

TERROR IN EAST TIMOR

PUBLIC MEETING

SPEAKERS

- Joe Higgins T.D.**
- East Timor Ireland
Solidarity Campaign**

ATGWU Hall

Monday

September 20th

7.30pm

EVENTS IN East Timor are moving rapidly. We've gone from "democracy" terror to marshal law to UN "peacekeeping".

Why did the major powers change their attitude and decide to intervene? The huge pressure of public opinion backed up by mass protest was a significant factor. The UN felt its credibility was on the line. Another factor was the potential destabilization of Indonesia.

Clinton's concern should be seen as hypocrisy. The US has backed Indonesia as an ally regardless of its vicious repression of East

Timor since 1975.

Sections of the army elite expropriated vast tracts of land in East Timor as well as its resources. However the army is still reeling from last year's movements of ordinary people from throughout Indonesia which led to the ousting of Suharto. Independence could mark a further blow to army prestige as well as directly threaten their personal material interests. Furthermore independence could threaten the break up of Indonesia given the encouragement it would give the other movements for independence in the region.

Reports of a split between the government and the army with a coup threatened by the latter seem well founded. US, Britain and Australia knew that marshal law in East Timor and a coup in Jakarta could unleash a second mass movement which would create a new radical regime that could threaten capitalist interests in the area.

Undoubtedly these powers intervened to stay the hand of the military by threatening to withhold economic aid. The situation is very unstable right now and the military have been forced to accept intervention. What they will do when their material interests are under immediate threat is an open question.

The future of the people of East Timor will be one of continued oppression and poverty unless the country's resources are nationalised and democratically used for the benefit of ordinary people. Only those who are blind to the reality of the past 24 years can think that the UN can fight for the rights of ordinary people. These same people have the blood of the East Timorese on their hands. The UN will oppose any real attempts by people to own their country and its

resources. Their commitment to physically defend East Timor even in the short term is questionable given their past role in Rwanda and Somalia.

The Socialist Party believes that it is only the ordinary people of East Timor and Indonesia who can end the decades of repression and exploitation in East Timor. The mass movement in Indonesia which toppled the Suharto dictatorship last year was the beginning of this process.

As the Indonesian military are cracking down in East Timor, they are also cracking heads in Jakarta. Students and some political groups have come out in defence of the East Timorese. Fears of a new coup are in the air. The struggle against exploitation and for democracy is common to both peoples. A crushing defeat of the East Timorese will inevitably lay the basis for further attacks on activists in Indonesia.

A new mass movement in Indonesia like the movements of last year is a possibility. Linked to the struggle in East Timor and a campaign of workers' action internationally, the Indonesian military and political elite can be defeated.

Socialist Party stands for:

- * For the immediate recognition of East Timor's independence by the Irish government.
- * Indonesian forces and militias out of East Timor.
- * An international campaign of workers sanctions against Indonesia's military elite.
- * For a mass movement in Indonesia against the military occupation in East Timor and for real democracy at home.
- * No trust in a UN or foreign military intervention.
- * The establishment of a democratically run armed defence force in East Timor.
- * For a government of genuine representatives of workers and poor of East Timor.
- * Opposition to all repression of ethnic and national minorities and full support to the struggle for a socialist, independent East Timor.

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