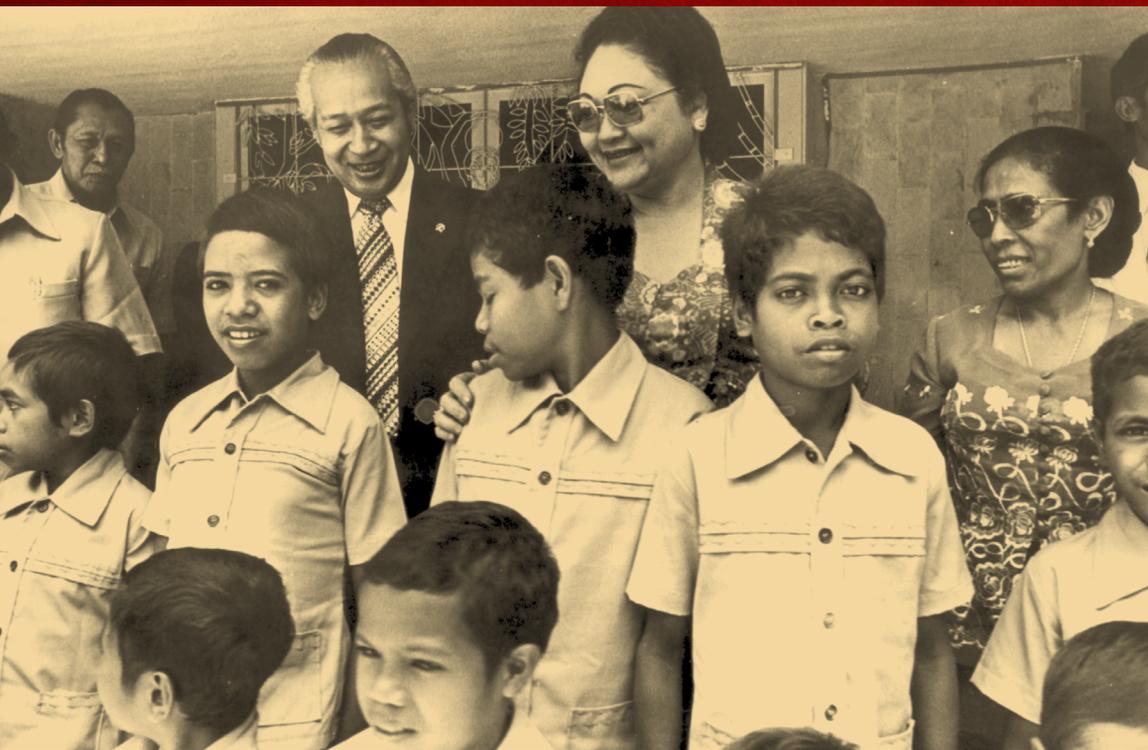


'I hope this book will help East Timorese who were taken to Indonesia as children to realise that they are not alone in their experience.'

Foreword by Her Excellency Ms Kirsty Sword Gusmão



# MAKING THEM INDONESIANS

CHILD TRANSFERS OUT OF  
EAST TIMOR

HELENE VAN KLINKEN

MAKING THEM  
INDONESIANS



MAKING THEM  
INDONESIANS  
CHILD TRANSFERS OUT  
OF EAST TIMOR

HELENE VAN KLINKEN

# Making Them Indonesians: Child Transfers out of East Timor

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## Foreword

This book tells the story of thousands of East Timorese children who were transferred to Indonesia between 1975 and 1999. A lot is written about the suffering of our people during the war and conflict – the displacement, hunger, detention, torture, rape, disappearances, killings. But this story of the transfer of vulnerable children out of East Timor is almost unknown. The children were raised and educated in Indonesia, losing their East Timorese culture and sometimes even the ability to communicate with their own parents and families. Many now live and work in Indonesia and have their own families there. Those who took the children often did so with the best of intentions, but their paternalistic attitudes, including taking many children against the wishes of parents and families, meant that there was little understanding of the personal suffering and the pain that separation causes.

Since the vote for independence in 1999, a number of East Timorese parents have asked me and/or the Alola Foundation of which I am Chair, for help in tracing their missing children in Indonesia. The Alola Foundation, named after a child taken as a war trophy to Indonesia in 1999, has assisted families in their search, and in several instances we have been successful. My husband, Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, also supports efforts to reunite children taken to Indonesia with their families in East Timor.

This book describes and analyses the child transfers out of East Timor and helps us better to understand why they occurred. The stories here represent the experiences of many East Timorese children and parents, and the book helps to draw public attention to their stories.

There are still many East Timorese living in Indonesia who were taken there as young children. There are also many families and elderly parents in East Timor who long to meet their missing children. I hope that this book, besides giving us a clearer understanding of the transfers, will also help East Timorese who were taken to Indonesia as children to realise that they are not alone in their experience. I hope that they will try to search for their families, and that those who took the children to Indonesia will assist them in their search.

*Her Excellency Ms. Kirsty Sword Gusmão*  
*Goodwill Ambassador for Education, Timor-Leste*  
*Chair National Commission, UNESCO Timor-Leste*  
*Chair of the Alola Foundation*



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## Preface

My decision to write about child transfers out of East Timor was influenced by my interest in the 'stolen generation' of Australian Aboriginal children. During my childhood I heard many stories from my mother and her friends about Aboriginal children living in institutions in Australia. However, it took many years before we understood why the children were placed in these institutions.

I first heard stories about children smuggled out of East Timor by soldiers when I was working in Indonesia from 2000 to 2002. This was already after the fall of the New Order regime. More political freedom in Indonesia meant that East Timorese dared to tell their stories. In 2003 I had the opportunity to volunteer at the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor, CAVR. There I began to realise the systematic nature of the transfer of young East Timorese children to Indonesia and to formulate the ideas which led to a PhD thesis and now this book.

There is little awareness of the fact and scale of the transfer of young, dependent East Timorese children to Indonesia. I was struck by the parallels with the removal of Aboriginal children from their families in Australia, a practice which only ceased at the end of the 1960s. If such transfers could continue for so long in Australia, I realised that under the repressive and censored Indonesian New Order regime, from 1965 till the fall of Suharto in 1998, the transfer of young children out of East Timor could also take place unchallenged. As I researched, gradually a picture emerged. I found the power holders in East Timor and Australia transferred children out of similar – though not identical – political and ideological aims. The Australian authorities wanted to assimilate the Aboriginal children into the dominant, white, Christian society; the aim of the Indonesians was similarly to integrate the East Timorese children, and make them Indonesians.

There was hardly any material written about these child transfers. I have collected the stories from many oral sources. But finding informants was not easy, as those involved have no organised contact with one another. Most of my research took place between 2003 and 2004 in Indonesia and East Timor and I am sincerely grateful to all the people who shared stories and information that made the writing of this book possible. I interviewed 32 parents or relatives of children taken to Indonesia, many of them still looking for their missing children. I spoke with a similar number of East

Timorese who had been taken to Indonesia as children. Most have returned to East Timor, although some continue to live in Indonesia. A small number of them are still searching for their families but have no accurate information. Many people generously shared with me information they had about the transfers: East Timorese village and traditional leaders; church and government officials; staff of religious and childcare institutions, staff of non-government organisations in East Timor and Indonesia; former members of the Indonesian military; and pro-Indonesian East Timorese living in Indonesia.

I started out to write a book, but I soon discovered that to write a convincing book, a book that the children and their parents deserved, I had first to write a thesis. This I completed in 2009 at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, under the thorough and wise supervision of Professor Robert Elson. I am deeply grateful for his encouragement and support often offered from a distance.

This book has benefitted greatly from the suggestions and corrections of the two examiners of my thesis, Professor Geoffrey Robinson and Assoc. Professor Jean Gelman Taylor, although any remaining errors are completely my responsibility. I offer them my sincere thanks.

I especially thank the Rev Agustinho de Vasconcelos and other commissioners of the CAVR for the opportunity to volunteer as a researcher for a short period in 2003, also CAVR staff in Dili and the districts, in particular Adriano Lemos and others in Ermera, were generous and tireless in their support.

I am indebted to the following people who helped in special ways:

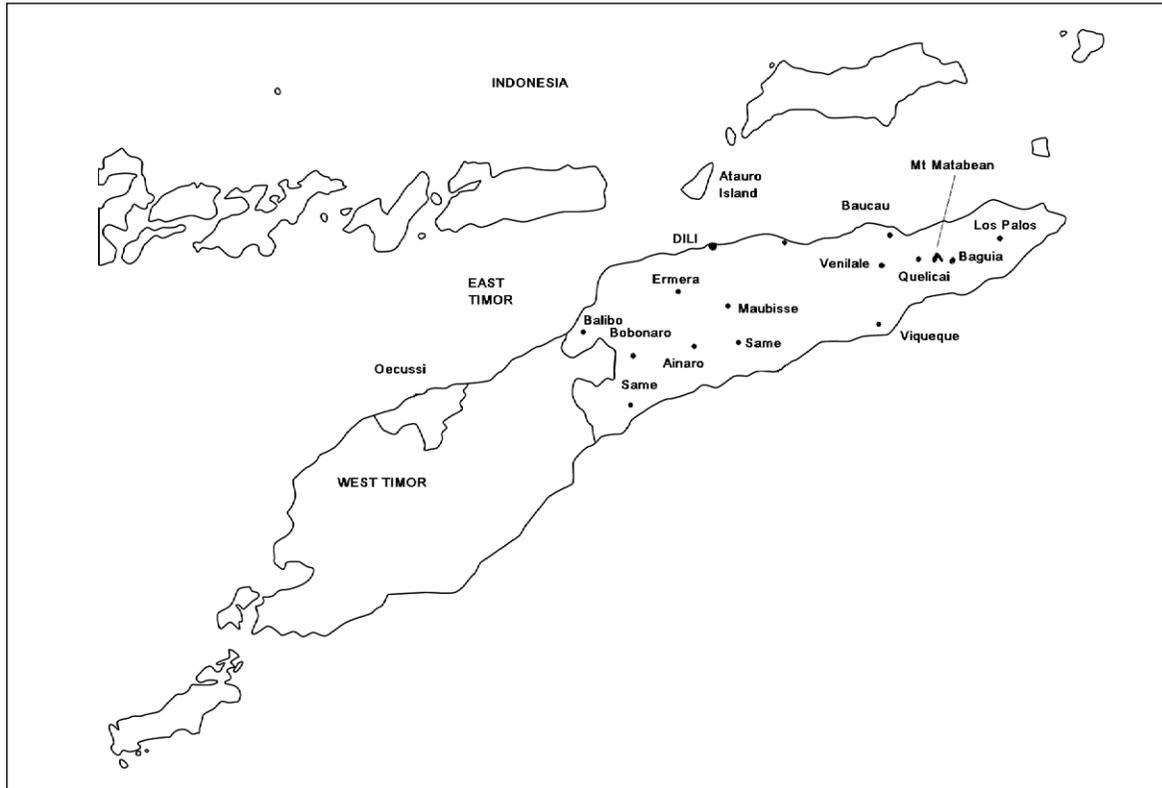
In Jakarta: Ade Rostina Sitompul, Rocky T.S. Wibowo, Nadjib Yasser, I Gusti Agung Putri Astrid Kartika, Luciano Conceição; in Bandung: Antonio Freitas, Alex Freitas Haryanto (Lukman), Rafael Urbano Rangel; in Yogyakarta and Salatiga: Esti Sumarah, Sri Murnining Tyas; in Kupang: Karen and John Campbell-Nelson, Elcid Li; in Atambua: Sister Sesilia; in Sulawesi: Ariyas Dedy; in Dili: Rob Williams and Catharina Williams-van Klinken, Inge Lempp, members of the United Islamic Centre in East Timor especially Mohammad Iqbal Menezes and Syamsul Bahari, Petrus Kanisius Alegria; in Leiden: the helpful librarians at the KITLV; in Brisbane: the wonderful people who lived at Stanley Terrace.

My immediate family played an important role in the journey that became this book. My interest in this topic was first stirred by my late mother, Mary

Rose, who would understand why I wrote this book. My children, Ben and Rosie, taught me the joy and the strength of the bond between parents and their children, which signals to me what separation would mean. Most of all I thank my husband Gerry for his inspiration and encouragement. He helped me to love Indonesia and first took me there in 1977; then to other places, which gave me the insight, language and opportunity to write.

To all the open-hearted people who told me their stories of separation, in particular those who shared the anguish of their ongoing search, I dedicate this book. I hope that it will make a small contribution in helping you find your missing family members.

# East Timor



# Indonesia and neighbouring countries



## Biliki's story<sup>1</sup>

I was born in about 1969 in a small village in central Portuguese Timor. My parents, Kulibere and Maria, were farmers and small-scale traders of sleeping mats, coffee, fruit and chilies. I lived with my parents and older brother Maumale near our coffee gardens. I remember running to meet my brother when he came home from school; he would carry me on his shoulders. After a gathering in our traditional ceremonial house following the death of my grandmother, my uncle Armindus took my brother and me to live with him some distance from our parents; I don't know why, possibly because of some problem in the family involving customary law. My brother didn't stay there long as he knew the way back home. I enjoyed playing with the children of my uncle, Bitersa, Sucakina and Armindos, but I was not allowed to meet my parents. My mother seemed to be afraid of my uncle and would try to meet me secretly in the coffee gardens.

Then the Indonesians invaded in 1975. When the soldiers came close I fled with my uncle's family and the villagers to the forest. In 1978 we were forced to surrender. The Indonesian soldiers made us move to Ainaro. There we lived with hundreds of other villagers in a large building near the church. During the day it was used as a school, but at night we slept there guarded by soldiers.

One Kopassus Special Forces soldier was particularly nice to me. He gave me pretty clothes and sweets and used to take me for walks and to his office. My uncle always told me to hide if the soldier came. He said that maybe the soldier knew I was not his child and wanted to take me away.

One Sunday, it was just after my first communion, I was coming out of church with other children when Indonesian soldiers took me and put me into a vehicle. My uncle tried to stop them. I remember screaming and being very frightened. They took me to the nearby airfield and then in a helicopter. As we took off I threw the handkerchief my uncle had given me out of the helicopter. In Dili I stayed for some time in the soldiers' barracks in Taibessi where there were East Timorese women, one of whom cared for me. On one occasion I tried to run away and find my way back home. After some time the soldier was finished in Ainaro;

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1 Interviews and telephone conversations, Jakarta, 2003–2006

he collected me from the barracks and took me back to Indonesia by plane.

I stayed with this soldier for five days, then he gave me to another family also living in the Kopassus complex in Cijantung in Jakarta. But I was not happy. The soldiers should have known I would feel that way after they stole me. They did not think at all about how I might feel. This second family had many children and the mother was sometimes cruel to me. After one year I met another woman in the same complex, and she invited me to come and live with her family. This family was good to me and I think of them as my own family. They sent me to school. They have six sons and the eldest child is a girl; I come in the middle. Now I am married and I have three children.

I want to find my parents before I die. I'm East Timorese even though I have grown up in Indonesia. I didn't dare to try to find my family during the New Order period. Since 1999 [the end of the New Order and independence for East Timor] I've asked a few people to help me, but I haven't had any success.

In May 2004 Biliki contacted the Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação (CAVR), the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor, which broadcast her request to find her family via its radio program, *Dalan ba Dame*. Biliki told listeners all she knew about herself – her East Timorese name, the names of her parents and her older brother and those of her cousins, and the fact that she came from Ainaro:

I want to return home ... go home. Sure I am an Indonesian citizen, but I am an East Timorese. My parents don't come from some unknown place; they come from East Timor. I need to go to East Timor, but that doesn't mean I will leave my family – not at all. I'm not just interested in going home, as you ask me, I have to. It would be dreadful if I died and I hadn't been able to meet my mother and my family.

I hope that if you are my family and hear my story that you will contact me. I don't want to be lost forever. The problem is that here in Indonesia, for me it's another country. No matter how bad one's country, we will want to go home. I don't want to be left here. I have to find my family...

Biliki was fortunate because her relatives heard her story. They had not forgotten the missing child in their family. They came to the CAVR, and soon afterwards the CAVR brought Biliki to East Timor. After an absence of 27 years she was back home.

Biliki's anguished quest of many years to trace her family and reclaim her identity is now over. But with it has come the upsetting realisation that it is difficult to return permanently to East Timor. Her future is with her young family in Indonesia. She has in fact become an Indonesian.



**Biliki at CAVR**

Biliki in June 2004, on her first day back in East Timor after 27 years, relates her story to the CAVR; pictured with CAVR commissioner, Maria Olandina Isabel Caeiro Alves.

© CAVR, 23 June 2004



**Biliki and her children in Jakarta, August 2006**

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*Introduction*

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## **Making them Indonesians**

Biliki's story is representative of the experience of many young East Timorese children who were taken to Indonesia during and shortly after the Indonesian occupation of East Timor between 1975 and 1999. Biliki was taken by a soldier, whereas others were sent to Indonesia by government and religious institutions. Besides these young children, many older East Timorese children were sent to Indonesia for education and training. While most of the older children went voluntarily, many of the younger children, like Biliki, were taken from their families with varying degrees of coercion and deception. The focus of this book is the approximately 4,000 young, dependent children sent to Indonesia between 1975 and 1999. This account is the first detailed record of the history of the transfer of these children to Indonesia.

The history of the transfers is not a simple story, nor can it be depicted in black and white terms. Some children were taken against their wishes, while others were rescued from certain death; some parents were coerced and deceived into giving their children away, while others agreed to the transfer of their children; some children were treated like family members by those who took them, while other children had to work for their adoptive families, sometimes in slave-like conditions. Those who took children acted out of mixed and varied motivations, ranging from genuine compassion and good intentions to the less benevolent manipulation and use of vulnerable children for economic, political and ideological ends.

The child transfers give us a deeper glimpse into the Indonesia–East Timor relationship. They reveal the complexities in the relationship and help us to judge its nature. It had many of the marks of a colonial relationship and, like all such relationships, was full of ambiguity and contradiction. The contradictions can perhaps best be understood by a quick survey of the arguments for and against colonialism over time. Early European colonisers emphasised the cultural and civilising nature of their colonising mission and the backwardness of their colonial subjects. Leaders of the colonised world, especially from the mid 20th

century, challenged these assertions, pointing to the violence and illegitimate economic and political exploitation of the colonised (Blue 2002: 3–4). In its rhetoric, the Indonesian regime vehemently denied that it was colonising East Timor. It claimed that its generous development program proved that it was not there to exploit the East Timorese. Central to development was the education offered to all East Timorese. These educational opportunities were indeed welcomed by the East Timorese, as the colonial Portuguese had reserved education, especially higher education, for the elite. Indonesians also argued that some other aspects of classic colonialism were not a part of the relationship, such as separation by long distances and wide cultural differences, which Benyamin Neuberger (1986: 84) calls the ‘salt and skin’ test.

Writing about colonialism has changed in other ways as well. In the past the focus in colonial studies was largely on the public sphere and the political actions of the elite (Dirks 1992a: 11), but more recently personal lives and the social interactions of ordinary people have received greater emphasis.<sup>1</sup> These studies from several disciplines help us to understand better the multifaceted nature of colonialism, which was often ignored by earlier writers of history (Blue 2002: 3,11). Until the late 1990s, scholarly literature on East Timor in the English language had been mainly concerned with major actors and big issues in politics, security, international relations and human rights,<sup>2</sup> and often did not attend to its socio-cultural dimensions. The story of child transfers provides us with a lens on the socio-cultural, because it places ordinary people at the centre of the story. Many of the East Timorese who are the main focus of this history came from marginalised and disadvantaged families within East Timor. We learn here about their experiences of living and relating to Indonesians, most of whom were ordinary Indonesians from a broad range of backgrounds and from all layers of society – Indonesian soldiers and police at all levels, teachers, public servants and administrators.

The story of the transfer of young children also places the most vulnerable members of society at the centre of the story – those whose perspective is often ignored in national histories. The experiences and personal stories of East

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1 Disciplines, such as literature, anthropology, and feminist and gender studies, have all contributed their particular approaches and emphases to the study of colonialism; see, for example, Taylor (1983), Yuval-Davis, Anthias and Campling (1989) and Clancy-Smith and Gouda (1998). Among edited collections exemplifying the diverse approach are Dirks (1992b), Cooper and Stoler (1997), Blue, Bunton and Croizier (2002).

2 Important among these works are those by Dunn (2003), Jolliffe (1978) and Taylor (1999). Most non-Indonesian academics and foreign journalists wrote to challenge Indonesia’s annexation of East Timor and highlighted the struggle of the resistance. Their writing served to support the East Timorese in international advocacy for their right to self-determination.

Timorese who belonged to the resistance movement have received considerable attention in popular literature.<sup>3</sup> As Peter Carey (2003: 23–26) notes however, we know little about how other East Timorese interacted with Indonesians, especially those not deemed heroes of the struggle. We do have one small glimpse into how ordinary East Timorese interacted with Indonesians when East Timor was closed to the outside world in the 1980s. It is a remarkable report written by distinguished Indonesian scholars, and its criticism of the dominant role of the military led to its banning.<sup>4</sup> Most information about East Timor in the Indonesian language was prepared by Indonesian officials and appeared in propaganda brochures and booklets and in the censored news channelled through the state-controlled *Antara* news agency.

East Timor is now independent, but an understanding of East Timor today requires one to be attuned to the 24 years of Indonesian rule. As many histories of colonialism now argue, the experience of colonialism continues to influence contemporary politics and culture in former colonies. Since East Timor gained its independence, many foreign scholars have been less interested in the colonial period and have viewed East Timor as a laboratory for studying post-colonial transitions and identity formation (for example, Mearns and Farram [2008], Hughes [2009] and Bexley [2009]), although several important works analysing the history of the violence have been published (especially Robinson [2010] and Greenlees and Garran [2002]). The focus of Indonesian writers, such as Awali (2006), Sukawarsini Djelantik (2003) and Alatas (2006), has

---

3 Popular writings included autobiographies, such as that of clandestine leader, Contanção Pinto (Pinto and Jardine 1997), who wrote from exile in the United States; others were collections of stories told by women (Turner 1992; Winters 1999), while many personal stories were published by international organisations supporting independence for East Timor, such as the US-based East Timor Action Network (ETAN), Lisbon-based A Paz é Possível em Timor-Leste (Peace is Possible in East Timor), the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) and the UK-based Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), now called Progressio. Personal stories also appeared on the many websites that grew from these networks (Miller 2002; Dwyer 1999). Support groups began to appear within Indonesia (see Goodman 1999). International human rights organisations, especially Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (Asia), carefully documented human rights abuse perpetrated by all sides to the conflict, although most of their reporting was of violence by the Indonesian military and the East Timorese militia. (For Amnesty International archival resources, see IDC Publishers 2004; some post-1991 archival material by Human Rights Watch Asia is available on its website [[www.hrw.org/en/asia/east-timor](http://www.hrw.org/en/asia/east-timor)].)

4 An English-language translation (Mubyarto et al. 1991), published in Melbourne, circulated outside Indonesia. It was a study of the socio-anthropological impact of integration, commissioned by Indonesian officials of the regional government in East Timor who were concerned that development in East Timor was failing to lead to East Timorese acceptance of integration.

been the failure of Indonesian diplomacy to gain international acceptance of integration.

The most complete historical record of the period to date is contained in the 2006 Report of the CAVR. It documents the experiences of ordinary East Timorese during the period, although its focus is the human rights abuse by all parties to the conflict from 1974 to 1999 (CAVR 2006: 2 No. 4). The report also includes the first detailed statement about the transfer of East Timorese children to Indonesia (CAVR 2006: 7.8).<sup>5</sup>

While stories of the resistance continue to be popular (for example, Gusmão 2000; Carey 2003; Cristalis and Scott 2005; Rei 2007; Conway 2010), the growing public interest in child transfers is reflected in the fact that the first novel written in the East Timorese Tetun language is the story of a young boy taken for adoption by Indonesian soldiers (Ximenes 2009). The story of the child transfers is important not only for the sake of the children themselves but also for the greater insight it gives into the social history of the period and the nature of the intertwining relationships between the two peoples. These insights have many implications for policy, especially as the new nation of East Timor seeks to have a strong relationship with the now democratic Indonesia.

## **The transfer of children from East Timor**

This book is about the transfer of children to Indonesia, some to be adopted by Indonesian families and some to be cared for in institutions. I explain here why I have chosen the term ‘transfer’, the children I am referring to, and the numbers of children involved and outline briefly the conceptions of adoption held by East Timorese and Indonesians.

No single term captures the nuances of the transfers adequately. I describe the children as ‘taken’ and ‘sent’ to Indonesia, as well as ‘removed’ and ‘abducted’ from East Timor. However, I have chosen to use ‘transfer’ as a general term to cover the different manifestations. Article 3 of the United Nations Protocol on Trafficking in Persons (United Nations 2000b) deems any transfer of a minor, defined as anyone less than 18 years of age, as ‘trafficking’. However, this is an emotive term and its use would detract from my aim to portray the range of motivations of individuals and institutions for acquiring

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5 For a good analysis of the truth-seeking process of the CAVR, see Roosa (2007). The bilateral Indonesia–East Timor Commission of Truth and Friendship (CTF) was established in late 2004, after the CAVR had completed its work; it was limited to the investigation of the violence of 1999 (CTF 2008).

children and the varying degrees of incentive, coercion and desperation which led East Timorese parents to surrender their children.

Approximately half of the transfers were to institutions in Indonesia. The institutions became the guardians of these children and there was little continuing contact with those who had organised their transfer out of East Timor. The other children were taken for adoption. Most of the cases of adoption that I recorded were by soldiers. The children had the status of *anak angkat*, literally, a child who is taken up (into the family).<sup>6</sup> In Indonesia this is understood as a binding relationship between an adult and minor, although it is not established through a legal process as adoption is in the West. In English I describe the relationships as adoptions as they encompass stronger links and responsibilities than fostering implies.

Adoption is common throughout Indonesia and East Timor. Traditional adoption procedures in Indonesia usually have some way of formalising the new relationship is, although practices vary throughout the archipelago. Agreements between adopting and biological parents are often witnessed by civilian and traditional leaders and sometimes there is a formal written statement proving guardianship (Sriono 1992: 5–6, 18). In some cases, as in West Java, a token gift is given by the adopting parent to the biological parent to formalise the agreement (Moestapa 1946: 47). Some adopted children have no further contact with their biological parents, and they inherit from their adoptive and not from their biological parents. In Java, however, arrangements are often flexible and children may even move back to the home of their biological parents (Sriono 1992: 5; Schröder-Butterfill 2004: 116).

However, children who have been adopted usually cannot be taken back by their biological parents (Sriono 1992: 5–6; Schröder-Butterfill 2004: 116, 139 footnote 4; Moestapa 1946: 47). After independence, problems arose in some cases because the biological parents of a child returned to East Timor, while the parents who had adopted their child stayed on in Indonesia, or vice versa. In the preceding years, biological parents who had given a child for adoption, usually to a relative, did so with the full expectation that they would continue to have some contact with their child. With the changed political situation, access to their child suddenly ceased and some parents tried to demand the return of their child. Biological

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6 Most local languages have their own terms for this; see for example Sriono (1992: 3).

parents who want to reclaim their child usually must give some monetary restitution to the adoptive parents.<sup>7</sup>

Most Indonesians are Muslims, and the Koran encourages Muslims to care for the children of others, although it forbids adoption because it severs blood links with natural parents (Fuad Mohammad Fachruddin 1985: 67–68; Latief et al. 1977: 47–49). Despite this prohibition, traditional adoption is common among Indonesian Muslims, but the adoption of children by parents of a different religion is strictly forbidden.<sup>8</sup> The transfers discussed in Chapter 4 were sensitive for this reason.

In East Timor and Indonesia there are many reasons why families might adopt a child, just as there are many reasons why families might surrender their child for adoption. An important point to make is that in East Timor and in Indonesia adoptions are usually within the family network. Closely aligned with this is the fact that within most communities there are obligations to care for orphaned children of deceased relatives within the kinship system (Schröder-Butterfill 2004: 115).<sup>9</sup> One of the main reasons adults adopt a child is because they have no offspring to care for them in old age. Adoption is also not limited to married couples; unmarried men and women, widows and widowers, and grandparents can all adopt children. Other reasons for adoption are the desire to have a child of a particular gender and, sometimes, the belief that an adopted child can stimulate fertility. In Bali many families adopt male children, because only sons can pray for deceased parents and ancestors. Families also often take in a child to help with household tasks. Although Indonesian academic Edy Sriono (1992: 15) says that adoptive parents would not admit to this motivation, it is common practice (Newberry 2010).<sup>10</sup>

Poverty is one of the main reasons parents give away their children, although in Java a childless couple may ask for a child of any relative, not necessarily an impoverished relative. Sometimes parents give away a child who suffers from constant illness and whose siblings have all died, in the hope that the relative or adoptive parent might provide a more propitious environment in which to

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7 Carmen Da Cruz (conversation, Dili, April–May 2004) and Inge Lemp, Baucau (email communication, April 2010).

8 In 1982 the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), the state-organised Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars, issued a decree to this effect (Sriono 1992: 28–29).

9 The Tetun-speaking people living in West Timor on the border with East Timor and in the eastern region of East Timor around Viqueque are matrilineal and brothers are responsible for their sisters' children (Therik 2004: 20 [map 2], 139–140).

10 Sriono (1992: 4) also notes that families who adopt a child out of genuine philanthropic concern usually have children of their own.

raise the child (Sriono 1992: 5; Schröder-Butterfill 2004: 115–116; Geertz 1961: 36–41; Ekadjati et al. 1994: 21; Moestapa 1946: 47)<sup>11</sup>. But in East Timor and Indonesia poverty remains the primary factor that leads many poor families to give away a child, usually to a richer relative. Families in rural areas often give children to relatives living in towns where education is more accessible. The adopting family provides for the child, although the child usually works for the family in exchange for food and school fees. Parents also benefit from the arrangement, as their child will be educated and may contribute to their future wellbeing, which is why they prefer to pass children to relatives rather than to strangers. This practice is a type of transaction within a family network in which the child is a commodity in the exchange process (Vel 1994: 171–173; Newberry 2010). Similar circulation of children elsewhere is likewise to improve chances for children and provide adults with insurance for the future (Yu and Liu 1980: 247–62; Leinaweaver 2008). Anthropologist Tom Therik from West Timor likened the practice of poor families giving away a child to a survival strategy. Those who are able to eat only once a day are happy if their child has enough to eat, is clothed and can go to school, even if the child is forced to work hard or suffers discrimination and is not treated as the equal of other children in the adoptive family.<sup>12</sup> Such children are entirely dependent on the goodwill of their benefactors.

Indonesian soldiers who adopted East Timorese children did so for some of the reasons mentioned here and, as we shall see in Chapter 2, out of other motivations as well. When soldiers had contact with the parents, they usually formalised the adoptions by giving gifts, such as rice and money, and many entered into written agreements with the parents. In my judgement, this gift-giving and the letters of agreement did not represent a genuine customary law adoption procedure. The written documents had the official purpose of proving to the authorities in East Timor that there was no-one capable of caring for the adopted child. The agreements stated that parents handed over their children voluntarily, yet many East Timorese parents had no choice but to agree to the soldiers' requests. Those parents who did give permission believed that they were entering into an arrangement whereby soldiers would return their children on completion of their education.<sup>13</sup> However,

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11 I am grateful to Dr Julian Millie who drew my attention to the publications by Moestapa and Ekadjati and his colleagues.

12 Tom Therik (interview, Kupang, 9 February 2004).

13 According to parents I spoke to, soldiers made promises along these lines. As I explain in Chapter 2, East Timorese officials working for the administration confirm that soldiers made such promises, although none of the formal written agreements that I have seen make any mention of returning the children.

soldiers did not return the children to East Timor and in most cases there was no further relationship between the biological and adopting parents. Consequently, the biological parents feel that soldiers were duplicitous and betrayed their trust, and these adoptions fall outside established practices that are still common among both Indonesians and East Timorese.

East Timorese from all walks of life have told me that no East Timorese willingly gives up a child; if they had to do so, it would be to a family member or to a Catholic nun or priest. The calamitous events following the Indonesian annexation of East Timor in 1975 meant that traditional patterns of care broke down and families could not fulfil their responsibilities. In some cases most members of a family might have died, leaving perhaps a lone child. Many families faced the heavy burden of caring for the children of deceased or disabled relatives.<sup>14</sup> In 1985/6 the number of abandoned children was approximately 40,000 in a total population of 649,674 – an extraordinarily high ratio that shows the severity of the calamity.<sup>15</sup> The deprivation, oppression and fear in which East Timorese lived probably led many parents to believe that their child might have a better opportunity, even simply of survival, if she or he went to live in Indonesia. However, we cannot discount that some parents agreed to their children being taken to Indonesia because they were impressed by the Indonesians and believed that it would be good for their children and their own futures to have their child raised and educated in Indonesia. It is now difficult to make a judgement about the degree of force in any particular transfer, but we can conclude that the East Timorese faced a desperate situation – so desperate that many were willing to hand their children into the care of members of the invading armed forces.

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14 In 1985, Inacio Fernandes cared for 20 abandoned children in his own family (Mario Carrascalão, interview, Dili, 13 April 2004). Another family told me that between 1984 and 1988 they cared for 16 children of relatives whose parents had died or were incapacitated (Felicidade Guterres, conversation, Dili, 28 July 2003).

15 The 1985 survey was conducted by the provincial Department of Social Welfare (Dinas Sosial tingkat II) (Mario Carrascalão, statement at the CAVR public hearing, 'Women and conflict', Dili, 28–29 April 2003). A local government survey in 1986 estimated 42,896 abandoned children out of a total of 649,674 (Bapeda 1986: 32 124; Department of Information 1984: 78). In the years before the invasion, the Catholic Church had institutions attached to schools where children from remote areas lived while they attended school, but they were not established for the care of orphans. To cope with the crisis, the church expanded its facilities and Governor Mario Carrascalão received a small amount of financial assistance from Suharto's foundation, Yayasan Dharmais, for 5,000 children for four years (Nurhayati Sumadi, senior staff member, Yayasan Dharmais (interview, Jakarta, 15 August 2006).

East Timorese do not use age in any strict sense as the measure of maturity; parents were often unsure of the precise age of their children. East Timorese parents are responsible for their children until they marry and believe that they should be involved in the major decisions in their children's lives up to their marriage. At the time that these transfers occurred, a child was defined in Indonesian law as anyone under 21 years of age and not yet married. Indonesia's 2002 Child Protection Law uses 18 years of age as the end of childhood, as does the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to which Indonesia became a signatory in January 1990. Many of the students and youths who went voluntarily to Indonesia were still children under both of these definitions.

The children who are the focus of this book were dependent children at the time they left East Timor, in the sense that they could not live alone without supervision. Many of them were vulnerable: children who were separated and abandoned; children who were fatherless and orphaned; children from poor families; and children of the Fretilin resistance, who were regarded with suspicion and as having no rights. Separated, abandoned and orphaned children were easy to remove as no-one claimed them. Parents, widows and guardians who were poor were susceptible to persuasion and were coerced into handing over their children. They needed the gifts and financial assistance a soldier might offer and had no-one to speak out on their behalf. They felt more than the average person that it was dangerous to oppose a soldier. In Indonesia the children who were removed were unable to maintain links with their home, and their families did not have the resources to maintain contact with their children. By comparison, the young children of the East Timorese ruling elite – the supporters of integration – who were given scholarships to study in Indonesia received regular visits from their parents and other family members who ensured that their young children made regular visits to their homes in East Timor.

Estimating the number of dependent children transferred to Indonesia during the entire period of the occupation is difficult, although there are some indications of the scale. Each of the following chapters attempts to assess the available evidence to make an estimate of the children removed in the circumstance under discussion. East Timorese leaders confirm that many children were removed: Mario Carrascalão said that during the ten years he was governor (1982–1992), many parents reported their missing children to him each year; the Catholic Bishop of East Timor, Carlos Belo, stated in 1993 that 400 East Timorese children were living in Islamic institutions in Java (Carey 1995: 11); priests in East Timor tell of numerous

children who asked for help in finding their families on their return from Indonesia; and several East Timorese who returned home in the 1990s told of how many parents came to check if they were their missing children. A representative of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) told the CAVR that 4,534 children may have been transferred to Indonesia between 1975 and 1999 (CAVR 2006: 7.8.4.1 No. 353). This estimate, based on cases reported to the UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) throughout the occupation, matches closely my own estimates – about 2,000 children taken away by soldiers in the late 1970s and early 1980s; approximately 1,000 transferred by religious institutions; and about 1,000 intentionally separated immediately before and after the referendum in 1999.

This account relies almost entirely on oral sources, relevant Indonesian government records either do not exist or can no longer be located. A few non-government and church institutions in Indonesia made available their records relating to East Timorese children who had been placed in their care. Most records in East Timor were lost in the destruction after the referendum in 1999. The Indonesian military as an institution is not prepared to discuss the issue or disclose information officially. There were only a few references to the transfers in the Indonesian media, the exception being after the referendum in 1999 when many newspapers in Indonesia and internationally reported the plight of separated East Timorese children.

As I have already indicated, this is the story of how ordinary members of society, many of whom were weak and marginalised, experienced Indonesian colonialism. Information about the oppressed is usually not recorded in official histories. Consequently the only way to gather information is directly from those involved using an oral history approach. When dealing with oral sources we need to evaluate any bias that is present. But we have to remember that written sources are not free of bias: the contents have been filtered by its author and by others who decide that events will be understood in a particular way (Portelli 1998: 64; Roosa, Ratih and Farid 2003: 2,4–5). One advantage in gathering oral sources is that we can question the sources, ask for clarification and remind the story-teller about certain events that may facilitate the accuracy of recall, something that is not possible with written texts.

One unique challenge is that oral histories are often collected from people whose way of telling a narrative is linked to their tradition of folk narrative, where the boundaries between what happens in the outer world and the inner world of an individual, and between what concerns the group as

opposed to the individual, are more elusive than in written accounts (Portelli 1998: 66). East Timor has a rich oral tradition that includes ritual story-telling. As Therik (2004: 3–4) points out, the distinctive characteristic of ritual story-telling is that if the speaker, a designated elder, retells the words from the ancestors falsely it can lead to misfortune and death for the teller and the community. Accurate recall is emphasised, although the world of the ancestors can intersect with the present, as observed in the testimony of one speaker, not an elder, during the CAVR public hearing on ‘Children and conflict’. He shifted between describing the actions of the Indonesian soldier who mistreated him and those of a deceased, elderly relative who, he said, came to his aid, as if there was continuity between the actions of the living and the dead.<sup>16</sup> In a situation more intimate than a public hearing, confusions such as this could be clarified.

An advantage of history based on oral sources is that it deals with information and events in a personal and intimate manner and has immediacy not usually found in history based on written sources. East Timorese could describe their experiences in great detail, recalling, to my amazement, many small details of long ago events, although their experience of injustice was often expressed differently from the way I thought about it. One parent whose child is still missing told me, ‘We’d search till exhausted to find a missing animal, how much more so a person.’<sup>17</sup> Perhaps we place so much emphasis on written sources that we forget how well memory serves those who have developed the skill of remembering. Some of the details, such as dates and order of events, may be forgotten or several events may have collapsed into a single event, but the main thrust of a story remains crystal clear in the mind of the one who underwent the experience.

Certain traditional rituals ensured that people remembered events. When a child had been missing for a long period of time, whether separated then disappeared during the war or taken to Indonesia by soldiers, the child was assumed dead. Families often made a grave for these missing children and performed the ritual ceremonies associated with death. These ceremonies reassured those who performed them that the spirit of their child would return to rest with the spirits of their ancestors buried in their traditional lands in East Timor. It also meant that families did not forget these children. If a child assumed dead did return further ceremonies were necessary to place them again in the world of the living. When Sister Maria Lourdes Martins

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16 CAVR public hearing, ‘Children and conflict,’ Dili, 29–30 March 2004.

17 ‘Bintang hilang, kami cari setengah mati, apalagi manusia’ (Duarte Sarmento, interview, Tuapukan, Kupang 2004).

brought 18-year-old Mariana back to East Timor after an absence of more than ten years, her family was shocked that she was alive. They arranged for her to stay with another relative while they performed the appropriate ceremonies so that she could return home. The family of Achnesia Felina Manganang, taken as a six-year-old child in 1977 to Indonesia by a soldier, did not make a grave for her but asked the spirits of the ancestors to protect her. Many years later, her older brother succeeded in tracing her and in 1994 she travelled home to meet her family. When Achnesia arrived home her parents immediately held a celebratory feast for family and neighbours. Her father took her to the site of the family graves to thank the ancestors for protecting Achnesia and reuniting them.

From oral sources we learn not only what people did but also what they now think they did (Portelli 1998: 67). I was asking people to recall traumatic events that happened long ago. The need to justify certain actions led some parents and families not to relate particularly difficult details or to frame events in another way. I found this especially in relation to assessing the extent to which parents consented to their children being sent to Indonesia and the reasons they gave for doing so. Some now probably feel guilty about having surrendered their children, even though they gave permission under difficult circumstances when they could not care for their child or had been coerced into handing over their child. For example, one mother gave her younger daughters to soldiers for adoption to save her older daughters from being raped. This was never discussed openly in the family and I learnt about it from people who were not members of that family. Knowing this helped resolve inconsistencies in the stories I had received from different family members.<sup>18</sup> In general parents were honest and open and admitted that they had given permission for their child to be taken to Indonesia, if that had been the case, although many are disappointed that they were deceived in the agreements they made with soldiers and with the representatives of organisations.

I carried out the research presented here during and immediately after the period when the CAVR conducted a nationwide program to collect narrative statements from victims, witnesses and perpetrators. This had been preceded by a national campaign to explain the work of the CAVR and the data collection process (CAVR 2006: Annexe 2 Nos. 9–12). The people of East Timor strongly identified with the principles and processes of the

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18 Roosa (2007: 8) makes the point that small inconsistencies in a story from several sources often enable the researcher to detect a problem.

CAVR, so were better prepared than might be expected and eager to tell their experiences. Since independence in 1999 many East Timorese have sought the help of the UNHCR and also the ICRC to trace their missing children; during the period of Indonesian occupation many parents had contacted the ICRC.<sup>19</sup> Many parents had, therefore, already begun to tell the stories of their missing children before I commenced my research. Those who were transferred as children are now adult and the standards usually followed when interviewing children did not apply.

### Child transfer in other countries

Children are often transferred away from danger during war and conflict out of humanitarian concern and to safeguard the children who represent the future of the groups to which the children belong. Such transfers are carried out with the approval of parents. One famous example is the Kindertransport rescue operation, in which thousands of Jewish children were sent out of Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia prior to the Second World War (Stargardt 2006: 10,37–28,51–52).

The focus of this book, however, is the young children from a minority or oppressed group who were transferred away from their families and cultural milieu by those in power, in a process that is certainly not without precedent. Such transfers are often presented as a humanitarian response to the situation of the children, although there are usually many different underpinning motives that ultimately serve the goals of those holding power rather than the needs of the children and the groups to which they belong. Sometimes parents hand over their children because they too believe in the benefits to their children, but in many cases the transfers are coercive. It is worth noting that, almost without exception, as was the case in East Timor, transfers of children of the oppressed group proceed unquestioned at the time and remain unchallenged for many years.

Among the best-documented examples of transfers of children of oppressed groups are those of indigenous children in colonial settler societies, such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand.<sup>20</sup> The motivation for these transfers was deemed humanitarian, but were underpinned by the political

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19 Transferring children to Indonesia was not a violation included in the CAVR's statistical truth-seeking process and few parents reported the abduction or removal of the children to the CAVR. In the minds of parents it did not represent a crime, especially if they gave permission or signed a letter of surrender of their child.

20 For a summary and further information, see Armitage (1995).

and racial aims of the authorities. In the early decades of the 20th century Social Darwinist eugenics theories about race were popular and contributed to the belief that indigenous cultures were backward and inferior and would eventually die out as they came in contact with the modern world. Mixed-race children demanded special attention. Policy-makers believed that the best way to help them was to assimilate them into mainstream society by giving them a white identity, but to do so the children had to be removed from contact with their native environments (Spurling 2003: 99–106).

Forty thousand children of mixed Australian Aboriginal and white Australian settler descent were removed from their families, many forcibly, under official Australian government policies between 1915 and 1969 (HREOC 1997: Part 2). In her comparison of removal policies of Australian Aboriginal children with those of the child migration schemes in which orphans and children from poor families in Britain were transferred to Australia, Spurling concluded that the overriding concern in both programs was the political and social agenda to create and maintain a White Australia. The Aboriginal children needed help to develop a ‘white’ identity, and the British children would contribute to the European stock (Spurling 2003: 320–324).<sup>21</sup> Despite being a small minority in their colonies in French West Africa, the French had a similar policy, motivated by the same theories about race and miscegenation, of removing mixed-race children from their African mothers. From the beginning of the 20th century until 1940, approximately 3,500 children of mixed-race African and French parentage were taken from their families to be given a French education. Their education was intended to estrange the children from the local native population and engender loyalty to the French, thereby making them useful to the French in ruling their colonies (White 1999: 2,7–61,74,182). Information about these programs and the testimonies of the children took many years to enter public consciousness decades after the programs had ceased.

The Nazi regime developed a hierarchy of racial purity based on the same theories, which it used to justify the extermination of Jews and other minorities who did not match its criteria of racial purity. The same ideas underpinned its *Lebensborn* program, which aimed to improve the desirable Aryan stock in Germany. Children born to German fathers and women living in occupied European countries, particularly in Norway, would be raised and trained as future leaders (Olsen 2005: 15–24). This program

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21 A 2010 film, *Sunshine and Oranges*, tells the story of the British children deported to Australia.

extended to the forcible removal to Germany of racially 'suitable' Czech and, especially, Polish children during the German occupation of their homelands in the Second World War, to be assimilated into the dominant German culture (Stargardt 2006: 163–166). These programs, which destined some children for extermination and others for nurture, were conducted in secrecy and, once again, it was many years before they became public, especially the *Lebensborn* program (Ericsson and Simonsen 2005: 1–2; Hammer 2000).

Child transfers were also driven by other dominating motivations, including ideological and religious ones. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, religious institutions often worked together with the state, offering mutual support for their respective religious and civilising missions, especially in the education of children. Throughout the colonised world, many Christian mission organisations set up boarding schools to educate children away from parental interference and cultural influence. The children taken into these institutions were often the children of fatherless or poor families, or orphaned and abandoned children, because these children were deemed easier to influence, while at the same time most in need of the charity offered. In the 19th century English Protestant missionaries in Pacific islands found it advantageous to their educational aims to gather children in boarding schools (Grimshaw 1989: 40–41).<sup>22</sup> Another example is that of the Dutch Catholic missionary priests on the island of Flores, situated to the west of Timor, who took children, sometimes forcibly, from their scattered mountain villages to educate them in the main towns; some of the children were the sons of influential leaders who were persuaded to give their children the advantage of a Dutch Christian education (Steenbrink 2003: 90,109,134). In Australia, Christian missions were also actively involved in educating Aboriginal children in their institutions, although the process of removing children from their parents was under the control of the state (Spurling 2003: 220ff).

One of largest mass transfers of children for ideological purposes was carried out by the United States in the tense period of the Cold War. During the Pedro Pan Operation, 14,000 middleclass Cuban children were transferred to the southern United States between 1960 and 1962. The transfers were carried out in secret, with priests and senior officials of the Catholic Church in both countries working together with US officials to

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22 The missionaries began saving children from the practice of live burial with their dead mothers. This group of outcasts who grew up to become educated leaders also demonstrated to the missionaries the benefits of an education away from cultural influences (Young 1989: 117).

support and encourage parents to send their children to the United States. The aim was to deprive the communist regime of knowledge, wealth and future leaders, but it also meant forcing family separations that often lasted for many years (Torres 2003). After the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, they transferred Afghani children out of Afghanistan to achieve their ideological and religious goals. Older children were sent for short periods of re-education and training to Islamic states in Soviet Central Asia. However, children under ten years of age, especially those orphaned by the war and the poor and fatherless, were sent to the Soviet heartland for a communist education. These younger children were easier to influence and had no parents and family who might object to their communist education. Away from their Islamic environment they could be educated as future leaders sympathetic to their new Communist masters (Laber 1986).<sup>23</sup>

Most of the children displaced by these transfer programs were sent to institutions, although in some cases they were adopted. Removals for adoption are more complex because personal motives intersect with the broader nationalistic motives already mentioned. Conflicts and disasters are often associated with a sharp increase in attempts to take children for adoption. In recent years such transfers and attempted transfers following disasters have received a lot of media attention and have sometimes led to criminal charges. Following the tsunami in the Indonesian province of Aceh in 2004, there was much unfounded rumour and heated debate in the press about children being taken away by individuals and institutions for adoption, for sale in neighbouring Asian countries or to be raised in Christian institutions (Maas 2005). In 2007 the French L'Arche de Zoé charity attempted to take children from Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region to be adopted in France. The children were purportedly orphans, but many had been taken under false pretences from their parents in Chad (Wikipedia 2008; UNICEF 2008). Still more recently, after the earthquake in Haiti a group of American Christian missionaries from the New Life Children's Refuge tried to take Haitian children to America to be adopted.<sup>24</sup> Most Haitian parents had given permission to the group to take their children, but official permission had not been obtained (Wikipedia 2010; SOS Children's

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23 Laber points out that the tragedy was that the Afghans took their own children and trained them as fighters, the beginning of the Taliban, to resist the Soviet occupiers.

24 Soon after the earthquake, children were taken from Haiti to other destinations, many of whom had been living in orphanages and adoption processes were already under way when the earthquake struck. See Weeda 2010.

Villages 2010). In both of these cases the organisers were arrested and sentenced, although all have now been released.

The final example of child transfers to which I will refer is the stealing of babies for adoption in Argentina during the 'Dirty War' between 1976 and 1983. The babies and infants were the children of anti-government activists who were targeted and killed by the military junta; pregnant women were often allowed to give birth and then 'disappeared'. An estimated 300 children were kidnapped following the military coup against the Juan Perón government (International Coalition of Sites of Conscience 2010). The children were given new identities and adopted by childless families loyal to the regime, often the killers of the parents of the children they adopted. After the regime fell, the police chief of Buenos Aires who had been in power during part of the junta's rule argued that it had been a humanitarian act by the regime to 'rescue' the young children and not kill them along with their parents. He claimed that the children were given new identities so that they would not grow up seeking revenge for what had happened to their parents and that they would not follow the leftist, anti-government ideas of their parents which, he argued, was better for them and for Argentina (IACHR 1988:Chap. 5-I). Heinrich Himmler, the chief architect of the extermination of Jews and unwanted minorities in Nazi Germany, used a similar argument in relation to Polish children who were placed in German foster homes after their parents had been killed or sent to concentration camps following the assassination of a senior German official in Poland in June 1942. He maintained that their good German education and upbringing would make them loyal Germans and prevent them from trying to avenge their parents' deaths (Stargardt 2006: 165).

It is widely accepted, no less in Indonesia, that removing children from their families or social environments should be subject to controls. Care should always be taken to ensure that families are kept together. In most of the transfers described above, the party removing the children claimed it only wanted to help or rescue them, but the transfers occurred in an unequal relationship, with the removing party invariably having wealth or power. The seemingly harmless desire to help children is never sufficient reason to remove them from their families and cultural environment. For this reason there are strident national and international laws governing the transfer of children, particularly for adoption during war and conflict. During such periods of war and conflict, as well as during crises caused by natural disasters, international conventions stipulate that the transfer of children out of a territory by an occupying power is prohibited regardless of motive;

if evacuation is necessary, those children removed from harm should be sent back when it is safe to do so. The laws also make special mention that the identity of children and their parentage should be safeguarded (United Nations 1949: Art. 49 and 50).

This overview demonstrates the widely different contexts and varied manifestations of child transfers. Despite the differences in each, there are similarities and patterns. The setting is often war or conflict. Children of a weaker group were transferred to be raised and educated in the homes and institutions of the power-holders or their colonial masters. Education was deemed to benefit the children and to ensure they would grow up loyal to the rulers. Parents were in a weak position and often were coerced or persuaded that giving away their children would be beneficial for their child.

Many of the children had good experiences and are grateful for the care and education they received. Far too many, however, suffered neglect and abuse by those who claimed to be their carers and protectors; many were a source of cheap labour. At the same time the children were deprived of the physical care and emotional support of their parents and families. As Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson noted in response to the Australian Prime Minister's apology to Aboriginal people for the 'stolen children', 'it wasn't just that children were stolen in a literal sense, it was more the case that the prospects of Aboriginal people being able to pursue any form of sustainable and decent life were stolen' (Pearson 2008).

Young children were the target of these transfer projects because they are impressionable and easily manipulated to serve political, racial, ideological and religious aims of the power-holders – to civilise and assimilate, incorporate and dominate, as well as to weaken the group to which the children belonged. Transfers remind us that children are a valuable resource, even though their perspective is often overlooked and ignored in national histories. The importance of children to the future of a group is the reason that the forced transfer of children is one of the five points of the definition of genocide in the United Nations Convention on Genocide (United Nations 1951).

The main chapters of this book describe the different actors who were centrestage in the drama of the transfers that unfolded within changing political and historical contexts. Chapter 2 discusses the Indonesian soldiers and civil servants who took children and adopted them during the early years of the occupation. The actors in Chapter 3 are Indonesian government departments and institutions, and foundations owned by Suharto and other members of his family. This chapter includes the experiences of children and

young people who went voluntarily to Indonesia: students, participants in informal government-sponsored activities and those sent for training and work experience. Chapter 4 focuses on the action of religious organisations in sending East Timorese children to Indonesia. Chapter 5 looks at the pro-Indonesian East Timorese who supported continued integration with Indonesia and who deliberately separated children from their families following the referendum in 1999. But first a chapter that sets the scene for the transfers: Chapter 1 explores how New Order officials justified the integration of East Timor, a construction which had lasting impact on the relationship between the two peoples and influenced life for all who lived under its rule.



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*Chapter 1*

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## **The New Order in East Timor**

Indonesia's nation-building project in East Timor, as Richard Tanter (2001: 189, 194) has argued, was an expression of the fundamental character of New Order Indonesia. The project began, as the New Order had, with military force, and power and control was maintained by military intimidation and violence. However, New Order leaders recognised that the use of military force alone would not provide legitimacy for the incorporation of Portuguese Timor, just as military force alone had been insufficient to legitimise the New Order's seizing power in Indonesia in 1965.

Part of the New Order's success in and after 1965/66 can be attributed to the narratives and myths it generated to legitimise its authority and justify the treatment of its citizens, including the killing of many of them. The myth-making involved sophisticated use of ideology and propaganda, revisions of history and a 'great show of commitment to legality' (Bourchier 1996: 270). The New Order also believed that its generous development program would ensure its acceptance among its subjects. Like all such narratives, the narratives and myths of the New Order were grounded partly in reality but they also employed manipulation of the truth, over-simplification and, frequently, outright lies (Dunn 2003: 63). The techniques honed in 1965 were applied again in 1975 in Portuguese Timor.

The approach of New Order propagandists and military intelligence operators was to win the people of Portuguese Timor to accept integration; if they did not succeed, they would use force to dominate and control them. Therefore, to understand the situation of the East Timorese during the Indonesian occupation of their territory we need to have some understanding of how the New Order came to power, what it stood for and how it operated.

## Integrating East Timor

Following the Second World War Indonesia was a leader among the decolonising nations. Its declaration of independence on 17 August 1945 and its struggle to free itself of its Dutch colonisers were significant for the rejection of colonialism worldwide (Reid 1974: 170). Yet within 30 years Indonesia had begun the project of colonising its tiny neighbour Portuguese Timor. The explanation for the change in Indonesia is found in the New Order and its military backers, who were firmly in control in Indonesia in 1975.

By the mid-1960s the first President of Indonesia, Sukarno, was leading a nation on the verge of economic collapse and in political chaos. Tensions finally erupted between the military and the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), and the military emerged victorious (Ricklefs 2001: 284–341; Vickers 2005: 142–156). Possibly as many as half a million Indonesians were massacred between October 1965 and early 1966, mostly at the instigation of the armed forces and army-backed militias, and hundreds of thousands were jailed without trial (Elson 2001: 123–127; Cribb 2001: 233–235). In the following years the New Order regime, as it called itself, wrested power from Sukarno and General Suharto emerged as the new President. The New Order authorities adopted an anti-communist and pro-Western stance that focused on development.

Before 1975 Indonesia had shown little interest in Portuguese Timor, which is situated in the east of the Indonesian archipelago, 500 kilometres north of Australia. The Portuguese arrived there in 1520 and competed with the Netherlands for control of the island until 1912 when the Dutch and Portuguese agreed on its division. The western half became part of the Dutch East Indies and later independent Indonesia, and the eastern half, together with the small enclave of Oecussi in the west, became a Portuguese colony. After the Second World War, when most European nations began granting independence to their colonies, the authoritarian dictatorship in Portugal refused to begin such a process, and in 1960 the United Nations listed Portuguese Timor as a non-self-governing territory which had yet to be given the right to self-determination.<sup>1</sup> As Indonesian leaders prepared for their own independence in 1945, many argued that Portuguese Timor should join a 'Greater Indonesia' (Indonesia Raya). The Indonesian proclamation of independence on 17 August 1945, however, covered only the territory that had been ruled by the Dutch (Reid 1974: 21–21; Vickers 2005: 138–139).

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1 East Timor was removed from this list after the United Nations organised the referendum on independence on 30 August 1999.

When Indonesia later pressed its claim at the United Nations for sovereignty over West Irian, which it achieved in 1963, it argued that West Irian had rightly belonged with Indonesia since the proclamation of August 1945. In support of this, Indonesia submitted that it made no claim of sovereignty over Portuguese Timor (McDonald 1980: 191; Taylor 1999: 20).

Indonesia became concerned about Portuguese Timor when independence for the territory suddenly emerged as a possibility. A bloodless revolution in Portugal on 25 April 1974 finally brought the Portuguese colonial empire to an end. The Salazar/Caetano dictatorship was deposed by a radical leftist movement led by middle-ranking military officers. The following two years in Portugal were marked by political instability, with complicated power struggles between various factions, some more radically leftist than others, until forces for democracy won out on 25 November 1975. In April 1974 the new administration immediately began a process of decolonisation of its territories, including in its colony in Timor (Robinson 1979).

Portuguese Timor was less prepared for independence than the Portuguese colonies in Africa and it received little help from Portugal. Political parties were formed in May 1974 and they began talking about their future, including holding discussions with Indonesia. In August 1975 fighting broke out between the indigenous political parties and after several weeks the leftist-leaning Fretilin party gained control and expelled its rivals, many of whom fled across the border to seek safety in Indonesian West Timor. During the fighting the Portuguese administration moved to Atauro, a small island 30 kilometres to the north of Dili. Because of the political instability in Portugal, the Portuguese were unable to meet their decolonising obligations in Timor and never returned to take control (CAVR 2006: 3.3 No. 43, 3.7 Nos. 142–159; Dunn 2003: 1–65; Jolliffe 1978: 12–60).

Indonesia's main concern was the possibility of a communist or otherwise non-sympathetic state controlled by the Fretilin party on its border and independence for the territory was, therefore, judged a threat to Indonesia's national security. The public rhetoric from the New Order asserted that it respected the right of the people to self-determination and that it had no territorial ambitions, but in mid-1974 it began planning to incorporate Portuguese Timor into Indonesia. Lieutenant General Ali Murtopo, Special Assistant and close confidant of President Suharto (Alatas 2006: 29), set up a clandestine intelligence operation to manipulate the situation to achieve peaceful integration with Indonesia; if this failed the plan was to create a situation where Indonesia would be 'invited' by a section of the population to come in and 'restore stability' (Monk 2001: 185).

From early 1975, however, powerful factions within the Indonesian military decided to force the integration of Portuguese Timor, even though some senior military officials, such as Colonel Aloysius Sugiyanto, who worked in intelligence with Ali Murtopo in 1974/75, and Lieutenant General Hasnan Habib, the army chief of staff in 1975, did not agree with military intervention (Sukawarsini Djelantik 2003: 97).<sup>2</sup> Major General Benny Murdani, who held several key positions in the main intelligence bodies, was the chief architect and driving force for the use of military force (CAVR 2006: 3.6 No. 116, 4.2 No. 34; Conboy 2003: 198, 206–234; Pour 1993: 386–7). When Fretilin gained control in Portuguese Timor in September 1975, the Indonesian military immediately began covert military incursions into the territory (CAVR 2006: 4.2 Nos. 31–34). With Fretilin's declaration of independence on 28 November 1975, the military, fearing that the declaration might gain international recognition (Conboy 2003: 233), launched a combined military operation involving land, sea and air forces on 7 December 1975 (CAVR 2006: 3.10; Dunn 2003: 243–264). In 1976, on 17 July, Portuguese Timor was officially incorporated as the 27th province of Indonesia with the name Timor Timur (East Timor).

The majority of the population of East Timor did not accept integration and it was not recognised by the United Nations. Initially, yearly resolutions in the United Nations General Assembly strongly condemned Indonesia's actions in East Timor, but they gradually weakened in their condemnation until the issue was removed from the General Assembly's agenda in 1983 and other diplomatic channels were explored (Gunn 1997: 107, 112). Under Fretilin leadership, the East Timorese resisted the Indonesian occupation by military engagement until they were defeated. Fretilin leader Nicolao Lobato was killed on 31 December 1978 and on 26 March 1979 Indonesia declared that East Timor had been pacified (CAVR 2006 3.12 Nos. 312–320, 4.2 No. 43). Most of the 100,000, and possibly as many as 180,000, East Timorese who died during the occupation died during the period between 1975 and 1979 from hunger and disease (CAVR 2006 6.2.1 Nos. 36–37, 7.3.7 No. 50, 8.1 pp. 35, 39, 40). Thereafter the remaining East Timorese fighters reorganised under Xanana Gusmão, resisting integration by guerrilla warfare and a clandestine movement among the civilian population. During the 1990s support for independence grew among the younger generation in East Timor; their cause gathered support internationally and among activists in Indonesia, especially following the widespread news coverage of the massacre at Dili's Santa Cruz cemetery on 12 November 1991 (CAVR 2006: 3.12 Nos. 387–396, 3.18 Nos. 475–486).

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2 Aloysius Sugiyanto (interview, Jakarta, 21 August 2006).

When President Suharto was forced to resign on 21 May 1998, many democratic changes followed in Indonesia. The new Indonesian president, BJ Habibie, agreed to a ballot in East Timor, which was organised by the United Nations on 30 August 1999. The special autonomy option offered by Indonesia was overwhelmingly rejected (Greenlees and Garran 2002; Martin 2001). In October 1999, the Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) ended the New Order's project in East Timor by revoking the 1976 law that had legitimised integration. On 20 May 2002, after a period of transitional administration by the United Nations, the territory became the independent nation of Timor-Leste, or East Timor.<sup>3</sup>

### The Communist threat

The threat of communism and the fear of the resurgence of the PKI was the justification the New Order gave within Indonesia and internationally for annexing Portuguese Timor. Fear generated by the purging of communists in Indonesia in 1965 still haunted Indonesians and the New Order exploited this fear to mobilise their support for its intervention in Portuguese Timor. In 1968 in South Blitar, East Java, hundreds of PKI members had been killed (McDonald 1980: 61–62). Indonesian social scientist Dr Mochtar Mas'oad recalled that in 1978 military personnel justified their involvement in East Timor by claiming they had evidence that the South Blitar communists had moved to East Timor.<sup>4</sup>

The issue of communism in Portuguese Timor arose because of the possible influence of leftist politics in Portugal on the political process in the territory. During May 1974 three main political parties emerged in East Timor: the União Democrática Timorense (UDT), the Timorese Democratic Union, which proposed continued association with Portugal; Fretilin which demanded independence immediately; and Associação Popular Democrática Timorense (Apodeti), the Timorese Popular Democratic Association, which proposed integration with Indonesia. Fretilin was socialist and stridently nationalist, in the vein of many newly decolonised nations after the Second World War (Jolliffe 1978: 325–338; Dunn 2003: 45–65; Klinken 1999). Not all Indonesians shared the New Order's portrayal of Fretilin as communist, including the editor of one major Indonesian daily who described Fretilin's rhetoric as no more radical than that which Indonesia had used in its fight against the Dutch (Siagian

3 Timor-Leste is now the official Portuguese-language name for the territory. The English form of the name, East Timor, is used throughout this text. The Indonesians called their province Timor Timur, which is also translated in English as East Timor.

4 Dr Mochtar Mas'oad (conversation, Leiden, 22 September 2005).

1975). Sympathetic debate such as this ceased when the New Order began its incursions into Portuguese Timor and press restrictions were imposed.

Ben Anderson (1995: 139) concluded that while some decision-makers in the New Order must have believed in the communist threat scenario, New Order leaders understood that they could garner international support, in the context of the Cold War, for their plan to integrate Portuguese Timor by citing the communist threat. This was confirmed by Yusuf Wanandi, a member in 1975 of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Ali Murtopo's think tank. In his testimony to the CAVR he said that the New Order's intervention in East Timor was portrayed as an 'heroic anti-communist crusade, joining it to the ideology and historical antecedents of the New Order regime...to attract Western support' (CAVR 2006: 4.2 No.5). The West, particularly the United States, had supported Suharto and the New Order in 1965 in its destruction of the PKI (Roosa 2006: 176–201). Continuing Cold War fears among Western nations in 1975 led them to maintain Indonesia as an ally and not to thwart its decision to annex Portuguese Timor, rather than to defend the rights of the small, seemingly unsustainable territory. Indonesia was even more important to the West after South Vietnam fell to the Communists in April 1975. We now know from declassified Western intelligence sources (Simpson 2005; Dowson 2005; Monk 2001; CAVR 2006: 3.12 No.295) the extent to which the West was forthcoming in military, economic and political assistance.

The New Order regime suffered little international censure in 1965/66 for its elimination and imprisonment of hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens, many of whom were not closely associated with the PKI organisation or ideologically motivated (Cribb 2001: 234).<sup>5</sup> Children and grandchildren of communists were stripped of their rights as citizens (Cribb 2001: 236–237). Aware that it could confidently assume that the world would again turn a blind eye to the massacre of 'communists' in Portuguese Timor, the New Order planned to annihilate Fretilin and remove its influence there. People who were identified as Fretilin leaders were executed immediately, even those who surrendered on offers of amnesty (CAVR 2006: 3.13 No. 324, 7.2.3.4 Nos. 234–246, 8.4 p. 48; Simpson 2005). Between 1977 and 1979 most people hiding in the mountains looked to Fretilin for protection from the advancing Indonesian troops, although eventually the Indonesians proved too strong. This was a difficult period and presented a dilemma for the Fretilin leadership

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5 US aid and business flowed into Indonesia after the New Order destroyed the communists (Roosa 2006: 197).

who bitterly disagreed over whether the people should surrender or stay in hiding to continue a popular struggle (CAVR 2006: 2.12 Nos. 286–302). The people also faced a difficult choice ‘between starvation in these remote areas or surrender to forces which they knew had tortured and killed large numbers of those who had entrusted themselves to their custody’ (CAVR 2006: 8.1 p. 38).

Those East Timorese who were captured or surrendered were imprisoned in camps and restricted from going out into the fields to gather and grow food (CAVR 2006: 7.3.4 Nos. 194–195, 8.1 pp. 39–40). The military also destroyed crops as they ousted people from an area (CAVR 2006: 3.12 Nos. 303–306, 8.1 p. 40) so that Fretilin sympathisers could not make contact with fighters in the surrounding areas and supply them with food. The people were only allowed to venture out of the controlled areas once the military was certain Fretilin was no longer operating close by (CAVR 2006: 3.13 Nos. 321, 337). The military also prevented international agencies from delivering aid to the camps until it was sure Fretilin had been driven out of the area.<sup>6</sup> Thus people already weakened by their experiences of fleeing military attacks continued to die in their thousands in these camps. Besides being unable to feed themselves, many people experienced arbitrary violence perpetrated by the Indonesian military. The East Timorese had to resort to many measures just to survive. They were pressured to inform on those among them who were members of Fretilin; men had to join auxiliary forces as civil guards (*bansip*) and fight with the Indonesians against their fellow East Timorese; captured Fretilin fighters had to stalk and kill their former comrades-in-arms; men and young boys had to work as soldiers’ helpers (*tenaga bantuan operasi* [TBO]); women and young girls were forced into prostitution; and parents often had to give up their children to soldiers if a soldier made such a demand. Those who co-operated received small amounts of food from the soldiers, which often meant the difference between life and death for them and their families.

The New Order was constructed on the blood of its own citizens and its political enemies (Cribb 2001: 236); the project in East Timor claimed an even greater proportion of lives of the total population. In both cases the military denied its central role in the deaths of thousands. Instead it maintained that it had saved the Indonesian nation from the imminent threat of communism. These lies were perpetuated by a successful propaganda campaign with 1965 that served as a model in East Timor in 1975, under Ali Murtopo who had probably been the inspiration for the 1965 campaign (Elson 2001: 124). A

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6 The International Committee of the Red Cross was not given permission to start operating until late 1979 (CAVR 2006: 8.1 pp. 38–40).

recent example of the continued denial of this brutal fact of history is the 2006 memoir of the New Order's last Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas, who described Indonesia's diplomatic struggle for East Timor without a single reference to these deaths. Just as there was no place in the national discourse for the hundreds of thousands of rural peasants who were unjustly murdered and jailed in 1965/66, there was also no place for the more than 100,000 East Timorese who died between 1977 and 1979.

It was in the context of forcing the East Timorese to surrender that soldiers removed many children from East Timor. The Indonesian military, however, has never acknowledged its role in causing the disaster that led to the abandonment and dislocation of thousands of children.

### **Returning to the Indonesian family**

To justify the integration of East Timor, New Order propagandists and myth-makers cleverly employed familial images and metaphors to bolster their claim that the territory belonged with Indonesia. These images and metaphors linked East Timor with Indonesian national mythology and evoked a generous, albeit patronising, attitude to the East Timorese: New Order officials argued that the East Timorese and Indonesians were 'brothers' who shared a common cultural, social, religious, economic and racial heritage; there was no gap between them as there had been between the European imperialists and their colonial subjects (Asvi 2004); the two had once belonged together but had been separated by the European colonisers (Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin 1991a: 367–368). The last of these ideas was based on the quasi-historical claim that the East Java-based kingdom of Majapahit had dominated the entire archipelago from the late 13th to the early 16th centuries (Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Information 1980; Elson 2008: 73). The 'brothers' were, however, only those East Timorese who wanted to integrate with Indonesia. Indonesian intelligence agents organised these 'brothers' in a political alliance among Apodeti, UDT and two smaller political parties and coerced them to request integration.<sup>7</sup>

The East Timorese were referred to as the 'child' in the common metaphor of the 'child who was lost and has now returned' (*si anak yang hilang telah*

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7 The two smaller political parties were Kota and Trabalistha. Party leaders who had fled to West Timor after the inter-party fighting had been received there on condition that they requested integration with Indonesia, which they did on 7 September 1975 (CAVR 2006: 3.7 Nos. 160–161). They also signed the 'Balibo declaration' on 30 November 1975, a few days after the declaration of independence by Fretilin on 28 November 1975 (CAVR 2006: 3.9 Nos. 213, 214). Balibo is situated in East Timor on the border with Indonesia.

kembali)'. Returning (home) meant that the child had reformed and taken its place in the family by accepting the terms of living in that family.<sup>8</sup> The use of this metaphor to describe the East Timorese bears comparison with its application by the New Order to another group of outsiders – prisoners who had been declared fit to return to the family when in early December 1975, 1,300 second-rung communist leaders were released from detention, most of them without trial, after almost ten years.<sup>9</sup> Admiral Sudomo, commander of the extra-constitutional body Security and Order Restoration Command (Kopkamtib) declared that they could be accepted back into the Indonesian family because they had demonstrated that they had returned to the right path and to Pancasila (*Sinar Harapan* 1975d, 1975e). New Order ideologues characteristically conceived of the Indonesian nation in terms of family: the various parts of the family should work together for the good of the whole; communal rather than individual values were important; and harmony and order expressed the true Indonesian character. The New Order had enshrined these ideals in the state Pancasila ideology. Thus the New Order, in claiming to uphold the sacred Pancasila, was able to stifle any dissent that might disrupt harmony and order and thereby remove any threat to its hegemony (Bourchier 1996: 234). The New Order reshaped the attitudes and behaviour of all Indonesians through the Pancasila indoctrination programs developed in the late 1970s (Bourchier 2001: 118; 1996: 74–85, 107–110, 116–127, 191–204). The 'lost children' – the East Timorese brothers 'returning' to the Indonesian fold and the released ex-communists returning to society – were welcome back in this Indonesian family because they accepted the Pancasila way. The society created by the New Order excluded the hundreds of thousands of Indonesians who had been massacred and imprisoned in the formation of this 'New Order Family.' In East Timor, those who rejected their place in the family by resisting integration would also be destroyed (Roosa 2006: 225) and many of their children would be removed to Indonesia.

Suharto's understanding of his leadership was also encapsulated in this family metaphor. He was likened to a 'father' who guided the nation and was given the title 'father of development' (Elson 2001: 236; Shiraishi 1997: 9–11). As the benevolent patriarch, he maintained an interest in the welfare

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8 For example Situmorang (1989); sometimes the expression is *anak merantau*, referring to the tradition, especially in Sumatra, of sons travelling far from home. The lost child theme in Indonesian literature resonates with the biblical parable of the prodigal son (Hoekema 2005). After 1999, one Indonesian author described the loss of East Timor as the 'departure of the lost child' (Madjiah 2002).

9 They were classified Group (Golongan) B, middle-level leaders of organisations with communist affiliations.

of disadvantaged members of society, war veterans, orphans, widows and the poor, and established personal foundations to provide for their care and help pay the school fees of their children. Suharto wrote in his autobiography that he established his foundations to mobilise non-government resources as the government had been unable to fulfil its responsibilities (Soeharto 1991: 243), although the President and his family also used the foundations for personal gain (Elson 2001: 252–253, 281, 295–296; Aditjondro 1998).

In the late 1970s one of his foundations organised for 61 young East Timorese orphans to be sent to Java to be cared for and educated. On 3 September 1977, 20 of these small children were taken to meet him at his family home in Cendana Street in Jakarta where he and his wife took time out of their busy schedules to host them. It was a highly symbolic meeting played out for the Indonesian media. The Minister of State, Sudharmono, and the governors of East Timor and Central Java were present. The governor of East Timor formally handed over the children to Supardjo Rustam, the governor of Central Java where the children were to live. The reporting of the meeting emphasised its family dimensions. The children were photographed in the Suhartos' private home, surrounded by their personal possessions.



**Ibu Tien Suharto serves drinks to visiting East Timorese children**

Twenty East Timorese children at the home of the President and his wife on 3 September 1977.

© *Antara*, 5 September 1977

The President was reported as giving the children advice as a father would to his children. Ibu Tien, the President's wife, helped them wash their hands and served them food. She was described as feeling a 'motherly' sadness for these little children, the youngest of whom was only four years old, who had to travel so far from their own environment to be cared for (*Pelita* 1977; *Kompas* 1977). This meeting with the children occurred shortly after Suharto had offered an amnesty to Fretilin during his state address on Independence Day, 16 August 1977. There were also calls for the East Timorese who had fled overseas to return home (*Sinar Harapan* 1977). Suharto symbolically extended the invitation to all East Timorese to be part of the Indonesian family through his overtures to this representative group of 20 small children. The children became, on behalf of East Timorese, putative members of his family and, by extension, of the Indonesian family. Petrus Kanisius, one of the children, recalled that after this meeting they were often referred to as the 'President's children'.<sup>10</sup>



### Shaking hands

East Timorese children visit the Suharto's home on 3 September 1977. The children are taught Javanese manners as they are greeted by (from left to right): President Suharto; Ibu Tien Suharto; the Minister of State, Sudharmono; the East Timor governor, Arnaldo dos Reis Araujo; and the governor's wife.

Source: *Berita Buana*, 5 September 1977

10 Staff at several childcare institutions also told me that these children were referred to in this way.

The meeting between Suharto and the children carried other layers of meaning. Indonesia, like all colonisers, believed in its civilising mission to the East Timorese, referring to them as living in a situation of ‘extreme backwardness’ (Doy 1975; *Merdeka* 1975; Chaidir 1980: 12; Mubyarto et al. 1991: 58; Naipospos 2000; Madjiah 2002: 154). One published photograph showed the important Indonesian hosts participating, with some amusement detectable in their exchanged glances, in demonstrating to the children the correct, civilised, Javanese way of shaking hands in greeting.

The news reports noted that, even though it was the month of Ramadan, when Suharto’s household was fasting, the children were served food – a reminder to the East Timorese, most of whom were Catholics, that the Indonesian family included non-Muslims.

In another example of Indonesians appropriating their national mythology to include the East Timorese, they invited them to ‘return to the lap of Mother Earth (kembali ke pangkuan Ibu Pertiwi)’, a reference to the sacred unity of Indonesia (*Merdeka* 1975; Neonbasu 1996). Separatist groups in West Irian, Aceh, and South Sulawesi have often been depicted in terms of their relation to Indonesia, as returning to or trying to separate from ‘pangkuan Ibu Pertiwi’. The East Timorese orphans who were admitted into the intimacy of the first family were appropriated to symbolise the receiving of East Timor into the care and nurture and on the comforting lap of Mother Indonesia.

The President maintained a personal interest in the progress of development in East Timor and wanted the East Timorese to be happy and to accept integration in ‘heart and mind.’ In early June 1976 a group of 50 parliamentarians from the Provisional Government of East Timor arrived in Jakarta to request integration with Indonesia. This meeting was described as a joyous occasion where they greeted and hugged each other ‘like family members who spontaneously embrace after a long separation’ (*Kompas* 1976b). Suharto also wanted to hear from the 20 East Timorese children themselves that they liked visiting Jakarta and were happy about coming to live in Java. They had been coached to sing a song for him in Indonesian to that effect. Petrus Kanisius told me that of course they were excited about the visits to the wonderful attractions in Jakarta such as Indonesia in Miniature (Taman Mini) and about the delicious food laid out for them at the palace. However, when he left the concentration camp in Aileu, he and his family had thought that he was being sent to school in the ‘big city’ of Dili. Instead he and the other children were suddenly in Jakarta, overwhelmed by this huge city with its strange language and customs and having left Dili with no way of informing or farewelling their families. These ‘happy’ occasions ignored the fact that the

request for integration by the members of the Provisional Government did not represent the free choice of the majority of East Timorese. As will be described in Chapter 3, most of the parents of the orphans brought to meet Suharto were victims of Indonesian military aggression. The public images of East Timorese happy with integration portrayed none of their suffering and loss, which was the reality that had to be submerged and forgotten.<sup>11</sup> In the new colonial relationship in which the East Timorese now found themselves, they were cast as children who could easily be manipulated with material incentives (Nandy 1983: 11).

The President's concern for these children was almost certainly exemplary and encouraged other Indonesians to take children to Indonesia. One Indonesian told me that after he saw the televised program of the East Timorese children meeting Suharto he decided to help. A few years later he collected a child from East Timor and brought her to an institution in Jakarta and paid for all her expenses for over 20 years.<sup>12</sup> When Indonesia was criticised at the United Nations for the invasion in 1975, New Order leaders told the nation that the accusation was unjust and that this criticism was the price Indonesia had to bear for its genuine concern for the fate and suffering of the East Timorese (*Sinar Harapan* 1975f). Most Indonesians had no independent information about the invasion and rallied nationalistically in support of their government in the face of foreign criticism (*Indonesian Observer* 1975). Leaders made many appeals to Indonesians to help the poor and backward East Timorese (Beding 1975; *Kompas* 1975). The thousands of public servants and soldiers who went to East Timor in the early years to conduct the integration project witnessed many dislocated children; some of them responded to the needs of children by following Suharto's example and taking a child home to Indonesia.

## Legalising integration

In taking control in East Timor the New Order regime maintained that it was committed to a legal process.<sup>13</sup> In 1975 it was aware that an outright invasion of East Timor would lead to international condemnation, so it staged a carefully manipulated drama to give integration a legal form. New Order officials

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11 This brings to mind Milan Kundera's totalitarian 'angel-fanatics' who are 'so convinced of their world's significance that they are ready to hang anyone not willing to share their joy' (Kundera 1980: 20).

12 Robert Samara (telephone conversation, Jakarta, 19 January 2004).

13 The New Order leaders used this tactic in legitimising their takeover in 1965 (Bourchier 1996: 270, 271).

claimed that they had a moral responsibility to respond to the request to integrate East Timor with Indonesia from the four parties that had regrouped in West Timor (*Sinar Harapan* 1975a; 1975b). On 22 September 1975 the four parties began to fight back against Fretilin, supported by the Indonesian military (*Sinar Harapan* 1975c). The coalition, supposedly representing the majority of the East Timorese, provided a quasi-legal basis for the New Order's claim that the majority of East Timorese wanted integration.

The Indonesian military disguised and denied the leadership role of its troops in this military counter-attack on East Timor. Indonesian Special Forces troops trained and armed East Timorese recruits in West Timor; these partisans, as they were known, 'led' the counter-attack and the Indonesian soldiers who fought alongside them were supposedly 'volunteers' (CAVR 2006: 4.3 No. 79, 3.3.6 No. 116). To disguise the involvement of the Indonesian military, all identifying marks on vehicles and uniforms were removed and soldiers could not use their American-made weapons, but used others obtained from various sources (Conboy 2003: 224–225). Ostensibly the Indonesian 'volunteers' were helping the East Timorese, but the whole scenario was planned and executed by Indonesian intelligence and Special Forces. An anecdote from Colonel Dading Kalbuadi, who headed the Special Forces operation,<sup>14</sup> highlights its colonial nature. When Major General Benny Murdani recruited him, Kalbuadi took up the challenge in swashbuckling style, imagining himself as some sort of modern day 'Lawrence of Arabia' (Pour 1993: 387). Like the English officer who had dressed in Arab clothes and fought alongside Arabs against other Arabs backed by the Ottomans during the First World War, Kalbuadi would discard his Indonesian uniform and fight side by side with East Timorese against their compatriots. Even more striking in Kalbuadi's comparison of himself with the famous adventurer is what it reveals about his mission. For both, the pretext was to support an independence struggle, but the primary motivation was the promotion of colonial interests.

A few weeks after the invasion, on 18 December 1975, the Provisional Government in East Timor (PGET) was hastily formed in Dili, with the East Timorese Arnaldo dos Reis Araujo appointed as governor. The PGET proceeded formally to request integration with Indonesia. In June 1976 a delegation of 50 East Timorese arrived in Jakarta to bring the integration request to President Suharto who, as we have seen, was profuse in his welcome of his 'brothers' from East Timor (Soekanto 1976: 652). On 17 July 1976 integration was formally ratified by the Indonesian parliament. The

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14 Operation Flamboyan prepared for the invasion, which was called Operation Seroja.

New Order deemed this an official and legally valid ‘expression of the will of the people’ and used it to deflect criticism and to reject calls to grant self-determination to the East Timorese (CAVR 2006: 7.1.2.3 No. 83; Soejitno Hardjosoediro 1977; Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin 1991a: 385).

Once integration was ratified it meant that East Timor was treated in the same way as other provinces of Indonesia. The Indonesian military could operate openly in East Timor, no longer needing to disguise its presence there. Fretilin, which was fighting for the right to determine its own future, was relegated to the status of a ‘Gang of Security Disturbers’ (CAVR 2006: 4.2 No. 41), as other separatists groups in West Irian and Aceh were later designated. At the reception following the formal integration request in June 1976, the President offered to help the children who were orphaned by the conflict in East Timor. A few months later, on 26 October 1976, one of the President’s foundations, with the help of Kalbuadi, who had been appointed the military commander in East Timor, organised to bring the first group of young children from East Timor to Indonesia. The children were moved across an international border in an international conflict, but the quasi-legal process followed by the New Order led it to deem East Timor, legally and irrevocably, the 27th province of Indonesia.



#### **Children sent to Indonesia by Suharto in 1976**

Six children were sent by Dharmais Foundation to SOS-Kinderdorf in Bandung on 30 December 1976.

Source: ‘The Development of East Timor province’. Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, 1977.

## Development and education

Development (*pembangunan*) had a central role in Indonesian propaganda in East Timor, just as it had in New Order Indonesia. New Order authorities believed that development would return stability to Indonesia after the economic and social turmoil of the previous regime. They also deemed stability and security necessary conditions for implementing development and alleviating poverty (Elson 2001: 175). In 1975 Indonesia was flush with funds from the massive rise in the price of oil in 1973 and economic progress in Indonesia in the first decade of New Order rule, was impressive (Bourchier 1996: 179; Hill 1994: 54; Vatikiotis 1993: 34). The New Order's treatment of East Timor differed from its treatment of other provinces in that the development budget outstripped spending elsewhere, six-fold in some cases, and was vastly more than Portugal had ever outlaid (Hal Hill 2000: 59, 229; Mackie and Ley 1998: 96). In all 13 district capitals new government offices were erected, usually in new towns situated in more accessible locations than the hilly positions of most East Timorese towns. The New Order regime believed that the development it brought would prove that Indonesia had no colonial intentions and, further, that the East Timorese would be grateful and would accept integration.

The East Timorese were deeply attracted by the development promised by the Indonesians, but there were many discrepancies and problems in its delivery. In the late 1980s Indonesian researchers from Gadjah Mada University found that many Indonesian officials harboured racist and discriminatory attitudes towards the East Timorese. Their research indicated that East Timorese felt largely excluded from any significant role in the administration and the decision-making process of their homeland. They also found that East Timorese were resentful because they were sidelined in economic activity, especially with increasing numbers of traders and entrepreneurs arriving from other islands (Mubyarto et al. 1991: 3–4, 53–60). In reality, by the mid-1990s the development budget had brought more benefits to Indonesians living in East Timor than to East Timorese. Half the budget was spent on the physical infrastructure and government apparatus needed to meet the security requirements of the military and the local administration, while health and education, priorities in the development plan, constituted only 7% of spending.<sup>15</sup> In 1981 a group of East Timorese parliamentarians wrote to President Suharto complaining

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15 Carey (1996: 17) derived these figures from Saldanha's statistics.

about the economic exploitation of East Timor by Indonesian officials and the misuse of development funds by military officers, but they received no response (CAVR 2006: 4.4 Nos. 156–157; Mubyarto et al. 1991: 60, 61, 67). The East Timorese economist Joao Mariano Saldanha concluded that development, as a consequence of problems associated with its delivery, did not achieve what the Indonesians had hoped, namely, that the East Timorese would begin to ‘think, understand, and act like Indonesians’ (Saldanha 1994: 30–31, 93, 115, 122).

Few voices within Indonesia and East Timor dared to criticise the military nature of the occupation. The Gadjah Mada researchers, whose work was commissioned by the regional government in East Timor to try to determine why the East Timorese were ‘uncooperative, apathetic and constantly suspicious’ towards Indonesians, referred to the excessive presence of the military in the province as an ‘overdose of military’. They also reported that the people to whom they spoke in the mid-to-late 1980s, especially students and youths, were ‘absolutely committed’ to freeing themselves from the ‘shackles of colonialism’. The researchers concluded that development was not enough to make people content with their situation. With the boldness that characterised their report, they warned that the oppression in East Timor could become a ‘new model of colonialism’ (Mubyarto et al. 1991: viii–ix, 43, 61). Their voices were not heeded, however, and their publication of their report was banned in Indonesia.

Education was not only an important dimension of the promised development in East Timor but also essential for facilitating integration of the territory. Since Indonesia achieved independence in 1945, the Indonesian government has viewed education as an important tool in national integration (Beeby 1979). As a developing nation it had little money for education, although that situation changed with the availability of oil money during the 1980s when one of the chief beneficiaries of the new oil wealth was education, particularly primary school education (Hill, Hal 2000: 59). Immediately after integration the Indonesians began building schools in East Timor and seconding teachers from Indonesia. They also sent students to Indonesia. East Timorese young people found the educational opportunities offered by the Indonesians deeply desirable, but to be eligible they had to demonstrate their support for integration.

The education that East Timorese received in Indonesia was meant to civilise them and to instill in them a sense of being Indonesians. As Australian historian David Day (2008: 6–10) argues, supplanting societies, after establishing legitimacy, strengthen claims of ownership over a

supplanted territory by conducting a civilising mission of which education is central.<sup>16</sup> Ashis Nandy (1983:xi–xii, 3, 11) asserts that a civilising mission is essential to colonialism, as physical integration will not succeed unless it is accompanied by colonisation in the psychological, cultural and social spheres.<sup>17</sup> The education system set up in East Timor mirrored education in Indonesia (Mubyarto et al. 1991: 5; Arenas 1998). Schooling during the New Order was highly centralised and controlled, with a heavy emphasis on ideology and propaganda. The regime’s version of Pancasila ideology and morality was inculcated through special programs<sup>18</sup> compulsory for students and public servants (Elson 2001: 228–229). Education was designed to ensure loyalty and obedience to the regime, and was no less alienating for many Indonesians than it was for East Timorese (Drake 1989: 71). Although education became much more accessible in East Timor, no attention was paid to the different circumstances of the newly incorporated territory. It was typical of education in a colonial setting, as described by Albert Memmi (1967: 97, 104), with a curriculum based on the language of the coloniser, full of the cultural ideas and symbols of the coloniser and a history as seen through the eyes of East Timor’s master.<sup>19</sup>

One of the unintended outcomes of colonial educational systems was to produce a new awareness of liberty and desire for freedom among the educated colonised (Carnoy 1974: 72). This outcome was evident in the experience of young East Timorese, whose education in Indonesia contributed to their political awareness and fanned their nationalism. Many of the students and youths who were sent to Indonesia used the less oppressive environment there to expand their clandestine networks and activities, including developing contacts with Indonesians resisting the New Order regime (Pinto 2001: 33, 38). Completion of their education also raised students’ hopes of obtaining better employment. The unavailability

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- 16 Day employs the term ‘supplanting’ in an attempt to find a concept that accounts for the various manifestations of oppression of a weak group by a powerful one. A supplanting society moves onto the land of another with the intention of making that land its own.
  - 17 Many nationalists from the colonised world have argued similarly that political and economic exploitation by the coloniser could not have been achieved without cultural domination of the colonised; see, for example, Kallaway (1984a: 9) and Thiong’o (1993: 442).
  - 18 Pendidikan Moral Pancasila (PMP), Pancasila Moral Education, and P-4 (guidelines for the practice of Pancasila).
  - 19 This function of education is generally true for any minority or dominated group in relation to the power-holders, such as blacks in South Africa and African-Americans in the United States (Kallaway 1984b; Marks and Trapido 1987; Carnoy 1974: 3).

of jobs led to anger and rebellion and was partly responsible for the participation of youths in anti-integration demonstrations (Mubyarto et al. 1991: 55). There were other benefits of development that also stimulated the growth of East Timorese nationalism and the call for independence, including improved transport and opportunities to travel, as well as better communication technology, especially the telephone and internet, which broadened perspectives and contacts at national and global level for the growing educated class (Hill 2002: 49–50). As Anderson (1995: 145–146) noted, educated East Timorese became fluent in Indonesian but rejected being Indonesian. Education, development and repression combined in an ‘explosive mixture’ (to use Anderson’s phrase) that led to a deepening of nationalism, especially among young East Timorese.

## **Conclusion**

The fact that East Timor had never been one of the Netherlands’ colonial possessions in the East Indies that later made up the Republic of Indonesia challenged the New Order regime to make a case for incorporation of the territory. In trying to achieve its political objectives, the New Order and its military backers employed the same techniques in East Timor that they had used to control Indonesian citizens after 1965. The continuing tension and violence in East Timor since becoming an independent nation in 2002 shows that there are deep divisions among the nation’s many different ethnic groups and classes. In 1975 Indonesians exploited these differences, offering incentives and support to Fretilin’s enemies in exchange for East Timorese acceptance of integration.

New Order rule in the territory left most East Timorese feeling excluded from any meaningful political and economic role in their homeland, despite its considerable physical development. It was Indonesian military violence, however, that united the East Timorese against a common enemy. East Timor’s status, as a non-self-governing territory according the United Nations’ determination, further kept alive the hope of a different future and stimulated the struggle of the resistance to Indonesian rule.

In the final analysis, the Indonesians were deceived by their belief in their own myths and their colonial attitude towards the East Timorese, whom they considered backward and primitive. The conditions of membership of the New Order Indonesian family were unattractive to the East Timorese who were not persuaded to give up their right to decide their own future.

## Leonia's story<sup>1</sup>

I was born in East Timor in about 1972. I don't remember the names of my parents. In fact I have more memories of my grandparents than of my parents. I remember a bent, crazy woman with a shorn head who lived with my grandparents. I seem to remember that people said she was my mother and that my father was fighting in the forest. My grandfather was a technician [mantri] and blacksmith [tukang besi], but I can't remember his face. I also can't remember the name of my village; I only have memories of the place where I used to play. It was near a river where there were rice fields. I went to school for a few months in the Portuguese time. We were taught by a nun, but my family was not Catholic. I had to walk a long way to school and I remember, I don't know why, carrying a coconut palm to keep off the sun and rain. I clearly remember running away from our home when the Indonesians attacked, in 1978 or 1979, when I was about six years old. We carried my grandfather on a chair.

In all the confusion I was separated from my family and never saw them again. I don't know how that happened. There were bombs exploding around us as we fled. Everywhere there were bodies, especially of young children, and we had to move carefully so as not to tread on them. I had a small amount of ground maize which I carried in a bottle and we had to drink muddy water. But then I became separated from my family and I was with people I did not know. We left the mountains and went into the town. We had to live in crowded conditions under the control of Indonesian soldiers. I looked everywhere for my parents but could not find them. There were many children I had never seen before, but they were not children from my village.

I played with the other children; I don't remember being frightened. We used to run around all day playing. We would climb onto the trucks and other vehicles belonging to the soldiers and sometimes travel with them. Occasionally the soldiers gave us food. We slept wherever we could find

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1 Interview, Dili, 1 March 2004. Leonia is not her real name.

a place, under a tree, in a house or with the family of one of the other children.

One day I travelled with soldiers on their vehicle to the small nearby harbour. I was playing with my friends when the soldiers called us and invited us to come onto their boat. They gave us food and sweets and battery-operated toys to play with. We were really excited. Then all at once a soldier took me by the hand and led me below deck. He told me to climb into a box and to keep quiet; he said, 'Shh! Shh!' Then he closed the lid. It smelt bad, it was hot and I could hardly breathe. I was very frightened but I did not dare to call out. Then I felt the boat moving as it left the harbour. Only then was I allowed to climb out of the box. By this time I felt quite weak and exhausted. I saw through a window in the boat that we were far out to sea and I began to cry until I fell asleep. When I woke up it was dark. I asked to get off the boat and find my friends. The soldiers threatened that they would throw me overboard if I didn't stop demanding. One soldier lifted me up as if he was going to do just that. I was frightened especially because I had seen the body of a young boy floating in the sea and I thought that would happen to me.

When we got to Jakarta I understood that the soldiers discussed between themselves who would take me. One of the soldiers had no children of his own, so the others agreed that he should take me. He is my adoptive father and he and his wife treated me well, as if I was their own child. But in my heart I have always had a longing to know who I really am. In our home nothing was ever said about East Timor, only that East Timorese were not good people. If I asked my parents they always said that I was born in Indonesia and that I was their child.

By chance I made friends with a young girl from East Timor. At first I did not know that she was East Timorese. One day she told me that when she was small an Indonesian soldier brought her to Jakarta from East Timor. It was a shock to hear her say that and I thought, yes, that is what happened to me too. Not long afterwards I said to her, 'I'm also East Timorese!' We both had been given new names by our adoptive fathers and did not use East Timorese names. Her East Timorese name was Teresa dos Santos. I had always wondered if I was East Timorese, but because I was always considered part of this family it remained a question in my mind. After some time I brought Teresa home, but my parents forbade me to have

any further contact with her. Eventually they ended our relationship by sending me away to Surabaya to live with my father's brother who was also in the navy. At least that's how I understand the fact that they sent me there.

My uncle looked after me very well and I liked living with his family. I finished high school there. I always got good grades and worked hard so everyone liked that. I always had everything I needed, both in Jakarta and in Surabaya. One day I came home late. When I arrived home my aunt angrily explained, 'East Timorese don't know how to behave!' With this casual remark my aunt confirmed that what I thought about my origins was correct.

I decided to go to Jakarta to ask for answers from my parents. My father was not there. My mother was very surprised by my questions, but she wouldn't talk about it. She would only say that I was their daughter. But I was too afraid to ask my father because I knew he would get angry; I went back to Surabaya and have never asked him. I now had many questions. I often sat alone thinking. How did I come to be in Indonesia with this family? How was I taken away from home? Who are my parents? I became even more convinced that I was an East Timorese. After that I started to keep notes of my memories. If I remembered something about my past I wrote it down.

After finishing high school I began working in a factory to save money to go to East Timor. One day I met Lucas who was a newspaper seller. He told me that he was an East Timorese from Ainaro; he had worked as a TBO for a soldier then taken back to Surabaya. I told him what I could remember about my family. Unfortunately he deceived me; he said he knew my family and that the places I described were in Ainaro. He claimed he remembered an old woman with a bent back and also carrying me on his shoulders. He said this showing how he carried me. I suddenly felt that it was exactly like that; I guess I just wanted to believe it. I was stupid, but I was only about 19. I started to collect my clothes in preparation to go with Lucas to East Timor. As well as the money I had saved, my parents had given me some pocket money and I had won a few prizes at school; so I had enough money to buy a ticket. On 1 September 1991 I left Surabaya with Lucas, without telling anyone.

On the boat I realised that Lucas wanted to marry me. I was very scared and regretted travelling with him. I felt there was no point in returning to East Timor. I felt like jumping overboard. I was really desperate. A student from the military academy saw how miserable I was and he talked to me. He took me to the cafeteria and gave me a bible and told me to read it. I still carry that bible. I was a Christian but not so sincere. I opened the bible just a little and I could read, 'Don't be afraid.' I quickly closed it. I spent the rest of the time on the boat avoiding Lucas.

We arrived in Dili on 3 September: people there told us it was dangerous in Ainaro because there were many Fretilin operating there. I didn't know what to do. I was so afraid of Lucas and of travelling to Ainaro. Again I opened the bible and again I read, 'Don't be afraid.' I remembered what I had been told by the student on the boat; I don't even know his name.

The next day we travelled to Ainaro. I wanted to get away from Lucas. In Ainaro he met with his family. I asked him about my family, but he said we'd talk about that later. I had no idea how to begin looking for my family, so I went to the sub-district military command. I told the commander that a soldier had taken me to Indonesia and that I had returned to look for my family. I also told him that Lucas was annoying me; he told me not to worry about Lucas, they'd take care of me if he tried to come near me.

It was market day and very busy. I think the information was only passed around by word of mouth; in any case word quickly spread. Within a short time dozens of parents had gathered to see if I might be their missing daughter. They listed off names, Maria, Martina, Helena, Christina and others, asking if I might be one of them. I was confused. I looked at them all – some were skinny, others fat – I didn't think that I could have belonged to any of them. Because I was afraid and did not have anywhere to stay, I decided to go home with one of the women who insisted that I was her daughter. We weren't able to speak together because she spoke the local language and knew no Indonesian. But I thought and prayed a lot, wondering whether I could belong in that family. I think we both knew that we were not family and I couldn't force myself to believe it. After one month the family had to go to Dili and I went with them.

In Dili I decided to go to speak with Governor Mario Carrascalão; every Friday he set aside time to receive people with problems. He organised for me to stay at the home of a priest in Dili. Again word spread that I was looking for my family, and people came from Suai, Ainaro, Liquica, Baucau, Bobonaro, Ermera, wondering if I could be their daughter. There was someone from a ruling family (liurai), a public servant, rich people and poor people. Once again I was confused; but none of them was my family.

The governor organised a scholarship for me to attend university in East Timor and my family in Jakarta also sent me money in the mid-1990s to help me pay my school fees – I still have regular contact with them.

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## *Chapter 2*

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### **Transfer for adoption**

In the early years of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, Indonesian soldiers ran the territory and were responsible for the development program. Even though soldiers believed that the East Timorese clamoured for integration and development, they often delivered development in ways that breached the rights of the East Timorese. They did not deem it necessary to consult with the East Timorese to determine what they wanted from development or their hopes for the future.

This tension is mirrored in the transfer of about 2,000 East Timorese children out of the territory by Indonesian soldiers, one of whom we have already met – Biliki, who was taken to Indonesia against her wishes and those of her parents and guardian. On the one hand soldiers showed compassion towards the many children they took from East Timor, but on the other hand they failed to acknowledge the circumstances of the children they removed and the manner in which they removed them.

#### **Evidence and scale**

We turn first to the evidence and scale of transfer of children by soldiers out of East Timor. This is a difficult task because there are no official records or documentation of the transfers, which leaves us dependent on the estimates of those who observed the transfers and those who were transferred. The anecdotal evidence is considerable. A retired marine, a member of the personal staff of Brigadier General Dading Kalbuadi, commander of the Regional Security and Defence Command, the most powerful position in East Timor for the first years after the invasion, told me that he believed that several thousand children were taken by individual soldiers from East Timor during that period. The soldiers who took children were those who had contact with the people, such as the

combat troops and Special Forces soldiers; he did not know of marines who took children, as they had less opportunity to do so.<sup>1</sup>

Many of those who took children were officers and troop commanders. Mario Carrascalão, governor of East Timor from 1982 to 1992, was aware of the fact that many high-ranking officers took children with them to Indonesia. Lieutenant General (retired) Kiki Syahnakri, deputy army Chief of Staff in the early 2000s with at least three tours of duty in East Timor (CAVR 2006: 8.4 p. 2), adopted a six-year-old East Timorese child in 1981 when Syahnakri was a captain. The child had been separated from his parents and was with a group of people who surrendered in Manatuto. Many of Syahnakri's officer friends also adopted East Timorese children. Andi Wijayanto, an analyst of military affairs at the University of Indonesia, knows many officers who took East Timorese children back to Indonesia during the late 1970s. His father, Theo Syafei, commander of the Udayana military region responsible for East Timor in the 1990s, found two separated children in 1979; one was adopted by Syafei's family and the other by a soldier from Gorontalo in Sulawesi. Prominent journalists, Daud Sinjal, chief editor and director of the new *Sinar Harapan* newspaper, and Aristides Katoppo, publisher and director of *Suara Pembaruan* newspaper, both told me that soldiers took many children from East Timor in the late 1970s.

Regular soldiers usually took the young children back to Indonesia by boat at the end of their tours of duty. Carrascalão confirmed that there were almost always groups of East Timorese children taken away on the boats that transported battalions back to Indonesia. Guilherme dos Reis Fernandes, in 2004 a senior staff of the Secretariat of State for Labour and Solidarity in East Timor, told me that in 1977 he saw soldiers from Battalion 712 from Sulawesi removing children from Betano, on the southern coast of East Timor. Almost all the East Timorese with whom I spoke who had been taken away by a soldier said that they saw other children on their boats, travelling with soldiers of the same battalion. Thirteen-year-old Antonio from Manatuto was taken forcibly by a soldier to Ambon in 1980. The vessel's first port of call was Ternate where Antonio saw many dozens of East Timorese children, some older and some younger than he was, disembarking with the soldiers who had brought them from East Timor.

A soldier who intended to take a child home to Indonesia usually took the child with him to the main military barracks in Taibessi in Dili, where the battalions gathered to prepare for departure. In 1977 Domingus de Deus

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1 Anonymous interview, Jakarta, January 2004.

Maya, an East Timorese Catholic catechist, witnessed a group of young children waiting there to be taken away. At that time the only way to travel was on an Indonesian military vehicle, with permission. De Deus Maya lived in the concentration camp in Letefoho, Ermera and had travelled to Dili to try to buy rice. When he returned to the barracks in Taibessi to arrange his trip back to Letefoho, he saw about ten small children held in an enclosure; beside them stood luggage belonging to soldiers who were preparing to depart. Dominggus Maya wrote down the details of the children, but because of the war in the ensuing years and difficulty with communication, he was unable to locate their parents and relatives. In 2004 he told me that the memory of the confused and crying children, penned with the soldiers' luggage, still haunts him.

Further evidence of the transfer of large numbers of children out of East Timor by Indonesian armed forces personnel comes from witnesses who saw children of East Timorese descent living in the vicinity of military barracks and housing complexes in many places in Indonesia. Father Felix Layade, an Indonesian Catholic priest who has worked in Makassar for many years, knew of many dozens of East Timorese children living in and around military bases in Bone and Jeneponto and other locations in South Sulawesi. On a visit to South Sulawesi in 1990, Rev Agostinho de Vasconcelos, the post-CAVR Executive Director and a former National Commissioner of the CAVR, encountered 30–40 East Timorese children, aged from five to ten years, living with the families of soldiers in the military housing complex in Bantimurung, 40 kilometres from Makassar.

East Timorese who were raised in a military complex also knew other East Timorese children living in their complex. Biliki, who grew up in the housing complex of the Kopassus Special Forces Command in Cijantung, remembers an older East Timorese youth named Josep who worked as a servant in the home of the soldier who took her from East Timor. Two East Timorese girls, Maria and Orpah, lived with other families in the same complex and when Biliki was older she sometimes overheard people talking about East Timorese who lived there, though she herself did not know them.

Although there is overwhelming evidence that children were taken from East Timor by soldiers, the number of children involved is difficult to estimate accurately. Syahnakri told me in 2006 that there were maybe 200–300 children altogether, but he could not confirm the numbers. According to my investigations that figure is too low. One way is to try to estimate the number of children taken on military boats, the main form of transport for the majority of soldiers. Several East Timorese children who

were transported out of East Timor by boat thought that there were 20–30 East Timorese children aboard the boats returning with their battalions to Indonesia, six or seven children with a platoon.<sup>2</sup> One older child counted 21 children on his boat (CAVR 2006: 7.8.4.2 No. 360). Experts calculate that during the height of the conflict between 1976 and 1979 there were 30 Indonesian battalions operating in East Timor at any one time (CAVR 2006: 7.8.2.1 No. 41). Troops were usually there for a year or possibly shorter period before they were rotated. Battalions may also have travelled on more than one boat, but if we count one boat per battalion and 30 battalions, with ten East Timorese children taken away per boat, then that would support an estimate of 300 children in one year. That four-year period alone could account for over 1,000 children taken away, but the number could well have been much higher. That number corresponds roughly with the estimate of several thousand by the retired marine officer already mentioned. Many of the children travelling on these boats had been soldiers' helpers (TBO), though the number of children who worked in this capacity is difficult to determine so this fact does not help in estimating numbers removed. It needs to be noted here that some of the children taken to Indonesia by soldiers were not adopted but sent to be educated in religious institutions in Indonesia, as we will see in Chapter 4.

## **The process of transfer**

During the early years of the occupation of East Timor, soldiers, initially as fighters and then organising the population as they surrendered and were captured, were the face of Indonesia. Soldiers ran the territory until the early 1980s, when a civilian government apparatus began functioning, although military influence was pervasive throughout the entire period of Indonesian rule. Consequently, soldiers had face-to-face contact with East Timorese and formed relationships with them in a range of contexts, which presented opportunities to identify children they might adopt.

### **Children in combat zones**

Until the middle of 1977, half of East Timor's population was sheltering in the mountains beyond the reach of the Indonesian military. From August 1977 and into early 1979 the military bombarded mountain hideouts to force people to surrender. Children were particularly vulnerable during these

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2 Alfredo Alves (interview, Dili, 2004) and Antonio (interview, Yogyakarta, 2001).

attacks; along with the elderly, they were unable to keep up with the fleeing crowds and often became separated if no-one could carry them or help them. Simião Lopes Assis, the four-year-old cousin of Maria da Costa, could not keep up with his family when they fled from a bombing attack through the muddy terrain in the Dolak area on the south coast near Betano. His feet got stuck and, in the enormous crush of panicking people, he was separated from his mother and never seen again. The fate of children like Simião and many others who were separated or abandoned is unknown. Some were rescued by Indonesian soldiers who had compassion for these children. Some soldiers said that they could not bear to see children abandoned to die.<sup>3</sup> They often took these children to Indonesia to adopt them. Abdul Rauf Manuel and Ismail Dominggus were young children when they were wounded during Indonesian military attacks on their villages and then rescued by soldiers and taken to the Seroja childcare institution in Dili. In 1980 an Indonesian Red Cross doctor took them, along with Linda, another young girl who had been wounded, to be treated at the Gatot Subroto army hospital in Jakarta. They grew up in a school for disabled children in Jakarta, Yayasan Pembinaan Anak Cacat, where they received a good education and the continuing interest of the doctor who brought them from East Timor.

Soldiers regularly placed children in institutions in Dili and returned to collect them at the end of their tours of duty to take them back with them to Indonesia. If the children were sick and weak, as was often the case, they admitted them to the Dili hospital. Sometimes after a battle, soldiers took separated children by helicopter to Dili and placed them in the Seroja institution,<sup>4</sup> as had happened to the two children mentioned above. Later some of these children were reunited with their parents and family members who successfully traced them to the institution. Staff members of the institutions were often unable to help families in their searches, as some children were too young to provide information and the soldiers who delivered the children gave them few details.<sup>5</sup>

In other instances soldiers deliberately selected a child to save from among a group of people they killed, which would have included the parents of the child. One such child was Amelia who was two years old when her parents and others with them were killed by soldiers in the area of Baucau. The patrol commander carried Amelia and cared for her for the remainder of his patrol,

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3 Andi Wijayanto (interview, Jakarta, 26 July 2006).

4 The role of Seroja institution in child transfers is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

5 Abel dos Santos (interview, Dili, 7 March 2004), and Maria Margarida Babo (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004); see also CAVR (2006: 7.8.4.2 Nos. 361–362).

then later took her home to Sulawesi. She was light-skinned, possibly of Portuguese descent.<sup>6</sup> East Timorese from all backgrounds told me that they believed that Indonesian soldiers deliberately selected light-skinned children for adoption, although the truth of this is difficult to ascertain (Aditjondro 2000: 131). It was probably more a personal preference for a child of a lighter skin colour, unrelated to the racially motivated discourse among many European colonisers which argued for separating children, usually mestizo children, from their families on the basis of skin colour.

### **Children in concentration camps<sup>7</sup>**

Gradually the Indonesian military succeeded in capturing the people or forcing those hiding in the mountains to surrender. In 1978 the Fretilin leadership decided that only armed fighters should stay on in the mountains and that ordinary people should surrender to the Indonesians (CAVR 2006: 3.12 Nos. 315–317). The Indonesian military also uprooted whole villages to prevent contact with Fretilin and forced the occupants to join the surrendering population in designated camps (CAVR 2006: 3.13 Nos. 331–333). In the crowded camps food and medicines were scarce.<sup>8</sup> To prevent food from reaching Fretilin, the military permitted the distribution of only small amounts of food by the Indonesian Red Cross and some by the Catholic Church (CAVR 2006: 8.1 p. 39–40). People weakened by months of trying to avoid capture did not have sufficient to eat. They could work in the fields and gardens only under escort, as a way of preventing food from reaching the fighters. These ‘concentration’ camps thus became places of misery and death.

Amongst the captured and surrendering population in the concentration camps were many separated children, such as Leonia, who were often assumed to be orphans and taken away by soldiers. Children separated during attacks often joined up with other groups of people, even strangers, as Leonia had done. Consequently, when captured they were sometimes held in different camps from their parents and other family members, even in areas far from

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6 Alfredo Alves (interview, Dili, 5 March 2004).

7 East Timorese often refer to the temporary holding camps as places of concentration (*konsentrasi*) meaning that the population was confined to a small area with restricted freedom of movement. When the military had ousted Fretilin from an area, it allowed people to move back to their homes. In some cases the concentration camps became permanent and in remote areas people were relocated in permanent resettlement villages (CAVR 2006: 7.3.4 Nos.194–195).

8 For a description of life in the camps, see CAVR (2006: 7.3.4 esp. Nos. 89–90, 133–160, 168–173).

home where no-one knew them. Sometimes these separated children were too small to explain where they came from and what had happened to their families. These separated children were especially vulnerable as they had no-one to care for them and provide them with food. Two young girls of about 12 and eight years of age turned up in the concentration camp in Hatolia, Ermera, in 1978. They did not know each other nor were they known to any of the hundreds of others in the Hatolia camp. The girls said they came from Zumalai, in the south, a long distance by foot over the mountains. Although some people in Hatolia tried to help them, they died in the following months.<sup>9</sup> Rogerio Maia found a young abandoned girl in the Fatubessi concentration camp in Ermera. He and his wife Joana raised her, but her trauma wiped out memories of her childhood and they have been unable to trace her family. Often East Timorese pretended that separated children were members of their own family, as in the cases of the children just mentioned, for fear that soldiers would try to remove them because they were abandoned orphans. On surrender to a battalion in a particular district the people were required to register all their details, so it was easy for soldiers to identify the separated children if they had not been temporarily 'adopted' by an East Timorese family. These unattached and separated children may have been orphans, but their orphan status was never certain. It is almost certain that there would have been surviving family members who would have cared for them.

Not only did the soldiers take many separated children from the concentration camps; in some cases they also forcibly removed children who were living with their parents. Biliki's case was not unique; from talking with many dozens of parents and family members emerged a picture of systematic abuse by soldiers of the rights of parents and their children. The soldiers intimidated parents in many ways once they had settled their attention on a particular child. They often tried to cajole and bribe the parents and, if that did not succeed, they resorted to threats. They would try to acquaint themselves with a particular child whom they liked, taking them for walks and to their military posts. Like the soldier who took Biliki, they gave gifts of clothes, sweets, food and soap to the parents, which helped the family to care for the child and provided the whole family with a few basic items.

Parents felt powerless to resist soldiers' requests to take their children and felt they had no choice other than to give their consent. They were intimidated

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9 Former inhabitant of the Hatolia concentration camp (interview, Dili, 8 September 2003).

by the mere fact that soldiers carried guns. Most parents and guardians were like Biliki's family and were too afraid to protest the removal of their child; after the fact they did not dare to demand their return. Soldiers also told parents, in what constituted a humiliation and possibly even a threat, that the parents would be unable to look after and educate their child. Shortly before a soldier was about to leave with a child he would usually offer gifts to the parents, such as rice and money, as did the soldier who took Biliki.

Soldiers did not permit the lack of parental consent from the few who dared to resist thwart their wishes. In some instances other members of the family were threatened by soldiers if parents refused to co-operate, for example an older daughter was threatened with rape unless the younger child was handed over.<sup>10</sup> Soldiers told families that it would be better for the children's futures if they handed over their children; parents often felt this was a threat, especially those who were active members of Fretilin. This was the experience of Francisco Babo Soares who was captured in 1977 and held in the Aifu concentration camp. After his Fretilin membership was revealed by an informer, he was jailed in nearby Ermera town, where soldiers asked his permission to take two of his children to Indonesia to send them to school: Luis, his 16-year-old son, who was in the second year of the Portuguese middle school, and Augusta, his seven-year-old daughter. When Francisco refused, soldiers indicated that the safety of the children could not be guaranteed. Soldiers had already spoken with Luis, and his father believes that Luis would have been afraid to refuse their offer to go with them to Indonesia. However, Francisco and his wife never agreed to the soldiers' requests, even under duress. Nevertheless, Luis and Augusta were abducted in 1977 along with three other children from the Aifu concentration camp. Two of these other children were sisters, seven-year-old Augusta and eight-year-old Madelina, who had been handed over to the soldiers by their mother under circumstances of threatening coercion.<sup>11</sup> A fifth child, Cristovaõ, was about eight years old when a soldier had found him separated from his family and had brought him to Aifu. Nobody knew anything about him or his family, and Cristovaõ knew only his name and that he came from Hatolia, in the Ermera district. Francisco's daughter, Dominggas Babo Soares, tried to save him from removal by claiming he was her child, but she was unsuccessful.

Areas where the East Timorese resistance was strongest, in the east of the territory, far from the border with Indonesia, were sites of oppression and

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10 Anonymous conversations, East Timor, April 2004.

11 Filamena dos Santos, older sister of the two girls (interview, Letefoho, Ermera, 2004).

provided plenty of opportunities for soldiers to remove children.<sup>12</sup> The people in some areas in the east lived in the worst concentration camp conditions for a longer period than in other districts. One of the consequences of the resistance of the people of Loro village in the eastern Los Palos district was the removal by Indonesian soldiers of up to 20 of their children between 1977 and 1982. Some of the children were separated from their parents; some were forcibly taken from their parents; and the parents of others were dead, although there were living relatives willing to care for the children.<sup>13</sup>

The military-controlled concentration camps also provided opportunities for civilians to transfer children – transfers that were conducted with military knowledge and support. The process of transfer was similar to that followed by soldiers. The following stories of children who were taken from the concentration camps, one by a civilian and the other by a civil servant, serve as examples. From 1977 to 1980, PS, an Indonesian civilian, worked for a soldier relative who owned a building contract business in East Timor. In Baguia he met Vitor who was about five years old. PS believes that Vitor's parents died during the time he was there. According to PS, Vitor's father was a civil guard working for the Indonesian military and was killed in 1979 by Fretilin. PS did not meet Vitor's mother but heard that she lived some distance away and had died of starvation. In the concentration camp in Baguia where PS lived, a Spanish priest cared for possibly up to 100 separated or orphaned children. PS lived close by in a large Portuguese-style building, to which Vitor, who was very thin and malnourished, often came begging for food. PS let him do small tasks for him in exchange for food. In 1980 PS asked the priest if he could take Vitor home to Indonesia. PS told me that he thought that the priest agreed because he had so many children in his care. A friend of his also took a child, Juliano, at the same time, but this child was very weak and died during the trip to Jakarta.

There is a more complete understanding of the abduction of two children of the Gandara family from Los Palos, as family members as well as the person who took them to Jakarta, EBD, have told me their story. EBD worked as advisor to the district administrator in Lautem from 1978 to 1980, and was also a lay evangelist for the Imanuel Protestant Church in Los Palos. The parents of four-year-old Sonia Gandara and two-year-old Thomas Alfredo Gandara (Sorotu) were killed in Los Palos by Indonesian

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12 After the defeat of Fretilin and the death of Nicolau Lobato, Xanana Gusmão and several other leaders escaped to the east from where they reorganised the resistance (CAVR 2006: 3.15 Nos. 382–383).

13 Luciano Conceição (interview, Jakarta, 17 August 2006).

soldiers in June 1979 because of their Fretilin activities. EBD, in his capacity as an evangelist, visited the children's pregnant mother in the prison in Los Palos where she was imprisoned until she was killed. He told me that he discussed with her his plan to take the children to Java. The children's uncle, Egidio dos Santos Gandara, said that the family asked military officials if they could take the children into their care, but their request was denied. EBD flew with the children to Jakarta on 18 June 1979 and it took 15 years for their uncle to be reunited with them.

The aftermath of the military operation to force the East Timorese out of the mountains left many children destitute and homeless and they tried to survive in the towns by loitering and begging around markets and along the roads. According to several people I spoke to, many of these children were adopted by Indonesian civilians and civil servants. Indonesians living in East Timor tried to help these children by giving them food and lodgings in exchange for small tasks performed. When they returned to Indonesia, they often took the children with them. Many Buginese from Sulawesi took East Timorese children home with them; often the children had helped with their family businesses in East Timor.<sup>14</sup>

### **Soldiers' helpers – *Tenaga Bantuan Operasi***

Another group of children particularly vulnerable to transfer to Indonesia were soldiers' helpers, the *Tenaga Bantuan Operasi* (TBO), who were recruited to do small tasks to assist a soldier.<sup>15</sup> The transfer of the TBOs to Indonesia was a consequence of the initial removal from their families, often through coercion or in order to survive. It was easier for a soldier to remove a TBO than to take another child. The TBO could travel with the soldier until the moment of the soldier's departure from East Timor, without raising suspicion that he was planning to take the child with him. With other children a soldier needed to make arrangements for the care of a child until he was ready to leave. The soldier who took Biliki sought the help of an East Timorese woman to care for her until his departure for Indonesia.

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14 Maffinawang, director Legal Aid Foundation, LBH, Makassar (interview, Makassar, 26 March 2003).

15 Two reports for the United Nations Secretary General, the Graça Machel report (1996) and the Otunnu report (2005), drew attention to the abuse of children in armed conflict. The latter raised the issue of abduction of children from their families to become child soldiers, sex workers or slave labourers (Otunnu 2005:III.C.68,V.4). There is no evidence, however, that Indonesian soldiers took their helpers to work in this capacity, although they often had to work as servants for the soldiers' families in exchange for attending school.

The use of TBOs was a program of the Indonesian military, acknowledged officially at least from 1982; guidelines for recruitment and treatment of TBOs were outlined in one of several secret military documents captured by the resistance in that year (Budiardjo and Liem 1984: 226; CAVR 2006: 7.8.2.1 No. 37). A soldier recruited his own TBO who then worked for that soldier, carrying out tasks such as cooking and cleaning the barracks and serving as porters carrying equipment and supplies on patrols and military operations, although they did not carry weapons. Most TBOs were adults, with strength to carry substantial loads, but some of the TBOs were children, even younger than the minimum 12 years of age stipulated in the guidelines.<sup>16</sup> In some cases children were preferred because they could be more easily controlled and were considered less likely to defect to the resistance. Soldiers also selected children of Fretilin families in an effort to control and influence them (CAVR 2006: 7.8.2.1 Nos. 30, 49–50).

Some TBOs were recruited, including forcibly, and others offered to work as a TBO because it was a lifeline to survival for them and their families. In exchange for their work they received food; they were usually not paid a wage and no mention of payment was made in the captured documents (CAVR 2006: 7.8.2.1 Nos. 81–82). The TBO program was essentially slave labour with no payment and no rights. Agostinho Soares was 16 when he became a TBO in the Letefoho concentration camp, at the same time that a 15-year-old female relative of his was forced into prostitution. The food they received helped their family to survive. One of his tasks as a TBO was to help bury East Timorese who died from hunger and sickness in the camps, sometimes up to 20 people in one day. Deaths on this scale continued in the Letefoho camp from 1976 until the defeat of Fretilin in the area at the end of 1978, after which time the military began to permit deliveries of food from international organisations. Agostinho recalled that, of the family groups with an average of about ten members each who lived close by his family in the concentration camp, only one or two members from each group survived, and that every member of some families died. Despite his help and that of his relative, half of his own family died: his older sister and her two children; his younger brother; and his single aunt who lived with them.<sup>17</sup>

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16 Twelve is much younger than the legal age of employment, 15 (ILO 1973:Article 2) and 18 in the CRC optional protocol of involvement of children in armed conflict (United Nations 2000a:preamble).

17 For experiences of recruitment of other TBO, see CAVR (2006: 7.8.2.1 Nos. 53–64).

At the end of a soldier's term of service and before returning to Indonesia, the military guidelines instructed the soldier to send his TBO back to school and ensure he was given careful guidance. Among other reasons given for doing this was that an ex-TBO understood the strengths and weakness of the military, information which would be useful if the TBO joined and passed his knowledge on to the resistance (Budiardjo and Liem 1984: 226). Since the TBOs were recruited through a recognised military procedure, the military had an institutional responsibility to care for them after their discharge, in particular to ensure that younger children were returned to their families and villages. However, soldiers often did not fulfil this responsibility. Sometimes a TBO travelled with his soldier's battalion a long distance from home and would be abandoned on the wharf in Dili when his soldier left East Timor.<sup>18</sup> Other soldiers took their child TBO home to Indonesia. In some cases soldiers had developed a genuine emotional attachment to their TBO and wanted to help them by taking them to Indonesia where they could send them to school. They knew the boys were reliable and hard-working and could continue to work for their families while they attended school. A soldier who had decided to take his TBO to Indonesia seldom sought the child's consent, much less that of his parents. Soldiers treated these young boys as their personal slaves, and the manner in which some soldiers removed them suggests that soldiers regarded them as personal property to be removed at will.

While it is difficult to know how many child TBOs were taken from East Timor, many were removed in circumstances such as those of Antonio and Alfredo. Antonio was a TBO for Corporal B from Ambon who forcibly removed Antonio from East Timor in 1980. At the time Antonio, like Agostinho Soares, felt he had no choice but to work as a TBO; otherwise he and his family living in the concentration camp in Manatuto would have starved. When Corporal B's company was not on a military operation, Antonio could visit his family and B gave him rice to take home. After some time B suggested to Antonio that he would like to adopt him and invited him to come with him to Ambon. Antonio felt he could not reject the offer so he just said nothing. B persisted for several months, but Antonio never gave him an answer. Antonio estimates that in January 1980 their company was involved in an operation in Baucau. Afterwards they drove from Baucau directly to the harbour in Dili, without stopping at their base

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18 Jose Luis de Oliveira, HAK Association (interview, Dili, April 2004); see also the CAVR Report (2006: 7.8.2.1 No. 32, 7.8.5.1 No. 425).

near Manatuto. Antonio had no choice but to go with B to Ambon, even though he was upset and fearful.<sup>19</sup>

Twelve-year-old Alfredo was taken forcibly from the Aileu concentration camp by Sergeant T in 1978. As T's TBO Alfredo had to perform many tasks beyond what should be expected of a child. He was exposed to physical danger when he came under Fretilin fire and had to help T reload the magazine of his gun. Alfredo moved round for some time on patrols with the soldiers until they came back to Aileu. When the soldiers began cleaning their equipment, he realised they were preparing to return to Sulawesi. In their platoon there were 30 soldiers with ten to 15 TBOs. Some of the TBOs were sent home, whereas the older TBOs were sent on new operations. Alfredo and four other TBOs, the youngest TBOs, were taken to Taibessi, the military base in Dili, without any explanation. Besides the five TBOs there were two other children, one collected after a confrontation on a patrol and the other from a concentration camp. Sergeant T took 13-year-old Alfredo to Sulawesi in March 1980 without asking his opinion or telling him of his intention and without contacting and gaining the permission of his parents. The six other children taken by soldiers of the same platoon were removed in similar circumstances.<sup>20</sup>

Some soldiers, however, did defer to the wishes of the families of the TBO they planned to take to Indonesia. Sometimes the family of a TBO enlisted a priest or a relative with some influence to intervene on behalf of their son. The soldier for whom Faustino Cardoso Gomes worked as a TBO wanted him to return with him to Indonesia. Faustino's uncle was able to persuade the soldier that his nephew was missing his family and wanted to go home to Suai. Faustino thinks that the fact that he cried at the prospect of being taken away may have saved him from removal. The family of 14-year-old Guilherme dos Reis Fernandes was also able to persuade the soldier from Battalion 712 from Sulawesi, for whom their son worked as a TBO, not to take him away, and the family of Aderito de Jesus sought a priest's help in advocating on their son's behalf to prevent his removal.

### **Children of guerrilla fighters**

As we have already seen, from the beginning of the occupation the children of Fretilin families were vulnerable to removal by soldiers. After most of the population had surrendered, soldiers sought out the children of guerrilla

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19 Antonio (interview, Yogyakarta, 2001).

20 Alfredo Alves (interview, Dili, 5 March 2004).

fighters, especially of Falintil military commanders, for adoption. From the early 1980s Fretilin reorganised as a guerrilla resistance under the leadership of Xanana Gusmão.<sup>21</sup> Many of those fighting in the mountains had their families with them. Because of the logistical problems of caring for their children while fighting, however, many handed over their children to family members living in towns, which increased the risk of the children's removal by Indonesian soldiers. Mario Carrascalão heard from his deputy governor, Brigadier General AB Saridjo, that the daughter of Suharto and wife of Lieutenant Colonel Prabowo Subianto Djojohadikusumo, a Special Forces commander in East Timor, had asked him to help her to find a child to adopt. She wanted a child who had been sent into town by parents who were still fighting in the forest.

Lieutenant Colonel S was the commander at the district military command in Los Palos in March 1988 when he heard that a Falintil fighter had sent his child from the forest into town. The child was Benvindo Aze Descart, the 17-month-old son of Olinda Morais and Aluc Descart, Falintil commander of the eastern region. Commander Aluc had been wounded and his fighters were short of food and water, so he asked his men to deliver Benvindo to his father living in town. Four soldiers sent by Lieutenant Colonel S to Aluc's father's house ordered him to come with the child to the military command post. S told Aluc's father that the child was not his grandchild and threatened to cut him in two if he did not hand him over. A week later, in need of someone to care for Benvindo, S called Aluc's father to his office and told him that he and Aluc's younger sister could help care for Benvindo, although they could not take him home. They saw the child frequently until S was transferred to Ainaro the following year. At the end of his time in East Timor S took Benvindo back to Jakarta where he raised him as his own son.

It was dangerous for East Timorese to care for the children of guerrilla fighters, since they risked being accused of being Fretilin sympathisers. Some fighters may have decided that it was safer for their child if they put them into the care of Indonesian soldiers (Aditjondro 2000: 129–130). Certainly by sending their children out of the forest and into town, they placed their children at risk of being removed by soldiers. Elito, the six-month old son of

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21 A broad-based umbrella organisation, the Revolutionary Council of National Resistance (CRRN) was formed in 1981 to organise resistance, with Falintil as its fighting wing. In 1988 the CRRN became the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) and in 1998 the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) (CAVR 2006: 3.15 Nos. 377–396 esp. 389).

Commander Lere Anan Timur from Illiomar, Los Palos district, like Aluc's son, was taken to Indonesia after Lere decided to send him out of the forest when his wife died soon after giving birth in 1981. Elito was adopted by Brigadier General Sontono, head of the Indonesian police in East Timor from 1978 to 1982, but Lere had no information about Elito until they were reunited in June 2010 (*Suara Timor Lorosae* 2010; *Tempo Semanal* 2010a and b).

Often the only way that guerrilla fighters could keep their children in East Timor was to put them in the care of nuns and priests, although even that was not without risk, as soldiers were suspicious of children who suddenly appeared in the care of nuns. Nevertheless, children of guerrilla fighters were cared for clandestinely in many Catholic Church institutions in East Timor, including one of Xanana Gusmão's children, who was placed in the care of the Salesian nuns at the Catholic institution in Venilale (Lewis 1993: 107–108). Two children of Domingas Alves da Silva (code name Bilou-Mali), one of four women guerrillas who stayed and fought in the forest throughout the Indonesian occupation, were taken away by Indonesian soldiers after she had been forced to leave them during military engagements in 1986 and 1987. This influenced her decision in 1996 to put her two-week-old son into the care of the Catholic nuns in Soibada.<sup>22</sup>

## Motivation for transferring children

Soldiers who took children from East Timor had many different motives; political and ideological reasons intermingled and overlapped with personal and psychological motivations. Soldiers insisted that in taking East Timorese children to care for them in Indonesia they acted benevolently and sacrificially.<sup>23</sup> Senior journalist, Aristides Katoppo, recalled debates in the late 1970s about soldiers taking children from East Timor and conducted his own investigation at the time. Soldiers told him that they were not abducting children but were just trying to help them. Luhut Panjaitan, a Special Forces officer, who adopted a young boy from near Mount Matebean said that he took the child to care for him and educate him, as a way of expressing his love for East Timor (Bentley 1995: 180).

The arguments for taking children away were aligned with the assertions of New Order ideologues who claimed that Indonesia went to East Timor

22 Indonesian intelligence officers found out about the child and came to investigate. The Sister there told them that he was the child of her niece and the priest, who knew the child's identity, supported her.

23 Andi Wijayanto (interview, Jakarta, 26 July 2006).

not out of self-interest but to help the East Timorese. Indonesian soldiers fighting in East Timor were imbued with New Order propaganda that the East Timorese wanted integration and the development opportunities that Indonesia offered. Soldiers doubtless believed that taking children out of their backward environment to civilise and educate them in Indonesia was an acceptable way to help and were supported in this belief at the highest political level. At the time of integration President Suharto promised publicly that Indonesia would be generous in its development programs – in Chapter 3, I describe how he organised the transfer of 61 young children to be educated in institutions in Indonesia. He justified separating children from their families and cultural environment in order to give them the benefits of an Indonesian education. The transfer of young children to Indonesia for educational purposes was not, however, explicitly formulated as official policy by either the civilian or the military authorities.

Soldiers always emphasised that they took children to Indonesia to educate them. I have already referred to the importance that the New Order attached to education and its role in ensuring loyalty and obedience to the regime. Soldiers who took East Timorese children and students to Indonesia wanted to ensure that they learnt to become loyal Indonesians and take on an Indonesian identity. They wanted to ensure the success of integration by educating children in Indonesia at least as much as they wanted to help the children. In this chapter I deal with individual soldiers taking children to be educated; in later chapters we shall see that the military supported the work of organisations that sent children to educational institutions throughout Indonesia.

An education in Indonesia, away from the distracting influence of resistance in East Timor, was deemed more likely to ensure loyalty to Indonesia and acceptance of integration. Many a soldier took their TBO back to Indonesia in order to continue to influence them through an Indonesian education. Soldiers usually hoped that their TBOs would eventually join the Indonesian armed forces and they also wanted to prevent the TBOs from joining the East Timorese resistance and disclosing sensitive information about the Indonesian military (CAVR 2006: 7.8.2.1 Nos. 30, 49–50). Like the Argentinean children who were taken from their families between 1976 and 1983 so that they would not be influenced by subversive ideology as they grew up, the TBOs and children from Fretilin families would be free from the subversive influence of anti-integration ideas if they were raised in Indonesia.

Although ideology may provide a rationalisation for transfers, it does not, however, sufficiently explain the actions of individual soldiers. It would be cynical to deny that compassion motivated many soldiers to rescue an

abandoned child. Many, no doubt, experienced revulsion at the war and helping a destitute child was a response at a personal level, although most soldiers probably left the children to their fate.<sup>24</sup> But let us not imagine that soldiers wanted to help these children out of feelings of remorse. Indonesian soldiers sent to fight in East Timor in the early years were told that they were there to free the East Timorese from the evils of communism. The military did not see itself as the perpetrator in this war; nevertheless, it cloaked all information about the war in a veil of secrecy – the displacement of about 300,000 East Timorese; the death of over 100,000; the thousands of displaced, separated and orphaned children. Had they not done so, the role of the military in the disaster in East Timor would have been exposed. The extreme military measures that led to such suffering contradicted New Order propaganda that most East Timorese supported integration and that Fretilin had no support base (CAVR 2006: 7.3.4 Nos. 64, 113, 6.2.1 No. 36).

We have seen that soldiers not only took separated and abandoned children but also removed children from their parents and families under duress. Again, soldiers even justified force in terms of the perceived benefits to a child. We need, however, to probe deeper if we are to understand why soldiers would personally accept the responsibilities of adoption and what drove them to remove children forcibly, even with the use of violence, from their families and environment.

Some soldiers had personal reasons for adopting children. Many took children because they had no children of their own or because they wanted a child of a particular sex. In these cases the children were usually well cared for by the soldiers who treated them like natural children. In Indonesia it is common practice to adopt indigent children, especially of poorer relatives, although the adoptions are not legal contracts, as explained in the Introduction. Many soldiers may have regarded the adoption arrangements as being similar to this common practice. Even unmarried soldiers took children, probably for similar reasons, and usually asked a member of their family to care for the child on their behalf. Achmad da Silva was taken by a soldier in 1983 to Indonesia, where he lived with the soldier's parents at first, but joined the soldier once he had married.

As noted in the Introduction, adopted children in Indonesia often have to work for their adoptive families in return for their education and care and the experience of East Timorese children was no different. The provision of cheap labour for a family was a strong personal motivation for taking a

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24 Andi Wijayanto (interview, Jakarta, 26 July 2006).

child, especially TBO children, whom soldiers knew to be reliable, hard workers. The treatment of children in their adoptive homes is discussed later in this chapter.

The question of why some soldiers took the children forcibly is a difficult one to find answers to. It is possible to imagine that the desire to have a child to work for his family or the wish to continue to influence a TBO and perhaps turn him into an Indonesian soldier could lead a soldier to use force to satisfy this desire. It is much more difficult to understand why a soldier would take a child from its parents and family, if the intention was to raise the child as his own and treat the child as he would his own natural child. Yet soldiers did just this. They treated the East Timorese as inferiors who had no rights, not even the right to care for and raise their own children.

I found no evidence that Indonesian soldiers transferred children for financial gain or of any instances where soldiers were paid for the children they took to Indonesia from East Timor, nor that there was any trafficking in East Timorese children for sexual or physical slavery or for removal to other countries.<sup>25</sup> Soldiers often gave the children they brought back to Indonesia to other families, usually relatives or other military families. I do not know if soldiers had been requested by these families to find a child or if they received payment for the child. I have not heard of paedophilia in the relationships between soldiers and the children they adopted, including in relation to their TBO, although this does not mean it did not exist (CAVR 2006: 7.8.3.3 Nos. 302–332, 334).<sup>26</sup> Aristides Katoppo believes that soldiers did not have such evil intentions towards the children they took back to Indonesia.

Other motives appear to have arisen from psychological factors, factors that often operate in war. Ordinary soldiers were probably frustrated that they had to fight the East Timorese when their superiors had told them that the East Timorese wanted integration with Indonesia.<sup>27</sup> They were also no doubt angry that comrades died.<sup>28</sup> Punishing the East Timorese and taking booty or spoils compensated them for what they had had to endure. Indonesian soldiers plundered East Timor, especially in the initial and then

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25 See also the CAVR Report (CAVR 2006: 7.8.4.1 No. 352).

26 There were, however, many cases within East Timor of East Timorese girls under the age of 18 who experienced sexual violation and were forced into sexual slavery by members of the Indonesian military. And after 1999, many young girls were forcibly held in sexual slavery in Indonesia; almost exclusively the perpetrators were pro-Indonesian East Timorese militia (see Chapter 5).

27 For example, Kuku Sudjoko speaking on TV 7 (now Trans 7), *Saksi Mata* #13, 18 July 2006.

28 In the first few years more than 1,000 died (Klinken 2005: 112–113).

the final stages of the occupation; but children, even separated or seemingly abandoned children, cannot be treated in this way. The child taken home after the battle is over gave the soldier the opportunity to demonstrate to his family and neighbours his success in East Timor and his power over his enemies. He had his own personal East Timorese to dominate and command at will, which perhaps helped him deal with his feelings of powerlessness in a war about which he was forbidden to speak.

The use of children to assert dominance over the enemy was influential in motivating soldiers to seek deliberately to adopt the children of guerrilla fighters, especially the children of Falintil commanders. By controlling their children, Indonesian soldiers attempted to humiliate and discourage the East Timorese fighters, almost certainly in the hope of hastening their surrender. Soldiers used control over children in hostage-like situations with this purpose in mind elsewhere in East Timor. In the early 1980s, 2,000–3,000 children under 12 years of age, along with women and the elderly – 8,000 people in total from villages all over East Timor – were confined in harsh conditions to a prison on Atauro Island in an attempt to try to force those in their families who were still fighting to surrender (CAVR 2006: 3.13 Nos. 344–350).<sup>29</sup> In 1986, in the hope that the parents of the children would surrender and give up their struggle, the commander of territorial Battalion 713 from Menado, Sulawesi, gave permission for 13 children of senior guerrilla fighters to be brought from the central Falintil base in Waimori to Venilale, Baucau district. It was a more humane approach as soldiers allowed the children to grow up undisturbed in the Catholic institution run by the Salesian nuns in Venilale.<sup>30</sup>

Bringing a child home was at another level a way for soldiers to demonstrate to their fellow-Indonesians their good intentions towards the people of East Timor. Indonesians had heard how backward and primitive the East Timorese were, so this exotic child, brought to be educated in Indonesia, proved the success of the soldier in bringing integration and development. In villages throughout Indonesia, the scenario described in Chapter 1, played out by Suharto for a media audience in September 1977, was repeated. Just as Suharto had done, the soldiers used the children they brought to Indonesia to demonstrate their generosity in providing a child with an opportunity to

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29 See also statements by Maria do Céu Lopes Federer at CAVR public hearing, 'Political prisoners', Dili, 27–28 February 2003 and testimony by Joana Pereira to the CAVR public hearing, 'Forced displacement and famine', Dili, 28–29 July 2003.

30 Dominggas Nunes (interview Venilale, 27 March 2004), Mau Caluc (interview, Dili, 27 March 2004) and Father Eligio Locatelli (interview, Fatumaca, Venilale, 8 April 2003).

receive a superior education in Indonesia. When 13-year-old Antonio and five other East Timorese child TBO taken away by soldiers in the same platoon arrived home in their village in Ambon, the whole village came out to stare at them. This was also TBO Alfredo's experience when he arrived in Sulawesi, also aged 13. The neighbours came to see how primitive he was, touching his strange hair and watching to see how he would eat. For the soldier, Alfredo was proof of his heroism. At the CAVR public hearing, Alfredo described his experience on arrival in Sulawesi in 1980.

It was like being in a zoo. I was sitting in a house – they were these tall houses. Everyone came to look at me. They touched my hair. It was a bit red. They watched to see how I would eat. It was the first time they had seen an East Timorese. They asked if all East Timorese were like me. I was like a hero because he had brought me there.<sup>31</sup>



#### **Alfredo Alves Reinado at a CAVR public hearing**

Alfredo Alves Reinado (left) preparing to make statements at the CAVR public hearing on 'Children and conflict', Dili, 29–30 March 2004. Holding the Bible is CAVR Commissioner Rev Agustinho de Vasconcelos.

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31 Alfredo Alves testimony to the CAVR public hearing, 'Children and conflict', Dili, 29–30 March 2004.

## Institutional controls

The fact that soldiers took children from East Timor was known and condoned by those in authority.<sup>32</sup> There were, however, some institutional controls which suggest that it was a practice that did not have official approval, but they were not rigorously implemented and were easily manipulated. Many people told me that the removal of children by soldiers was policed by the Indonesian military police and that there was pressure from East Timorese leaders, the governor and bishop in particular, for removals to be controlled. However, the CAVR (2006: 4.2 No. 39) did not find any evidence that the military police disciplined individual soldiers for removing children. Mario Carrascalão said that he often spoke publicly about child transfers out of East Timor – on official occasions he would sometimes pocket the speech prepared for him by his Indonesian deputies and start talking about such matters in Tetun, but he was unable to control the practice. One anecdote that confirms that the military police tried to stop removals comes from TBO Alfredo who was taken to Sulawesi by his soldier. While Alfredo was at the military base in Taibessi waiting to depart, he overheard instructions by the military police to soldiers on parade that included forbidding the soldiers to take children home with them.

The only known document containing a military instruction that related to adopting children did not explicitly forbid soldiers to remove children; rather, it stated that soldiers could adopt only orphans, and that they must obtain an official letter signed by the local district administrator (*bupati*) verifying that the child they wished to adopt was an orphan. This instruction was issued by the military commander of the East Timor Region Command in 1978 or 1979, at the height of the military activity which was when most children were removed by soldiers. A copy of this instruction was attached to a letter signed by the district administrator of Ermera with a list of the names of orphans who could be adopted by soldiers.<sup>33</sup> The existence of this document confirms that soldiers were taking children away from East Timor on such a scale that the military authorities considered it necessary

32 This was also the conclusion of the CAVR (CAVR 2006: 7.8.4.2 No. 373).

33 This secret military document was seen by Hilmar Farid, head of the Indonesian Institute of History and Cultural Network (Jaringan Kerja Budaya dan Institut Sejarah Indonesia). It was found among documents left behind in the Indonesian military's retreat from East Timor in 1999 and is now in the archives of the human rights organisation Yayasan HAK in Dili, where I was unable to obtain permission to view it. The district administrator was Tomás Gonçalves, former partisan and Apodeti leader, who defected in 1998 (Hilmar Farid, interview, The Hague, 8 May 2004).

to regulate it; it is also possible it was issued in response to the complaints of East Timorese leaders and officials.

It would have been almost impossible for an administrator to confirm with certainty whether a particular child was an orphan, given the chaos and upheaval of the early years of the occupation of East Timor. Furthermore, while these district administrators were East Timorese, they were appointed by the Indonesians and were only figureheads who acted under instruction from their military counterparts. To organise an adoption, a military commander could 'request' an administrator to issue the necessary permissions (Anderson, Djati and Kammen 2003: 5–6). Several children living at the Seroja institution were adopted by soldiers who organised permission, even though the adoptions were not in conformity with the regulations of the Department of Social Welfare.<sup>34</sup> Lino Martinz, in 2004 a policeman in Dili who had lived in Seroja for many years after 1982, recalled that two-year-old Thomas was removed in 1983. A group of women from the association of soldiers' wives, Persatuan Istri Tentara (PERSIT), used their influence with senior military officers to obtain the letter of permission from the Department of Social Welfare to adopt Thomas.<sup>35</sup>

Neither government regulations nor military instructions stopped soldiers taking children, as soldiers found ways to avoid the restrictions they imposed. For example, they negotiated the restriction on adopting only orphans by obtaining written permission from parents to take their children to educate them in Indonesia, without making any reference to adoption. In such cases a soldier simply had to report to the government and military officials, usually at sub-district level, that he was taking a child with parental permission and he would be issued with an appropriate letter of authorisation. These letters were termed 'letter of surrender of a child' (*surat keterangan menyerahkan anak*) and were signed by the parents and the soldier or civilian adopting the child, their witnesses, and military and civilian officials.

Clementino dos Reis Amaral, the deputy district administrator in Baucau in the late 1970s and now a member of parliament, witnessed dozens of agreements such as these in his district and heard that a similar procedure was followed in other districts. He said that soldiers tried to persuade parents to let them take their children by giving money and rice and promising to return the children after they had completed their education. Amaral believes that some parents did genuinely agree to the soldiers' requests, but there

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34 Guilherme dos Reis Fernandes (interview, Dili, 2004).

35 Maria Margarida Babo (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004).

were many others whom he doubts would have signed voluntarily; parents often came to him crying and protesting that their child had been taken away, even though they had signed an agreement. Often parents disagreed with each other about the surrender of their child. At the official signing of agreements, Amaral sometimes observed in a mother's expression and body language that she did not agree, although she did not dare to protest; the father had been a TBO for the soldier and agreed, or felt he had to agree, to the soldier's request to take their child away. Amaral was unable to do anything to prevent the removals other than encourage the parents to speak out if they dared to do so. Soldiers sometimes asked religious leaders to help them acquire the necessary letters of permission to remove separated and orphaned children. In the concentration camps the care of these children was often organised by priests or catechists. As the putative guardians of a child they could authorise the child's surrender into the care of a soldier. Domingus Maya, the Catholic catechist in Letefoho in 1977, refused to meet one soldier's request to organise an agreement because he believed it would not have been the parents' wish.

These written agreements functioned as a means by which soldiers could remove children to Indonesia unhindered; once they were back in Indonesia they adopted the children or gave them to other families to adopt. The documents varied in their content: some were letters stating the child was an orphan, attested to by the district administrator; some were letters of surrender of a child by its parents, a priest or other guardian; others stated that parents gave up all rights to the child, as they would in a legal adoption document. Most parents whose children had been taken by soldiers to Indonesia believed that the soldiers had promised they would return their children. Clementino dos Reis Amaral confirmed that such promises were made to parents who were still living. He does not, however, know of any soldier who returned a child as he had promised. Nor have I heard of a single instance of soldiers returning children to East Timor, with the possible exception of Luhut Panjaitan, who, although he did not return the child to his parents, took him back to East Timor on visits. He said that he has a good relationship with the villagers and the father of his adopted East Timorese son (Bentley 1995: 180).

That the military regarded the documents merely as a formality and not a genuine agreement between parents and soldiers is evidenced by the falsehoods they contained and the dishonest treatment of parents. Officials lied to parents about the contents of the documents they were forced to sign. One mother of a three-year-old child and her witness were forced to sign or thumbprint

a document written in Indonesian that neither of them could read. It stated that the mother gave permission to the soldier to adopt her child and that she gave up all rights to her child. It also stated that she had no objections to surrendering her child for adoption. At the sub-district military command, where she and her witness were called, many Indonesian security and civilian officials had gathered, creating a situation that she found intimidating. They told her that the soldier would educate her child and return the child when his education was complete and that that was what the written document, which was signed by the district and sub-district administrators and the sub-district police and military commanders, said. She signed because she was afraid. When the soldier first met her to discuss his intention to take her child to Indonesia, he had deliberately placed his gun on the table, which she interpreted as a threat. She still hopes for the return of her child.<sup>36</sup>

Civilians taking children to Indonesia also needed letters that surrendered guardianship to them. In the case of Vitor, noted above, the Spanish priest in Bagaia acted as the official party surrendering Vitor to his adoptive father, PS. In the case of the Gandara children, the official letter stated that the children were handed over to EBD for adoption by two members of the Imanuel Protestant Church in Los Palos, an East Timorese named Thomas who could scarcely sign his name and an Indonesian named PN. It too was signed by the district administrator and the police and military commanders. The claim by the local Protestant Church of guardianship over the children may be linked to something the mother agreed to in jail just before she was killed. The letter stated that EBD should raise the children as his own because their parents were dead and there was no family member to take on the responsibility of their care. It added that the party removing the children had exerted no pressure on anyone. Other Gandara family members had asked to care for the two children, but the military authorities denied the wider family their right to care for them. They were not given a reason, but it was almost certainly because of the family's Fretilin affiliation and activities. EBD told me that the children had been placed in an Islamic childcare institution in Los Palos because the military authorities would not allow the children to be taken back by their family. He said that when he spoke to their mother in jail, just before she was killed, he offered to take them to Java. It is possible, although I have no proof, that the children's mother, aware that the family was not permitted to care for the children, thought his offer was better than their staying in the Islamic institution.

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36 Anonymous interview, Dili, 11 May 2004.

GEREJA KRISTEN IMANUEL  
 \* LOSPALOS  
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SURAT KETERANGAN PENYERAHAN ANAK

Pada hari ini tanggal sebelas juni seribu sembilan ratus tujuh puluh sembilan, kami yang bertanda tangan dibawah ini :

I. Thomas , anggota Majelis Gereja Kristen Imanuel Lospalos.  
 Petrus Ngadirun, anggota Majelis Gereja Kristen Imanuel Lospalos, selanjutnya disebut PIHAK PERTAMA.

II. Drs.E.B,Djatrik, TBT,Dep,Plau Negeri di Kab,Dati II Lautem, selanjutnya disebut PIHAK KEDUA.

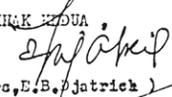
Pihak pertama menyerahkan kep-da pihak kedua,2 ( dua ) orang anak anggota Gereja Kristen Imanuel Lospalos :

1. Soxia ( Pr ) lahir di Lisabon , 6 April 1975.
2. Sorotu ( Lk ) lahir di Lospalos , 15 Juni 1976.

untuk dipelihara dan dididik sebagai anak kandung oleh pihak kedua , hal ini dilakukan mengingat kedua orang tuanya dan ahli warisnya sudah tidak ada lagi.

Demikian surat keterangan ini kami buat dan tanda tangani bersama dengan tanpa ada paksaan maupun tekanan dari pihak siapapun juga.

Lospalos, 11 Juni 1979.

PIHAK KEDUA  
  
 ( Drs. E. B. Djatrik )

PIHAK PERTAMA.

1. Thomas : 
2. Petrus Ngadirun :

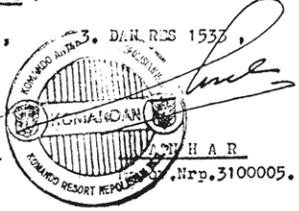
MEMENGETAHUI/MENSETUJUI :

1. BUPATI KEPALA DAERAH TK.II 2. DATU DIN 1629 ,

3. DAN RES 1533 ,

DAERAH DAERAH  
  
 ( Claudio Vieira )

  
 LAHAT  
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**Gandara adoption papers**

An adoption document for the two Gandara children, signed in Los Palos, 11 June 1979.

Source: Egídio dos Santos Gandara.

It was important for ordinary soldiers and civilians to obtain an official guardianship document as it enabled them to apply to the Indonesian Department of Social Welfare for assistance with school fees and living costs for which all orphans were eligible.<sup>37</sup> There were, however, many cases where there were no letters of agreement with parents, although there may have been verbal discussion and parental acquiescence of a kind, as in the case of Biliki when she was taken by the Special Forces officer. It was probably easier for senior officers to take a child, in part because of their seniority and also because they did not need state assistance for the child's education and upkeep and, consequently, did not need a letter of guardianship.

When regular soldiers were unable to obtain the necessary letter of permission to remove a child, they circumvented the regulations by the rather distressing method of smuggling children out of East Timor in crates, concealing them as if they were part of their luggage. Maria Legge Mesquite's father was carrying her when he was shot dead by an Indonesian soldier in 1978 in Aileu. A soldier found her with her father's body and took her to the military post where he cared for her. Some time later he told her that her father was not dead but in Java and that he would take her to him. As the battalion was about to leave, soldiers put five children, including Maria, into five boxes. A family member of one of the children found them and freed them and, despite being threatened and physically abused, their rescuers refused to reveal to the soldiers where they had hidden the children.

Agusta and Madelina, who were abducted from Ermera with the two children of Francisco Babo Soares and the separated Cristovaõ in 1977, were packaged into boxes to conceal their transport onto a boat leaving Dili. Their departure was witnessed by Francisca dos Santos Lobo from Ermera who had been attending school in Dili at the time of the invasion and was still living there. Soldiers had also brought Francisca's younger brother, Salvador Araujo, to Dili with the intention of taking him away. They kept him in a house in Dili that happened to be close to where Francisca was boarding. With him were the sisters Agusta and Madelina. Just before they were due to leave, the soldiers came to collect the children. Francisca told me that she argued vehemently with the soldiers and refused to let them take her younger brother. She saw the soldiers take Agusta and Madelina into a room and then she heard hammering. After some time the soldiers emerged with a large box. Through a hole she saw the girls lying in the box back to back

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37 PS (interview, Jakarta, 2006).

and she followed them to the wharf where she saw them carried as part of the soldiers' luggage onto the boat bound for Indonesia.

As already mentioned, although soldiers could move around freely with their TBO, they had to deal with the military police if they decided to take their TBO home. Many TBOs were also hidden in boxes when they were removed from East Timor. Antonio, the TBO from Manatutu, had to hide on the boat that took him to Ambon. The soldiers slept on raised platforms and during the day Antonio had to hide in a box under one of these platforms, coming out only at night, presumably so that he would not be seen by the soldiers' commanding officer. Some children were forced to stay hidden only until their boat was out of view of East Timor, which suggests that some battalion commanders were not particularly strict about controlling their men once the children had evaded detection by the military police before leaving Dili. On the day of Sergeant T's departure to Sulawesi, he offered to take 13-year-old Alfredo to the wharf to see his boat. Alfredo was keen to see the boat and, although he was surprised, he trusted T when he told him he would have to hide in a box so that the military police did not see him and prevent him from entering the port area. He had just heard the instructions to the soldiers on parade that prohibited them from removing children so he was not suspicious. Alfredo described his experience:

T put me in a big box. I wasn't really scared but I was surprised, and I was wondering what had happened to the others from our group of seven. I could see out of the box a bit, and I felt myself being lifted onto a truck and then a bit later carried some more. After some time I tried to get out of the box, but T told me to stay hidden because the military police were coming. However, I wanted to get out of the box and look around the boat. Then I heard the siren of the ship; it was very noisy, and suddenly I could feel the boat was moving. After about twenty or thirty minutes in the box I was very hot and sweaty. Then T let me out. I saw that I was on a big boat and then I saw my friends. They all said their soldier had brought them aboard in a box. We looked round and we could see that Dili was far away and that we were moving away from the shore. I don't really know how the others felt. Some were running round and seemed happy. But I felt very sad and was crying. I thought about my mother in Maubisse and I thought that I would never have a chance to go back there.<sup>38</sup>

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38 Alfredo Alves (interview, Dili, 5 March 2004).

I heard of a few instances where battalion commanders did take action if they received reports about the behaviour of the soldiers in their command. In 1977 some parents asked Catholic catechist Dominggus Maya for help after their child had been kidnapped by a soldier about to leave Letefoho. Dominggus Maya reported to the battalion commander who ordered his men to remove their gear from the already loaded truck and eventually the commander found the child packed into a box and returned the child to the parents. In the face of indiscriminate abuse by the military, East Timorese were rarely able to demand their rights. Their only hope might be a sympathetic commander, such as the one at Letefoho, who might investigate or discipline his men. Monsignor Martinho da Costa Lopes, Apostolic Administrator of East Timor from 1977 until he was dismissed in 1984 for his anti-integration stance, found that the only recourse to justice for East Timorese in those early years was for him to appeal personally to a commander on behalf of victims and sometimes commanders would take action in response to a complaint against the men in their command.

Reporting a soldier's behaviour to his commander involved a risk, however, because the soldier would often take revenge out of sight of his commander. One tragic example of this was the rescue of V who was abducted in 1978 when she was a baby. A company commander from Sulawesi, RM, had asked her family if he could adopt her, but they refused. RM then took V without permission and packed her into a small box just before he left town. V's mother asked the priest for help to find her daughter and, through a Catholic nun in Dili and an East Timorese TBO, she traced V to the district military command in Dili. V's mother travelled to Dili to demand her daughter back. She was intimidated and punched by soldiers at the district command because she had dared to accuse them of stealing her daughter, but when she refused to be put off, the commander eventually showed her the baby still in the box in which she had been smuggled to Dili. V's mother was able to identify her, so the commander returned the child to her. RM was not pleased with the outcome and back in Ermera he tried to shoot her. The bullet passed between her legs, frightening her but not killing her. V's older siblings paid a higher price. Her 18-year-old brother, who worked as a TBO for RM, was tortured by RM and placed in an open latrine. He was there for several days until his mother found and rescued him. On a return assignment

to East Timor, RM raped V's 13- and 15-year-old sisters, one of whom became pregnant with a child that RM later abducted. She has never had any further information about her child.<sup>39</sup>

## Treatment of children in Indonesia

In Indonesia, soldiers either adopted the children and cared for them in their own homes or gave them to other families, often relatives or other military families. As explained in the Introduction, the adoptions were not legal contracts but resembled a practice, common in both Indonesia and East Timor, in which indigent parents give a child to a rich relative or benefactor to raise. In return for education and care, the child usually works for the benefactor's family. I do not know whether the families asked soldiers to find a child or whether the soldiers sought someone else to care for the child because their own families could or would not accept responsibility for the child. We saw that Biliki moved families twice. Augusta and Madelina, the two sisters taken in 1977 from Ermera, grew up in separate soldier families, neither of which were the family of the soldier who removed them.<sup>40</sup> This was also the case for Luis and Augusta, a brother and sister who were taken from East Timor in the same group as Augusta and Madelina.<sup>41</sup>

Most soldiers kept their promises to parents and sent their adopted East Timorese children to school in Indonesia. Many children, however, were unable to adjust to life in Indonesia and its school system. According to Kiki Syahnakri, most children brought to Indonesia by soldiers did not succeed at school and one of the main reasons for their limited progress was their embarrassment at being placed in first-grade classes with six-year-olds in order to learn Indonesian. Many children had difficulty studying because of the trauma they had experienced and many suffered from the effects of malnutrition, which interfered with their learning.<sup>42</sup> Some did succeed, notably the children of senior officers who may have had access to better opportunities. Syahnakri's adopted son became a senior civil servant; Toni Tauro, adopted by a relative of Syahnakri, is an actor in television (*sinetron*)

39 Anonymous interview, Dili, 1 April 2004.

40 Filamena dos Santos (interview, Letefoho, Ermera, 23 February 2004).

41 Francisco Babo Soares and Madelina dos Santos (interview, Aifu, Ermera, 24 February 2004).

42 PS (interview, Jakarta, 6 August 2006) and EBD (interviews, Jakarta, 12 August 2006).

in Kupang; Sebastian da Costa, adopted by Lieutenant General (retired) Yunus Yosfiah, is a well-known tennis player;<sup>43</sup> Thomas Americo, taken from East Timor by soldiers from the East Java Brawijaya battalion, became the first boxer from Indonesia to compete against an international title holder (Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Information 1980: 24; *Kompas* 2008).



**Thomas Americo at Independence Day celebrations**

The celebrations were held at Merdeka Palace in Jakarta, 17 August 1981. Thomas Americo (left) is accompanied by Letjen H. Herman Sarens Soediro. On the right is Saoul Mamby, from the US who defeated Americo in the boxing match in Jakarta.

© *Kompas*

Many soldiers probably did not give careful thought to the challenges that introducing a traumatised child into their own families would present; there were often problems that left the children unprotected and exposed to danger. Although TBO Antonio had only elementary Indonesian, he

43 Kiki Syahnakri (interview, Jakarta, 24 August 2006) and Andi Wijayanto (interview, Jakarta, 26 July 2006). Yunus Yosfiah was a Special Forces officer who took part in the invasion of East Timor and commanded of the East Timor region command from 1985 to 1987. In 1997 he was appointed Chief of the Armed Forces Social and Political Affairs Staff (Kassospol) and in 1998 Information Minister (Tanter, van Klinken and Ball 2006).

understood when he arrived at Corporal B's home in Ambon that the soldier's wife was not pleased and that she would have preferred a girl, as they already had three sons. She did not treat Antonio well and often physically abused him, especially when the rest of the family was absent. She chased him away from home on several occasions, until one day she lunged at him with a large chopping knife, yelling at him to leave or she would kill him. He was just beginning high school and, after this experience, he never returned to his adoptive home, finding many different jobs to survive and pay his fees so that he could complete high school. In 1991 he returned to East Timor where he successfully registered to receive a government scholarship for his university education in Ambon.

Children who, like Antonio, were taken to Indonesia to continue to work in soldiers' homes, were often treated harshly in conditions that were little short of slavery. Antonio had to get up at three in the morning to chop wood and boil water, fry bananas or cassava for breakfast, sweep and mop. He had to draw the daily water supply from a deep well, and only after the rest of the family had bathed could he bathe and leave for school, usually running so that he would not be late and locked out of the classroom. He always felt tired in class, but he was positive and grateful for the opportunity to get the education of which he had always dreamed. After Alfredo arrived in Sulawesi, the group of seven children was separated; each was taken to the village where their soldier lived. T took Alfredo to his parent's home, where he was well treated by some of T's family, but, like Antonio, he was often physically abused, especially by T. Alfredo was so miserable that he tried to run away on several occasions, but he was caught each time and severely punished by T. Eventually, when he was 17, he succeeded in escaping and two years later, in 1986, he found his way back to East Timor.

Both of these young men were highly intelligent and had more than an average ability to care for themselves. Many other children were not so resilient in their strange new environment. If they ran away or were thrown out of home, they were vulnerable to further abuse because they had no extended family to turn to and no-one to see that their disappearance was followed up. I heard about East Timorese children who had been abandoned or had run away, who later turned up as dockworkers, members of semi-criminal youth gangs, homeless people and psychologically disturbed street beggars.<sup>44</sup>

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44 Staff at the West Java Muhammadiyah Headquarters (Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah Jabar), Bandung (interview, Bandung, 30 January 2004); one child

Some turned to the Catholic Church where Indonesian priests and nuns assisted them (CAVR 2006: 7.8.4.2 No. 380). Mariana from Remexio, Aileu, was about seven years old in 1977 when she was taken by a soldier to Temanggung in Central Java. She had to work as a servant for his family, caring for their twins, and was not sent to school. After ten years she ran away and was fortunate to meet the East Timorese Sister Maria Lourdes Martins, then a theological student in Yogyakarta, who helped her to return to East Timor. Sister Lourdes took Mariana to confront the soldier who had brought her to Indonesia and asked him at least to pay Mariana's fare home to East Timor. Even though he had never paid Mariana wages for her years of work, giving her only a small amount of pocket money, he still refused to help her with her fare home.

Indeed many children turned to Indonesian soldiers at times of greatest need. This is not surprising, as it was an instinctive response to turn to those they had learnt to relate to in their childhood and in whom they had put their trust. Leonia asked soldiers to help her when she arrived back in East Timor to look for her family and was worried about her safety. After his escape from Sulawesi, Alfredo Alves arrived destitute in Surabaya in 1986 and decided to seek help directly from the most senior commander. Alfredo knew how to approach the commander, using his upbringing in a soldier's family to his advantage. The commander responded sympathetically and gave him a letter that meant that he had royal treatment on the journey home – a free boat trip and the waiver of the compulsory travel pass for the road trip from Dili to his mother's home in Maubissi.

The experience of the two Gandara children, taken to Indonesia by the Indonesian civil servant EBD who worked in Los Palos, gives us a glimpse of what can happen when adoptions are quasi-legal and inadequately supervised. EBD told me that he took the children from Los Palos on behalf of a Menadonese from Sulawesi who lived in Dili and said that he had no intention of adopting them, even though he had signed the official document. His Dili contact refused to accept them, so, according to EBD, he had no alternative other than to take the two children back to Jakarta. In Jakarta a neighbour asked if she could care for Tommy and raised him until she died, when her family continued to care for him. EBD sent Sonia to an orphanage run by the Protestant church, the Panti Asuhan van de

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taken by a soldier became a pedicab driver had his story told in the Catholic weekly, *Mingguan Hidup*, in about 1980 (Luciano Conceição, interview, Jakarta, 17 August 2006).

Steur, situated near his house in Pondok Gede, eastern Jakarta. Sonia had bruises on her face when she arrived at the institution and often ran away looking for her brother. EBD handed over the official letter of guardianship to the institution, but did not explain that the two children mentioned were siblings, which meant that staff at the institution did not believe Sonia when she said she had a brother living nearby.<sup>45</sup> Tommy, who was given a new name and raised as a Muslim, was angry that he was not told about his older sister and his true identity (CDPM 1997; TAPOL 1997a; 1997b). He learnt the truth 15 years later, in 1994, when their uncle Egidio finally traced them to Jakarta.

Senior military personnel singled out intelligent East Timorese youths from Fretilin backgrounds and sought to foster in them a positive attitude towards integration by personally supporting their education, sometimes even taking them into their homes. As already mentioned, Government scholarships were readily available to young people from non-Fretilin backgrounds; initially, those with family members still engaged in fighting were excluded. Officers, however, dared to experiment with a different approach. In 1976, 17-year-old Francisco Lay Kalbuadi, an East Timorese of Chinese descent living in Dili, came to the attention of Brigadier General Dading Kalbuadi, then the military commander in charge of East Timor. Because of Francisco's musical ability, Kalbuadi selected him to go to Indonesia with 100 East Timorese youths for a scouting jamboree (*Suara Karya* 1976b). After the jamboree, ten from the group were chosen to stay on and receive several months training. Francisco told me that he was denied this opportunity because he and his family did not belong to the Apodeti party.<sup>46</sup> He wanted to remain in Indonesia to study so he decided to go directly to Kalbuadi's home in Jakarta, where he spoke with Kalbuadi's wife and made a favourable impression. Subsequently, Kalbuadi adopted him and provided him with many generous opportunities to study. Francisco later took up leadership positions in several national organisations.

Perhaps the best example of an Indonesian military officer using a spectrum of approaches to persuade East Timorese youths to support

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45 Sonia Gandara (telephone conversations, 2004–2006) and information from Panti Asuhan van de Steur, August 2006. A copy of the letter was given to Egidio dos Santos Gandara, the children's uncle. The branch of the van de Steur institution in Pondok Gede took in younger children, who transferred to the main institution in Matraman Road in central Jakarta to attend senior high school.

46 Francisco's name is on a list (perhaps tentative) of ten youths accepted to do the training, which included children from well-known Apodeti and UDT families (*Berita Yudha* 1976).

integration is that of Prabowo Subianto, the son-in-law of Suharto and commander of Kopassus. He recognised that one approach would not fit all and had the financial resources to fund individual pursuits, thereby earning the gratitude of recipients. The ventures funded by Prabowo show him seeking to win over or manipulate both pro- and anti-independence youths for his purposes; but they also show the East Timorese youths using him opportunistically to further their own goals. He took many clever youths under his patronage and supported them while they studied. His students came from areas of conflict in Indonesia where there were separatist or independence movements, including East Timor, Aceh and West Irian. He provided a house for them in Cijantung, near the Kopassus headquarters, and paid their living expenses and school fees. Savio Domingos from a Fretilin family from Los Palos with close relatives fighting with Falintil, worked as a soldier's TBO when he was 13 years of age. In 1985, Major Ganap, who became a member of parliament in Dili and deputy speaker after he retired as chief of military intelligence, sent Domingos to Jakarta. Through friends, Domingos met Prabowo in 1992 and was given a scholarship to study at university and a room in Prabowo's house. At that time about ten students lived in Prabowo's house: six from East Timor, three from Fretilin families and the others Apodeti and UDT, and several other students from Aceh and Papua (Loveard 1997). Domingos often met Prabowo when he came by to check their progress each semester; Prabowo never engaged them in political discussion and did not try to indoctrinate them. Domingos's clandestine anti-integration activities, which he conducted while living at Prabowo's house, eventually forced him to flee Indonesia in 1995. Domingos feels sure Prabowo would have been aware that he was the East Timorese stringer for the Reuters journalist Jeremy Wagstaff between 1993 and 1995, when it was difficult for foreign journalists to obtain visas to enter East Timor and reports from East Timor angered the military. Domingos has respect for Prabowo for never challenging him:

Prabowo must have known what I was up to. He's bright. I think he would have found it difficult to reprimand me. Sometimes I feel bad about Indonesia and Prabowo. Maybe he thinks I was ungrateful. On the other hand I had a moral obligation to write about the truth. As human beings it may seem hard. Someone pays for my education, then I write like this. But I think – well, to write the truth I don't have to feel guilty. If you write about truths, how could he say, 'I don't think you should do that.' He's also a human being.

Both Francisco and Domingos are grateful to their benefactors for the opportunities they had to study; Francisco continues to use Kalbuadi's name as a measure of his gratitude to his adoptive father. Both went on to take up key positions in the first Fretilin government of independent East Timor.

The benefaction of senior officers towards youths like Francisco and Domingos was intended to win over the East Timorese elite to do their bidding and was very much in contrast to the harsh treatment meted out to ordinary people.

The privileged treatment of the young children of senior Fretilin fighters who were left undisturbed while they lived at the convent in Venilale has already been noted. Another example of privileged treatment was that of Maria do Céu Lopes Federer whose home is on Atauro Island, which the military used as a prison for the relatives of guerrilla fighters. Céu was one of the first East Timorese students to receive a scholarship to study in Indonesia. She returned home to care for her dying father in the early 1980s, just as the prisoners began arriving on the island. Céu, a French and Portuguese speaker, became a translator for the ICRC's emergency relief program, but military officials in Dili decided that they did not want her there. Rather than threaten her directly, they tried to entice her to leave. Major Ganap, the intelligence chief, and Colonel Paul Kalangi, the regional administrative secretary (*sekwilda*), flew with her to Atauro and tried to lure her back to Jakarta. The director of Bank Rakyat in Dili offered her a good position away from the island and the director of the regional state logistics agency, Bulog, offered a scholarship to wherever she wanted to go, on condition she did not defect, in an attempt to cut her contact with the prisoners on Atauro.<sup>47</sup>

Other East Timorese who were perhaps more vulnerable to manipulation were bribed by these same military officers, including Prabowo, to intimidate and blackmail others. One such East Timorese was Hercules Rozario Marcal, the adopted son of Major General Zacky Anwar Makarim, a Special Forces intelligence officer who oversaw the organisation of pro-integration militias in East Timor in 1999. His parents were killed during bombing attacks in Ainaro in 1978 and Hercules, about 12 years old at the time, lost an arm and eye. Makarim recruited him as his TBO and later took him back to Jakarta to live with him. Up to ten other East Timorese

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47 Céu spoke French as well as Portuguese because her father had been exiled to Portuguese Timor from the Portuguese colony of São Tomé and Príncipe off the francophone west coast of Africa (Late Night Live 2007).

youths lived at Makarim's house, gardening, cleaning and doing guard duty, but they were not sent to school.<sup>48</sup> For many years Hercules was a well-known gang leader in Jakarta. Working with other East Timorese youths in his gang, he ran profitable extortion rackets at the Tanah Abang market in Jakarta and intimidated pro-independence East Timorese with financial and political support from Makarim and Prabowo (CAVR 2006: 7.8.4.2 No. 380; Bexley 2009; *MateBEAN* 1997; 1998a and b). Another East Timorese who was supported by Prabowo to conduct similar action against other East Timorese was Octavio Soares who played a prominent role in transferring children to Java following the referendum, which is described in Chapter 5.

The young, dependent children whom soldiers took to Indonesia were often destitute, but soldiers gave little thought to the impact that transfer would have on their emotional and psychological development and the trauma that they and their families would suffer as a consequence. Life in her adoptive home in Jakarta was not easy for Biliki who has suffered all her life from feelings of anger and frustration as a result of her forced removal. Biliki still wonders why a soldier who had forcibly removed a child from her family could fail to understand her reaction. Leonia also struggles with her feelings of loss and the need to know about her family who were never able to search for her after she had been lured away from East Timor. In 1977, an Indonesian military policeman forced Amelia Seguia from Ermera to hand over her eight-month-old daughter, Veronica. The ICRC tried to trace Veronica without success, and Amelia, now in her 60s, is still emotionally disturbed as a result of the abduction.<sup>49</sup> The most tragic example of the impact of trauma suffered by children removed from East Timor is that of the TBO, Alfredo Alves (Reinado), who was killed in an apparent assassination attempt on President Jose Ramos Horta on 11 February 2008. The sensitive, brave 12-year-old TBO of Sergeant T had wept as he was forcibly removed from East Timor in 1978 because he feared he would never see his mother again. He made an amazing escape from Sulawesi in 1986 and nearly ten years later he navigated a tiny boatload of 17 East Timorese political refugees in a daring trip to Australia on 30 May 1995, the only successful refugee boat trip from East Timor. Alfredo cannot have been unaffected by the experience of forced removal and abuse in his adoptive home and, tragically, he repeated the violence perpetrated against him (Niner 2008).

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48 Abel dos Santos (interview, Dili, 7 March 2004).

49 Manuel Martinz (from Poilala) and Alexander dos Santos and Rojina de Arauja, (interviews, Ermera, 10 September 2003).

While many soldiers treated their adopted East Timorese children well and the children concerned are grateful for the education they received and their acceptance in their adoptive homes, the children grew up with many questions about their identity. Biliki was tormented all her life about the family from whom she was so cruelly torn in 1979. Many East Timorese children were too young when they were taken away to remember the details about their families. Despite this, many still returned to East Timor to search for their families. They would often ask for help from Catholic priests, village leaders and non-government organisations – anyone who might have information about families whose children had been taken away.<sup>50</sup> The number of parents who contacted Leonia wondering if she might be their missing daughter is an indication of the scale of removals.

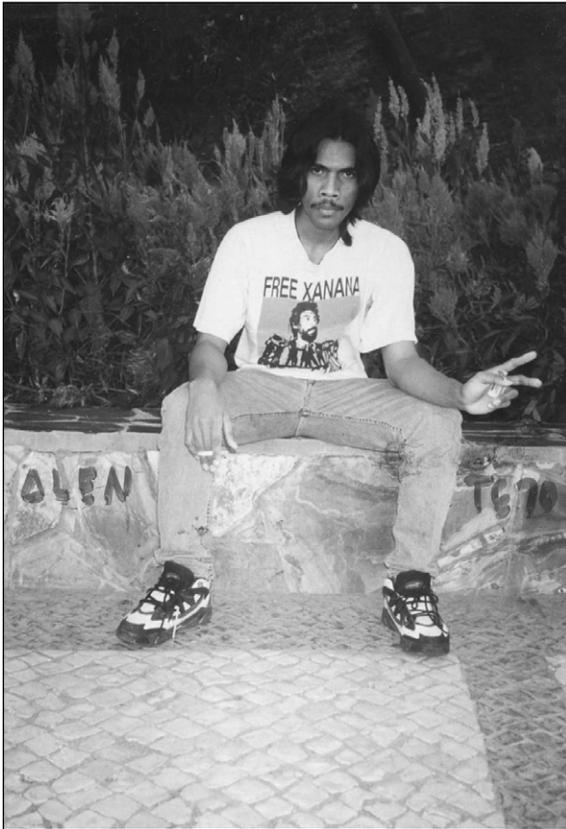
The ability of East Timorese families to trace their children was limited. Lieutenant Colonel S, the adoptive father of Benvindo Aze Descart, did have some contact with Benvindo's mother, Olinda Morais, at her request. Olinda was captured in 1990, after 14 years with the guerrilla fighters. The new district commander helped her to contact S who invited her to ring and visit her son in Bali, but it was not possible for her to travel and she could not speak Indonesian. S sent her a photo of Benvindo in 1991, which was taken to her by a soldier. According to one report (*Paz é Possível em Timor-Leste*, 1991), the soldier informed her that her son was well but warned her that she should not continue to try to contact him. Olinda sought help from the ICRC to trace Benvindo, but the Indonesian military would not co-operate with the request. Benvindo's parents received no further news of him until they were reunited in September 2003 and Benvindo was not told about them until then.

Given travel limitations and communication difficulties, it was only marginally easier to trace children who had been taken by civilians. In 1992 Egidio dos Santos Gandara was studying in Dili and a friend in Jakarta helped him obtain the address of EBD, the public servant who had taken his niece and nephew from Los Palos. After an exchange of letters, Egidio went to Jakarta in 1994 and brought Sonia and Tommy home to East Timor. They found it difficult to live in Los Palos in the tense years of the mid-1990s, especially with one uncle still fighting with Falintil and another having to report every day to the district military command. The latter was questioned for three hours daily over a period of two months, mostly in

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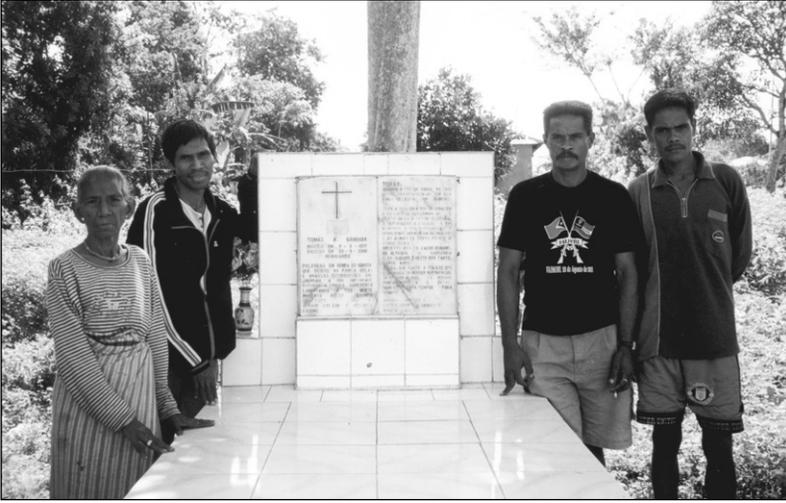
50 I heard this from many priests throughout East Timor, including Father Santana R Pereira (interview, Dare, 18 September 2003).

relation to the return of the children. The terror instilled in his family and the whole population shocked Tommy. Sonia returned a few years later to Indonesia where she is married and lives with her family. Tommy left East Timor and later Indonesia, after seeking asylum in the Dutch Embassy in Jakarta in 1995. He went to study in Portugal. While there he contracted an illness, returning to East Timor a few days before his death in 2001. He is buried in Los Palos.



**Tommy Gandara, Alentjo, Portugal, 7 September 1996**

© Dino Gandara



**Tommy Gandara's grave**

The grandmother and uncles of Tommy Gandara at his grave in Bauro village, Lospalos, 2004. Egidio dos Santos Gandara is on the left.

© Helene van Klinken



**Sonia Gandara and her son in Jakarta, 2010**

© Helene van Klinken

Soldiers raised their adoptive children as Indonesians, obliterating as much as possible the East Timorese identity of the children. They raised the children in their own religion and usually gave them new names. They did not tell their adoptive children that they were East Timorese, if they could hide it from them. Even the small amount of information soldiers had about them was usually kept from them, and children were taught the New Order version of the situation in East Timor. Rauf and Ismail, the two youths rescued by an Indonesian Red Cross doctor, do not know of any records kept of their villages of origin in East Timor. They were wounded during Indonesian attacks on their villages, although they were told that Fretilin had bombed their homes. Leonia was also accepted by her soldier father as long as she did not begin to explore her East Timorese identity.

Nicolau Ramadan had a tragic experience of rejection. He was accepted in his adoptive home, but then rejected by his father after East Timor voted against integration in the 1999 referendum. In 1981, when Nicolau was about three years old, an Indonesian army captain found him and took him to Java. Unlike Leonia, he was later told that he was East Timorese and that his family came from the Venilale area. Several years after Nicolau's adoption, the soldier had a natural child, but Nicolau continued to be treated no differently from the soldier's own child. Everything changed after Indonesia lost the referendum in 1999 when Nicolau's father, a senior officer by this time, cut all contact with him. He would not accept Nicolau's phone calls and stopped paying for his education, forcing Nicolau to drop out of university. Nicolau was not a radical student, being, in fact, a member of the pro-Indonesian and pro-integration Yogyakarta student forum.

Nicolau's relationship with his adoptive soldier father and its breakdown demonstrate poignantly the political and ideological motivations of soldiers who raised East Timorese children. His story highlights that these relationships reflected the broader relationship of the military with East Timor and the East Timorese. The military was confident that its generous development program, along with its tight control on the territory, would ensure that the East Timorese accepted integration. With the rejection of integration by the East Timorese, Nicolau's Indonesian officer father withdrew his affection and longstanding generous acceptance of his adopted son. He transferred his disappointment at the loss of East Timor to this innocent young man, in a way that mirrors the military's vengeful destruction of the considerable fruits of Indonesian development in East Timor.

## Conclusion

The relationship that developed between Indonesians and East Timorese was often deeply troubled and the transfer of children out of the territory by soldiers provides us with an informative prism to help us understand its complexity. The soldiers who took approximately 2,000 children away from the territory did so with intentions that were simultaneously noble and disturbing. They considered that the only hope for East Timor was the development offered by Indonesia. Many East Timorese wanted this development, particularly education for their children. They were, however, confronted by military abuse on a horrendous scale, although the Indonesian military denied its central role in the war that led to suffering and oppression, and meant that many parents could not provide for their children, many of whom were separated from their parents and abandoned.

Most of the instances of children being taken by soldiers for adoption occurred in the years of greatest military activity; many children were indeed rescued by soldiers from certain death. The camps where the population was held after surrender were places of hunger, suffering and death and it was from these camps that soldiers took separated children to care for them and educate them in Indonesia; but they also forced many parents to hand over their children. Most East Timorese parents were powerless to prevent soldiers removing their children, just as there was no recourse to justice for any abuse perpetrated by the military. Soldiers lied about agreements and failed to keep promises they made to the East Timorese, such as those they made to parents about returning their children on completion of their education. The Indonesian military's arrogant attitude to those it deemed inferior widened the gap between the East Timorese and the Indonesians rather than fostering the trust and co-operation that was essential to achieving any prospect of integration.

## Petrus Kanisius's story<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the attacks by the Indonesians in Maubessi, I ran to hide in the forest with my brothers and sisters. My parents had died a few years previously. My older brother and sister cared for me and my two younger siblings. In January 1977, the group of people we were hiding with were captured and the soldiers sent us to Aileu. In Aileu I returned to school where I was in the fourth class. Not long afterwards, soldiers from the Aileu district military post (Kodim) asked the people to register children under ten years of age who had no parents. The soldiers said they wanted to select some children without parents to send them to school. At that time I was ten. My seven-year-old cousin and I were chosen from among the Maubessi people living in the concentration camp in Aileu; two other children who came from Aileu were also selected.

In April 1977, a military vehicle took the four of us to Dili in the middle of the night. No East Timorese came with us, only Indonesian soldiers. My older sister and brother and everyone else were frightened when they took us away. At that time people thought that anyone taken away by soldiers like that would be thrown into the sea. I was also afraid because I couldn't speak much Indonesian and had not been to Dili before. They took us to the Seroja institution in Dili and I started going to school again. Two weeks later my brother came to Dili to look for me, to make sure I was still alive.

Soldiers were very involved with the Seroja institution at that time. There was a five storey building used as the army headquarters near Seroja. Every Friday and Sunday, soldiers visited and taught us to sing national songs and about integration. We didn't feel threatened, but the discipline was very strict, semi-militaristic. We all had to follow the strict routine with no exception made for the younger children.

Towards the end of August we were told that the following week we would be sent to Java to go to school. The staff began organising the things we would need for the trip, but they did not contact our families to tell them

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1 Interviews, Dili, 2003–2004.

we were leaving. There were exactly 20 of us. We came from all over East Timor. Some like me had no parents, but we still had family members who cared about us. Some parents were still in the forest and there was still no information about them. Some children became separated from their parents when they were running from attacks and had surrendered or were captured with other people. Sometimes if the soldiers found a child and they knew nothing about them they gave them their own name. One child in our group was like that. I was one of the oldest in the group and in the highest class at school.

On 1 September 1977 we left for Jakarta on a military aircraft. Lieutenant Colonel Mulyadi from Sulawesi and the governor of East Timor, Arnaldo dos Reis Araujo, accompanied us. A special bus from the President's palace met us at the airport and we had a military escort to the Franciscan Vincentius institution where we stayed for several days. We were given yellow uniforms and we had to wear them wherever we went. There was a special program arranged for us. Soldiers took us to visit the sights of Jakarta, including Taman Mini (Indonesia in Miniature).

On 3 September 1977 we were taken to meet President Suharto and his wife at the presidential palace. There was a special program organised for us and nice food. I still remember things that the President said: 'You children from East Timor are children of the state and according to the constitution the state is responsible for you. You can choose where you want to live and the government will pay for your education till you graduate, for as long as you want to study. We'll pay for your food, clothes and all your education, even till you finish university if you do well enough to study there'. He promised us Rp150 per day. The newspapers called us 'The President's children'.

We had been taught a children's song so they asked us to stand on the podium and sing, 'Di sini senang, di sana senang, di mana-mana hati kita senang (We're happy here, we're happy there, everywhere we're happy)'. I knew a little bit of Indonesian and the President asked me if I was happy in Jakarta. I answered yes. Then he asked us if we wanted to live in Jakarta or Central Java. I thought we would be living at Vincentius in Jakarta and that Jakarta and Central Java were the same place. He laughed when I answered Central Java; then he called the Secretary of State, Soedharmono, and asked him if he knew a place where we could stay in Central Java. It must

have all been arranged because he said he knew about St Thomas run by Catholic sisters in Ungaran. They talked a bit more and I was told to go back to my seat. Then there were some more speeches. Lots of media were there taking pictures, also television. There was an official ceremony where the governor of East Timor formally handed us over to the governor of Central Java, Supardjo Rustam, both of whom were there.

On the way home from the palace in the bus we were given gifts, a schoolbag, shoes and clothes. They all had our names on them and the sizes seemed to be right. Soldiers and military police travelled with us. I don't know why we always had military escorts; we were only children. Maybe it was because there were some officials with us. We got back to Vincentius institution and that same evening we took the night train to Semarang.

We arrived very early in the morning and were taken to the Gatot Subroto army barracks in Semarang. At about 7 am we set off for Ungaran, 20 kilometres to the south. The entrance hall of St Thomas was decorated with flowers and a special carpet was laid out. The governor of East Timor and the governor of Central Java were there again, as well as the minister for social welfare and other government officials. This time the ceremony was to hand us over to the sisters at the institution, Sister Petrona, the head of the Santa Maria Foundation which ran St Thomas Asrama, and Sister Madelina, the leader of the ADSK [Abdi Dalem Sang Kristus] congregation.

At the beginning things went well but then problems began to arise. We started to show that we were East Timorese. We were not obedient like the Javanese students living there: we were naughty, really naughty, and the sisters were annoyed with us. It turned out the sisters did not have enough money to cover our expenses. According to the sisters, the amount received from the government was Rp13,000 per month, which was not enough to cover food and drink, let alone clothes, soap, books, school fees and other expenses. Not all the students living there came from poor families. In 1980, some of the students paid between Rp70,000 to Rp100,000 – at least five times more than the amount that the sisters received from the government for us. Some families wanted their children to be educated by the nuns, and the nuns used their money to help to pay the costs of children from poor families. The sisters told us that we had to behave ourselves. They were afraid our behaviour would drive away their paying students. I felt betrayed. I thought that everything was going to be

paid by the government; that is what the President promised us. Maybe St Thomas didn't receive the money, I don't know.

In 1983, just as we were becoming young adults, we were moved out of the main asrama into a building on a small hill a little distance away. It was especially built by the government for us. There was a ceremony when the district head (bupati) handed it over to St Thomas. We lived there with the children who had the same status as us, orphans and illegitimate children. We could no longer eat and mix with the paying students. The sisters who cared for us told us that we had to learn to be independent. I wasn't sure what that meant but I soon learnt. We were divided into groups and in the mornings before and after school we had to work; we had to tend the gardens planting sweet potatoes and looking after the fruit trees. Before school we drank tea and ate some snacks that we had collected, like sweet potato or cassava. After school we had to work again, and we only got our main meal brought to us at four o'clock in the afternoon. But there was often not enough food, and we always felt hungry. If we asked for food they said we were greedy.

One day after school we were working in the garden and feeling very tired and thirsty, so we climbed a coconut tree and ate some of the fruit. When the sister brought us food on her Vespa motorbike at 4 pm, somehow her instinct told her that we had taken fruit from the trees. She went over to the creek where we had thrown the husks. She was angry with us and asked us one by one who was responsible. As the oldest I said I told them to do it. My punishment was to kneel under the tree for one hour and the others had to wait to eat. When the sister returned she saw that I had dirty legs from kneeling, so we were allowed eat. Actually, the young assistant who was left in charge to watch me told me to make my legs dirty to help convince the sister.

Not long after this, a reporter from *Suara Merdeka*, the Central Java newspaper, came to interview the sister. Maybe the sister was trying to give attention to our situation, because the article mentioned that the government was responsible for us. The news article also said that the East Timorese students living there ate plants and roots – food for animals that Javanese never eat. When we saw the article we were really mad with the sister for saying that we ate animal food, and also with the reporter for writing it like that. Some of the others wanted to burn the Vespa and even

the asrama. We refused to go to school for one week. Another sister tried to organise a meeting between us, the sister and the journalist, to clarify the misunderstanding, but when nothing happened after one week we went to find the journalist. We were going to kill him, but he wasn't home; we also found out that the journalist whose house we had gone to worked for *Kompas* not *Suara Merdeka*. When this *Kompas* journalist heard about our visit to his home he came to St Thomas to interview us, but we refused to talk to him.

Five students could stand it no longer and ran away. They got on a bus but had no idea what their plan was, and they didn't have any money. When asked by the conductor they said, 'We're the President's children', expecting to not pay. Because of the recent publicity in the press many people had heard about the 'President's children'. The sisters had contacted the police and the bus staff had been told to look out for them, so they didn't get very far. However one of the five, Henrique Araujo from Same, disappeared. I was upset about Henrique but there was no effort to find him. Without telling the sisters, together with a few others I went to the Department of Social Welfare and complained. The staff just replied, 'Let them get lost. Die. Don't bother looking for him'. We wrote protest letters to the parliament (DPR), also the upper house (MPR) and the President, but nothing ever happened, and I have never heard about Henrique since then. They just didn't care. I felt that our lives had no value in their eyes. We were worth no more than animals. We suffered in East Timor, then we were sent to St Thomas where we also suffered, and to this was added even a greater suffering, the loss of one of our friends.

This made us think about our situation. We now understood that no-one would look out for us and we agreed together that we had better do what they asked – work and study hard and not make demands, otherwise we might suffer a similar fate to Henrique. Several older East Timorese university students studying in Yogyakarta came to visit and talk to us, Dominggus Maya and Armindo Maya. That helped and the situation became a bit better. At least when we got home from school we were allowed to eat before going to the gardens. The sisters also decided that our group would split up, some going to Yogyakarta, some to Surabaya and Jakarta. I stayed in St Thomas. Everyone worked hard but the sisters still did not acknowledge that East Timorese students were also clever.

We didn't have any further contact with the government though lots of people, including rich people and even film stars, came and asked if they could adopt us. But the sisters told these people that if they wanted to help they should make a donation to St Thomas.

In 1978, Agostinho, one of our group, died in Ungaran. He came from Aileu. A letter was sent to the sub-district head in Aileu to inform the family of his death. Everyone there thought it was me who had died and my family began preparing the ceremony to call the spirit of the dead. I had also at that time sent a letter and it arrived just as they were starting to make the preparations. That was the first time my family knew that I was in Java. My older brother was not able to visit Dili to check on me after that first trip he made in April 1977 as he was forced to join the civil guard (*hansip*). That's why my family didn't know. But after that I didn't write. I just wanted to concentrate on my studies. Writing would just disturb my concentration in Java and my family in East Timor.

The government organised for us to make a return visit to East Timor for Christmas and New Year 1985–1986. We only got the news at the last minute that we would be going home for two weeks. One of the sisters from St Thomas accompanied us and in Dili we lived at the Seroja institution. I was surprised that people knew about our visit. There were announcements over the radio about the visit of 20 orphans who had been studying in Java. Not all the children were allowed to go to their homes though, especially to distant places like Same and Suai, because it was very tense. Only those who lived nearby could make a trip out of Dili. Aileu is close so I could travel home. I saw myself how tense it was, with soldiers everywhere, inspecting travel letters. When we were stopped at military posts, they already knew about us and had a list of our names; it was all well organised. There was no trouble for our vehicle to pass through each checkpoint. Four of us went to Aileu. I invited some friends who couldn't go home to their own district to come with us. We went there on 28 December and were told we could stay for one week. But after only four days a letter came through the district military post that we had to go straight back to Dili because we had to leave for Java on 4 January 1986. So our short two-week visit was reduced to just over one week.

About my name, Petrus Kanisius Antonio Algeria: when I left East Timor my name was Algeria. When I arrived at St Thomas the name Antonio was added to Algeria, but I don't know where that came from. In East Timor I was

not a Catholic, I didn't know anything about religion. In Ungaran in 1978 I was baptised and given the name Petrus Kanisius. That's why it's not like the Portuguese names East Timorese take when they are baptised. When I came back to East Timor some people suggested I adopt a Portuguese name, but then all my certificates would be invalid and that would be a problem for me.

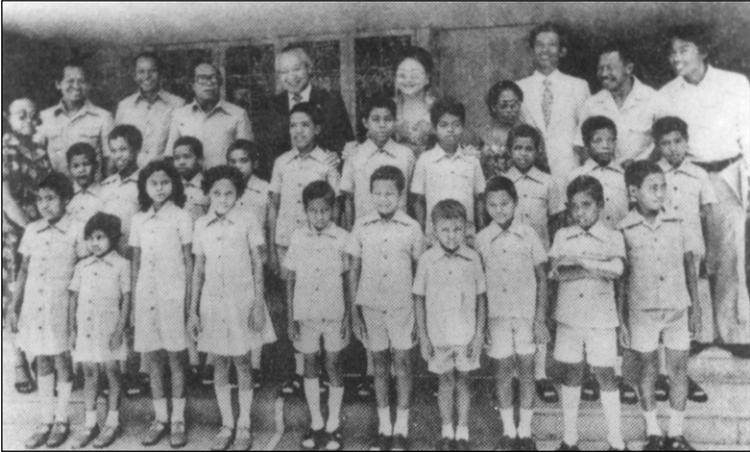
Petrus Kanisius Antonio Algeria spent 17 years studying in Central Java. He graduated from the School of Philosophy at Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta in 1994, after which he returned to East Timor. After 1999 he was appointed principal of the 10 December Junior High School in Comoro, Dili.



**Petrus Kanisius**

Petrus Kanisius listening to testimony at the CAVR public hearing on 'Children and conflict'. Dili, 29–30 March 2004. Listening with him is a former staff member of the Seroja institution, Maria Margarida Babo.

© Helene van Klinken



**The Suhartos with twenty East Timorese children in their yellow costumes**

The children were sent to the St Thomas Asrama in Ungaran, Central Java. Petrus Kanisius is on the far right in the middle row. Henrique Araujo from Same, who disappeared, is standing in front of Ibu Suharto; he is fourth from the right in the middle row.

Source: *Pelita*, 5 September 1977.

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*Chapter 3*

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## **Transfers by institutions linked to the state**

Although life was difficult for East Timorese living in the towns and areas that came under Indonesian military control soon after the invasion in 1975, the military oppression they experienced was not nearly as great as that suffered by the people who fled to the mountains and were later captured and held in concentration camps. The difference in the level of oppression experienced by those who stayed and those who fled was reflected in the incidence of removal of young children by soldiers, which occurred less frequently among East Timorese who lived in the Indonesian controlled centres. Indonesian officials moved quickly to deliver on their promise of development, especially to those people living in areas that had accepted integration by default. Education was high on the development agenda. The educational and other options offered by the Indonesians were generous and welcomed by young East Timorese. Such opportunities had never been available to most of them during the Portuguese administration.

The early implementation of educational programs reflected not only the New Order's hope to win the East Timorese support for integration, but also its need for educated Indonesian-speaking East Timorese – fluent in Indonesian language, accustomed to Indonesian culture, immersed in the state Pancasila ideology and familiar with the Indonesian administrative system – to help its rule in East Timor (CAVR 2006: 4.4: 162–167). In pursuing its goal for education, besides expanding educational facilities within East Timor, government departments and institutions of the New Order also set up programs for children and young people to go to Indonesia to study and work and to participate in informal educational, sporting and cultural activities. Before considering these programs, we will look in more detail at the transfer of a group of young, dependent children referred to in Chapter 1. This transfer was initiated by President Suharto and supported

by state institutions, and it probably influenced other transfers conducted by both individuals and institutions.

## The 'President's children'

### Suharto, orphans and charity foundations

In the late 1970s a charity foundation owned by President Suharto organised for 61 young East Timorese children to be sent to Java to be educated. The children were singled out for special attention by Suharto because they were, or were deemed to be, the children of East Timorese martyrs who fought and died for the right to integrate with Indonesia. The fathers of half the children were Apodeti and UDT leaders who had been killed by Fretilin; some had died after the Fretilin victory over UDT in September 1975 and the others after the invasion, having been imprisoned by Fretilin and accused of colluding with the Indonesians (CAVR 2006: 3.11 Nos. 265–266).<sup>1</sup> To the Indonesians, these martyrs and their children symbolised the New Order assertion that East Timorese wanted integration with Indonesia and were ready to die for it. When Suharto met a delegation of East Timorese to Jakarta requesting integration in early June 1976, he promised the widows of these martyrs that Indonesia would care for and educate their children. Bringing them to Java, the sophisticated heart of Indonesia was a mark of gratitude to these East Timorese supporters of integration.

We can find some explanation as to what lay behind this offer by Suharto by recalling his attitude to child transfers out of West Irian at the time of its formal incorporation into Indonesia in 1969. He was concerned about the backward and primitive Papuans, still living in the 'stone age' (*Antara* 1969a). He believed an Indonesian education was the key to development and his special development project for West Irian included a proposal for 200,000 Papuan children to be adopted by Indonesian families (Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin 1991b: 165; *Antara* 1969c). Relocating children out of the backward territory would make it easier to inculcate the Indonesian-ness – ideology, language, behaviour, the wearing of clothes – considered necessary for development.

At the time there was a lot of confusion about whether Suharto actually meant that the children would be sent to other places in Indonesia; it

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1 Indonesia also produced reports in English (Provisional Government of East Timor 1976; Freitas 1992).

certainly was interpreted in that way by Papuans who were indignant because they felt that the proposal implied that they were backward and their environment inadequate to properly educate their own children (Kroef 1971: 154; Tomaso 1969). Sambery, Mex E Ongge and A Nussy,<sup>2</sup> Papuans with prominent positions in Indonesian-sponsored organisations and probably mouthpieces for pro-Indonesian sentiments, stated that they agreed with the idea of adoption of Papuan children by Indonesians, as long as it was with the agreement of their parents and carried out according to traditional practices (*Warta Berita* 1969). There was even a report in the daily bulletin from the Indonesian Embassy in The Hague that a Dutch couple in Rotterdam, on hearing of the plan, had sent a cable to President Suharto offering to adopt two Papuan girls (*Antara* 1969b). However, New Order officials claimed that Suharto had been misunderstood and a month later the official news agency *Antara* announced that he had meant that Indonesia would provide scholarships for that number of children in an 'adopt a child' scheme (*Antara* 1969a; *Sinar Harapan* 1969). The New Order was not entirely pleased with the negative publicity in relation to Suharto's proposal, and Peter Tomaso, the *Sinar Harapan* journalist who criticised the relocation of large numbers of Papuan children, was arrested and interrogated.

Suharto then launched a humanitarian project for West Irian, which included a focus on education. The children to be helped were the reportedly 200,000 illiterate children in the interior, around Wamena and Enarotoli. The target for the first year was to raise sponsors for 4,500 children, each of whom would receive Rp6,000 per year to cover the cost of education and clothing. On 9 November 1969 Suharto organised a special function in the presidential palace in Bogor to collect contributions for Papuan children from wealthy donors; he and his wife were pictured in the press signing up to sponsor the education in West Irian of ten Papuan children (Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin 1991b: 171–172; *Sinar Harapan* 1969). Throughout the year *Antara* reported contributions from governors, businessmen, wives of officials, even Muslims in Rome (*Antara* 1970d; 1970a; 1970b). By July 1970, 200 children were living in a boarding school in Yapen Waropen and attending school; altogether 2,000 children were receiving sponsorship (*Antara* 1970c).

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2 Sambery was the leader of the Gerakan Merah Putih (Movement of the Red and White – a reference to the Indonesian flag) in West Irian; Ongge and Nussy were leaders of young people and students from West Irian in Jakarta.

Nonetheless, Tomasoa has reliable information that Papuan children were sent to Java at this time. He thought that at least 20 children, aged from six to 12, were taken to Java by Indonesian public servants who adopted them and raised them in their own families. Tomasoa thought that local ministers and priests signed documents giving permission for the children to be adopted. Some of the children became teachers or soldiers, although many worked as servants in the homes of those who took them to Java.

As happened in East Timor, Indonesian soldiers fighting in Papua in late 1961 during the Trikora military campaign against the Dutch also took Papuan children back to Indonesia, although once again there is little information about this. Tomasoa knew one father who travelled to Jakarta many years after his son had been taken for adoption in 1964, and succeeded in tracing him through the Department of Foreign Affairs. The father was a Christian, but his son had been given a new name and raised a Muslim. Another case is that of Agus Soehardjo, who was born in Sentani in 1953 and adopted by an Indonesian soldier, Marsekal Soehardjo, during his term of duty there. Agus came to the attention of Papuans in 1993 when reports of the crash of the plane that he was piloting appeared in the national press. Agus's family name was Eluay, but he had been given a Javanese name and almost certainly a fictitious birth date of 17 August, the date on which Indonesia declared its independence from the Dutch in 1945, and the date, Indonesian nationalists argued, that Dutch New Guinea also became independent as part of the Republic of Indonesia (*Kompas* 1993; *Suara Pembaruan* 1993).<sup>3</sup>

Just as he had hoped to do for the Papuan children, Suharto wanted to help advance and assimilate the East Timorese into Indonesian society by educating children in Indonesia. However, in his offer to young East Timorese orphans he was cautious; instead of making the suggestion himself an East Timorese was organised to request his help, as all the media reports at the time especially noted. In early June 1976, military personnel organised a delegation of 50 members of the Provisional Government in East Timor (PGET) to travel to Jakarta to petition Suharto officially for East Timor to be integrated with Indonesia; almost certainly they also suggested to one of the delegates, Maria Osario, the widow of the former general secretary of Apodeti, Jose Osario Soares, to ask Suharto for help for the children of integration supporters made fatherless in the fighting (*Kompas* 1976a).

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3 I am grateful to Rev Dr Karel Phil Erari for drawing this to my attention.

The President was involved in initiating and funding the transfer of these children to Indonesia through his personal charity, the Dharmais Foundation. In 1962 Suharto, then Major General and commander of the Trikora campaign in Dutch New Guinea, had established the Trikora Orphan Foundation to care for the veterans of Trikora and their orphaned children (Elson 2001: 87). Later he would set up other foundations that provided for the care and education of orphans and indigent children. On 8 August 1975 he established Dharmais Foundation, which would provide for the victims of the East Timor integration campaign (Elson 2001: 211). The foundation acquired a large tract of valuable land in Bekasi, East Jakarta, where it built the Seroja housing complex for wounded veterans and widows of the Seroja campaign in East Timor. The complex included a childcare institution called *Panti Asuhan Seroja*, opened on 1 November 1978, which cared for the children of Indonesian soldiers killed and wounded in East Timor. In April 1976, the military authorities in East Timor established a childcare institution in Dili with the same name to care for the children of East Timorese killed and wounded fighting against Fretilin and for integration. It was also funded and supported by Suharto's Dharmais Foundation and Suharto maintained an interest in the Dili institution, visiting it in August 1978 on his very short trip to East Timor.

It is helpful at this point to clarify briefly the terms 'orphan' and 'orphanage' as they are understood and used in Indonesian. Children who have lost one parent are referred to as *anak yatim* in Indonesian and, if they have lost both parents, *anak yatim piatu*. *Anak* means 'child,' and the adjectives *yatim* and *yatim piatu* are added to indicate whether one or both parents are dead, although the terms are not always applied strictly.<sup>4</sup> These terms are usually translated in English as 'orphan'. Institutions caring for the children of the poor and for abandoned children are called *panti asuhan*. The full designation of the name usually includes *anak yatim piatu*, thus, *panti asuhan anak yatim piatu*. This is correctly translated in English as 'orphanage'. However, I have chosen to refer to these *panti asuhan* as 'childcare institutions' and not as 'orphanages', as many of the children living in these institutions are not orphans. They are there because their families are poor; the institutions pay the children's school fees and provide for their care, while families contribute according to their capacity to do so.

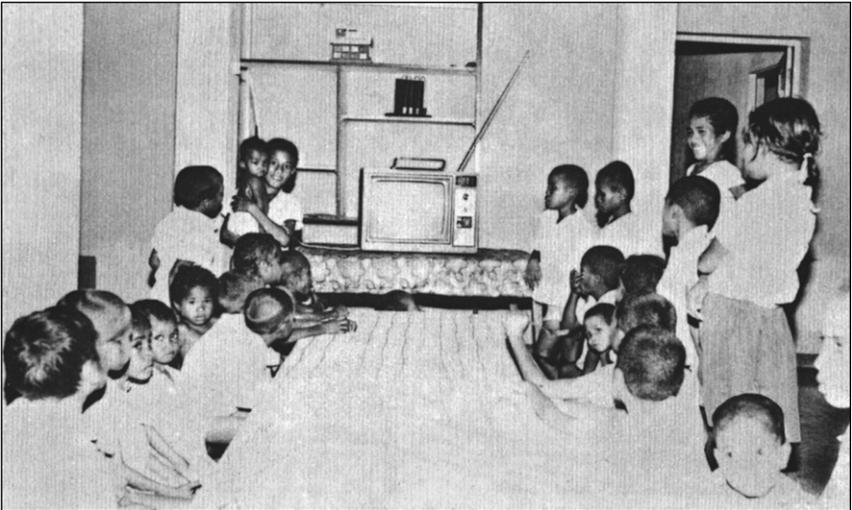
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4 In Tetun children who have lost one or both parents are referred to by the same term *oan kiak*; – *oan* means 'child' and *kiak* means 'poor'.



**The President and his wife meet young children from Seroja institution, Dili, August 1978**

Source: 'President Suharto visits East Timor'. Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, September 1978: 12.



**Children at the Seroja institution in Dili watching television, August 1978**

Source: 'President Suharto visits East Timor'. Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, September 1978: 19.

In Dili, the Seroja childcare institution (Panti Asuhan Seroja) was housed in a Portuguese-era building in the suburb of Barrio Formosa. The building had a brief, earlier history as an orphanage during the few months that Fretilin controlled East Timor from September 1975 to the Indonesian invasion in December; it was referred to simply by the Portuguese word for orphanage, *orfanato*.<sup>5</sup> Some of the children living at the *orfanato* in late 1975 were members of the Conceição family, the traditional rulers of Tibar, just west of Dili. Between 28 August and mid-September 1975, 30 adult members of the extended Conceição family, all UDT supporters, were killed by Fretilin during the conflict between these political parties. Those killed had lived in Turliu village and had decided to stay behind when other family members fled across the Indonesian border to Atambua in West Timor. Eighteen children were spared. Five of these children were taken in by families in the region, but the remaining 13 orphans were taken to the *orfanato* by Fretilin. When Indonesia attacked on 7 December 1975, all the children from the *orfanato* fled with their carers to the district hospital in the foothills south of Dili. Several weeks later the Indonesian military, who had by this stage identified them as victims of Fretilin, brought them back to the *orfanato*. An uncle of the children, Abilio da Conceição, who returned to Dili from Atambua in January 1976, found his 13 nieces and nephews living there. When Seroja institution was officially opened on 1 April 1976, the 13 Conceição children were living there with 13 other children,<sup>6</sup> some of whom may have been hospitalised at the time of the invasion and had become separated from their families, as in the case of six-year-old Nazario from Quelicai, Baucau. The bishop suggested to Nazario that he should live in the *orfanato* because he could not travel home to Quelicai.<sup>7</sup>

The Indonesian military was responsible for the operation of Seroja institution until it was taken over by the Department of Social Welfare in 1978, although it remained a symbol of integration. The staff of the *orfanato*

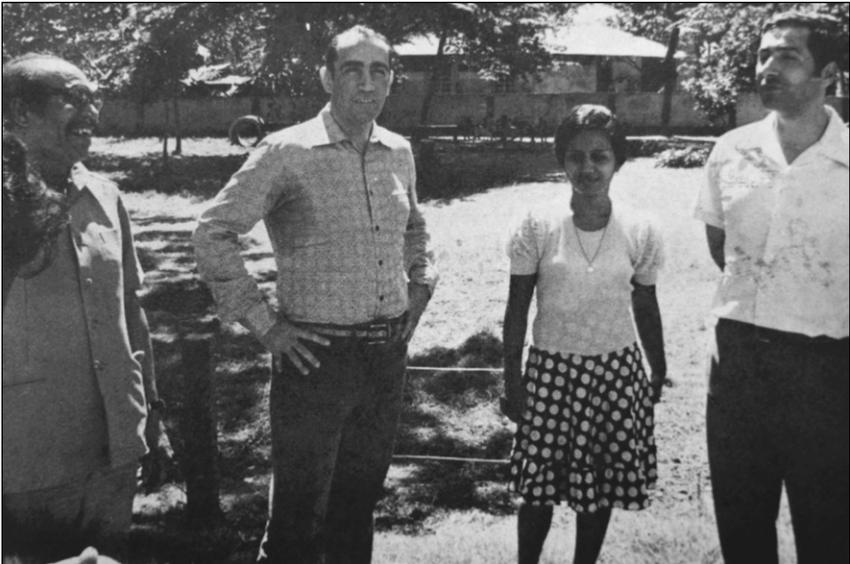
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5 It was built in 1966 and used by the Portuguese as the Red Cross headquarters. Towards the end of Portuguese colonial rule, the building was used as a fee-supported day-care centre for young children of public servants.

6 This was the number of children listed in the Seroja records (Guilherme dos Reis Fernandes, Statement at the Public Hearing, 'Children and conflict', Dili, 29–30 March 2004). Abilio da Conceição began working for the Indonesian Red Cross and remembers delivering supplies of food each month for 35 children at the institution, the number of children as given by the Indonesian military.

7 He was not able to travel home to Quelicai until 1988 when he learnt that his mother had died in the concentration camp in 1982. Soon after his visit his father died (interview, Dili, 10 May 2004).

who had been employed by Fretilin were not reemployed by the military. Instead, soldiers asked several Apodeti and UDT widows, specifically those whose husbands were among the party leaders killed by Fretilin soon after the invasion, to work there.<sup>8</sup> The institution, bearing the name of the integration campaign, with at least half its first occupants the orphaned Conceição children whose parents were killed by Fretilin and with a staff of women widowed by Fretilin, was for the military a powerful symbol of its version of the integration struggle. In June 1976, soldiers took the Portuguese General Morais da Silva, in Dili to negotiate the release of 23 Portuguese prisoners, to this symbolic institution as part of their effort to convince him that Portugal should support integration. At Seroja Morais met the widows and the orphans – all of whom were dressed in new uniforms – and was photographed in front of the institution with its freshly-painted signboard bearing in bold letters the name of the integration campaign, ‘Seroja’ (Soekanto 1976: 570).



### **Morais da Silva**

The Portuguese General Morais da Silva visiting Seroja institution in June 1976. The governor of East Timor is on the left.

Source: Soekanto 1976, *Integrasi: Kebulatan tekad rakyat Timor Timur*, Yayasan Parikesit, Jakarta: 570.

8 Former staff members of Seroja institution (interviews, Dili, April 2004).



### **Children at Seroja**

Children at the Seroja childcare institution on the occasion of the Portuguese General Morais da Silva's visit in June 1976.

Source: Soekanto 1976, *Integrasi: Kebulatan tekad rakyat Timor Timur*, Yayasan Parikesit, Jakarta: 570.

The intention was no doubt to highlight for the Portuguese general the sacrificial struggle of the East Timorese to integrate with Indonesia. At the secret negotiations with Major General Benny Murdani and Harry Tjan Silalahi of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Morais was perhaps persuaded by Indonesian propaganda that the majority of the population wanted integration. In exchange for the release of the Portuguese prisoners, he offered the possibility of Portuguese recognition of Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor, although he was over-ruled by politicians on his return to Portugal.

### **'Orphans' and receiving institutions**

The Dharmais Foundation chose three institutions in Java to receive the children from East Timor (see Appendix I); one was government run, another was a Catholic institution and the third was a private institution with international connections. Before sending the children to Java they were gathered together in the Seroja institution in Dili. All the Indonesian institutions had links with the New Order regime and support from the highest echelons of the military. Brigadier General Dading Kalbuadi, the military commander in East Timor, organised the departure of five

children, the first group of children sent to Indonesia, and on 27 October 1976 personally handed them over to the Panti Penyantunan Anak Taruna Negara (PPATN) institution run by the Social Welfare Department in Cimahi, Bandung, West Java (Soejitno Hardjosoediro 1977).

On 4 September 1977, the 20 children who had been taken to meet Suharto the previous day arrived at St Thomas Asrama, in Central Java.<sup>9</sup> The institution is run by an indigenous Javanese Catholic order of nuns and does not have the international links or sources of funding commonly enjoyed by Catholic institutions in Indonesia.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the order accepted these children in the hope of building up its institutional facilities, especially with the promises made to the children by Dharmais Foundation. Whether or not the institution had such materialistic motives, it co-operated with the New Order by helping to educate East Timorese in Indonesia. Contact may have been made with the institution through one of the nuns whose brother, Soewardjio, was a senior employee, later head until 1999, of the Department of Education and Culture in Dili. It is also possible that the military learnt about the institution through Father Alex Dirdjasusanto, a Jesuit priest who travelled and worked in East Timor in 1978 with military permission and support. When he returned to Java Father Alex brought five East Timorese children with him; he sent the four younger children to the St Thomas institution, which is close to where he lived.<sup>11</sup>

The Catholic Church had no official policy of educating young East Timorese children in Indonesia, as it had its own extensive network of schools in East Timor. Nevertheless, several Catholic institutions, besides St Thomas, took young children into their care. The Franciscan-run Vincentius institution in Jakarta was particularly active in doing so. Some of the 61 children sent to Indonesia by Dharmais were accommodated at this institution on their arrival in Jakarta, before continuing to their destinations (*Kompas* 1977).<sup>12</sup> Later, many other East Timorese children came to study there.<sup>13</sup> In the late 1970s

9 RF Soedardi, Dharmais Foundation administrator, in a letter to St Thomas, 4 September 1977 (archives of St Thomas).

10 The order is Abdi Dalem Sang Kristus (ADSK), Servants of Christ, with about 17 branches throughout Indonesia.

11 Alex Dirdjasusanto SJ (telephone conversation, 12 May 2003) and Sr Angelina, staff member at St Thomas (conversation, Ungaran, 2002); the fifth child, Armindo Maya, was older and was sent to study in Yogyakarta. He became the first Minister for Education in independent East Timor.

12 Also, former East Timorese Kinderdorf staff (interview, Dili, 14 August 2003).

13 Damaria Pakpahan, conversation, Yogyakarta, May 2003.

Indonesian nuns from the Carolus Borromeus order took the young children from several influential Apodeti families, whose fathers had been killed by Fretilin, to its institutions in Yogyakarta. The nuns sought to help these families who suffered for supporting integration with Indonesia.<sup>14</sup> Children were also sent to the institution run by nuns associated with the Santa Markus Church in Cililitan, East Jakarta.<sup>15</sup> The care offered by the Indonesian Catholic Church in its institutions in Indonesian is an indication of its support for the integration of East Timor, which will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

The third institution to receive East Timorese children was SOS-Kinderdorf. Agus Prawoto obtained permission to establish Kinderdorf and to locate it in Bandung through his brother-in-law, General AY Witono, military commander of West Java in the 1970s (SOS-Kinderdorf International).<sup>16</sup> This family connection gave Kinderdorf access to President Suharto and his wife, Ibu Tien Suharto, who had been involved since the 1950s in fundraising activities and establishing charitable foundations with a special interest in education (Elson 2001: 193–194; Gafur 1992: 386–387, 439–440, 487; 1997: 179, 183–189). She was patron of many childcare institutions, including SOS-Kinderdorf, and believed that Kinderdorf's 'group home' model of care should be implemented in state institutions.<sup>17</sup> When Kinderdorf was officially opened on 23 August 1976, the Suhartos attended the ceremony together with six government ministers, who were in Bandung for the opening of a new aircraft factory (*Kompas* 1976c).

The New Order co-opted Kinderdorf's excellent facilities, in which – the physical environment was far superior to the homes of the average Indonesian – to reward the children of Apodeti members killed by Fretilin. Shortly after the official opening of Kinderdorf, the governor of East Timor visited to ask Kinderdorf to accept East Timorese children. Initially the institution could receive only six children, who arrived on 30 December 1976. It constructed two new group homes for the 20 children of Apodeti families, who arrived in 1977. Kinderdorf requested the governor to send East Timorese carers for the children and he sent two women, widows of Apodeti leaders, who

14 James J Spillane SJ (interview, Yogyakarta, 2003); Father Joachim Sarmiento (interview, Dili, 4 May 2004) and nuns from the Carolus Borromeus order in East Timor (interview, Dili, 4 May 2004); the children lived in the Santa Maria Catholic institutions in Ganjuran and Boro, Yogyakarta.

15 Alex Dirdjasusanto SJ (telephone conversation, 12 May 2003)

16 This information is no longer recorded on the SOS-Kinderdorf International website, but was included there as recently as 2007.

17 The Kinderdorf village model of care was developed in Europe after World War II to care for large numbers of traumatised orphans (Stargardt 2006: 381–383).

accompanied their children and acted as carers, one in each of the two new group homes built for the East Timorese children.

This group of 20 children did not meet Kinderdorf's acceptance criteria, namely that the children it received were orphans and had no-one to care for them. An education at Kinderdorf was a reward that Suharto organised for these children of high-profile martyrs killed by Fretilin. All of the East Timorese children at Kinderdorf were cared for by East Timorese women and – ten of them were actually the children of the carers. Before this group of children left for Java, most had been living with their mothers in Dili and not at the Seroja institution, although some of their mothers had been working there. The governor of East Timor had given several of the women substantial houses in the elite area of Dili, which had belonged to former Portuguese officials. In the ensuing years, several East Timorese children, some of them relatives of the children already there, and one even a close relative of the governor, went to live in Kinderdorf. The East Timorese carers at Kinderdorf occasionally travelled to Dili and collected the children on these visits.<sup>18</sup>



**Signing agreements on the arrival of the children at Kinderdorf institution, 1976**  
The governor of East Timor, Arnaldo dos Reis Araujo, is on the left.

Source: 'The Development of East Timor province'. Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, 1977.

18 Staff at Kinderdorf (interview, Bandung, 27 January 2004).

The President's largesse also extended to 30 children from the concentration camps, including children from Fretilin families. These children were sent to St Thomas in 1977 and the the state-run PPATN in 1979. In early 1977 several children were selected from each district in what appears to have been a scheme to send 'representative orphans' from East Timor to Java. Most of the children had no parents, but were living with close relatives. Only one of these 30 children, Gatot, had no knowledge of his family. He had been found by a soldier and given the soldier's name. In the difficult conditions in which they were forced to live in the concentration camps, some parents and guardians said that they felt hopeless about the future and their ability to provide for their children. Hence they handed over their children because of the offer of care and a free education.

Again the military was the main implementer of the 'representative orphans' initiative of Suharto's Dharmais Foundation. Soldiers selected children from the concentration camps and transported them to the Seroja institution and then to Jakarta. Lieutenant Colonel Mulyadi from Sulawesi accompanied the group of 20 children sent to meet the President in early September 1977. Soldiers met the children when they arrived in Jakarta and transported them in buses provided by the presidential palace; they also accompanied the children on sightseeing trips in Jakarta.

The experience of Petrus Kanisius was typical of many of the 'representative orphans'; his relatives understood that he was offered an education in Dili, but then he was sent to Java. Some of the parents were told in advance of the intention to send the children to Indonesia. The initial arrangements with families from Beobe village in Viqueque were not made directly by the military, but by an Indonesian civil servant, Petronela Maria Inasio, a member of the local parliament. Unlike the soldiers who organised the program in Aileu district, she explained that the offer by Dharmais Foundation was for the children to go to Java. Inasio came from Atambua in West Timor and was married to a local man from Viqueque. With her local contacts she was probably well placed to identify families to participate in the program. Parents or guardians of five children agreed to Inasio's offer and the army transported them by helicopter to Dili, where they placed them in the Seroja institution.<sup>19</sup>

Though the program to send 'representative orphans' to Indonesia was organised by government and military personnel, there were many problems in the organisation of the departure of the children – some relatives were not informed at the time of departure of the children and they thought the

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19 Duarte Sarmiento (interview, Tuapukan, Kupang, 8 February 2004).

children were to be educated in Dili, which was a privilege for these children, most of whom had never visited the capital city. Soldiers did not give the East Timorese staff members at Seroja detailed information about the movement of the children that could have been passed on to parents. The staff could not speak Indonesian well and were afraid to demand explanations from the military personnel in charge of the institution. Maria Margarida Babo, a staff member at Seroja for the entire period of its operation, tried to keep her own records. Unfortunately her notebooks were destroyed in the forced evacuation in 1999 when the institution was burnt down.

Abilio da Conceição and other Conceição family members were not consulted and their permission was not sought in relation to sending their young relatives to Java. Throughout 1976 the Conceição children had visited Abilio in a nearby suburb of Dili regularly on Sundays. When they did not turn up for several Sundays he decided to visit them in Seroja, where he heard from other children living at the institution that his relatives had been sent to Java. He said that he was afraid to ask the soldiers for information and his fear was compounded by the difficulty he had in communicating in Indonesian. The Conceição children were split up between two institutions in Bandung, five at PPATN and three at Kinderdorf. They did not meet again for over seven years, even though they lived in the same city. Most of the other members of the family living at Seroja ran away for fear that they too would be sent to Indonesia.

The departure from Dili of the group of 20 children on 1 September 1977 was hastily organised, in order, it seems, for the children to meet Suharto as soon as possible after the amnesty offer he made to Fretilin in his State of the Nation address on 16 August 1977. Soon after giving that address, Dharmais officials in Jakarta began communicating with the governor of East Timor, Arnaldo dos Reis Araujo, about sending children to Indonesia.<sup>20</sup> The hurried departure meant that the children had no time to inform or farewell their families.<sup>21</sup> The urgency of taking the children to meet Suharto was given greater priority than the needs of the children.

### Treatment in Indonesia

The 20 East Timorese children who met Suharto at his home on 3 September 1977 were a part of a propaganda exercise for the media. They were presented as

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20 Governor of East Timor in letter to Dharmais Foundation, 25 August 1977 (archives of St Thomas).

21 Petrus Kanisius (interviews, Dili, 2003–2004).

symbols of the integration struggle, representing not only orphaned children, but all of the East Timorese who had suffered. Indeed they were a poignant symbol – children invariably evoke powerful emotions – of the willingness of East Timorese to die for the right to integrate with Indonesia (*Suara Karya* 1977; Department of Information 1980; 1977?). By providing care and education for these small children, Suharto demonstrated Indonesia’s concern for victims of the struggle and the benefits of surrendering to Indonesia. However, just as New Order officials manipulated the truth about the war in East Timor by – maintaining that the East Timorese were fighting each other for the right to integrate – so too was the reality of these young children made to embody the same New Order myths. As we have seen, the children were collected from the concentration camps in East Timor, into which they had been forced by Indonesian military aggression – among them was one child who had seen his parents killed by Indonesian soldiers.<sup>22</sup> And, just as New Order officials broke many promises meant to entice the East Timorese to accept integration, so too the Dharmais Foundation, after using the children in the propaganda exercise, ceased to take any further interest in them.



**East Timorese children at the home of the Suhartos, 3 September 1977**

Twenty children were invited to the Suharto’s home as a way of showing their concern for East Timor and desire to help its development.

© *Kompas*, 5 September 1977

22 Petrus Kanisius (interviews, Dili, 2003–2004).

Nevertheless, because the Dharmais Foundation, on Suharto's instructions, had organised the transfer of the children to Java, it had continuing responsibility for their care. The Foundation handed over guardianship of the East Timorese children to the institutions they sent them to, but Dharmais had a different role in the care of these children from the care of other children in institutions whom it supported financially. The East Timorese children had been handed directly into the care of Dharmais Foundation by parents and family members and, consequently, Dharmais was ultimately responsible for the welfare and safety of the children, as well as for reporting to their parents or families. The tension between the staff and East Timorese children at St Thomas, which led to the disappearance of 15-year-old Henrique Araujo from Same that upset Petrus Kanisius and the other children at the institution so much, exposed the lack of supervision by those responsible for them and the danger to which they could be exposed. Petrus Kanisius believes that there was never any official effort to trace Henrique. He was angry and felt that their lives had no value in the eyes of those who were responsible for them, those whom the children should regard as their own parents, as the President had told them (*Berita Buana* 1977). These experiences of feeling abandoned, with no interest on the part of the officials in Indonesia in their safety, placed a huge burden on the children. Despite this, the children showed extraordinary resilience, banding together in their isolation and loneliness to look after one another.

Cipriano, a 'representative orphan' from Viqueque, had disappeared even before leaving for Java. The 'representative orphans' had been brought to Seroja in about April 1977. Twenty children, including Petrus Kanisius, were sent to St Thomas in September 1977, but the remaining ten were not sent to the PPATN in Bandung for another three years. Sometime during those three years, while he was living in Seroja institution, Cipriano, together with a young girl from Ainaro, was abducted by a soldier. Cipriano's parents, Ana Maria and Miguel Amaral, handed him to the representative acting for Dharmais, the parliamentarian Inasio, in early 1977. Later in the year Miguel Amaral and his brother Leopoldo visited Cipriano at Seroja. They heard that their son had not been sent with the other children to the PPATN in Java nearly seven years later, when the other Viqueque children, on a visit from Bandung organised by the governor in 1984, arrived home without him. His parents are still living in Viqueque and still hoping to be reunited with their missing son.<sup>23</sup> Dharmais

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23 Rafael Urbano Rangel (interview, Bandung, 28 January 2004; email communication, 11 July 2011) and Duarte Sarmento, Ana Maria's brother, who has obligations with

Foundation, which had made the promise to Ana Maria and Miguel Amaral to educate their son in Java, is, therefore, responsible for his abduction.

Many of the promises made by the Dharmais Foundation to the children were not honoured. Suharto promised that his Dharmais would provide for all their basic needs and his Supersemar Foundation would pay for the tertiary education of those who worked hard and succeeded (*Suara Karya* 1977). In an official letter to St Thomas, Dharmais Foundation promised that it would cover the cost of food, clothing and education.<sup>24</sup> According to Petrus Kanisius, however, the funds from Dharmais were insufficient to cover even their basic needs at St Thomas, quite apart from their school fees, and he did not receive any help for his tertiary education from the Supersemar Foundation. Kinderdorf also paid for the care and education of the East Timorese children at its institution. In contrast to St Thomas, Kinderdorf had international links to draw upon for extra funds, although the district administration in Semarang did build a new wing (*asrama*) for the East Timorese children at St Thomas in 1983. The promises made by Dharmais to the children in these two institutions were largely unfulfilled.

Dharmais made no attempt to assist the staff at the institutions in helping children maintain links with their families or with East Timorese languages and culture. Most of the children did not communicate with their families; the exception was the Apodeti children at Kinderdorf, where – the East Timorese staff occasionally travelled to East Timor and carried news to families. The ‘representative orphans’ had no-one to help them maintain such contact; Petrus Kanisius wrote only one letter to his family, at the time the child from Aileu died. The fact that these children came from many inaccessible districts of East Timor also meant that communication was difficult, although this does not justify a total lack of contact.

The institutions provided adequately for the physical welfare of the children, but, like all East Timorese children taken to Indonesia, they were in Indonesia to learn to be Indonesians. Immersed in their new environment, the children spoke Indonesian, or in daily conversation in Bandung, Sundanese, and in Central Java, Javanese. The experiences of individual children trying to adjust to life in Indonesia varied. Some children integrated well into life in Java, whereas others felt that they were stereotyped as uncivilised and

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respect to his sister’s children (interview, Tuapukan, Kupang, 8 February 2004).

24 RF Soedardi, Dharmais Foundation administrator, in a letter to St Thomas, 4 September 1977 (archives of St Thomas).

disruptive. Some staff members in the institutions in Java felt there was a wide cultural gap between themselves and the East Timorese, which led to problems, as in the case of Petrus Kanisius and his friends at St Thomas, especially as the children grew older. While the tension with the staff at St Thomas was caused in part by the financial difficulties of the institution, the children, especially the 16 boys among the 20 East Timorese children living there, considered that they faced discrimination and misunderstanding. As a result, they engaged in rebellious and even disobedient behaviour, their unrestrained conduct contrasting markedly with the submissive, obedient behaviour expected of Javanese children.

The institutions were unable to help children suffering psychological problems, especially those resulting from trauma. All of the children had been exposed to violence and their parents had been killed. Fretilin had killed the fathers or both parents of half of the group of 61 children. The other half had experienced Indonesian military violence during combat and in the concentration camps. The young boy who witnessed the killing of his parents by an Indonesian soldier suffered continuing serious psychological problems.

Staff at the institutions never discussed East Timor with the children and they were, indeed, ill informed about the situation there. They had been exposed only to New Order propaganda and, like most Indonesians, supported integration. The children were afraid to ask them about the war in East Timor or about the reason for their separation from their families. Floriana Conceição, who was only two years old in October 1976 when she arrived at PPATN in Bandung, adapted well to life in Indonesia, yet she cannot understand why she and her relatives had to be sent away from East Timor. By contrast, Rafael, who was sent to PPATN when he was six years old, always felt estranged from his environment in Bandung. Growing up far from his family was a bitter experience for him and a picture of a mother embracing her child still painfully reminds him of the family he never learnt to love. His problems with adjustment often led him to engage in attention-seeking, rebellious behaviour. Eventually Rafael made friends with East Timorese students studying in Bandung. At first he felt shy and inferior because he could not speak Tetun, so he made an effort to learn his own language. While happy to have received an education in Indonesia, he believes that 'even if the place you come from is simple and not very special, in the depths of your heart you will always long for home'.<sup>25</sup> In 2008 Rafael

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25 Rafael Urbano Rangel (interview, Bandung, 28 April 2004).

was able to return to his hometown, Viqueque, on the south coast of East Timor, and take up a position in the civil service there.

The cultural isolation and lack of links with family changed somewhat for the children, particularly those in Bandung, when the governor of East Timor, Mario Carrascalão, visited them in 1984. He became governor in 1982, but did not know that children had been sent to Java until an East Timorese staff member of Kinderdorf lodged a request for financial assistance.<sup>26</sup> He observed that the institutions treated the children well and that their basic needs were met, but he was concerned about their lack of contact with East Timor and that they spoke only Indonesian and Sundanese. He promised that during the Christmas holidays he would organise a visit home to East Timor. Floriana Conceição, who lived at PPATN, talked animatedly about the governor's visit when I met her in 2004. The children from the two institutions in Bandung were brought together to meet the governor. This was the first time that Floriana and her seven other Conceição relatives had met together for seven years and realised that they had been living only a short distance apart, having been divided between the two institutions in Bandung. For Floriana, the governor's visit also helped to validate them as East Timorese; he gave them a guitar and other musical instruments, telling them that as East Timorese they must be able to sing. The Conceição children started trying to talk together in Tetun and to recall their families and the places they came from in East Timor. On arrival in Dili for Christmas 1984, the children were taken to the Seroja institution where their families came to collect them. Most of them lived in Dili, although some lived far away in Viqueque. They stayed for a month, after which their visit was extended by another week. Following this visit Floriana began to exchange letters with her family in East Timor and in 1988 another visit was organised.

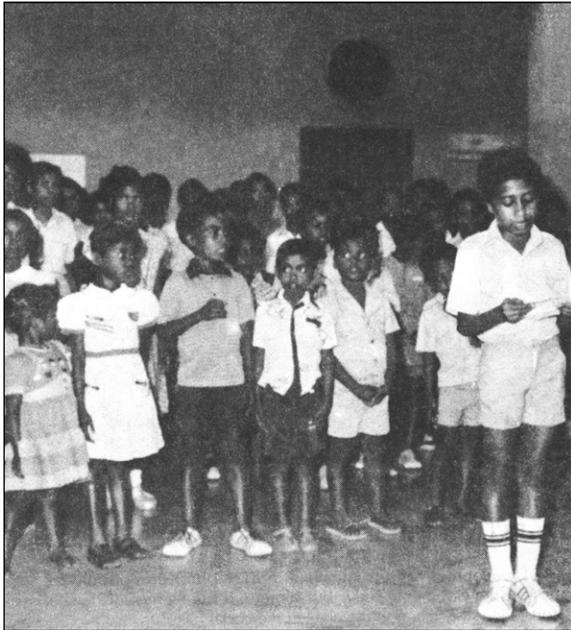
The children from St Thomas were also given a visit home the following year, perhaps to match the visit organised by the governor for the children in the institutions in Bandung. The military made all the travel arrangements and took the children to their homes. In contrast to the extended visit of the children from Kinderdorf and PPATN, their promised two-week visit was reduced to just over one week. Soldiers accompanied those who lived close by to their homes, including Petrus Kanisius to Aileu, instead of their families being called to meet them in Dili. The different arrangement for the visits of

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26 By this time there were 20 children at Kinderdorf. Of the original 26 children, seven had returned to East Timor, including six children from one family. One of the Conceição children had been brought from Dili to join his sister at Kinderdorf. The number of children at PPATN was still 15.

the two groups of children further confirms that the Kinderdorf children and some of those at PPATN had special privileges, coming as they did from pro-integration families, whereas the loyalty of the families of the 'representative orphans' was indeterminable. The military probably feared that a longer stay in East Timor could have exposed children to anti-integration ideology and may have led some to abscond or refuse to return to Indonesia.

The 61 children were all raised as Catholics, the majority religion in East Timor. The institutions in Indonesia, often with help from the Indonesian Catholic Church, paid for their education. Most of the children at Kinderdorf, belonging to several well-known Catholic families, had been given Portuguese 'Catholic' names at birth. Of the children sent to St Thomas, more than half belonged to families that had followed traditional Timorese religious practices and, therefore, had no 'Catholic' name. They were baptised as Catholics and given Christian names, although the names they were given were Indonesian versions and not the Portuguese versions commonly used in East Timor. So although Petrus Kanisius was raised as a Catholic, he still carries in his name an Indonesian identity.



**Orphans at Seroja institution, 1984**

Source: 'East Timor today'. Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, 1984: 79.

Many of the children were successful at school and returned to work in East Timor, while a few stayed in Indonesia to marry and/or to work; four of the 20 from St Thomas, six of the 15 at PPATN and one of the 26 at Kinderdorf stayed on in Indonesia. Some, such as Floriana Conceição, still feel estranged from East Timor. She was only two years old when she was sent away and felt uncomfortable on her return visits, especially in the tense political environment. In 2004 she was still living in Bandung, but maintaining contact with her family in Dili is important to her.

## Student scholarships to Indonesia

The children we have been discussing thus far were sent to Indonesia under the auspices of the Social Welfare Department, as they were deemed orphans. Now we turn to programs run by other government departments, which commenced sending young people to Indonesia soon after integration was formalised on 17 July 1976. These students and young people were, in most cases, older than the children discussed so far. They went voluntarily, although they had to show their support for integration, and the great majority came from Apodeti families.

The invasion led to an enormous disruption to the provision of education in Portuguese Timor; schools were closed and Portuguese was banned as the language of instruction. Indonesian officials constantly referred to the deplorable state of education in Portuguese Timor. To some extent this was true, as education had served the needs of the indigenous elite and those of Portuguese descent, with access to higher education limited to their children. The Portuguese began to focus more on comprehensive education in the 1960s, establishing village schools (*escola suco*) and (*escola posto*) at sub-district level, which taught basic literacy and numeracy. In 1964 they made schooling compulsory for children from six to 11 years of age. By 1973 there were 298 of these basic schools in villages and sub-districts and 53% of children were attending school, most of them at village schools. Schools that offered a full elementary education (*escola primario*) were situated only in the main towns of each district. Most secondary schools were organised by the Catholic Church and a few privileged students had been sent to Portugal for university study (Hill, Helen M. 2000: 44–48; Saldanha 1994: 57–60).

The new administration prioritised education and the first Indonesian government department to become operational in East Timor was the Department of Education and Culture (Depdikbud), in 1978. Before that,

educational activities in East Timor were organised from Jakarta. By 1980, the Indonesian education department had rehabilitated or constructed over 200 primary schools and 400 primary school teachers had been brought from Indonesia. Eight junior high schools had been built in the district capitals employing 30 Indonesian teachers, and a senior high school in Dili operated with 19 Indonesian teachers (Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Information 1980: 22–25; Enoch 1980: 16). In the concentration camps, where it was not safe for civilians to work, soldiers often set up schools, mainly to teach Indonesian language, Pancasila ideology and Indonesian national songs. Soldiers usually instructed East Timorese who had been teachers or had some education, who, in turn, taught the children.<sup>27</sup>

One project that could proceed irrespective of the security threat from Fretilin was the sending of students to Indonesia. The first students were sent with government scholarships in 1977, their travel to Jakarta and accommodation organised by the military. Maria do Céu Lopes Federer from Atauro Island and one other student were the first East Timorese students sent to universities in Indonesia in late 1977. By 1980 the Department of Education and Culture had sent 96 senior high school students to study in government schools in Java, and 21 university students, most of them to Java and a few to Makassar (Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Information 1980: 22–25; Enoch 1980: 16). Many of the first students are today leaders in East Timor.<sup>28</sup>

The East Timorese were interested in the educational opportunities offered by the Indonesians, but students had to demonstrate their support for integration.<sup>29</sup> Those selected to receive scholarships in the late 1970s came from families who were known supporters of integration (CAVR 2006: 7.8.5 No. 440; Anderson, Djati and Kammen 2003: 21).<sup>30</sup> In 1977 the Indonesian Department of Religious Affairs also gave scholarships to 29 Arab East Timorese students to study in Islamic institutions in Java; some were very young and were accompanied by older siblings. They came from Arab families in East Timor, most of whom supported integration

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27 Sr Consuelo Martinez HC (interview, Dili, 4 July 2003); Eduardo Casimiro de Deus (interview, Dili, 6 August 2003); see also Siahann (1978).

28 Isabel Guterres (interview, Dili, 27 April 2004).

29 Father Joachim Sarmento (interview, Dili, 4 May 2004) and Isabel Guterres (interview, Dili, 27 April 2004).

30 The scholarships came from the Department of Education and Culture and the provincial government (Department of Information 1983: 132).

with Indonesia (Bazher 1995: 54–55).<sup>31</sup> Even before the invasion, a group of Arab East Timorese already studying in Indonesia had petitioned the Indonesian government to do something about education in East Timor (*Berita Buana* 1975).

Students with family links to Fretilin were denied scholarships. The military implemented a screening process and anyone with family members fighting or sheltering with Fretilin away from Indonesian control was not eligible. Eusibio Jeronimo was 18 when he received a government scholarship to study in Malang in 1980 in one of the earliest intakes of students. He had to answer questions about his family and whether any of them still had not surrendered, and he had to sign a statement that he agreed with integration. When Mario Carrascalão became governor in 1982, he persuaded his military minders that they would never win the hearts and minds of the East Timorese with such policies. Several years later, students from Fretilin backgrounds were among the large numbers of students who received government scholarships to study in universities throughout Indonesia (Anderson Djati and Kammen 2003: 21; Saldanha 1994: 116,124–125).

Young East Timorese were also sent to Indonesia in the early years after the invasion to participate in informal government programs intended to foster identification with Indonesia and to ‘imbue a love for the homeland and its culture’ (Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Information 1980: 23). Indonesians believed that, if East Timorese experienced Indonesian development first-hand, they would want it for themselves; students living in Indonesia and visiting East Timorese officials were invariably asked to comment on their impressions of development (Bhaskara 1986; *Merdeka* 1977). Scouting (*pramuka*) was foremost among the informal activities in which East Timorese participated and a few weeks after integration was formalised 100 East Timorese youths were selected to attend a national scout jamboree in Cibubur, close to Jakarta (*Suara Karya* 1976b).

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31 Arab East Timorese students received generous allowances. One student remembers receiving Rp3,000 a month for their own use in 1977, which increased to Rp7,000/month in 1982/3. It was usually handed over to them by the leaders of the pesantren where they studied, but, if it was late in coming, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) in Bandung helped them request it from the P2A (Pengurus Pembinaan Pengalaman Agama Islam) of the Department of Religious Affairs (Abdullah Sagan, conversation, Dili, 12 May 2004).



**East Timorese scouts**

East Timorese belonging to the Indonesian scouting movement, Pramuka. Membership was one way in which the regime could influence and discipline youth.

Source: 'The Development of East Timor province'. Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, 1977.

As Indonesian anthropologist Pujo Semedi has noted, Indonesian scouting provides political leaders with a 'tool to organise and control youth' (Semedi 2007). It was used as such in East Timor, where local police organised scouting after its official inauguration on 6 April 1977 in all districts

of the new territory (CAVR 2006: 4.3: 114; Department of Information [1977?]). East Timorese youths also travelled to Indonesia to participate in national sporting events (Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Information 1980: 23). Sport was considered useful in instilling discipline and nationalistic fervour and military officers have traditionally been senior officials in sporting organisations such as Komite Olahraga Nasional Indonesia (KONI), the National Sports Institute. On 17 August 1976 two East Timorese youths were invited to represent the new province and help raise the sacred flag, traditionally a task for young people, during the high-profile Indonesian Independence Day ceremony at the State Palace (*Suara Karya* 1976a). The East Timorese young people who participated in these events came from among the East Timorese who lived in the towns and had at least given verbal consent, and some their written consent, to Indonesian control.

The students in Indonesia were monitored by military intelligence agents and East Timorese informers to ensure that they did not waver in their support for integration. In the earliest years of Indonesian rule, East Timorese university students were often accommodated in the homes of Indonesian military personnel or pro-integration East Timorese officials, such as East Timorese national parliamentarians.<sup>32</sup> In later years, East Timorese students in Indonesia often lived together in dormitories (*asrama*) provided by the East Timor regional government or in rented houses (*kos*) nearby. Their living in communities made it easier for Indonesian intelligence agents to become acquainted with the students and to supervise their activities.

Compulsory membership of students' associations also facilitated military surveillance. Initially intelligence agents and students' associations regarded each other with mutual suspicion. In the early 1980s about 50 students belonged to one of these organisations in Jakarta. Luís Taolin, a West Timorese agent of Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara (BAKIN), the Indonesian State Intelligence Co-ordinating Agency, turned up at one of their meetings in 1982, after which the group became frightened and broke up.<sup>33</sup> As more students arrived in Indonesia, membership of local East Timor students' associations, such as Impettu, became the channel for dealing with the bureaucracy and organising payment of scholarships, hence all students had to register as members. After the Santa Cruz

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32 Maria do Céu Lopes Federer (interview, Dili, 7 April 2004).

33 Ignatius Ismartono SJ (interview, Jakarta, 12 May 2003).

cemetery massacre in Dili on 12 November 1991, the district military commands became further involved in 'guiding' students in Indonesia via these associations. Soldiers tried to influence students to support integration by developing relationships of a patron–client nature. Soldiers offered physical protection and material incentives, such as paying the fees of students in financial difficulties and providing them with funds for parties associated with religious and national festivals. However, despite the efforts of soldiers to monitor the activities of student associations, pro-independence students set up clandestine organisations, often using the official student organisations as a cover for their activities (Bexley 2009: 68–71; Pinto 2001: 38). During the APEC meeting in Jakarta in November 1994, on the third anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre, 29 East Timorese students scaled the wall of the American Embassy to draw attention to East Timor's struggle.<sup>34</sup> Immediately after, soldiers in Bandung posted a guard on the *kos* where many students lived in order to monitor their movements and attended the regular Impettu meetings, threatening harsh retribution if the students discussed integration (CAVR 2006: 3.18 No. 494).<sup>35</sup>

Despite the efforts of military security operators to control the students in Indonesia and win their support for integration, they were only partly successful. Military repression in East Timor contributed to rejection of integration by the students. East Timorese often chose to move to Indonesia to study and work to escape the distrust and fear they experienced in East Timor.<sup>36</sup> Indonesia was not a safe haven, but it did provide new opportunities for the resistance to set up underground organisations and, following the Santa Cruz massacre, it received a new source of support for its struggle from some Indonesian activists and student organisations (CAVR 2006: 7.1.6.3 Nos. 511–518). Furthermore, some East Timorese, such as children of public servants and East Timorese educated in Muslim institutions in Indonesia, who, according to New Order orthodoxy, were supposed to support integration, changed their minds.<sup>37</sup> The students educated in Indonesia were intended to be a generation of supporters of integration; instead their Indonesian education

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34 Between October 1995 and mid-March 1996, approximately 200 East Timorese entered embassies. Usually the students were quickly sent on to Portugal where East Timorese held citizenship (Human Rights Watch 1996).

35 Armando Marques (interview, Baucau, 23 April 2004).

36 Isabel Guterres (interview, Dili, 27 April 2004); see also CAVR Report (CAVR 2006: 4.3 No. 112).

37 Mohammad Iqbal Menezes (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004) and Syamsul Bahari (interview, Baucau, 23 April 2004).

broadened their political awareness. They became more adamantly nationalist and many of them played a central role in resisting integration and in building demand for independence. Indeed, they reenacted the role played by Dutch-educated Indonesians in Indonesia's own independence struggle against the colonial Dutch (Anderson 1995: 145; 1991: 116).

## **Training and work in Indonesia**

One further program was initiated by Departemen Tenaga Kerja (Depnaker), the Department of Manpower, in the early 1990s for unemployed youths. Initially, the young people were enthusiastic and went voluntarily to Indonesia, but, just as the military became involved in the oversight of students in Indonesia, it also became involved in this program, although in a much more direct and heavy-handed manner than with the students.

In 1990, two-thirds of job-seekers in East Timor were secondary school graduates. These young people had completed their secondary education in the Indonesian school system (Saldanha 1994: 26), but there were no jobs to match their skills. The public service sector could not absorb them all, even though in the public service in East Timor was inflated to the extent that, by 1998, it accounted for a far higher percentage of non-agricultural jobs than in any other province of Indonesia (CAVR 2006: 4.4 No. 179; Klinken 2007: 62). School graduates also lost out on jobs to the 70,000 Indonesians who had moved to East Timor by 1991 (Elson 2001: 254–255). Students at school often felt discriminated against by their Indonesian teachers in comparison with the children of Indonesian officials, especially the children of soldiers. The quality of education was poor and it placed strong emphasis on indoctrinating students in pro-integration ideology. Increasingly students became disobedient and disrespectful, which further contributed to the decline in the quality of their education. Many youths said that their Indonesian education actually influenced them to develop anti-integration ideas (Carey 2003: 41–45; Mubyarto et al. 1991: 53–60; Arenas 1998).

This crisis in education and unemployment fuelled resentment among young people and threatened the success of the New Order's integration project in East Timor. Officials responded with a program offering training and work experience in Indonesia for young people between 15 and 25. Siti Hardiyanti Indra Rukmana (Mbak Tutut), Suharto's eldest daughter, announced the program on a visit to East Timor in December 1990. Her charity, Tiara Foundation, would finance the program, while

the Department of Manpower would organise it. The program promised vocational training and well-paying jobs in the electronics industry based in the industrial estate on Batam, an island close to Singapore.

As with the offers of education, young people responded enthusiastically. Details of the program were advertised on public billboards and information was given on the radio and at public meetings; youths were also recruited in door-to-door visits (Jones 1992: 1). On 27 March 1991 the program was launched with considerable fanfare, with both Bishop Belo and Governor Mario Carrascalão attending a formal send-off for the first group of 132. During 1991 the first year of operation, 821 young people, mostly males, were sent from East Timor to Java and some to Kalimantan (Asia Watch 1993:V). I have no details about the total number of participants for the program's operation from 1991 to 1996, but there were 500 in 1995 and possibly similar numbers each year (Aditjondro 2000: 142ff; Omar and Sonhei 1996).

The program floundered almost immediately, as the offers turned out to be false promises and it became apparent that the young people had been deceived into leaving East Timor. When they arrived in Jakarta in early 1991, staff from Tiara Foundation told them that they were not going to Batam as they had been promised. The young people felt that Tiara staff, including the President's daughter, did not give them a clear reason for the change of plan. Officials from the foundation and the government department claimed that the program had made no such promises and that the youths' expectations of high-paying jobs in the electronics industry were unrealistic as they had no relevant skills (Jones 1992: 2, Appendix II). In 2004 former governor Carrascalão told me that Tiara Foundation did indeed break its promise to the East Timorese youths and that in 1990 he and Bishop Belo also had been deceived by the organisers into giving their support.

Instead of going to Batam, the young people were sent to work as labourers in low-paid, menial jobs in factories throughout Indonesia, and those who protested were intimidated and physically punished. Many of the factories that the young people were sent to were owned by members of the Suharto family. Some foreigners who owned companies in Indonesia were also asked by soldiers to employ the East Timorese, even when the youths did not have the required skills.<sup>38</sup> The wages and conditions for the youths sent to work at PT Kanindotex in Central Java, a factory owned by Bambang Trihatmojo, the President's eldest son, were pitiful, although not substantially different from those of other factory workers. The problem was that the young people

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38 João da Costa (interview, Baucau, 23 April 2004).

had been promised better-paying jobs and the chance to study. Not all had the resources to return home, nor did they have the networks that locals had to help them survive on such low incomes. Many had difficulty adjusting to their new physical and social environment, and the misunderstandings and frustration with their situation often resulted in physical clashes with their Javanese colleagues.<sup>39</sup> Several young people who protested their treatment were detained and beaten by soldiers and were then intimidated into making a public admission that they had no complaints about their wages and work conditions (Asia Watch 1993:V).

Less than one year after the program was established, the military became more involved in recruitment and organising the program, although Asia Watch received unconfirmed information that the military and Tiara Foundation officials in late 1989, before the launch of the program, had already worked through lists of youths who had been arrested for demonstrating, so that they could recruit them (Jones 1992: 1). The trigger for more aggressive military involvement was the demonstration and massacre at the Santa Cruz cemetery in November 1991 in which an estimated 270 young people died (CAVR 2006: 3.18 No. 483). Unemployment among youths was widely blamed for their involvement in demonstrations (*Tempo* 1991; Sherlock 1996). Some of the young people who participated in November 1991 had had no prior involvement in demonstrations and no affiliation with clandestine organisations. They were angry that their school friend, Sebastião Gomes, had been shot dead by soldiers and were using his funeral procession to express their resentment towards the Indonesian occupation.<sup>40</sup> The local military in Dili began to target those it considered likely to join in anti-integration demonstrations so that they could recruit them for the work program and get them out of East Timor. The young people who were specifically asked to join the program felt intimidated and unable to refuse.

That was the experience of 17-year-old João da Costa from Baucau who was pressured to sign up in 1995 because of his resistance activities. João's uncle worked for the military and his superiors gave him the task of persuading João to register. João's parents did not want him to go to Indonesia, but he was too afraid to refuse and, once he was registered, he could not withdraw. At one preparatory lecture a military officer told the recruits that withdrawing from the program would indicate that they worked for the

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39 East Timorese young people employed at Kanindotex (conversations, Salatiga, May 1991).

40 Domingos da Silva (interview, Dili, 6 August 2003). Different person.

resistance. Before leaving East Timor the 75 recruits in Joao's intake, mostly males with some as young as 15, lived at a military base in Akadiruhun, Dili, where soldiers organised a strenuous physical training program and regular political indoctrination. The rationale for the training, according to the military, was that it helped to provide the discipline and attitude needed to move into regular work (Asia Watch 1993:V). The departure of the youths from Dili was supervised; one young man who tried to escape as the group boarded the boat was caught by a plainclothes intelligence officer who was ready for such eventualities.

The youths were sent to jobs all over Indonesia and the military continued to supervise them.<sup>41</sup> João was sent to Sulawesi where disciplinary training continued, organised by the police and military, although staff members from the Department of Manpower were involved in finding jobs. The department did not find João a job; he and two other youths were given lodgings with a military colonel who used his influence with a foreign-owned company and asked it to employ the youths, despite their lack of relevant skills.

Tiara Foundation did support some of the youths to study short courses, but not with fares back home, as one of the main aims of the program was to remove them from East Timor. Only those who had the resources to do so could return home; others remained in Indonesia to work in their factory jobs. Of those who stayed on, many joined clandestine resistance organisations, especially if they had contact with university students.<sup>42</sup> Some also took part in anti-integration demonstrations in Jakarta and several sought asylum in the Portuguese embassy (*PIPA* 1995). Other youths from the program became members of gangs with military connections in Jakarta, intimidating pro-independence East Timorese and conducting demonstrations to counter those by pro-independence groups (*MateBEAN* 1997). In 1999 many registered for the UNHCR repatriation program to return to East Timor.<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusion

The success of the integration of East Timor with Indonesia depended not on the physical control of the population alone. Indonesian rule also had to

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41 See statement of 28 East Timor workers sent by the Department of Manpower to the national parliament, 21 August 1991 (Jones 1992: Appendix I).

42 Teodoro Soares (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004).

43 Helio Freitas (interview, Dili, 26 September 2003) and UNHCR staff member (interviews Dili, April 2003).

be considered legitimate in the eyes of the East Timorese. All colonisers face this challenge, and education has always been central to the mission of ensuring that the population accepts and submits to colonial rule. The New Order, in the way of all colonisers, deemed education integral to achieving this aim in East Timor.

The students and young people who were sent to Indonesia were eager to take up the options offered by the Indonesians. For the Indonesians, the aim of their education and training was to assimilate them as Indonesians and to influence them to accept integration. However, like youth in many colonised territories, their colonial education helped to awaken their awareness and prepared them to challenge the basis of the colonial system. Graduates took on administrative jobs in East Timor, but the oppressive military situation there fanned their resistance to integration. Broken promises on the part of the Indonesians and the constant suspicion with which they regarded the East Timorese further militated against the possibility of forming genuine, lasting community.

The offers made to the young children and their families by the President's personal foundation, Dharmais, were well intended, but Dharmais failed on many yardsticks in its treatment of the children and their families. It manipulated the real stories of the children to serve Indonesian propaganda purposes and, once again, promises made to the children and their parents were not fulfilled. These transfers by Suharto's foundation almost certainly functioned as models for other transfers and gave rise to a culture that condoned the transfer of children as a means of helping advance the East Timorese.

## Iqbal Menezes's story<sup>1</sup>

Mohammad Iqbal Alcino Menezes's story encapsulates the attitude many East Timorese held to conversion to Islam of their fellow East Timorese as well as the nervous response of the Indonesian regime anxious to avoid inter-religious conflict. The fact that Iqbal came from a well-connected family probably contributed to the intensity of responses from all sides. With his family background and personal determination to convert he was a cause célèbre of Islamic mission in East Timor.

I was born in 1978 in Tatilari, Uatolari, Viqueque. My father was the Falintil commander Manuel Menezes, code name Lafaek. When the Indonesians invaded, my mother and three siblings stayed with my father in the forest, but eventually he could no longer care for us. He found us a hiding place and left us there, returning every few weeks with food. In 1983 we were captured. We were taken to Uatolari and my mother and my three siblings and I were held in jail for one year. Sometimes we had no food for a whole day. My younger sister was very malnourished and I think that there is still an influence from that time on her, as well as from the way my brothers and I behaved. We were always fighting, perhaps because we had learnt that we needed to look after ourselves.

The military then decided to send us to Atauro Island to try to force my father to surrender. However, my mother, a descendant of the ruling family from Quelicai, paid off the local military commander (babinsa) with watches and gold. She did sewing to provide for us. In 1984 my father was killed.

In 1991, when I was 13 years old, I decided to convert from Catholicism to Islam, taking the name Mohammad Iqbal Alcino Menezes. I had many Indonesian friends who were Muslims. We often talked together about the holy pictures in the church. My friends said they were pictures of God, yet my mother always told me that we cannot see God.

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1 Interview, Dili, 1 April 2004.



**Iqbal with his mother and family, Dili, 2004**

After the death of his father, the Falintil commander Manuel Menezes, Iqbal decided to convert to Islam. Yakin sent him to Java to study.

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We decided we'd go together to the church and closely inspect the pictures to see if this was true, but on the way we got scared. I became uncertain about my faith as a Catholic and stopped going to church. When I told my mother I was going to become a Muslim she became angry. But one day I just took her sarung [as a prayer mat] and joined in prayers at the mosque.

At that time I was attending the local state junior high school, where the same teacher taught art and Catholic religion classes. When this teacher discovered that I attended art but had stopped going to religion classes, he was angry and bashed me till I nearly fainted. The teacher who taught the Islamic religion class would not let me into his class. He was afraid there could be trouble for Muslims in the community if an East Timorese converted from Catholicism.

The Catholic priest was also angry with me. He was sure I had been bribed to become a Muslim, and even offered to send me to school in Italy. My mother tried to force me to go to church. One day as she was trying to drag me along to church I jumped off the bridge. I survived but she kept crying and was very unhappy with me. An Indonesian policeman found out about my situation and tried to help me.

The military commander in East Timor came by helicopter to Uatolari to try to sort out the problems I had caused by wanting to convert. The local Catholic priest had made a report to the governor, Mario Carrascalão, which had been passed on to the district administrator (bupati) of Viqueque. The military advisor for social and political affairs called a dialogue with the sub-district head (camat) of Uatolari, the priest, the school principal and the heads (kepala desa) of six villages. At the meeting they asked me why I wanted to become a Muslim. I could only say that it was what I wanted to do and that no-one had influenced me. The Javanese political affairs advisor told me the law in Indonesia forbids children to change their religion without the agreement of their parents. I started to cry because of all the questions. I used to hate Muslims but something made me want to become a Muslim.

After that the staff at the mosque in Uatolari organised for me to leave my village to live at the Yakin institution in Dili and study at the Islamic school run by the An-Nur mosque. Some locals threatened to burn down our house, the mosque and the houses of Indonesian Muslims living around the mosque. For some time Muslims were not allowed to use a loud speaker or put up banners in public. Nothing happened in 1991, but in September 1995 there were riots in many areas, and our house was burnt down, as was the mosque and Islamic school in Uatolari.

After three months, Yakin sent me to study in Indonesia. I left with a group of six students. We were given a special send off reception attended by Abdullah Hamid, the head of Human Relations of the Department of Religious Affairs in Dili. He witnessed our oaths in which we promised to study and then return to work in East Timor. A banner was stretched across the road in Dili announcing our departure, 'Pelepasan anak-anak ke Malang'. Our group was actually unique among the students sent

by Yakin. We were a bit older than average; at 13, I was the youngest. Children sent by Yakin were generally younger, and their departures were not made public. We were also especially selected on the basis of merit and sent to study at reputable institutions in Malang. We were also more successful than average. All but one completed a university qualification, several obtained masters degrees and one received a scholarship to study in Malaysia. While I was studying in Indonesia I kept in contact with my mother. The preacher (ustad) from Uatolari lived in East Java; he would visit us to collect letters and carry them back home.

After I completed my study in Malang I went to study at the IAIN, now the State Islamic University, in Jakarta. In early 2002 I decided to return home for the proclamation of independence on 20 May. I led a group of ten East Timorese Muslims, some only children, who also wanted to be there for the celebrations. We travelled overland, but had trouble at the border between West and East Timor: pro-Indonesian East Timorese, including ex-militiamen, tried to prevent East Timorese crossing into East Timor; however, we managed to sneak past them.

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## *Chapter 4*

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### **Transfers by religious institutions**

The ‘civilising’ mission has always been the most obvious area of co-operation between European imperial powers seeking to expand their territories and Western Christian missions attempting to convert the ‘heathen’ inhabitants. Education was central to achieving this goal. As the church educated adherents to the new religion of the colonisers, it inculcated the language and culture of the coloniser, thereby helping to foster a population loyal to the colonial government (Johnston 2001: 77; Tuck 1987: 20–33; Steenbrink 2003: 25,174).<sup>1</sup> Portuguese Timor was an excellent example of such co-operation. During the Salazar dictatorship, from 1940 to 1974, the Catholic Church was a powerful political force and in the colony in Timor its influence was exercised largely through education (Carey 1999). In its institutions of higher education, the church educated a generation of indigenous elite who came to think of themselves as Portuguese (Kohen 1999: 37–39).<sup>2</sup>

New Order secular and religious leaders in Indonesia, like their Western colonial counterparts, also worked together, as eminent Indonesian political scientist, Daniel Dhakidae (2003: 734) has noted. Secular and religious leaders supported each other in East Timor in their respective projects of integration and conversion. Indonesian Catholics welcomed the expansion of Catholicism in the eastern islands of the archipelago and the church sent religious staff to help with development and to conduct Christian

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1 The Dutch also considered the ‘Christian natives’ more loyal (Klinken 2003: 237–238). While this traditional view of mutual support has been challenged (Beck 2007), Copland (2006: 1052) argues that in education there has always been co-operation between missions and the state.

2 The regime signed a Concordat with the Vatican in 1940, which gave the church an important role in state affairs, particularly in education, until the fall of the Salazar/Caetano regime in April 1974.

mission.<sup>3</sup> As Islam is the majority religion in Indonesia, Islamic missionary organisations also arrived to engage in mission and educational activities.

For Muslims as well, education is central to mission and conversion. Unlike the Catholics who had an extensive school system during the Portuguese era, Muslims had only one religious school, attended by the descendants of Arab Muslims living in Dili. There were no converts to Islam among the indigenous population,<sup>4</sup> but after integration Islamic organisations sought to expand their religious activities; however they faced opposition from Catholics in the territory.

Religious educational institutions, like their secular counterparts, have sometimes deemed it necessary to remove children from their families in order to inculcate new ideas, especially the precepts of a new religion, and break the influence of old traditions and beliefs. As was discussed in the Introduction, the children selected for removal from their families were often the most impoverished and vulnerable members of the group. Indonesian Islamic organisations also decided to send East Timorese children to Indonesia to be educated in Islamic schools and these organisations sent approximately 1,000 young indigenous East Timorese to Indonesia during the 1980s and 1990s. The transfer of these young children to Indonesia is the main focus of this chapter.

## Religion in East Timor

Before we begin to consider these transfers, we need to understand the role of religion in New Order Indonesia, and especially how this played out in East Timor. In 1975, most religious leaders in Portugal, in Portuguese Timor and in Indonesia supported the integration of Portuguese Timor with Indonesia. They feared the atheism of communism and many believed that a Fretilin-led government would pose a threat to religion; they preferred to put their trust in Indonesia's Pancasila doctrine.

The New Order guaranteed freedom of religious practice, but required all citizens to adopt one of its officially sanctioned religions. With the arrival of the Indonesians in East Timor, the people there were forced to adopt a religion or risk accusations of being atheists and, therefore, communists and potential members of Fretilin. Religious leaders and organisations in

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3 Ignatius Ismartono SJ (interview, Jakarta, 12 May 2003).

4 I use the term 'indigenous' here to distinguish Arab East Timorese, who were all Muslims, from non-Arab East Timorese.

both Indonesia and East Timor supported the New Order policy. Together with the practice of forced relocation of the population, this policy gave impetus to conversion projects, but it also led to competition among the religions represented in East Timor and contributed to religion assuming a greater role in politics in the territory than would otherwise have been the case (Steenbrink 2004: 229–230; Mubyarto et al. 1991: 30–31; *Ummat* 1996a: 55–56).

Catholicism spread rapidly to become the dominant religion. At the time of the invasion, 70% of the population of Portuguese Timor adhered to traditional religious practices. They lived in clusters of houses around their traditional or sacred house (*uma lulik*), all descendants or putative descendants of the original founder of the sacred house (Mubyarto et al. 1991: 26–27, 30–31).<sup>5</sup> In the years before 1975 the Catholic Church had trained many indigenous East Timorese as catechists – laypersons with basic religious training but not ordained as priests. Catechists encouraged people in the concentration and relocation camps to become Catholics (Kohen 1999: 28–29). Initially the expansion of Catholicism in East Timor was supported by the Indonesian military, especially through the influence of the powerful Major General Benny Murdani, himself a Catholic, who was responsible for developing the New Order’s strategy for the integration of the territory. Murdani had close links with the Catholics on the staff of the anti-communist Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which advised on integration strategies. CSIS was both anti-communist and supportive of the army’s anti-Islamic measures (Porter 2002: 135; Mujiburrahman 2006: 122, 134–149). By 1990, 90% of the population was Catholic (Kantor Statistik Propinsi Timor Timur 1990: 128)<sup>6</sup> and almost all influential, educated East Timorese were Catholics.

Supporting the Catholic Church in East Timor did not, however, fulfil the New Order’s expectation that the Church would afford legitimacy to integration.<sup>7</sup> The Portuguese leader of the church at the time of the invasion, Bishop Dom José Joaquim Riberio, supported integration initially but changed his mind after witnessing military abuse of the people and the desecration of churches (Dunn 2003: 297). Monsignor Martinho da Costa Lopes, an

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5 The most detailed description of religion in East Timor is Traube’s writing on the rituals of the Mambai in central East Timor (Traube 1986).

6 The other 10% were mostly Muslims and Protestants, and mainly Indonesians from outside East Timor.

7 Dominant symbols of support in Dili were the cathedral and the Christ the King statue on the beach front (*Pikiran Rakyat* 1996; Cohen 1995).

East Timorese who replaced him in 1977, was also outspoken against the Indonesian occupation and was removed from office in 1983 under pressure from the New Order. The young, inexperienced East Timorese, Dom Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo, was not as malleable as the Indonesians had assumed. He too began to speak out against abuses, most famously in 1989 when he wrote to the United Nations that the East Timorese were ‘dying as a people and as a nation’ (CAVR 2006: 3.15 Nos. 397–401, 415–416, 432, 445–450).<sup>8</sup> The international links of the Catholic Church and the awarding of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Bishop Carlos Belo and Jose Ramos Horta, the future president of East Timor, were crucial in drawing attention to the human rights situation in East Timor (CAVR 2006: 3.15 No. 398). It was during the Pope’s visit to East Timor in 1989 that the anti-integration demonstrations by the clandestine movement commenced (CAVR 2006: 433; Pinto 2001: 34), much to the dismay of the Indonesian authorities who had hoped that the visit of the head of the Catholic Church to the territory would bestow legitimacy on integration.

Instead, the East Timorese Catholic Church became the one place where East Timorese could express themselves with some degree of openness away from Indonesian control (Archer 1995: 127). Catholicism became integral to East Timorese national identity, setting East Timorese apart from their Indonesian Muslim oppressors, although by no means all Catholics had the same attitude towards integration (Carey 1999: 86; Archer 1995: 127). The Church with its ‘East Timorese character’ was accepted internationally as representing the authentic voice of the majority of East Timorese and became the focus of the independence struggle.

During the Portuguese administration there were few indigenous East Timorese Protestants or Muslims. A small number of East Timorese had become Protestants in the late Portuguese period (Gereja Kristen di Timor Timur 1989: 4–5),<sup>9</sup> and a community that had grown to approximately 650 Muslims, descendants of Arabs from Hadramaut (now Yemen) had lived in Portuguese Timor since the 17th century. Most Arab East Timorese lived in Kampung Alor, in the western area of Dili, where the An-Nur mosque

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8 With the departure of most Portuguese clergy, more indigenous East Timorese became priests, most of whom rejected integration because of the suffering they witnessed; priests also came from Indonesia and many among them supported their government’s position on integration (CAVR 2006: 3.15 No. 397). For some reflections by Catholic clergy of the early years of the occupation, see Archer (1995: 122).

9 This report is available from Uniting International Mission, Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly, Sydney. I thank Rev John Barr for helping me with this information.

had been the focus of their worship, ceremonies and religious education for many years (Bazher 1995: 28–38, 45–50; *Media Dakwah* 1995a: 41–49; Hill 1976: 45). The members of the Arab community were accepted in East Timor and there was no impediment to the practice of their faith. With the arrival of the Indonesians most Arab East Timorese supported integration, although there were some who did not, notably Mari Alkatiri the first prime minister of independent East Timor.<sup>10</sup> There were no adherents to Islam among indigenous East Timorese.

Conversion to Islam and Protestantism gained some momentum immediately after the invasion. Because of the absence of religious leaders in the concentration and resettlement camps, Indonesian soldiers and civil servants often played a direct role in ensuring that East Timorese adopted a religion. Many battalion commanders, non-Catholics as well as Catholics, encouraged East Timorese without a religion to adopt the religion they themselves practised. To teach and assist the new converts, the military, which strictly controlled entry to and travel in East Timor, gave permission and protection to many Indonesian religious personnel to travel and work in East Timor, where they had to co-operate with the military and support its integration policies.

Indigenous East Timorese who chose to become Muslims or Protestants were only ever a small percentage of the population – the often-cited 10% included many outsiders from Indonesia. They were often regarded with suspicion by the Catholic majority as being less nationalistic and identifying more with Indonesia. This applied especially to Muslims.<sup>11</sup> In the early 1990s, 70,000 people who were not East Timorese were living in the territory (Elson 2001: 254–255) and this number expanded to 150,000 by the end of the decade.<sup>12</sup> Many of the newcomers were Muslims (*Kompas* 1998). In 1995 there were approximately 3,500 indigenous East Timorese Muslim converts, living mostly in remote districts of East Timor (*Republika Online* 1995b; Viera 1998).

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10 Mari Alkatiri belongs to one of the Arab East Timorese families in Dili. In 1975 he was a member of the Fretilin central committee and spent the occupation in exile in Mozambique. Since independence the Catholic Church has tried to re-assert its influence and, unhappy with his socialist/Marxist orientation, helped to depose him in 2006.

11 Some East Timorese Protestant leaders spoke out against the occupation, for example Rev Arlindo Marcal (1995), but the institutions of the church were controlled by Indonesian Protestants.

12 The numbers from the Bureau of Statistics are only of those registered in East Timor, with identity cards (KTP) from there. The actual numbers would have been greater, as many Indonesians working in East Timor, such as soldiers, public servants and traders were not registered there.

By the mid-1990s mosques had been built in the main centres of all districts and smaller worship rooms (*musholla*) had been constructed, as well as *madrasah* to teach the Koran, elsewhere (Bazher 1995: 102,105–111). While not numerous, these schools and places of worship served mainly those who were not East Timorese; with the exception of the main mosque and several worship rooms in Dili, they had all been built since the arrival of the Indonesians.

To many East Timorese, mosques and Islamic schools were symbols of the Indonesian presence and of contest with the East Timorese Catholic Church (Catholic Institute for International Relations 1993: 7). Following the demonstration at the time of the Pope's visit, the frequency of anti-integration demonstrations by frustrated youths in East Timor increased (CAVR 2006: 3.17 No. 433). Most demonstrations were nonviolent, but between mid-1994 and mid-1996 a series of violent religious riots broke out targeting Muslims and Islamic institutions. The rioters, many only school children, burnt mosques, worship rooms and Islamic schools, as well as the homes and businesses of Muslim migrants, especially those of the Bugis voluntary migrants from South Sulawesi, who were accused of dominating business and trade and taking jobs from East Timorese. The Protestants had also built many churches in East Timor and the anger against Indonesia spread to them, resulting in several Protestant churches being burnt (Human Rights Watch 1996).<sup>13</sup> Indonesian security forces responded by arresting perpetrators, but they also placed restrictions on the daily practice of Islam in problem areas. Some Islamic schools were closed and the procedure for obtaining permission for the building of mosques was tightened (Azra and Umam 1998: 418; *Republika Online* 1995a; Bazher 1995: 53).<sup>14</sup> In this climate of unrest some Muslims decided that the only way to educate indigenous East Timorese children as Muslims was to send them to Indonesia.

## Islamic mission in East Timor

Islamic mission in East Timor posed a dilemma for the regime. In the earliest years the army and many New Order officials, such as the Minister for Religious Affairs, were responsive to Catholic sensitivities about the growth of

13 Much about these religious riots – who was involved, who instigated them and with what motive – is still unclear. There is little substantial information about them in the CAVR report (CAVR 2006: 3.18 No.490); see also *Media Dakwah* (1995b: 42–47).

14 Munawir Sjadzali, Minister of Religious Affairs from 1983 to 1993, had reportedly disallowed the building of a large mosque in Dili during his time as minister because he believed it was unethical to do so when there was no major cathedral for the Catholics (Seno Joko Suyono 2004).

Islam. They continued to be so even when it was clear that the Catholic Church was not offering its anticipated support for integration. One of the main reasons for their continuing support was the officials' fear that any suggestion of proselytising by Muslims in East Timor would not help to convince the international community that integration was good for East Timor (Azra and Umam 1998: 418; Seno Joko Suyono 2004; Bazher 1995: 53).

Some Islamic organisations, state and non-state, did not share this sensitivity to international opinion, believing that Islam should be allowed to flourish in East Timor, as elsewhere in Indonesia, and that the religious needs of Indonesian Muslims living in the territory should be met. They argued that the East Timorese should become like Indonesians because, in fact, they were Indonesians and this, in the ideological discourse of Pancasila, included tolerance of other religions.<sup>15</sup> David Day's argument that a supplanting society must successfully populate its newly acquired territory (Day 2008: 7–10) reminds us that the Indonesian authorities needed to provide a suitable space for the many Indonesians living in the territory, most of whom were Muslims – public servants, security personnel, official transmigrants and voluntary migrants. These Indonesians were necessary to the success of the integration project and it was unacceptable for them to live in Indonesian territory without access to religious facilities.

The spread of Islam in East Timor began with the military, especially those officers and soldiers who were zealous proselytisers. Many belonged to the military's Spiritual Guidance organisation, Rawatan Rohani Islam, similar to chaplaincy services.<sup>16</sup> They were assisted by Indonesian civilians and Arab East Timorese Muslims working for organisations such as the Indonesian Red Cross.<sup>17</sup> In some areas 'freelance' Islamic preachers, with no apparent affiliation with any Indonesian organisation, accompanied the army when it was engaged in dangerous missions, such as in East Timor. They helped soldiers in their daily practice of Islam and also encouraged indigenous East Timorese to become Muslims (*Media Dakwah* 1990: 54–55; 1995a: 41–49).<sup>18</sup>

15 Among Muslims who were outspoken in their criticism of the New Order policy in relation to Islamic mission in East Timor at the time was Muhammadiyah leader, Amien Rais (*Media Dakwah* 1995b: 42–47; 1995d: 6–7).

16 Haji Paita Halim, ketua pengurus (head organiser), Sulthan Alauddin Mosque (interview, Makassar, 26 March 2003).

17 For example, Haji Abdullah Sagan was in charge of food relief by the Indonesian Red Cross. The first distribution of food was to all those in the camp, but subsequent distributions were allegedly only to those who had registered as Muslims (Mario Carrascalão, interview, Dili, 13 April 2004).

18 Also EBD (interview, Jakarta, 12 August 2006) and Mario Carrascalão (interview, Dili, 13 April 2004); I am grateful to Martin van Bruinessen for drawing this to my

The most active Islamic mission organisation in East Timor was the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII), the Indonesian Islamic Propagation (or Missionary) Council, the largest national Islamic mission organisation. In 1981 it sent seven preachers from East Java to East Timor, who were soon joined by others who spread out to work amongst indigenous East Timorese in every district (*Media Dakwah* 1995a: 41–49; Bazher 1995: 62). Soldiers assisted the DDII preachers with transport and logistics, especially those soldiers and officers with a missionary agenda (*Suara Hidayatullah* 1995b: 83). The activities of the DDII were also supported by the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), the official state-organised Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars, which had been formed by Suharto in 1975 as a means of establishing New Order control over Islamic political activity. In the early 1980s Suharto's support base was still the armed forces, although by the end of the decade he had become more closely aligned with other groups, including Islamic groups such as the MUI (Porter 2002: 78–79, 132–136; Olle 2009: 98). There were anti-New Order strands within the DDII,<sup>19</sup> while the MUI, despite being a New Order creation, incorporated elements that diverged from New Order orthodoxy. In order to secure the co-operation of a broad range of Islamic groups, the New Order had to make some concessions to the different factions. Possibly in distant East Timor the missionary activities of the DDII were tolerated (Bruinessen 1996: 24). However, the army's shift away from supporting the Catholic Church in East Timor did not translate into overt military support for the expansion of Islam there, and Islamic mission organisations were frustrated in their goals.

The resistance to the building of schools and worship places eventually led DDII leaders to decide to send children to Indonesia to be educated. However, the tension among decision-makers about the expansion of Islamic facilities and the role of Islam in East Timor was also apparent in relation to their attitude to the transfer of children to Indonesia. This tension probably accounts for the fact that the transfers were permitted as long as they were conducted in a low-key, almost secretive manner.

The public acknowledgement of the departure to Indonesia of Iqbal Menezes, the controversial convert from Uatolari, was an exception. According to Mario Carrascalão, had the removals become public knowledge, the program would have been questioned and scrutinised, both in East Timor and

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attention (conversation, Leiden, October 2007).

19 I have no information that children were transferred to radical institutions that harboured anti-New Order sentiments, such as the demand for an Islamic state. For a history of the DDII, see Boland (1982: 113–115), Bruinessen (2002; 2004).

Indonesia. He believes that if children from influential families had been sent away by the DDII, the families would have dared to challenge the transfer of their children. This probably accounts for the selection of children from remote districts of East Timor – Los Palos, Viqueque, Same, Suai – and from the poorest families, families with little access to power and more vulnerable to persuasion by DDII members and soldiers to hand over their children. Orlando de Araujo, village head for ten years till June 1999 of Kuluhun, the local suburb in Dili where the DDII established Yakin, its educational institution, was often invited to functions in the complex in his capacity as village head. He observed firsthand that the facilities at Yakin, the classrooms and accommodation for remote students, were quite adequate, although all of the teachers came from West Timor. Throughout the occupation, Orlando lived directly across the road from Yakin institution, yet despite this proximity and his contact with Yakin, he understood that the facilities catered for the children who lived there and was unaware that the institution had also been the channel for transferring many children to Indonesia.

The DDII had the support of members of the local East Timorese Arab community to set up the Yakin institution in 1982.<sup>20</sup> It was called the Nasrullah Islamic Welfare Foundation (Yayasan Kesejahteraan Islam Nasrullah), abbreviated to Yakin. On the site it built schools at various levels and student accommodation (*panti asuhan*) and MUI's East Timor headquarters, a large three-storey building that opened in 1997 (*Kompas Online* 1997).<sup>21</sup> A mosque was planned for construction on the site, but as a result of the opposition, permission was not forthcoming (Bazher 1995: 53). Thus Yakin was integrated with institutions and individuals hoping to expand Islamic activities in East Timor. The An-Nur Mosque Foundation and another organisation working in East Timor, the Hidayatullah Al-Ishlah Foundation, which had an office in Fatuhada in Dili, also sent small numbers of young children to Indonesia (*Suara Hidayatullah* 1995a; Aditjondro 2000: 136–137).<sup>22</sup>

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20 The DDII founders of Yakin in 1982 were Ustad Sumitro Mangkusamito, an Indonesian preacher from East Java, and Andi Baso Pangoriseng, an Indonesian businessman from Makassar. They worked together with the Arab East Timorese, Haji Abdullah Sagan and his brother Haji Salim Sagan, from a well-established Arab family in Dili. Salim Sagan was active in Yakin throughout the Indonesia occupation. The Sagrans were the titular holders of the land on which the Yakin facilities were constructed. The complex was destroyed in 1999 and five years later the following inscription over the entrance was still legible: 'Propinsi Timor Timur, Pendidikan dan Panti Asuhan SD Islam, SLTP Islam, SMK Islam Alma'un'.

21 The founders of Yakin were also foundational members of the MUI's Dili branch, established in 1982.

22 On Hidayatullah, see Bruinessen (2004).

While Yakin's main function was education, it was referred to in official publications as a social welfare organisation (Biro Pusat Statistik 1997: 112). There are a few references to Yakin's educational activities in the Islamic press, but none in the major national newspapers (*Media Dakwah* 1990: 54–55; 1998: 56–57; *Suara Hidayatullah* 1995a: 28; *Ummat* 1996b: 36). Ambarak Bazher's 1995 history of Islam in East Timor makes no reference to the indigenous children sent to Indonesia by Yakin, not even in the chapter on the development of Islamic education in East Timor; there is only an obscure reference in a table in the appendix (Bazher 1995: 112).<sup>23</sup> In contrast to the lack of information about the transfer of indigenous East Timorese children to Indonesia, Bazher lists the names of all 29 Arab East Timorese children sent there at the end of the 1970s by the Department of Religious Affairs, with the names of the three institutions in Java where they studied (Bazher 1995: 54–62).<sup>24</sup> The children sent to Indonesia by Yakin and the Department of Religious Affairs were alike in that they were East Timorese sent to Islamic institutions in Indonesia; it seems strange, therefore, that the author discloses all the details about the small number of children who, as Arab East Timorese, could be identified easily as Muslims, while the information about the transfer of the much larger number of indigenous children is presented so obscurely. One can only conclude that the author deliberately chose to dissimulate.

The transfer of indigenous children to Indonesia by religious groups was potentially an even more explosive issue in East Timor than building Islamic schools and mosques there. In 1995 local anger against the transfer of children erupted in Suai district. Hanafi Martins, an East Timorese preacher, was taken into police custody for trying to send 22 children from Daisua village to one of the Hidayatullah network of schools, recently constructed on the outskirts of Kupang, West Timor. As a young man Hanafi had been sent to Purworejo, Central Java, to be trained as an

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23 The appendix is a table with the heading, 'Children attending madrasah in East Timor'. One column in the table is headed 'sent to pesantren'. Since there were no pesantren in East Timor, this reference is almost certainly to children sent to pesantren in Indonesia. So according to Bazhir, in 1990 there were 74 children in pesantren in Indonesia.

24 In 1977 nine students (most at least 15 years of age) were sent to a pesantren in Pabelan, Muntilan, near Yogyakarta, while ten younger students were sent to two locations, Darussalam Pesantren in Biamis, West Java, and Cililin Pesantren in Bandung, West Java. Another group of ten students, most of them younger than 12, was sent later in the same year to At-Thahiriyah Pesantren, Kampung Melayu, South Jakarta, and the Asy-Syafi'iyah Pesantren, Jati Waringin, East Java. Most children belonged to the Arab families from Kampung Alor, although several were of Chinese descent and had converted to Islam.

Islamic preacher by Burhani Tjokro Handoko, the Direktur Jenderal Bimbingan Masyarakat (Dirjen Bimas), Director General of Islamic Community Leadership. When Hanafi returned to East Timor he worked for the Hidayatullah Al-Ishlah Foundation. The case was taken up by the police after the parents protested, and the children were returned (*Kompas* 1995; Aditjondro 2000: 136–137; *Media Dakwah* 1995c: 42–46; 1996: 15–16; *Suara Hidayatullah* 1995a: 28–29). The number of children sent to Indonesia by the Hidayatullah Al-Ishlah Foundation in East Timor was small (Aditjondro 2000: 136–137).<sup>25</sup> It seems quite possible that this foundation was sacrificed to protect and draw attention away from the activities of Yakin, which had the support of the MUI and transferred children on a much larger scale. At the time of the religious riots, Bishop Carlos Belo told the London-based Catholic Institute for International Relations that proselytising by Muslims may have fanned the riots and referred to 400 East Timorese children in Islamic schools in Java (Catholic Institute for International Relations 1993; Carey 1995: 11). No Indonesian leader engaged him in discussion about his comments; the only response mentioned in the press was that he surely was referring to the Hanafi Martins case, where Kupang, not Java, had been the intended destination for the children and in this case the children had been returned (*Media Dakwah* 1995c: 42–46).

## Motivation for transferring children

Like all those who sent children to Indonesia, Yakin and other Islamic institutions said they wanted to help the poor and backward East Timorese. They emphasised the benefits of the free education they offered and their contribution to development in East Timor. Nevertheless, if we look more closely at the operation of Yakin, it is evident that proselytising Islamic faith in East Timor was the main motivation for sending indigenous children to Indonesia. This was made explicit in a small low-key ceremony organised by Yakin before departure for Indonesia. The children had to take an oath promising to return home after they had completed their study in order to spread Islam in East Timor.<sup>26</sup> The purpose of sending them to Indonesia is also clear from the nature of the education most received,

25 Also Mohammad Iqbal Menezes (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004).

26 Haji Salim Sagran (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004) and Anwar da Costa (interview, Dili, 24 April 2004).

namely, to become Islamic teachers or preachers. Only in a few cases were children educated in disciplines that would help them contribute to broader development in East Timor.

We can also learn a lot about the motives for transferring children by looking at the receiving institutions in Indonesia and Yakin's rationale for selecting these institutions. The main condition for selecting an institution was that the receiving institution was willing to pay for the education and care of the East Timorese children it accepted. Thus, many of the institutions were those that cared for Indonesian orphans and children of the indigent. Yakin also chose institutions with few entrance criteria. Of course, institutions stipulated some criteria, such as the numbers they could accommodate and preferred age and sex. Institutions generally liked younger children, no older than ten years of age, as they were easier to influence and train. Most children sent by Yakin were under 15 and many were under ten years of age. Yakin generally did not use institutions that required evidence of children's performance at school and it did not set aside sufficient funds to follow-up children after they left East Timor; the responsibility for the children lay with receiving institutions. This manner of operating reflected Yakin's focus – to educate as many children as possible in Indonesia. If there were insufficient children already living in the Yakin complex in Dili when an offer arrived from an Indonesian institution, Yakin sent staff to the districts of East Timor in search of children who fulfilled the criteria.

Yakin sent children to institutions with a wide range of Islamic theological orientations; there was no systematic attempt to inculcate a particular position.<sup>27</sup> Many of the earliest placements were in Sulawesi and in East Java. The first preachers in East Timor came from the Al Fatah Darmo Mosque in Surabaya, East Java, and they probably had contacts who could help with placements (Bazher 1995: 61; *Media Dakwah* 1995a: 41–49). While some of the institutions, such as the Maccopa institution, were linked to the DDII, most of the institutions that received East Timorese children were run by national Islamic organisations, such as Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Persatuan Islam (Persis). Some private institutions established by wealthy individuals also received East Timorese children.<sup>28</sup> Muhammadiyah organises an extensive network

27 Alex Haryanto Freitas (interview, Bandung, 29 January 2004) and Mohammad Iqbal Menezes (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004).

28 Alex Haryanto Freitas (interview, Bandung, 29 January 2004) and DDII staff (interview, Bandung, 30 January 2004); Muhammadiyah, NU and Persis are national

of childcare institutions (*panti asuhan*) for poor children throughout Indonesia and many East Timorese children lived in these institutions which found suitable placements in nearby Islamic schools.<sup>29</sup> George Aditjondro, the only Indonesian academic who wrote, albeit briefly, about East Timorese children transferred to Indonesian Islamic institutions provided a list of some of the institutions in Java and Sulawesi (Aditjondro 2000: 135).<sup>30</sup>

The assistance which the childcare institutions received from the Islamic tax (*zakat*), in particular for the new East Timorese converts (*mualaf*), enabled many institutions in Indonesia to accept East Timorese children into their care. Paying *zakat* is one of the five obligations for Muslims; it is distributed to the poor and especially to new converts to Islam. The indigenous East Timorese children met these two criteria and those caring for them had a right to request funds from mosques and wealthy individuals and businesses, which were obliged to help. Being able to access these funds helps explain why Islamic institutions (*pesantren* and *panti asuhan*) were willing and able to accept East Timorese children.<sup>31</sup> By caring for these East Timorese children, the institutions combined religious fervour and nationalism; a religious obligation was fulfilled and support was given to Indonesia's nationalistic attempt to draw the East Timorese into the Indonesian family. Bandung and South Sulawesi were areas where many Muslim East Timorese children and students congregated because Indonesian Muslims in these strongholds of Islam

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organisations established in the early 20th century. Each has its own schools and pesantren for teaching their understanding of Islam. Muhammadiyah has many schools, which have 70% regular curriculum and 30% religion, while the proportions at pesantren are reversed. NU is famous for its live-in 'pondok' pesantren, especially in rural East Java, where it has the strongest following. Persis has a smaller following than the others and a more fundamentalist interpretation of doctrine (Ensiklopedi Islam 1993: Vol. 3 pp. 275,345, Vol. 4 p. 95). East Timorese children who lived in Muhammadiyah *panti asuhan*, attended a Muhammadiyah school or, more usually, a pesantren as a day student, and sometimes even a government school if they received a scholarship.

- 29 Haji Ety Syuryati, Secretary for Tabligh Wilayah, Muhammadiyah, Bandung, West Java (interview, Bandung, 30 January 2004); most Muhammadiyah *panti asuhan* are regular houses where a caretaker lives with a group of ten to 30 children, segregated by sex and often age.
- 30 The Indonesian version of Aditjondro's book is a significant update of the earlier English version with a similar title, *In the shadow of Mount Ramelau: the impact of the occupation of East Timor* (Leiden: Indonesian Documentation and Information Centre, 1994).
- 31 Yunus Arabah (interview, Dili, 3 May 2004) and Mohammad Iqbal Menezes (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004).

were generous in their assistance.<sup>32</sup> Suharto's Dharmais Foundation also contributed to the support of East Timorese children living in Indonesian institutions.

However, some indigenous East Timorese Muslims felt that the Arab East Timorese who organised the transfers treated them and their parents as second-class Muslims, as Muslims in Indonesia from Arab backgrounds have often thought themselves superior to non-Arab Muslims. In particular, the indigenous East Timorese criticised their continued designation as *mualaf* long after they had converted to Islam. They considered that they were 'commercialised' in order to obtain funds to promote the spread of Islam in East Timor, which was part of the strategy of Yakin's organisers to support integration.<sup>33</sup>

## Military support for Yakin

The military as an institution, as well as individual soldiers, supported the transfer of children to Islamic institutions in Indonesia. From the late 1970s devout soldiers helped DDII fulfil its mission activities. When they returned to Indonesia many took young East Timorese youths and placed them in Islamic institutions to be trained as teachers and preachers.<sup>34</sup> Many of these young East Timorese men, or their fathers, had worked as TBOs, for example Salanuddin (Raimiru) from Quelicai, Mohammad Miolo (Fernando Hornai) from Caiwati and Mohammad Johari (Bonifacio Moreira) from Uaitame, Quelicai, Baucau district.<sup>35</sup> Most of them were sent to the Darul Istiqomah Pesantren, established in 1970 in Maccopa sub-district, Maros, about 25 kilometres from Makassar in South Sulawesi. Although DDII in Indonesia does not usually build its own

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32 These two areas are traditional strongholds of Darul Islam (a movement which began soon after Indonesia's independence with the aim of establishing Indonesia as an Islamic state) and the DDII has links with them; but it was the generosity of sponsors, as much as any particular orientation of Islam, that attracted East Timorese Muslims to these two locations.

33 In 2004 there was conflict between the indigenous and Arab East Timorese Muslims, particularly over ownership of property and assets, including the land on which the Yakin complex stood, which had been donated by international benefactors from all over the Arab world to Yakin on behalf of the East Timorese *mualaf*.

34 Haji Paita Halim, ketua pengurus (head organiser), Sulthan Alauddin Mosque (interview, Makassar, 26 March 2003).

35 Mohammad Johari, who lived in the Maccopa *panti asuhan* but attended a private Islamic junior high school in Maros (interview, Dili, 20 March 2004).

educational facilities, the Makassar branch of the DDII has close links to this institution. The Darul Istiqomah Pesantren received many students from Sulawesi, but also from distant provinces, such as West Irian and the newly incorporated East Timor. The first East Timorese students arrived at the Darul Istiqomah Pesantren in the late 1970s (*Media Dakwah* 1991: 55–56).<sup>36</sup>

As we have seen, the DDII decided to build Yakin institution to facilitate its activities. The military gave the DDII access to a large block of land it had seized after the invasion, its previous Chinese owner having fled to Australia in 1975. Initially the location was used as a sub-district military command (*koramil*). Military support for Yakin continued throughout the occupation in the form of a military guard post with approximately 12 soldiers on rotational duty,<sup>37</sup> although this did not prevent damage to Yakin facilities during the religious riots in 1995 (*Media Dakwah* 1995f: 11–17; 1995e: 50–51).

Anecdotal evidence of military involvement in the transfer of children to Islamic institutions is supported by a secret military document, possibly originating from the zealous Islamic generals identified earlier, that was shown to an East Timorese parliamentarian in the mid-1980s by a senior Indonesian military officer, a Catholic, who was concerned about the practice.<sup>38</sup> It suggested that soldiers should promote the transfer of children in order to help the expansion of Islam in East Timor. Individual soldiers co-operated with this instruction by suggesting to parents that they send their children to Indonesia with Yakin, ‘suggestions’ that were difficult for parents to refuse. Abidin Haryanto from Quelicai, south of Baucau, was a TBO for a soldier who encouraged him to send his seven- and five-year-old daughters to Java with Yakin; the children left for East Java in 1993. Leonel Guterres, also from Quelicai, recalled that in 1995 the parents of a group of 13 children from poor families had been pressured by soldiers to hand their children into the care of Yakin. The military also used the Yakin program to transfer youths, including street children, whom it deemed likely participants in anti-integration demonstrations, just as it had done for the Department of Manpower program described in Chapter 3. Sudirman (Alacino), who came from Baguia in Baucau district,

36 I thank Samsuri for help with this reference. Also Haji Paita Halim, ketua pengurus (head organiser), Sulthan Alauddin Mosque (interview, Makassar, 26 March 2003).

37 Orlando de Araujo (interview, Kuluhun, Dili, 4 March 2004).

38 Anonymous (interview, Dili, 13 April 2004); it also suggested lowering the East Timorese birthrate by encouraging the use of birth control.

ran away to Dili at about 15 years of age. His parents were dead and he had trouble living with his relatives. He arrived in Dili with no money and spent the first night sleeping at the bus station where a soldier found him and immediately suggested he should join a group of children Yakin was about to send to Makassar. Sudirman felt that he had to comply as he had no other plans, but he did not understand what he was agreeing to.

Various sub-district military commanders (*danramil*), in Quelicai also supported transfers by Yakin, including using intimidation and manipulation to ensure that transfers proceeded. In 1994 a group of parents from Uaitame village in Quelicai appealed to East Timorese civilian leaders to return their children (25 in all, between the ages of eight and 12) who had been sent to Indonesia by Yakin against their wishes. Eusibio Jeronimo, the sub-district head of Quelicai, lodged a complaint on behalf of the parents with the governor, Abilio Soares, who called the parents to Dili. The sub-district military commander from Quelicai accompanied the parents, thus monitoring the governor's comments and ensuring that the parents felt intimidated.

The military also involved itself in this case through its advisor for social and political affairs. This staff member was appointed to the office of the district administrator to give political guidance, to monitor and control civilian affairs, and to ensure that conflict did not escalate and that the government position was followed. After the parents' visit to the governor, the district head of Baucau called them to a meeting at which the military advisor persuaded them to allow their children to stay in Indonesia. It is possible that the parents were deceived about the conditions of the free education offered to their children, learning only after the children's departure that they would have to convert to Islam; whatever the facts, the parents were denied their right to demand the return of their children.

Civilian leaders such as district and sub-district heads were merely puppets and were powerless to obtain justice for the East Timorese, including this group of parents. Eusibio had taken the parents' complaint directly to the governor because the children had already left East Timor; he considered that the transfers needed to be addressed urgently. He was summoned by the advisor for social and political affairs and reprimanded for reporting directly to the governor instead of through the 'proper channels', beginning at the local level. The demand that 'proper channels' should be followed was a typical means employed by military and New Order officials throughout Indonesia to thwart local discontent. In the

opinion of Loekman Soetrisno, a distinguished Indonesian academic, the official political channels in East Timor did not work for the East Timorese (Loekman Soetrisno 1995: 74). Even as governor, Mario Carrascalão was unsuccessful in securing, at one mother's request, the return of her child sent to Sulawesi by Lieutenant Colonel Azis Hasyam. Azis had connections with staff from various government departments who helped send children to Islamic institutions in Indonesia from the earliest years of the occupation.<sup>39</sup>

## Transfers by Yakin

Yakin's attention was not directed primarily to providing education on their premises in Dili, but to finding placements for the children in Islamic schools throughout Indonesia. Children lived and studied at Yakin usually only until a suitable placement was available in Indonesia. Yakin's function of channelling the children to Indonesia was similar to Seroja's in the late 1970s. Syamsul Bahari from Viqueque was nine years old when he was taken to Yakin by Alex Freitas Haryanto (Lukman), an older East Timorese convert to Islam who was home on holidays from Sulawesi and acting as a Yakin staff member. Syamsul's father had been a TBO from 1983, but five years later was killed by Indonesian soldiers. Syamsul spent one year studying at Yakin after which he was sent in a group of 32 children to Bandung, in 1989. Iqbal Menezes lived there in 1991 for three months until Yakin found a place for him in Malang. The two daughters of Abidin Haryanto, Siti Aminah (Amlia Soares) and Siti Khodijah (Olinda Soares), were aged seven and five years when they left for East Java in 1993, along with 30 children, many of them of a similar age; all these young children had been gathered together at Yakin to await their departure to Indonesia.

The earliest record of transfers of young indigenous East Timorese children to Islamic institutions dates from 1984 and they continued until 1999. Most of these transfers were conducted by Yakin, but its records were lost when the complex was destroyed in 1999. Haji Salim Sagan, the director during most of the Indonesian period, claims the organisation sent from 200 to 300 students to Indonesia, but this number is far too

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39 Azis, as Assistant to the Regional Administrative Secretary for Economy and Development, controlled the development budget; he was eventually arrested and imprisoned for misusing development funds (Saldanha 1994: 122; CAVR 2006: 4.4 No. 157).

low. His rehabilitated records in 2002 listed 51 Yakin-sponsored students still studying in Jakarta, but this number does not include all those in Bandung and Sulawesi or any of the children sent in earlier years, even those who were still there in 2002, such as the two daughters of Abidin Haryanto, mentioned above. In 1986 an East Timorese parliamentarian sighted a list of names of 80 to 100 children sent to Indonesia by Yakin during that year alone;<sup>40</sup> and the 400 East Timorese children in various Islamic institutions in Java referred to by Bishop Belo in 1993 did not include the greater number of children in Sulawesi. Iqbal Menezes, who completed a dissertation at the State Islamic University in Jakarta in 2002 about the history of Islamic mission in East Timor, puts the number of children sent by Yakin in the high hundreds and Al-Bana, another East Timorese student at the same institution from the mid-1990s, thought that the number would be at least 1,000. A DDII member in Makassar also confirmed that many hundreds of children were taken to Makassar, both by Yakin institution and also by soldiers who supported Yakin's program.<sup>41</sup> My own estimate, which accounts for children in all areas of Indonesia, is at least 1,000 children. Small numbers of children were also sent by the An-Nur and Hidayatullah Al-Ishlah Foundations and, as will be explained later, some East Timorese Muslims who had been sent to Indonesia by Yakin in the early years later took children to Indonesia on their own initiatives, outside the Yakin framework.

The An-Nur Foundation associated with the mosque in Dili, which had organised the transfer of 29 Arab East Timorese children in the late 1970s, also sent indigenous children to Indonesian institutions. The children sent by An-Nur were older and usually had completed junior high school. Unlike the children sent by Yakin, they were generally selected on the basis of merit and were usually more successful. The Foundation helped them with contacts to continue their education beyond high school. Julia completed her elementary education at a government school in Baucau, after which she studied at the An-Nur Junior High School in Dili. In 1992 she was selected on the basis of her achievement to go to Makassar, with 15 other girls and 15 boys, most of whom graduated from senior high school and some of whom went on to study in Malaysia.<sup>42</sup>

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40 Anonymous interview (Dili, 13 April 2004).

41 Haji Paita Halim, ketua pengurus (head organiser), Sulthan Alauddin Mosque (interview, Makassar, 26 March 2003).

42 Imam Syahid, (interview, Dili, 7 April 2004) and Julia (conversation, Baucau, 27 March 2004).

We turn now to consider the role in Islamic mission of the young East Timorese men, sent by Indonesian soldiers and public servants to Maccopa institution in Sulawesi and other places in Indonesia. These young men were the first generation of indigenous East Timorese Muslims. They returned to East Timor in the late 1980s and early 1990s and had an important role to play in organising the transfer of indigenous children to Indonesia. On completion of their training, the DDII and Yakin sent them back to East Timor to spread Islamic faith. We have already encountered Hanafi Martins who was educated in Java and returned to work in Daisua village in Suai; he worked for Hidayatullah, rather than Yakin, but the pattern was the same. The indigenous preachers worked alongside the Indonesian DDII preachers already stationed in the districts, teaching and preaching and helping to organise children to Indonesia (Bazher 1995: 62). They began by persuading members of their own families to convert to Islam. In 1990, ten years after leaving East Timor, Fernando Hornai, who took the Muslim name Mohammad Miolo, returned to Caiwati, Viqueque district. He built a simple mosque from local construction materials and, by 1999, 30 of a total of 520 families had become Muslims, most of whom were his relatives.<sup>43</sup> This pattern was repeated in other villages where the indigenous East Timorese preachers lived and worked.

Yakin organisers claimed that they sent only children whose parents were Muslims to Indonesia. Indeed, many of the children were from Muslim families, such as the children of the first preachers and teachers; others were from among the small number of converts in concentration camps when all East Timorese had to adopt a religion. Older children sent by Yakin confirm that being a Muslim was a condition of acceptance by Yakin and that, before they joined the program, they had to agree to become Muslims or to convert. Organisers told parents that with an Indonesian education their children would become someone of note (*jadi orang*)<sup>44</sup> and some parents were probably persuaded that they would gain respect and status among Indonesians if they and their children converted to Islam.

Despite the organisers' claims, Yakin also sent many children from non-Muslim families, especially from poor families, and orphaned and fatherless children, mostly from remote areas of East Timor. Parents and guardians who were poor were more easily intimidated by soldiers and

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43 Manuel Luis Guterres, Caiwati village head, Ossu, Viqueque, and Herman Fernandes (interviews, 26 March, 2004).

44 Haji Salim Sagran (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004).

more susceptible to incentives, such as the offer of free education and care of their children, and of food, clothes and even monetary incentives for themselves, if they sent their children with Yakin.<sup>45</sup> Many Catholic parents were not happy that their children had to convert. The family of Boavida, who fled East Timor with Yakin as a means of avoiding suspicion of involvement in anti-integration activities, was not happy that he became a Muslim.<sup>46</sup> Villagers in Caiwati, Viqueque district, are still indignant about the four young children from their village whom they said were secretly made Muslims the night before they were taken away to Indonesia by Yakin staff members.<sup>47</sup>

The children usually travelled to Indonesia in a group accompanied by an East Timorese Yakin staff member, often an older student, such as Johari, Miolo and Salanuddin, returning to his institution after a vacation period. Sometimes Yakin sought the help of Indonesians willing to accompany children to their destinations. In 1992, for example, a Javanese businessman with a branch of his business in Dili took Siti Khodijah from Luro and two other girls and seven boys when he returned to Surabaya in East Java. On arrival in Surabaya, the ten students lived in his house for two weeks while he checked their placements with the institutions that had agreed to receive them. He then accompanied the three girls to Pesantren Putri Al Taqwa in Tangerang, near Jakarta, and the boys to Pacirin in East Java.

The state gave its support to transfers through the MUI, whose East Timor branch wrote letters of introduction on behalf of the children for Yakin staff to carry to institutions in Indonesia. In some areas MUI helped directly in finding placements, such as the Bandung branch in West Java, which found places for a group of 32 children in 1988.<sup>48</sup> DDII staff in branch offices throughout Indonesia also helped contact institutions willing to receive East Timorese children.<sup>49</sup> In some cases the children arrived in a particular town without suitable placements arranged, sometimes because the offers had expired and the places filled by others. The Yakin staff member accompanying the children then travelled around lobbying Islamic institutions until places were found.<sup>50</sup> Usually children were accepted into institutions in groups of three or four.

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45 Hermenegildo Fernandes and other villagers (interview, Caiwati, 26 March 2004).

46 Fernando Jose Freitas Soares (interview, Quelicai, 25 March 2004).

47 Hermenegildo Fernandes and other villagers (interview, Caiwati, 26 March 2004).

48 Syamsul Bahari, Al-Bana Concelcao and Alex Haryanto Freitas (interviews, Baucau, Jakarta and Bandung, 2004).

49 DDII staff (interviews, Bandung, 30 January 2004).

50 Sidiq Soares Lemorai (interview, Dili, 5 May 2004).

Sometimes the children were taken into the homes of benefactors who paid the children's school fees and provided them with free lodgings in exchange for the student doing tasks for the family. In 1988, when Yunus Arabah arrived in Bandung, one of a large group of East Timorese children, his story was broadcast on the radio and in the media and a local resident offered him a place in their home.

As with children sent to Indonesia by Dharmais Foundation, the agreements Yakin made with parents were informal and parents were often not properly informed about the departure of their children to Indonesia. Like some of the families who gave their children to Dharmais, many parents now claim that they thought their children were going to study at the Yakin complex in Dili, and they did not give Yakin permission to send them to Indonesia. Paulino and Faustina Hornai from Caiwati, Viqueque, sent their son Mahmud Mathius Hornai to Yakin in 1992 and learned that he was in Indonesia after his departure.<sup>51</sup> If time permitted, older students who were about to leave were sent home to ask permission from their parents, but younger students who could not travel alone were unable to do so. Information was usually passed to the parents by a preacher or a relative, but often not until the child had left East Timor.<sup>52</sup> Most parents and children said that there were no formal, written agreements with Yakin, although the evidence is conflicting. Salim Sagan claimed that there were written agreements, and Vicente Pereira, from Garuca village in Quelicai, Baucau, whose daughter Maisaro was sent by Yakin to Sulawesi in the 1980s, said he signed a written agreement.<sup>53</sup>

The number of children transferred away from a particular village may not have been large, but their departure had a significant impact on the communities from which the children came. One of the complaints from village leaders and elders was that Yakin often took children without consulting them. It is a normal practice throughout Indonesia for visitors to inform village heads of their presence in a village and to take their leave from them, even more so if members of the community will be away from the village for many years.<sup>54</sup> Another concern amongst villagers was that if

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51 Paulino and Faustina Hornai (interview, Caiwati, 26 March 2004); the parents claim they found out about their son being sent to Indonesia when they received a letter from him in 1999.

52 UNICET staff (Mohammad Iqbal Menezes, Muslim Leo, Anwar da Costa) (interviews, Dili, April 2004).

53 Salim Sagan (interview, Dili, 1 April 2001) and Vicente Pereira (conversation, Dili, 9 May 2004).

54 Agostinho Moreira, village head, Uaitame, Quelicai (interview, Uaitame, 2 May 2004).

their children became Muslims they would not fulfil their traditional social obligations, for example in relation to burial rites; they might also not follow other prescriptions, such the taboos applying to choosing marriage partners and paying the bride price.<sup>55</sup> Villagers exaggerated the number of Muslims and talked about ‘Islamic villages’ when the proportion of Muslims was only small – 30 out of 520 families in Caiwati, Viqueque district, and only 1% of the villagers in Uaitame where Johari worked.<sup>56</sup> The concern was as much about the break in village harmony and social solidarity as it was about the fact that the children were educated as Muslims.

## Treatment in Indonesia

Yakin, through its field staff, mainly the older East Timorese students, tried to ensure that the East Timorese children stayed on at their institutions in Indonesia to complete their education. This was what the children had promised in the oath they made before leaving East Timor. Young children were discouraged from communicating with their parents because it made them homesick and distracted them from studying. They were not provided with trips back to East Timor in case they did not return after their vacation.<sup>57</sup> The Al-Taqwa Girls’ Pesantren in Tangerang did, however, pay for Siti Khodijah from Luro and the two other East Timorese girls to visit home in 1994 after three years absence. One student at an institution in West Java told me that he missed his family and wished he could return home for the Idul Fitri Islamic celebration at the end of fasting, as did all the other Indonesian students living at his institution each year. The organiser of the institution said that he offered trips home to all the children, including the East Timorese children, as there was money for their travel costs for this important religious and family celebration, but that the East Timorese children always rejected his offers, as they had been instructed to by Yakin’s East Timorese staff.<sup>58</sup> The receiving institutions were probably unaware of the situation of the families in East Timor and the political dynamics leading to the children being sent there – and kept there – in much the same way that the institutions that had received children from Seroja had little understanding of the children in their care.

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55 Raimiru da Conceição (interview, Quelicai, 25 March 2004); anonymous interview (Sulawesi, 2003); see also *Suara Hidayatullah* (1995a: 28).

56 Agustinho Moreira, village head, Uaitame, Quelicai (interview, Uaitame, 2 May 2004).

57 Alex Haryanto Freitas (interview, Bandung, 29 January 2004).

58 Staff and students at the Sumur Bandung panti asuhan and Alex Haryanto Freitas (interviews, Bandung, 29 January 2004).

As a result, the children lost contact not only with their families but also with their East Timorese culture and languages. They were educated as Muslims and had to adopt Islamic faith: they were given Islamic names, which some combined with their East Timorese names, and wore Islamic dress – the girls usually wore the *jilbab* (the Islamic headscarf) in the style of Indonesian women. Most were sincere about their faith, although that was not uniformly the case. One Indonesian Catholic who lived close to an Islamic institution in Indonesia often met East Timorese children from the institution. They had Muslim names and wore Islamic dress, although they told him they were still Catholics. Some of them would ‘coincidentally’ turn up at his house for the Christian celebrations of Easter and Christmas, the girls removing their Islamic headdress only when safely inside his house.<sup>59</sup>

There was no procedure for central record-keeping, even though it was the responsibility of Yakin to keep track of the children and keep parents informed. Certainly it was a demanding task to crosscheck enrolments with individual institutions, as the children were scattered in small groups throughout Indonesia. East Timorese staff of Yakin or older East Timorese students in Indonesia conveyed information to parents in East Timor,<sup>60</sup> but even young children were moved around and sometimes ran away to other places, making it difficult to track them and, inevitably, some children fell through the gaps. One young boy, Igidio, who was sent to Jakarta by Yakin when he was in the first year of elementary school, could not remember where he came from or anything about his parents, and the older students did not know how they could help him.<sup>61</sup> Helping children maintain contact with their parents was not the responsibility of other students but of the organisers of the institution; in this regard Yakin was negligent in its duty of care.<sup>62</sup>

As a consequence of the poor reporting system, information that did reach parents was often minimal and out-of-date, and sometimes Yakin staff members kept parents ignorant of their children’s situation. Yakin staff members often worried that other parents, on hearing negative stories, might decide against sending their children away. This lack of information and transparency usually went unchallenged as long as there were no serious problems. But the death of children in distant places showed how ill-

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59 Anonymous interview (Makassar, March 2003).

60 Alex Haryanto Freitas (interview, Bandung, 29 January 2004) and Mohammad Iqbal Menezes (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004) and others.

61 Al-Bana Concelcao (interview, Jakarta, 17 January 2004).

62 This was also the observation of Julio Pinto, East Timor Secretary of State for Defence since 2008 (interview, Dili, 5 May 2004).

prepared and unwilling Yakin was to fulfil its responsibilities. Ismail from Uatolari, in Viqueque district, died of illness at the Al Mukmin Pesantren in Ngruki near Solo, Central Java, about a year after his arrival in 1992 or 1993. Taufik, the East Timorese preacher who had organised his departure, did not inform the parents of their son's death for almost a year. According to one East Timorese who was in Java at the time, Ismail's parents knew that their son was in Java, but when the parents belatedly received the news of their son's death, they were angry and accused Taufik of sending Ismail there without their consent. As Ismail's father had a job in the governor's office, with more influence than the average parent of children sent to Indonesia by Yakin, his outspoken complaints resulted in Taufik having to leave Uatolari.<sup>63</sup> In another case a family had sent three of their children to Surabaya with Yakin. One of the children died, but Yakin refused to assist the family to visit their child's grave. After independence the family requested their two other children be returned to East Timor, but again Yakin refused to help.<sup>64</sup>

Many East Timorese children were exposed to danger because Yakin did not monitor their movement away from their original placements. Although I am unable to estimate the numbers, it was quite common for students to leave their institutions or to be transferred to other institutions. Often children were unable to adjust to the discipline and demands of an Islamic institution. The physical conditions in which they lived were no different from those of other Indonesian children in the institutions; they all usually had to work hard to provide for themselves and pay their school fees. However, the culture, and especially the style, of Islamic education were unfamiliar to East Timorese. The contrast between the freedom of life in a mountain village in East Timor and the strict discipline of study and long hours spent daily in chanting prayers and reading the Koran in Arabic was often too demanding for East Timorese children and led to defiance and arguments with the organisers of the institutions. Many moved out of the institutions they had been sent to, sometimes with and at other times without the permission of the organisers. Sometimes they went to another institution, if they could find one prepared to take them in, while some ran away without informing their carers. Abdul Kholiq, who was sent to Java by Yakin in 1992 when he was seven years old, moved between several institutions. Initially he was sent with 30 other East Timorese children to the Baitulamin childcare institution

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63 UNICET staff, Mohammad Iqbal Menezes, Muslim Leo, Anwar da Costa (interviews, Dili, April 2004) and Sidiq Soares Lemora (interview, Dili, 5 May 2004).

64 Syamsul Bahari (interview, Baucau, 23 April 2004); eventually through other avenues the parents were helped to make the trip to Surabaya.

in Bareng, Jombang, East Java and was then sent by Baitulamin him to a Muhammadiyah institution, also in Jombang. Because of conflict at this institution, Abdul Kholiq was sent to another Muhammadiyah institution in Rungkut, Surabaya, where he was again unhappy, so in 2000, now 14, he ran away. He took a job as the nightwatchman at a small telephone kiosk in Surabaya where he ate and slept and helped to clean the nearby school, earning enough to pay his school fees until the telephone kiosk was closed a year later and he had to drop out of school.

Many Muslim East Timorese students whose placements collapsed gravitated to Bandung or Makassar in search of solidarity and support from older East Timorese students. Abdul Kholiq, like the children taken to Indonesia by soldiers, did not have the resources to return home and Yakin provided no alternatives for students unable to adjust to life in the institutions. One 15-year-old student who ran away from an institution in Makassar in 1986 was afraid of being caught and returned to the institution. He approached a Catholic priest who took him in and paid for his fare to return to East Timor.<sup>65</sup> Not all managed to find another institution or to join up with older East Timorese or find someone who could help them. In Bandung there are stories of young East Timorese living on the streets; others became involved in crime and, almost certainly, in prostitution.<sup>66</sup>

Yakin promised only to support students until they had finished high school,<sup>67</sup> but, having lived in Indonesia for many years, some students were uncertain about returning to East Timor. During the 1990s, many East Timorese Muslim students in Bandung and elsewhere in Indonesia sought help to continue their study from private benefactors and donations from mosques. In this way they were able to provide for their tertiary education and to help younger students. As more students moved to Bandung, the financial and psychological demands on the older students living there increased. Some of the students who moved there, like Abdul Kholiq, were dissatisfied with their institutions and ran away, while others wanted help to find a new placement or continue their study. Some were homesick and came to Bandung for the company of other East Timorese and many suffered from stress because of the length of separation from their families. In 1994 Syamsul Bahari contacted Yakin asking for assistance but received

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65 Catholic priest (conversation, Makassar, March 2003).

66 Dahlan Ramli, Badan Taknur Mesjid Mujahidin (interview, Bandung, 30 January 2004) and Mohammad Iqbal Menezes (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004).

67 Haji Salim Sagan (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004); this level of education was probably deemed sufficient for them to become teachers in the lower levels of Islamic schools.

no response. The Bandung students then decided to form the Ikatan Pelajar Mahasiswa Islam Timor Timur (Ipmitim), an association of East Timorese Islamic university and school students which functioned like the student organisations described in Chapter 3. In order to help younger students, they contacted receiving institutions directly, operating in much the same way as Yakin had by requesting institutions to accommodate a small number of East Timorese children in need of a placement. Over time Ipmitim developed links with many institutions throughout West Java who took in East Timorese children and they received assistance from the DDII and MUI in Bandung.<sup>68</sup> On special days, such as the celebration of Idul Fitri, Ipmitim organised activities for all the Islamic East Timorese students in the Bandung area, thus enabling them to keep in contact with one another. By default, Ipmitim took over the responsibility of Yakin and became the point of contact for institutions in relation to younger East Timorese children at institutions.<sup>69</sup>

Older students in Makassar in Sulawesi also found sponsors to enable them to stay on in Indonesia and continue their study. In the early 1990s they set up their own accommodation facility in Makassar, the Panti Asuhan Al-Anshar, under the leadership of Mohammad Johari. According to Johari, the children felt more at home living with older East Timorese who understood their language and culture. The strict regime of the Islamic institutions was adapted and the children at Al-Anshar attended Islamic schools only as day students. Al-Anshar attracted other East Timorese besides students living in Sulawesi, and it became a home away from home for them as well. East Timorese sent by Yakin to other institutions in Sulawesi often left their institutions to join Al-Anshar. At times there were more than a hundred East Timorese of all ages living there.<sup>70</sup> Johari funded Al-Anshar by requesting donations from mosques and local businesses, such as the well-known Makassar business, Bosowa. According to many students who had lived in Makassar, it was easy to garner donations, just as it was in Bandung. Johari obviously proved to be a successful lobbyist, when in July 1995 he received a donation of Rp80 million (approximately \$US32,000 at that time) from the Japanese government for the construction of a childcare institution (*Suara Pembaruan* 1997). Johari regularly returned to East Timor to collect children, especially from Quelicai district and his own village,

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68 The institutions were located in places such as Sukabumi, Ciamis, Tasikmalaya, Cianjur, Purwokerto, Cirebon, Majalenka, Sumedang, Bogor and Banten, as well as in the city of Bandung itself.

69 Syamsul Bahari (interview, Baucau, 23 April 2004).

70 Teodoro Soares (interview, Dili, 26 April 2004).

Uaitame. He offered parents a free education for their children and took the children directly to his Al-Anshar institution in Sulawesi, without first sending them to Yakin. Al-Anshar was like a small business enterprise: its children had to work hard to support themselves and run the institution. Some of the children claimed they did not see many improvements after the Japanese government donation in anything other than the standard of living enjoyed by Johari.<sup>71</sup>

Students in Jakarta faced problems in finding fees to continue with university study and, in comparison with Bandung and Makassar, fewer younger students congregated there looking for help. In 1995 Abdul Malik Soares, a Muslim East Timorese, established Koordinator Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (Kormantim), to help with finding scholarships. The following year Amien Rais, at the time the head of Muhammadiyah, promised Kormantim a hundred scholarships, ten per year for ten years, for East Timorese to study at the Muhammadiyah University of Indonesia (UMI) in Jakarta. In 1997 a local Indonesian Islamic welfare foundation, Yayasan Amanah Ummat, provided the East Timorese students with a two-storey building near UMI to use as accommodation. The students also organised a common kitchen with funds provided by the foundation.<sup>72</sup>

## Protestants and child transfers

Scores of East Timorese children were also sent to Indonesia by a Protestant organisation. Although the numbers were small, the organisation's treatment of children in Indonesia and their motives for transferring them were similar to those of Muslim organisations. The Protestant organisation and the children affected reappear in Chapter 5, so it is helpful to understand these transfers (CAVR 2006: 7.8.4 No. 398).

The transfers were not an official program of any particular Protestant Church in Indonesia, nor of the Gereja Kristen di Timor Timur (GKTT), the Protestant Church in East Timor. They were organised by Rev Paulus da Costa, an East Timorese GKTT minister from Matata in Ermera district, and Cornelius Banoe, a businessman from Kupang who lived in Matata until the 1999 referendum. In the 1990s they established the Cinta Damai Foundation, which sent approximately 60 young children to West Timor.

71 Mohammad Johari (interview, Dili, 20 March 2004) and Sudirman (interview, Dili, 9 May 2004).

72 Al-Bana Concelcao (interview, Jakarta, 17 January 2004).

The children were cared for in the childcare institution associated with the Oeba Ebenhaezer Protestant Church, Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT), in Kupang. Cornelius Banoe placed some of these children in foster homes in West Timor, where they often worked as household servants in exchange for their school fees. Some children worked as street sellers and as farm labourers and not all attended school.<sup>73</sup>

The Cinta Damai Foundation, like the Islamic foundations, wanted to help the children from the remote, impoverished district of Ermera to receive a superior, Indonesian education. Many ministers of the Protestant church in East Timor supported integration. Da Costa probably believed that raising children as Protestants was good for an East Timor integrated with Indonesia and also for his own prestige and position in relation to Indonesians and he was assisted in his efforts by Protestants from Kupang.

Parents from Ermera were attracted by the offer from Cinta Damai Foundation, but, as we have seen with the other institutions transferring children, the foundation did not keep the parents well-informed, even though West Timor's proximity made it somewhat easier to maintain contact. The foundation did not request parental permission to place the children in foster care and parents thought that their children were living in the institution run by the church. Like other foundations, Cinta Damai considered that transferring children to Indonesia was an appropriate response to the poverty and backwardness of the children and their families and it was naïve about the wider implications of transferring children and the responsibilities involved.

## Conclusion

The New Order's policy of requiring all Indonesians to adopt one of the officially approved religions motivated religious groups to expand their conversion missions; simultaneously they accrued political favour and the possibility of influencing the course of integration. The Catholic Church benefited most from the New Order's policy, with the majority of the population becoming adherents of Catholicism, whereas those engaged in Islamic mission struggled to establish a following in the territory.

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73 Cinta Damai sent 23 children to Kupang in 1991, including da Costa's son. Fifteen were of primary school age and six not yet at school. Groups of about 20 were sent in 1995 and 1998 (Francisco da Conceição Guterres (interview, Ermera, 17 Juni 2003), Mrs Sin Kapitan, Panti Asuhan GMIT, Oeba (9 February 2004) and Cornelius Banoe (interview, Kupang, 9 February 2004).

Many Indonesian Muslims believed that the spread of Islam amongst the indigenous population would advance the acceptance of the Indonesian presence in East Timor and that indigenous East Timorese Muslims would help to diminish Catholicism as a marker of East Timorese identity and the sense that Islam represented the Indonesian oppressor. Further, increasing the number of indigenous Muslims would help justify the building of mosques and schools to meet the religious needs of all Muslims, including the thousands of Indonesian Muslims in East Timor to implement integration.

The unfavourable climate for the growth of Islam in East Timor provided an incentive for Islamic mission organisations to send young East Timorese children to Indonesia to be educated in Islamic religious schools. Away from their social and cultural environments, the East Timorese children were educated in a way that gave them a new identity and new allegiances. On completion of their education they were expected to return to East Timor and disseminate their faith.

The tension in the position of New Order policy makers towards non-Catholic mission in East Timor was reflected in the conduct of the transfers by Islamic organisations. Although the authorities restricted the construction of Islamic schools and places of worship in East Timor, the institution that conducted most of these transfers had a wide support base – individual soldiers, the military as an institution, public servants, senior officials from nationwide Islamic bodies, staff of the Department of Religious Affairs, and, most actively, the Arab Muslim East Timorese who organised the transfers at a local level. In order not to draw attention to its activities, the organisation conducted the transfers in a low-key, almost secretive manner, selecting orphans, the children of widows and the children of poor families from remote districts.

The mission organisations that sent children to Indonesia exploited the vulnerability of indigenous East Timorese parents and their children. In some cases parents were coerced and forced to accept the transfer of their children against their wishes. Arab East Timorese who ran the main institution gave the institution credibility as a local East Timorese foundation; the organisers were often, however, more concerned about ensuring that the children remained in Indonesia until the completion of their study than about the welfare of the children and responding to their needs.

Indigenous young East Timorese children were sent to Indonesia until the end of the occupation, at least 1,000 in total. During the last years of the New Order it became increasingly difficult for Muslims, including the

East Timorese converts to Islam, to carry out their mission activities and to build mosques and religious schools in East Timor. With independence for East Timor and the end of Indonesian colonial rule, the children's usefulness in extending Indonesian influence in East Timor also came to an end. As we shall see in the following chapter, after independence for East Timor many Muslim East Timorese children were left abandoned in institutions throughout Indonesia.

## Zacarias Pereira's story<sup>1</sup>

I was born in November 1986. My mother died in 1996 when I was in the third class of the elementary school in Tibar [just west of Dili]. One of the teachers at the school was Mr Budiato from Indonesia who began teaching at the school in the early 1990s. Because we were poor, Mr Budiato invited me to live with his family, doing jobs for them and helping to mind his young daughter. In exchange he paid my school fees.

As the time for the referendum in 1999 approached Mrs Budiato was afraid, so Mr Budiato took her back to their home in Magelang in Java. I helped them carry their belongings to the harbor in Dili. Then Mr Budiato returned to Tibar. Not long afterwards he said that if I wanted to be safe I should go with him to Java to go to school. He said that I could continue living with his family and they would help me with school fees. He told me that when it was safe in East Timor I could return home.

About three weeks before the referendum was due to take place he took me to Dili. The day before the boat to Java was due to depart I went with Mr Budiato to look for someone; he didn't say who he was looking for but we did not find them. Then we went together to the home of an East Timorese woman who had three children. I didn't hear what Mr Budiato said to her. The following day Mr Budiato took me to the harbor. There we met up with the woman and the three children; two of the children were a brother and sister from Ermera, a bit older than me. Mr Budiato gave me Rp200,000 saying it was to buy books and shoes. Then he left me, promising that he would return before the boat left to give me the address and telephone number of his wife in Magelang. He told me that when I arrived I should contact her and she would arrange to meet me. However, he never came back and since that time I have never had any contact with him. I travelled to Java with that woman and the group of children. I was confused and didn't know what else I should do; I was only twelve years old.

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1 Interview, Dili, 5 May 2004.

When the boat arrived in Jakarta, Hasan Basri met us. I discovered that the people I had travelled with were all his relatives. I think Mr Budiato had organised beforehand for me to go with Hasan Basri. But he never told me that before I left Dili. Hasan Basri took us to Bandung where we stayed for one week in his house – there were about twenty children altogether. Many of them were related to Hasan Basri; some of them were quite small and their parents were still in East Timor.

A Javanese religious man, a Haji, visited us and Hasan Basri asked him to help find places for us in an Islamic boarding school, pesantren. Some of the children were sent to Bogor and Tasikmalaya, as well as other places I can't remember. The Haji took me and Nur Hikmah, one of the two children from Ermera who travelled with us on the boat, to Majalengkah, near Cirebon in West Java. Her brother Manuel (Abdul Rahman) was sent to Tasikmalaya. He cried because he couldn't be with his sister, but the Haji said it was better if we didn't all stay together otherwise we would influence each other. I think Hasan Basri thought that we might run away together. At the time I thought that I was being taken to Mr Budiato's home, because I thought that Majalengkah was the same as Magelang. I was very disappointed.

In Majalengkah I started studying at the junior high school and was there for three years, from 1999 to 2002. I lived with the teacher who taught Islamic religion (ustad) in his house behind the pesantren. Nur lived in the house of another religious teacher. I helped in the house and I was able to go to school.

The pesantren was run by Persatuan Islam (Persis). We studied a lot about Islamic religion and I became a Muslim. I was happy with the study and I wanted to become a Muslim. Before I went to Java I had not been baptized. When I lived with Mr Budiato he often went to the mosque in Komoro. Once I went with him, but I waited outside.

While I was in Majalengkah I had no information about my family. I saw on the television that East Timor became independent, in 2002. I felt sad because now I couldn't go home and I didn't know how it was with my father and my family. The ustad told me not to be sad. He said that when I had completed my study I could go back to East Timor. They never said anything else about East Timor or about my parents. Nur was also sad and wanted to know about her parents.

I had never talked with Hasan Basri about Mr Budiato. So after the first year in Java during the long vacation I went to Hasan Basri's house, but he had already moved. The following year during the vacation once again I tried to find him. This time I had heard that he lived in Sumedang, near Bandung. But when I asked him about Mr Budiato he said he didn't know him. During my third year in Majalengkah, in 2002, once again I returned to Sumedang.<sup>2</sup> There were about ten other East Timorese children who lived in various pesantren around Bandung who also had gathered at Basri's house. By chance I met a foreign journalist at Basri's place who said he would take a letter from me to my father in East Timor. That is how my father found out where I was. During that vacation I also met with staff from the UNHCR who told me that my father was searching for me and had asked help from the UNHCR to find me. They told me that my father was going to come to pick me up and take me home. But I did not believe that my father would come there.

Just in case I decided to go back to Majalengkah and collect my belongings and returned to Sumedang. I began attending the pesantren in Sumedang. Nur also returned to Sumedang. After three months, in October 2002, my father came with the UNHCR to collect me. With the UNHCR staff was a policeman and staff from the social welfare department.

Hasan Basri gathered together all the East Timorese children staying with him to meet with the UNHCR staff. Before the meeting he said to me, 'Even if your father comes to meet you, you should stay here and not go back to East Timor. It's better to complete your study first'. But he did not forbid me to go home with my father.

At the meeting Hasan Basri asked us, 'Who wants to return to East Timor?' Another mother had come with my father to collect her three children. The only ones who raised their hands were me and one of her three children, Syamsuddin Abe. This woman, Domingas, was the older sister of Hasan Basri's wife. No other children dared to raise their hands, but I think that if their parents had come to collect them they would have wanted to go back home. As the UNHCR vehicle was leaving, one of the other children, Abe from Ossu, ran down the road taking a shortcut leading out of the complex. He hid along the side of the road until the UNHCR car passed then stopped

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2 Hasan Basri established his own pesantren in Sumedang.

it and asked be taken home. At that time he was not attending school, just helping in the gardens. So there were three of us who went home.

When I got back to Dili the UNHCR helped me so that I could begin school at the 30 August Junior High School in Comoro. But I was not happy there because I wanted to go to a school with Islamic teaching. So I moved to the An-Nur Junior High School run by the An-Nur mosque.'



**Zacarias**

Zacarias, left, and Johnny at the institution run by Hasan Basri, Sumedang, Bandung, 2002

© David O'Shea, Dateline, SBS television (Australia)

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## *Chapter 5*

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### **Separations after the referendum**

The relationship between Indonesia and East Timor broke down entirely when East Timor rejected Indonesia's offer of autonomy in a secret ballot organised by the United Nations. New Order officials had confidently placed their faith in their own propaganda; from the beginning of the integration project they had asserted that the East Timorese would accept integration if they experienced the material benefits of Indonesian development. The military was angry and bitterly disappointed by their rejection by the East Timorese and the sudden end of the integration project. The terror perpetrated by the military at the end of the project was not a new experience for the territory, as throughout the occupation the East Timorese had been subjected to extreme military tactics. Up to half the population had been displaced during the late 1970s and Fretilin supporters and members had been summarily killed. In the weeks following the announcement of the referendum result in early September 1999, approximately 1,400 East Timorese who supported independence were killed and up to 250,000 East Timorese were forced out of the territory into squalid camps, mostly over the border in West Timor (CAVR 2006: 7.5.5 No. 246).

The destruction of 70% of the physical infrastructure, almost all of the much-vaunted development that Indonesia had so generously shared with the East Timorese, showed the colonial nature of the relationship in its crudest form. Because development did not produce the hoped-for results, its fabric would not be left for the ungrateful East Timorese. The people forcibly removed to Indonesia and held there by militias would demonstrate to the world that a large proportion of the East Timorese population feared an East Timor without Indonesia. During the chaotic situation created by the military, dependent children were intentionally separated from their families and children who had already been forcibly evacuated were also taken from the camps. This chapter describes the separation of children from their families in the final stages of Indonesia's East Timor project.

The gradual dismantling of the New Order in Indonesia after the fall of Suharto and independence in East Timor signalled the beginning of a new era in the relationship between the two countries. The relationship shifted from that of the coloniser and the colonised to a relationship between two independent and democratic nations. Indonesian officials were initially reluctant to help the children separated after 1999, but after several years they began to take up the responsibility and fulfil their obligations towards the children. This chapter also shows that the change in the relationship has opened the possibility for reunions between children and their parents separated in the preceding decades.

## The end of the East Timor project

The forced resignation of Suharto on 21 May 1998 led to many democratic changes in Indonesia. Within a month of Suharto's departure, President BJ Habibie offered the East Timorese a popular ballot on a special autonomy package and in January the following year promised that if the East Timorese rejected the offer, Indonesia would 'let go' of East Timor. At the ballot on 30 August 1999, 78.5% of the population rejected Indonesia's offer of autonomous government, thus paving the way for the territory to achieve independence after centuries of colonial rule (Greenlees and Garran 2002: 196; Alatas 2006: 133–158).<sup>1</sup>

Many Indonesians were disappointed with the popular rejection and found the break painful. They felt that they had acted generously towards the East Timorese in helping to develop the territory and that East Timor was 'part of their self-consciousness' (Alatas 2006:xii). The Department of Foreign Affairs had expended enormous effort since 1975 to try to gain international acceptance of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. Senior Indonesian officials were critical of Western nations, especially Australia, which changed their position on supporting integration (Alatas 2006: 143, 148–150, 240), and they placed part of the blame for the defeat of the integration vote on the bias of UNAMET, the UN body responsible for conducting the vote (Robinson 2003: 5.5 pp. 80, 12, 264–265; *Republika Online* 1999).<sup>2</sup> In Indonesia an outburst of nationalism was expressed in anti-United Nations and anti-Western sentiment. The change in the relationship between Indonesia and East Timor was particularly difficult for all those

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1 For a brief chronology of events, see Dunn (2006: xxiii–xxxii).

2 For an account of the conduct of the vote, see Martin (2001).

who had benefited under Indonesian rule, including the Indonesian-trained East Timorese militia, East Timorese civilians, and Indonesian civilians who had made their homes in East Timor.

The destruction in 1999 showed yet again just how militarised East Timor was, even though the Indonesian military, as it had done in 1975, denied its central role in the violence there (Idi Subandy Ibrahim 2002: 161, 149, 220; KPPHAM 2006: 29–34, 41).<sup>3</sup> In the lead-up to the referendum, the military trained militias, just as it had trained partisans prior to the invasion in 1975 to help provide cover for the invasion. Robinson argues that militia groups in 1999 were ‘mobilised, trained, supplied and backed’ not only by the military but also by the Indonesian authorities to provide a cover for official efforts to disrupt and influence the outcome of the vote on independence (Robinson 2001: 275). Robinson (2010: 20) concedes, however, that the military may not have had a master plan to destroy East Timor after the vote – it expected that intimidation would ensure a win for Indonesia.

In 1999, sensing victory and conscious of the unique opportunity offered by the United Nations, the leaders of the resistance agreed to stay within an agreed cantonment, thereby forestalling the Indonesian military’s strategy of generating a situation in which it could again claim that it needed to intervene to stop the fighting between two warring sides (Martin 2001: 72). When the International Force for East Timor (InterFET) landed on 20 September 1999, the Indonesian military offered no resistance. Nevertheless, in the weeks following the announcement of the result of the vote it, together with the East Timorese militias, had destroyed 70% of the domestic and government infrastructure, almost all of which were the achievements of the New Order in East Timor, and forced more than 25% of the population out of East Timor (CAVR 2006: 3.21 Nos. 624–660).<sup>4</sup>

The forced displacement of an estimated 250,000 East Timorese, both pro- and anti-integrationists, was designed to prove that the population rejected the result of the referendum. Their departure was well organised and planned in advance and began immediately after the result was announced on 4 September 1999. Most of them were moved overland or by boat to West Timor, but some were moved to other Indonesian islands, especially to South Sulawesi. While some East Timorese left voluntarily, most were forcibly removed. Anyone who chose to stay was assumed to have voted for

3 For history and analysis of militias in East Timor, see Robinson (2002: 246ff).

4 For a description of displacement in each district, see CAVR (2006: 7.3 Nos. 423–484) and for the killing and destruction see also CAVR (2006: 7.2.3.11 Nos. 757–765), UNHCR (2000:Nos.102, 103, 132, 133) and Dunn (2003: 339–360).

independence and was targeted for revenge. Those who did not flee East Timor sought refuge in the hills (CAVR 2006: 3.21 No. 654; Robinson 2003: 3.1 p. 45ff). The main reason for this astonishing expenditure of resources in relocating a vast proportion of the population seems to have been an attempt to use the displaced people as a political resource to discredit the result of the vote. The displaced East Timorese were portrayed as evidence that a significant percentage of the population supported integration and was afraid of an independent East Timor controlled by Fretilin (KPP HAM 2006: 37–41; McDonald and Tanter 2006: 4, 11). Some, including the founders of Hati Foundation (Yayasan Hati 2000a; 2001b), even demanded that a proportional area of independent East Timor be carved off and returned to Indonesia as a place where the pro-integrationists could live.

The camps where people were forced to live were controlled by East Timorese militias whose aim was to hold the East Timorese in Indonesia. Those who wanted to return to East Timor often had to find ways to sneak past the guards to register with the UNHCR (CAVR 2006: 3.21: 659; KPP HAM 2006: 41; Campbell-Nelson et al. 2001: 45–48, 62–69). The militias also intimidated the international organisations and NGOs providing relief aid in the camps.<sup>5</sup> Despite the threats, intimidation and obstacles, three months after the vote half of those who had been forcibly evacuated had returned home (UNHCR 2004b: 17, 22).

At the end of 2002, the Indonesian authorities withdrew the ‘refugee’ status of East Timorese in Indonesia (Human Rights Watch 2003). In 2006, approximately 60,000 people were still living in ‘refugee’ camps in Indonesia, awaiting relocation in resettlement villages; many of them were the family of militias and too afraid to return to East Timor.<sup>6</sup> By default they had chosen to be Indonesians, although most still considered themselves East Timorese. They refused offers to resettle in distant locations, preferring to stay on the island of Timor close to home. Many of the pro-integration families, especially Apodeti members who had done well under the Indonesian regime, bought homes and set up businesses in Indonesia, especially in West Timor.<sup>7</sup> Approximately 60,000 other East Timorese continued to work in Indonesian government jobs or the security services, jobs they held at

5 The distrust and anger of the militias towards foreigners culminated in the murder of three UNHCR staff in Atambua in September 2000 (UNHCR 2004b: 17: 28–29; East Timor–UNTAET News 2000).

6 In 2006 the Social Welfare Department (Dinas Sosial) of the East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) province registered 53, 889 Timorese who qualified to receive social security benefits (Dominggus Elcid Li, email, 2007)

7 Dominggus Elcid Li (email, 2007); there are no statistics indicating their numbers.

the time of the vote.<sup>8</sup> The majority of converts to Islam fled voluntarily to Sulawesi and some also to Bandung, West Java, the areas where many had studied, taking their families with them. Some of the East Timorese living in Sulawesi elected to go to one of the two transmigration sites offered by the government in Mamuju and Malili in South Sulawesi (*Kompas* 2002)<sup>9</sup>

A high proportion of those who fled East Timor and sought shelter in the camps in Indonesia were children. At the height of the crisis, the Komnas Perlindungan Anak (Indonesian National Commission on Child Protection) estimated that 60% of the people in several camps around the West Timor town of Atambua were below the age of 14 and more than half of these were below the age of five (*Suara Pembaruan* 2003; *Tempo* 2003). Some of the children among them had become separated from their parents in the mayhem that followed the referendum and were rounded up and taken along with others deported from East Timor (*ABC Radio Asia Pacific* 2000). The parents of others had fled to the mountains of East Timor for refuge and had put their children into the care of grandparents or other relatives (Jesuit Refugee Service 2003 [especially the case of Valerianus and Petrus de Jesus]). Some of the separated children, as well as children living with their parents in the camps in Indonesia, all of whom had already suffered one deportation, were sent away to institutions in Indonesia, far from the camps in West Timor and from their homes in East Timor.

## Separation during deportation

Children who had been living in institutions in East Timor in September 1999, like the rest of the population, were forced to flee or evacuated voluntarily. Militia members threatened to blow up the Seroja complex so the occupants took to

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- 8 According to an official government registration on 6 June 2001 by the Social Welfare Department in NTT province, 111,540 Timorese registered to stay on in Indonesia. Of these 14,085 were public servants, including teachers, 1,894 police, 3,763 members of the armed forces and 750 civilian employees of the military. The problem with calculating numbers is that the categories are not clearly delineated. Some but not all civil servants and security personnel were calculated in the number of those who qualified to receive social security benefits. Some of those included in the numbers of East Timorese who registered to stay on in Indonesia were Indonesians who had lived in East Timor for many years, and some people were registered in more than one camp (Domingus Elcid Li, email, 2007).
- 9 This article reported that in 2002 there were 1,545 refugees in South Sulawesi. In 2000 the Community Development Organisation in Polewali estimated 7,449 East Timorese in Southeast Sulawesi (Father Felix Layadi, telephone conversation, Makassar, 2003). and in 2007 the numbers in North Sulawesi were given as 27,600 (*Antara* 2007). The discrepancy in numbers is probably because the higher numbers include Indonesians who previously lived in East Timor, working in business and as transmigrants.

the streets where out-of-uniform soldiers patrolling Dili picked them up and took them to the local police headquarters where many other frightened East Timorese had already assembled. The soldiers immediately organised a passage for them on the boat to Kupang. Before leaving Dili, Seroja staff members had contacted SOS-Kinderdorf institution in Bandung and Kinderdorf took the children and their carers into their newly built institution in Maumere, Flores, an island to the west of Timor. Soon after InterFET landed in Dili, the children and most of the Seroja staff asked for UNHCR assistance to return to East Timor. Kinderdorf staff and the local Catholic priest, like other Indonesians, encouraged them to stay, telling the East Timorese staff that the children would benefit more from an Indonesian education. Kinderdorf staff members were disappointed that the East Timorese chose to return to East Timor, but respected their wishes and assisted the UNHCR in their repatriation.<sup>10</sup>

Indonesian and East Timorese Islamic preachers encouraged all indigenous East Timorese Muslims to leave East Timor, warning them that there would be no place for them in an independent East Timor.<sup>11</sup> The children and staff at the Yakin institution left voluntarily for Sulawesi on the evening before the announcement of the result of the ballot and before the burning and violence had erupted.<sup>12</sup> In the following weeks, as the exodus escalated, many members of the children's families also travelled there to be with their children in Makassar. Approximately 600 East Timorese sought shelter in the Sulthan Alauddin Mosque run by the DDII, which had sent children from East Timor to Indonesia. East Timorese were also cared for in two other Islamic childcare institutions, the Panti Asuhan Kasih Ibu and Al-Anshar, the institution established by Mohammad Johari, mentioned in the previous chapter and further discussed below.<sup>13</sup> By 2008 few East Timorese Muslims had returned to East Timor and, as already noted, many settled on government transmigration sites in South Sulawesi (*Jakarta Post* 2002a).

During the forced exodus from East Timor, I found cases of children taken into the care of individuals who planned to keep them in Indonesia, although I have no evidence that soldiers took children for adoption at this time. There are, however, well-documented cases of East Timorese militia members who

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10 Most of the children found their families again after spending a short time at the Carmelite convent in Maubara, 50 kilometres west of Dili. Four children who had been unable to do so by 2004 continued to live at the convent and attend school (Maria Margarida Babo, interview, Dili, 1 April 2004).

11 Fernando Jose Freitas Soares (interview, Quelicai, 25 March 2004).

12 Orlando de Araujo (interview, Kuluhun, Dili, 4 March 2004).

13 Haji Paita Halim, ketua pengurus (head organiser), Sulthan Alauddin Mosque (interview, Makassar, March 2003).

kidnapped under-age girls and forced them into marriage and/or prostitution in the camps in West Timor, such as Alola (CAVR 2006: 7.8.3.3 No.334; Murdoch 2006). Hasan Basri (Roberto Freitas), from Lalea in Bacau district, travelled to East Timor to gather children for his Lemorai Foundation in Bandung, West Java. In the uncertain months leading up to the referendum, Basri offered to help his relatives and acquaintances from his village who were sufficiently concerned about their safety to relocate to Indonesia. In 2002 he told a foreign journalist that, through his foundation, he had assisted 661 East Timorese to move to Bandung, including many of his and his wife's relatives from Venilale, two-thirds of whom were children. He offered to care for and educate the children at Islamic institutions in Indonesia. Some parents who were worried about security handed their children into his care; for example Jose Pereira gave Basri permission to take two of his children, Jacinto and Marito, then five and eight years of age. Basri stipulated a condition that the children had to become Muslims (Elegant 2002). Others worked for Basri collecting children to bring them to Indonesia, such as the Indonesian teacher, Budiando, who organised Zacarias to join Basri.

## Transfers out of camps

Desperate parents and guardians of children in the camps in West Timor often agreed to hand over their children to individuals and representatives of institutions who offered to care for and educate their children. Children were exposed to health risks and their education suffered in the appalling conditions in the overcrowded camps (CAVR 2006: 3.21 No. 659; Campbell-Nelson et al. 2001: 70–77); many parents were attracted by the offers, even though it usually meant that their children were taken to distant places in Indonesia. Parents made these decisions in conditions where there were few alternatives and they often knew those to whom they entrusted their children. In the circumstances, the arrangements should at least have been regarded only as temporary. The control exercised by militias in the camps made it highly unlikely that parents were able freely to make informed choices about their children, especially for the long-term (Campbell-Nelson et al. 2001: 62–67).

Many of the organisations that took children from the camps were run by East Timorese who were strongly opposed to independence for East Timor. Other organisations that took children from the camps were based in Indonesia and had had no previous involvement in caring for East Timorese children. The Indonesian NGO, Pokastim, located several East Timorese children between the ages of seven and 12 at the Buah Hati orphanage, run by a Protestant

Church in Situbondo in East Java<sup>14</sup> – the local government in Kupang prevented a further group of about 30 children being taken to this same institution after its plans were uncovered by the UNHCR (*ABC Radio Asia Pacific* 2000). The Jesuit Refugee Service based in Kupang traced 16 children to the Islamic Tunas Kalimantan institution in Banjarbaru in South Kalimantan (Jesuit Refugee Service 2003; CAVR 2006: 7.8.4.2 No. 407), while Arist Merdeka Sirait, the Indonesian secretary for the Komisi Nasional Perlindungan Anak (National Child Protection Commission), located 57 children at a Protestant school in Pontianak, West Kalimantan. As the head of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Kupang noted, NGOs depended on donations and East Timorese children were bound to attract donors (*ABC Radio Asia Pacific* 2000), although religious institutions inevitably also had a proselytising motive.

A more detailed examination of the operation and activities of the organisations run by these anti-independence East Timorese will help us to understand better their motives for sending children away from their families and why some of them tried to keep the children in Indonesia.

### **Cinta Damai Foundation**

After the referendum, the Cinta Damai Foundation organised by an East Timorese Protestant minister from Ermera, Rev Paulus da Costa, and Cornelius Banoe from Kupang, as described in Chapter 4, took 59 more children from their families promising to educate them. Some parents from Ermera who were living in the camps in West Timor knew the organisers and handed their children into their care. However, the Cinta Damai organisers did not place the children in the institution run by the GMIT Oeba Ebenhaezer Protestant Church, as the parents believed, although the children may have lived there for a short time before it had to close. As he had done on previous occasions, without seeking the consent of parents, Cornelius Banoe made a radio announcement asking individuals to offer to care for a child and most of the children were taken in by families in Kupang. In 2004, at least three children from different villages in Ermera were in the care of a doctor in Kupang who had worked in East Timor until 1999.<sup>15</sup> Some of the 59 children were moved further away, including one who was taken to Bandung by Banoe's son and another to Jakarta by a Protestant minister.<sup>16</sup>

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14 Pokastim staff (interviews, Jakarta, 1 January 2002).

15 Children from Ermera living with Dr Frank Tow, Kupang (conversations, 9 February 2004).

16 Cornelius Banoe (interview, Kupang, 9 February 2004).

The stated aim of the organisers was to help the children of former members of the Ermera Protestant Church congregation, but, like the organisers of the programs to send children to Islamic institutions, too often they betrayed the trust of parents and were dismissive of parental rights. Indeed parents were angry when they discovered that their children were not living at the GMIT institution, as had been agreed, and demanded to know their whereabouts. The misfortune of the East Timorese families became an opportunity for the Cinta Damai organisers to transfer children to members of the Protestant Church in Kupang – some to work as household helpers, others to be cherished by those with no children, and all to be raised as Protestants. Several months later, most East Timorese parents from Matata, Ermera, had returned home and they demanded the return of their children who had been handed into the care of the Cinta Damai Foundation.

### **Lemorai and Al-Anshar Foundations**

Two childcare institutions set up by East Timorese Muslims used the children in their care after 1999 to demonstrate their continuing support for integration. Mohammad Johari had collected children for his Al-Anshar institution from East Timor in the 1990s, and after 1999 he offered shelter to many East Timorese in his complex. Johari also began to offer a free education to the children of East Timorese who had relocated to Sulawesi. Many parents accepted his offer, including those who had moved to transmigration sites. Johari cared for them in the Al-Anshar childcare institution or placed them in other nearby institutions willing to take in East Timorese children (Faizal 2002b). Johari, or his associates, Salam and Arifin, probably visited the camps in West Timor to collect East Timorese children for their Al-Anshar institution.<sup>17</sup>

We have already seen that, just before the referendum, Hasan Basri took children into his care with offers of free education. Basri was one of the youths in the first group of East Timorese that Salim Sagram, the chairman of Yakin, took to an Islamic institution in Sulawesi in 1980.<sup>18</sup> For many years he had lived between Indonesia and East Timor, and in 1998 he was living in Bandung and a leading member of Ipmitim, whose members decided they wanted to establish an institution modelled on the Al-Anshar institution run by Johari in Sulawesi. The student association failed to reach an agreement about the aim of the foundation. Several members told me that they were

17 Anonymous interview, Makassar, March 2003).

18 Alex Haryanto Freitas (interview, Bandung, 2004).

concerned about the monitoring of donations. Hasan Basri proceeded with the plan, nevertheless, and established Lemorai Foundation as his personal foundation,<sup>19</sup> and after 1999, many more children came into his care. He depended on the goodwill of Islamic institutions in the vicinity of Bandung to receive children, just as Yakin had done. In 2002 he claimed he had placed almost 100 East Timorese children in small groups in a dozen institutions all over Java, and others in South Sumatra and Sumbawa. Twenty-two of the children were living in his Baitul Muh'taddin childcare institution in Sumedang, near Bandung (Faizal 2002b). A local preacher had helped him find placements for the 20 children of which Zacarias was one. The children became Muslims and were given their Islamic names while living in these institutions. In 2004, the father of Zacarias told me that he was not concerned that his son had become a Muslim, but he was unhappy about the way in which his son had disappeared after 1999 and had sought UNHCR help to trace him.<sup>20</sup>

While Johari and Basri claimed they were responding to the needs of the children, another motivation for having children in their care was financial. Advertising the children as new converts (*mualaf*) helped in soliciting donations, which is why Johari and Basri insisted that the children convert to Islam. Zacarias believes that Basri did not want him and others to return to East Timor because he could use them to raise funds. In Bandung, soon after the referendum, one bank displayed photos of 20 East Timorese children, all dressed in Muslim attire, whom the bank helped by requesting donations. Chapter 4 notes Johari's success in soliciting donations in Sulawesi; Basri had similar success in Bandung. The district head in Sumedang and the governor of West Java, HR Nuriana, reportedly donated the equivalent of several thousand US dollars to the East Timorese through Basri's Lemorai Foundation. Residents of Gunungmanik village in Sumedang, where Hasan Basri set up his institution, felt that the East Timorese were given favoured treatment, receiving not only important visitors but also generous donations (*Pikiran Rakyat* 2002). Some East Timorese parents, frustrated in their demands to take their children back from Basri, accused the foundations of 'selling the names' of East Timorese children for personal gain.<sup>21</sup>

19 According to Syamsul Bahari, the student association in Bandung was more representative and democratic than that in Sulawesi, but was unable to reach agreement. It is likely that Hasan Basri modelled his pesantren on the pesantren in Java, which are established and run by an individual religious leader, *kiyai*.

20 Agostinho Pereira Pasqual (interview, Tibar, 5 May 2004).

21 Thomas Ximenes (interview, Bandung, 28 January 2004) and anonymous interview, Makassar, March 2003.

The pro-Indonesian East Timorese in Sulawesi and Bandung were able to defy the demands of parents for the return of their children because they received support from Indonesian civil servants and military personnel. One Indonesian news article even shored up the pro-integration credentials of Hasan Basri by reporting, erroneously, that his father had signed the Balibo declaration, the declaration of integration with Indonesia by East Timorese in 1975 (Faizal 2002a). To maintain interest in their cause and keep donations flowing Johari and Basri made nationalistic, pro-Indonesian pronouncements at a time when Indonesians were smarting over the 'loss' of East Timor. Attempts by the UNHCR to return children in their care played well into their agenda, giving them the media attention to express their pro-Indonesian sentiments. The rights of the children and their parents were not their main priority.

### **Hati Foundation**

The child removals from the camps in West Timor by the Hati Foundation were the most ideologically motivated of the removals in the period just before and after 1999. The Harapan Timor Foundation, or Hati Foundation, was owned by the family of Abilio Osorio Soares, the last governor of East Timor, and was officially constituted on 3 April 2000 (Yayasan Hati 2000b). The Soares family were members of Apodeti and passionate supporters of integration. Many members of the family had been killed by Fretilin in January 1976, leaving the wider family with bitter psychological scars. Natercia Soares, the sister of the ex-governor and director of the foundation, was a national parliamentarian and an outspoken, vehement integrationist. Her nephew Octavio Soares, in 1999 a medical student at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, was the general secretary of Hati Foundation and organised the transfer of the children to Java.

Hati Foundation had a clearly articulated political and ideological agenda for educating children in Java, which it outlined on its website. The children were to be raised as Indonesians, but consciously as East Timorese who belonged to Indonesia. To keep alive the hope of re-integration Hati Foundation needed a future generation to continue the struggle; hence the children were to be indoctrinated and educated in these ideas.<sup>22</sup> The organisation was often quoted in the media as having plans to educate many East Timorese children from the camps in West Timor in Java. In 2001,

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22 The Internet Archive does not record older versions of the website in which the position of the organisation was stated more overtly.

Antonio da Silva, a co-ordinator of the Wemalae camp in Betun, Atambua, claimed that Hati Foundation planned to send the 20,000 to 25,000 children in his camp to institutions in other places in Indonesia (*Kompas* 2001a). In late 2000, Octavio Soares, the general secretary of the foundation, said that 1,000 children were already waiting to be sent to Java and only the permissions had to be organised (Murdoch 2000), but these plans did not come to fruition. The first group of 123 children, aged between seven and 16 years, arrived in Semarang, Central Java, in two groups in late 1999. They were sent to the institution run by the order of indigenous Javanese nuns who had taken in the 'President's children' in September 1977, as described in Chapter 3.

Hati Foundation received tacit support to carry out its agenda, at least in the first few years after the referendum, from its connections with high-ranking military personnel and individuals who had been powerful during the New Order. Major General Prabowo Subianto, Suharto's son-in-law and commander of the elite Kopassus troops, had supported Abilio Soares in his political and business career and had supported other organisations sponsored by the Soares family that were fronts for military interests, for example, the East Timor Student Movement (led by Octavio Soares in 1996), and the Morok militia in Manatuto district (run by Soares family members in 1999) (Klinken and Bourchier 2006; Aditjondro 1997; *SiaR* 1998). On 10 December 1996, Octavio Soares and a friend, Joao Mota, who later also held a leadership role in Hati Foundation, travelled to Oslo to protest the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Carlos Belo and Jose Ramos Horta (*Suara Merdeka* 1996). Just before the referendum, the East Timor Student Movement led demonstrations in Jakarta to counter those by pro-independence East Timorese, and in 1999 Octavio Soares was given time on Indonesian national television, in which he forecast the break-up of East Timor if it were to become independent (*Ummat* 1999: 26). Strong supporters of integration, like Hati Foundation members, wanted East Timor to be divided and the western section to remain under Indonesian control (Klinken and Bourchier 2006: 122). After the referendum, Octavio Soares and Marcos X Fernandes, an associate in Hati Foundation, harassed, including with death threats, and physically abused pro-independence East Timorese students living in Yogyakarta. Because of the official patronage they enjoyed, the local police could do nothing to curtail their activities.<sup>23</sup>

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23 On 14 January 2002, members of the Association of East Timorese Students (Associação Dos Estudantes De Timor-Leste), reported ten serious attacks between

The director of Hati Foundation, Natercia Soares, maintained that Hati's motivation for bringing children to Java was humanitarian concern and that it had responded to the desperate need of the people living in dire conditions in the camps (*Kompas* 2001a and b). Indeed the conditions were appalling and Hati Foundation promised far better educational opportunities for their children in Java. A considerable number of the parents who handed children into the care of Hati Foundation were relatives and members of the wider Soares family or came from their village in Laclubar, Manatuto.<sup>24</sup> Hati Foundation organisers probably considered that the organisation could be self-funding. The organisation required parents to contribute Rp25–30,000 per month for each child from the assistance that the occupants of the camps received from the Indonesian Department of Social Welfare, an amount of Rp1,500 per day per person. Hati Foundation used these contributions to pay Rp30,000 per month for each child to the institutions where the children lived, although it was not enough to cover all their costs.<sup>25</sup> Natercia defended this practice, maintaining that the people would have gambled the money away. She claimed to me that Hati Foundation had tried to find placements for the children in West Timor, but was unsuccessful, so the children were sent to Java instead. The motivation of Hati Foundation members was not, as appeared to be the case with the Muslim organisations, for the donations and profit that might accrue from educating the children and Hati members became indignant at the accusations of profiteering.<sup>26</sup>

Hati Foundation members knew that East Timorese children had been taken into the care of the nuns at St Thomas institution in 1977; in 1999 they asked the nuns at St Thomas to help them achieve their aim. As Octavio Soares was studying in Java, it would be easier for him to monitor and control the children if they lived in Java. One of Octavio's cousins, who studied in Central Java in the 1980s, had heard about St Thomas, which was close to his university. The cousin was one of the children mentioned in Chapter 3, who had been taken by nuns of the Carolus Borromeus order in the late 1970s to be educated in the order's institution in Ganjuran, south of Yogyakarta.

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May 2000 and December 2001 on their members to the police in Yogyakarta (Faustino Cardoso Gomes, interview, Yogyakarta, 2002).

24 Villagers in Laclubar, Manatuto (conversations, 2 April 2003).

25 Hati Foundation said they stored Rp5,000/month for each child, though the parents of some children who returned home complained that this money was not refunded (parents at the Noelbaki camp, Kupang, conversations, 8 February 2004).

26 Hati Foundation took the Jesuit Refugee Service in Kupang to court in 2002 for accusing the foundation of stealing children to enrich themselves, though Hati lost the case (JRS staff, email and telephone conversation, 10 December 2007).

At Ganjuran children had to work in the gardens and do household chores in order to support themselves while they studied, which was also the case at St Thomas.<sup>27</sup> The nuns at St Thomas agreed to accept children, thinking that the situation in East Timor in 1999 was similar to what it had been in 1977.<sup>28</sup> Probably Hati Foundation represented the children as victims because their families supported integration, which is how the children had been described in 1977.

However, in 1999, the Indonesian Catholic Church had changed its position in relation to East Timor and no longer supported integration. When the church hierarchy in Semarang became aware of the motives of Hati Foundation, it tried to restrict Hati's contact with the children and made it harder for Hati to supervise and indoctrinate them by distributing them in three institutions in Central Java and Yogyakarta (Murdoch 2000; Mujiran 2001). In 2002, Linda, an East Timorese theological student lived in Temanggung at one of these institutions while she undertook three months practical training. She observed first-hand the indoctrination of the 20 children living there by an associate of Octavio Soares, Marcos X Fernandes, who visited regularly. He told the children that they should not think about returning to their families. The Catholic Church forbade its institutions from accepting other children from the Hati Foundation.<sup>29</sup> The church's efforts to return children were frustrated because the Indonesian police did not act decisively against those who deliberately sabotaged the church's efforts (*Kompas* 2001c). When Hati Foundation organised another 46 children from the camps in West Timor to Central Java in June 2001, the church refused to accept them into its institutions. Hati Foundation placed the children in a private institution in Gunung Kidul, about 40 kilometres from Yogyakarta,<sup>30</sup> on land that had been acquired by Soewardijo, who, until 1999, had been the head of the Department of Education and Culture in Dili. While the institution had no official link with the Catholic Church, Soewardijo was the brother of the nun from the St Thomas institution who was the contact for Hati Foundation in bringing the children to Java (*Kompas* 2001b).<sup>31</sup>

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27 James J Spillane SJ (interview, Yogyakarta, 9 May 2003), and Father Joachim Sarmiento (interview, Dili, 4 May 2004).

28 Helio Soares (interview, Kupang, February 2004), and staff at St Thomas, Ungaran (conversations, July 2001).

29 Budi Herlianto, Soegijapranata Social Welfare Foundation, Semarang (interview, January 2004).

30 Taman Bina Anak Bangsa Asrama is in Playen, Wonosari (*Kompas* 2001a).

31 Soewardijo (interview, Yogyakarta, 3 February 2004).

Hati Foundation was able to implement its plans because it had access to funds through its high-level connections. Octavio Soares obtained money for the first group of children from the Indonesian government-sponsored National Foster Parents' program (GNOTA), the East Timor branch of which was chaired by the wife of Abilio Soares (Murdoch 2000). Major General Zacky Anwar Makarim and his wife also showed their support to Hati by visiting the St Thomas institution and bringing gifts.<sup>32</sup> When Hati's activities began to be scrutinised by the UNHCR and it came under media attention, members of Hati visited camps in West Timor between 14 and 24 October 2000 to organise letters of parental consent in relation to the children in their care in Java. They could not, however, go to the camps empty-handed; giving rice and medicines to the parents facilitated obtaining the necessary letters of permission to demonstrate to the UNHCR that Hati had legitimate custody of the children. The influential generals, Prabowo and Makarim, provided funds and logistics for Hati Foundation to get the letters of permission (Yayasan Hati 2000c).



### **East Timor children in Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta**

The children were taken to Yogyakarta by Hati Foundation in 2001.

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32 Staff at St Thomas (conversations, Ungaran, 2001); Zacky Anwar Makarim was head of the armed forces intelligence agency, BIA, in 1999 and oversaw the organisation of pro-Indonesia militias in East Timor.

## Returning home – breaking the ties

With the Indonesian government decision at the end of 2002 to end the ‘refugee’ status of those East Timorese who had entered Indonesia in September 1999, support for the ardent pro-integrationists dwindled. The end of the relationship was a bitter experience for them. They were disappointed with the broken promises of their Indonesian backers and the end of their special treatment. Until that time, pro-integrationists who had East Timorese under their control used them to keep their struggle alive. The East Timorese militias dominated and controlled the people in camps as if they were the victors (Campbell-Nelson et al. 2001: 47) and those with children in their care tried to prevent them from returning to their parents.

An attempt by the UNHCR to reunite a group of children with their parents demonstrated the determination of the pro-integrationists to keep the children in their care. In October 2000, most of the parents of the 123 children brought to Java in late 1999 by Hati Foundation were still in West Timor, but the parents of 16 children were back in East Timor and asked for their children to be returned to them. The Indonesian NGO, Pokastim, traced the 123 children brought by Hati Foundation to St Thomas institution and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) broadcast their names over its radio station.<sup>33</sup> The parents contacted UNTAET and asked for their children to be returned to East Timor. Some of the parents in East Timor claimed that Octavio Soares had tricked them into giving up their children (Murdoch 2001a). The parents wrote letters to their children explaining that they were back in East Timor and that it was safe for them to return home. The UNHCR delivered the letters to the children and made arrangements for their trip, but on 15 March 2001 the plan was aborted because of threats and intimidation by Hati Foundation members. The foundation’s staff confiscated the letters parents had sent to their children and cast doubt in the children’s minds about whether their parents had actually returned to East Timor and whether it was safe there. Hati Foundation accused the UNHCR of pressuring parents to demand their children back and claimed that the organisation only wanted the children to return because it had repatriation targets to reach (Murdoch 2001b).

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33 Pokastim (interviews, Jakarta, January 2002). UNTAET was the sovereign power from 10 October 1999 until East Timor gained independence on 20 May 2002.

A second attempt to return the children on 17 July 2001 was again thwarted on the day of departure when Octavio Soares led the nuns to believe that he was driving the children to the airport, but took them to his home instead. The parents who had come from far-flung places in East Timor to meet their children at the airport in Dili had to return home disappointed (Murdoch 2001c; Chandrasekaran 2001). It took further pressure on the Indonesian government from the head of UNTAET and the international advocacy of East Timorese national leaders to persuade the Indonesian government to take action and insist that the children be returned (Murdoch 2001d, e and f).

Hati Foundation, in its attempt to keep the children in Indonesia, had indoctrinated them to the extent that they were afraid to return. The children had been traumatised when they arrived in Indonesia and had had no choice other than to trust those into whose care their parents had placed them. On 14 September 2001, one year after the parents had first requested UNHCR help for the return of their children, a group of ten children was taken to Bali to meet their parents. Six of the children whose parents had requested their return refused to go. The other ten children were convinced that they would not be returning to East Timor and would not pack their belongings for the trip to Bali. When the children met their parents after nearly two years of separation, most children were tense and unresponsive to their parents' warm embraces. Two out of the group of ten children decided not to return home, including one who became violent towards his distressed father (Murdoch 2001g).<sup>34</sup> The nuns were concerned about the unnatural response of the children when they met their parents in Bali, which was an indication of the extent to which the children had been manipulated by Hati Foundation staff (Murdoch 2001g). Several months after the children had returned to East Timor UNHCR staff members visited them and found that the children were happy to be home and that their trust in their parents had been restored.<sup>35</sup>

The antipathy that foundations caring for East Timorese children felt towards the UNHCR resonated sympathetically with many Indonesian officials. The belief that East Timor could not survive without Indonesia persisted and some officials questioned why the UNHCR would want to send children back to East Timor when conditions were so much better in Java (Chandrasekaran 2001). As they had done throughout the occupation, Indonesian officials condoned the transfer of children to Indonesia because

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34 For the Hati Foundation version of this meeting, see Yayasan Hati (2001a).

35 UNHCR staff (conversations, Dili, April 2004).

they believed they were offering the children a better future and they gave far too much credibility to the demands of the pro-integration foundations caring for the children (*Jakarta Post* 2002b).<sup>36</sup> For example, because Indonesian officials accepted Hati Foundation's argument that it had made agreements with parents to care for their children, only the parents could collect the children, so Hati could not hand the children over to the UNHCR (*Kompas* 2001c; Agence France-Presse 2002). Because children had been given so much misinformation about the conditions in East Timor and the situation of their parents, the UNHCR had, in reality, no way of conveying the truth to children other than to confront them face-to-face with their parents. Consequently, repatriation became an expensive and time-consuming process.

Gradually the Indonesian authorities began to accept the obligations they had under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Indonesia had signed in 1990, to facilitate the return of children when their parents so requested. The decision was helped by considerable international media attention and criticism of the way the Indonesian authorities had handled the return of the children. The Indonesian and the international press played a crucial role in raising the issue of separated children. Some of the reporting may have been dramatised and oversimplified, but without it there may have been no political will on the part of Indonesia to repatriate these children (UNHCR 2004b: 60–61 Nos. 208, 213). The decision at the end of 2002 to end the 'refugee' status of East Timorese in Indonesia demonstrated 'emotional' acceptance by Indonesia of the independence of East Timor. Following this, Indonesian President Megawati wrote to the Catholic Church in Semarang asking it to return the children in its care,<sup>37</sup> and high level officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs summoned Octavio Soares and told him to let the children go, if the parents so requested (Murdoch 2001f). Soon afterwards Octavio left to work in Kalimantan as a doctor for the national oil company, Pertamina.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps to soften the blow to Hati Foundation, the Indonesian government refused to renew the work visa of Lindsay Murdoch, the Australian journalist who had persistently written about Hati Foundation, effectively expelling him from Indonesia without any explanation (Kirschke 2002).

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36 See also the press statement by the Indonesian head of Political and Information Affairs of the Consulate in Dili, about the children in the care of Hati Foundation (*Suara Timor Lorosae* 2001).

37 Linda (interview, Dare, 9 March 2004).

38 Abilio Soares (interview, Jakarta, 24 January 2004).

The end of the 'refugee' status of the East Timorese living in camps spelled the end for Hati Foundation. When financial support from the Indonesian government stopped flowing in 2002 (Human Rights Watch 2003), parents in the camps had difficulty meeting their commitments to pay the Rp30,000/month fee to the foundation. In 2003 the ex-governor, Abilio Soares, received a three-year jail sentence for crimes against humanity from the Ad Hoc Human Rights Court in Jakarta.<sup>39</sup> Sometime in 2004 or early 2005, Hati Foundation was disbanded, by which time most of the children had been returned to their parents in either East or West Timor. Eleven children who wanted to stay on to complete their education in Java were put into the care of the Harapan childcare institution run by the Protestant Pentecostal Church in Bawen, near the St Thomas institution.<sup>40</sup> A Japanese Catholic nun working in Jakarta had quietly persevered in helping the children brought to Java by Hati Foundation since 1999. She carried letters between them and their families, organised for several children to return even after the UNHCR date for returning refugees had expired and tried to help those still in Indonesia to understand and sort through all the misinformation fed to them by the pro-integrationists. In 2006 some of the children told her that they would like to return to East Timor, but they could not understand why their parents, many of whom had worked as militia, did not want to return to their ancestral land.<sup>41</sup>

Hasan Basri in Bandung and Mohammad Johari in South Sulawesi, just like Hati Foundation members, were unco-operative with the UNHCR in the return of children. Despite their pronouncements that they would hand over children whose parents came to collect them, it proved not to be the case. They intimidated, indoctrinated and deceived the children in order to keep them in their care. The father of Nur and Johnny, in the care of Hasan Basri, travelled to Bandung to find his children in mid-2002. Basri refused to meet him and the father returned to East Timor without seeing his children; for a long time Basri did not even tell the children about their father's visit (O'Shea 2002). Similarly, when the father of Zacarias arrived to collect him, Basri convened a meeting with the local

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39 He served only three months of the sentence, which was revoked on appeal, and died in June 2007.

40 Natan Ngguso, PA Harapan, Bawen, Central Java (telephone conversation, 5 February 2004).

41 Sr Inoue Chizuyo (interviews, Jakarta, 2004 and 2005). In 2009 some of these children had completed high school and could not continue their education in Indonesia as their nationality status was unclear (F. Dimas Ariyangto, Lembaga Perlinhdungan Anak, interview, Yogyakarta, July 2009).

military and police and the district head, in an attempt to intimidate the children to stay in Bandung. The other parent who travelled with Zacarias's father had been requested by seven parents back in East Timor to tell their children, also in Basri's care, that they should return home. None of them wanted to do so, although one young boy sneaked away to intercept the UNHCR car as it left and asked to be taken home, having not dared to say so at the meeting.

The story was much the same in Makassar, South Sulawesi. In 1999 Abdurrahman Alberto, one of the East Timorese sent by Yakin to the Maccopa institution in Sulawesi in the early 1980s, had taken over the administration of Al-Anshar institution from Johari. On the first occasion the UNHCR came to collect children from Al-Anshar in January 2003, as arranged, Abdurrahman changed his mind about letting the children go with the UNHCR and said he would only hand them over to their parents. The UNHCR came with several parents six months later and four children were taken home. The successful return of these children caused a storm of protest among pro-integrationists in Sulawesi who accused the UNHCR of kidnapping the children. Local East Timorese held demonstrations at the office of the district parliament and the governor's office, demonising the UNHCR. They fabricated stories about the UNHCR having removed the children through a window. Abdurrahman demanded \$5,000 US in 'compensation' for the years he had cared for the children, further evidence that one of his prime motives in holding the children was monetary (*Suara Pembaruan* 2003; *Tempo* 2003: 19). During the next attempted repatriation, the two children involved had been so indoctrinated about the mission of the UNHCR that they became frightened and ran away. The children did not know whether to believe the UNHCR, who told them that their parents had returned to East Timor and that it was safe to go back, or the information they heard from pro-integrationist Abdurrahman.

Where there were no aggressive pro-integrationists forcibly holding children, UNHCR mediation was not so vigorously challenged. Many parents from Matata, Ermera requested the UNHCR and the Jesuit Refugee Service in Kupang to trace their children, who had been given to families in West Timor by the Cinta Damai Foundation. The children and their parents were brought to the border between East and West Timor where they decided together what they wanted. Most children chose reunion, although some children in good placements wanted to stay and finish their education and in some of these cases parents, who had asked

for their children to be returned, agreed to let them stay on in West Timor. By 2004, most of the East Timorese children given to families in Kupang by the Cinta Damai Foundation in 1999 had been located and half of the children sent from East Timor by the foundation before the referendum had returned home, while the others were still in Kupang.<sup>42</sup> Some, like Ago Pito (Jon dos Santos), fell through the net. He was about seven years old in 1999 when his parents handed him into the care of the foundation, but in 2007 he had lost contact with his family and was a street seller in Kupang, believing that if his parents were still alive they would have come to find him (Elcid Li 2007).

Compounding the issue of reunions was the fact that some of the children whose return to East Timor was requested by their natural parents had lived with their guardians or adoptive parents for many years, as explained in the Introduction. The adoptive parents believed that they had the right to make decisions about the children they had adopted. Problems arose after 1999 in cases where the natural parents of a child chose to return to East Timor, while the adoptive parents stayed on in Indonesia. The political division of the two countries complicated future contact that natural parents had always expected to maintain with their child. In such cases, the wishes of the child had to be respected (Jesuit Refugee Service 2003).

## Returning home – children taken before 1999

The fall of Suharto and the unravelling of the New Order regime gradually brought genuine changes throughout Indonesia and not just in East Timor. Co-operation in returning and reuniting separated children became possible and a memorandum of understanding was signed by East Timorese and Indonesian government officials in December 2004 to deal with outstanding cases of children still separated as a result of the 1999 conflict (CAVR 2006: 11 No. 11.2; UNHCR 2004a). However, the young, dependent children taken away in the preceding years and still living in Indonesia, who are now adults, still lack accurate information and the resources to trace their families. The CAVR Report recommends that the names of these children be made available to the East Timorese by the Government of Indonesia and that the children be helped to make contact and to return to East Timor if they so desire (CAVR 2006: 11 No.4.2.7, 10.9).

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42 Cornelius Banoë (interview, Kupang, 9 February 2004).

Many of the older students in Indonesia and those sent there to work by the Department of Manpower were able to register with the UNHCR to return to East Timor. The scholarships of hundreds of East Timorese students studying at universities in Indonesia were renegotiated in inter-government arrangements, when after 1999 they became 'foreign students'. The generous arrangements offered by the Indonesian government suggest that Indonesia will continue to be a popular destination for East Timorese students, where hundreds study either with the support of foreign donors and or as self-supporting students (*La'o Hamutuk* 2002). Those most affected were the East Timorese Muslim students, many of whom were uncertain about returning to East Timor. Their Indonesian scholarships ceased and, because most had studied in Islamic institutions, they were unsuccessful in their application for support from the government of East Timor. Before 1999 these students had been well-treated and given special facilities, but this ceased after independence; many said they felt that they had been used by the organisations which sent them to Indonesia as symbols of the support of those organisations for integration.<sup>43</sup>

Younger students living in Islamic institutions, sent to Indonesia by Yakin in the years before the referendum, were usually unable to organise their return to East Timor. In Bandung, Hasan Basri and Abdul Fatah (Dominggus Lopes Guterres), fellow organiser of Lemorai, took on responsibility for all these young children. Likewise in Sulawesi Mohammad Johari and Abdulrahman from Al-Anshar claimed to be the spokespersons for the children sent to institutions by Yakin. Yakin's inadequate tracking mechanisms and lack of procedures made it possible for these aggressively pro-integration East Timorese to take control of the children and insist that they remain in Indonesia. These children were, in fact, even more vulnerable than those removed in 1999. They did not fall under the UNHCR's repatriation umbrella and had no-one to advocate for their return or to give them accurate information about East Timor. Consequently, they were worried about security in East Timor and how they would be treated living there as Muslims.<sup>44</sup> The head of one Muhammadiyah childcare institution in Bandung, where seven young children had arrived in 1995, said that after 1999 all these children told him that they wanted to remain permanently in Indonesia,<sup>45</sup> probably as instructed by Hasan Basri. While Yakin organisers

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43 Mohammad Iqbal Menezes (interview, Dili, 1 April 2004).

44 Student members of Ipmitim, Bandung (interviews, Bandung, February 2004).

45 Head staff of Sumur Bandung panti asuhan (interview, Bandung, 29 January 2004).

such as the Arab East Timorese Salim Sagrin returned to East Timor after the vote, they did nothing to help children in the clutches of people like Basri and Johari who wanted to return home.<sup>46</sup>

The case of Siti Khodijah (Olinda Soares) and her sister Siti Aminah (Amelia Soares), who had been sent by Yakin to Java in 1993 at the ages of five and seven respectively, is an example of how Hasan Basri, who had had nothing to do with organising the two girls in Bandung up to 1999, interfered with the arrangement the two girls made with their father to return home. In mid-2004 they spoke with their father, Abidin Haryanto, who informed the institutions where they had been studying about their return. On the day of their planned departure Hasan Basri hid the girls so that they could not be contacted. Their father was reluctant to involve the Indonesian police and eventually had to travel to Bandung to collect his daughters. This procedure took over a year from the time when the two girls first spoke with their father, who had to rely on the financial help of the Alola Foundation in Dili to travel to Jakarta and organise his daughters' return.<sup>47</sup>



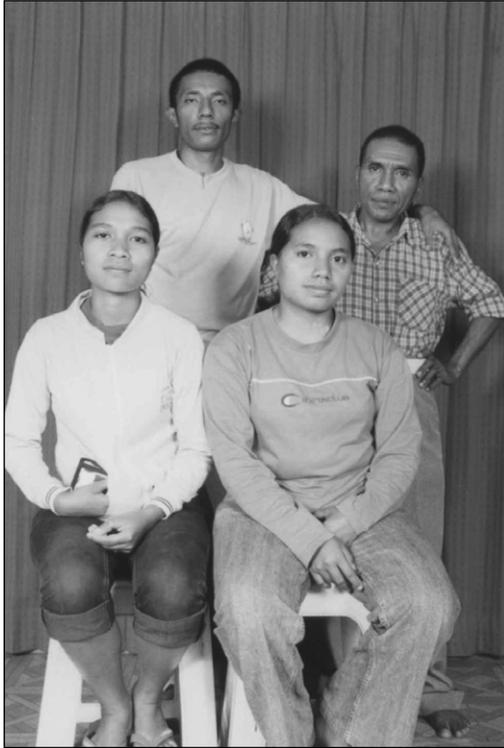
### **Siti Khodijah**

Siti Khodijah (Olinda Soares) at school in Bandung, 2004. Yakin sent her to Indonesia in 1993 when she was five years old.

© Helene van Klinken

46 Syamsul Bahari (interview, Baucau, 23 April 2004).

47 Antonio Freitas (email and telephone communication, Bandung, 2005); Alola Foundation ([www.alolafoundation.org/](http://www.alolafoundation.org/)) is run by Kirsty Sword Gusmão, the Australian wife of Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão.



**Antonio with girls and father**

Siti Khodijah (Olinda Soares) left, and her sister Siti Aminah (Amelia Soares) with their father, Abidin Arianto, back right, Bandung, 2005. He went to Bandung to bring his daughters home.

© Antonio Freitas

In most cases the Indonesian military still does not co-operate with tracing children taken from East Timor by its personnel. Even when East Timorese parents have the details of the name, unit and identification number of the soldier who took their child, as in one case I am aware of, there is no formal channel for military co-operation. Despite this, direct personal contact with senior Indonesian military personnel has produced some successes. One well-publicised case was the return in 2010 of the child of Lere Anan Timur. A senior Indonesian officer, Lieutenant General (retired) Yunus Yosfiah, helped Lere contact Brigadier General Sontono, the adoptive father of Lere's son. This reunion was possible in part because relations between military officers from Indonesia and East Timor have now improved. Brigadier-General Lere, who is now the Chief-of-Staff of the Defence Forces of East Timor,

has good relations with former enemies such as Lieutenant General (retired) Prabowo Subianto (*Tempo Semanal* 2008). Less well-connected parents whose children were taken by lower ranking soldiers do not, however, have access to such assistance in tracing their children.

Nevertheless, children who were taken away by soldiers now have more options and are less fearful of trying to find their families than during the New Order period. Augusta and Madelina, the two sisters taken with three other children in 1977 from Ermera, contacted their family in 1999. Madelina's husband is a soldier who was stationed in West Timor in 1999 and found people from Ermera in the camps who knew his wife's family and carried photos and letters back to Ermera. That Madelina and her husband were able to speak directly with people who knew her family made this initiative possible,<sup>48</sup> but such opportunities are rare. It is still difficult to send mail to East Timor and the children raised in Indonesia have lost the language they need to communicate with their parents. Furthermore, many do not know where their parents live. Radio may offer options for families and children seeking reunion, and this was how the CAVR helped Biliki to trace her family. There are now local radio stations that reach the remotest corners of Indonesia.<sup>49</sup> In the future all Indonesians will have access to the internet, at one or more of the internet access sites to be located in all of Indonesia's 5,748 sub-districts (*Antara News* 2010), which will offer new possibilities for networking and tracing missing family members. Nevertheless, institutional arrangements between the two countries need to be established to help in the process of tracing and reuniting families.

To end this account of child transfers it is fitting to return to the story of the 1988 abduction of two-year-old Benvindo Aze Descart, already told in Chapter 2, and his reunion in 2003 with his biological parents. Benvindo's experience dramatically encapsulates the contradictions in the Indonesia–East Timor relationship and how the transfer of children to Indonesia was part of the effort to consolidate Indonesian domination. Benvindo is the son of Falintil commander Aluc Descart, who spent the entire occupation fighting the Indonesian military. When Benvindo was 17 months old, Lieutenant Colonel S took him from East Timor to Indonesia. As other Indonesians had done, S took the child to try to force the surrender of his father and colleagues fighting in the forest. Yet S did not kill the child; he

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48 In 2004 the contact had been lost (Filamena dos Santos, interview, Letefoho, Ermera, 23 February 2004).

49 Kantor Berita Radio 68H supports a network of 700 local and private stations.

and his wife lovingly raised him as his own son. S concealed Benvindo's true identity from him and Benvindo believed he was the natural son of his adoptive Javanese parents, even though he was often teased about his non-Javanese looks – his darkish skin, his curly hair and his height.

Like other East Timorese parents whose children had been taken to Indonesia, Benvindo's parents wanted to trace their son. Several factors contributed to the success of Aluc's search for Benvindo after 1999. Just like Lere, Aluc had an influential position in independent East Timor, having been appointed second-in-command of the newly formed East Timor army when he came out of the forest in 1999. He located the former commander of the district military command in Los Palos, whose name he knew, with the help of several East Timorese women married to senior Indonesian military officers. Kirsty Sword Gusmão also wrote to S requesting reunion. By this time S had become a high-ranking Indonesian officer and he had no alternative other than to co-operate with the request. It was only after Aluc had contacted him that S told Benvindo of his true identity.

For Benvindo it was confusing to discover suddenly that he had two fathers. He said that he felt as if he were acting out a scene from a soap opera. When he first met his biological father, by which time he was 18, he was shocked, but then overjoyed and proud of his natural father. He now says that, even though he has been raised as a Javanese, has a Javanese name, follows Javanese customs and speaks Javanese, he is East Timorese and wants to recover his East Timorese identity and learn Portuguese so that he can communicate with his parents who do not speak Indonesian.<sup>50</sup> Like other children transferred to Indonesia, Benvindo had crossed a colonial border and taken on the identity of the enemy of his father and people, not because he was a collaborator or traitor but because he was a child and that was his experience.

Benvindo was understandably torn between his affection for his adoptive father and his biological father, for whom he soon developed great respect. He had known no other father than S, yet it was obvious to him that he was Aluc's son. Stolen Argentinean children also faced this dilemma when they discovered that the parents who had raised them were the murderers of their biological parents, and it was most difficult for children who had had good experiences in their adoptive homes (Robinson and Linda 1998). Benvindo had to face the fact that those he loved had lied to him. He was more fortunate than many children transferred to Indonesia as his biological parents had

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50 The Descart family comes from Los Palos where Fataluku, rather than Tetun, is the local language.

survived, yet he could not choose between his two fathers. Perhaps only a child placed in this situation could arrive at the solution he found. Benvindo, who had been taken forcibly across the colonial border, told his two fathers that he was a bridge between them and that, although former enemies, through him they had become friends. They exchanged weapons to cement this friendship and Aluc now proudly wears the sword he received as a gift from S.

Colonial attitudes persisted despite the new friendship. To his credit, S apologised for taking Benvindo. Unlike most soldiers who took children, S had sent a photograph of Benvindo when he was about five years old to his mother. S invited Aluc to take Benvindo home, but warned him that his education would suffer if he returned to East Timor, thus persisting with the approach used throughout the occupation by soldiers and others to persuade parents to hand over their children. Benvindo, who goes by his Indonesian name Shalih Zeromon Miranda Rahman, is now an adult and what is important for Aluc is that his son learns the truth about his parents, about their struggle and about how their son's removal to Java and adoption into an Indonesian family was part of that story – indeed representative of it.<sup>51</sup>



### **Benvindo in Jakarta**

Benvindo (Shalih Zeromon Miranda Rahman), centre, with East Timor relatives and Javanese friend, in Jakarta, 2006.

© Helene van Klinken

51 S died in May 2005. In 2009 Benvindo returned to East Timor where he now lives (Tol 2009).



**Benvindo in East Timor**

Benvindo giving an interview to Radio Nederland in East Timor, August, 2009

© Aboeprijadi Santoso

## Conclusion

Indonesia's integration project in East Timor began and ended violently and suddenly. The militarised nature of the occupation became evident as the end played out on television screens around the world. As in the late 1970s, the population was displaced on a stupendous scale in 1999 to live in camps in Indonesia controlled by East Timorese militia with Indonesian military backing.

The East Timorese militia and pro-integrationists were angered by the loss of East Timor. They were disappointed that Indonesian promises that East Timor would always be part of Indonesia were broken, resulting in the end to their favoured status. It is likely that they feared revenge from

their fellow East Timorese whom they had mistreated with impunity and were determined to demand the return of East Timor to the Indonesian fold and that their fervent support for integration did not go unrewarded. Indonesian soldiers had taken children from East Timor in the war to establish their superiority over the East Timorese. Likewise, some of these pro-integrationists, acting as if they were the victors in the final outburst of conflict, took children to support their ideological aims. It was in a climate of fear and deprivation that many parents, in 1977 and 1999, handed over their children to people who came to them with offers to care for and educate their children in a safe, albeit distant, environment. As part of their plan to keep alive the hope of the reintegration of East Timor with Indonesia, the pro-Indonesian East Timorese intended to educate the children in their care with this vision for the future.

After 1999 the UNHCR had the task of reuniting children separated from their parents. At first, Indonesian officials, many of whom shared the anti-United Nations sentiments of those holding the children, did not act decisively and demand the return of the children. The Indonesian authorities once again condoned transfers, just as they had condoned them throughout the occupation. Gradually, however, Indonesian officials took up the responsibility of forcing the organisations to comply with parental requests for the return of their children. The Catholic Church, in contrast to its position towards integration in the earlier years of the occupation, also took a firm stand against the transfer of children far from their families. Pressure also came from Indonesian NGOs and from United Nations agencies and foreign journalists, all of whom called on the Indonesian government to take steps to intervene on behalf of the children. In tandem with this, the ardent pro-integrationists began to lose their Indonesian political sponsors and military backers as the end of the East Timor project became an undeniable reality.

The children were separated from their parents in 1999 when East Timor was in chaos and were traumatised when they arrived at their destinations in Indonesia. Those who held them manipulated them with misinformation about the situation in East Timor and, as minors, they had no choice other than to trust their carers. They were caught in a tug-of-war, not knowing whether to believe the information from the UNHCR about their parents and the situation in East Timor or what they were told by their carers. Like the East Timorese population held in the camps by East Timorese militia, the children who were taken from their families were victims in the political struggle that ended the integration project.

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*Conclusion*

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## Reflections on the transfers

The transfer of approximately 4,000 young, dependent East Timorese children to Indonesia during the occupation of East Timor between 1975 and 1999 is just one example of a not uncommon, although often secretive, practice in which a hegemonic power uses children in its goals of dominating the subordinate group to which the children belong. The unique factor in the transfers described here is that they were conducted by non-Europeans, indeed by people who, until 1945, had been the colonised people in a colonised territory.

Crossing a colonial border had long-lasting consequences for the identity of the children. The students learnt from the Indonesians; then many of them became leaders in rejecting Indonesian colonialism. Collaborators and traitors choose to cross colonial boundaries voluntarily and to identify with the enemy; the experience of the young, dependent children was different. In Indonesia they were raised as the children of the enemy – and took on the identity of the coloniser, simply because they grew to adulthood there. The children imbibed Indonesian culture, language and ideology and were educated to be nationalistic supporters of a united Indonesia that included East Timor. The boundaries between coloniser and colonised were blurred for them and many still do not know their origins as they have been hidden from them. The objective of New Order Indonesia for all East Timorese was to make them, in their hearts and minds, accept their identity as Indonesians. Transferring children to Indonesia encapsulated the goal of the integration project and the intention of the New Order authorities for all East Timorese whom they regarded more like children – namely, to make them Indonesians.

Indonesians who transferred children to Indonesia regarded their intentions as benevolent, but they were not motivated by humanitarian concern alone. As described in chapters 3 to 6, as the historical and

political context changed, so too did the nature of child transfers and the motives that impelled them. Colonial relationships are, in the final analysis, about ensuring the hegemony of the coloniser and this is reflected in the transfers, in which humanitarian concern for the welfare of the children was aligned with and served national and ideological interests and self-interest.

In chapters 2 and 4, I pointed to the highly political and powerfully symbolic significance attached to the transfer in the late 1970s of 61 young 'orphans' to educational institutions in Indonesia, carried out at the initiative of President Suharto. The children were brought to Indonesia in the immediate lead-up to the launch of full-scale war by the Indonesian military to drive the East Timorese out of their mountain hideouts into Indonesian control. The transfers demonstrated Indonesian generosity to East Timorese who accepted integration, but they simultaneously served Indonesian propaganda purposes of indicating that the East Timorese wanted integration and of justifying Indonesian military involvement on behalf of those who suffered in the struggle.

The war that followed, from late 1977 until early 1979, produced many of the separated and abandoned East Timorese children taken for adoption by Indonesian soldiers. In Chapter 2 we learnt that soldiers took these children to educate them, but they also removed them because they had no children of their own or they took them to work for their families. They also wanted to adopt the children of the resistance as a way to punish, weaken and humiliate their enemy. The children were there for them to take, like other spoils of war, and bringing home a child became, for some, proof of their success in dominating the East Timorese.

Soldiers' disregard for the trauma that transfer caused children and their families has many similarities with the attitudes of white Australian officials in their treatment of young Aboriginal children removed from their families. East Timorese parents were assumed to agree, like the parents of Aboriginal children, that their children would be better off educated in the institutions of the 'superior' culture. While many soldiers raised the children as their own and treated them well, some of the children, like some of the Aboriginal children, were mistreated by those who claimed to be their protectors and concerned for their welfare. Furthermore, some of those who raised East Timorese children, particularly children from Fretilin families, like those who stole and raised Argentinean children in the late 1970s, considered it better for the children to grow up estranged from their East Timorese identity and allegedly subversive backgrounds.

In Chapter 4 we saw that many young children were sent to Indonesia to be raised and educated as Muslims. They were sent away from East Timor, where it was difficult to establish Islamic educational facilities, for similar reasons that had motivated the Soviets to transfer young vulnerable children out of zealously Islamic Afghanistan to receive a communist education in the Soviet heartland. The East Timorese were expected to return home and spread Islamic faith among indigenous East Timorese. The organisers of Islamic mission in East Timor deemed it necessary to raise a community of indigenous East Timorese Muslims to help to create a space in East Timor for Islam, the religion of the majority of the numerous Indonesian newcomers there to conduct the integration project. In predominantly Catholic East Timor, a community of indigenous Muslims would help to justify the existence in East Timor of Islamic schools and places of worship.

During and shortly after the turmoil following the rejection of Indonesia's autonomy offer in the referendum in 1999, many of those who took East Timorese children from refugee camps did so because, once again, they believed in the superior education they offered in institutions in Indonesia; they also knew that the children would help them attract donors. As described in Chapter 5, the pro-Indonesian East Timorese who took children to Indonesia were motivated by economic considerations, but equally so by ideology, although it was mostly swaggering posturing. They proposed to educate the children to struggle for the future re-integration of East Timor with Indonesia.

While Indonesians believed that the East Timorese received special treatment and were showered with generous development projects, like a 'favoured child' (*anak mas*) (*Media Dakwah* 1995d: 6–7), development was often delivered in contradiction to the rights of the East Timorese. Abuses perpetrated by the Indonesian military backers of the New Order regime created such trauma in the population that benevolent rule was not achievable. The tension in the relationship is mirrored in the generous treatment of many of the East Timorese children by their carers in Indonesian homes and institutions, in contradiction with the frequently forced transfer of the children out of East Timor. Many of the transfers contravened rights enshrined in Indonesian and international laws and conventions. Coercion and threats to force families to hand over their children were in breach of Indonesian law. The smuggling of children out of East Timor by soldiers indicates that removing children contravened Indonesian law. It is also forbidden by Indonesian law to raise children in a religion different from that of their parents. In many cases children were deemed abandoned orphans in

order to justify their transfer, yet they had family members in East Timor who were denied the right to care for them and keep in contact with them. Almost invariably military abuse in East Timor went unchallenged and, in most cases, East Timorese were unable to demand their rights, including the return to East Timor of the children removed from them under duress.

An extra dimension in the relationship with which the Indonesians had to contend was that integration was never recognised under international law. The territory was under the international spotlight and integration was challenged, increasingly over the years, much to the irritation of the New Order authorities. This dimension may help to explain not only why children were transferred, but also why the transfers were conducted surreptitiously with so little known about them in the public sphere.

Taking East Timorese children to Indonesia proved that Indonesians were concerned about the children. Children were not transferred out of other conflict areas in Indonesia, such as West Irian and Aceh, on the same scale as occurred in East Timor. These young impressionable East Timorese children who were brought up as Indonesians, understanding Indonesian language, culture, ideology, and often given new names and a new religion, were living proof of the reality of integration. They symbolically portrayed East Timor as belonging within the embrace of the wider Indonesian family. The young children, along with the thousands of students studying at Indonesian institutions, helped to justify Indonesia's claim to ownership of East Timor.

Why then were child transfers conducted in such a low-key almost furtive manner? Part of the reason for the secretiveness lay in the fact that it is not acceptable in Indonesia for young children to be taken from their families, but there were other reasons as well. The war against Fretilin left many destitute and abandoned children. To admit this would have indicated the scale of the fighting and the resistance to Indonesian rule by the East Timorese. While many soldiers left children to die in the aftermath of battle and in concentration camps, those who took children home out of compassion could not fully disclose why there were abandoned children in East Timor. To friends and neighbours, Indonesian soldiers presented them as the children of East Timorese who died fighting against Fretilin to achieve integration. Another reason for the low profile of transfers is that public acknowledgement that many children from East Timor were raised as non-Catholics, particularly in Islamic institutions in Indonesia, was likely to cause unrest in East Timor. Consequently, it was usually the most destitute children from the most vulnerable families who were sent to Indonesia –

children abandoned and separated during war and conflict, orphaned child, children of the poor, fatherless children, children of the resistance who were deemed to have no rights, children of families who could be manipulated and coerced. The families of these children had few resources and little recourse to political influence to challenge the transfer of their children or to reclaim them.

The students sent to study in Indonesia took up positions of leadership in East Timor, but most did not ultimately become collaborators in the East Timor integration project as the Indonesians had hoped. Their experiences and those of their parents and families living under abusive, Indonesian military rule led most of them to reject integration. Nevertheless, they are grateful for their Indonesian education and benefited and learnt from it. But, like young Indonesians who had benefited from their colonial Dutch education, East Timorese young people also demanded the same right to freedom that the Indonesians had won from the Dutch. Fernando de Araujo, former student leader and parliamentary leader in 2008, asserted in 1992 that the East Timorese people could not ‘exchange their fundamental right to be free, for development’.<sup>1</sup>

During the Indonesian aggression and occupation in East Timor the relationship between Indonesians and East Timorese in the public arena never rose above a colonial relationship. Nevertheless, individual Indonesians and East Timorese formed bonds during the occupation that will serve them in building a relationship between two democratic nations. There is no doubt that some of these connections are between the colonial Indonesians who tried to help, albeit ‘from above’ and paternalistically, and the students and children they raised and educated in Indonesia. The story of child transfers helps us to form a more nuanced understanding of the intertwined social dynamics that will continue into the post-colonial relationship between the new, young nation of East Timor and its powerful neighbour.

Many of the young children who were taken across the colonial border do not, however, have much information about their East Timorese origins and they do not have the resources to search for their families. I hope that this account of the transfers will be supplemented by the work of future researchers and that other sources will become available – the archives of the Indonesian military and those of Indonesian institutions, as well as

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1 de Araujo was chairman of Renetil, the East Timorese student resistance organisation during the occupation and in 2008 a political party leader and leader of the national parliament. He made this statement in his defence during his 1992 trial for organising demonstrations in Jakarta after the Santa Cruz massacre (CAVR 2006: 7.9.4 No.128).

personal archives – that will contribute to greater understanding and, most importantly, to future reunions of children and their families. It is even possible that Indonesian military personnel who forcibly abducted children can be brought to justice, as has happened in one case in Argentina more than 20 years after the kidnapping (*BBC News* 2005).

I began by saying that we have many stories from the resistance, but that the stories of the children who were raised in the homes and institutions of Indonesians are also part of the history of the struggle of the East Timorese. However, the stories you have read here are also important in themselves, not only because we learn from them about the ambiguities and complexities in the relationships between vulnerable groups dealing with hegemonic cultures, but also because they tell us about the world that we have created and how we treat the weak and powerless.

## Appendix I. Dharmais Foundation child transfers to Java

Arrival in Indonesia	Institution	Number	Children, where known*
27 October 1976	PPATN, Bandung	5	Children from Conceição family, Tibar
30 December 1976	Kinderdorf, Bandung	6	3 Conceição children; 3 others
4 September 1977	St Thomas, Semarang	20	19 'representative orphans' and 1 Conceição
17 December 1977	Kinderdorf, Bandung	20	Children of Apodeti 'martyrs', later joined by others, particularly siblings
20 November 1979	PPATN, Bandung	10	'Representative orphans'

\* I am not sure of the backgrounds of all 61 children. In a few instances, a child with a different history seems to have been added to a group to bring the number to a multiple of ten.

Information was made available by the staff at Kinderdorf and St Thomas institutions. PPATN is no longer in existence and I was unable to meet its former staff or to locate its records, so the PPATN data is reconstructed from other sources. According to the Conceição family, Venâncio Conceição, who was sent to Kinderdorf, travelled to Bandung with the group of ten children on their way to PPATN; Kinderdorf records indicate that he arrived at Kinderdorf on 20 November 1979.

Panti Penyantunan Anak Taruna Negara (PPATN), was run by the Social Welfare Department to care for wards of the state and was located in Cimahi, Bandung, West Java. St Thomas Asrama, in Ungaran, Central Java is run by nuns from the Abdi Dalem Sang Kristus (ADSK), an indigenous Javanese Catholic order for women with about 17 congregations throughout Indonesia. In 1977 Sr Madelina was the head of the ADSK and Sr Petrona ran the Santa Maria Foundation responsible for the St Thomas Asrama. SOS Desa Taruna Kinderdorf, in Lembang, West Java, is a private institution with links to SOS International which has its headquarters in Austria.

The Conceição children were orphaned when their parents, UDT supporters, were killed by Fretilin in September 1975, during the party conflict before the invasion. 'Representative orphans' refers to 30 children specially selected from concentration camps to be sent to Java for an education. The children of Apodeti 'martyrs' were the children of Apodeti leaders killed by Fretilin soon after the invasion; they had been taken prisoner during the party conflict and blamed for co-operating with the Indonesians. The mothers of these children were not killed.

## Appendix II. Interviews

The table below provides details of interviews with informants who are quoted more than once in a chapter or in several chapters. Informant names often appear in the main text without being referenced in footnotes.

In both the text and footnotes, most informants are referred to using their given name first. Here and in the index they are listed surname first, where appropriate.

Some informants wished to remain anonymous.

Name	Place of interview	Date	Chapters where used
Abdul Rauf (Manuel)	Jakarta	21/01/2004	2
Alves da Silva, Domingas (Bilou-Mali)	Dili	4/05/2004	2
Andi Wijayanto	Jakarta	26/07/2006	2
Antonio (from Manatuto)	Yogyakarta	Feb – June 2001	2
Arabah, Yunus	Dili	3/05/2004	4
Araujo, Orlando de	Kuluhun, Dili	4/03/2004	4, 5
Babo Soares, Francisco, Madelina dos Santos and Dominggas Babo Soares	Aifu, Ermera	24/02/2004	2
Babo, Maria Margarida	Dili	1/04/2004	2, 3, 5
Bahari, Syamsul	Baucau	23/04/2004	3, 4
Banoe, Cornelius	Kupang	9/02/2004	5
Biliki	Jakarta	2003–2006	Intro, 2, 5
Cardoso Gomes, Faustino	Yogyakarta and Dili	2002, 21/04/2003	2, 5
Carrascalão, Mario	Dili	13/04/2004	Intro, 2, 3, 4
Chizuyo, Sr Inoue	Jakarta	2004, 2005	5
Conceição, Abilio da, and members of the Conceição family	Dili	Apr, May 2004	3
Conceição, Floriana	Bandung	31/01/2004	3

Conceição, Luciano	Jakarta	17/08/2006	2
Concelcao, Al-Bana	Jakarta	17/01/2004	4
Costa, Anwar da	Dili	24/04/2004	4
Costa, João da	Baucau	23/04/2004	3
Costa, Maria da	Dili	3/07/2003	2
DDII staff	Bandung	30/01/2004	4
Descart, Benvindo (Shalih Zeromon Miranda Rahman)	Jakarta	17/08/2006	2, 5
Descart, Lieutenant Colonel João Miranda 'Aluc'	Metinaro	29/04/2004	2, 5
Deus Maya, Dominggus de	Dili	20/04/2004	2
Dirdjasusanto, Alex SJ	telephone	12/05/2003	3
Dominggus, Ismail	Jakarta	21/01/2004	2
Domingos, Savio	Dili	9/05/2004	2
East Timorese parliamentarian (anonymous)	Dili	13/04/2004	4
EBD	Jakarta	12/08/2006	2
Elcid Li, Dominggus	email	1/12/2007	5
Fernandes, Hermenegildo	Caiwati, Ossu, Viqueque	26/03/2004	4
Freitas Soares, Fernando Jose	Quelicaí	25/03/2004	4
Freitas, Antonio	Bandung; telephone and email	2004–2006	5
Freitas, Helio	Dili	26/09/2003	3
Gandara, Egidio dos Santos	Los Palos	10/04/2004	2
Gandara, Sonia	telephone	2004–2006	2
Guterres, Isabel	Dili	27/04/2004	3
Guterres, Leonel	Quelicaí	25/03/2004	4
Halim, Haji Paita	Makassar	26/03/2003	4
Haryanto Freitas, Alex (Lukman)	Bandung	1/01/2004	4, 5

Haryanto, Abidin	Lelalai, Ossoliru, Quelicai	24/03/2004	4, 5
Ismartono SJ, Ignatius	Jakarta	12/05/2003	3
Jeronimo, Eusibio	Dili	13/05/2004	4
Johari, Mohammad (Bonifacio Moreira)	Dili	20/03/2004	4, 5
Kanisius, Petrus Antonio Algeria	Dili	2003/2004	1, 3
Katoppo, Aristides	Jakarta	2/08/2006	2
Khodijah, Siti (from Luro)	Los Palos	10/04/2004	4
Khodijah, Siti (Olinda Soares)	Bandung	1/02/2004	4, 5
Kholiq, Abdul	Dili	1/05/2004	4
Lay Kalbuadi, Francisco	Dili	16/04/2004	2
Layade, Fr Felix	Makassar	28/03/2003	2
Legge Mesquite, Maria	ISMAIK, Dare	14/04/2004	2
Leo, Muslim	Dili	10/04/2004	4
Leonia	Dili	1/03/2004	2
Linda, Sr	ISMAIK, Dare	9/03/2004	5
Lopes Federer, Maria do Céu	Dili	7/04/2004	2, 4
Lourdes Martins, Sr Maria	ISMAIK, Dare	9/03/2004	2
Manganang, Achnesia Felina	email and telephone	Jun 2010	2
Martinz, Lino	Dili	10/09/2003	2
Menezes, Mohammad Iqbal	Dili	1/04/2004	3, 4
Moreira, Agustinho	Uitame, Quelicai	2/05/2004	4
Pereira Pasqual, Agustinho	Tibar	5/05/2004	5
Pereira, Zacarias	Tibar	5/05/2004	5
Pokastim staff	Jakarta	1/01/2002	5
PS	Jakarta	6/08/2006	2
Ramadan, Nicolau	Yogyakarta	5/02/2004	2
Rangel, Rafael Urbano	Bandung; email	Apr 2004, 2008	3

Reinado, Alfredo Alves	Dili	5/03/2004	2
Reis Amaral, Clementino dos	Dili	13/05/2004	2
Reis Fernandes, Guilherme dos	Dili	Apr, May 2004	2
Sagran, Haji Salim	Dili	1/04/2004	4
Santos Lobo, Francisca dos and Orlando Ximenes Ley	Mertutu, Ermera	Sep 2003, Apr 2004	2
Santos, Abel dos	Dili	7/03/2004	2
Santos, Filamena dos	Letefoho, Ermera	23/02/2004	2
Sarmento, Duarte	Tuapukan, Kupang	8/02/2004	Intro, 3
Sarmento, Fr Joachim	Dili	4/05/2004	3
Silva, Achmad da	Jakarta	2003/2004	2
Sinjal, Daud	Jakarta	3/08/2006	2
Sirait, Arist Merdeka	Jakarta	20/04/2004	5
Soares Lemorai, Sidiq	Dili	5/05/2004	4
Soares, Agustinho	Ermera	13/08/2003	2
Soares, Helio	Kupang	9/02/2004	5
Soares, Natercia	Jakarta	21/01/2004	5
Soares, Teodoro	Dili	1/04/2004	3
Soewardijo	Yogyakarta	3/02/2004	3
Spillane SJ, James J	Yogyakarta	9/05/2003	3, 5
Sudirman (Alacino)	Dili	9/05/2004	4
Syahnakri, Lieutenant General (retired) Kiki	Jakarta	24/08/2006	2
Therik, Dr Tom	Kupang	9/02/2004	Intro
Tomasoa, Peter	Jakarta	23/08/2006	3
Vasconcelos, Rev Agustinho de	Dili	10/05/2004	2
Vasconcelos, Rev Agustinho de	Dili	10/05/2004	2

## Appendix III. Biographical information

<b>Araujo, Arnaldo dos Reis</b>	Araujo was the first Governor of East Timor, appointed in late 1975 by the Indonesian military as head of the Provisional Government in East Timor (PGET).
<b>Basri, Hasan</b>	Hasan Basri (Roberto Freitas) was taken to Sulawesi in the early 1980s by Salim Sagran. In 1998 he set up the Lemorai Foundation in Bandung.
<b>Carrascalão, Mario</b>	Carrascalão was Governor of East Timor from 1982 to 1992.
<b>Djojohadikusumo, Lieutenant General (retired) Prabowo Subianto (b. 1952)</b>	Prabowo Subianto was a Special Forces (Kopassus) officer in East Timor in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1976 he was ranked lieutenant, but quickly rose to become the commander of a unit (Nanggala). In 1983 he married the president's second daughter and in 1995, as Lieutenant General, he was appointed Kopassus Commander and in 1998 Commander of the Army Strategic Reserve (Kostrad).
<b>Gusmão, Xanana</b>	Xanana Gusmão led the Fretilin resistance from the early 1980s after the death of Nicolau Lobato. He became the first President after independence and in 2007 the Prime Minister of East Timor.
<b>Horta, Jose Ramos</b>	Jose Ramos Horta was the exiled spokesman for the East Timorese resistance during the occupation. He was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1996. In 2007 he became President of East Timor.
<b>Johari, Mohammad</b>	Mohammad Johari (Bonifacio Moreira) was sent to a pesantren in Sulawesi as a young man in 1984 and later established Al-Anshar Institution in Makassar.
<b>Kalbuadi, Lieutenant General Dading (1931–1999)</b>	Colonel Dading Kalbuadi was the chief of intelligence of Operation Seroja. In early 1976 he became Commander of Komando Daerah Pertahanan Keamanan (Kodahankam), Regional Security and Defence, which gave him, in effect, total command in East Timor, as there was no civilian government.
<b>Murdani, General Benjamin (Benny) (1932–2004)</b>	In 1974 Major General L Benny Murdani headed several intelligence bodies. Together with Murtopo he played a key role in developing policy for the invasion of East Timor in 1975.
<b>Murtopo, General Ali (1924–1984)</b>	In 1975 Major General Ali Murtopo was deputy head of the State Intelligence Coordinating Body, BAKIN, and head of the Special Operations Command, Opsus, which set up the Operation Komodo to infiltrate East Timor. Murtopo established the military think-tank, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), with strong links with some members of the Catholic Church, especially several Jesuits.

<b>Sagran, Abdullah and Sagran, Salim</b>	Haji Abdullah Sagran set up Yakin. His brother Haji Salim Sagran took over running the institution when he died. They belong to the East Timorese Arab community.
<b>Soares, Abilio</b>	In 1992 Abilio Soares replaced Mario Carrascalão as governor of East Timor. He was a protégé of Prabowo Subianto. He belonged to a well-known Apodeti family. In 2004 he was charged in the Ad Hoc Tribunal in Jakarta for human rights abuses that occurred when he was governor in 1999. He served three months of a three-year sentence, which was revoked on appeal and died in June 2007.
<b>Soares, Octavio</b>	Octavio is the nephew of the last governor of East Timor, Abilio Soares, and was general secretary of Hati Foundation.
<b>Suharto</b>	Second President of Indonesia.
<b>Sukarno</b>	First President of Indonesia.
<b>Syafei, Major General Theo (1941–2011)</b>	General Theo Syafei was involved in East Timor from 1975. He was a battalion commander and from 1993 to 1998 commanded the Udayana Military Region.
<b>Syahnakri, Lieutenant General (retired) Kiki (b. 1947)</b>	Kiki Syahnakri spent many years in East Timor and speaks Tetun. He was the army's East Timor expert. In 1994-95 he was the Regional Military Commander for East Timor. After the referendum in 1999, he was the martial law administrator from 7 to 27 September and was then appointed the commander of the Udayana military area. In 2003 he was charged, in absentia, with crimes against humanity before the Dili special panel and indicted with six other senior military officers.

## Appendix IV. Chronology

17 Aug <b>1945</b>	Indonesia declared its independence from The Netherlands.
<b>1965/66</b>	After an anti-communist pogrom, Suharto seized power from the first president, Sukarno, and established the New Order.
7 Dec <b>1975</b>	Indonesia launched large-scale invasion of East Timor in Dili.
17 Jul <b>1976</b>	East Timor declared the 27th province of Indonesia.
Mar <b>1979</b>	Fretilin was defeated as a fighting force. (Several years later, under the leadership of Xanana Gusmão, the resistance regrouped as an umbrella organisation with Falintil as its fighting wing.)
12 Nov <b>1991</b>	Santa Cruz massacre in Dili left up to 270 dead and 200 missing, mostly young people. Publicity of the incident helped to galvanise international support for East Timor's struggle.
21 May <b>1998</b>	Suharto forced to resign as President of Indonesia.
30 Aug <b>1999</b>	The people of East Timor voted against an autonomy option offered by Indonesia.
25 Oct <b>1999</b>	UNTAET established to administer the territory.
20 May <b>2002</b>	The territory became the independent nation of Timor-Leste.

# Glossary

ADSK	Abdi Dalem Sang Kristus (Servants of Christ), an indigenous Javanese Catholic order for women with about 17 branches throughout Indonesia
<i>Antara</i>	Indonesian state-owned news agency
Apodeti	Associação Popular Democrática Timorese (Timorese Popular Democratic Association), a political party that supported integration with Indonesia
<i>asrama</i>	dormitory-style accommodation for students or children
Atauro Island	island to the north of Dili used from 1980 as a prison for family members of active Fretilin fighters
BAKIN	Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara (the Indonesian State Intelligence Coordinating Agency)
Balibo Declaration	signed by four political parties declaring integration with Indonesia on 30 November 1975, two days after the Fretilin declaration of independence
<i>bupati</i>	district head
<i>camat</i>	sub-district head
Catechist	lay person trained to give instruction in Catholic teaching
CAVR	A Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação (Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor)
concentration camps	areas where East Timorese were confined until the early 1980s by the Indonesian military after surrender or capture
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies, a think-tank in Jakarta set up by Ali Murtopo, which was involved in developing policy regarding Portuguese Timor
CTF	bilateral Indonesia–East Timor Commission of Truth and Friendship
Depnaker	Departemen Tenaga Kerja (Department of Manpower)
DDII	Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Propagation (Missionary) Council)
Dharmais Foundation	Yayasan Dharma Bhakti Sosial (Duty of Social Service Foundation), commonly known as Yayasan Dharmais.
Fretilin	political party begun as Associação Social Democrática Timorese (Timorese Association of Social Democrats), which in September 1975, after it gained control in Portuguese Timor, formed Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor)

<i>hansip</i>	<i>pertahanan sipil</i> (civil guards)
Hati Foundation	Yayasan Harapan Timor (Hope for Timor Foundation), more commonly known as Yayasan Hati, a foundation established by members of the family of Abilio Soares after 1999 to educate East Timorese children in Indonesia
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
Impettu and Impeltim	Ikatan Mahasiswa Pemuda/Pelajar Timor Timur (East Timorese student associations)
InterFET	International Force for East Timor, the Australian-led force that landed in Dili on 20 September 1999
Ipmitim	Ikatan Pelajar Mahasiswa Islam Timor Timur (Association of East Timorese Islamic University and School Students) in Bandung
Irian Jaya (West Irian)	Indonesian name for the western half of the island of New Guinea, now known as Papua
ISMAIK	Instituto Secular Maun alin Iha Kristo (Secular Institute of Brothers and Sisters in Christ), based in Dare, East Timor.
Kinderdorf	SOS Desa Taruna Kinderdorf, a private institution near Bandung in West Java with links to SOS International
Kodim	Komando Distrik Militer (District Military Command)
Kopkamtib	Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban (Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order), a high-level extra-constitutional intelligence body established by Suharto to rid Indonesia of communists
Kopassus	Komando Pasukan Khusus (Special Forces Command)
Koramil	Komando Rayon Militer (Sub-district Military Command)
Kota	Klibur Oan Timur Aswain (Sons of the Mountain Warriors), an association of traditional East Timorese leaders ( <i>liurai</i> ) that joined with Apodeti and UDT to sign the Balibo Declaration.
<i>liurai</i>	traditional leader or elders, sometimes referred to as <i>raja</i> (king)
<i>madrasah</i>	Islamic religious school
MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly), the highest legislative body
MUI	Majelis Ulama Indonesia, the official state-organised Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars, which opened an office in Dili in 1982
<i>musholla</i>	small room set aside for prayer, especially important when the mosque is situated too far away to attend regularly
NGO	non-government organisation (During the New Order era NGOs often took on functions usually carried out by governments in democratic societies.)

Operation Flamboyan	organised by Major General Benny Murdani to prepare for the invasion of Dili, in which the ground troops were led by Colonel Dading
Operation Komodo	intelligence operation to achieve the peaceful integration of East Timor, led by Ali Murtopo and commencing its operations in April 1974
Operation Seroja	invasion operation that ended in March 1979 when Fretilin was defeated as a fighting force and most East Timorese had been captured or forced to surrender
Pancasila	state ideology of Indonesia, consisting of Five Principles (Belief in one God; A just and civilised society, including respect for all people; Unity of Indonesia; Democracy led by representatives of the people; Social justice for all)
<i>panti asuhan</i>	institution for the care of orphans and children of poor families
Papuans	inhabitants of Irian Jaya (West Irian), called Papua in recent years
<i>pesantren</i>	institution where Muslim students ( <i>santri</i> ) live while receiving instruction, with an emphasis on religious teaching.
PGET	Provisional Government of East Timor
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Communist Party of Indonesia)
Pokastim	Kelompok Kerja untuk Kesejahteraan dan Pendidikan Masyarakat Madani (Working Group for the Welfare and Education of East Timorese), an NGO based in Jakarta
PPATN	Panti Penyantunan Anak Taruna Negara, an institution in Bandung run by the Department of Social Welfare to care for wards of state and destitute children
St Thomas	childcare institution near Semarang, Central Java run by the ADKS order of nuns
TBO	Tenaga Bantuan Operasi (Staff Assisting Operations)
Tetun	since independence the official language of East Timor, along with Portuguese
Tiara Foundation	owned by Siti Hardiyanti Indra Rukmana, the daughter of Suharto, which supported the Depnaker-organised training and work scheme to send unemployed East Timorese youths to Indonesia in the 1990s
Trabalistha	Labour Party, formed in 1974 in Portuguese Timor, which joined with Apodeti and UDT to sign the Balibo Declaration
trans-migration	Indonesian government internal migration scheme which sent landless peasants from overcrowded Java and Bali to develop outlying areas of the archipelago, including East Timor (The program often had political overtones as it brought into areas such as East Timor a population assumed to be more loyal to the central government, but conflict often arose because of cultural and religious differences between the locals and transmigrants, and also over land rights.)

UDT	União Democrática Timorense (Timorese Democratic Union), which initially supported continued association with Portugal and later chose integration
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICET	United Islamic Centre of East Timor, established by indigenous East Timorese Muslims
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, established 1999 after the referendum to administer the territory until independence May 2002
UNAMET	United Nations Mission in East Timor, established 11 June 1999 and ended 25 October 1999
Yakin	Yayasan Kesejahteraan Islam Nasrulla, the DDII supported foundation that organised the transfer of Timorese children to institutions in Indonesia

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[www.istoriaku.org](http://www.istoriaku.org)

Istóriaku has been set up to provide information about the transfer of children out of East Timor during the Indonesian occupation (1975–1999). The organisation aims to help those who are searching for missing family members.

Its website tells the stories of separation and transfer of many East Timorese children and their parents. These offer a glimpse of the relationship between Indonesians and East Timorese during that period and help explain why the transfers occurred.

The name Istóriaku combines Tetun, the language of East Timor, and Indonesian. *Hau iba istória* (Tetun) and *Cerita aku* (Indonesian) both translate as My Story.





# MAKING THEM INDONESIANS

## CHILD TRANSFERS OUT OF EAST TIMOR

HELENE VAN KLINKEN

*One Indonesian soldier was particularly nice to me. He gave me pretty clothes and sweets and used to take me for walks and to his office. Then one Sunday, it was just after my first communion, I was coming out of church with other children when soldiers took me and put me into a vehicle. My uncle tried to stop them. I remember screaming and being very frightened. They took me to the nearby airfield and then in a helicopter. As we took off I threw the handkerchief my uncle had given me out of the helicopter. In Dili I stayed for some time in the soldiers' barracks in Taibessi where there were East Timorese women, one of whom cared for me. On one occasion I tried to run away and find my way back home. After some time the soldier was finished in Ainaro; he collected me from the barracks and took me back to Indonesia by plane.*

— **Biliki, in Jakarta (2003) recalling her last recollections of her life in East Timor as a seven-year-old child in 1978.**

Biliki was one of approximately 4,000 dependent East Timorese children who were transferred to Indonesia during the occupation of East Timor by Indonesia between 1975 and 1999. Many, like Biliki, were taken by soldiers to be adopted, others were sent to institutions in Indonesia by government and religious organisations. This book is the first detailed account of the history of the transfer of these children to Indonesia.

**Helene van Klinken** worked in Java, Indonesia, in university contexts between 1984 and 1991, and 2000 to 2002. She first visited East Timor in 1989 after the territory was opened to outside visitors. In 1999 she worked for the United Nations as a political affairs officer in the lead up to the popular consultation, and in 2003 was a volunteer at the CAVR (the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor). This book is based on the PhD thesis she completed at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, in 2009.

Cover photograph by *Kompas*, East Timorese children at the home of the Suhartos, 3 September 1977.

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