Peter Carey and G. Carter Bentley, eds. *East Timor at the Crossroads: the Forging of a Nation,* Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1995.

Loren Ryter

The history of East Timor, for as long as the place has commonly been identified by that name, has understandably been written as tragedy.[1] Those familiar with the horrors of East Timor through the early 1980s tended to write about the East Timorese as victims, yet inscribing this victim status ironically implied an incapacity on the part of the East Timorese to exercise the very right to self-determination which had been so coldly denied them.

East Timor at the Crossroads: the Forging of a Nation positions the East Timorese at a turning point where future avenues are once again theirs to take. Conscious of the shifts in world politics which structure new possibilities for East Timor, this book departs optimistically from the premise that there is such a thing as an East Timorese nation, even if not (yet) an East Timorese nation-state. This is at once the book's greatest strength and its greatest weakness, for having the courage to regard East Timorese nationalism as a serious subject, it fails to treat it with a sustained criticism. While I shall return to this point, exploring East Timorese nationalism is not, despite the subtitle, the book's aim. Its contribution lies chiefly in its effort to take a fresh look at East Timorese history and issues with a renewed confidence in an imminent and just resolution to the conflict. At times it seems to be a kind of advance retrospection on the Indonesian interregnum as a curious anomaly in the narrative of former Portuguese Timor.

The book, the outcome of two conferences on East Timor held respectively in 1990 at St. Antony's College in Oxford and by the SSRC in 1991 at the American University in Washington DC, brings together some of the foremost experts on the subject of East Timor. Many of them have had personal involvement in East Timor, both before and after the Indonesian invasion, as field researchers, aid workers, or diplomats—not to mention as student activists and resistance fighters. Following a forward by the former Portuguese President António dos Santos Ramalho Eanes and two prefaces representing each of the conferences, the book is divided into four substantive sections of essays, and then a colloquy, a comprehensive bibliography, and a chronology. The four sections, each of which contains from two to four essays, deal with historical background, international aspects, personal testimonies, and future prospects.

To speak of the history of East Timor is already to have entered into a politicized debate. Proponents of East Timorese self-determination often stress, as does Eanes, the unique culture of the "Timorese" as a "distinct ethnic group," while detractors will deny them an independent history altogether. In the opening section, John Taylor and Elizabeth Traube avoid these twin pitfalls by historicizing East Timorese identity with reference to Portuguese colonialism, and in Traube's case, particularizing it by focusing on one of many East Timorese ethnic groups.

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[1] Particularly, as an untold tragedy. See, for example, M. Aarons and R. Domm, *East Timor: A Western Made Tragedy* (Sydney: Left Book Club, 1992); J. S. Dunn, *Timor: A People Betrayed* (Milton, Queensland: Jacaranda Press, 1983); and J. G. Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor* (London: Zed Books, 1991).

Both Taylor and Traube emphasize the importance of ritual exchange in extending political alliances and legitimating a social hierarchy into which the Portuguese were eventually able to insert themselves. That trade was being redirected to meet the needs of Lisbon made no difference as long as the Portuguese continued to maintain the indigenous system of exchange. Only when they imposed a head-tax and abolished the tribute system did Portuguese legitimacy begin to slip.

Traube's ethnography adds to the impression that the Portuguese arrived to find a ready-made basis for legitimacy. The Mambai, says Traube, maintained a diarchic political ideology whereby leadership was "divided between active political executives, the actual holders of power, and passive ritual authorities, who legitimize the power held by others." (p. 47) In this system, the "younger brothers," with whom the Portuguese came to be identified, were to be responsible for "outer" worldly affairs, while the "older brothers," the Mambai, were to be the custodians of "the rock and the tree." While she recognizes that the political units the Mambai of the 1970s regarded as traditional were actually "products of an earlier stage of colonial intervention," Traube appears to believe—though it is never made explicit—that this Mambai cosmology was indeed already available five centuries ago to make sense of the Portuguese presence, and was not elaborated as an ideology post facto in order to naturalize this new arrangement.

Whatever the construction of their cosmology, it clearly was relevant to the way the Mambai, at least the ritual leaders with whom Traube did her field work, understood the rapid politicization that occurred in 1974 when Portugal announced its intention to relinquish its colonies. She discusses how this cosmology enabled both conservative arguments (the Portuguese simply cannot go because they are our younger brothers who were called here to rule us) and arguments for change based on the fact that the Portuguese had violated their own basis for legitimacy by abolishing the tribute system or even by acting rudely in ways inappropriate for a younger brother. (pp. 50–51)

Taylor explores at greater length the politicization process and the formation of the political parties UDT, Fretilin (initially ASDT), and Apodeti. He briefly describes Fretilin's grassroots rural development and literacy campaign, which promoted a nationalist program from the start with a handbook written in a vernacular, Tetum, entitled "Tai Timor Rai Ita Niang" (Timor Is Our Country). While they agree on most substantive points, there is a significant difference in perspective between Traube and Taylor. While Traube stresses how bitter people were that Fretilin failed to consult the ritual keepers and seek political legitimacy through them, Taylor emphasizes how Fretilin built up popular support precisely through traditional kinship networks. This difference in emphasis illustrates the multiple ways politicization and the role of Fretilin were being interpreted in a society colonized for nearly four hundred years.

James Dunn's essay leads off the next section on the international dimensions of the "Timor Affair," but its focus is rather on the relatively abrupt shift in the Indonesian position towards Portuguese Timor. He points out that despite Indonesia's vociferous anti-colonialist position, at no time before 1974 did it hint at any objection to Portuguese control. Only after the rapid politicization of East Timor following the coup in Lisbon did senior military figures like Ali Murtopo and Benny Murdani advise and then execute plans to intervene in the nascent party politics, attempt to derail the

budding nationalist movement, and when that failed disastrously, endeavor to bring about integration by "whatever means necessary." (p 62) He does also give some consideration to the lack of any credible reaction from the major powers—who at times also deliberately minimized the scale of the suffering—despite increasingly shocking reports on the situation coming out of the territory from relief agency sources.

Roger Clark contributes a well-documented and tightly argued analysis of the legality of the 1989 Timor Gap treaty, which divided between Indonesia and Australia the oil exploration rights in, and spoils from, the waters between East Timor and Australia. Based largely on a UN resolution which denies recognition of a territory acquired by force (a resolution to which Australia was not only a signatory but a principal drafter and co-sponsor), Clark dismantles Australia's argument that it has no international obligation to refuse Indonesia recognition, de jure, when that country seeks to establish sovereignty over East Timor, even though Australia does not contest that East Timor was taken by force. In the stretch to make sense of Australia's odd claim in its own terms, Clark helps to clarify how certain aspects of international law can be considered obligatory, shows that the resolutions on non-recognition of territories acquired by aggression meet these criteria, and concludes that under these terms the treaty—and the recognition itself—is null and void. Unfortunately, since this section is a revision of a paper given at the 1990 Oxford conference, the key case brought against Australia in 1991 by Portugal to the International Court of Justice is addressed only in a footnote, and the court's June 1995 decision that it lacked the jurisdiction to make a ruling in the absence of Indonesia's consent missed the publication date.

The third section colorfully accomplishes its goal to present views from the inside. Paulino Gama (Mauk Muruk), as a witness and a leader in the resistance until his surrender in 1985, is able to bring a rare immediacy and compelling specificity to the grim figures of the hundreds of thousands of dead, naming villages, mountains, and rivers where executions, bombings, rapes, and extermination campaigns took place. It is telling that among the contributors it is not the academics but this Fretilin commander, a partisan to the feud between Fretilin and the UDT, who gives the most attention to the internecine warfare of August 1975, even if it is placed largely to show that he personally behaved compassionately toward UDT prisoners and put "human rights and national ideals above party interests." (p. 99) Others seem to minimize these deeply divisive few weeks, when they mention them at all.

The succinct essay by Donanciano Gomes which follows clearly shows the change of tone among the younger generation of nationalist activists. There are no party politics here, no base camps or units "neutralized"; just his narrative of a boyhood occupied with burying bodies in the sand and an adolescence of defiance. For him, Xanana Gusmão is a mantra not a man, so that when badgered into giving his name by an Intel chief after staging a demonstration following the 1989 Papal Mass in Dili, Donanciano spits 'Xanana.'

Shirley Shackleton, whose determination goes far beyond her resolve to uncover what really happened to her husband, Greg Shackleton, in Balibo in October 1975, shares her experiences of a journey to East Timor which she timed to coincide with the same Papal visit. She paints a picture of her contact with Indonesian officialdom that seems believably banal; we learn of her administrative difficulties planting a tree in

memory of Greg in Balibo and her breakfast of evasions with Benny Murdani. In her attention to detail, she also brings up some important aspects of the situation in East Timor. She is the only one, for instance, who alludes to the strange family politics of the Timorese when she mentions that Arsenio Ramos-Horta, brother of East Timorese diplomat-in-exile par excellence, Jose Ramos-Horta, is now managing the Turismo hotel. An anecdote she relates about a bus full of Indonesian transmigrants bullied by a soldier reminds us that not all newcomers have access to privileges that many assume is granted to all Javanese.

In the essay concluding the penultimate section, Robert Archer traces the evolution of the role of the Catholic Church. With reference to a few church documents, Archer relates how the church, having been cut off from Rome as a result of the war, underwent a gradual transformation and began to defend East Timorese identity, ultimately emerging as a champion of self-determination. In part for this reason, and also because Indonesia required all East Timorese to adopt a state-sanctioned religion, East Timor went from being nominally animist to overwhelmingly Catholic. Archer also stresses that since priests include East Timorese, Indonesians, and also foreigners, the church in East Timor is deeply divided: a priest's predisposition toward self-determination determines a great deal about his approach and the management of his parish.

Benedict Anderson travels back to 1975 to signal a "world-conjuncture" where the Indonesian invasion and its aftermath made some sense. Given how much blood has been spilled so futilely over the past twenty years, it is often difficult to come up with an explanation of how the Indonesian military could have made such a strategic blunder in the first place. Most agree that in the days when, for technical reasons, the Timor Gap had no prospects and East Timor was no economic prize, the reason had to do with a misplaced fear of Communism. (See for instance, Dunn, this volume, p. 62.) Normally this explanation seems lacking.

Anderson overcomes this lack by evocatively recalling a 1975 which these days is difficult to conjure as anything other than a kind of Cold War kitsch: one in which Communism was at the apex of its "strange parabola of power." The fall of Saigon, the independence of the African Lusophone colonies, and other shifts coalescing in 1975 produced a naïve confidence among a Fretilin leadership riding the wave of national liberation movements. At the same time, these events also inflated the sense of urgency among Indonesian leaders, secure in their support from both the "real and honorary West," to contain the red menace, regardless of the shade of red. (pp. 138-139) He observes that it wasn't merely the social democratic Fretilin that made the East Timorese so totally expendable to the big capitalist states, but its alliance with undesirables in the post-Salazar anti-fascist Portuguese military, then seen as a threat to all of Western Europe. He argues that for these reasons 1975 was a key year: at any other time the US would have rallied behind a European ally rather than its Pacific bulwark. Anderson, with equal flair, then turns his attention to the Indonesian domestic situation and suggests that the invasion was in part the result of political squabbles in post-Malari Jakarta and the need of some military figures in unstable positions to prove themselves to *Bapak Presiden*. The instability in Portuguese Timor offered a convenient pretext.

Pat Walsh's concluding essay provides an overview of the various strategies for peace currently on the international agenda and an update on the positions of the major players and world powers. He gives due attention to the involvement of East Timorese in the diplomatic process, including the CNRM (National Council of Maubere Resistance) Peace Plan, the UN-sponsored "intra-Timorese dialogue," and the "reconciliation talks" initiated by Indonesia. Walsh notes that the latter have been presented by Indonesia as consistent with the UN principles regarding the intra-Timorese dialogue but rejected by the resistance as Indonesian posturing.

Walsh's contribution stands out as the only one in this volume fully composed after the major watershed in recent East Timorese history, namely the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre. After the videotape of blood-soaked Timorese circulated internationally, including within Indonesia, the terms in which arguments about the success or failures of *integrasi* could be conducted had fundamentally changed. Thus, at times certain comments in the book sound dated or have been qualified with awkward parenthetical remarks referring to Santa Cruz. At other times, the effect can be eerie, as when Bishop Moore worries in the colloquy that "if the intifada kind of resistance . . . continues, the Indonesians will finally decide to wipe them out like the Chinese did in . . . Tiananmen Square." (p. 167) Nevertheless, it is a tribute to the foresight of the contributors that they were as a whole so optimistic even before the international reaction to the massacre in Dili created such new prospects.

The colloquy, presented as a transcript of the 1991 SSRC workshop, constitutes a major addition to this volume as it brings in voices not otherwise represented, including the voices of a US Air Force colonel, an Indonesian officer, US state department officials, an oil company consultant, and an Indonesian academic who has published on East Timor. They begin with fundamentally different premises about integration, the desirability of self-determination, the importance of economic development, and in fact about the gravity of the human rights condition in East Timor more generally. The range of views and the conviction with which they are presented reveals what has been one obstacle to the resolution of this conflict all along: the existence of an epistemological gap widened by the difficulty of access to the territory, by lack of competence in local languages, and by expectations based on prior agendas. One other aspect of the colloquy worth mentioning is that it highlights the degree to which the Indonesian government tends to allow US officials to represent its position while it adopts a silent posture (it sent no representatives to the conference despite an invitation). At one point, Colonel Maynard even offers to the participants a copy of the Pancasila, right down to the thirty-six pearls, so that they may judge "the Indonesians" by their own value system.

The bibliography, while modestly confessing that it is not exhaustive, is certainly the most comprehensive bibliography of materials on East Timor ever compiled, and as such will be an indispensable resource for any scholar or activist engaged with East Timor. It includes items in a dozen languages which are as varied as human rights agency reports, Indonesian government publications, US congressional hearings, and party pamphlets. Though gaps are extremely difficult to spot, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas's lecture, "De-Bunking the Myths Around a Process of Decolonization," one of the more recent and detailed expositions of the official Indonesian version of history, would have been an important inclusion. Now that so

much material on East Timor is available on-line, a few pointers to cyberspace would have also been welcome.[2]

Finally, John Taylor's chronology, which covers the period from April 1974–February 1995 , serves as a handy guide to significant events. Entries such as one noting the February 1975 mock invasion of Lampung support the view that Indonesia planned to invade long before the political situation became heated. Conspicuously absent, however, is any explicit reference to the UDT-Fretilin strife of August 1975, surely among the most critical turning points in contemporary East Timorese history.

This omission points to a deeper reluctance of many observers of East Timor openly to come to terms with the divisiveness generated by this short-lived but deeply felt conflict, which to this day haunts East Timorese politics, particularly in exile. Arising out of a need to protect the East Timorese by representing them as united, it ultimately does a double injustice to them, first by allowing apologists for Indonesia to claim falsely that the "civil war" was responsible for the bulk of the deaths and to exaggerate the need for Indonesian intervention, and secondly by obscuring a sore point sure to be an issue in the politics of an independent East Timor. This book doesn't adopt the standard image of a resistance united by the CNRM, however. Instead, it tends to present somewhat retrogressively Fretilin as identical with East Timorese nationalism, to the extent of placing a national flag designed by the Fretilin Central Committee on the cover.[3] In the introduction, Peter Carey asserts that in a free election today Fretilin would "certainly win a landslide victory at the polls." (p. 15) Even Jose Ramos-Horta recognizes the sensitivity of such claims when he concedes that his former party does not represent the entire people of East Timor and is willing to admit the possibility that Fretilin "might even lose" in a local election. (p. 181)

The situation inside East Timor today is tremendously complicated and is becoming ever more so. If the resistance had shifted from a guerrilla struggle in the mountains to emphasizing civilian political campaigning in the cities during the 1980s, the 1990s has seen it take new forms, including a generalized resentment toward Indonesian settlers as manifested in the late 1994 and early 1995 rioting.[4] With the influx of settlers (many of them from Eastern Indonesia), determining who qualifies to participate in a referendum on self-determination will be contentious and will run into the same difficulties as were encountered in Western Sahara under Moroccan control. As time wears on, positions related to sovereignty and self-determination are likely to further diversify. Evidence that some young East Timorese are identifying with Indonesian pro-democracy activists and viewing their struggle not as against Indonesia per se but against the current regime is increasingly available. At the same time, we must frankly admit that no one can know for certain the extent to which *integrasi* has been accepted, however pragmatically. What will be the long-term effects of a condition where, as Bishop Belo has remarked, half the population is paid to spy

[2] TimorNet at the University of Coimbra (http://www.uc.pt/Timor/TimorNet.html) has links to many other sites and is as good a starting point as any.

[3] The flag of the Democratic Republic of East Timor was stitched together on the eve of Fretilin's unilateral declaration of independence, and used the Fretilin colors red, black, yellow, and white. See J. Jolliffe, *East Timor: Nationalism & Colonialism.* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1978), pp. 208-211.

[4] The riots were cast in the Indonesian press as anti-Muslim, but Indonesian shop owners were perhaps the most prominent targets.

on the other half? None of these current questions are seriously discussed in this volume.

This book offers important insights about the origins and character of East Timorese nationalism, but it is up to the reader to pull them together. Can we describe more than a single nationalism: one developed programmatically by Fretilin in the period before there was reason to mark it with reference to Indonesia, and another born more recently out of opposition to the occupation and understood quite differently by the younger generation? If so, was the national framework created by Fretilin which Taylor describes as having weakened after the first years of assault upon it then replaced, or rebuilt upon, by this newer understanding? Was the enabling condition for East Timorese nationalism, as Traube suggests, "the common experience of subordination to a particular European power" (p 45) rather than colonialism in general? Is it rooted, as Archer offers, in a suffering which is "not distinct from their vision of God?" (p. 120) If so, were suffering to lessen, would nationalism also fade? This book provokes such questions and should open up the door for new and uncompromising scholarship on East Timor and East Timorese nationalism, now past due.