be argued that Horta's whole career as a freedom fighter has been as a messenger (traveller) between the two levels.

advance. Needless to say my options of getting to East Timor was quite limited and in a short while they would go from highly limited to totally impossible.

4. Theory

What history is, or should be, cannot be analysed in separation from what the social sciences are, or should be... There are simply no logical or even methodological distinctions between the social sciences and history – appropriately conceived⁹

This thesis aims to explore some theories developed in the field of Historical Sociology. It is within this field of study that I touched upon the idea put forward by Charles Tilly, that the most interesting results in sociology are to be found in the breaking point between the macro level and micro level¹⁰. This finding of Tilly was an eye-opener for me. After reading this very short statement, many of the problems, which I had battled with before now, seemed to be explainable. As I mentioned in the introduction I initially had another approach for my thesis but it had to be changed for various reasons, which I could not control. Confronted with questions how to focus my new approach, stumbling upon Tilly's ideas about the breaking point between macro and micro levels meant a breakthrough for me. Even so, I must admit that I find Tilly somewhat static in his approach to collective action, and I believe that he is at times preoccupied with ready-made entities that play their expected roles in the course of historic development.¹¹ Saying this I still agree with Tilly that history provide good opportunities and not so favourable opportunities for collective actions, and it is with these opportunities that collective actions emerge.

I continued by approaching a theoretical framework developed by Philip Abrams and Anthony Giddens. Giddens has developed the "structuration" theory, which encompasses the concepts of structure, system, and duality of structure. The key elements in this theory have been summarised by Lloyd¹² in five points:

⁹ Anthony Giddens quoted in Abrams, Philip "*Historical Sociology*" Cornell University Press 1982

¹⁰ Törnqvist, Rolf "*Historiskt Konkretiserande Sociolog*", p. 258 i Månsson, Per (ed.) "*Moderna Samhällsteorier- Traditioner, Riktningar, Teoretiker*" Prisma 1991

¹¹ For a good account on the works of Charles Tilly see Lynn Hunts essay "*Charles Tilly's Collective Action*" in Skocpol, Theda (ed.) "*Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*" Cambridge University Press 1998

¹² Lloyd, Christopher "*The Structures of History*" Blackwell 1983 p, 83

1. A central ontological and methodological place is given to the conscious but decentred human agent who has social structuring power.
2. Neither the human agent nor society is considered to have primacy; each is constituted in and through recurrent practices.
3. Institutions are theorised as structured social practices that have a broad spatial and temporal extension. Structure as institutionalised relations is the outcome of the social practices it recursively organises.
4. Social conduct and social structure are conceived as fundamentally temporal and specifically environmentally located.
5. The forces for social change have to be looked for in the causal interrelationships between action, consciousness, institutions, and structures.

Even though I find the concept of structuration a bit vague, I believe that there are parts of this theory that could be applied to the case of East Timor in a fruitful way.

Ron Eyerman & Andrew Jamison have discussed ideas which are closely connected to the above. I will therefore, in the discussion concerning the intellectual leaders of East Timor, base this discussion on the concepts put forward in the book "*Social Movements*" by these two scholars.¹³ In this book, the authors are trying to find a new approach to explain the intellectual capital within social movements and how this intellectual capital is produced and sustained. I will specifically focus my interest on their discussion about how the intellectual leaders in a social movement are not fixed characters finding their place within the movement, but rather intellectual characters created by the movement.

Eyerman & Jamison are not pleased with the traditional explanations of movement intellectuals and write:

¹³ Eyerman & Jamison "*Social Movements- A Cognitive Approach*" Penn State Press 1991

The problem with the traditional understanding is that it offers a static view of both intellectuals and social movements. Both are seen as readymade entities set to play their appointed role on the stage of history.¹⁴

Instead the authors claim that:

By identifying intellectual roles and activities within different social movements, and by focusing on the formative processes of movements themselves, we want to develop a different conception of intellectuals altogether. By conceiving of Intellectual activity as a process rather than product, we want to uncover the significance of social movements in the societal formation of Intellectual activity.¹⁵

Another aspect of the formation of movement intellectuals, which is pointed out by Eyerman & Jamison, is how the movement intellectuals are formed by their interaction with “the Other”. With the term “the Other”, the authors mean the entity towards which the movement interacts, as follows:

This ‘Other’ is not merely an intellectual construction, but is almost always a real social actor, an authority, the government, an institution, the state or a conglomerate of individuals, the ‘technocrats’, with whom the movement must strategically interact.¹⁶

The concept of “the Other” in forming the East Timorese movement intellectuals is quite significant, which I will try to explain later in this thesis.

Eyerman & Jamison also identify a character within the movement whom they name “The Professional”. “The Professional” is specifically important while interacting with “the Other”. Eyerman & Jamison claim that “the Professional” within a particular social movement uses special skills and talents, and is

¹⁴ Eyerman & Jamison, p. 95

¹⁵ Eyerman & Jamison, p. 98

¹⁶ Eyerman & Jamison, p. 102

usually a specialist. This character, as we will see later, applies very well to Nobel laureate José Ramos Horta.

5. Literature and Method

Like most other works in the field of Historical Sociology, this thesis is mainly based upon the use of secondary sources analysed from a new perspective. In this particular case, these sources are mainly accounts of East Timor's modern history. There are many books written on the East Timor topic, and there has been an increasing flow of these books since the East Timor popular consultation ballot took place in August 1999. Most of these books, however, tell the same heartbreaking story. Unfortunately, there are very few books that go beyond the initial story telling and provide some new facts or insights to the field of East Timor Studies. This is however not surprising, since most of the literature on this subject is written with a political agenda, where the overriding objective has been to tell the world about the tragedy of East Timor.

Even so, many of these books are highly worthwhile reading. I would like to mention some of them. The book *"Timor- A People Betrayed"* by James Dunn¹⁷ (former Australian consul-general in Portuguese Timor) is probably the most comprehensive account of the period before and after the Indonesian invasion, and the roles of USA and Australia. Another good account on the same topic is John Taylor's *"East Timor- the Price for Freedom"*.¹⁸ Jill Jolliffe's book *"East Timor- Nationalism & Colonialism"*¹⁹ gives a good description on the early stages of the East Timorese resistance movement. There are also two other books that are good for reference. The first one is John G Taylor's *"The Indonesian Occupation of East Timor 1974-1989- A Chronology"*²⁰, which gives an almost complete account about the main events in the East

¹⁷ Dunn, James *"Timor- A People Betrayed"* The Jacaranda Press 1983

¹⁸ Taylor, John G *"East Timor-The Price of freedom"* Pluto Press Australia 1999

¹⁹ Jolliffe, Jill *"East Timor- Nationalism & Colonialism"* University of Queensland Press 1978

²⁰ Taylor, John G *"The Indonesian Occupation of East Timor 1974-1989- A Chronology"* Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) 199

Timor history. The second book is "*East Timor and the United Nations- The Case for Intervention*" by Geoffrey Gunn²¹. This book provides the reader with an insight into many official UN documents dealing with the East Timor issues. Finally, I want to mention Gudmund Jannisa's Ph D dissertation, "*The Crocodile Tears- East Timor in the Making*"²² which is one of the few good academic works on the East Timor question. It has a good and clear theoretical framework.

Some remarks should also be made concerning the use of Indonesian sources. During the Suharto rule, the Indonesian press was under quite strict censorship. During the early days of Indonesia's "New Order" the country's press had a quite free position in the society. But when new economic policies of Suharto became to painful the Indonesian press became more openly critical to the Leaders of the government. This was something that Suharto did not tolerate and after the "Malari" incident several newspapers were shut down and those who remained exercised self-censorship in order to stay alive. As noted by the English-language magazine "Indonesia Business Weekly" in 1992:

"Most Indonesians have long resigned themselves to the fact that the pen is often mightier than the sword but is absolutely no match for the gun"²³

The laws were made up so any publication which challenged the concept of *pancasila* and the 1945 constitution was deemed illegal and therefore shut down. The control over the media throughout the Suharto era affected the political debate on a deeper level as well. By only hearing praise from the press the government missed out on very important feedback from the people on how the government was running the country. As noted in the Indonesian monthly Tempo:

²¹ Gunn, Geoffrey C. "*East Timor and the United Nations- The Case for Intervention*" Red Sea Press 1997

²² Jannisa, Gudmund "*The Crocodile Tears- East Timor in the Making*" Lund Dissertation in Sociology 1997

²³ Quoted in Schwartz, Adam "*A Nation In Waiting- Indonesia's search for stability*" Allen & Unwin 1999, p. 240

“What is not realised is that from frightened people you hear no sincerity, but distortion. You will not know whether the praise uttered by a frightened man is authentic or merely boot-licking”²⁴

Taking the censorship in Indonesian media into account I decided not to use much of it in my thesis. Indonesian press material from the Suharto era has of course a value as a indicator of the political climate at the time but it does not provide any reliable information connected to a specific topic.

Another very important source of knowledge and Information is, of course, my own participation in the voting process regarding East Timor’s future political status during the summer and autumn of 1999, as discussed briefly in the introduction above and at more length in Chapter 7. Because of my close work with East Timorese refugees, as well as with international representatives from United Nations, I gained a quite good insight into how such issues are dealt with on the ground level of the international arena. During my time with the UNHCR, I also met with several Indonesian members of Non- Governmental Organisation, NGO’s as well as with State officials and got their version of the East Timor question. Needless to say, it was during my time at the UNHCR that I came to understand how issues on a global and local level influence each other.

Unfortunately, I do not have any interview records from these meetings, neither with East Timorese refugees nor with other officials. The main reason for this is ethical considerations. What I mean with ethical considerations is that during the crises summer of 1999, I was interviewing people who had lost everything, and I found it very difficult to inconvenience these people with questions regarding my thesis. Some of these people would probably have answered the questions I had, but at the time I found my thesis less important than doing my job as an interviewer with the UN agency. On the other hand, during this time I gained valuable firsthand experience and insight into the East Timor question through numerous informal talks with policymakers as well as with “ordinary” refugees.

²⁴ Quoted in Schwartz, p. 242

One interesting issue that arose was the problem of separating my research from my job at the UNHCR. When was I to be a student working on my Master's thesis and when was I an intern with UNHCR in Jakarta? I thought at times that I should never have taken up the opportunity to work with UNHCR and focused instead on my thesis. Then again, if I had followed such a course, I would never have been allowed so close to the heart of the East Timor conflict as I actually was during the summer of 1999.

Once again, I would like to bring the reader's attention to the fact that I did not hold a research visa during my time in Indonesia for reasons already explained. This of course also added to the problems of doing interviews outside of those that were part of my duties at UNHCR.

6. Early History

6.1 The Majapahit

Since I wish to place recent developments in East Timor in a historical context, I find it necessary to give a brief account of the old Indonesian kingdom of Majapahit. The reason for this is that the Indonesian government has presented the invasion of East Timor in 1975 as the reunification of a pre-colonial greater Indonesia, allegedly created by the leaders of that old kingdom. According to this version of history, the "brothers" living in western and eastern parts of Indonesia were separated by Portuguese and Dutch colonialists, a separation which ended when East Timor was formally included into the Republic of Indonesia as its 27th province in 1976.

The empire of Majapahit, a continuation of the old dynasty of Singhasari, was created when prince Wijaya rose to power in the late 13th century. During its first years, the Majapahit kingdom was ailing and it was not until the great Gadjah Mada became Prime Minister that a successful expansion began. With Gadjah Mada's death in 1364²⁵ the Majapahit Empire started to decline.

²⁵ Hall, D G E "A History of South-East Asia" Fourth Edition, Macmillan Press LTD, 1981, p. 99

Internal wars tore the empire apart, and in 1468 the Kraton (capital) of Majapahit was abandoned.²⁶

The best source of information on the geographical extent of the Majapahit conquests comes from the chronicles of Nagarkrtagama by Prapanca dated 1365²⁷. The island of Timor is only mentioned once in the chronicles where in canto fourteen, stanza five, it says: “Seran Timur, these makes the first of the numerous islands which are mindful.” These few words are the total sum of written sources upon which Indonesian officialdom based its assumption that East Timor once formed an integrated part of a pre-colonial Indonesia²⁸. Since the Majapahit Empire survived until late 15th century, and these chronicles were written in 1365, there are still a couple of hundred of years in history to account for.

Sources tell us that the Majapahit conquered the island of Bali in 1343 and the town of Dampo on Lombok 1357. So we have a date, 1357, for the eastward expansion of Majapahit. Let us for a moment accept the official Indonesian view of Timor as a dependency of the Majapahit. If Majapahit actually ruled over Timor, it must have been after this date, since Timor is situated further away from Majapahit than Dampo. There is a time difference of 14 years between the conquest of Bali and the island of Lombok. With Dampo as base, further conquests may have been easier to undertake. The gradual disintegration of Majapahit started with the death of king Ayam Wuruk 1389. This leaves us with approximately 30 years of Timor being under the sway of a strong Majapahit since it would be likely that the very distant Timor would be one of the first to slip out of its grip.

It should, however, be noted that the easternmost inscription from the Majapahit period was found on the island of Sumbawa to the west of Timor. On Timor itself, no remnants of Majapahit have been found, and the local

²⁶ Hall, p. 101

²⁷ Hall, p. 83

²⁸ Jannisa, p. 276

culture shows no traces of influence from the Hindu-Javanese culture associated with Majapahit, or other kingdoms centred on Java.²⁹

6.2 The Portuguese rule

The Portuguese first arrived to the Timor area in the beginning of the 16th century³⁰. The Dutch started trading out of the port of Kupang on the western part of the island in the 1630s³¹. The British governed the island from 1812 to 1815³², after which the Dutch and the Portuguese fought for supremacy over Timor. Treaties settled Portuguese sovereignty over the eastern part of Timor in 1860 and 1893, with a final agreement being signed by the two parties as late as in 1914.

In late 1911, the *liurai* (king) Dom Boaventura managed to unite several different ethno-linguistic groups in the region against the rule of the Portuguese. In December the same year Dom Boaventura and his followers attacked Dili, the capital of the territory, and it was not until Portuguese reinforcements had arrived from Macau and Mozambique that the uprising was quelled. The most significant contribution the Boaventura uprising brought to the history of East Timor was the unification of the territory in the minds of its inhabitants. There are several different ethnic and linguistic groups on the territory, but with the Boaventura uprising these groups joined together and formed the base for the unified people of East Timor that later were to struggle against the Indonesian oppressors.

The Japanese forces occupied Timor during World War II. East Timor, including the enclave surrounding the town of Oé-cussi, situated on the western, i.e. Indonesian, part of the island, thereafter remained in Portuguese possession until 1975. This was when the Timor political party *Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente*, Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor, (Fretilin), after a short standoff with *Uniao*

²⁹ Jannisa, p 278

³⁰ Jannisa, p 98

³¹ Jannisa, p 106

³² Jannisa, p 126

Democratica Timorese, Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), declared the territory to be independent on 28 November. Nine days later, Indonesian forces invaded the territory, and East Timor was subsequently declared to be the 27th province of the Republic of Indonesia on 17 July 1976. However, the legality of Indonesia's administration of East Timor was not recognised by the United Nations, which continued to view East Timor as a non self-governing territory, with Portugal as the administering authority. This view was presented as neo-colonialist by Indonesian officials, while what the UN actually demanded was an orderly de-colonisation of the territory under Portuguese supervision.

7. The modern history of East Timor

7.1 The Suharto administration before Santa Cruz

On 25 April 1974, the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement (AFM) overthrew the Caetano regime in Portugal. Marcello Caetano's regime was the continuation of Salazar's *Estado Novo*, an oppressive and isolationist fascist regime which had kept Portugal outside of mainstream European politics since the 1930's. During *Estado Novo*, all political activities outside of the State party was strictly forbidden, and if Portugal lived in relative isolation during this long period, a distant colony such as East Timor was virtually cut off from the outside world except for when the territory was occupied by the Japanese during WW II. When news of the coup filtered down to East Timor this, however, prompted associations and groupings that had led a shadowy existence amongst the indigenous members of the colonial elite, to come forth and present their ideas about independence and development. Soon three political parties were founded: the *União Democrática Timorese*, Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), the *Associação Social Democrática de Timor*, Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT) and the *Associação Popular Democrática* Timorese Popular Democratic Association (Apodeti). ASDT became *Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente*,

Revolutionary Front of an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) in September 1974 with José Ramos Horta as its chief representative.³³

The UDT formed a coalition in January 1975 with FRETILIN but then withdrew from the coalition in May.³⁴ After a meeting in Jakarta with Indonesia's leading generals, UDT launched a coup in Dili on Monday the 11th of August³⁵ to wrest power from the Portuguese and halt the growing popularity of FRETILIN. The coup led to a brief civil war between UDT and FRETILIN, and also to the withdrawal of the Portuguese administration from Dili to the small island of Ataúro.

FRETILIN proved to be effective in taking control of East Timor, and declared East Timor's independence on 28 November 1975³⁶. This was a vain attempt to call the world's attention to the fact that an invasion from Indonesia seemed imminent, after a strong military build-up along the border between the Indonesian and the Portuguese halves of the island, including raids across the border by Indonesian troops. The declaration of independence had not been accepted by more than a handful of states when Indonesia made its fatal move. The Indonesian government, under Suharto's presidency, fearing a Cuba-like situation on its backyard, attacked East Timor on 7 December 1975. It later claimed that four out of five of the newly formed political parties, namely UDT, Apodeti, Kota and Trabalhista, had independently proclaimed the freedom of East Timor, and its integration with Indonesia through the so called Balibo Declaration (as a counter-move to FRETILIN's declaration of independence) on 30 November 1975³⁷. These parties had also, allegedly, invited the Indonesian military, ABRI, to intervene, so as to restore security and order.

However, independent observers tell a different story. They assert that Indonesia's invasion of East Timor was secretly condoned by the United

³³ Jolliffe, p. 62-64

³⁴ Jolliffe, p. 115

³⁵ Jolliffe, p. 119

³⁶ Jannisa, p. 221

³⁷ Jannisa, p 218 and 313-314

States and Australia because of a perceived threat of communism and anarchic instability from the territory's most popular party, Fretilin.³⁸ The Balibo Declaration has also been shown to be a hoax, signed by a number of non-representative East Timorese who were held hostages by the Indonesian army. East Timor was formally "integrated" into Indonesia as its 27th province on 17 July 1976, through Law No. 6/76. The integration was later ratified by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) Decree No. 6/78. The United Nations condemned the invasion and refused to recognise the annexation. It instead continued to recognise Portugal as the administering power.

In 1986, the year in which Portugal became a member of the European Union (EU), the Portuguese Government tried to bring UDT and FRETILIN together. At a meeting between representatives from the two parties, old animosities were at least formally buried, and the so-called Convergence was created. The following year, resistance leader Xanana Gusmão left FRETILIN to clear the resistance of its "leftist" stigma and, together with the exiled leader José Ramos Horta, formed an umbrella organisation called *Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Maubere*, National Council for Maubere Resistance (CNRM).³⁹ This new organisation aimed to install a western style democracy in an independent East Timor. This organisation is today called CNRT, where the "T" now stands for Timorese as Maubere [common man] was considered by some older members of UDT as being a term with socialistic connotations. From 1987, the CNRM (T) formally led the resistance.

East Timor suffered considerably during and after the Indonesian take-over, but due to restrictions imposed by the Indonesian government, International Commission for Red Cross (ICRC) did not have the opportunity to begin its relief programme in East Timor until 19 October 1979. Moreover, the ICRC was only allowed to visit the prison of Baucau, the second largest town in the territory, for the first time in March 1989. International humanitarian organisations and human rights activists estimate that between 100,000 - 200,000 East Timorese may have died as a direct result of the Indonesian

³⁸ See for example Jardine & Chomsky p. 11 and 29

³⁹ Jannisa, p. 246

Invasion.⁴⁰ When elaborating on the new government's policy on East Timor on 4 February 1999, President Habibie said that Angkatan Bersenjata Republic Indonesia, Armed Forces of Republic of Indonesia, (ABRI) had lost 1,419 men during their operations in East Timor. Other observers would suggest this figure to be much higher.⁴¹

By 1989, Indonesia claimed that FALINTIL (the armed wing of FRETILIN which retained its name when under control by the newly formed CNRM from 1987) had been pushed back to a few isolated hideouts in the far east of the island. However, the Indonesian military maintained its considerable presence, 20,000 troops, in this tiny territory. The Indonesian occupying force also seriously underestimated the capacity of FALINTIL to re-organise itself after the killing of its commander, Nicolao Lobato, on the last day of 1978⁴². Xanana Gusmão, one of the few FALINTIL commanders still alive after the Indonesian offensive, turned out to be an excellent strategist and managed to turn FALINTIL into a successful guerrilla movement that had the capacity to strike anywhere and at any time in East Timor.⁴³

7.2 The Santa Cruz Massacre

On November twelfth, 1991, the Indonesian occupying force performed one of its most violent attacks on the East Timorese population, and perhaps also its biggest blunder. If one event can be said to have turned the tide in favour of the independence struggle of East Timor, most scholars and others familiar with the East Timor issue, would argue that paradoxically the massacre of unarmed civilians, mostly youngsters, at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili is that event.⁴⁴

On November 12, 1991, hundreds of people had gathered in Dili for a peaceful demonstration in connection to a Portuguese visit scheduled for the

⁴⁰ As Chomsky points out this may have been greatest death toll relative to the population since the holocaust. Jardine & Chomsky p. 7

⁴¹ Jardine & Chomsky p. 52

⁴² Taylor (1999), p. 203

⁴³ Cox, Steve and Peter Carey "*Generations of Resistance- East Timor*" Cassell 1995 p. 35ff

⁴⁴ See for example Pat Walsh in "*East Timor at the Crossroads*" p. 149

same day. The demonstration would coincide with the funeral procession of a young man, Sebastião Gomes, who had been killed by Indonesian security forces two weeks earlier. The Gomes family, together with Bishop Belo⁴⁵ and many others, did not know that a large number of the accompanying members of the procession had planned a demonstration, since having a large number of mourners accompanying the funeral cortege was nothing unusual. Almost half the population of Dili had been present in a demonstration on the 29th of October in direct connection with the killing of Sebastião Gomes.⁴⁶

Later, the demonstrators found out that Portugal had cancelled the visit, and the reaction was one of indignation and frustration. Portugal had once again let the people of East Timor down⁴⁷. After a while, the young people decided to go ahead with the demonstration, even though the Portuguese mission was not there to witness the event. During the mile long procession to the Santa Cruz cemetery, more people joined in and soon the crowd numbered a couple of thousand people. Once at the cemetery, the crowd started chanting independence slogans and waving CNRT flags. Although the majority of the crowd stayed inside the walls that surrounded the Santa Cruz cemetery some men and women stayed outside the cemetery. These people were the first to notice the large number of Indonesian soldiers entering the cemetery, and lining up in order to block the only exit. Soon after that, the Indonesian soldiers opened fire into the defenceless crowd. Eyewitness Allan Nairn, an experienced US journalist reported later:

Without warning and without provocation, soldiers raised their rifles and took aim. Then, acting in unison, they opened fire ... Men and women fell, shivering, in the street, rolling from the impact of the bullets. Some were back-peddalling, and tripping, their hands held up. Others simply tried to turn and run. The soldiers

⁴⁵ Kohen, Arnold S “*From the Place of the Dead- Bishop Belo and the Struggle for East Timor*” Lion Publishing Plc 1999, p 194

⁴⁶ Cox & Carey p. 49

⁴⁷ The reason for Portugal's cancellation was that they had been refused the right to choose for themselves who would accompany the mission. When the Indonesian government refused to admit the well-known Timor observer Jill Jolliffe to the party, Portugal chose to cancel. See Cox and Carey p 49

jumped over fallen bodies and fired at the people still upright. They chased down young boys and girls and shot them in the back.⁴⁸

After the initial bloodbath, the killings continued, as the Indonesian soldiers searched the area, killing those who were “only” wounded. Many were taken away for execution while others were killed at the hospital. Some just disappeared, presumed killed by the Indonesian soldiers. All in all, most sources estimate that as many as 250 people were killed that day.⁴⁹

This was not the first massacre of its kind. Similar shootings had occurred earlier, for example the September 1981 massacre in Lacluta⁵⁰, where at least 400 women and children had been slaughtered⁵¹. This was followed in 1983 by the massacre at Kraras, where Indonesian troops reportedly killed more than 500 Timorese⁵². The Santa Cruz massacre, however, differed in that it had several international witnesses. One of them was Max Stahl. Stahl, a British filmmaker, was in East Timor on behalf of Yorkshire Television. He managed to film the entire massacre, and before being confronted by the Indonesian troops, he managed to hide the film in the cemetery. Later, he managed to go back and retrieve the films. The film was then smuggled out of Indonesia to Amsterdam, with the help from a Dutch freelance reporter, Sasika Kouwenberg.⁵³ Although witness reports had leaked out of Indonesia that a massacre had occurred, not many were willing to believe that such a thing could have happened. After Stahl's film was shown, under the title “Cold Blood: the Massacre of East Timor” first on Dutch television and then in Britain, nobody could deny it, not the Americans, nor the Australians (although they tried to at first)⁵⁴ and not even in Indonesia.

7.3 The end of the Suharto era

⁴⁸ Jardine and Chomsky p. 16

⁴⁹ The Santa Cruz massacre is described in most works on East Timor. See for example Jannisa p 255-ff or Kohen p. 194 ff.

⁵⁰ Kohen. P 201

⁵¹ Taylor (1999) p. 138

⁵² Taylor (1999) p. 142

⁵³ Kohen p. 201-202

⁵⁴ See for example Scott Burchill in “Guns and Ballot Boxes- East Timor's Vote for Independence” Kingsbury Damien ed. Monash Asia Institute 2000, p. 173

As a response to the world's reaction to the Santa Cruz incident, Indonesian President, Suharto, ordered an investigation, which resulted in charges brought against some of the involved military figures. The military head of East Timor, General Warouw was fired, and a few soldiers received various smaller prison sentences. The investigation seemed to satisfy Japan, (who, after the massacre, had said it would stop aid to Indonesia), Australia and the US. Relations were soon back to normal. It was business as usual.⁵⁵ The International community had reacted as it usually does; first with outrage and then with "OK you're forgiven, now let's make more money". After all, both the US and Australia had large business interests to look after in Indonesia. Surely a little massacre here and there should not interfere with that.

Nevertheless, people all over the world had become aware of the atrocities committed by Indonesia in East Timor. Friends of the Indonesian East Timor policy, found it increasingly difficult to help the Suharto regime conceal the oppression of the East Timorese people. Today, many observers argue that the massacre at Santa Cruz cemetery was the turning point for the East Timorese struggle.

In November the following year the leader of the FALINTIL resistance fighters, Xanana Gusmao, was captured in Dili. In May 1993, he was sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of subversion and illegal possession of firearms by a court in Dili. He was transferred to Cipinang Prison in East Jakarta on 10 August 1993, and his sentence was later commuted to twenty years of imprisonment. The trial was a mockery of justice. Although several international observers were invited, the court stopped Xanana's twenty-eight page defence speech as he reached page three, claiming that it was irrelevant.⁵⁶ After the capture of Xanana Gusmão, Konis Santana became the new leader of the FALINTIL forces.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Jannisa p. 258

⁵⁶ Jannisa p. 260

⁵⁷ Konis Santana was supreme Commander of the Falintil Forces until he was killed in an accident 1998. Taur Matan Ruak who is still today the Military commander of Falintil replaced him.

7.4 Development under President Habibie's administration

The economic crises that punished Asia in 1997 hit Indonesia worse than most other countries. The Indonesian currency, the rupiah, fell, and many large enterprises went down with it.⁵⁸ In 1998, the cry for *reformasi* (reforms) sparked riots all over Indonesia, eventually forcing Suharto to resign in disgrace. The ailing former dictator is now being prosecuted for corruption and there are many who wish to see his children go the same way.

The end of President Suharto's administration opened the way for a more flexible approach to the problem of East Timor.⁵⁹ A few weeks after assuming his presidency, B. J. Habibie released a dozen East Timorese political prisoners from Becora prison in Dili. In addition, less than a week before his meeting with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Dili, Carlos Ximenes Belo, on the 24th June 1998, Habibie offered special status for East Timor. This was part of a deal that included international recognition of the territory as part of Indonesia, but without elaborating on what special status meant in practice. The proposal was met with rejections by East Timorese students, who staged demonstrations in Jakarta and East Timor. They demanded instead a referendum on independence for the territory, and the immediate release of the imprisoned resistance leader Xanana Gusmão.

Rallies in East Timor, which deteriorated into bloody clashes, took place during a visit by European Union ambassadors, and later by the United Nations special envoy for East Timor, Jamsheed Marker, in July 1998. The month of July also saw some two weeks of exodus of migrants from East Timor to Ujung Pandang⁶⁰ in South Sulawesi, Kupang in West Timor and Surabaya in East Java. This wave of migration was sparked by rumours that there would be a massive demonstration to coincide with the 17 of July anniversary of East Timor's 'integration' into Indonesia. It was believed that

⁵⁸ There are many good accounts on the Asian crises and its consequences. One I particularly like is Krugman, Paul "*The Return of Depression Economics*", Penguin Press 1999

⁵⁹ There are several accounts on the political process from 1998 to the popular consultation in August 1999. See for example, Taylor, John (1999) p. xv ff.

anti-integrationists would proclaim their independence from Indonesia, and start to flush out transmigrates from the territory. These rumours, exacerbated by reports of terrorism against civilians by mysterious 'ninjas' at night, had driven more than 7,000 migrants to flee the province for fear of possible violence during the anniversary. However, many of those who fled to neighbouring East Nusa Tenggara (West Timor) returned to East Timor later in the same month.

For the first time ever, Indonesian Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas, laid out details of a plan to give "wide-ranging autonomy" to East Timor during a visit to Manila, where he attended a meeting held by a group of Asian, South Pacific, North American and European foreign ministers. This was later followed by an announcement by Indonesia and Portugal that they had agreed on broad outlines of a plan, during talks under the auspices of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Under this proposal, the territory would be given power to control everything except foreign affairs, external defence, monetary and fiscal policy. The agreement to at least discuss the Indonesian proposal, was the first major diplomatic breakthrough in over two decades of stand-off between Portugal and Indonesia. The two nations also took the first step towards the resumption of full diplomatic relations with the opening of 'interest sections' in each other's capital, which took effect later in late January 1999, with the Netherlands representing Portugal in Jakarta and Thailand representing Indonesia in Lisbon.

After several months of relative calm in East Timor, the territory was rocked again by violence in October 1998. In two separate incidents in late October and early November 1998 assailants, whom the military blamed as pro-independence activists, killed three soldiers and a civilian. The killings occurred amid reports that the number of Indonesian troops in East Timor was more than 20,000, far in excess of the number 10,000 claimed by the government. Another three soldiers were killed and thirteen others kidnapped when a group of men in paramilitary uniforms, believed to be FALINTIL, attacked a military outpost in Alas, 40 kilometres Southeast of Dili. The

⁶⁰ This city was formerly known as Makassar.

military retaliated to the killings with a massive military operation, deploying two troop battalions. According to reports by Bishop Belo, this move by the Indonesian military claimed the lives of 40 people. This prompted Portugal to temporarily suspend the talks under UN auspices in New York. However, after investigating the violence in late November 1998, the National Commission on Human Rights, (KomnasHAM), denied the massacre and found that only five people had died during the incident, and ICRC had come across reports of only four dead.

In the meantime, the fourth All Inclusive East Timorese Dialogue (IAETD) sponsored by UN, and held in Krumbach Castle, Austria, ended unsuccessfully. Anti-referendum groups argued that autonomy was a final solution, while pro-referendum groups, which included José Ramos Horta, only agreed to a transitional autonomy period lasting between two and five years, after which an internationally monitored referendum should be held. The jailed resistance leader Xanana Gusmão, who was regarded internationally as a key player in moves to secure peace for East Timor, and Bishop Carlos Belo, said that they wanted several years of autonomy, in order to rebuild the shattered society. Thereafter, a referendum should be held so the people of East Timor could choose between independence, Indonesian rule or some kind of federation with Portugal. Xanana Gusmão had also urged reconciliation among warring East Timorese ahead of any consideration of autonomy or independence.

Being accepted by the west as an honest and decent man had always obsessed President Habibie. He wanted to be remembered as a human rights defender rather than as an oppressor, according to Jonathan Head, former BBC correspondent in Indonesia⁶¹. This was the main reason why Habibie suddenly decided that if the Timorese did not want to be a part of Indonesia, Indonesia should let them go. Most of Habibie's cabinet, including foreign minister Ali Alatas did not know that on the 27th of January, President Habibie had consulted some of his closer aids on the Timor issue. The result of that

⁶¹ From talks between Mr Head and Myself in March 2000

consultation was revealed when later that day the Indonesian President met with his ministers and unexpectedly raised the question of whether or not to let East Timor go. Habibie then went around the table making everyone present at the meeting to decide on the spot a “yes” or “no” to a Timor self-determination referendum. The majority of the cabinet members were in favour of a referendum to decide the future of East Timor. From this decision by the president and his cabinet, the road was paved for the popular consultation, which would be organised by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and United Nations Mission for East Timor (UNAMET).

7.5 Towards Popular Consultation

Indonesia’s offer of “autonomy or separation” led to a built up of tension in East Timor. January 1999 witnessed a major shift in the East Timor policy when the Australian government, which previously only supported autonomy, announced that it now supported complete self-determination to the East Timorese after a period of autonomy. This policy was rejected by Indonesia who argued that the plan was too costly. On 27 January 1999, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said that Indonesia might grant independence to East Timor if the East Timorese and the international community rejected the wide-ranging autonomy proposal.⁶² He said that the government would propose to the new People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR), who were expected to hold their first general session in November 1999, to scrap its earlier decree on East Timor’s 1976 integration into Indonesia. In addition, jailed FALINTIL/CNRT leader Xanana Gusmao would also be removed from Cipinang Jail and be provided with a special house for a ‘house arrest’ instead, in recognition of his role in the peace process. Gusmão was moved to such a house shortly after.

This new development was followed by armed clashes between pro-integration and pro-independence groups, leaving a number of people from both sides dead. The incidents began in early December 1998, when

⁶² Jakarta Post 990128

Indonesian military-trained East Timorese civilian militia raided a pro-referendum youth building. Human rights activists blamed the spate of violence on the government's decision to arm pro-integrationists. The heightened tension in East Timor once again worried transmigrants from other areas of Indonesia, mostly traders, government workers, teachers and doctors, and some of them, fearing for their safety, decided to leave the territory. Some of those few East Timorese who supported integration with Indonesia were also talking about leaving their homeland. The Indonesian government, in an apparent anticipation of an influx of refugees from the territory, prepared Wetar Island, several kilometres north of East Timor, to accommodate about 20,000 families of transmigrates⁶³.

Responding to the plan for granting independence to the East Timorese, chairman of the National Mandate Party (PAN), Amien Rais,⁶⁴ said that the only way to settle the East Timor issue was through a referendum, rather than through granting immediate independence. On the contrary, two other leading Indonesian opposition figures, Megawati Sukarnoputri of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI Perjuangan), and Abdurraman Wahid (a. k. a. Gus Dur) then head of Nahdlatul Ulama⁶⁵ and backer of the People's Awakening Party (PKB), said East Timor should remain a part of Indonesia. About a week later Megawati reversed her stance and said that if she was elected President she would respect any decision taken by the East Timorese regarding their future. Later, Gus Dur did the same.

While clashes between pro-integration and pro-independence groups continued in East Timor, significant developments took place in March 1999. Resistance leader Xanana Gusmão met, on 11 March 1999 in Jakarta, with the Commander of the pro-integration fighters, João da Silva Tavares. They

⁶³ The Indonesian Transmigrasi scheme is aimed at moving people out from Java to the outer island where they are given a piece of land to cultivate. The program was launched to take the load off Java, which is one of the most densely populated islands in the world. It was also used as a way to *Javanize* the outer islands.

⁶⁴ Amien Rais was at the time also chairman of the second largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia called Muhammadiyah.

⁶⁵ NU is Indonesia's largest Muslim organization with more than 35 million members. Its members are usually based in the rural communities in east and central Java. Gus Dur is now the President of Republik Indonesia with Megawati as vice-president.

agreed to put down weapons and discuss the territory's future peacefully. These words, however, proved to be nothing but empty promises on the part of the militias, and soon pro-integration paramilitary troops started widespread killings in East Timor. Also on 11 March, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced in New York that Indonesia and Portugal had agreed on a "direct ballot" for East Timor, and that the UN together with several countries would finance this ballot. According to this scheme, the East Timorese would decide whether to accept or reject the autonomy proposal, effectively translating the ballot into a choice to remain part of Indonesia or to break away.

Following the agreement, a team of six members of the UN Secretariat in New York left for Jakarta and East Timor. Their main objective was to carry out a preliminary assessment of the consultation mechanism of the direct ballot for the wide-ranging autonomy. F. Vendrell, Director of the Asia-Pacific Division in the UN Department of Political Affairs, led the delegation.

In May 1999, Kofi Annan appointed UK human rights worker and former head of Amnesty International, Ian Martin, to lead the United Nations Assistance Mission for East Timor (UNAMET). On the third of June, the UN flag was officially raised outside the UNAMET office building in central Dili. Prominent pro-integration people, as well as Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo and CNRT officials David Ximenes and Leandro Isaac attended the ceremony.

The work of UNAMET was the target of criticism from both Indonesian officials and pro-integrationists from the first day of its mission. These critics repeatedly accused the UN body for siding with the pro-independence supporters. The UNAMET rejected these allegations, arguing instead that the Indonesian government was the one which was not neutral, since it supported pro-Jakarta paramilitary groups with training and weapons.

Not only were there harsh words; outright violence was a constant threat during the time of preparation for the ballot. It has been estimated that more than one hundred killings occurred in the region over a six-month period leading up to the ballot. Most of these killings were ascribed to pro-integration

militia, who on at least three occasions massacred people at pro-independence rallies. According to Bishop Belo more than 30 people were killed by pro-Jakarta paramilitary on the 6th of April 1999, and a similar incident occurred on the 17th of April where at least 20 people were killed.

Due to the widespread violence, the date of the ballot was postponed twice, before it was finally decided to take place on the 30th of August, 1999.

UN offices around the province were also targeted by violence, mainly from pro-Jakarta troublemakers. On the 29th of June the UNAMET office in Maliana was attacked with stones and rocks by a mob of over one hundred persons, associated with a pro-Jakarta militia. Inside the office were UNAMET staff and a few locals who had taken refuge in the building. The building was severely damaged but none was seriously hurt.

Shortly after, the UNAMET office in Viqueque was evacuated after a death threat had been delivered, and on July 4th a UN Human Aid convoy was attacked in the region of Liquica by a pro-Jakarta mob. These attacks triggered sharp reactions from the UN, the US and Australia. UNAMET even threatened to pull out of East Timor if security was not improved.

Meanwhile the Indonesian armed forces and pro-Jakarta militia claimed that the armed resistance, FALINTIL continuously ambushed and killed pro-Jakarta supporters. Contrary to these claims by the Indonesian army, the Indonesian human rights organisation KIPER (The Independent Committee for Direct Ballot Monitoring), stated in a report dated August 20th, that at least thirteen different pro-Indonesian militias should be blamed for nearly all the violence in East Timor, while the pro-independence camp had committed only very minor violations.⁶⁶

7.6 In Jakarta (2)- Caught in the middle

In Indonesia itself the situation gradually deteriorated. The closer the day of the ballot for self-determination of East Timor came, the worse it became.

⁶⁶ Jakarta Post 990821

The Jakarta newspapers repeatedly slandered the Australians, The Portuguese and the UN, UNAMET in particular. UN workers were accused of not understanding the Timorese history⁶⁷ and of being partial in their job.⁶⁸ On one occasion, the United Nation staffs were even accused of rape, nudity and torture(!)⁶⁹

Being a UN employee in Jakarta during this period (cf Chapter 2) I could see before my eyes how the tension worsened each day. On several occasions it was difficult to get to the UN office, since angry protesters, accusing the UN, Australia and Portugal of trying to split the Indonesian nation, blocked the front door. Sometimes stones and eggs were hurled at us while we entered our office building. When the day of the ballot, or the popular consultation as it was officially called, was finally decided, I contacted Michael Kennedy, the Jakarta head of the IOM,⁷⁰ requesting to be accredited as an official UN observer at the Jakarta ballot station. This request was accepted by Mr Kennedy.

The registration procedure that had been going on for several weeks prior to the ballot had made us expect a high turnout. We were not disappointed, as more than 98% of the registered voters turned up at the ballot station where I was an observer, including resistance leader Xanana Gusmão. This massive turnout must be considered a great success for IOM and UNAMET, considering the obstacles posed by local media and politicians and the tangible possibility of violence.

There was, however, not much violence reported on the historic day of the East Timor popular consultation ballot, neither in Jakarta nor in East Timor. The one exception to this was when pro-Jakarta militiamen killed a local UN

⁶⁷ Article in *the Jakarta Post* 990813 and 990914, by Sri Pamoedjo Rahardjo.

⁶⁸ See for example *Indonesian Observer* 990831 or *Jakarta Post* 990903

⁶⁹ *The Indonesian Observer* 990708

⁷⁰ While UNAMET had responsibility for the East Timor voting procedure the IOM were in charge of the ballot operations outside Timor. The organisation therefore established ballot stations in the five Indonesian cities of Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Denpasar, Jakarta and Ujung Pandang (Formerly Makassar). IOM also set up polling stations on five locations outside Indonesia, these were: New York (USA), Macao, Sydney (Australia), Lisbon (Portugal) and in Mozambique.

staff member when he was returning from a ballot centre in East Timor. This relative calm was somewhat of a surprise, given the amount of violence that had preceded the ballot. Some analysts thought that perhaps the pro-Indonesian militias had finally realised that they fought for a lost cause and had decided to stop fighting its own people. This, unfortunately, was not the case. After the ballot, the pro-Jakarta militia started one of the worst onslaughts in this decade. Panic spread throughout East Timor and elsewhere in Indonesia. More than half of the East Timorese population fled East Timor and those who remained took refuge in the countryside.

Many of these refugees found their way to Jakarta and the UNHCR office. As mentioned earlier, the UNHCR regional office was at that point of time understaffed. The task of interviewing these new arrivals was divided between Daniel Yliadi, Henk van Goethem and myself. Since the three of us could not possibly handle the several thousand refugees by ourselves, we received assistance from the Australian Embassy and the Portuguese mission at the Dutch Embassy⁷¹. Several local NGO's also helped out with the registration of East Timorese refugees in urban areas throughout Indonesia.

During those weeks, my work at the UNHCR office intensified. Together with the CNRT and other parties, we tried to assemble a list of all East Timorese refugees who were hiding out in different shelters around Jakarta. Many organisations were involved in providing safe houses for refugees. Help came from all parts of Jakarta; from religious institutions, Human Rights groups and various aid organisations. Many private persons also took in refugees into their own homes, risking their own lives. Helping East Timorese refugees was in many places a very dangerous undertaking. In Jakarta rumours circulated that pro-Indonesian militias in the capital had placed a number of refugees and aid-workers on a death list. Protests outside the UN headquarters at Jl. Thamrin intensified, with flag burnings taking place on several occasions.

⁷¹ Portugal did not have an Embassy in Indonesia at that time and worked therefore from the Dutch Embassy.

Meanwhile, the UNHCR, ICRC, the Australian and Portuguese governments and other national and international organisations tried to find ways to get the refugees to safety outside of Indonesia, a task that proved to be tricky. Although all East Timorese refugees were at risk at the time, some cases were considered at higher risk than others. The high-risk cases were for example people who were active in the CNRT, and the relatives of those. The Australian government, together with the Portuguese agreed that these people should be moved out of the country as soon as possible. It was therefore decided that any person who was considered a high-risk case by the UNHCR, should be referred to either the Australian Embassy or the Portuguese Mission for immediate evacuation. The majority of the several thousands of refugees could not, however, be evacuated the same way due to their sheer number. For these people we had to find an alternative.

7.7 The result of the ballot

In East Timor, 98,6 % of the registered voters of more than 450 000, cast their votes on the 30th of August, equalling the high turnout that was registered at “my” ballot station in Jakarta. The proceedings were handled in an orderly fashion, apart from the tragic incident mentioned above.

The Canadian team assigned by the IOM to handle the external, i.e. outside of East Timor, voting procedure, finalised the counting at Hotel Borobudur after about five hours. The result from this count that included votes from the five polling stations outside East Timor (Yogyakarta, Jakarta, Surabaya, Ujung Pandang and Denpasar) was kept secret as the vote counting was still under process in East Timor.

It was apparent to all observers, however, which side was going to win, and the unexpected calm in East Timor during the day of the referendum was short-lived. Violence from desperate pro-Jakarta militia forces, knowing fully well that their side had lost, resumed the following day on several locations. A number of UN workers received death threats and pro-integration militia

leader Eurico Guterres stated that he and his companions would guard Dili harbour and shoot everyone trying to leave the area.

The vote counting was expected to take a week, but due to the increased violence in the region the proceedings were speeded up and the result was displayed in Dili and in New York at the same time on September 4, 1999.

To the surprise of very few, if any, the outcome of the ballot displayed a massive rejection of the autonomy. 78,5 % of the voters opted for independence while 21,5 % favoured the autonomy package. The government of Indonesia, in a speech by President B J Habibie, concluded that the ballot had been undertaken in a transparent and orderly fashion, and that they accepted the result. Nevertheless, the result still had to pass through the MPR when the general session started in October. This was also done.

The overwhelmingly strong support for independence triggered a wave of violence from pro-Jakarta militia all over East Timor. The situation deteriorated and all journalists were evacuated from Dili during the weekend following the announcement of the result. Not only journalists were threatened, however, and one day Ravi Rajan, the head of the UN offices in Indonesia, sent out a memo to all UN personnel, saying that it was no longer safe to stay in the office and that everybody was advised to leave for home.

This was where I left for Sweden, having abandoned my initial plan to do a number of interviews in East Timor, but instead armed with experiences and insights which eventually led to the discussions with my supervisor and to the revised plans that I have already presented in Chapter 3.

7.8 UN and Timor Loro S'ae

After much negotiation, the international community finally decided that the killings had to be stopped. Australia, attempting to amend some of its dismal history in East Timor, chipped in by providing the majority of the soldiers to the UN-created security force, International Forces for East Timor

(INTERFET) that was set up to restore order in East Timor. Apart from Australians, INTERFET consisted of troops mainly from Thailand and the UK. When the INTERFET forces landed in East Timor, they found a country in almost total devastation. Nearly every house in Dili was burned down and the streets were empty. The Timorese who had not managed to flee the island were hiding in the mountains outside Dili. Several massgraves were discovered. Upon the arrival of INTERFET, the pro-integration militias fled with their tails between their legs, finding it less appealing to fight real soldiers than unarmed civilians. They threatened that they would be back, but so far they have remained in hiding in West Timor.

INTERFET later handed over the administration of the territory to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). The plan is that UNTAET will administrate East Timor for a transitional period until a local East Timorese administration has been built up, and the East Timorese people have elected their own government. This mission of UNTAET is clearly formulated in Security Council resolution 1272 (1999) of 25 October 1999, which states:

UNTAET has overall responsibility for the administration of East Timor and is empowered to exercise all legislative and executive authority, including the administration of justice.⁷²

UNTAET's mandate consists of the following elements:

- To provide security and maintain law and order throughout the territory of East Timor;
- To establish an effective administration;
- To assist in the development of civil and social services;
- To ensure the co-ordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development assistance;
- To support capacity-building for self-government;
- To assist in the establishment of conditions for sustainable development.

7.9 Summary

Before moving on to the next section of the thesis, here is a summary of the account thus far. I have shown that the Majapahit empire's influence did not

⁷² <http://www.un.org/peace/etimor/UntaetM.htm>

reach the island of Timor, and that Timor was only mentioned once in its chronicles (as is, by the way, large parts of Southeast Asia.) The Portuguese arrived to Timor in the early 16th century, but the Portuguese sovereignty over the territory was only settled in the late 19th century. The Portuguese administrated the territory as Portuguese Timor until World War II, during which the Japanese took control. After the war, Portugal resumed authority. In 1974, a coup in Portugal overthrew the Salazar-Caetano regime and ordered a complete Portuguese withdrawal from its colonies. UDT, a local East Timorese party then tried to take control over the territory but lost a very short civil war to Fretilin. Fretilin proclaimed East Timor independent and shortly after Indonesia invaded East Timor. Once in East Timor, Indonesian troops started a brutal oppression of the East Timorese during which time many people lost their lives.

One of the most fateful events during the Indonesian occupation was the tragic massacre at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili in 1991. Many believe that this was the turning point of the independence struggle, at least on an international level, since it was the first time that Indonesian violence in East Timor was filmed and showed on international television. Even though many countries restored their good relations with Indonesia after an initial outcry of protest, the occupation of East Timor was from then on no longer possible to ignore on and it was clear that Suharto was testing his luck with the international community.

In 1997 and 1998 an economic crisis hit all the East Asian countries⁷³. In the wake of this crisis, Suharto had to resign in disgrace and was replaced by B J Habibie. Habibie was at first reluctant to offer the people of East Timor anything more than wide-ranging autonomy, but later agreed to a popular consultation ballot that would decide the future of East Timor. The result of the ballot favoured independence and a terrible butchery started with pro-Indonesian militias as the main villains. After much negotiation, a peace force led by Australia, called INTERFET, was deployed and the militias fled to West

⁷³ Except for Taiwan that managed to sustain an economic growth of 5% through the entire crises.

Timor, the Indonesian half of the island, but not before first burning most of East Timor to the ground. The territory is now run by UNTAET, and will be so until the first democratic elections can be held in East Timor, perhaps in the year 2002.

8. The International Players

8.1 *United States of America*

When Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975, it was with the silent consent of the United States. The American president at that time, Gerald Ford, had together with Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, visited Jakarta just previous to the attack and agreed with the Indonesian government that the US would not have any problems with the invasion. Actually, the invasion was delayed a few days, in order to allow the American president and his staff could return to American soil before the invasion⁷⁴. One reason behind US consent to the invasion of East Timor was the strategic military importance of Indonesia. Bilateral agreements with the Indonesian government were crucial for deep-sea transportation of American nuclear submarines between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. A US military strategist explained:

“ It would certainly be an inconvenience to the superpower if their SSBN (Nuclear Armed Submarines) were denied unimpeded underwater passage through International straits inside territorial waters, having to surface according to the prevailing interpretations of innocent passage, and had to meet safety, pollution and other standards which could be applied for political reasons. For the US, however, the number of straits through which she needed passage in order to reach Soviet targets and for which she could not count on Allied permission was confined essentially to Gibraltar and the Indonesian straits, Lombok and Ombai – Wetar. There she had working arrangements for satisfactory SSBN transit, although they depended on favourable political reactions”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Taylor (1999) p. 64

⁷⁵ Taylor (1999) p. 74-75

Access to the Ombai–Wetar straits was thus an essential part of the US post-Vietnam security strategy.⁷⁶ In a period when the threat of world-communism was far from being a bad joke, the mobility of the American fleet was deemed to be of utmost importance. The US thus chose continued close co-operation with the Indonesian military, and whenever the East Timor question surfaced internationally, the American government always supported the Indonesian side. In 1977, American officials claimed that most of the human casualties in East Timor had occurred before the Indonesian invasion, and the following year the US country officer concluded that most East Timorese were happy with East Timor being a part of Indonesia.⁷⁷ As late as 1987, the US official stance on the East Timor question was that it was a question between Portugal and Indonesia and should be solved without foreign interference.⁷⁸

Among US politicians at the time of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, the fear of communism was widespread, and thus the right to use important waterways within Indonesian territory was not the only reason why the United States supported the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. There had been some indications that FRETILIN, the victor of the brief civil war in 1975, had communist sympathies. This fear was based on the fact that some, nine to be exact, East Timorese students in Portugal had been influenced by the Maoist brand of communism and these students had returned home after the overthrow of the Caetano regime in 1974.⁷⁹ These nine students were used by Indonesia as one pretext among others to invade the territory and, in its turn, provided the US with the argument that supporting Indonesia was in fact an act of self-defence.⁸⁰ Noam Chomsky wrote of this perceived threat of communism in East Timor:

“An independent East Timor would be ‘communist’ by the usual criteria: it might not follow orders in a sprightly enough manner”⁸¹

⁷⁶ See also Dunn p. 346

⁷⁷ Taylor (1999) p. 175

⁷⁸ Taylor (1999) p. 170

⁷⁹ Jannisa p. 204

⁸⁰ Jardine & Chomsky p. 11

⁸¹ Jardine & Chomsky p. 11

Almost fifteen years later the Soviet Union fell apart, and suddenly there was no longer a threat of world-communism. This had several implications, but the following one, highlighted by Benedict Anderson, is certainly applicable to the development in East Timor:

The ending of the cold war and the collapse of Stalinism and Maoist communism have thus had two very important, if apparently contradictory, political implications. On the one hand, the anti- communism, which underlay the legitimating of authoritarian, right wing military regimes in the third world, including Southeast Asia, has been rapidly losing its force. I believe that this is the case even in Indonesia, where a quarter of a century has passed since the physical elimination of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), and where there are not the least signs of any revival- not even in overseas exile. On the other hand, all old- style left- wing revolutionary movements have lost their single most important resource – more important than guns and organisation; namely the confidence of being at the vanguard of history.⁸²

In 1991, pictures of the Santa Cruz massacre were displayed all over the world. Although Washington at first tried to downplay the tragedy, a number of American politicians started to demand that US should rethink its policy regarding Indonesia. After Santa Cruz, several members of the American congress demanded congressional action. A letter on the issue, signed by fifty-two senators, was sent to the then President George Bush. Some months later, the US House of Representatives voted to cut off funds for US military training of Indonesian soldiers.⁸³ Although soon the US signed new deals with Indonesia, these actions showed that the debate on East Timor had taken a new course, and from now on there was no way back for Suharto.

In 1993, William Jefferson Clinton took office as the new President of the United States. Bill Clinton and his vice president Al Gore, who had signed the above-mentioned letter when he was senator, were more concerned with human rights than Reagan and Bush had been during their tenures of office. Before leaving for an OPEC meeting on the 15th of November, 1993,

⁸² Anderson in "*East Timor at the Crossroads*" p. 142

⁸³ Kohen p. 208- 209

President Clinton received a letter signed by thirty-seven senators, urging him to raise the issue of East Timor with Suharto.⁸⁴ It was later reported that during this meeting, Suharto had been offended when Clinton had gently lectured him on human rights.⁸⁵ At that point of time Suharto could afford to be offended by the young American president. The Asian nations were prospering, with economic growth increasing for every year, and foreign investments were pouring into the Asian countries. Five years later, however, the Indonesian economy was on the verge of collapse. Suharto was no longer Washington's favourite dictator, instead he had turned into a liability. With the collapse of the Indonesian economy, American investors began to leave the sinking ship. The politicians followed suit, and by 1998, Washington had definitely turned its back on the old general. Suharto had been a gravel in Washington's shoes during most of the 1990's due to Indonesia's dismal record when it came to human rights, and now there was no longer any need to support the ageing general for financial reasons.

8.2 Portugal

The post-W.W.II era brought most of the European colonialism to an end. The Portuguese dictatorship under Antonio Salazar and Marcelo Caetano, however, were not interested in giving up its colonies. It was not until after the 1974 coup in Lisbon that the Portuguese territories overseas, one by one, were granted independence. The Portuguese withdrawal from East Timor, unlike that from Mozambique or Angola, was sudden and unplanned and left the territory in a state of chaos. Before the withdrawal there had not been any clear objective from the Portuguese administration regarding the future of East Timor. Within the Portuguese military administration, there were split views on whether East Timor should remain a part of Portugal, integrate with Indonesia or become independent.⁸⁶ Towards the end of 1974, after much debate, it was decided by the Portuguese that a three-way proposal would be presented to the Timorese, whereby the people of East Timor were to be

⁸⁴ Walsh in "*East Timor at the Crossroads*" p. 149

⁸⁵ Kohen p. 216

⁸⁶ Dunn, p. 59

given an opportunity to choose between full independence, free association with Portugal or integration with Indonesia.⁸⁷ Soon after, the UDT staged a coup, after which a brief civil war left FRETILIN in power and the Portuguese administration in exile on the little island of Atauro outside Dili.⁸⁸ On December 8 1975, the last remnants of the 400-year-old Portuguese administration finally left East Timor.⁸⁹

Portugal, however, continued to play a role in the future politics of East Timor. In the years immediately following the withdrawal from Timor there was not much interest from any party in Portugal to take on the Timorese cause. A small number of Portuguese politicians have through the years shown a personal interest in the Timor question, an interest which was based on the grounds that Portugal was seen as having both a historical and a constitutional obligation to initiate a solution.⁹⁰ On an official level, however, nothing much was done until Portugal joined the European Community in 1986, from whence Lisbon on several occasions put the East Timor question on the agenda of this organisation.⁹¹

As elsewhere, the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre made a strong and terrifying impression in Portugal, and perhaps more so than in most other places. As Arnold Kohen noted:

No country in the world had a stronger human connection with East Timor than Portugal, but for the Portuguese government, there had always existed a fear of isolation that comes with diplomatic disapproval by the USA and the big European powers like France, Germany, and Britain, all close friends of Indonesia. For Lisbon, Timor was a very difficult issue. But the sight of East Timorese praying in Portuguese and cowering in terror in a cemetery built in the Portuguese style had a

⁸⁷ Dunn in "*East Timor at the Crossroads*" p. 62

⁸⁸ Dunn in "*East Timor at the Crossroads*" p. 64

⁸⁹ Dunn p 290

⁹⁰ In the revised constitution on 1982, article 307 states that:

"Portugal shall remain bound by its responsibility, in accordance with international law, to promote and safeguard the right to independence of Timor Leste. The President of the Republic, assisted by the council of the Revolution, and the Government shall be competent to perform all acts necessary to the achievement of the aims set forth in the foregoing paragraph."

See Dunn p. 371

⁹¹ Dunn p. 372-373

huge impact on the Portuguese people. Public sentiment forced the government's hand.⁹²

Continuous talks between the Portuguese Foreign Minister, José Manuel Durao Barroso and his Indonesian counterpart, Ali Alatas, were held throughout the 1990's. The first round of these talks were not particularly successful, but signs of progress started to appear in 1993 and continued into 1994 when even Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos Horta participated in the meetings. During the meetings in 1993, the Indonesian government agreed to take some measures to ease the situation in East Timor, including the right for UN organisations to gain access to East Timor. After the meeting, the Indonesian government claimed that it would never again negotiate with either Ramos Horta or Gusmão. Moreover, the concessions made during the 1993 talks were only partly fulfilled, and the human rights situation did not improve substantially.⁹³ Portugal, however, continued to support East Timor and even contested the Australian deal with Indonesia over the so called Timor Gap when the country brought this case to the International Court of Justice.⁹⁴

8.3 Australia

Outside of Indonesia, no country has been more directly involved in the East Timorese tragedy than Australia. When Portugal wanted to transform its colonial presence in the region in 1974, Lisbon representatives asked the Australian government to help out with security matters in East Timor, only to receive the response that Australia had no intention of jeopardising its relations with Indonesia over the Timor question.⁹⁵ Gough Whitlam, the Australian Prime Minister at the time, had met with Suharto earlier in that year and had, as it appears, already made up his mind that East Timor should be integrated into Indonesia as soon as possible.⁹⁶

⁹² Kohen p. 209

⁹³ Walsh in "*East Timor at the Crossroads*" p. 152

⁹⁴ Walsh in "*East Timor at the Crossroads*" p. 150

⁹⁵ And as Dunn points out, Australia had been one of the first countries in the world to recognise the nationalist movement in Guinea-Bissau. Dunn p. 81

⁹⁶ Dunn p. 81

There were two main reasons for the Australian sunshine policy towards Indonesia. First, there was the political reason; Australia had seen the Japanese gaining influence in the region and therefore needed to balance this by making friends with Suharto.⁹⁷ The second reason was economic; Mr Whitlam wanted stronger ties with the Association of South East Asian nations (ASEAN) and Indonesia was the key player in this organisation. Australia was also interested in the presumed oil reserves in the Timor Gap, an area between Australia and Timor which by some is believed to be one of the richest oil-fields in the world. Australia's ambassador to Indonesia at that time, Richard Woolcott, wrote in 1975 on this subject:

We are aware of the Australian defence interest in the Portuguese Timor situation but I wonder whether the Department has ascertained the interest of the Minister of the Department of Minerals and Energy in the Timor situation. The present gap in the agreed sea border ...could be more readily negotiated with Indonesia than with Portugal or an independent Portuguese Timor. I know I am recommending a pragmatic rather than a principled stand but that's what national interest and foreign policy is all about.⁹⁸

The Australian Government continued in the 1980's and 1990's to back the Indonesian repression of the East Timorese. In 1982, Gough Whitlam argued in front of the UN General Assembly that the East Timor question should be withdrawn from the UN agenda⁹⁹, and in 1995 Australia and Indonesia signed a security agreement which further strengthened the ties between the two countries. As Scott Burchill explains :

By placing a premium on 'stability' within the Indonesian archipelago and deeper economic relations with Jakarta, Canberra ignored the ethical implications of close ties with a repressive dictatorship.¹⁰⁰

Then suddenly in the late 1990's, under the Conservative administration of John Howard, the Australian policy towards Indonesia changed. The height of

⁹⁷ Horta, Jose Ramos, *"Funu- The Unfinished Saga of East Timor"* Red Sea Press 1987, p. 76

⁹⁸ Jardine & Chomsky p. 46-47

⁹⁹ Burchill in *"Guns and Ballot Boxes"* p 174

¹⁰⁰ Burchill in *"Guns and Ballot Boxes"* p 182

that new policy was when Australia led the INTERFET force which landed in East Timor in 1999. As Scott Burchill sees it, there were three reasons behind this change in policy. First of all, the Howard government had always been looking for a way to distance itself from previous Labour administrations, and it would therefore be an excellent PR victory if the Howard administration could “deliver” an independent East Timor. Secondly, Howard detested the old policy of putting profit before human rights, and did not want to condone the repeated abuse of human rights in Asia¹⁰¹. The third reason, as Burchill sees it, was that Howard had never strayed far from public opinion, and public opinion was clearly on the side of independence for East Timor.¹⁰²

Given the history of Australian policy towards Indonesia, it was not a complete surprise to anyone familiar with the region that the Indonesians felt betrayed by Australia when Canberra suddenly took the lead in pushing for an intervening force to be deployed to East Timor. During the most dramatic stages of the East Timor crises in 1999, there were burnings of Australian flags outside the UN building in Jakarta as well as at the Australian embassy.

8.4 ASEAN

The Problem started because these other countries said ‘look the East Timorese are unhappy’. But there are many unhappy minorities living uncomfortable lives in ASEAN¹⁰³

“Hear no evil, See no evil” has always been the standard reaction within the ASEAN when dealing with criticism on human rights. Singapore’s Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew’s statement above provides a good example of how the ASEAN usually tackles questions regarding human rights. The question of East Timor had several times been debated within the countries of ASEAN, and until 1998 all decisions regarding East Timor had been in favour of Indonesia. Malaysian Journalist Sonny Inbaraj, has in his book *“East Timor-*

¹⁰¹ However this have not stopped the Howard administration from stopping the UNHCHR to do investigations in Australia over oppression of Aborigines.

¹⁰² Burchill in *“Guns and Ballot Boxes”* p 181

¹⁰³ Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore senior minister defending ASEAN principles of non- intervention and laying the blame for the East Timor crisis on Portugal, the EU and US human Rights Groups, at the WEF summit in Singapore in 1999. Asiaweek October 29, 1999.

Blood and Tears in ASEAN” described how the ASEAN governments have been unwilling to criticise Indonesia on what has been referred to as Internal Affairs.¹⁰⁴ When Australia in 1999 asked that the INTERFET force should be formally led by an ASEAN country, there was much hesitation and the only two countries that finally agreed to this suggestion were the Philippines and Thailand. This was not very surprising since these two countries are the only somewhat democratic countries in the ASEAN¹⁰⁵. In an interview with Asiaweek, José Ramos Horta was asked if he was upset with ASEAN’s lack of action:

Yes. They are a club of hypocrites who play golf, display ostentatious ways and crack down on students and intellectuals who disagree with their policies and lifestyle.¹⁰⁶

8.5 Summary

In this part of the thesis I have tried to show the reader how, and why, the main international players over the years have changed their policies towards East Timor. In order to sum this up, I want to stress some important points again.

The colonial empire of Portugal fell apart in the mid-1970’s after a relatively peaceful coup d’etat in April 1974. This had severe repercussions in far off Timor where, after an outburst of political activities, which formerly had been curtailed by the Portuguese secret police, and a brief civil war, Portugal withdrew its administration and left the former colony in chaos. Portugal was still considered by the UN to be the lawful administrator of East Timor, but the country’s politics towards the East Timor question was very low-keyed until Portugal became a member of the EC in 1986. From then on Portugal has

¹⁰⁴ Inbaraj, Sonny “ *East Timor- Blood and Tears in ASEAN*’ Silkworm Books 2nd Revisited Edition 1997

¹⁰⁵ Indonesia is at least trying and could soon be number three and would then be the third largest democracy in the world. For a comprehensive report on democracy in Asia see American NGO Freedom house’s homepage: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/>

¹⁰⁶ Asiaweek September 24, 1999. The Golf issue is very interesting within ASEAN. It is customary before every annual meeting to play a round of golf to show that relations are good between the member states. However, to the meeting in 1998 Mr Surin Pitsuwan, Thailand’s foreign Minister did not bring his golf clubs in order to protest against Burma’s abuse of human Rights. This was considered quite a scandal within the organisation.

acted as the foremost supporter of East Timor's independence on the international arena, at least on macro level.

In the case of the United States it was a mix of greed (i.e. investment opportunities) and cold war communist fear that was the background to US support for an invasion of East Timor. After the fall of the Soviet empire, the communist threat disappeared, and Suharto became more of a liability than an asset. The Santa Cruz massacre in 1991 brought the horrors of East Timor to the attention of the world in a shocking way and made it increasingly difficult for the economic and political allies in the West to support the Suharto regime. In 1997 and 1998, the Asian crises provided the final blow to this regime, thereby paving the way for the popular consultation regarding East Timor's future in September 1999.

Australia had far reaching economical and political interests in neighbouring Indonesia, and therefore had a favourable view of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. The country also became Indonesia's strongest supporter when the occupation was discussed by the UN. This policy changed suddenly, and dramatically, when, under Australian command, the UN force INTERFET arrived in East Timor in late 1999.

I have also briefly showed how the ASEAN countries have worked against East Timor's self-determination throughout the whole period of occupation. Personally, I believe that this stance has more to do with internal ASEAN politics than with the East Timor question *per se*. Apart from Thailand and the Philippines, ASEAN is an organisation made up of repressive dictatorships who have agreed not to interfere with each other's internal affairs, including widespread abuses of human rights.

9. East Timorese Players

9.1 Bishop Belo and the role of the church

Even though being a part of the Portuguese colonial empire, in which the Catholic faith played an important part, the people of East Timor were not easily converted to Catholicism. The great majority of them remained faithful to their age-old animist beliefs; as late as 1970 less than a third of the East Timorese population was Catholic.¹⁰⁷ The Indonesian invasion meant a marked change to this state of affairs. From 1970 to 1990, the number of Catholics in East Timor grew from 180,000 to more than half a million, or from 30 per cent of the population to a near 80 per cent.¹⁰⁸ Influenced by the doctrine of Pancasila,¹⁰⁹ and the wish to root out every trace of communism, Indonesian authorities had actively encouraged the conversion of the East Timorese people into Catholics.¹¹⁰ Most conversions, however, were not merely a response to the wishes of the new masters. On the contrary, many Timorese saw the choice of Catholicism, as opposed to Islam, as a way, and for many the only way, to show dissatisfaction with the new political situation. Over the years, the people of East Timor have also found the church to be the best, and definitely the most secure, forum when voicing their longing for freedom. No one symbolises this voice more than Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo.

Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo was born on 3 February 1948 as the fifth child of Domingos Vaz Filipe and Ermelinda Baptista Filipe in the village of Wailakama, near Vemasse, on the north coast of East Timor. After spending most of his childhood in Catholic schools, Belo graduated from the Dare seminary in 1968. After the graduation, Belo spent a number of years studying theology in Portugal and Rome. In July 1981, he returned to East Timor as a teacher, a position he held until 1993 when he replaced Dom

¹⁰⁷ Archer in *"East Timor at the Crossroads"* p. 121

¹⁰⁸ Archer in *"East Timor at the Crossroads"* p. 127

¹⁰⁹ Pancasila was from the beginning an idea of the first president of Independent Indonesia, Sukarno, at it was to function as Indonesia's state philosophy. This Philosophy is comprised of five principles as follows; a belief in ONE supreme god, humanism, nationalism, popular sovereignty and social justice. On the account of the belief in one supreme god the constitution of the Republic of Indonesia identifies five religions that are allowed to be practiced; Buddhism, Hinduism (where Shiva is here said to be the supreme god), Christianity, Catholicism and Islam. Animism was not allowed and the people should therefore be converted.

¹¹⁰ Anderson, Benedict *"The spectre of Comparisons- Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World"*, Verso Books 1998 p. 135.

Martinho da Costa Lopes as apostolic administrator of the Dili diocese. The fact that Belo, as Dom Martinho before him, was ordained apostolic administrator, and not bishop, is a matter of more than academic interest. To the people of East Timor both men were simply “the bishop”; but in the view of the Vatican a bishop can only be ordained when the political status of a country is not questioned. Regarding East Timor, the Vatican went along with the UN position that this matter was not yet settled, and therefore Belo became an apostolic administrator, i.e. acting bishop. One implication of this was that the diocese of Dili was administrated directly by the Vatican. This was, of course, a disappointment to Indonesia, who would have preferred the appointment of a bishop who was administered by the Catholic Church of Indonesia.

Belo’s predecessor, Dom Martinho had himself been a strong defender of the rights of the people in East Timor. This had, however, made him a liability to the Vatican who wanted smooth ties with Indonesia and therefore asked Dom Martinho to resign.¹¹¹ Following the resignation Dom Martinho moved to Portugal, from where he made a number of trips around the world to try and inform the world about the nature of the Indonesian occupation of his homeland. The decision to replace him with the young and inexperienced Carlos Belo was endorsed by Jakarta. It was widely believed that Belo would not be the same gravel in the shoe as Dom Martinho had been, and that he would without much fuss do what Jakarta told him to do. It was soon clear that this assumption was a mistaken one.¹¹²

After a short period of time, Belo proved that he was not at all the man that Jakarta had wished for. After a massacre in Kraras in 1983, Belo spoke out and condemned the action. In 1984 this insubordinate behaviour continued with Belo writing a letter to his predecessor Dom Martinho describing the suffering of the Timorese people. In this letter Belo urged the people abroad to “pray for us and appeal to the free world to open its eyes to the barbarities

¹¹¹ See Jannisa p 242

¹¹² Dom Martinho retired to Portugal where he lived until his death on 27th of February 1991.

of which the Indonesians are capable".¹¹³ Belo's outspoken attitude made him a prime target for Indonesian intimidations. Although Belo himself said in 1989 "the military are threatening me physically and psychologically. They send me anonymous letters. They want to kill me"¹¹⁴, he continued to tell the outside world about the Indonesian oppression of East Timor.

Belo declared on many occasions that the church stood outside of politics and that he did not wish to transform the role of the church to that of a resistance forum. He has also continuously declared that he is only interested in doing his job, and part of this job is to listen and try to help the people within the community. Be that as it may, it is of course difficult to draw a line between where Belo served only as a man of God and when he also served the cause of self-determination. Certainly there is no such line to be drawn and the church in East Timor must be accredited to have played a most decisive role in maintaining the spirit of the people during the years of terror. As one woman have expressed her faith:

We have nothing left to lose. We are human beings and they have treated us as insects. We will never accept them here. Even if we have to die resisting, we will resist. We have our dignity and our own identity. And God is with us.¹¹⁵

The church network in East Timor has been vital for the survival of the resistance movement. The church is present in every town and in every village across the territory, and has managed to provide some shelter from the violence of the Indonesian troops, as well as providing help to relatives of resistance fighters who had either been killed by Indonesian soldiers or were living in the mountains of East Timor.¹¹⁶

The Catholic Church of East Timor has also, beginning with the exiled Dom Martinho, played an important role as communicator to the outside world about the situation in East Timor. The Vatican, as explained above, had after the Indonesian invasion placed the diocese of Dili under its direct

¹¹³ Jannisa p. 245

¹¹⁴ Taylor (1999) p. 156

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Archer in "*East Timor at the Crossroads*" p. 120

administration. This meant that the church personnel in Timor could not easily be dismissed and replaced by the authorities in Jakarta, and this was of course one major reason why the church managed to play such an important role in assisting the suffering people of east Timor. Apart from this, however, the Vatican did not act much on the behalf of the faithful in East Timor. The priority of the Vatican was to keep up good relations with Indonesia for several reasons; First of all, Indonesia, in spite of being the largest Muslim country in the world, showed great tolerance towards other religions. This in turn gave Indonesia an important role in inter-religious talks between Muslims and Christians. Secondly, although there were only a few million Catholics in Indonesia, they comprised a powerful community which included several ministers and other high officials; General Benny Murdani, who led the invasion of East Timor being one of them. The Indonesian Government had also generously assisted the Catholic schools and hospitals in Indonesia.¹¹⁷

During the 1980's, Vatican bureaucrats often voiced the opinion that Belo, as Dom Martinho before him, should be removed¹¹⁸ on the grounds that he had a negative effect to the Vatican's diplomatic relations with Indonesia. An internal battle between hard-liners opting for *realpolitik* on the Timor question and other more sympathetic members of the Vatican gave the Holy See's policy on East Timor quite an ambivalent face over the years.

The advantage of having the church in East Timor administered directly from Rome, even if the Vatican showed only a token interest in the plight of the population, gave church members such as Belo a unique opportunity to communicate with the outside world. During the 1980's, it was in fact the only institution in East Timor which had this opportunity.¹¹⁹

9.2 Xanana Gusmão, José Ramos Horta, and popular resistance in East Timor

¹¹⁶ Archer in "East Timor Crossroads", p. 126-127

¹¹⁷ Kohen p 141-142

¹¹⁸ See for example Kohen, p. 155.

¹¹⁹ Archer in "East Timor at the Crossroads", p. 126

José Alexandre Gusmão, a.k.a. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, was born on June 20, 1946 in Manatuto, East Timor, where his father was a schoolteacher. He was raised in the country, together with his brother and five sisters. Xanana, as he is most often called, completed primary school before starting secondary school at the Catholic Mission of "Nossa Senhora de Fatima" in Dare, outside Dili. He then went to Dili for further studies, and he played a minor role in the de-colonisation process which preceded the Indonesian invasion in December 1975. Following the invasion, Xanana was one of many who escaped Dili and became a guerilla soldier in the hinterland of East Timor. In late 1978, the Indonesian air force bombed the remnants of the East Timor armed resistance, in the proceedings also killing more than 3000 civilians. The leader of the armed movement, Nicolau Lobato, was killed in a gunfight with Indonesian troops. Following this, the Indonesian troops soon finished off what was left of the FRETILIN support bases and the FALINTIL (the armed wing of FRETILIN) fighters. The collapse of the armed resistance was followed by a famine, caused by the impossibility to carry out traditional (slash and burn) agriculture during the bombardments. During this period 80 per cent of the FALINTIL fighters and 85 per cent of the FRETILIN leadership were killed, or died by disease or malnutrition.¹²⁰ It was not until March 1981 that the few survivors of the FALINTIL could meet again. At this meeting, Xanana Gusmão was elected commander-in-chief of the FALINTIL forces and he reorganised the resistance.

The strength of the Indonesian troops was now overwhelming, and the guerrilla fighters had to operate in very small self-supportive units of three or four men. Meanwhile, a clandestine support organisation called "Nurep" was built up in the villages and towns.¹²¹ Through the "Nurep", the remaining fighters could obtain radio equipment and batteries, which were vital in keeping contact with the other fighters in the territory. The loyalty that the people of East Timor had towards the guerrillas was unquestionable. There were always people in the towns willing to take to the mountains to join the

¹²⁰ Cox & Carey p. 35

¹²¹ Nucleos de Resistencia Popular, Cox & Carey p, 35

resistance fighters. In this way, the resistance managed to rebuild itself into a network that reached all corners of East Timor.

In the mid 1980's, Xanana, together with José Ramos Horta, reorganised the resistance movement by creating the CNRM (c.f. Ch. 7.1) as an umbrella organisation for the East Timorese resistance. This move made it less obtrusive for former UDT loyalists and others who saw themselves as non-FRETILIN to participate actively in the struggle for independence. As the leader of CNRM, Xanana also co-operated with the Catholic Church, thus creating an even broader platform of resistance, armed as well as unarmed.

For us all Timorese are Xanana. If one Xanana is captured another Xanana will come!¹²²

Eventually, in 1992, Xanana was captured by Indonesian troops in Dili. However, the mere fact that Xanana could repeatedly move in and out of Dili without drawing attention from the omnipresent Indonesian soldiers during the resistance campaign, was a sign of the support he enjoyed from the people in Dili and elsewhere in East Timor. In January 1993, a trial started that would later have Gusmão sent to twenty years in prison.¹²³ Most observers at the trial concluded that it was unfair and that it violated human rights. More important, however, was the fact that he was given a trial at all. The invasion and occupation of East Timor had already cost about 200.000 East Timorese lives, so why spare the life of the one person who more than anyone else symbolised the resistance of East Timor? Why did the Indonesian soldiers not simply kill him? The answer to that is that five years earlier they probably would have done just that, but after the Santa Cruz massacre the eyes of the world were on Indonesia, and an assassination of Xanana was probably ruled out as a political impossibility.

The imprisoned Xanana continued to serve as the formal head of the resistance movement while his former second-in-command, Konis Santana

¹²² Anonymous resistance fighter quoted in Cox & Carey, p 39

¹²³ Taylor in *“East Timor at the Crossroads”* p. 245

took over the role of commander-in-chief of the FALINTIL forces. After his imprisonment, Xanana paradoxically became better known to the outside world than he had been before his capture, and was now widely being recognised abroad as the leader of the Timorese people. Xanana has since 1981, among his fellow Timorese, had a legendary status as the resistance leader, but since his capture in 1992, Xanana's fame has spread outside of his followers and the small circle of "East Timor specialists" to political leaders from all corners of the world who have visited him in Cipinang jail in Jakarta. These cordial visits were, perhaps, based upon the realisation that Suharto's rule was nearing its end and that it was now time to make up for past sins, i.e. supporting the brutal regime in Jakarta with arms and/or silence about the situation in Timor. If Xanana harbours any bitterness, he does not show this. According to many observers he has a charisma comparable to that of Martin Luther King or Ernesto Ché Guevara. When he talks, he does not talk about revolution or revenge, not even against Indonesia, instead he, like Mandela, stresses the importance of reconciliation and the need to look forward in rebuilding East Timor. Xanana has said that he does not see himself as the next leader of an independent East Timor, feeling that his job is done once East Timor has gained its independence. At the time of writing he works together with UNTAET head, Sergio Vieira de Mello, as an unofficial co-president of the territory.

José Ramos-Horta was born in Dili on December 26, 1949. He had a Timorese mother and a Portuguese father who, like many others, had been exiled to East Timor by the Salazar dictatorship. José was educated in a Catholic Mission in the village of Soibada, and later studied at the seminary Dare, like most of the present day political leaders in East Timor. Originally schooled as a journalist,¹²⁴ the exiled Horta later achieved a Doctorate in Law and studied Human Rights in Strasbourg, France.

¹²⁴ He actually held a position as Public Affairs and Media Director with the Embassy of Mozambique, in Washington, D.C. in 1987-1988.

Horta became a leader in exile when he left East Timor three days before the Indonesian troops invaded the territory, after having been appointed to represent the East Timorese independence movement abroad. Directly after the invasion, in December 1975, Horta travelled to the UN headquarters in New York and urged the world to take action. For the next ten years, Horta was the UN representative of FRETILIN. In 1986, Horta continued this task as special representative of CNRM. When CNRM changed into CNRT in 1998, Horta was elected vice president, a position he still maintains today.

Horta has during his years as special representative become the Ambassador at large for the Timorese people. In 1994 he met with Indonesian foreign minister Ali Alatas, being the first East Timorese leader to meet with Indonesian government representatives.¹²⁵ In December 1996, José Ramos-Horta's long uphill struggle was awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize, a price he shared with Bishop Belo.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 1996, in two equal parts, to Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo and José Ramos-Horta for their work towards a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor.

Carlos Belo, bishop of East Timor, has been the foremost representative of the people of East Timor. At the risk of his own life, he has tried to protect his people from infringements by those in power. In his efforts to create a just settlement based on his people's right to self-determination, he has been a constant spokesman for non-violence and dialogue with the Indonesian authorities. Ramos-Horta has been the leading international spokesman for East Timor's cause since 1975. Recently he has made a significant contribution through the "reconciliation talks" and by working out a peace plan for the region.

In awarding this year's Nobel Peace Prize to Belo and Ramos-Horta, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wants to honour their sustained and self-sacrificing contributions for a small but oppressed people. The Nobel Committee hopes that this award will spur efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict in East Timor based on the people's right to self-determination.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Walsh in "*East Timor at the Crossroads*" p. 158

¹²⁶ Nobel Peace Prize Committee Homepage: <http://www.nobel.no/96eng.html>

9. Bringing it all together

This thesis started off by telling the tale of East Timor's rocky road to independence. This tale has for the most part been one of greed, *realpolitik* and brutal oppression, but it has also been a tale of unexpected success for a resistance movement which on several occasions has been knocked out, only to emerge once again. The first part of this thesis saw East Timor starting the new millennium with a plan to become an independent state within a few years.

Towards the end of the thesis I have outlined the important parts played by leading figures such as José Ramos-Horta, Xanana Gusmão and Bishop Carlos Belo. I also explained the important, and complementary, parts played by the Catholic Church and the FALINTIL guerrillas.

In accordance with Eyerman & Jamison, I would like to explain the function of movement intellectuals. When I claim that Belo, Horta and Xanana were created as movement intellectuals, I agree with Eyerman & Jamison that in many cases, this one included, it is the movement that forms the intellectual and not vice versa. The East Timorese resistance movement provided space for certain individuals to develop into intellectual leaders. The roles of these intellectuals changed over time, as the resistance itself changed. This change was most obvious in the case of Xanana Gusmão, who has changed from a Robin Hood-like warrior, a defender of the defenceless, into a soft-voiced political philosopher and well-informed statesman.

Or take the case of Bishop Belo. Some would perhaps argue that Belo is the classical type of intellectual. Being the head of the Catholic Church in East Timor, this would automatically put him in the position as a leader of the East Timorese, since most of them are connected to the Church through their faith. Just because he was a leader of the people through the Church did not, however, automatically make him a leader of the resistance movement. His position as a *de facto*, if not in title, leader in the independence movement was formed by the movement and not by his own initiative. Let us

recapitulate. Belo was sent to East Timor to succeed Dom Martinho da Costa Lopez. Belo had been out of East Timor during the Indonesian occupation and was therefore not expected to be as emotionally involved as his predecessor. He was also rather young which would, presumably (in the eyes of the Indonesians) have made him more easy to manipulate. Belo soon found himself being not just the religious leader but also the spiritual, in a wider sense. He was the head of an institution that was not only the provider of religious services in the territory, but which also gradually adopted the role of a sanctuary and a forum for the voice of self-determination. Belo had to act accordingly and thus he became one of the intellectual leaders of East Timor, not because he decided to, or even wished to, but because the setting in which he worked provided the space for this development. This description fits well into what Eyerman & Jamison tells us:

We argue that established intellectuals are transformed through their movement activity, even where (. /.), they may bring many of their preconceived ideas and social networks, their cultural capital, with them.¹²⁷

Eyerman & Jamison also mention that during the course of the movement, the intellectual may change appearance in interaction with what they call “The Other”. In the case of Belo, we can see how he, as a movement intellectual, changed initially when the Vatican chose to administer the Catholic Church in East Timor bilaterally, and later after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

This is also illustrated in the career of Xanana Gusmão. Xanana took over the leadership of FALINTIL after most of the armed resistance had been wiped out. Against all odds, Xanana managed to re-organise the resistance, and then assumed the role of an almost ghost-like character in the forest fighting for the people. Xanana was, as mentioned above, arrested in 1992 and sent to prison. Imprisoned, Xanana was able to move from the local context in East Timor, to the global arena of world politics as a recognised and respected freedom fighter. From this time on it became, to Indonesia’s great

¹²⁷ Eyerman & Jamison, p. 119

chagrin, increasingly difficult to exclude Xanana from any negotiations concerning the future of East Timor.

An earlier example of how Xanana at least once before his capture functioned as a link between the local and global context is the interview he gave to the Australian trade union lawyer Robert Domm in September 1990.¹²⁸ The Domm interview with Xanana is important for several reasons; firstly, when Domm arrived in Dili there were numerous people involved in bringing Domm to Xanana who was hiding in the hills outside of Dili. There were people everywhere scouting and reporting to ensure that Domm would arrive without being monitored by the Indonesian military. The participation from so many people clearly showed the large support Xanana and his FALINITIL fighters had by the people of East Timor. Secondly, when Domm met Xanana he met a man who was very much aware of what was happening in the outside world, a man who easily commented on issues concerning world politics, secessionist theories and guerrilla warfare. The content of the interview showed how well connected Xanana was with the outside world and it also gave Xanana the face of a people's leader and not just a guerrilla fighter. Thirdly, and maybe most important, was the international reaction to the interview. The Indonesian authorities were furious because the local military had not stopped the interview. In Australia especially, but also in other countries, the interview helped to expose the Timor question in the 1990's (before the filmed massacre at Santa Cruz), thereby increasing the public support of East Timor.

José Ramos Horta represents a certain character within the movement, identified by Eyerman & Jamison and as "the professional". Indeed, Horta fits quite well into Eyerman & Jamison's profile of a professional if we look at his background and his position within the movement. Although he is not, like the examples in Eyerman & Jamison, employed by the East Timorese as a professional or what call they non-committed professional¹²⁹, his activities

¹²⁸ Jannisa, p. 253

¹²⁹ Eyerman & Jamison, p. 100

within the movement and his contacts with “The Other” definitely fits the profile. As the authors explain:

Those who act as intermediaries between the movement and its ‘Other’, translating aspects of the movement’s newly articulated worldview into programs from which specific demands can be turned into negotiable items in the arenas of the established political culture. Movement spokespeople and experts thus filter out aspects of a rather diffuse worldview, which as a source of collective identity has served as a framework for mobilising supporters, into clearly defined items for political negotiations in the institutional frameworks of the established political culture.¹³⁰

The activities of Jose Ramos Horta I believe illustrate that of a “professional”, as in the term used by Eyerman & Jamison, and he does not necessarily have to be non-committed (which he definitively is not) or professionally employed by the movement.

To sum this up, I would firstly want to point out that my aim here is not to give a full account of the leaders of the East Timorese resistance, nor do I intent to go further into analysing the resistance movement itself. I have merely given a short account on the basic facts of the movement and how it has evolved over the past years. I have stressed the importance of some of the most important of the movement intellectuals, such as like Xanana Gusmão, José Ramos Horta and Bishop Belo, but I have also tried to explain how the roles of these leaders have been shaped by the movement as such. Unfortunately, there is no room within this thesis to venture any further into how Belo, Horta and Xanana have changed over the years, and how much influence the “Other” has exercised over the values, ideas and actions of these people and vice versa.

Let us recapitulate by looking once again at the historical process described in part one and to a lesser extent on part two. The historical process is very important and there are several events that have been crucial in the East Timorese development. One such local event is the Dom Boaventura uprising

¹³⁰ Eyerman & Jamison, p. 102

in the second decade of the 20th century, which managed to unify most of the different ethno-linguistic groups in East Timor.

The fall of communism played a decisive role on a global level. Once the spectre of Marx was exorcised, the Western alliance with Suharto became increasingly fragile, until finally the Indonesian economic crises in the late 1990's forced Suharto out of power. Habibie took over and gave way to internal as well as international pressure to let East Timor go. International pressure had been on the increase ever since pictures of the Santa Cruz massacre were cabled out to television viewers around the world. In Australia, we saw a political change where the new government tried to distance itself from the old one by rethinking its ties with Indonesia. All these different events provided opportunities for the independence forces to succeed as they eventually did.

It would therefore be obvious to conclude that social changes occur when historical events provide opportunities for the people to respond and force a change. I believe, however, that the explanation is a little bit more complex than that and this is when my approach moves closer to Giddens and Abrams.

In this thesis I have tried to describe the global and local context of the East Timor question and show that it is the meeting between the two, that is the base for the political change in East Timor. For this meeting to take place there must exist, what I would like to call, travellers. Travellers are usually people¹³¹ that can work as links between the two levels. Ramos Horta is the most obvious example, spending most of his political career a connection between the International community and the East Timorese independence movement. Nevertheless, I would not say that Ramos Horta is typical, on that score, I think that Belo and Xanana are more aptly described as travellers. Xanana was acting almost exclusively on the local level until the Indonesian military caught him and put him in prison. Once in prison, he became an

¹³¹ I also believe that it could be events like the Santa Cruz massacre as in the case of East Timor.

international figure and from there made the connection to the conscience of the outside world, becoming a leading figure for the independence movement both locally and internationally. The same thing happened with Bishop Belo once the Vatican became more sympathetic to the East Timorese cause. Belo then used this channel to transfer his messages out of the isolation that East Timor was in the early days of the resistance.

The second part of the thesis revealed how powerful countries like United States and Australia sacrificed the people of East Timor for reasons of economic profit and fear of communism. The second part also showed how Portugal, the former colonial ruler, became one of East Timor's few allies in the international arena. Here we could also see how the policies of the international community changed over the years due to several different historic events that made some countries review its ties with Indonesia. I also showed how interest groups in the different countries managed to keep the connection between the micro and macro levels alive. In Australia the Robert Domm interview got much attention and so have many of Noam Chomsky's articles in the USA.

The works of Domm, Chomsky and many others also show us that while it is important to describe the actions of big international players towards East Timor it is also important to acknowledge the work of organisations and private persons in many countries who helped keeping the Timor Question alive. In Australia there was, at least initially, an unholy alliance between leftist groups and old war veterans who had fought in East Timor during W.W.II. These people managed to keep the awareness alive in Australia and over the years attracted several thousands to the cause.

In Portugal a few exiled Timorese and the noted scholar Barbedo de Magalhães kept the Timor question alive even during the "silent decade" from 1976 – 1986. In Sweden "Svenska Freds"¹³² and the Swedish East Timor committee repeatedly criticised Swedish weapon exports to Indonesia in the

¹³² Actually the first time I heard about the Timor question was on a Svenska Freds seminar while I was in 7th grade.

shadow of the East Timor tragedy. Very few important scholars have devoted their time to the East Timor question, but people like Peter Carey, John Taylor, Benedict Anderson, Noam Chomsky and the aforementioned Barbedo de Magalhães have all contributed by producing a great amount of articles and books explaining the implications of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

It goes without saying that the *real* heroes of this story is the people of East Timor. Without their courageous resilience there would be no resistance fighters in the bush and there would be no travellers between local and global levels, and there would certainly be no reason for a *malae* (foreigner) like me to write a thesis about the struggle for independence in east Timor, for there would be no such struggle.

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