DIALOGUE

EAST TIMOR: PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL GENOCIDE

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In the former Portuguese colony of East Timor there continues one of the most serious violations of international law in recent years as the Indonesian attempt at a forced annexation and "integration" of the territory into its 27th province has led to massive killing, starvation, and a nearly total information blockade against the interest and concern of the outside world. A few of the basic facts of the East Timor situation should be of particular interest to U.S. readers, for the role of the U.S. Government in this tragedy looms larger with each new leak of information.

Following the anti-fascist coup in Lisbon in April, 1974, nationalist forces in East Timor began legal political activities. After several months, a moderately progressive organization known as FRETILIN, the "Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor", had clearly established itself as the most representative political grouping. In October of 1975, with the unexpected retreat of the Portuguese to an offshore island, FRETILIN became the *de facto* governing body.

FRETILIN's popularity seems to have frightened Indonesia's rightwing military regime, which had, in 1965, eliminated the Indonesian Communist Party by means of a massacre estimated to have taken the lives of between 200,000 and one million people.

 VOL. 6 no. 1 March 1981

Despite the fact that East Timor, with a population of less than one million, posed no military threat to Indonesia's 140 million people, Indonesian generals began interfering in the internal affairs of the territory by early 1975. Border incursions were noted by October of that year, rapidly accelerating to a massive military onslaught that began on December 7, 1975 with the landing of several thousand troops and continues to this day with an occupation force of perhaps 30,000, along with air force and naval power surrounding the island.

Resistance And Terror

The overwhelming Indonesian military superiority, however, met well-organized guerrilla political and military resistance. For two and one half years, FRETILIN maintained almost total control over the East Timorese countryside. They fought a classical guerrilla war with captured enemy weapons, while political and social programs bolstered the population. As late as 1977, 85% of the territory remained firmly in nationalist hands.

Beginning in April, 1977, and continuing into 1978, the Indonesian military launched a series of massive air and artillery attacks throughout the mountain regions. Armed with newly supplied OV Bronco-10s — the U.S. electronic bombing aircraft widely used over North Vietnam — Indonesian forces were able temporarily to destroy the agricultural and social basis of the resistance in many areas. Following the brutal 1978 attacks, FRETILIN found it necessary to encourage people to come down from the mountains. Thousands died of starvation. Thousands were killed in the bombings. Of a 1975 estimated population of 650,000, the Indonesians were able to round up just over 300,000 people and lock them into concentration camps. In 1979 and 1980, East Timor appeared from time to time in the Western press as the dull-eyed, boney-framed children of the surviving population looked out at photographers and aid officials, many of whom declared the situation *worse* than Kampuchea, Bangladesh, and other similar disasters. Information from a wide variety of sources indicates that at least 100,000 and possibly as many as 300,000 people were slaughtered or starved to death by the occupying troops. Those remaining alive may be forever on international relief because the Indonesian military is afraid to allow them back into their mountain home areas where they will almost surely take up the resistance again.

Fighting Continues

Despite what must be one of the greatest concentrations of firepower launched in such a small area in modern history, the independence forces continue to harrass their would-be rulers. Even the capital city of Dili comes under guerrilla attack from time to time. The Indonesians respond by rounding up hundreds, torturing and killing some, or destroying a few villages. These continuing rounds of resistance and terror and the continued forced camp life for most of the population can end only when the international community compels the Indonesians to withdraw and permit a properly conducted act of self determination. The United Nations has for the past six years refused to accept the Indonesian annexation, and has reaffirmed its call for just such an act.

U.S. Role

Of all the governments in the world, the United States could play the most important role in bringing about a just settlement of the East Timor war. The U.S. is the main supplier of arms to the Indonesian military, and also provides absolutely crucial economic assistance to help stabilize the increasingly unpopular regime in Jakarta. Indeed, information that has recently surfaced from the Australian diplomatic corps indicates that the Indonesians were wary about even attempting the invasion in the first place until they had signs of U.S. support. A secret cable describing U.S. attitudes just previous to the invasion, contains the following report: "[U.S.] Ambassador [David] Newsom told me last night that he is under instructions from Kissinger personally not to involve himself in discussions on Timor with the Indonesians." Further information indicates that President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger did ask the Indonesians to delay their invasion until *after* Ford and Kissinger had left Jakarta. The U.S. President and staff flew out after their state visit on December 6, 1975: the invasion began a few hours later.

In several Congressional hearings on East Timor further details of U.S. involvement in the invasion and ensuing massacre have come to light. A State Department legal adviser has admitted that at the time of the invasion, Jakarta was "armed roughly 90 percent with our equipment." A reported secret cutoff of aid to protest the invasion by the Carter Administration was later admitted, in so many words, to have been a fraud. Several military shipments were made during the supposed cutoff.

Finally, the arming of the Indonesians with the OV Bronco-10s can only be seen as an act of support for the massive attacks of 1977 and 1978. The OV Bronco 10 is essentially an antiguerrilla aircraft with little defensive or offensive use in conventional war. As Indonesia really faces no external threats,

and the political opposition inside the country is primarily unarmed or under close army surveillance, there could be little use for these planes except as they were in fact employed. It is difficult from these and many other documented facts to come to any conclusion other than that the U.S. Government, under at least two different administrations, and now possibly a third, has willingly aided and allowed the massive physical destruction of a people. Attempts by the occupying forces to impose Indonesian language and culture on the survivors against their will are examples of what anthropologists would term "cultural genocide."

Becoming Informed

Support for the East Timorese has increased dramatically in the past few months, especially in the United States where a growing number of people are beginning to question the apparent sponsorship of physical extermination and cultural genocide in East Timor by our government. In addition to the United Nations resolutions, major international events in opposition to the invasion and occupation include condemnations at the two most recent meetings of the nonaligned nations (despite Indonesia's prominent position in that group), a 1979 Conference in Lisbon, and a September, 1980 Conference in Amsterdam. In the United States itself, in addition to a series of Congressional hearings, there have been speaking tours by East Timorese representatives at several universities and churches across the country, and in October of 1980, an International Conference took place in New York where several leading experts addressed an audience of over 200 people.

On February 27, 1981, the Southeast Asian Studies program at Yale University hosted a conference entitled: "Partners in Secret Genocide," and several other events are in preparation. Members of the staff of the Asian Center in New York are available as expert speakers. These programs are highlighted by slides, books, pamphlets, news clippings, and other essential documented materials for those interested in learning more about East Timor and the United States' role. The next several months are likely to be an important time for discussing this issue as more and more Americans become aware of the facts.

For readers of the *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly* who would like to know more about possible activities in support of the East Timorese, resources are available at the following addresses:

East Timor Program
Asian Center/Clergy and Laity Concerned
198 Broadway, Room 302
New York, N.Y. 10038

East Timor Human Rights Committee
Box 363 Clinton Station
Syracuse, N.Y. 13201

CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS: THE TRANSITION AND REENTRY PROCESSES

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Introduction

Every international traveller has a stock of takes regarding the experiences and impact of one's first immersion in another culture. A great deal of research has been conducted on these experiences, primarily by anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, and communications experts. Studies have focused on the sociocultural and psychological structures and processes of change involved in such immersion experiences, with particular emphases centering on ethnocentrism and stereotypes, on culture shock, and on emic and etic approaches to defining and understanding phenomena cross-culturally. Our intent is not to summarize these bodies of knowledge (see, e.g., Stening; LeVine and Campbell; Adler), but to present several of our tales and to explain how these experiences have had an impact on our personalities and lives, how we have used these experiences as paradigms to help others to understand the difficulties involved in moving through cultural boundaries, and how these experiences have provided us improved insights into conceptual issues of interest to anthropologists.

Transition and Reentry Experiences

There is a relatively substantial literature on culture shock (see, e.g., Stening). The literature on reverse culture shock, or reentry, however, is miniscule. Further, it is frequently not even touched on in discussions of cross-cultural experiences. Where it is mentioned, it is usually in reference to problems faced by foreign students returning home from study at an American or European university, or veterans returning from an unpopular war. One wonders why this is the case. It is because the assumption is made that, except in certain very specific situations, there can be little that is stressful about coming home? Our subjective experiences calls this into question. We found the first reentry experience to be equally as stressful as culture shock, and in some ways more so. It was an overwhelming emotional experience, and it engendered a weariness that was almost debilitating.

Although Warren was born and raised on the Yakima Indian Reservation, the racial separation was so complete that he never met a Yakima until last year. Despite contact with foreign students and