



### **Excerpts from *At the Scene of the Crime: Essays, Reflections and Poetry on East Timor, 1999-2010*.**

Reconciliation must not be confused with resignation, nor forgiving with forgetting. East Timor's modern history and identity have been indelibly shaped by the experience of the last 25 years. The archival testimony of that struggle should be returned to the people of East Timor as their rightful property. Where it is negative, it will serve as a healthy corrective. Where positive, it will strengthen, sustain and inspire in the years to come.

*p. 13 For the Record: the Case for an Archival Centre in East Timor. 1999.*

The Indonesian military is on the back foot. For the sake of all in Indonesia who have suffered under its heel, including the West Papuans and people of Aceh, we have both an obligation and now an opportunity through the international inquiry on East Timor to ensure that it keeps stepping backward. To coopt a military term quoted from Geoffrey Robertson at the beginning of this talk, it is up to us to go on the offensive.

*p. 31 East Timor: Project Impunity. 1999.*

Xanana Gusmao's key concern seemed to be that international humanitarian agencies were 'doing it all' separate from the East Timorese who were left as observers on the sidelines. The CNRT President believes his concerns are not being heard. One can ask, are at least some sections of the international humanitarian community open to the critique made of Presidential hopeful Al Gore that he knows all the dance steps but can't hear the music. In the case of East Timor, the 'music' is that East Timor's struggle has been in essence about independence. Having achieved this goal at extraordinary cost, the East Timorese will guard both the reality and spirit of independence jealously and challenge anything that might erode it.

*p. 61 Knowing the Steps but Not Hearing the Music. 1999.*

Both the international community and East Timor agree on the imperative of capacity building as the basis of meaningful participation and partnership. Capacity building is the area of greatest challenge for the international community, bearing in mind that the debate over East Timor for three decades turned on the question of capacity, with battle lines drawn sharply over the viability of an independent East Timor.

*p. 95 All the King's Horses and All the King's Men. 2000.*

Like the Covenant of old, the CNRT Magna Carta is what its title says it is, namely a great undertaking, a solemn and sacred commitment. It owes its origins primarily to the vision of CNRT leaders who were convinced that justice and reason would prevail, that East Timor would achieve its freedom and that the struggles and sacrifices behind it had to be harnessed and projected as ideals and principles for the future.

*p. 98 Human Rights and the Duties of Citizens. 2000.*

The ballot (Popular Consultation of August 1999) was an exercise in human rights – the human right to self-determination, the human right to free expression, assembly and association, the right to information, the right to have one's own political opinion, the right to one's distinctive cultural identity, the right to be different, the right to participate, the right to have a say and to shape your own future and institutions. It was a total rejection of the politics of violence and intimidation and the KKN tactics of bribery and corruption. The August 30 ballot was a model for the future.

*p. 107-8 Human Rights and the Duties of Citizens. 2000.*

On a recent early morning jog, backlit by an end-of-the-world sunrise behind Jesus's statue across the bay, I came across four very cute little girls. They were doing what kids all over the Third World do – out on a job for mum collecting firewood and scrap. No gas, no microwave, kero or whatever to boil their drinking water and get brekkie. One of the littlest had a lump of broken plastic. To burn, she said! Imagine the smell and smoke. My thoughts went to the acrid stench that fills our house when Manuel our cook very-deep-fries smoked fish at our place.

*p. 117 Settling in At the Scene of the Crime. 2001.*

The most difficult message to get across, however, is that it's not really about tennis at all but about personal, community and even national development. Properly conceived, thought through and implemented, tennis, like other sports, can be an engaging and effective vehicle for health, skills development, character formation, getting on with others (even peace-building), taking responsibility, learning how to run a meeting, how to manage people and a small business and so on. In a word, nation-building at the grassroots.

*p. 129 Tennis in Timor: You Can't be Serious. 2004.*

The houses were raffled at the opening on 30 November 2005. The recipients felt like they'd won the lottery as, indeed, did everyone who had contributed. Can there be anything more satisfying than helping someone get a home? At its simplest, this is what the East Timor issue has been all about. Both Domingos Monteiro's dreams had come true.

*p. 139 Domingos Monteiro's Dream. 2005.*

It is critical at this point in our development that Timor's two Golkars (church and government) have good relations based on trust and cooperation, not suspicion and competition. Timor-Leste needs to breathe with both lungs.

*p. 149 Towards a New Timor-Leste: the Shared Responsibility of Religious Institutions. 2006*

Timor-Leste has had little to be proud of over the last 12 months due to the institutional crisis and violence in Dili, but I believe that its truth commission is an achievement that is worth talking about.

*p. 175 Nation-building in Timor-Leste: the Contribution of Timor's Truth Commission. 2007.*

The lessons from Timor and now Burma are clear and universally applicable. The key lesson is that societies under restrictive military control are especially vulnerable in the face of serious disaster. As in Timor-Leste, the ultimate humanitarian response to the tragedy in Burma must be the restoration of democracy and the demilitarisation of Burma's stunted political life. Only if the freedoms of association, movement and communication articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are upheld will an effective response to Burma's situation be possible.

*p. 193 The Catastrophe in Burma: Lessons from Chega! 2008.*

Many of Dili's multi-cultural international community might be wondering why Timor-Leste is going to such lengths to honour the Polish Pope, as yet uncanonised. Others might feel that the honour should have gone to Dom Martinho da Costa Lopes, East Timor's first indigenous church leader, rather than Pope John Paul II, the man who removed him from office in 1983.

*p. 199 Dili's New Pope John Paul II Memorial. 2008.*

Neither Indonesia nor Timor-Leste have chosen to remember the attack on Dili for what it was – an embarrassing exercise in war crimes, aggression and incompetence. Indonesia has held no-one accountable, including for the deaths of its own troops, and has elected to remember the event in heroic terms. Timor-Leste has chosen not to press the point. 7 December is officially commemorated as Timor-Leste heroes day, deflecting public attention away from Indonesia. The people of Dili are left to remember the reality as best they can and to puzzle how both sides could have covered themselves in glory that fateful day.

*p. 234 7 December 1975: the Politics of Remembering. 2008.*

Having lost precious minutes, we speeded up, chatting happily and sweeping around sharp corners as we climbed into the green slopes. Our rising spirits suddenly dipped when a voice from the back seat announced that Mateus had thrown up. I parked and got out to assess the situation. Mateus had emptied his tummy over himself, the front seat and floor but, worse, also over Ines's spendidly decked out husband's

new outfit, including – horror of horrors – his pointy crocodile skin shoes.  
*p. 253 The Baptism of Carlos Maria Walsh. 2009.*

Maniaty's comment is a thoughtless repetition of a view that was regularly trotted out by the defenders of the Soeharto regime during the long struggle over East Timor's fate. This sort of give and take is no surprise in the heat of battle. But such nonsense has no more place in a serious book published in 2009 than equally specious claims over the years that Indonesians who supported human rights in East Timor were unpatriotic or that journalists who exposed the violence in East Timor over 25 years were driven by revenge for the murder of their colleagues in 1975.  
*pp. 257-8 Shooting Australian Timor Activists. 2009.*

To dismiss talk of an international tribunal as payback is to misunderstand it. The central issue for many is the destiny of humanity and the need to draw the line in the inch-by-inch struggle to overcome the impunity which permits what are so powerfully termed 'crimes against humanity'. For them it is abhorrent that Timor-Leste, which used and benefited significantly from international law in its long struggle to breathe freely, might now not play its part in this global common effort and, worse, even weaken it.  
*pp. 261-2 An International Tribunal for Timor-Leste: an Idea that Won't Go Away. 2009.*

One has to ask are President Horta's actions more in the spirit of the Prodigal Son than the demands of those who call for justice? The classic Catholic position is that justice is essential for lasting forgiveness and that the suggestion that one must choose either one or the other, theology or the law, is a false dichotomy.  
*pp. 274-5 Religious Dimensions of the Timor-Leste Reconciliation Process. 2009.*

Gus Dur was a good friend on Timor-Leste. Wits linked him jokingly to Gus-mao, a play on words this most humorous of men would have loved.  
*p. 283 Remembering Gus Dur. 2010.*

To top the day off, Grandma threw a going away party for me when she got home. She set it up out the front on four plastic tables and loaded them with Fruitamin, sausage rolls and a big fat chocolate cake all tarted up like one of those ladies. I was the only one allowed to start. All the other kids came and circled around the table like flies, but had to wait until Grandma gave the signal. She and I cut the cake and everything disappeared in a flash as though the spirit that lives in the top of Mariano's big tree had come along too.  
*pp. 301-2 Markito's Diary. 2010.*

Indonesian speakers at the launch were lavish in their praise of Chega! variously describing it as 'monumental', 'historic', 'a gift to humanity', an 'inspiration and benchmark for Indonesians wishing to address their own past', a 'mirror' in which Indonesia can examine itself objectively, and a valuable educational resource that should be utilised to correct 'lies' about Timor-Leste propagated during the Suharto period.  
*p. 313 Chega! A Gift to Indonesia and to Humanity. 2010.*

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