

## **APHEDA 2011 Timor-Leste Study Tour**

**by Chris White**

Timor-Leste is one hour 10 minutes flight north-west from Darwin over the Timor Sea. It has the same tropical climate and gum trees as Northern Australia but very mountainous. Our study tour of seven Australian unionists, APHEDA members, on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2011 flew from Darwin to Dili, capital of Timor-Leste. We visited APHEDA projects in Dili and then travelled east to Baucau and to villages in the mountains and then west to the town of Liquica.

This first story is of a community learning centre. We drove east from Dili for four hours along very rough dusty roads damaged not yet repaired - there is still little infrastructure - beside beautiful beaches and the steep mountainside, through small poor villages to Baucau, the next biggest town. We drove to the APHEDA 'Place of Learning' up on the mountainside in the village of Dauburubaha, near Viqueque town. We meet women working with our partner, Grupo Feto Foinsa'e Timor Lorosa'e (GFFTL), who teach literacy and income generation skills to rural women. GFFTL is an organisation of women students from the National University of Timor-Leste who conduct literacy training. Women in the village after independence said they wanted to learn to read, write and count. These literacy lessons in Tetum have been going well for a few years.

On arrival the women were at their lessons. They greeted us warmly with introductions all around and we discussed through translation their classes. We eat and drank tea. We noted the women's need for better shelter from the rain in their 'classroom area'. We purchased their traditional crafts and Tais.

Timor-Leste people are small in numbers only over a million who have been very vulnerable to invaders and suffered genocide before winning independence. As a new nation Timor-Leste faces immense challenges, is still very poor, surviving and optimistic just beginning slowly for their people's development.

One challenge is that 2/3rds of adult rural women under the Portuguese colonialists and the Indonesian army never attended any school (similarly with men). With high illiteracy, learning to read and write and count is vital so they can participate in their new lives and in their democracy. APHEDA supports people to organise themselves to meet their needs.

APHEDA is the Australian unions ACTU overseas aid organisation. Union Aid Abroad works worldwide with local NGO partners and donors assisting poverty stricken people in training projects and for workers' rights. The APHEDA

strategy is to work in projects with enduring self-management. We saw how this succeeds.

<http://www.apheda.org.au/projects/easttimor/index.html>

I report below on APHEDA supporting unions. Our group learnt about the government's development plans with their oil and gas money. The Timor-Leste budget is 90% dependent on such income. A pipeline is operating by the companies into Darwin, but not yet to Timor-Leste.

I listened to the politics. Xanana Gusmao, elected as the first President, is now the PM and the President is Jose Ramos-Horta. FRETILIN the first government with Mari Alkatiri as PM is now in opposition.

### **Cooperatives**

We visited a bamboo cooperative in the mountains with workers planting seeds to making finished bamboo products, such as bamboo beds on order. The head of the village told their history from 2001 and NGO leaders explained how they are sustainable and share income in the cooperative.

We visited other projects where women learn sewing. They now make and sell products, school-shirts etc.

We drive west from Dili to Liquica, where we meet women from two Community Learning Centres (a KBH project). The Community Learning Centres (CLCs) form a central part of APHEDA's vocational education training program. The 5 CLCs are developed with the local communities, and KBH works closely with the group members to develop and implement training. KBH work with local trainers to provide training in skills such as sewing and embroidery, organic agriculture, making tempe (a fermented soybean product), managing kiosks and mini-restaurants, chicken farming and handicraft production.

On the first day in Dili we visited the Labour Advocacy Institute for Timor-Leste. After introductions to Clemente the owner and others, we hear of the carpentry training in their workshop. Clemente has been successful in running his business, and receives orders from the government, Timorese customers and other NGOs. He works as a trainer with the other carpentry groups in the rural districts.

The teachings include business management skills for project planning and management, writing reports and bookkeeping. APHEDA leaders Elisabeth de

Araujo and Tanya Karliychuk report on this:

[http://www.asu.asn.au/media/international/20110111\\_uaaapheda.html](http://www.asu.asn.au/media/international/20110111_uaaapheda.html)

APHEDA and unions support a TL theatre group. Dynamic young actors making people laugh performed a play about ethics in the workplace. This Expressional Arts Project sees story telling as most important to present new workplace rights in this theatrical form. PM Xanana Gusmao is a poet, supports the arts, opened an Arts Academy and wants young people to train as artists.

We visited the community radio-station Radio Lorico Lian in Dili we support and listened to how volunteers put on their programmes. We donated Australian music, CDs. Community radio is a powerful medium in Timor-Leste due to low levels of literacy in the community and the passion for the historic and local language, Tetum. Radio Lorico Lian broadcasts on average between 12 and 16 hours per day in Dili and at community events/meetings outside Dili when possible. Radio Lorico Lian has a well developed network of broadcasting volunteers and producers, and relies heavily on the time and effort of these volunteers to sustain the station. Their experience of broadcasting continuously for the past several years in Dili makes them one of the oldest community broadcasters in Timor-Leste. They have had training in station and equipment management, equipment repair and maintenance, program production, ethics in journalism (including defamation), and the role of independent media, which was especially useful during the constituent assembly campaign and parliamentary elections. The Coordinator of Radio Lorico Lian, Nono, is also the President of ARKTL, the Timor- Leste Community Radio Association.

We were proud to attend the new APHEDA office opening in Dili with APHEDA leader Elisabeth de Araujo and staff. Everyone enjoyed delicious Timor-Leste food and drank beer. We met volunteer workers and supporters. Last year APHEDA trained over 400 people, mostly women.

The priest officially blessed the APHEDA office. Timor-Leste is 96% Catholic. When the Portuguese left in 1975 only about 35% of the population was Catholic (the rest followed traditional religions). The Portuguese did not forcibly convert, it was the Indonesian State ideology Pancasila that made the population declare for one of the five approved religions (atheism was not allowed as it implied communism). The Church played a key role in the struggle, Archbishop Bello receiving the Nobel peace prize with Ramos-Horta. The Church is strong, culturally, in everyday life. A huge Statue of Christ is on the Dili hill-top.

We visited the Santa Cruze Cemetry where young protesters were massacred by the TNI Indonesian army but secretly filmed and publicly exposed on our TV screens.

This protest generation is now critical of post-independence as Jill Jolliffe (see books in Appendix) found in 'Postcolonial Blues East Timor's Lost Generation' in the august 2011 Monthly <http://www.themonthly.com.au/jill-jolliffe> She interviews Lemos, a contemporary famous singer and in the West in the music for the film Balibo.

'Known as generation four ('the new generation'), Lemos' contemporaries are remembered principally for staging the pro-independence demonstration at Santa Cruz cemetery in 1991, in the East Timor capital of Dili, which ended in a massacre by the Indonesian army. The movement in fact began in 1989 during a visit by Pope John Paul II when students held a demonstration and hit world headlines. Before that, the brunt of resistance to Jakarta's occupation forces had been borne by the resistance army FALINTIL (the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor) fighting from the mountains.

Many of the students were captured and viciously tortured by the Indonesian military, but their actions heralded an urban uprising that provided crucial relief for the hard-pressed guerrilla army. Moreover, they spelled doom for military planners in Jakarta, who realised that all attempts to indoctrinate the younger generation had failed and that a second generation of resistance fighters would replace the old.' Jolliffe's current report underlies the new personal struggles for living in Timor-Leste today.

I now return to meeting the unions.

### **Unions growing**

On the first Saturday our union group met with the unions who only started organising this century. Workers were not allowed by the Indonesians or the Portuguese to bargain in unions. Since independence, with some ILO principles as a first Labour Code, workers have labour laws that allow the right to be in unions and to organise and to bargain with the right to strike (that is in the TL Constitution). Workers are becoming involved. From 1999 until now workers have been forming unions and now collectively bargaining and settle disputes.

[http://www.apheda.org.au/projects/easttimor/pages/files/Donor\\_Report\\_07-08\\_EastTimor\\_KSTL.pdf](http://www.apheda.org.au/projects/easttimor/pages/files/Donor_Report_07-08_EastTimor_KSTL.pdf)

We exchanged greetings with the Timor Teachers Union (ETTU), the Timor-Leste Nurses Association (AETL), the Public Sector Union (SFP-TL), the Maritime, Energy & Transport Union of Timor-Leste (METU-TL), the Agricultural Workers Union (SATL), the Construction Workers Union (UCTL) and the General Workers Union (UGTL) (covering Security workers, Hospitality & Retail

workers). The Public Sector Union held their inaugural Congress in September 2007. The Teachers Union (ETTU) was inactive after their office was destroyed by fire in April 2006 but new leadership was elected and KSTL has helped to reinvigorate the ETTU. The Maritime, Energy and Transport Union have more than doubled in size to over 500 members.

Unions joined together in the 2002 Congress of 130 delegates into the peak union organisation the KSTL - **Konfederasaun Sindikatu Timor-Leste**.

We expressed solidarity from Australian unions with KSTL's President Zito da Costa. He explained KSTL history. I presented solidarity letters from Unions NT and unions in Darwin. He replied with his letter of solidarity and thanks as they remember the help already from Australian unionists.

We listened to their workplace issues and disputes over no pay. On unfair dismissals the KSTL wants reinstatement as a remedy not compensation and this is disputed. They are negotiating collective agreements. We learnt how unions are strengthening and have 10,500 members, but not many financial.

The KSTL General Secretary Rigo Monterio was away working that day but I met him later at dinner the last night at Elizabeth's. I continued discussions with Zito, a wise and practiced leader, and listened to recent industrial disputes.

### **Jobs a priority**

Zito said a major union issue is job creation given the 43% unemployment. The KSTL is to put making jobs particularly in the rural areas with Dili funding Provincial governments as demands to all political parties before the 2012 election.

Timor-Leste political parties accept workers' rights and the role of effective unions to assist economic development. Employers support the tripartism. Timor-Leste is yet to have an anti-union party like Howard/Abbott.

The unrest that began in April 2006 was very traumatic for East Timorese people, and rebuilding the confidence of people to participate in democratic civil society will be a long-term process. Central to this is building strong democratic and representative organisations, such as trade unions, that can keep people informed of decision-making by elected representatives. Pleasing growth and progress is being made in many of these unions.

### **The new Labour Code**

The Timor-Leste Parliament is debating amendments to the 2002 Labour Code for worker's rights. Where nations establish labour rights and have wage increases, then these flow into the local economy and assists poor communities. The unions were involved with business and the government in the tripartite consultations. Of the approximately 130 articles in the new Code, about 50 were recommended by the KSTL.

The new Code is much more acceptable than the old one for the union movement in Timor-Leste. It covers OH&S issues, migrant workers, reforms on contracts of employment, casualisation, collective bargaining, right to strike provisions, the setting of the minimum wage, new Labour Department institutions, and processes on unfair dismissal and the right to reinstatement. Strong debate ensures on the details. Some sections are more favourable to workers than our Fair Work Act.

We met Mr. Bendito Freitas the Secretary of State for Vocational Training and Employment who is responsible for the Labour Code. His press release says: 'Labour legislation, besides being a priority for the Government, is a fundamental tool to establish the rules in this area. The Labour Code is currently in the National Parliament, with Commissions A and H and awaits approval.

In Timor-Leste there are many cases of national workers living a precarious job situation or are just unemployed. Many of these cases are the result of the lack of an employment contract with the company, a contract that leaves them unable to enforce their rights as workers.

Currently, unemployment faced by young men and women force them to accept proposals for work in conditions that may not be ideal. Bendito de Freitas believes that they tend to accept what is offered to them without negotiating and without asserting their rights as workers.

Another important aspect is the entry of international workers who end up competing with national workers, and in this aspect the Labour Code will also regulate the protection, defense and rights of all workers. This is also one of the responsibilities of the Secretariat of State, to regulate and supervise the work of foreigners in Timor-Leste and assist workers and employers in matters involving labour.

To enforce the principles of equality in accordance with the International Labour Standards and support the implementation of the Labour Code, DL 19/2010 of December 1st, establishes the status of the General-Inspectorate of Labour (LGI), under the responsibility of SoSPTE. The LGI is a public service that controls the compliance with the standards for working conditions, prevention of

occupational hazards, social security, employment and unemployment protection and employment of foreigners.'

These new workplace laws will come into operation. Government labour regulation institutions are then to be formed and within an ILO-type tripartite framework, familiar in other countries. With the economy in growth with government contracts for re-building, Australian unions will work step by step for Timor-Leste to have basic workers' rights.

Mr. Bedito Freitas explained his plans linking vocational training to economic works funded from the Human Development fund. Youth unrest, protests, gangs and violence is still occurring with high unemployment, but now more young people are trained to go into jobs and to be able to work on government tenders.

Politics is raised. I am asked about PM Julia Gillard our first woman PM and the unions and the Labor government.

The KSTL at their 2011 Congress on Politics and Trade Unions resolved that they and the unions are independent of the political parties (unlike most Australian unions under ALP government hegemony).

### **Working Women's Centre**

We visited the new Working Women's Centre Timor-Leste in the APHEDA office. Jessica Sequeira (WWCTL) came with us on the tour.

<http://workingwomenscentretimor-leste.blogspot.com>

This introductory video clip is by Shabnam Hameed Trade Union Advisor to the KSTL and for Working Women's Centre Timor-Leste.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFQpimC65QO>

Ged Kearney ACTU President is to launch on September 1 the WWCTL at the conference 'Our Work Our Lives' in Dili. This has the support of the Australian National Network of Working Women's Centres, the University of South Australia and the Queensland University of Technology and includes:

'Speaking Book - the oral histories of women working in Timor-Leste. Agora panel discussion - of the Australian and Timorese experience of building sustainable communities through women's workforce participation. The themes cover women in precarious or vulnerable work, women's access to their rights and entitlements, decent work in the Asia Pacific and building sustainable communities through women's workforce participation.'

## **Parliament President**

We met with the President of their National Parliament Mr. Fernando Lasama, one of the historic resistance fighters. Like many of Timor-Leste's leadership, Mr Lasama paid heavily for his role in the independence struggle, arrested and incarcerated in Indonesia.

Mr Fernando Lasama described how the Parliament worked with nine political parties. He is the leader of the Democratic Party and in the parliamentary majority alliance government (AMP) with PM Xanana Gusmao and his CNRT party. PM Xanana Gusmao had just presented the National Development Strategic Plan to Parliament. I asked why it was rushed through Parliament in one day with the opposition FRETILIN walking out in protest. This he said was just politics as there had been much consultation.

He plans to run again for President in the 2012 elections.

## **Energy security**

Mr. Alfredo Pires the Secretary of State for Natural Resources gave an interesting powerpoint presentation on energy security. He and his family lived in Melbourne and have a strong relationship with Australia. His sister is Finance Minister.

He explained how Timor-Leste wants to have maximum participation in deciding on the oil/gas. Young new tertiary educated overseas Timor-Leste oil/gas professionals are now working for him.

He showed plans for energy security and how they want to use the oil/gas money so that they can develop on the south coast – and have electricity and gas going to all villages, towns, homes and businesses. The government must finance basic infrastructure for basic needs in ending poverty and move to human development for all. The government has impressive plans from revenues from the oil/gas income from what they have and in the future what they can negotiate. The money goes into the Petroleum Fund. See the National Petroleum Authority

<http://www.anp-tl.org>

The Minister is proud of their transparency structure. The money from the PF goes into the Budget that must be approved by Parliament. The 13 day Budget debate was televised and on radio as education about spending on development

is a priority. In some of the mountain villages we saw solar panels, linked to the receiver dish and to the TV for community viewing. In March 2011 the government launched the Transparency Portal on budgets and procurement.

As a petroleum-rich country, Timor-Leste is vigilant in maintaining good governance to avoid the resource curse prevalent in many resource-rich countries. The Government adopted a legal framework based on Norway for petroleum production, taxation, and revenue management that is considered international best-practice: the EITI Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. He was proud that Timor Leste was accepted as an EITI Compliant country on 1 July 2010.

<http://eiti.org/TimorLeste>

Democratic principles are important for this new nation. What various groups think of this sees different reactions.

### **That pipeline still contested...**

That pipeline contest has been going for many years (See Cleary's book 'Shakedown' in the Appendix).

Mr. Alfredo Pires explained the government's policy for a pipeline to go from the oil/gas fields in the Timor Sea saying it can be done despite the deep trough and at a lower cost than originally stated. The giant companies Woodside and Shell and the Australian government still reject this pipeline as too costly. Their alternative is that the technological capacity is for a new expensive FLNG floating natural gas corporate development in the Timor Sea and not needing the pipeline. Before visiting, I read Australian oil/gas advisors arguments against the pipeline and for the FLNG. But the Timor-Leste government rejects the FLNG as too risky.

The issue is still contested in negotiations with the companies who have an interest that include ConocoPhillips, Inpex (Japan), Petronas, Eni, Woodside and Shell. The Australian government Minister Rudd is backing the FLNG.

A recent article by Pedro Seabra is 'Timor-Leste and Woodside: time for take two?' from the Portuguese Institute of International Relations and Security (IPRIS).

<http://renovatimor.blogspot.com/>

To our shame both Labor and Liberal governments supported the Indonesian dictatorship and Downer took East Timor's oil. Xanana said it is 'unacceptable

that Australia that claims to be a defender of human rights and democracy should profit from the blood of other people’.

We debate how we lobby our Gillard government to ensure Timor-Leste decision-makers are allowed to develop their oil/gas.

The Ministers are painfully aware that Timor-Leste development is in a world capitalist economy in severe crisis.

### **Rain and more rain...**

People are aware of the environmental crisis and global warming. Timor-Leste farmers suffered last year two wet seasons rather than dry and wet. APHEDA supports projects for sustainable organic agriculture and had a Climate Change worker involved.

### **Chega! Truth and reconciliation**

We visited the Truth and Reconciliation Commission museum. We heard about the testimonies of people who had family members killed by the Indonesians.

The Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR - the Portuguese acronym) - was set up in 2001 and functioned from 2002 until its dissolution in December 2005. It was an independent, statutory authority led by seven East Timorese Commissioners and mandated by UNTAET Regulation 2001/10 to undertake truth seeking for the period 1974-1999, facilitate community reconciliation for less serious crimes, and report on its work and findings and make recommendations. Its 2,800 page report entitled 'Chega!' was presented to the President, Parliament and Government of Timor-Leste following its completion in October 2005. <http://www.cavr-timorleste.org>

For 30 years in the unions and East Timor solidarity groups I, with thousands of other Australians, supported independence struggles for a new nation free from the Indonesian army. The people just survived despite after the 1999 Yes referendum vote for Independence, when the Indonesian army responded again with slaughter, burning 90% of homes and buildings and forcibly removing thousands, until the UN forces restored stability.

East Timor people suffered a history of Portugal as colonial masters for 400 years, then in WW11 the Japanese invasion when thousands died and since 1975 the brutal occupation by the Indonesians for 24 years of planned genocide, tortures, rapes, killing of villagers and repressive military control. This truth and reconciliation process was essential.

The Indonesians were defeated by guerrilla struggles led by Xanana Gusmao and by the people and externally diplomatically by Ramos-Horta who received the Nobel Peace Prize and by FRETILIN leaders like Mari Alkatiri. Clinton Fernandes' new book (in Appendix) shows the Australian and international solidarity groups were crucial.

## **Alola**

We visited in Dili the Alola Foundation that is a not for profit non-governmental organisation operating in Timor-Leste to improve the lives of women and children. Founded in 2001 by the then First Lady, Kirsty Sword Gusmao, this organisation seeks to nurture women leaders and advocate for the rights of women. 'Our mission is Feto Forte Nasaun Forte - Strong Women, Strong Nation.'

<http://www.alolafoundation.org>

'A Woman of Independence' by Kirsty Sword Gusmao (Macmillan) is a must read. The first lady of East Timor describes her work as an undercover activist in Jakarta, her contact with jailed leader of the resistance movement Xanana Gusmao, the unlikely romance and marriage that ensued, the events that saw East Timor freed from Indonesian occupation, and the slow and painful rebuilding of the country. Here is a review

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/1/31/106756608590.htm>

At the **Tais** markets I bought the traditional weaving Tais to raffle at APHEDA fundraisers, as I am Secretary of APHEDA NT.

We enjoyed good meals at all the recommended local restaurants, the fish great. Why hadn't I enjoyed buffalo before?

Everywhere we went places have stories of killings and of resistance and this is where this murder happened etc. When relaxing in Bacau we knew at the rear of the hotel of the torture rooms. But for some supporters of this successful struggle, Timor-Leste (we hope) is in a post-conflict era and peace tourism tours is one venture. Eco-tourism is active.

## **Politics**

Finally a brief description on politics in the lead up to the 2012 elections.

In the first 2001 election, FRETILIN the organization that lead the movement in the 1970s and proclaimed Independence with the support of the majority of the people was elected the government with Mari Alkatiri PM. In the Presidential election Xanana Gusmao was overwhelmingly elected President.

After the 2006/7 crisis and then the 2008 attempted assassination of Ramos-Horta, in the following Presidential and parliamentary elections no political institution or leader from the national liberation struggle won a clear majority based on program, ideas or leadership. No party scored more than 29% in either the first round of the Presidential elections or the parliamentary elections. In the parliamentary elections both Xanana's party CNRT, the same initials as the umbrella organization in the Resistance but now called the National Reconstruction of TL and Alkatari's FRETILIN scored less than 30%. FRETILIN 29% to CNRT's 25%. Xanana as PM now governs with an alliance of smaller parties the AMP in the Parliament with FRETILIN the opposition. The Democratic Party and the ASDT scored less than 20%. The small left Socialist Party of Timor (PST) has its leader Avelino da Silva in Parliament and a Minister in the alliance government. I briefly met the FRETILIN spokesperson and former Minister Jose Texeria.

We watch with interest the 2012 elections. Overseas volunteers are to assist in a democratic election.

### **And so we return to Darwin**

I praise the wonderful, intelligent, hard-working optimistic group leaders Thushara Dibley and Elizabeth de Araujo with their professional debriefings and Abere and Aje our drivers and all in the APHEDA organisation and the seven wonderful friends on the 2011 Timor-Leste tour.

APHEDA established in 1984 is an active associate member of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid and a registered charity. APHEDA operates 60 projects in the Pacific, South East Asia, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Cambodia, Lao and Vietnam, Africa and the Middle East. You can join an APHEDA study trip next year.

Now Australian people - not our governments - have been able to support the people of Timor-Leste for independence. We can still assist for their human development in this troubling world economy. Australian unions continue to work with Timor-Leste non-government groups and unionists to assist people's needs.

This is my first general Report on 17th august 2011, updated 30<sup>th</sup> august.

## Appendix

Learn more at <http://www.apheda.org.au>

Join Global Rights at Work <http://www.globalrightsatwork.org.au>

Support Millennium Development goals [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

Receive daily reports from **East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN)** on justice, democracy, rights <http://www.etan.org>

**The Government of Timor-Leste** <http://www.timor-leste.gov.tl>

Government Tourism department <http://www.turismotimorleste.com/>

Lonely Planet <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/east-timor/>

**La'o Hamutuk**, East Timor Institute for Reconstruction Monitoring and Analysis <http://www.laohamutuk.org/>

Virtual Tais of Timor <http://www.etimortais.org/index.htm>

CNRT <http://cnrt-timor.org/>

### **FRETILIN**

<http://fretilin-rdtl.org.blogspot.com/href> <http://fretilinmedia.blogspot.com/>

I am Patron of the **AETFA-SA** We began as Campaign for an Independent East Timor, SA Inc in 1975. The name changed to Australia East Timor Friendship Association, SA Inc in 2002. We work for ongoing self-determination of the East Timorese people; to assist to rebuild their country and their lives; and to promote public awareness in Australia of the history, culture and contemporary situation in Timor-Leste. <http://www.aetfa.org.au/>

### **BOOKS**

I strongly recommend these books on the independence struggle and their exposes of Australian governments.

‘The Circle of Silence’ by Shirley Shackleton ‘A personal testimony before, during and after Balibo.’ (2010) Shirley Shackleton’s searing portrayal won the prestigious Walkley Award 2010 for her dramatic story seeking the truth about her husband journalist Greg killed at Balibo in 1975 by the invading Indonesians. Her fight against the fascist Indonesian military and to bring them to account led to the Australian Inquest showing the Australian government’s cover-up. The criminal inadequacies of Liberal-National and Labor governments and the deliberate pro-Indonesian dictatorship are exposed... but the circle of silence continues. See Andy Alcock & Cathy Heptinstall review <http://chriswhiteonline.org/2010/05/circle-of-silencebalibo/>

‘Finding Santana’ by Jill Jolliffe (Wakefield Press) 2011.

An exciting adventure from journalist Jill Jolliffe telling of her perilous journey to meet Comandante Nino Konis Santana, one of East Timor’s honoured guerrilla heroes. She begins with the secret planning needed, travelling inside Indonesia,

with long waits, cat and mouse with the Indonesian secret police and meeting with the guerrillas and Comandante Nino Konis Santana and her story. Book II is her return, capture and interrogation. She returns home mending broken pieces. An amazing tale that marks what a professional journalist does for a real story to report the truth that the resistance continued.

Jill Jolliffe's earlier book 'Balibo' is now the film. Featuring six additional chapters, this revised edition reveals the provocative story of one of the most shameful episodes in Australia's history, providing a firsthand account of the 1975 deaths of five young television reporters killed by the Indonesian military in the East Timor border town of Balibo. Chronicling how the reporters died as well as the eventual execution of a sixth reporter who attempted to investigate their fate, this gripping depiction also documents the personal narratives behind the families of the victims and their heartbreaking struggle for the truth. Contending that the Australian government was always aware of the circumstances of the killings, this argument maintains that their cover-up was a key factor in Indonesia's decision to invade and occupy East Timor. With a striking collection of photographs from its thrilling companion film, this searing recollection is as much an investigation of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor as it is a case study of the Balibo killings.

Jill Jolliffe writes now on 'Psychological Healing As A Prerequisite To Good Governance In East Timor' in 'Democratic Governance in Timor-Leste: Reconciling the Local and the National' edited by David Mearns (2008 Charles Darwin University publication).

'Reluctant Saviour: Australia, Indonesia and the independence of East Timor' (Scribe 2004) by Clinton Fernandes explodes the myth that Howard and Downer took the initiative in the fight for East Timorese self-determination - the reality is the opposite. Exposing the role of the so-called Jakarta Lobby-Australian officials whose policies supported the Indonesian military regime and public commentators who defend these policies in the public sphere - this inquiry contends that under their influence, John Howard worked assiduously to support Indonesia's occupation of East Timor, trying hard to prevent a ballot of independence. That it was only pressure from activists and the broader public that forced the Howard government to send a peacekeeping force and reluctantly help East Timor to achieve independence is also revealed.

Clinton Fernandes' new book is a must read: 'The Independence of East Timor: Multidimensional perspectives - Occupation, Resistance and International Political Activism', (Sussex Academic Press, UK, 2011).

'He tells the struggle for independence. Guerrilla warfare and clandestine resistance for 24 years against the occupation is documented as a continuum of effort between the armed freedom fighters in the mountains, the resilience of urban supporters, and international activism and support that eventually brought about liberation in September 1999. The Timor rebels did not have a land border with a friendly state, had no external supplier of weapons and no liberated area in which to recover between guerrilla operations, so their successful resistance is unique in the history of guerrilla warfare and independence struggles. Equally uncommon was an unexpected weapon in the struggle – a remarkable display of strategic non-violent action.

Fernandes integrates the major factors. His multi-dimensional perspectives include Indonesian, US and Australian diplomacy; Indonesian military operations and activities against the populace; East Timorese resistance at all social levels; human rights abuses; the issue of oil; and international diplomacy resulting from global solidarity activism.'

'Shakedown: Australia's Grab For Timor Oil' by Paul Cleary (Allen & Unwin 2007).

'In 2000 one of the poorest nations on earth began negotiations with Australia over rights to the lucrative oil and gas resources of the Timor Sea. With the revenue from the oil and gas fields, the young democracy of East Timor would have a chance to secure its economic future. If Australia would allow it. In an ironic twist of fate, East Timor found that Australia, the country which had delivered freedom to the Timorese by intervening against Indonesia's bloody attacks in 1999, was now trying to deny it a fair share of the profits.

This is the inside story of Australia's attempts to bully East Timor out of a promising future in the Timor Sea oil dispute. Paul Cleary, a former East Timor government adviser, gives a gripping insider's account of the six years of bruising negotiations between Australia and East Timor that followed the independence ballot.

He saw how the Timorese pulled off one of the great David and Goliath feats of the region but then were unable to lay the foundations for a peaceful future. In this compelling insight into Australia's international operations, Cleary exposes the heroes and villains who emerged in a one-hundred-billion-dollar shakedown.'

'The Men Who Came Out Of The Ground A Gripping Account of Australia's First Commando Campaign: Timor 1942' by Paul Cleary (Hachette 2010).

'The exciting story of a small force of Australian Special Forces commandos that launched relentless hit and run raids on far superior Japanese forces in East Timor for most of 1942. These were the men of the 2/2nd Australian Independent Company. Initially stranded without radio contact to Australia, the Japanese declared these bearded warriors 'outlaws' and warned they would be executed immediately if captured. The Australians drawn mainly from the bush were chosen for their ability to operate independently and survive in hostile territory.

These men wrote an epic of guerrilla warfare. Expertly researched by Paul Cleary, a must read and order for libraries.'

Sara Niner 'Xanana Leader of the Struggle for Independent Timor-Leste' (2009 Australian Scholarly Publishing) is the political biography of Xanana Gusmao resistance leader and for unifying East Timorese nationalism from his childhood to First President and now PM. This book is an emotional read as Xanana copes with the Indonesian genocide. During the brutal 24-year war with Indonesia, he was transformed through crisis from being a young apolitical outsider into a hardened guerrilla commander and keen political strategist, who ultimately became the central unifying figure of east Timorese nationalism. This book focuses on his years in leadership and seeks to explain how the events of the time affected the development of his ideas, policies and strategies. The traumas after independence continue.

Sarah Niner edited 'To Resist is to Win The Autobiography of Xanana Gusmao' (Aurora Books 2000). See review <http://chriswhiteonline.org/2010/01/xanana/>

'Step by Step: Women of East Timor, Stories of Resistance and Survival' edited by Jude Conway (Charles Darwin University Press, 2010) presents 13 oral histories from Timorese women, with each story accompanied by photographic snapshots from their lives. The collection of stories reveal the role women played in East Timor's independence struggle on the guerrilla front, the diplomatic front and in the student movement inside and outside the country and afterwards.

'The Crisis in Timor-Leste: Understanding the Past, Imagining the Future' edited by Dennis Shoemith (2007 Charles Darwin University Press) is from a symposium in 2006 explaining the 2006 violence and rebellion in a larger context and examines the social and developmental strategies.

'Locating Democracy: Representation, Elections and Governance in Timor-Leste' edited by Steven Farram (2010 Charles Darwin University Press) is from a symposium in Dili April 2010 on the difficulties facing TL in reform for new municipal assemblies with the aim of making democracy more representative.

'East Timor A Western Made Tragedy' by Mark Aarons and Robert Domm (1992 Left Book Club) is a damning indictment of Indonesia's annexation and genocide with acceptance from Australia.

'Free East Timor: Australia's Culpability in East Timor's genocide' edited by Jim Aubrey (1998 Vintage).

'East Timor: making Amends? Analysing Australia's role in reconstructing East Timor' edited by Lansell Taudevin and Jefferson Lee (2000 Australia-East Timor Association Otford press.)

'If you leave us here, we will die: how genocide was stopped in East Timor' by Geoffrey Robinson.

In this intimate, informed account, historian Robinson (*The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali*), examines the tumultuous events surrounding East Timor's 1999 attempt to gain independence from Indonesia. With expertise and an insider's perspective—a principal researcher for Amnesty International in the 1990s, Robinson joined the UN mission overseeing East Timor's independence referendum—the author offers rare insight into the country's internal turmoil. Particularly riveting are Robinson's descriptions of the days preceding the historic vote to separate from Indonesia: "dressed in their Sunday best, some [East Timorese] left home in the middle of the night to reach the polling station by dawn." The importance of that vote, in which "98.6 percent of those who had registered cast ballots," is hard to overstate; just hours after voting ended, however, pro-Indonesian militia groups erupted in a violent backlash that would kill approximately 1,500 civilians and send 400,000 fleeing the country. Despite the overwhelming brutality of the story, and a bleak assessment of actions from the UN and international community (as much a part of the problem as the solution), Robinson manages to cap his detailed report with a hopeful note. Copyright 2010 Reed Business Information.

'East Timor: a Nation's Bitter Dawn' by Irena Cristalis.

This book tells the story of the traumatic creation of Asia's youngest country, East Timor, which has been struggling to rebuild itself ever since the mayhem of Indonesia's reluctant withdrawal in 1999. The author, one of a mere handful of journalists who refused to be evacuated in the final days of the Indonesian occupation, gives a vivid first-hand account of the lives of individual Timorese during the occupation, their struggle for freedom and their endeavours to rebuild their homeland. Based on years of research, and lengthy interviews with East Timor's leaders, priests, nuns, students and guerrilla fighters, this moving and extremely readable book is at the same time also an exploration of the complexities of the country's internal politics. This author actually went with Jill

Jolliffe on her second effort to meet up with Santana. This story is her version of that trip.

'Resistance: a childhood fighting for East Timor' by Naldo Rei.

Naldo Rei was just six months old when Indonesia invaded East Timor in December 1975. He spent the first three years of his life in the jungle, where his family had fled for safety. After his father was murdered for his work in the resistance movement, nine-year-old Naldo was recruited by the clandestine FRETILIN network and began his own extraordinary journey fighting for East Timor's freedom. Throughout his teenage years, Naldo was imprisoned and tortured regularly for his covert resistance to the brutal Indonesian regime. Eventually, in too much danger to remain in his homeland, he escaped to Indonesia and then Australia for several years. Now living in an independent East Timor, Naldo Rei can tell his incredible story. His life is proof that no amount of danger and loss can crush the human spirit.

'East Timor: Beyond Independence' edited by Damien Kingsbury and Michael Leach (2007 Monash University Press).

Gaining full independence in 2002 only after a brutal occupation by Indonesia of over three decades and having the lowest per capita gross domestic product in the world, East Timor clearly faces a host of development challenges.

This collection of 19 papers was put together by Kingsbury (international and political studies, Deakin U.) and Leach (Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin U.) in order to address some of the most significant of those challenges and related issues, including state-building, migration, development, maritime boundaries, border security, the possible role of forensic archaeology and anthropology for post-conflict justice, petroleum fund management, food security and agriculture, adult education and development, language policy and language rights, and raising literacy.

'Last flight out of Dili: memoirs of an accidental activist in the triumph of East Timor' by David Scott, a really interesting read that also covers the political efforts and some intrigues associated with the key overseas activists Horta and Alkatiri.

'Timor lives! speeches of freedom and independence' by Xanana Gusmao.

'East Timor: a rough passage to independence' by James Dunn.

With expert analysis and clarity of writing, James Dunn highlights the disturbing gap between the noble rhetoric and the heartless reality of international commitment and resolve.