

Introduction

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In July 2015, the Timor-Leste Studies Association held its biennial conference. A call for papers for a *40 years since 1975* panel attracted so many papers that several panels were held.

This volume contains edited versions of some of the papers that were presented at the conference. It also contains a paper on Benedict Anderson, the most prominent Indonesia specialist to challenge United States policy on East Timor. When news came through that Professor Anderson had died six-months after the conference, we requested his friend, the author and long-time activist, Arnold Kohen, to contribute this paper.

The papers here reflect a number of different, sometimes competing, analytical perspectives, and no editorial attempt has been made to adjudicate between them. That task quite properly belongs to the broader community of Timor-Leste scholars, not an editor.

The scholarly hiatus is Indonesian in nature. That country's longest war – the invasion and occupation of Timor-Leste – is barely known to most Indonesians. Indonesia is yet to make an official admission that there was even an Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Its position in 1975 was articulated by Information Minister Mashuri, who said that 'Indonesian volunteers' had helped 'the combined forces' of 'our brothers in Portuguese Timor', and that the Indonesian military went there only after the formal integration on 17 July 1976. In 2008, the Commission on Truth and Friendship, after stating its unswerving commitment to 'The Conclusive Truth,' said that the 'nature of the process by which East Timor was integrated into Indonesia has been the subject of controversy. The two parties to the conflict have opposing interpretations of this process which it is difficult to reconcile.'

The *40 years since 1975* collection has no taste for such weak tea. Like Timorese coffee, we prefer our scholarship strong, stimulating and heated. Viva!