

Unfortunately, his views were rather trite and less informative than many of the other contributors.

Nevertheless, this is a remarkably useful volume and it is bound to be adopted as a course text for development journalism programmes. —

DAVID ROBIE

Media hypocrisy on East Timor

A Critical View of Western Journalism and Scholarship on East Timor, by Geoffrey Gunn, Manila: Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, 1994. 272 pp. K10.

Shortly after the Dili massacre in November 1991, I was paid a 'kill' fee by one of New Zealand's largest dailies rather than publish a detailed account of the circumstances leading up to the massacre and an exposure of the Indonesian lies and distortions. The full-page broadsheet article had already been set up in type and laid out when it was 'pulled' from the paper. A New Zealander was among those who were brutally murdered by Indonesian troops that tragic day. Yet the New Zealand media were reluctant to publish the truth. My article was eventually published in *NZ Monthly Review*, a small circulation national magazine.

The incident was perhaps the most extreme example of mainstream media self-censorship on the issue that I have personally experienced. But it was always apparent to me that news editors had a mind set

over Indonesia and the East Timor issue. Australia was far worse than New Zealand (whose government and media, after all, take their cue from across the Tasman) and the Pacific media all but ignore the Timor issue.

Perhaps this mind set has at least partially been altered by John Pilger and the controversy over his *Death of a Nation* television documentary which have exposed the hypocrisy and blatant self-censorship practised by the *Australian* and several other Australian news media over the issue. But in many respects Pilger was simply reporting what many of us journalists in the Pacific reporting on Indonesian colonialism have been saying for years.

So it is refreshing indeed to see *A Critical Review of Western Journalism and Scholarship on East Timor*, Geoffrey Gunn's timely critique of news media responses to Indonesian colonialism. It comprehensively exposes the double standards and hypocrisy of Western governments — particularly Australia, given the heroic sacrifice of the East Timorese people in support of Australian commandos in the defence of Australia from Japanese fascism during the Second World War, the eagerness of Australia to militarily intervene alongside the forces on the side of the 'free world' in South-East Asia in the 1960s, Australia's special role in brokering the peace plan for Cambodia in 1990 to the defence of 'democracy' against tyranny in the rescue to Kuwait from Saddam Hussein.

'Again,' notes Gunn, 'we confront the paradox where the antipodean model of a "free press" has — seem-

ingly — been at the forefront in chastising the Australian Government's myopia over the East Timorese self-determination issue yet has also revealed itself to be swayed by the state-engendered processes of information control which would see, in line with the thinking of the dominant elite, the building of a new consensus on questions of national importance.'

An independent Timor posed no other threat than being another South-East Asian state. However, thanks to Indonesian propaganda as much as the Western information services, the consensus emerged that Jakarta was actually repaying the West by 'rescuing' the Timorese from the clutches of godless communism and a potential 'South-east Asian Cuba'. This book goes a long way to dispelling most, if not all, of the media myths about East Timor. It is recommended reading for Papua New Guinean or other Pacific journalists seeking a better understanding of Indonesian foreign policy in the region.

REPORTAGE

Tapping the global electronic village

Mastering the Maze: How to Use Your Library to Break the Information Barrier, by Christine Fogg. Sydney: Australian Centre for Independent Journalism, 1994. A\$10.50 (inc. postage).

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With a focus on electronic information resources in reference and major academic libraries in Australia, *Mastering the Maze* describes online and CD-ROM databases, lists which CD-ROM products are in which libraries and explains CD-ROM search techniques.

Designed as a quick reference and explanatory guide to save reporters and media researchers valuable research time, *Mastering the Maze* is for anyone whose currency is information and whose goal is ease of access.